KPSC KAS Examination

Complete Syllabus & Exam Pattern — Karnataka Gazetted Probationers Examination

The Karnataka Gazetted Probationers Examination — popularly known as the KAS exam — is conducted by the Karnataka Public Service Commission (KPSC) to recruit Group 'A' and Group 'B' officers for the state government, including the Karnataka Administrative Service, Karnataka Police Service and allied services. It is held in three stages: the Preliminary Examination (objective, screening), the Main Examination (descriptive, merit-deciding) and the Personality Test (Interview). This document summarises the syllabus and pattern for each stage.

Exam Structure at a Glance

Stage	Papers	Marks	Nature
Preliminary	GS Paper I + Paper II	200 + 200 = 400	Qualifying only (screening)
Main	Kannada + English (qualifying) + Essay + GS I–IV	1250 (merit)	Written, descriptive
Interview	Personality Test	25 (merit)	Face-to-face
Grand Total	Mains + Interview	1275	Determines final rank

Note: Prelims marks are used only to shortlist candidates for the Mains and do not count towards the final rank. The interview carries only 25 marks (reduced from 200 in 2021–22), so the Essay and GS papers in the Mains decide the vast majority of the final merit.

Stage 1: Preliminary Examination

Objective type (MCQ), set in both Kannada and English. Each paper carries 200 marks (100 questions x 2 marks) over 2 hours, with 0.25 marks deducted for each wrong answer. General Mental Ability questions are of Class X / SSLC standard; the rest are of degree level.

Paper I — General Studies & Humanities (200 Marks)

- Current events of national and international importance
- History of India, with emphasis on its social, economic, cultural and political aspects — particular focus on the Indian national movement and Karnataka's role in it
- World Geography and Geography of India, with a focus on Karnataka
- Indian polity and economy — political system, rural development, planning, economic reforms, sustainable development, poverty alleviation, demographics, social sector initiatives

Paper II — State Studies, Science & Technology, Mental Ability (200 Marks)

- Current events of state importance and key Karnataka government programmes
- General Science & Technology, Environment & Ecology — contemporary developments and their everyday implications; health, biodiversity and climate change issues that don't require specialised study
- General Mental Ability — comprehension, logical reasoning, analytical ability, decision-making, problem-solving, basic numeracy and data interpretation (Class X / SSLC level)

Stage 2: Main Examination

Descriptive/written type, of degree-level standard (except the qualifying language papers). Question papers are set in both Kannada and English; candidates may answer entirely in either language (except the qualifying papers themselves). Comprises two qualifying papers and five merit papers.

Paper	Subject	Marks	Nature
—	General Kannada	150	Qualifying (min. 35% / 52.5 marks)
—	General English	150	Qualifying (min. 35% / 52.5 marks)
Paper I	Essay	250	Merit
Paper II	General Studies I	250	Merit
Paper III	General Studies II	250	Merit
Paper IV	General Studies III	250	Merit
Paper V	General Studies IV	250	Merit

Qualifying paper marks are not added to the final merit; candidates who fall short of the minimum are disqualified regardless of their GS/Essay performance. Total merit marks for the written stage: 1250.

Kannada & English (Qualifying Papers)

Each paper tests the ability to read and understand serious discursive prose and express ideas clearly in the respective language, through Comprehension, Precis Writing, Usage, Vocabulary, Communication Skills and a short Essay (25 marks each, totalling 150).

Paper I — Essay (250 Marks)

Two essays of 125 marks each, written in Kannada or English: one on a topic of national/international importance, and one on a topic of state or local importance.

Paper II — General Studies I

History & Cultural Heritage (India & Karnataka)

- Indus & Vedic civilizations, evolution of caste system, early religious movements
- Ancient Indian literature, science & technology, and art/architecture (excluding Karnataka) — Maurya/Gupta periods, temple architecture, painting, music and dance traditions
- India's cultural links with Central Asia, China, Japan, South-East Asia and Sri Lanka
- Major world religions originating or practised in India — Hindu Dharma, Jainism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Sikhism — core beliefs, sects and practices
- Social reform movements in 19th–20th century India and their key thinkers
- Karnataka from the Kadambas to the Hoysalas — language, architecture, sculpture and religion
- The Vijayanagara Empire and successor states (1336–1799) — administration, society, art, and religious movements including the Veerashaiva/Vachana and Haridasa movements; the Bahamani and Adil Shahi sultanates; Hyder Ali and Tipu Sultan
- Modern Mysore (1799–1947) — Krishnaraja Wodeyar, Commissioner's Rule, princely administration under the Dewans
- The freedom movement in Karnataka and the Unification of Karnataka (1885–1956) — key leaders, phases and socio-cultural developments

Social & Political Perspective

- Post-independence Karnataka — political consolidation, backward classes and social justice committees (Havanur, Venkataswamy, Chinnappa Reddy), the Gokak language movement, inter-state boundary and water disputes, land reforms
- Theories and processes of social change, modernisation and social movements
- Government and political system — legislature, executive, judiciary; decentralisation, Panchayati Raj, Centre–State relations
- Socio-economic systems, rural social structures, poverty and rural development strategies

Indian Economy, Planning & Rural Development

- Post-independence economic growth, poverty and inequality; growth of the Karnataka economy
- India's international economic relations, trade and foreign exchange; Karnataka's exports
- Regional development disparities and public policy responses, including in Karnataka
- Five Year Plans and post-1991 economic policy; planning in Karnataka
- Decentralised planning, Panchayati Raj finance, State Finance Commission
- Agriculture and rural development — irrigation, credit, marketing, rural infrastructure, poverty alleviation and employment schemes, self-help groups
- Statistical data interpretation — graphs, charts, data sufficiency; quantitative aptitude (ratios, percentages, time-speed-distance, etc.); reasoning and comprehension

Paper III — General Studies II

Physical Features & Natural Resources

- World geography — lithosphere, atmosphere, hydrosphere; physiography of continents; population distribution and demographic transition
- Geography of India — physiography, climate, rivers, soils, mineral resources, major crops, demography, industrial and regional planning
- Geography of Karnataka — physiographic divisions, agro-climatic regions, mineral and power resources, industries, transport, urbanisation and land use

Overview of the Indian Constitution

- Constitutional development and salient features — Preamble, Directive Principles, federal structure
- Fundamental Rights, reservations, and provisions for SC/ST and minorities
- Distribution of legislative, administrative and financial powers between Union and States
- Legislature, delegated legislation and judicial review; CAG and Attorney General
- Key constitutional amendments — basic structure doctrine, emergency provisions, 73rd & 74th amendments (Panchayati Raj)
- Constitutional bodies — Election Commission, Public Service Commissions, Finance Commission, Human Rights and Minorities Commissions, etc.

Public Administration, Management & International Relations

- Public vs private administration; New Public Management; development administration
- Organisational behaviour, management concepts and tools — POSDCORB, SWOT, PERT/CPM, leadership and motivation
- Administrative reforms, ethics in public service, Lokpal/Lokayukta, district administration and Panchayati Raj functioning
- United Nations and its agencies (WHO, ILO, FAO, etc.); international organisations (IMF, World Bank, WTO, SAARC, ASEAN, EU, NATO, G-8, etc.) and India's role in international relations

Paper IV — General Studies III

Science, Technology & IT in Public Development

- Basics of S&T policy, ICT, e-governance, e-commerce and the digital divide
- India's space programme — INSAT, IRS, EDUSAT, Chandrayaan and applications in agriculture and rural development
- Energy resources — conventional and renewable (solar, wind, biomass, hydrogen)
- Disaster management, crop science, sanitation and pollution control
- Knowledge economy — human capital, education, skill development and their role in growth

Natural, Life & Agricultural Sciences, Health

- Basic plant and animal sciences; microorganisms and their beneficial/harmful effects
- Agriculture — crop production, fertilizers, farm mechanisation, organic farming, post-harvest technology
- Horticulture and sericulture — importance and promotional programmes, especially in Karnataka
- Biotechnology — genetic engineering, transgenic crops, food safety standards
- Animal husbandry, dairy and fisheries — livestock breeds, milk cooperatives (AMUL, KMF), fisheries resources
- Agricultural policy — pricing, credit, crop insurance (NAIS, WBCIS), food security
- Health and hygiene — human body systems, AYUSH, national health programmes, communicable diseases and vaccination

Environment & Ecology

- Forest conservation, wildlife protection, Project Tiger, protected areas and eco-tourism
- Natural resource management — forests, water, land; rainwater harvesting; infrastructure impact
- Ecosystems, biodiversity hotspots, and threats to biodiversity
- Air, water, soil and noise pollution; solid waste management; relevant environmental legislation
- Climate change, global warming and disaster management

Paper V — General Studies IV

Ethics

- Essence, determinants and consequences of ethics in human action; ethics in public and private relationships
- Ethical dilemmas in public administration; laws, rules and conscience as sources of ethical guidance
- Accountability, transparency, RTI, citizen charters, and corruption in public service
- Human values — lessons from great leaders and reformers; role of family, society and education in shaping values

Integrity

Integrity, impartiality and non-partisanship, objectivity, dedication to public service, empathy, tolerance and compassion towards weaker sections.

Aptitude

Foundational values for civil service; structure and function of attitudes; moral and political attitudes; emotional intelligence and its application in governance; contributions of moral thinkers from India and abroad; case studies based on the above.

Stage 3: Personality Test (Interview) — 25 Marks

Candidates who clear the Main Examination on merit are called for a Personality Test assessing mental capability, reasoning, judgement, moral character and suitability for public service. The interview marks are added directly to the Main Examination score to determine the final merit list and cadre allocation.

Compiled for reference and study planning based on the Karnataka Recruitment of Gazetted Probationers Rules and current KPSC exam pattern. Always cross-check against the official KPSC notification (kpsc.karnataka.gov.in) for the current recruitment cycle before finalizing your preparation, as the Commission may issue amendments.