



# MGP for Beginners – An Approach Paper

Dear Students,

For those of you who have signed up for MGP 2021 and are complete freshers, here is a way to get started with it.

1. For Self-Assessment Tests maintain a register. Write your Answers in a register and not a QCA booklet. QCA booklets are anyway not provided for Self-Assessment Tests. The register will help you have a good quality question bank which you will need for revision a year later.
2. It is perfectly alright, if for the first 3-4 tests, you cannot write answers or face difficulties. You can treat the paper as an Open Book Test. You can pursue any of the below strategies to deal with the MGP.
  - a. You can download the Question Paper and QCA Booklet (for HLTs and FLTs) and attempt the paper in exam mode. It is alright if you are only able to write 3-4 test questions. The people whom you see as Toppers, nearly all of them began this way. But here is the thing, you should write the test after making an effort to study and not just like that. Mindlessly attempting the tests without studying will not help. Try to cover 100% of the syllabus but settle for 40-60% in the first iteration. Focus on progress not on perfection.
  - b. You can download the question paper and see the list of topics from which questions have been asked. You can prepare those topics by taking an additional day and then attempt to write the tests, based on your preparation

- c. You can download the question paper and the answer booklet. See the Question Paper, and the Solutions. You can read and study the solutions, use it as notes and then write the tests. Make sure that when you write the test you do not have the solutions open in front of you. In short, do not copy the solution. If the solution is found copied for HLTs and FLTs, you will be awarded zero marks for that question for HLTs and FLTs.
3. Make sure that you only use it as a beginner approach and do not continue to follow it after 3/4/5 tests. After 4-5 tests you must be able to write the tests without seeing the solution beforehand.
4. It is perfectly alright if you are not able to attempt all the questions – though the aim should be to finish the paper. Be patient. You will be able to do it eventually.
5. When you have shortage of time, you must ensure that you never leave questions that you know the answers to. Leaving questions whose answer you do not know is okay. But missing questions where you know answers is fatal.
6. You must develop this habit from day 1 that if you know 5 questions and if you have 15 minutes left, you must try to write on each of the question for three minutes. Do not go for the idea that “I will write at least one question well but leave others rather than writing all question poorly.”
7. From our experience with students, what we have observed is that when they write questions very well – they add a lot of irrelevant points to the answer, and hence do not get as much marks. When they write a question which they know but write it in less time – they just write the answer – even if it is 5 sentences – and end up getting more marks. This is something that may not make sense to you right now, but you will begin to understand this as you write more and more tests.
8. Use a digital watch, if possible while attempting the tests. It helps to measure time better and plan accordingly.
9. Avoid exhausting yourself with any other form of daily answer writing. There is an optimum number of answers that need to be written before the Mains Examination. If you overdo it, you lose interest in answer writing and after a point, you end up writing average answers – something that is difficult to change once you have reached a burn out stage with answer writing.
10. Everything is difficult at first before it becomes easy. Given a decent number of hours and continuous effort, things become easy over a period of time. If you are a complete

fresher, expect things to get better between 2-3 months, provided you are working hard and are fully invested in the program. If you are a complete fresher and are not making any effort or sub-optimal effort, the struggle period may last for 4-6 months depending on your effort levels.

11. In the beginning you will have speed issues. That is a problem that we will not solve on Day 1. Over a period of time, your speed will increase. We will be patient and wait for it. If at all after 3-4 months, the issue remains unresolved, we will seek professional help. We will not try to work on all front all at once. The first front we have to conquer is content building, notes making and answer writing.
12. Study throughout the week, not just last 2 days before the test. The strategy suggested in 2(a), 2(b) and 2(c) is to be used only in the beginning. The goal is to write tests in exam mode as early as possible. The suggestion in (2) are provided for resolving the dilemmas in your mind.
13. Since this is a going to be a year long journey, keep at least half a day and upto 1 day as a leave day or no study day. Use the day for sleeping extra hours, meeting friends, or watching a movie. It is better to plan for a study break day than to end up with one because of a burnout or running out of enthusiasm.
14. Use a good pen which helps you write faster and eases pressure on your hands. You can choose gel pens / pilot pens / or even ball pens, if you like the old way. Try using a darker ink color, instead of a light one.
15. Do not use two colored pens for writing answers. Stick to blue or black.
16. While writing answers, follow these five principles.
  - a. Identify the keywords or complex terms in the question Write 1-2 lines defining them. The definition should not be more complex than the word itself. It has to be simple. And complete.
  - b. You always build confidence with the evaluator that you know the answer through the first line. State objective things. Like, when you have a question on surrogacy – do not begin with a sentence like “The Surrogacy Act has liberated millions of women from the hands of exploitation by making commercial surrogacy illegal. Instead state in one line what Surrogacy is - “It is the bearing of a child in a mother’s womb on behalf of another woman or couple who cannot or does not want to conceive.” When you show that you “know” what surrogacy is, it is likely that the examiner builds trust on your

answer and awards you better marks. He may not even need to read the full answer!

- c. Learn to build high impact sentences when possible. For example, “The British subordinated India to the needs of her Industrial revolution” This is a sentence that sums up the British Rule, Industrial Revolution and Colonialism.
- d. Use / Repeat the words of the question in your answer. Like you used to write in school. This ensures that (a) you do not deviate from the question and (b) the evaluator is re-assured you are not deviating from the demand of the question..
- e. Vertically segment your answers. This means that different parts of your answer should be visible at the first glance. They should be easy on the eyes and should be read effortlessly. If an examiner has to stress himself while reading your answer, he is likely to pass on the stress onto you by way of marks. 😊 After your copy is evaluated, your mentors will guide you for the same.

17. Stay Positive. The preparation is not without a learning curve and you will not know all the answers on Day 1. Even if you get the answers you will not be able to absorb it unless you face the specific issues. You will face these specific issues and “discover” solutions in due course of time. All you have to do is – Stay Positive. And persevere.