



UPSC GUIDE
BY THE ACHIEVERS FOR THE ASPIRANTS



DECODE CIVILS

PHILOSOPHICAL ESSAY WRITING

For UPSC Civil Services Examination & State PCS Examination

2013-2022 MAINS 46 PHILOSOPHICAL ESSAYS SOLVED USING
28 APPROACHES ALONG WITH 138 ESSAY STRUCTURES

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The book 'Decode Civils: Philosophical Essay Writing' is a one stop destination for aspirants preparing for Essay component of various competitive examinations. It discusses all 46 Philosophical Essays asked between 2013 to 2022. The book uses 28 different approaches for solving these essays and also provides 138 structures i.e. 3 per essay.



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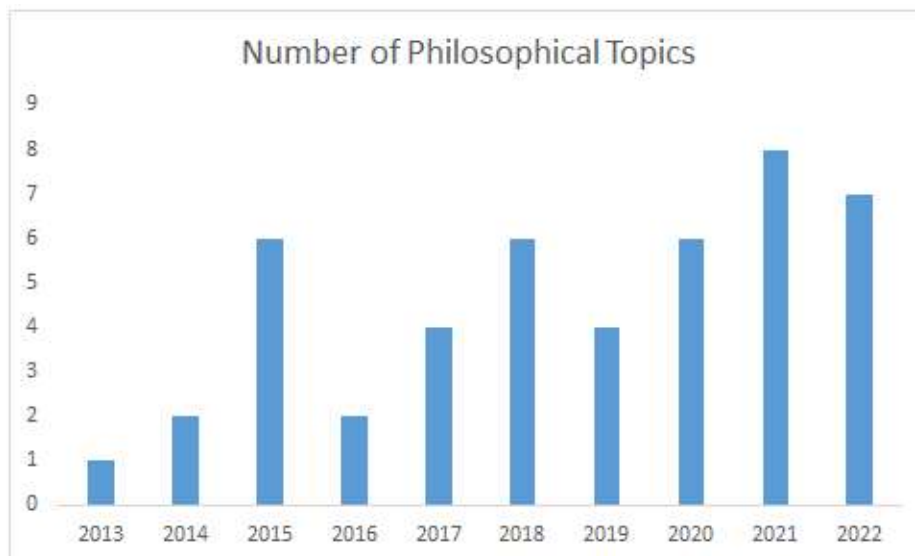
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Preface

Dear CSE Aspirants,

This is to bring your attention to the **increasing number of philosophical topics** in the essay paper of the UPSC Civil Services Examination. Over the years, UPSC has been emphasizing the importance of philosophical concepts and their application in contemporary issues. To help you excel in this crucial aspect of the essay paper, we bring to you this book, “**Decode Civils: Philosophical Essay Writing**”

This book is an invaluable resource **as it encompasses essays on all 46 philosophical topics that were asked between 2013 and 2022**. It provides you with a diverse range of philosophical perspectives, enabling you to develop a well-rounded understanding of these topics. Furthermore, the book offers **138 essay structures**, giving you **three different approaches for each topic**. This comprehensive coverage ensures that you are well-prepared for any essay question that may be asked.



One of the standout features of this book is its **incorporation of 28 different approaches in writing these essay structures and essays**. This ensures that you are equipped with a multitude of writing techniques, allowing you to express your thoughts effectively and creatively. The book provides detailed explanations and examples for each approach, guiding you through the process of constructing compelling and well-structured essays.

It is worth noting that the recently declared UPSC CSE-2022 results indicated a decline in essay scores. This emphasizes the importance of honing your essay writing skills and mastering the art of philosophical discourse. By investing in this book, you are equipping yourself with the necessary tools to enhance your essay performance and secure a higher score in the examination.

The increasing number of philosophical topics in the essay paper of the UPSC CSE demands a thorough understanding of these concepts. This book provides you with a wide range of essays, essay structures, and writing approaches to help you excel in this aspect. We encourage you to acquire this valuable resource and maximize your chances of success in the examination.

Best wishes for your preparation.

Sincerely,

Mudit Jain, IRS and Amrita Jain

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General Strategy for Essay Writing

Decide the topic very carefully:

- Quickly brainstorm for various facets related to topics. If you can think of say 10 dimensions without much pain, then go for it. Else better to go for other as in the end it's a game of dimensions.
- If you are weak in an area, then you should obviously practice it beforehand and still try not to attempt it in Mains.
- Finally, after eliminating topics, select the remaining ones. So elimination is more important than selection given the increasing abstractness of essay topics lately.

Starting over:

- Read the selected topics again. There have been instances where candidates have made structure and even wrote 1-2 pages before going for a different topic.
- Start making structure.
- In case of two essays make structure for first, write the essay and then proceed to next. Writing structures for both essays together is not a write way as there might be points which one might miss while structuring but recall during essay writing.
- With structure, write down introduction and conclusion as well. It is advisable to have 2-3 intro and conclusions prepared well in advance. Use them in tests and be flexible enough to use them in different kind of topics.

10 pages of essay should have:

- Half page introduction (1-2 paragraphs). Keep it simple and straight. Address keywords of the topic without taking any stance.
- 1 paragraph historical background.
- Hit the topic As soon as possible i.e. by the end of first page of your answer sheet.
- One dimension-one paragraph approach will ensure that your essay is multi-dimensional and not view based.
- Interlink two or more dimensions in a paragraph if you are not short of them. Flow should be maintained within a paragraph and between two paragraphs. Flow should be maintained between two dimensions like socio-economic.
- One-page conclusion. Remember to maintain continuity between previous paragraph and concluding paragraph. It should not begin all of a sudden. It is advised to end the essay with phrases for an ending punch.

28 Approaches for Essays on Philosophical Topics

1. **Compare and Contrast or Comparative:** The compare and contrast or comparative approach to essay writing involves examining the similarities and differences between two or more subjects or ideas. It focuses on highlighting the connections and distinctions to provide a deeper understanding of the topics being compared. In the body paragraphs, present your analysis by systematically comparing and contrasting the subjects based on your established framework. Support your statements with evidence, examples, and relevant sources to strengthen your argument.
2. **Historical:** The historical approach to essay writing involves examining a topic or issue through a historical lens. It focuses on understanding the historical context, events, and factors that have shaped the subject matter and providing their current relevance. When employing the historical approach, it is essential to critically analyze and interpret historical evidence, consider different perspectives, and contextualize the topic within its historical framework.
3. **Personal Reflective:** The personal reflective approach to essay writing involves introspection and self-examination of personal experiences, thoughts, and emotions. It focuses on sharing insights, lessons learned, and personal growth in relation to a specific event, situation, or topic. Relating the personal experience to broader themes, concepts, or societal issues helps to provide a deeper understanding and significance to the personal narrative. It also involves identifying the lessons or insights gained from the experience and explaining how they can be applied to future situations or personal growth.
4. **Analytical:** The analytical approach to essay writing involves critically examining a topic or issue by breaking it down into its constituent parts, analyzing the relationships between those parts, and drawing meaningful conclusions. This helps in understanding the various aspects that contribute to the overall understanding of the topic. It involves analyzing and evaluating each component individually, considering its strengths, weaknesses, implications, and relationships with other components.
5. **Argumentative:** The argumentative approach to essay writing involves presenting a clear and persuasive argument on a specific topic or issue. The goal of this approach is to convince the reader to adopt a particular viewpoint or take a specific action. Dedicate a body paragraph to each argument supporting your thesis. Clearly present your argument, provide supporting evidence, and explain the relevance and validity of the evidence. Anticipate counterarguments and address them effectively.
6. **Ethical:** The ethical approach to essay writing involves considering and analyzing the ethical implications and considerations related to a particular topic or issue. This approach focuses on examining the moral dimensions, values, and principles that are relevant to the subject matter. Consider how different ethical theories or perspectives offer insights into the moral aspects of the issue. Assess the stakeholders involved and consider their rights, interests, and well-being when analyzing the ethical aspects of the topic.

CSM 2013

Be the change you want to see in others – *Gandhiji*

Sample Structure 1 (Analytical Approach)

Introduction

- Introduce the topic and its significance
- Provide a brief overview of Gandhiji's philosophy of being the change one wishes to see in others

Gandhiji's Philosophy of Being the Change

- Explain how this quote reflects Gandhiji's broader philosophy of being the change one wishes to see in others
- Provide examples from Gandhiji's life and work to illustrate this philosophy, such as his advocacy for nonviolence and his emphasis on personal responsibility

The Importance of Personal Transformation

- Discuss why personal transformation is a necessary precondition for social and political change
- Analyze how Gandhiji's philosophy of being the change is grounded in a belief in the power of individual transformation to bring about broader change
- Provide examples from history or current events to illustrate this point, such as the civil rights movement in the United States or the environmental movement

The Challenges of Being the Change

- Analyze the difficulties and obstacles that individuals may face in trying to be the change they wish to see in others
- Provide examples from contemporary society to illustrate these challenges, such as the difficulty of reconciling personal values with corporate or institutional norms

The Role of Leadership in Being the Change

- Discuss how leadership can inspire and facilitate personal transformation in others
- Provide examples from history or current events to illustrate this point

The Relevance of Gandhiji's Philosophy Today

- Analyze the enduring relevance of Gandhiji's philosophy of being the change in today's world
- Discuss how this philosophy can be applied to contemporary issues such as climate change, social justice, or political polarization
- Provide examples of individuals or organizations who are embodying this philosophy today

Conclusion

Sample Structure 2 (Narrative Driven Approach)

Introduction

- Begin with an engaging anecdote or scenario highlighting a pressing global issue
- Introduce the quote “Be the change you want to see in the world” as a guiding principle for personal and collective transformation

Personal Transformation

- Share a story of an individual who recognized the need for change and embarked on a personal journey of growth and self-improvement
- Highlight the power of self-reflection, education, and developing new perspectives in shaping personal values and behaviors
- Emphasize the importance of cultivating empathy, mindfulness, and resilience to inspire positive change in oneself and others

Community Engagement

- Present a story or case study of a community that united to address a specific social or environmental issue
- Discuss the importance of grassroots movements, collective action, and collaboration in driving impactful change
- Explore how community-driven initiatives foster inclusivity, empower marginalized voices, and create sustainable solutions

Organizational Impact

- Illustrate the role of organizations, businesses, or NGOs in promoting positive change on a larger scale via story or case study
- Highlight examples of companies implementing sustainable practices, social responsibility initiatives, or diversity and inclusion policies
- Discuss the significance of aligning corporate values with societal needs, encouraging innovation, and driving systemic change

Policy and Advocacy

- Analyze the impact of policy-making and advocacy in addressing global challenges
- Showcase successful campaigns or movements that led to policy changes, legislation, or international agreements
- Examine the role of influential individuals, NGOs, and governments in shaping policies that promote human rights, equality, and environmental sustainability

Conclusion

Structure Used in Essay (Chronological and SDG Approach)

Introduction

- Introduce the quote by Gandhiji and its relevance in driving positive change
- Provide an overview of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their importance in addressing global challenges

Individual Level: Be the Change

- Choose one SDG (e.g., SDG 4: Quality Education) and discuss how individuals can contribute to its achievement
- Explore examples of individuals taking action to promote quality education, such as volunteering, mentoring, or advocating for inclusive and accessible education

Societal Level: Building a Culture of Change

- Choose another SDG (e.g., SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being) and discuss how societies can create an environment that supports the goal
- Highlight initiatives promoting good health and well-being, such as community health programs, awareness campaigns, and policies for healthcare accessibility

Organizational Level: Business and NGOs as Catalysts

- Choose a different SDG (e.g., SDG 5: Gender Equality) and discuss how organizations can contribute to its realization
- Explore examples of businesses and NGOs implementing gender equality policies, promoting diversity and inclusion, and empowering women in leadership positions

National Level: Policy and Governance

- Choose another SDG (e.g., SDG 1: No Poverty) and discuss how governments can address the goal at the national level
- Analyze policies, programs, and strategies implemented to reduce poverty, ensure social protection, and promote economic empowerment

Limitations and Solution

- Highlight the areas wherein the quote can face limitations
- Highlight the importance of collaboration among individuals, societies, organizations, and nations

Conclusion

- Summarize the key points discussed in the essay, highlighting the importance of individuals, societies, organizations, and nations in achieving the selected SDGs
- Reinforce the message that everyone has a role to play in creating positive change and emphasize the need for collective action
- Encourage readers to take action and contribute

Essay

Mahatma Gandhi, the renowned leader and advocate of non-violence, once stated, “Be the change you want to see in others.” This powerful quote resonates with the timeless wisdom that true transformation begins with individuals themselves.

Gandhi's words emphasize the importance of personal responsibility and action in creating a better world. By embodying the values and ideals they wish to witness in others, individuals have the potential to ignite positive change that ripples through society, organizations, and nations. In this essay, we will delve into the profound significance of Gandhi's quote and explore how it applies to achieving specific Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

By focusing on **SDG 4: Quality Education**, individuals who want to see an educated society can actively contribute to its achievement and embody the quote "be the change you want to see in others." They can volunteer as tutors or mentors to disadvantaged students, sharing their knowledge and inspiring a love for learning. Donating educational resources and books can empower underprivileged communities. Supporting organizations that promote inclusive education and advocating for equal access to education are other ways to make a difference. By actively participating in educational initiatives, individuals can pave the way for positive change, creating a ripple effect that transforms lives and societies, and ultimately achieving SDG 4.

For instance, individuals have taken various actions to promote quality education. Some volunteer their time, like Malala Yousafzai, who advocates for girls' education globally. Others, like Michelle Obama launched the "Let Girls Learn" initiative, advocating for girls' education worldwide. Edith Mmusi, a grandmother in Botswana, fought for equal educational opportunities for girls and won a landmark court case. Nalini Nadkarni brings science education to prisons, inspiring inmates to pursue learning. These individuals exemplify the "be the change" mantra by actively working to improve education and empower others.

Societies that want to achieve SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being, should create an environment that fosters overall well-being, embodying the quote "be the change you want to see in others." They can invest in accessible healthcare facilities and promote preventive healthcare practices through awareness campaigns. Implementing policies that ensure equitable access to healthcare services and affordable medication is crucial. Encouraging a culture of physical activity, healthy eating, and mental health support can also contribute to well-being. By prioritizing community health initiatives, providing support systems, and promoting a holistic approach to health, societies can inspire individuals to adopt healthier lifestyles and collectively work towards achieving SDG 3.

For instance, numerous initiatives promote good health and well-being worldwide. Community health programs like "Partners in Health" deliver comprehensive healthcare to underserved populations. The "Movember" campaign raises awareness for men's health issues. "Healthy Cities" initiatives prioritize health in urban planning. Policies for healthcare accessibility, such as the Affordable Care Act in the United States, aim to ensure coverage for all. The "Bell Let's Talk"

campaign tackles mental health stigma. The Global Polio Eradication Initiative has made substantial progress in eradicating polio. These initiatives emphasize preventive care, raise awareness, and advocate for better healthcare policies, ultimately contributing to improved well-being globally.

Organizations can play a vital role in advancing **SDG 5: Gender Equality**, thus embodying the quote “be the change you want to see in others.” They can implement policies that promote equal pay, inclusive hiring practices, and flexible work arrangements to support gender equality in the workplace. Creating safe and inclusive spaces where diverse voices are heard and respected is crucial. Providing mentorship and leadership opportunities for women and fostering a culture of equality and respect are also important steps. By championing gender equality within their structures and operations, organizations can set an example and inspire others to follow suit, leading to a more equitable and inclusive society.

For instance, businesses and NGOs have been actively implementing gender equality policies and promoting diversity and inclusion. For instance, The Coca-Cola Company has committed to achieving gender equality by promoting women’s leadership, empowering female entrepreneurs, and ensuring equal pay. The NGO CARE International focuses on empowering women and girls through various programs, including economic empowerment initiatives and advocating for women’s rights. Accenture has set goals to achieve a gender-balanced workforce and offers training and mentoring programs to support women in leadership positions. These examples highlight the efforts made by organizations to foster gender equality and empower women.

Governments can address **SDG 1: No Poverty** at the national level, embodying the quote “be the change you want to see in others.” By prioritizing poverty reduction in their policies and allocating resources effectively, governments can lead by example, inspiring citizens and encouraging collective action towards eradicating poverty and building a more equitable society. They can implement comprehensive social welfare programs that provide financial assistance, healthcare, and education to vulnerable populations. Developing and enforcing fair labor laws and minimum wage policies can help lift people out of poverty. Governments can also invest in infrastructure development, create employment opportunities, and promote inclusive economic growth.

For instance, governments can create policies that prioritize inclusive economic growth, providing equal opportunities for all. They can establish mentorship programs and training initiatives to empower individuals with skills and knowledge for entrepreneurship and employment. Governments can also lead by example by actively involving citizens in poverty reduction efforts and promoting a culture of philanthropy. By embodying the principles of equity, compassion, and empowerment