
UPSC Mains Answer Writing Framework

A flexible checklist for structuring clear, relevant answers

Before writing

Read the directive word (for example, discuss, analyse, evaluate or explain). Identify exactly what the question asks and underline its limits: topic, time, place and dimensions.

Spend a brief moment building a 3–5 point outline. Select only examples that directly support the argument.

A clear answer structure

Introduction: define the issue, provide context or state the central idea in a few lines.

Main body: use logical subheadings or linked paragraphs. Cover relevant dimensions, evidence, examples and trade-offs. Keep each point connected to the demand.

Conclusion: close with a balanced way forward, constitutional or policy principle, or concise synthesis. Avoid introducing a new argument at the end.

Self-review checklist

- Every part of the question has been addressed.
- The answer is organised and readable under time pressure.
- Examples and facts are relevant and accurately stated.
- The conclusion follows from the discussion.
- I stayed within the word and time limits specified in the practice task.

Practice reflection

What was strongest in this answer? _____

Which demand or dimension did I miss?

One change to apply in the next answer
