

# UPSC Mains Psychology Optional Paper-I Syllabus

## Foundations of Psychology

**1. Introduction:** Definition of Psychology; Historical antecedents of Psychology and trends in the 21st century; Psychology and scientific methods; Psychology in relation to other social sciences and natural sciences; Application of Psychology to societal problems.

**2. Methods of Psychology:** Types of research: Descriptive, evaluative, diagnostic and prognostic; Methods of Research Survey, observation, case-study and experiments; Characteristics of experimental design and non-experimental designs; quasi-experimental designs; Focussed group discussions, brainstorming, grounded theory approach.

**3. Research methods:** Major steps in psychological research (problem statement, hypothesis formulation, research design, sampling, tools of data collection, analysis and interpretation and report writing); Fundamental versus applied research; Methods of data collection (interview, observation, questionnaire and case study). Research Designs (Ex-post facto and experimental). Application of statistical techniques (t-test, two-way ANOVA, correlation and regression and factor analysis) item response theory.

**4. Development of Human Behaviour:** Growth and development; Principles of development, Role of genetic and environmental factors in determining human behaviour; Influence of cultural factors in socialization; Life span development Characteristics, development tasks, promoting psychological well-being across major stages of the life span.

**5. Sensation, Attention and Perception:** Sensation: concepts of threshold, absolute and difference thresholds, signal-detection and vigilance; Factors influencing attention including set and characteristics of stimulus; Definition and concept of perception, biological factors in perception; Perceptual organization-influence of past experiences, perceptual defence-factor influencing space and depth perception, size estimation and perceptual readiness; The plasticity of perception; Extrasensory perception; Culture and perception, Subliminal perception.

**6. Learning:** Concepts and theories of learning (Behaviourists, Gestaltalist and Information processing models). The processes of extinction, discrimination and generalisation. Programmed learning, probability learning, self-instructional learning, concepts, types and the schedules of reinforcement, escape, avoidance and punishment, modelling and social learning.

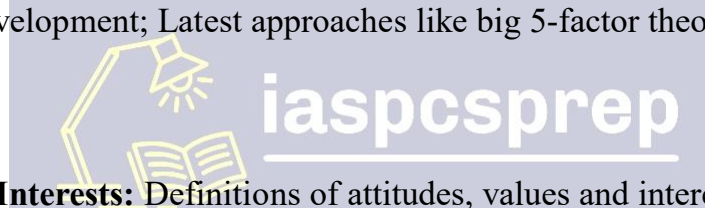
**7. Memory:** Encoding and remembering; Short-term memory, Long-term memory, Sensory memory, Iconic memory, Echoic memory: The Multistore model, levels of processing; Organization and Mnemonic techniques to improve memory; Theories of forgetting: decay, interference and retrieval failure: Metamemory; Amnesia: Anterograde and retrograde.

**8. Thinking and Problem-Solving:** Piaget's theory of cognitive development; Concept formation processes; Information processing, Reasoning and problem-solving, Facilitating and hindering factors in problem-solving. Methods of problem-solving: Creative thinking and fostering creativity; Factors influencing decision making and judgement; Recent trends.

**9. Motivation and Emotion:** Psychological and physiological basis of motivation and emotion; Measurement of motivation and emotion; Effects of motivation and emotion on behaviour; Extrinsic and intrinsic motivation; Factors influencing intrinsic motivation; Emotional competence and the related issues.

**10. Intelligence and Aptitude:** Concept of intelligence and aptitude, Nature and theories of intelligence - Spearman, Thurstone, Guilford Vernon, Sternberg and J.P. Das; Emotional Intelligence, Social intelligence, measurement of intelligence and aptitudes, concept of IQ deviation IQ, constancy of IQ; Measurement of multiple intelligence; Fluid intelligence and crystallized intelligence.

**11. Personality:** Definition and concept of personality; Theories of personality (psychoanalytical, socio-cultural, interpersonal, developmental, humanistic, behaviouristic, trait and type approaches); Measurement of personality (projective tests, pencil-paper test); The Indian approach to personality: Training for personality development; Latest approaches like big 5-factor theory; The notion of self in different traditions.



**12. Attitudes, Values and Interests:** Definitions of attitudes, values and interests; Components of attitudes; Formation and maintenance of attitudes. Measurement of attitudes, values and interests. Theories of attitude changes, strategies for fostering values. Formation of stereotypes and prejudices; Changing other's behaviour, Theories of attribution; Recent trends.

**13. Language and Communication:** Human language- Properties, structure and linguistic hierarchy, Language acquisition-predisposition, critical period hypothesis; Theories of Language development- Skinner and Chomsky; Process and types of communication-effective communication training.

**14. Issues and Perspectives in Modern Contemporary Psychology:** Computer application in the psychological laboratory and psychological testing: Artificial intelligence; Psychocybernetics; Study of consciousness-sleep-walk schedules; dreams, stimulus deprivation, meditation, hypnotic drug induced states; Extrasensory perception; Intersensory perception; Simulation studies.