



Pi Craft

NDA · CDS · AFCAT

# Defence Forces Preparation Guide

Written exam, SSB and medical: what each entry asks for, how to prepare and where the official information lives.

thepicraft.com · Concept is the power

**3**

**Entries**

NDA, CDS and AFCAT

**2**

**Stages after the paper**

SSB interview and medical

**900**

**NDA written marks**

Maths 300 + GAT 600

**+3 / -1**

**AFCAT marking**

100 questions, 2 hours

## Choose your entry

Open an entry to see eligibility, pattern, syllabus and tips.



### NDA

National Defence Academy: Army, Navy and Air Force wings after Class 12

#### Conducted by

Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), twice a year

#### Eligibility

Class 12 pass or appearing. Army wing: any stream. Navy and Air Force: Physics and Mathematics

#### Age

About 16.5 to 19.5 years at the time of entry; unmarried candidates as per notification

#### Written exam

900 marks: Mathematics 300 and General Ability Test (GAT) 600

#### After the written

SSB interview (5 days), then medical examination

## Syllabus

### Mathematics

Algebra

Matrices and determinants

Trigonometry

Analytical geometry (2D and 3D)

Differential calculus

Integral calculus and differential equations

Vector algebra

## Statistics and probability

### General Ability Test

English: grammar, vocabulary, comprehension

Physics, chemistry and general science

History and freedom movement

Geography

Current events

### Preparation tips

- Master Class 11 and 12 maths concepts first, then speed.
- Read English daily: newspaper editorials and grammar practice.
- Make short notes for science, history and geography from NCERT.
- Follow current affairs every day and keep a quick-reference notebook.
- Solve previous papers and take timed mocks every week.



## CDS

Combined Defence Services: IMA, INA, AFA and OTA for graduates

### Conducted by

Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), twice a year

### Academies

Indian Military Academy, Indian Naval Academy, Air Force Academy, Officers Training Academy

### Eligibility

Graduates (final-year students allowed in some cases); INA needs an engineering degree; AFA needs Physics and Mathematics at 10+2 or an engineering degree

### IMA, INA, AFA paper

English 100, General Knowledge 100, Elementary Mathematics 100 (2 hours each)

### OTA paper

English and General Knowledge (200 marks)

### Marking

+1 for correct, one-third mark deducted for a wrong answer

## Syllabus

## English

Reading comprehension

Grammar and sentence correction

Vocabulary, idioms and synonyms

## General Knowledge

Current affairs

History, geography and polity

General science

Defence-related awareness

## Elementary Mathematics

Arithmetic and number system

Algebra and trigonometry

Geometry and mensuration

Statistics

## Preparation tips

- Build concepts instead of memorising formulas, so changed question styles do not shock you.
- Attempt the easy, high-yield questions first and avoid wild guesses because of negative marking.
- Use The Hindu or a similar newspaper for English and current affairs.
- Maths is Class 10 level. Daily practice keeps speed up.
- Take mocks under strict time limits and review every wrong answer.



### AFCAT

Air Force Common Admission Test: flying and ground duty branches

### Conducted by

Indian Air Force, twice a year

### Eligibility

Graduates; technical branches need an engineering degree. Age limits differ by branch

### Paper

100 questions, 300 marks, 2 hours

### Sections

General Awareness, Verbal Ability in English, Numerical Ability, Reasoning and Military Aptitude

### Marking

+3 for correct, -1 for incorrect

### Technical branches

An Engineering Knowledge Test (EKT) is added

### After the written

AFSB tests and medical examination

## Syllabus

### General Awareness

History, geography and polity

General science

Defence and current affairs

### Verbal Ability

Comprehension

Grammar, idioms and one-word substitution

### Numerical Ability

Ratio and percentage

Time, speed and distance

Averages and profit and loss

### Reasoning and Military Aptitude

Verbal and non-verbal reasoning

Spatial and pattern questions

## Preparation tips

- Plan 3 to 6 months of steady preparation.
- Use quality basics: a reliable GK book, a grammar book and a quantitative aptitude book.

- Practise pattern-recognition and reasoning shortcuts daily.
- Read the newspaper every day for English and current affairs.
- Solve previous papers and full mocks to settle your attempt strategy.

## The SSB at a glance

After the written exam, the five-day Services Selection Board tests the whole person.

### DAY 1

#### Screening

Officer Intelligence Rating test and Picture Perception and Description Test.

### DAY 2

#### Psychology tests

Thematic Apperception, Word Association, Situation Reaction and Self Description.

### DAYS 3 AND 4

#### Group testing

Group discussion, planning and outdoor tasks that show leadership and teamwork.

### DAY 5

#### Conference

Final assessment by the board.

Always confirm dates, eligibility and pattern in the latest official notification.

## Your roadmap

1

#### Know your entry

Compare NDA, CDS and AFCAT: eligibility, age and branches.

2

#### Build the written base

Maths, English and general knowledge from the basics.

3

#### Practise and test

Previous papers and timed mocks every week.

4

#### Prepare for the SSB

Communication, confidence, current awareness and consistent fitness.

5

#### Stay medically ready

Know the medical standards and maintain good health.

## Preparation tips



### Fitness is part of selection

Run, stretch and build stamina every day, not only before the SSB.



### Speak clearly

Practise explaining your thoughts in short, confident sentences.



### Read the daily news

It helps the written paper and the SSB interview.



### Work in groups

Study with peers and practise group discussions to build team skills.



### Be honest in the SSB

Authentic answers always beat rehearsed ones.



### Stay calm

A steady mind performs better in every stage.

## Practice and mock tests



### Previous papers

Solve official papers topic by topic from the sites below.



### Timed mocks

Take full-length mocks and analyse every attempt.



### Cutie Pi

Stuck? Ask your AI tutor in plain words.

## Official resources

Go straight to the official source.



### **UPSC (NDA & CDS)**

Official notifications and previous question papers.



### **AFCAT (Indian Air Force)**

Notification, syllabus and the official application portal.



### **Join Indian Army**

Officer entry details, eligibility and notifications.



### **Join Indian Navy**

Officer entry schemes and notifications.



### **NCERT textbooks**

Official textbooks, the base for school-level and CUET preparation.

## **Questions answered**

#### **▼ Which entry should I choose?**

NDA is for Class 12 candidates. CDS and AFCAT are for graduates. Choose according to your qualification and the branch you want.

#### **▼ Is the SSB the same for every entry?**

The stages are similar. The details are given by the conducting board in each notification.

#### **▼ Where do I get official papers?**

From the official UPSC and Indian Air Force sites listed in the resources section.

This guide is an original Pi Craft overview prepared from public information. Always confirm dates, eligibility and pattern in the latest official notification. Pi Craft is an independent educational initiative and is not affiliated with, or endorsed by, any examination body or government organisation.