

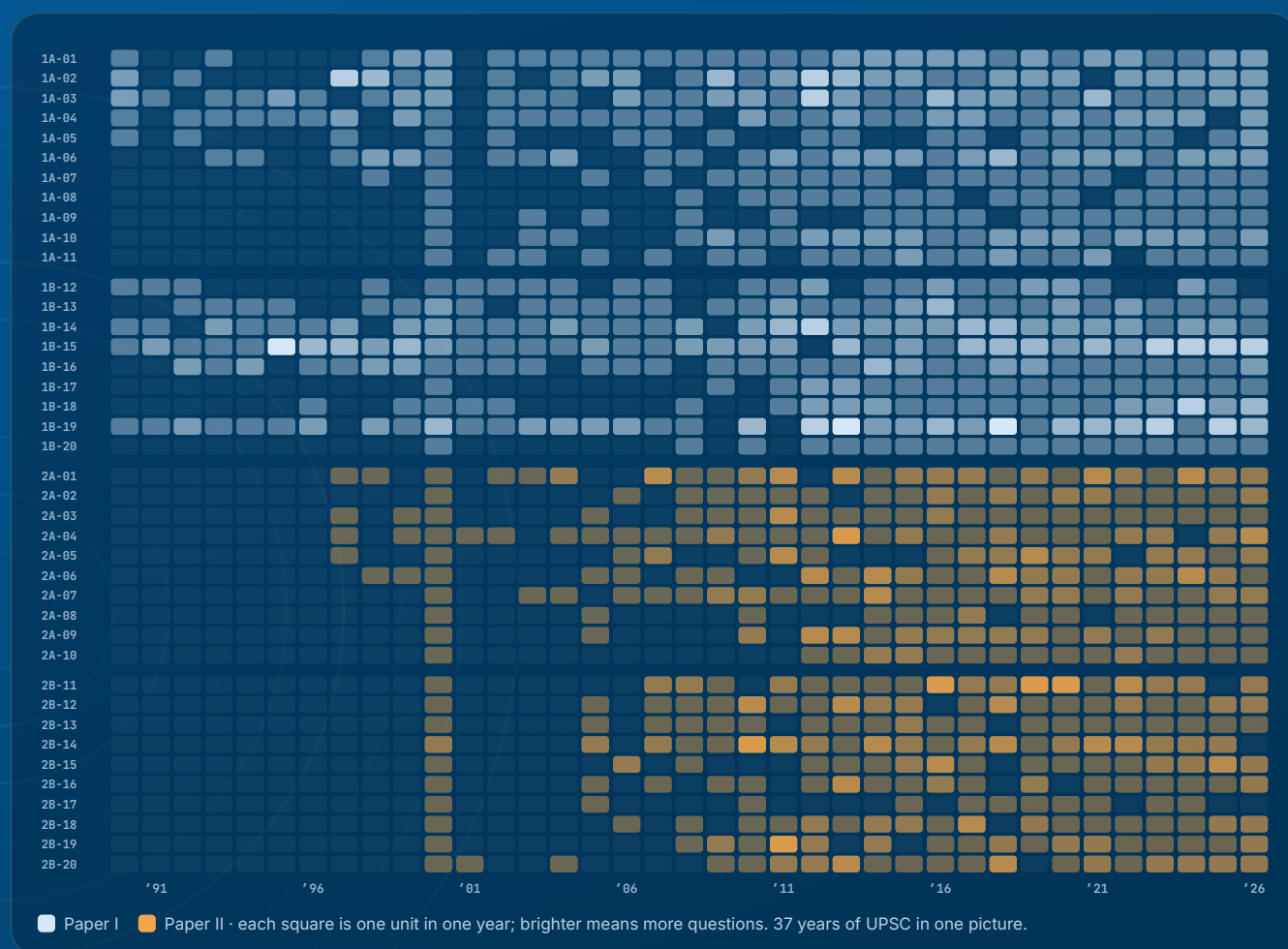
UPSC CSE MAINS · PHILOSOPHY OPTIONAL · PAPER I & II

Previous Year Questions

Topic-wise 1990–2026 + Year-wise 2013–2026

All 40 syllabus units of Paper I and Paper II, every question since 1990 sorted into its unit, the full papers from 2013 to 2026 with marks, and a ten-year pattern analysis of what UPSC asks.

COMPILED BY | Arvind KrS



FREE SAMPLE · THE FULL 197-PAGE BOOK COMES FREE WITH PHILOSOPHY OPTIONAL COMPLETE NOTES

1,338

questions sorted into units

40

syllabus units, both papers

14

full papers with marks

37

years of UPSC questions

Contents

A	Ten-year pattern analysis (2017–2026): unit weightage, heat map, trends	3
B	The official syllabus, Paper I and Paper II	9
C	Topic-wise questions, 1990–2026, all 40 units	11
D	Year-wise question papers, 2026 back to 2013	144

PAPER I · HISTORY AND PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY

SECTION A · WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

1A-01	Plato & Aristotle	42	12
1A-02	Rationalism	55	16
1A-03	Empiricism	52	20
1A-04	Immanuel Kant	43	24
1A-05	G.W.F. Hegel	20	28
1A-06	Moore, Russell & Early Wittgenstein	44	31
1A-07	Logical Positivism	20	35
1A-08	Later Wittgenstein	17	38
1A-09	Phenomenology (Husserl)	17	40
1A-10	Existentialism	34	42
1A-11	Quine & Strawson	24	45

SECTION B · INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

1B-12	Carvaka	29	48
1B-13	Jainism	38	51
1B-14	Schools of Buddhism	60	55
1B-15	Nyaya-Vaisesika	79	60
1B-16	Samkhya	42	66
1B-17	Yoga	20	70
1B-18	Mimamsa	33	73
1B-19	Schools of Vedanta	75	76
1B-20	Sri Aurobindo	18	81

PAPER II · SOCIO-POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY AND PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

SECTION A · SOCIO-POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

2A-01	Equality, Justice, Liberty	44	83
2A-02	Sovereignty	25	87
2A-03	Individual and State	26	90
2A-04	Forms of Government	38	93
2A-05	Anarchism, Marxism, Socialism	29	97
2A-06	Humanism, Secularism, Multiculturalism	36	100
2A-07	Crime and Punishment	33	103
2A-08	Development & Social Progress	15	106
2A-09	Gender Discrimination	30	108
2A-10	Caste Discrimination	19	111

SECTION B · PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

2B-11	Notions of God	38	114
2B-12	Proofs of God	32	117
2B-13	Problem of Evil	21	120
2B-14	Soul: Immortality, Rebirth	44	123
2B-15	Reason, Revelation & Faith	26	127
2B-16	Religious Experience	23	130
2B-17	Religion Without God	11	133
2B-18	Religion & Morality	27	135
2B-19	Religious Pluralism	28	138
2B-20	Religious Language	31	141

YEAR-WISE PAPERS

2026 · p145	2025 · p149	2024 · p153	2023 · p157	2022 · p161	2021 · p165	2020 · p169
2019 · p173	2018 · p176	2017 · p180	2016 · p184	2015 · p187	2014 · p190	2013 · p193

How to use this book. Learn topic-wise, test year-wise. Work through one unit's questions after you finish that unit, newest first, to see how UPSC frames it. Then sit full papers against the clock.

FREE SAMPLE · FULL 197-PAGE BOOK FREE WITH PHILOSOPHY OPTIONAL COMPLETE NOTES · LOTUSARISE.COM

PART A

2017–2026

Ten years of patterns

How many questions UPSC asked from each unit in the last ten papers, and the marks they carried. Each sub-part counts as one question; Q1 and Q5 sub-parts carry 10 marks, the long questions 20 or 15. A question that fits two units is counted in both.

560

Questions, 2017–2026 (every sub-part counts as one)

8,000

Printed marks those questions carried

21/40

Units asked in every one of the ten years

32

Questions from the most-asked unit, Nyaya-Vaisesika

WHAT THE DATA SAYS

- **Most asked:** Nyaya-Vaisesika (32 questions, 430 marks), Schools of Vedanta (29 questions, 435 marks), Notions of God (22 questions, 295 marks) over ten years.
- **Rising fastest** (2022–26 vs 2017–21): Mimamsa (+8 questions), Reason, Revelation & Faith (+6 questions), Nyaya-Vaisesika (+4 questions).
- **Cooling:** Anarchism, Marxism, Socialism (–4 questions), Carvaka (–4 questions), Notions of God (–4 questions). Cooling is not skipping: each of these was still asked in 7 or more of the ten papers.
- **Asked least often:** Religion Without God (7 of 10 years), Carvaka (7 of 10 years), Later Wittgenstein (8 of 10 years). Even these units drew questions, so no unit is a safe skip.
- **Indian Philosophy carries weight:** Paper I Section B accounts for 154 of the ten-year questions sorted into units; Nyaya-Vaisesika is its heaviest unit with 32 questions.

WHERE THE MARKS SIT, BY SECTION (2017–2026)

PAPER I · SECTION A
Western Philosophy

146

questions and 2,095 marks in ten years, across 11 units

PAPER I · SECTION B
Indian Philosophy

154

questions and 2,220 marks in ten years, across 9 units

PAPER II · SECTION A
Socio–Political Philosophy

145

questions and 2,075 marks in ten years, across 10 units

PAPER II · SECTION B
Philosophy of Religion

141

questions and 2,010 marks in ten years, across 10 units

Unit weightage, 2017–2026

Number of questions asked from each unit across the last ten papers, with the marks they carried alongside. One scale for both papers, so the bars compare directly.

● Paper I · History and Problems of Philosophy

1A-01	Plato & Aristotle		16 Qs	195 marks
1A-02	Rationalism		17 Qs	235 marks
1A-03	Empiricism		16 Qs	235 marks
1A-04	Immanuel Kant		15 Qs	230 marks
1A-05	G.W.F. Hegel		9 Qs	110 marks
1A-06	Moore, Russell & Early Wittgenstein		19 Qs	280 marks
1A-07	Logical Positivism		9 Qs	140 marks
1A-08	Later Wittgenstein		8 Qs	110 marks
1A-09	Phenomenology (Husserl)		9 Qs	125 marks
1A-10	Existentialism		17 Qs	270 marks
1A-11	Quine & Strawson		11 Qs	165 marks
1B-12	Carvaka		10 Qs	130 marks
1B-13	Jainism		12 Qs	170 marks
1B-14	Schools of Buddhism		20 Qs	290 marks
1B-15	Nyaya-Vaisesika		32 Qs	430 marks
1B-16	Samkhya		13 Qs	190 marks
1B-17	Yoga		10 Qs	140 marks
1B-18	Mimamsa		18 Qs	280 marks
1B-19	Schools of Vedanta		29 Qs	435 marks
1B-20	Sri Aurobindo		10 Qs	155 marks

● Paper II · Socio-Political Philosophy and Philosophy of Religion

2A-01	Equality, Justice, Liberty		19 Qs	245 marks
2A-02	Sovereignty		14 Qs	215 marks
2A-03	Individual and State		10 Qs	155 marks
2A-04	Forms of Government		15 Qs	195 marks
2A-05	Anarchism, Marxism, Socialism		18 Qs	240 marks
2A-06	Humanism, Secularism, Multiculturalism		19 Qs	280 marks
2A-07	Crime and Punishment		15 Qs	210 marks
2A-08	Development & Social Progress		9 Qs	150 marks
2A-09	Gender Discrimination		15 Qs	215 marks
2A-10	Caste Discrimination		11 Qs	170 marks
2B-11	Notions of God		22 Qs	295 marks
2B-12	Proofs of God		15 Qs	245 marks
2B-13	Problem of Evil		9 Qs	135 marks
2B-14	Soul: Immortality, Rebirth		20 Qs	290 marks
2B-15	Reason, Revelation & Faith		14 Qs	175 marks
2B-16	Religious Experience		10 Qs	150 marks
2B-17	Religion Without God		7 Qs	90 marks
2B-18	Religion & Morality		14 Qs	190 marks
2B-19	Religious Pluralism		14 Qs	205 marks
2B-20	Religion and Society		14 Qs	205 marks

FREE SAMPLE · FULL 197-PAGE BOOK FREE WITH PHILOSOPHY OPTIONAL COMPLETE NOTES · LOTUSARISE.COM

Year-by-year heat map

Questions asked from each unit in each year. Darker cells mean more questions; a dot means the unit was not asked that year. Read across a row to see how steady a unit is. Ten-year totals: questions, then marks.

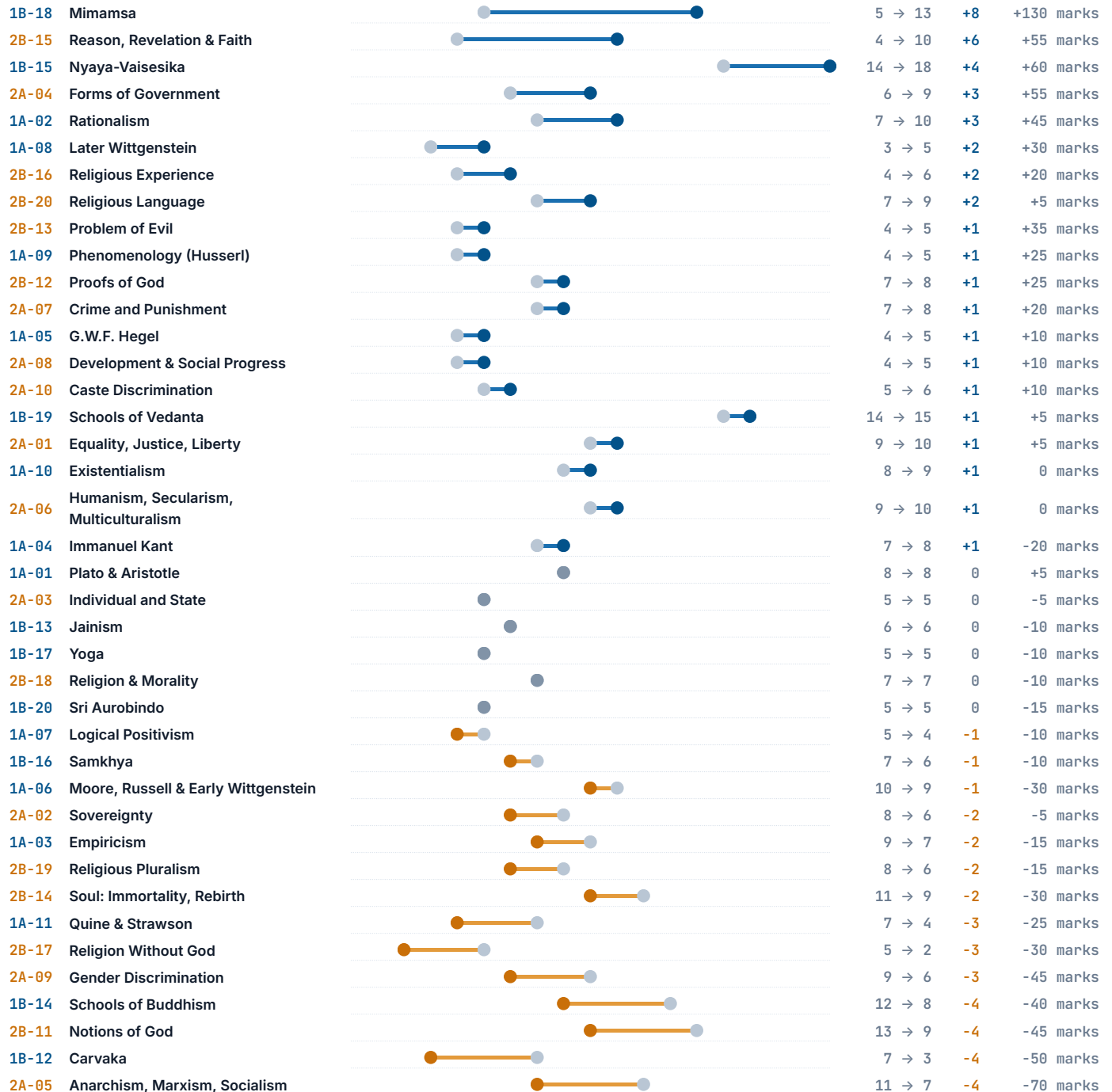
UNIT	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	Qs	Marks
1A-01 Plato & Aristotle	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	1	2	2	16	195
1A-02 Rationalism	1	2	2	2	.	2	2	2	2	2	17	235
1A-03 Empiricism	2	2	1	1	3	1	1	1	2	2	16	235
1A-04 Immanuel Kant	2	1	1	2	1	2	2	2	.	2	15	230
1A-05 G.W.F. Hegel	1	.	1	1	1	1	1	.	1	2	9	110
1A-06 Moore, Russell & Early Wittgenstein	2	3	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	19	280
1A-07 Logical Positivism	1	1	1	1	1	.	1	1	1	1	9	140
1A-08 Later Wittgenstein	.	1	1	1	.	1	1	1	1	1	8	110
1A-09 Phenomenology (Husserl)	1	.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	125
1A-10 Existentialism	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	17	270
1A-11 Quine & Strawson	1	2	1	1	2	.	1	1	1	1	11	165
1B-12 Carvaka	1	1	2	2	1	.	.	2	1	.	10	130
1B-13 Jainism	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	12	170
1B-14 Schools of Buddhism	3	3	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	20	290
1B-15 Nyaya-Vaisesika	3	3	3	2	3	2	4	4	4	4	32	430
1B-16 Samkhya	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	13	190
1B-17 Yoga	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	140
1B-18 Mimamsa	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	4	2	3	18	280
1B-19 Schools of Vedanta	2	5	1	3	3	3	4	1	4	3	29	435
1B-20 Sri Aurobindo	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	155
2A-01 Equality, Justice, Liberty	2	1	2	1	3	2	1	3	2	2	19	245
2A-02 Sovereignty	1	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	14	215
2A-03 Individual and State	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10	155
2A-04 Forms of Government	1	2	1	1	1	2	2	.	2	3	15	195
2A-05 Anarchism, Marxism, Socialism	2	2	3	2	2	.	2	2	1	2	18	240
2A-06 Humanism, Secularism, Multiculturalism	1	3	2	2	1	2	2	3	2	1	19	280
2A-07 Crime and Punishment	1	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	2	15	210
2A-08 Development & Social Progress	2	.	1	1	.	1	1	1	1	1	9	150
2A-09 Gender Discrimination	2	2	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	15	215
2A-10 Caste Discrimination	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	11	170
2B-11 Notions of God	2	2	4	4	1	3	2	2	.	2	22	295
2B-12 Proofs of God	1	3	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	2	15	245
2B-13 Problem of Evil	1	.	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	9	135
2B-14 Soul: Immortality, Rebirth	2	3	1	2	3	3	2	2	2	.	20	290
2B-15 Reason, Revelation & Faith	1	.	1	1	1	1	2	2	3	2	14	175
2B-16 Religious Experience	1	.	2	.	1	1	1	1	1	2	10	150
2B-17 Religion Without God	1	1	1	1	1	.	1	1	.	.	7	90
2B-18 Religion & Morality	3	.	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	14	190
2B-19 Religious Pluralism	1	2	1	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	14	205
2B-20 Religious Language	1	3	.	1	2	1	2	2	2	2	16	235

Fewer questions  More questions (max 5 in one year)

Rising and cooling units

Questions asked in 2017–2021 (grey dot) against 2022–2026 (dark dot), sorted from the biggest rise to the biggest fall. The change in marks is shown on the right.

● 2017–2021 ● 2022–2026



PART C

40 UNITS

1,338 QUESTIONS

Topic-wise questions

Every question UPSC has set since 1990, sorted into its syllabus unit, newest first. Marks are shown as printed in that year's paper (essay-era papers before 2013 carried 60-, 30- and 20-mark questions); the sub-topic tag shows the thinker, concept or theme within the unit.

1A-01 Plato & Aristotle 42 questions	1A-02 Rationalism 55 questions	1A-03 Empiricism 52 questions	1A-04 Immanuel Kant 43 questions	1A-05 G.W.F. Hegel 20 questions	1A-06 Moore, Russell & Early Wittgenstein 44 questions	1A-07 Logical Positivism 20 questions
1A-08 Later Wittgenstein 17 questions	1A-09 Phenomenology (Husserl) 17 questions	1A-10 Existentialism 34 questions	1A-11 Quine & Strawson 24 questions	1B-12 Carvaka 29 questions	1B-13 Jainism 38 questions	1B-14 Schools of Buddhism 60 questions
1B-15 Nyaya-Vaisesika 79 questions	1B-16 Samkhya 42 questions	1B-17 Yoga 20 questions	1B-18 Mimamsa 33 questions	1B-19 Schools of Vedanta 75 questions	1B-20 Sri Aurobindo 18 questions	2A-01 Equality, Justice, Liberty 44 questions
2A-02 Sovereignty 25 questions	2A-03 Individual and State 26 questions	2A-04 Forms of Government 38 questions	2A-05 Anarchism, Marxism, Socialism 29 questions	2A-06 Humanism, Secularism, Multiculturalism 36 questions	2A-07 Crime and Punishment 33 questions	2A-08 Development & Social Progress 15 questions
2A-09 Gender Discrimination 30 questions	2A-10 Caste Discrimination 19 questions	2B-11 Notions of God 38 questions	2B-12 Proofs of God 32 questions	2B-13 Problem of Evil 21 questions	2B-14 Soul: Immortality, Rebirth 44 questions	2B-15 Reason, Revelation & Faith 26 questions
2B-16 Religious Experience 23 questions	2B-17 Religion Without God 11 questions	2B-18 Religion & Morality 27 questions	2B-19 Religious Pluralism 28 questions	2B-20 Religious Language 31 questions		



PAPER I · SECTION A · UNIT 04

43 QUESTIONS · 1990-2026

Immanuel Kant

15

questions in the last 10 years

230

marks, 2017-2026

9/10

years asked



questions per year, 2017-2026

SYLLABUS Possibility of Synthetic a priori Judgments; Space and Time; Categories; Ideas of Reason; Antinomies; Critique of Proofs for the Existence of God.

2026 2 questions

- 1 How does Hume account for ideas of reason? How does Kant respond to Hume's views in this regard? Critically discuss. Kant and Hume 15
- 2 Analyze and discuss the different ways in which Kant and Hegel conceived the relationship between reality and our thinking about reality. Kant and Hegel 15

2024 2 questions

- 3 How does Kant respond to Hume's scepticism with regard to a priori judgments? Discuss. Kant and Hume 10
- 4 Critically examine Kant's objections against the ontological argument for the existence of God. Proofs of God 15

2023 2 questions

- 5 "Percepts without concepts are blind and concepts without percepts are empty." In the light of this statement discusses how Kant reconciles rationalism with empiricism. Critical Philosophy 10
- 6 What are the main arguments offered by Kant to prove that apriori synthetic are judgments possible? Discuss with examples. Synthetic a priori 10

2022 2 questions

- 7 What is apperception, according to Immanuel Kant? Discuss with reference to his transcendental exposition of space and time. Space and Time 10
- 8 How does Kant construct and antinomies to illustrate the illusory tendencies of pure reason? Explain and examine the antinomies presented by Kant. Antinomies 20

2021 1 question

- 9 Explain how Cartesian formulation of ontological argument is criticized by Kant. Proofs of God 15

2020 2 questions

- 10 "I never can catch myself at any time without perception, and never can observe anything but the perception." How does this statement by Hume problematize the philosophical notion of personal identity? How does Kant deal with this problem in his Critique of Pure Reason? Transcendental Self 20
- 11 When does Pure Reason enter into the realm of Antinomies according to Kant? Is Kant's notion of Antinomies of Pure reason a natural culmination of his distinction between Phenomena and Noumena: provide reasons in favour of your

FREE SAMPLE · FULL 197-PAGE BOOK FREE WITH PHILOSOPHY OPTIONAL COMPLETE NOTES · LOTUSARISE.COM

2019	1 question	
12	How does Kant argue for the transcendence of Space and Time? Discuss. Space and Time	20
2018	1 question	
13	Explain the significance of the Kantian dictum, 'Understanding makes Nature'. How far do you agree that Hegel's Absolutism is the culmination of the Kantian Dualism? Discuss. Give reasons in favour of your answer. Categories	15
2017	2 questions	
14	How is 'all bodies are extended' an analytic judgement but 'all bodies are heavy' a synthetic judgement? Is 'every event has a cause' an analytic or a synthetic judgement? Explain. Synthetic a priori	20
15	Elaborate Kant's theory of space and time. How does this theory enable him to explain how mathematical propositions can be both synthetic and a priori? Space and Time	20
2016	2 questions	
16	Examine Kant's criticism on Descartes' view of Self. Transcendental Self	10
17	What, according to Kant, are 'pure concepts'? Examine their role in the process of knowing. Categories	15
2015	1 question	
18	Explain Kant's division of categories. Categories	20
2014	1 question	
19	How are the synthetic a priori judgements justifiable according to Kant? Explain. Synthetic a priori	10
2013	2 questions	
20	What is an antinomy? Describe the major antinomies discussed by Kant. Antinomies	10
21	State Kant's view of causality. How far is Kant able to answer Hume's objection that causal relation lacks logical necessity? Kant and Hume	12.5
2012	1 question	
22	Why Kant's philosophy known as Copernicus revolution in metaphysics? What was revolutionary about Kantian philosophy? Give reasons for it Critical Philosophy	15
2011	1 question	
23	Hume aroused me from my dogmatic slumber". In what context Kant has made this statement? Explain Kant and Hume	20
2010	2 questions	
24	What is the basic difference between Leibniz and Kant on the concept of space and time? Space and Time	30
25	Why does Kant say that existence is not a predicate? Proofs of God	15
2008	1 question	
26	Hume and Kant on Metaphysics Kant and Hume Short note	20
2007	1 question	
27	FREE SAMPLE · FULL 197-PAGE BOOK FREE WITH PHILOSOPHY OPTIONAL COMPLETE NOTES · LOTUSARISE.COM	20

2006	1 question		
28	Explain Kant's criticism of the proofs for the existence of God	Proofs of God Short note	20
2005	1 question		
29	How does Kant respond to Hume's scepticism?	Kant and Hume	60
2004	1 question		
30	The significance of Kant's distinction between phenomena and noumena	Phenomena and Noumena Short note	20
2003	1 question		
31	How is synthetic a-priori judgment possible?	Synthetic a priori Short note	20
2002	1 question		
32	Kant's "Critical Philosophy" is a reconciliation between Rationalism and Empiricism. Elucidate the remark fully and bring out the consequence of such reconciliation for the possibility of traditional metaphysics	Critical Philosophy	60
2000	1 question		
33	State and examine Kant's criticism of the proofs for the existence of God.	Proofs of God	60
1999	2 questions		
34	Kant's idea of Reason	Ideas of Reason Short note	20
35	According to Kant, how are synthetic a priori judgements in the sciences possible.' Explain	Synthetic a priori	60
1997	2 questions		
36	How Kant reconciles rationalism with empiricism by superseding them?	Critical Philosophy	60
37	Are synthetic a priori judgements possible? Evaluate Kant's answer and show its importance in his philosophy	Synthetic a priori	60
1996	1 question		
38	What do you understand by Kant's claim that space and time are forms of pure intuition? Explain the arguments he gives in support of his position in this regard	Space and Time	60
1995	1 question		
39	Doctrine of transcendental deduction	Categories Short note	20
1994	1 question		
40	Can synthetic truths be known a priori? If so, must such Knowledge be Knowledge of universal and necessary truths? In this context critically consider Kant's view	Synthetic a priori	60
1993	1 question		
41	Knowledge begins with, but does not originate from experience." Discuss this statement of Kant with special reference to his theory of Knowledge	Critical Philosophy	60

1992 1 question

- 42 Discuss Kant's theory of reality. How does he attempt to reconcile the claims of science, philosophy and religion? Ascertain if he succeeds in his task [Phenomena and Noumena](#)

60

1990 1 question

- 43 Give a critical account of Kant's theory about space and time [Space and Time](#)

60

FINISHED 1A-04?

Take Immanuel Kant from questions to answers

COMPLETE NOTES · PAPER I & II

Philosophy Optional Complete Notes

Read Immanuel Kant in full: every syllabus topic of this unit in syllabus order, with diagrams and the previous year questions after each chapter, alongside the other 39 units of both papers.

- ✓ Paper I: Western Philosophy (1,244 pages) and Indian Philosophy (1,224 pages)
- ✓ Paper II: Socio-Political Philosophy (1,468 pages) and Philosophy of Religion (1,373 pages)
- ✓ Diagrams and previous year questions in every chapter



₹1,180

[Get the Notes →](#)

FREE SAMPLE · FULL 197-PAGE BOOK FREE WITH PHILOSOPHY OPTIONAL COMPLETE NOTES · LOTUSARISE.COM



PAPER II · SECTION B · UNIT 12

32 QUESTIONS · 2000-2026

Proofs for the Existence of God and Critiques

15

questions in the last 10 years

245

marks, 2017-2026

10/10

years asked



SYLLABUS Proofs for the Existence of God and their Critique (Indian and Western).

2026 2 questions

1 Discuss Aquinas argument from the contingency of the world to prove the existence of God. **Cosmological Argument** 10

2 Explain and examine Madhvacharya's arguments for the existence of God. **Madhva · Proofs** 15

2025 2 questions

3 Present an account of Design argument to prove the existence of God along with its criticism by David Hume. **Design Argument** 20

4 What proofs do Nyaya philosophers offer for the existence of God? Discuss. **Nyaya · Proofs** 15

2024 1 question

5 Present an exposition of ontological proof for the existence of God along with its criticism. **Ontological Argument** 15

2023 1 question

6 Critically examine the arguments of Nyaya for the existence of God. **Nyaya · Proofs** 20

2022 2 questions

7 Present a critical exposition of different arguments offered by St. Thomas Aquinas to prove the existence of God also known as 'Five Ways'. Which one of them do you find philosophically most interesting? Give reasons in support of your answer. **Aquinas · Five Ways** 20

8 Discuss the main points of distinction between a priori and a posteriori arguments for the existence of God. Which one according to you should be preferred over the other? Give reasons and justifications for your answer. **A priori vs A posteriori** 20

2021 1 question

9 Give a critical account of moral argument to prove the existence of God. **Moral Argument** 15

2020 1 question

10 It is ontological proof for the existence of God by St. Anselm logical? Discuss. **Ontological Argument** 20

FREE SAMPLE · FULL 197-PAGE BOOK FREE WITH PHILOSOPHY OPTIONAL COMPLETE NOTES · LOTUSARISE.COM

2019 1 question

- 11 State and evaluate the proofs for the existence of God as propounded in Jainism. **Jaina Critique** 10

2018 3 questions

- 12 Does the concept of God entail the existence of God? Examine from the perspective of ontological argument. **Ontological Argument** 15
- 13 Compare St. Thomas Aquinas' five ways of knowing God with the arguments of the Nyaya School of Indian Philosophy for the existence of God. **Aquinas and Nyaya** 20
- 14 Critically evaluate the Buddhistic arguments against the existence of God as the creator of the world. **Buddhist Critique** 15

2017 1 question

- 15 Compare and contrast the different forms of cosmological argument. **Cosmological Argument** 15

2015 2 questions

- 16 Examine the Nyaya arguments in favour of the existence of God. **Nyaya - Proofs** 15
- 17 Examine the ontological and cosmological arguments in favour of the existence of God. **Ontological and Cosmological** 15

2014 2 questions

- 18 Can it be self-contradictory to accept the idea of God but deny the 'existence' of God? **Ontological Argument** 15
- 19 Discuss cosmological argument for the existence of God, and show its merits and demerits. **Cosmological Argument** 15

2013 3 questions

- 20 State and elucidate the cosmological argument for the existence of God in Western and Indian philosophy. **Cosmological Argument** 20
- 21 Discuss two main objections against this argument. Are theists able to answer these satisfactorily? **Cosmological Argument** 15
- 22 Critically evaluate three major objections against the argument from design for the existence of God. **Design Argument** 15

2012 1 question

- 23 Can God's existence be proved with cogent and convincing rational arguments? **Rational Proof of God** 12

2011 1 question

- 24 Why is a proof for the existence of God necessary for the growth of a religion? Discuss **Rational Proof of God** 15

2010 3 questions

- 25 Is contingent argument for the existence of God anything more than a logical exercise? Discuss **Cosmological Argument** 20
- 26 If each and every argument has to take that its premises are true, would the causal argument for the existence of God as the first cause be different from assuming that it is true? Argue in favour of your position **Cosmological Argument** 20
- 27 Human mind is such that it naturally observes order in nature. Given this can one use arguments from design for the existence of God? Discuss **Design Argument** 20

FREE SAMPLE · FULL 197-PAGE BOOK FREE WITH PHILOSOPHY OPTIONAL COMPLETE NOTES · LOTUSARISE.COM

2009	1 question	
28	Analyse the teleological argument as a proof for the existence of God	Design Argument 30
2008	1 question	
29	Different versions of ontological arguments and Kant's critique of these arguments. Critical note	Ontological Argument 20
2007	1 question	
30	State and evaluate the cosmological argument for the existence of God. What are its two forms? What is the difference between a dependent being and self-existent being? Why is the self-existent being theo-centric? Can the nature itself be conceived as self. existent being? Discuss	Cosmological Argument 60
2005	1 question	
31	If God exists only in someone's mind, the greatest conceivable being is not after all the greatest conceivable being." Critical notes	Ontological Argument 20
2000	1 question	
32	Critically evaluate the Ontological Argument for the existence of God.	Ontological Argument 60

FINISHED 2B-12?

Take Proofs of God from questions to answers

COMPLETE NOTES · PAPER I & II

Philosophy Optional Complete Notes

Read Proofs of God in full: every syllabus topic of this unit in syllabus order, with diagrams and the previous year questions after each chapter, alongside the other 39 units of both papers.

- ✓ Paper I: Western Philosophy (1,244 pages) and Indian Philosophy (1,224 pages)
- ✓ Paper II: Socio-Political Philosophy (1,468 pages) and Philosophy of Religion (1,373 pages)
- ✓ Diagrams and previous year questions in every chapter



₹1,180

Get the Notes →

FREE SAMPLE · FULL 197-PAGE BOOK FREE WITH PHILOSOPHY OPTIONAL COMPLETE NOTES · LOTUSARISE.COM

UPSC CSE MAINS 2026

PHILOSOPHY OPTIONAL

Question papers 2026

Paper I and Paper II · 250 marks each · 3 hours each · attempt five questions: Q1 and Q5 compulsory, three more with at least one from each section.

PAPER I History and Problems of Philosophy

SECTION A · WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

Q1 Answer the following questions in about 150 words each:

- (a) How does Spinoza explain the relationship between states of mind and bodily processes? 1A-02 10
- (b) Explain the distinction between Intuitive knowledge and Demonstrative knowledge as propounded by Locke. 1A-03 10
- (c) Explain Hegel's idea that the concept of the Absolute as being is the concept of the Absolute as becoming as a process of self-development. 1A-05 10
- (d) Compare and contrast the notion of entelechy as presented in Aristotle's and Leibniz's philosophy. 1A-01 1A-02 10
- (e) "I can prove now, for instance, that two human hands exist." How does Moore use this illustration to prove the existence of an external world? Critically discuss. 1A-06 10

- Q2**
- (a) What, according to Aristotle, is the fundamental problem of metaphysics? Discuss this in relation with Aristotle's account of the essence of the world, where he rejects the views of both the Atomists and Plato. 1A-01 20
 - (b) How does Hume account for ideas of reason? How does Kant respond to Hume's views in this regard? Critically discuss. 1A-03 1A-04 15
 - (c) Describe Sartre's notion of consciousness as 'nothing'. How is it different from Husserl's notion of consciousness? Discuss. 1A-09 1A-10 15

- Q3**
- (a) Why are states of consciousness ascribed to anything at all and why are they ascribed to the same things to which we also ascribe physical properties? How does Strawson answer these questions in his work Individuals? 1A-11 20
 - (b) Explain Heidegger's conception of authenticity and inauthenticity as modes of Dasein's being. 1A-10 15
 - (c) Can words be viewed as the ideas in the mind of the person who uses them? Answer with reference to the philosophy of later Wittgenstein. 1A-08 15

- Q4**
- (a) "Wittgenstein's difficulty about not being able to say anything within a given language about the structure of that language can be met by the idea of a hierarchy of languages." Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons and justifications for your answer. 1A-06 20
 - (b) Analyze and discuss the different ways in which Kant and Hegel conceived the relationship between reality and our 15

FREE SAMPLE · FULL 197-PAGE BOOK FREE WITH PHILOSOPHY OPTIONAL COMPLETE NOTES · LOTUSARISE.COM

- (c) How did the logical positivists try to make philosophy a handmaid to science and establish a unified language of science? Why did their project fail? Discuss. 1A-07 15

SECTION B · INDIAN PHILOSOPHY

Q5 Answer the following questions in about 150 words each:

- (a) According to Nyaya view of inference (Anumana), what are the characteristics that ascertain the validity of inferential sign (Hetu)? Discuss. 1B-15 10
- (b) How does the Buddhist theory of momentariness problematize the issue of human action and responsibility? Critically discuss. 1B-14 10
- (c) Is Purusha one or many? Explain and examine the Samkhya position in this context. 1B-16 10
- (d) Critically explain the nature of Samavaya (inherence) as propounded in Vaisheshika philosophy. 1B-15 10
- (e) Explain, as per Yoga philosophy, the nature of Samadhi with special reference to the difference between Samprajnata Samadhi and Asamprajnata Samadhi. 1B-17 10

- Q6**
- (a) "A mango tree is grown out of a mango seed." How do the Samkhya philosophers explain this process through their theory of causation by rejecting their rival perspectives? 1B-16 20
- (b) Explain the basic characteristics of Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga for the realization of supramental consciousness through triple transformation. 1B-20 15
- (c) Bring out the main points of contestation between Naiyayikas and Prabhakara Mimamsakas with reference to knowledge through words (Shabdabodha). 1B-15 1B-18 15

- Q7**
- (a) Critically explain the arguments presented by the Akhyativadins for explaining erroneous cognition. Evaluate the arguments against Akhyativadins by the Anyathakhyativadins. 1B-18 20
- (b) Explain the meaning of seven steps of judgement (Saptabhanginaya) and its application in Jaina's Syadvada for advocating a philosophy of non-absolutism (Anekantavada). 1B-13 15
- (c) Do you agree with Nimbarka's explanation of the nature of God, Souls and Matter? Justify your answer. 1B-19 15

- Q8**
- (a) Present an account of Upamana as an instrument of knowledge (Pramana). How is Nyaya view of Upamana different from Mimamsa view? Discuss. 1B-15 1B-18 20
- (b) Critically explain Ramanuja's conception of Brahman with special reference to the difficulties in explaining the relation of Brahman to Spirit (Cit) and Matter (Acit). 1B-19 15
- (c) Why does the Dualistic School of Vedanta consider that differences (Bhedas) have separate existence and constitute the unique nature of things? Answer with reference to the theory of five-fold difference (Pancavidhabheda). 1B-19 15

PAPER II Socio-Political Philosophy and Philosophy of Religion

SECTION A · SOCIO-POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

Q1 Answer the following questions in about 150 words each:

- (a) Why does Rawls consider it necessary that the two principles of justice be applied in lexical order? Explain. 2A-01 10
- (b) Is Plato's vision of an ideal state compatible with the rights and liberties of individual citizens? Discuss. 2A-03 10

FREE SAMPLE · FULL 197-PAGE BOOK FREE WITH PHILOSOPHY OPTIONAL COMPLETE NOTES · LOTUSARISE.COM

- (c) Anarchism is not an independent political ideology in itself, rather it is inspired by liberalism on the one hand and socialism on the other. Analyze. 2A-05 10
- (d) On what grounds does Marxism criticize pure democracy? 2A-04 2A-05 10
- (e) How does value based education address the problem of corruption? 2A-07 10

Q2

- (a) Evaluate the importance of Kautilya's theory of Rajamandala in the context of sovereignty. 2A-02 20
- (b) Does providing land and property rights to women constitute a necessary condition or a sufficient condition or both for ensuring social equality among the genders ? Discuss. 2A-09 15
- (c) Examine the challenges faced by a multicultural society in creating a harmonious balance between group rights and individual rights. 2A-06 15

Q3

- (a) Retributivism presents a deontological justification for capital punishment, whereas deterrence presents a consequential justification for it. Explain. 2A-07 20
- (b) "The two antagonistic state structures – monarchy and democracy, both share some common features with dictatorship". Do you agree with this view? Give reasons and justifications for your answer. 2A-04 15
- (c) Negative liberty seems to embody the idea of ultimate personal freedom, whereas positive liberty enables individuals to achieve their full potential. Discuss. 2A-01 15

Q4

- (a) How has Ambedkar applied the concept of 'Social Endosmosis' for annihilation of castes. Evaluate its relevance for contemporary debates on identity and the politics of difference. 2A-10 20
- (b) Explain the contrast between the monistic and pluralistic approaches to sovereignty. 2A-02 15
- (c) Examine the relationship between democracy and development. Does democracy promote or hinder development? 2A-04 2A-08 15

SECTION B · PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

Q5 Answer the following questions in about 150 words each:

- (a) On what grounds does William James characterize mystical states as a genuine expression of religious experience? Elaborate. 2B-16 10
- (b) Discuss Aquinas argument from the contingency of the world to prove the existence of God. 2B-12 10
- (c) How does Paul Tillich's idea of faith as ultimate concern address the relation between faith, doubt and reason? Evaluate. 2B-15 10
- (d) Critically discuss the views of R. B. Braithwaite on the nature of religious language. 2B-20 10
- (e) "If religion were a subject of reason alone, it would have lacked an experiential account." Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons in support of your answer. 2B-15 2B-16 10

Q6

- (a) In what sense does St. Augustine's identification of all evil as either sin or as the punishment of sin succeed or fail in providing a coherent account of both moral and natural evil? Evaluate. 2B-13 20
- (b) How does the issue of moral autonomy conflict with conception of religion as a source of morality? Critically discuss. 2B-18 15

(c) FREE SAMPLE · FULL 197-PAGE BOOK FREE WITH PHILOSOPHY OPTIONAL COMPLETE NOTES · LOTUSARISE.COM 15

Q7

- (a) Analyse R. M. Hare's concept of 'blik' and assess whether it successfully defends the meaningfulness of religious language. 2B-20 20
- (b) Discuss the difference between personalistic and impersonalistic notions of God in the context of devotion. 2B-11 15
- (c) Can conflicting truth claims among religions be reconciled within the framework of religious pluralism? Critically discuss. 2B-19 15

Q8

- (a) Critically evaluate the shift in Gandhi's view from 'God is Truth' to 'Truth is God', in the context of interrelation between religion and morality. 2B-18 20
- (b) Explain and examine Madhvacharya's arguments for the existence of God. 2B-12 15
- (c) Present an account of criticisms against omniscience and omnipotence as attributes of God. 2B-11 15

You have read 18 of 197 pages

This sample shows the pattern charts, two of the forty unit question lists (Immanuel Kant from Paper I and Proofs for the Existence of God from Paper II) and the full 2026 papers. The complete book covers every unit and every paper from 2013 to 2026.

1,338

Topic-wise questions, 1990–2026, sorted into all 40 syllabus units

40

Unit sheets, Paper I and Paper II, each with its ten-year count, marks and year-by-year chart

14

Full papers, 2013–2026, with the marks for every sub-part

5

Pattern charts, 2017–2026: weightage, heat map, rising and cooling units, scorecard, question size

FREE INSIDE THE COMPLETE NOTES · MAINS 2027 EDITION

Get the complete 197–page book with the notes

The full Philosophy PYQ book comes free with Philosophy Optional Complete Notes: both papers and all four sections, in one voice and in syllabus order.

- ✓ Paper I: Western Philosophy (1,244 pages) and Indian Philosophy (1,224 pages)
- ✓ Paper II: Socio-Political Philosophy (1,468 pages) and Philosophy of Religion (1,373 pages)
- ✓ Diagrams and previous year questions in every chapter

₹1,180

[Get the Notes →](#)



SCAN TO OPEN