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UPSC GEOGRAPHY OPTIONAL SYLLABUS

2026



Complete Syllabus
Paper I & Paper II



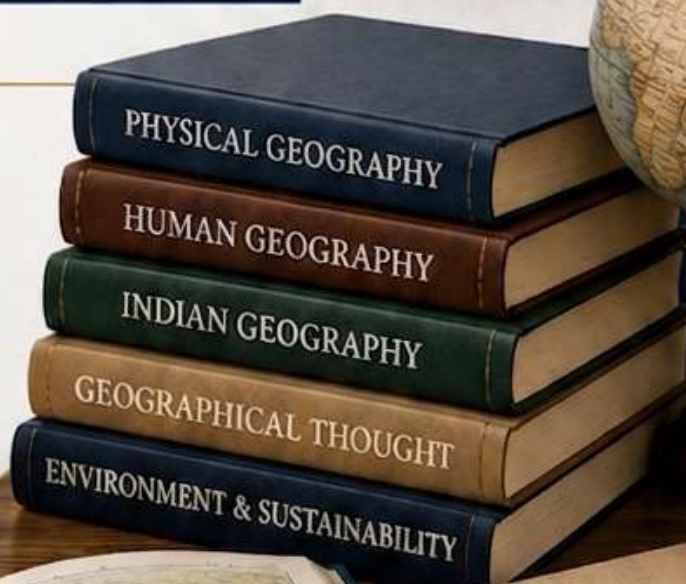
Detailed Topics
Unit-wise Breakdown



Exam Pattern
Marks & Structure



Preparation Tips
Strategy & Resources



Geography

PAPER-1 PRINCIPLES OF GEOGRAPHY

Physical Geography

1. **Geomorphology:** Factors controlling landform development; endogenetic and exogenetic forces; Origin and evolution of the earth's crusts; Fundamentals of geomagnetism; Physical conditions of the earth's interior; Geosynclines; Continental drift; Isostasy; Plate tectonics; Recent views on mountain building; Volcanicity; Earthquakes and Tsunamis; Concepts of geomorphic cycles and Landscape development; Denudation chronology; Channel morphology; Erosion surfaces; Slope development; Applied Geomorphology; Geomorphology, economic geology, and environment.
2. **Climatology:** Temperature and pressure belts of the world; Heat budget of the earth; Atmospheric circulation; Atmospheric stability and instability. Planetary and local winds; Monsoons and jet streams; Air masses and fronts; Temperate and tropical cyclones; Types and distribution of precipitation; Weather and Climate; Koppen's Thornthwaite's and Trewartha's classification of world climate; Hydrological cycle; Global climatic change, and role and response of man in climatic changes Applied climatology and Urban climate.
3. **Oceanography:** Bottom topography of the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific Oceans; Temperature and salinity of the oceans; Heat and salt budgets, Ocean deposits; Waves, currents, and tides; Marine resources; biotic, mineral, and energy resources; Coral reefs coral bleaching; Sea-level changes; Law of the sea and marine pollution.
4. **Biogeography:** Genesis of soils; Classification and distribution of soils; Soil profile; Soil erosion, Degradation, and conservation; Factors influencing world distribution of plants and animals; Problems of deforestation and conservation measures; Social forestry, agro-forestry; Wildlife; Major gene pool centers.
5. **Environmental Geography:** Principle of ecology; Human ecological adaptations; Influence of man on ecology and environment; Global and regional ecological changes and imbalances; Ecosystem their management and conservation; Environmental degradation, management, and conservation; Biodiversity and sustainable development; Environmental policy; Environmental hazards and remedial measures; Environmental education and legislation.

Human Geography

1. **Perspectives in Human Geography:** Areal differentiation; regional synthesis; Dichotomy and dualism; Environmentalism; Quantitative revolution and locational analysis; Radical,

behavioral, human, and welfare approaches; Languages, religions, and secularisation; Cultural regions of the world; Human development index.

2. **Economic Geography:** World economic development: measurement and problems; World resources and their distribution; Energy crisis; the limits to growth; World agriculture: a typology of agricultural regions; Agricultural inputs and productivity; Food and nutrition problems; Food security; famine: causes, effects, and remedies; World industries: location patterns and problems; Patterns of world trade.
3. **Population and Settlement Geography:** Growth and distribution of world population; Demographic attributes; Causes and consequences of migration; Concepts of the over-under-and optimum population; Population theories, world population problems and policies, Social well-being and quality of life; Population as social capital. Types and patterns of rural settlements; Environmental issues in rural settlements; Hierarchy of urban settlements; Urban morphology; Concept of primate city and rank-size rule; Functional classification of towns; Sphere of urban influence; Rural-urban fringe; Satellite towns; Problems and remedies of urbanization; Sustainable development of cities.
4. **Regional Planning:** Concept of a region; Types of regions and methods of regionalization; Growth centers and growth poles; Regional imbalances; regional development strategies; environmental issues in regional planning; Planning for sustainable development.
5. **Models, Theories and Laws in Human Geography:** System analysis in Human geography; Malthusian, Marxian and demographic transition models; Central Place theories of Christaller and Losch; Perroux and Boudeville; Von Thunen's model of agricultural location; Weber's model of industrial location; Ostov's model of stages of growth. Heartland and Rimland theories; Laws of international boundaries and frontiers.

PAPER-2 GEOGRAPHY OF INDIA

1. **Physical Setting:** Space relationship of India with neighboring countries; Structure and relief; Drainage system and watersheds; Physiographic regions; Mechanism of Indian monsoons and rainfall patterns; Tropical cyclones and western disturbances; Floods and droughts; Climatic regions; Natural vegetation, Soil types and their distributions.
2. **Resources:** Land, surface and ground water, energy, minerals, biotic and marine resources, Forest and wildlife resources and their conservation; Energy crisis.
3. **Agriculture :** Infrastructure: irrigation, seeds, fertilizers, power; Institutional factors; land holdings, land tenure and land reforms; Cropping pattern, agricultural productivity, agricultural intensity, crop combination, land capability; Agro and social-forestry; Green

revolution and its socio-economic and ecological implications; Significance of dry farming; Livestock resources and white revolution; Aquaculture; Sericulture, Agriculture and poultry; Agricultural regionalisation; Agro-climatic zones; Agroecological regions.

4. **Industry:** Evolution of industries; Locational factors of cotton, jute, textile, iron and steel, aluminum, fertiliser, paper, chemical and pharmaceutical, automobile, cottage, and agro-based industries; Industrial houses and complexes including public sector undertakings; Industrial regionalisation; New industrial policy; Multinationals and liberalisation; Special Economic Zones; Tourism including ecotourism.
5. **Transport, Communication, and Trade:** Road, railway, waterway, airway, and pipeline networks and their complementary roles in regional development; Growing importance of ports on national and foreign trade; Trade balance; Trade Policy; Export processing zones; Developments in communication and information technology and their impacts on economy and society; Indian space programme.
6. **Cultural Setting:** Historical Perspective of Indian Society; Racial linguistic and ethnic diversities; religious minorities; Major tribes, tribal areas, and their problems; Cultural regions; Growth, distribution, and density of population; Demographic attributes: sex-ratio, age structure, literacy rate, work-force, dependency ratio, longevity; migration (inter-regional, intraregional and international) and associated problems; Population problems and policies; Health indicators.
7. **Settlements:** Types, patterns, and morphology of rural settlements; Urban developments; Morphology of Indian cities; Functional classification of Indian cities; Conurbations and metropolitan regions; Urban sprawl; Slums and associated problems; Town planning; Problems of urbanisation and remedies.
8. **Regional Development and Planning:** Experience of regional planning in India; Five Year Plans; Integrated rural development programmes; Panchayati Raj and decentralised planning; Command area development; Watershed management; Planning for backward area, desert, drought-prone, hill tribal area development; Multi-level planning; Regional planning and development of island territories.
9. **Political Aspects:** Geographical basis of Indian federalism; State reorganization; Emergence of new states; Regional consciousness and inter-state issues; International boundary of India and related issues; Cross-border terrorism; India's role in world affairs; Geopolitics of South Asia and Indian Ocean realm.
10. **Contemporary Issues:** Ecological issues: Environmental hazards: landslides, earthquakes, Tsunamis, floods and droughts, epidemics; Issues related to environmental pollution; Changes in patterns of land use; Principles of environmental impact assessment and environmental management; Population explosion and food security; Environmental degradation; Deforestation, desertification, and soil erosion; Problems of agrarian and industrial unrest; Regional disparities in economic development; Concept of sustainable

growth and development; Environmental awareness; Linkage of rivers; Globalisation and Indian economy.