



# How to Attempt The Competitive Examination

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- *One reason of low marks in examination is poor quality of the one or two questions attempted hastily in the end due to time constraint.*
- *Presentation matters. A poorly presented answer will elicit a cold response from an examiner assessing hundreds of scripts, use tools like headings, tables, maps, graphs, quotations to create good impression.*

Understanding the techniques of attempting the papers is the key to success in the examination. The only yardstick available with the examiner to assess the competence of a candidate is "the content of the paper" produced by the candidate. The examiner is not aware of your educational background, the number of books you have consulted or the number of days you have studied a particular subject. It is only presentation of your answer that speaks for your ability and preparedness. Simply put, if your way of attempting or presenting the answer is not up to the mark, you will not be able to impress the examiner and subsequently will get average or below average marks in the examination.

Some general guidelines for attempting the competitive examination are given below:

### **Objective Type Section (MCQs):**

Objective type section of CSS examination is exclusively in the form of multiple choice questions. Either you know the answer or you do not. If you do

not know the answer, make a wise guess and move on. There is no negative marking in case of incorrect answer, so attempt all MCQ's. Allocated time for MCQ portion is 30 minutes. However, in many instances, invigilators distribute subjective type question paper 15 minutes after handing over the objective type paper. Try to conclude the MCQ portion at the earliest so that spare time may be utilized for the lengthy subjective type portion.

### **Read Question Paper Carefully:**

Read the question paper very carefully. Always go through the set of instructions given at the top of the question paper. Reading instructions is very important. Sometime there is a minor change in instructions without prior intimation by the Federal Public Service Commission.

## **Time Management:**

Time management, while attempting examination is more important than candidates care to admit. Total allocated time for each CSS paper is 3 hours. Thirty minutes are given for objective portion and two and a half hours for completion of subjective type section. Since in most of the examinations you are required to attempt four questions, it leaves you with 35 minutes on average to attempt each question. Usually, attempting the first question takes up more time. Naturally the question you choose to attempt first is the one you have best prepared with sufficient writing material. Since all questions carry equal marks you should rationally divide your time to answer each question.

## **Headings:**

Answer all questions with reasonably framed headings to clearly compartmentalize the content of your answer. Using headings makes it easy for the

examiner to assess your answer and reflects positively on the clarity of your thought process

### **Ink/Marker to be used:**

You may use black or blue ink pens /pointers/ ball pens etc. Choose the writing instrument well before examination that you are comfortable writing with. Use blue or black marker for headings. You may also use highlighter or a combination of highlighters for labeling maps and graphs.

### **Length of Answer:**

There is no specific word limit to answer a certain question unless specified Generally, with reasonable word-spacing around 1000 words (7-8 pages) are sufficient. However, keep in mind that the quality of the content you are producing is more important Irrelevant information disseminated over a number of pages will accrue little credit Relevant

information with reasonable length of answer will help in securing maximum score.

### **Highlight Important Piece of Information:**

As Discussed earlier, you must highlight important pieces of information such as quotations with marker to make them stand out. Similarly, data should be presented in tabulated form. For example, if you are discussing Pakistan's economy. you need to provide current data about economic indicators like GDP, growth rate, inflation, poverty, external and internal debt in a tabulated form. After this, you can expand on each indicator under separate headings.

The introduction and conclusion of every answer should exhibit a firm grasp on the subject matter. You can conclude your answer with a quotation or critical analysis of that particular issue.

## **Try to Make Your Paper Different:**

Since large number of candidates appear each year and more or less each candidate consults the same preparation material, consequently, same monotonous answer is reproduced in the examination that fetches average marks. Remember that examiner will give you maximum marks only if besides basic details, you also add some content that makes your answer different from other candidates. It may be in the form of graph, quotation, table, map, couplet, critical analysis etc.