

Margadarshan IAS

PYQs First, Books Later!

UPSC CSE Mains PYQs Astra Notes
GS Paper 1

Level 1 – Themewise PYQs Seggregations (2013–2025)

PYQS FIRST, BOOKS LATER!

UPSC CSE MAINS PYQS ASTRA NOTES

What is PYQs Astra?

Every serious UPSC aspirant hears this advice: "Solve PYQs." But what if there was a way to not just *solve* them, but truly *decode* them like a topper?

That’s exactly what **PYQs Astra Notes** by Margdarshan IAS offers. It is a carefully designed set of notes based on **12 years of UPSC Mains PYQs analysis (2013–2025)**. This isn’t a random compilation — it’s a roadmap to understand the examiner’s mindset, the hidden patterns, and the evolving trends.

The biggest strength of PYQs Astra is that it follows the **"PYQs first, books later"** approach. Instead of getting lost in endless book reading, aspirants first understand what UPSC repeatedly asks. Only then do they fill in gaps through books and standard sources. This approach saves time, sharpens focus, and directly targets high-probability areas.

Four Levels of Preparation

- **Level 1:** Theme-wise classification of questions to understand recurring focus areas.
- **Level 2:** Micro-theme breakdowns with background insights and why a question was asked.
- **Level 3:** Model frameworks with ready introductions, conclusions, and multi-dimensional points — so aspirants learn *how* to structure.
- **Level 4:** Advanced answer writing toolkit — diagrams, case studies, data points, interlinkages across GS papers, and value additions.

Rather than forcing aspirants to blindly copy model answers, PYQs Astra builds the skill to think and present like a topper.

How it helps across GS Papers

GS Paper 1 — History, Society & Geography

- Decode art & culture, modern history, and society PYQs thematically.
- Use model intros and conclusions to show depth.
- Ready data points (like census data, economic surveys) for society answers.
- Geography diagrams and map-based examples included.

How it boosts your GS Marks

- You understand the *trend* and *expectation* rather than just topics.
- Saves time on framing — focus on refining expression and content.
- Gives confidence in presenting answers with clear structure and substantiation.

PYQs Astra is not just another set of notes — it is a mindset shift towards smart, targeted Mains preparation.
For any aspirant who wants to score higher, write better, and decode the UPSC puzzle confidently, this is a true game-changer.



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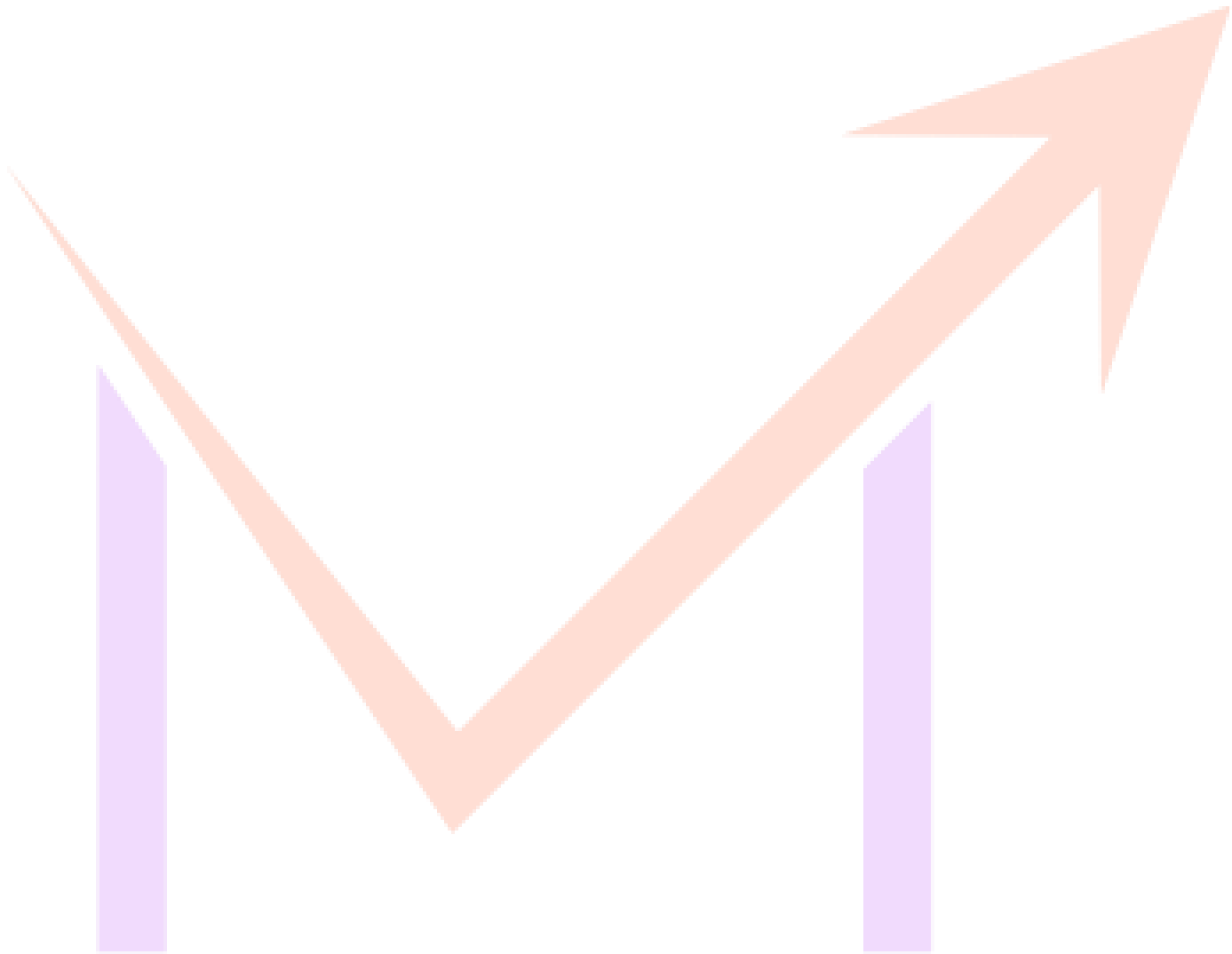
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UPSC MAINS PYQs ANALYSIS (2025-2013): MODERN HISTORY

NOTE: Headings in **bold** correspond to topics listed in the UPSC syllabus.

MODERN INDIAN HISTORY- MID-18TH CENTURY -PRESENT (SIGNIFICANT EVENTS, PERSONALITIES, ISSUES)



S.NO.	QUESTION	YEAR	SUBJECT	TOPIC	THEME
COLONIAL RULE AND IMPACT					
1	How far was the Industrial Revolution in England responsible for the decline of handicrafts and cottage industries in India?	2024	History – Modern India	Economic Impact of Colonial Rule	Industrial Revolution and decline of Indian handicrafts
2	How did the colonial rule affect the tribals in India and what was the tribal response to the colonial oppression?	2023	History - Modern India	Tribal Movements	Impact of colonialism on tribals and their resistance
3	Why did the armies of the British East India Company – mostly comprising of Indian soldiers – win consistently against the more numerous and better-equipped armies of then Indian rulers?	2022	History - Modern India	British Expansion in India	Military Superiority of the British East India Company
4	Why was there a sudden spurt in famines in colonial India since the mid-18th century? Give reasons.	2022	History - Modern India	Colonial Economy	Causes of Famines in British India
5	Assess the role of British imperial power in complicating the process of transfer of power during the 1940s.	2019	History - Modern India	Transfer of Power	British Policies and Challenges in Independence
6	Why was indentured labour taken by the British from India to their colonies? Have they been able to preserve their cultural identity over there?	2018	History - Modern India	Colonialism and Migration	Indentured Labour and Cultural Identity



7	Clarify how mid-eighteenth century India was beset with the spectre of a fragmented polity.	2017	History - Modern India	18th Century India	Political Fragmentation
8	Examine how the decline of traditional artisanal industry in colonial India crippled the rural economy.	2017	History - Modern India	Economic Impact of Colonialism	Decline of Artisanal Industry
9	Examine critically the various facets of economic policies of the British in India from mid-eighteenth century till independence.	2014	History - Modern India	British Economic Policies	Impact of British Rule on Indian Economy

GANDHI AND INDIAN LEADERS OF FREEDOM STRUGGLE

1	What was the difference between Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore in their approach towards education and nationalism?	2023	History - Modern India	Freedom Struggle	Educational and nationalist approaches of Gandhi & Tagore
2	Bring out the constructive programmes of Mahatma Gandhi during Non-Cooperation Movement and Civil Disobedience Movement.	2021	History - Modern India	Gandhian Movements	Constructive Programmes of Gandhi
3	Many voices had strengthened and enriched the nationalist movement during the Gandhian phase. Elaborate.	2019	History - Modern India	Freedom Struggle	Diverse Contributions to Nationalism
4	Throw light on the significance of the thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi in the present times.	2018	History - Modern India	Gandhian Ideology	Relevance of Gandhian Thought
5	Discuss the role of women in the freedom struggle especially during the Gandhian phase.	2016	History - Modern India	Indian Freedom Struggle	Women's Participation in Gandhian Movements
6	Highlight the differences in the approach of Subhash Chandra Bose and Mahatma Gandhi in the struggle for freedom.	2016	History - Modern India	Indian Freedom Struggle	Contrasting Strategies of Bose and Gandhi
7	How difficult would have been the achievement of Indian independence without Mahatma Gandhi? Discuss.	2015	History - Modern India	Freedom Struggle	Role of Mahatma Gandhi
8	Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. B R Ambedkar, despite having divergent approaches and strategies, had a common goal of amelioration of the downtrodden. Elucidate.	2015	History - Modern India	Social Reform Movements	Gandhi vs. Ambedkar on Social Justice

REVOLT AND MUTINY

1	The 1857 Uprising was the culmination of the recurrent big and small local rebellions that had occurred in the preceding hundred years of British rule. Elucidate.	2019	History - Modern India	Revolt of 1857	Preceding Rebellions and Their Impact
2	Explain how the uprising of 1857 constitutes an important watershed in the evolution of British policies towards colonial India.	2016	History - Modern India	Revolt of 1857	Impact on British Policies
3	In what ways did the naval mutiny prove to be the last nail in the coffin of British colonial aspirations in India?	2014	History - Modern India	Freedom Struggle	Role of Naval Mutiny in Independence



SOCIO-RELIGIOUS REFORMS					
1	Mahatma Jotirao Phule’s writings and efforts of social reforms touched issues of almost all subaltern classes. Discuss.	2025	Indian Society	Social Reform Movements	Phule’s Reform Movements
2	Trace the rise and growth of socio-religious reform movements with special reference to Young Bengal and Brahmo Samaj.	2021	History - Modern India	Socio-religious Reform Movements	Young Bengal and Brahmo Samaj
3	Examine the linkages between the 19th-century ‘Indian Renaissance’ and the emergence of national identity.	2019	History - Modern India	Socio-Religious Movements	Indian Renaissance and Nationalism
4	The women’s question arose in modern India as a part of the 19th-century social reform movement. What are the major issues and debates concerning women in that period?	2017	History - Modern India	Social Reforms	Women’s Issues and Debates in 19th Century
VICEROY AND THEIR ADMINISTRATION					
1	Evaluate the policies of Lord Curzon and their long-term implications on the national movements.	2020	History – Modern India	British Policies	Lord Curzon's Policies and Nationalist Response
2	In many ways, Lord Dalhousie was the founder of modern India. Elaborate.	2013	History - Modern India	British Policies	Lord Dalhousie’s Reforms and Impact

FREEDOM STRUGGLE- VARIOUS STAGES, IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTORS/ CONTRIBUTIONS FROM DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE COUNTRY



S.NO.	QUESTION	YEAR	SUBJECT	TOPIC	THEME
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VARIOUS STAGES OF FREEDOM STRUGGLE					
1	What were the events that led to the Quit India Movement? Point out its results.	2024	History – Modern India	Freedom Struggle	Causes and consequences of Quit India Movement
2	Since the decade of the 1920s, the national movement acquired various ideological strands and thereby expanded its social base. Discuss.	2020	History – Modern India	Indian Freedom Struggle	Ideological Diversification of the National Movement
3	Highlight the importance of the new objectives that got added to the vision of Indian Independence since the twenties of the last century.	2017	History - Modern India	Freedom Struggle	New Objectives of Indian Independence
CONTRIBUTIONS					
1	To what extent did the role of the moderates prepare a base for the wider freedom movement? Comment.	2021	History - Modern India	Indian National Movement	Role of Moderates in Freedom Struggle
2	Why did the ‘Moderates’ fail to carry conviction with the nation about their proclaimed ideology and political goals by the end of the nineteenth century?	2017	History - Modern India	Indian National Movement	Moderates' Ideology and Failure
3	Defying the barriers of age, gender, and religion, Indian women became the torchbearers during the struggle for freedom in India. Discuss.	2013	History - Modern India	Freedom Struggle	Role of Women in Indian Independence Movement
4	Several foreigners made India their homeland and participated in various movements. Analyze their role in the Indian struggle for freedom.	2013	History - Modern India	Freedom Struggle	Contribution of Foreigners in India's Freedom
5	Discuss the contribution of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad to pre-and post-independent India.	2013	History - Modern India	National Leaders	Maulana Azad’s Role in India
MISC.					
1	The ethos of civil service in India stand for the combination of professionalism with nationalistic consciousness – Elucidate.	2025	Indian Society	Values & Institutions	Civil Service Ethos
2	It would have been difficult for the Constituent Assembly to complete its historic task of drafting the Constitution for Independent India in just three years, but its experience gained with the Government of India Act, 1935. Discuss.	2015	History - Modern India	Constitution Making	Influence of Government of India Act, 1935
3	The Third Battle of Panipat was fought in 1761. Why were so many empire-shaking battles fought at Panipat?	2014	History - Modern India	Battles in Indian History	Strategic Importance of Panipat



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