

Preparing for CSAT with Non-English Background

Ever since UPSC has declared the inclusion of CSAT in the prelims exam we have received queries from numerous students regarding the same. Many students are worried, some are angry but most are looking for ways to cope up with this change. This page tries to address some of the concerns related to the English knowledge requirements of the CSAT exam. Another related page (Preparing CSAT with Non Mathematical Background) tries to alleviate the questions and worries related to the mathematical requirements of the new test.

At this point it is very important that students consider preparing for CSAT with non-English background is not a challenge but rather an opportunity. In the era of globalization where English has become a popular international language, having a basic command on the language would be helpful in all walks of life and especially if the student becomes an administrative officer. Imagine a situation where an administrator and a diplomat and are in conversation, but the administrator is not sound in English?

We believe that preparing for reading and comprehension portion of CSAT exam should not be a very challenging task for anyone. Our reasoning is as follows: One of the comprehension questions released by UPSC was

“The economy of contemporary India is a great paradox. It is a strange combination of outstanding achievements as well as grave failures. Since independence, India has achieved remarkable progress in overcoming its economic backwardness. From being a very poor country in the 1950s and a ‘basket case’ in the mid-1960s, it has emerged as the fourth largest economy in the world (in terms of purchasing power parity). Our economy has become one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Now the country is one of the leading players in the world knowledge economy with vast intellectual capital and booming software and information technology services. While our country has joined the league of the world's top five fastest growing economies, we are in the bottom 20 among all countries in terms of the Human Development Index. While the country is celebrating its growth rate and technological wonders, it is witnessing social contradictions and the paradox and ironies of development. Thus, there are ‘two Indias’ in contemporary India.”

(this passage was taken from Contemporary India: Economy, Society, Politics, by Neera Chandhoke, Praveen Priyadarshini). Based on this passage questions were asked. Note the following:

- The passage itself is based on contemporary topic and the possibility of a good candidate already having covered similar topic is high especially if he or she has done a good job of keeping up with the current affairs.

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- If the candidate can read and comprehend newspapers articles then comprehending this excerpt should not be difficult.
- Given that many would agree with our assertion above. The following general tips would also be helpful especially for students with a non-English background:
- Start with the very basic English vocabulary book, where the description is given. It can be a Hindi to English translation book or a book having translations from any regional language to English (Tamil to English) and so on
- Learn the basic of the grammar (basic knowledge most of which students might already have but just needs refresher), once you are sound in grammar you can solve the problems of sentence correction and vocabulary at your fingertips.
- Learn and know where and where not to use specific terms and phrases and words. To master this aspect it is vital that a student does lot of reading, be it newspapers or magazines or books or even news and articles on the web.
- When done with basic knowledge, refer books like Wren and Martin
- For section on reading comprehension, remember knowing good English is as equally important as good speed.
- Practice reading and comprehending good books to enhance your reading speed like books by Mahatma Gandhi & Jawaharlal Nehru which are written in very basic English language, easy to comprehend and useful for increasing fluency
- Practice, practice, practice. Don't give up:
- Never take it as a challenge impossible (or hard) to achieve, rather act as if it is an opportunity (to grow, to master to learn), practice we are sure you will succeed!

If you need help preparing for CSAT please do not hesitate to write to us at contactus@examrace.com.

We have also designed preparation material for CSAT with a range of students in mind. You can check it out at [Examrace CSAT Series](#). It contains solutions to more than 4000 problems, extensive comprehension and vocabulary section and even section on basic grammar.

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