

Website Name : www.vetriias.com

Topper tips

Photo Thiru.Dr.V.Varun Kumar IPS
All India Rank: 3, 2011 Batch

Thiru.Dr.V.Varun Kumar IPS (All India Rank : 3 , 2011 Batch) has secured 234 marks in the UPSC personality test(Interview).He happened to be the 2nd top scorer in the interview. Here he shares the success strategy for interview.

1) What is the composition of the interview board?

Board Chairman was Ms.Rajni Razdan. I had no clue about who the other members were. They were five in number including the Chairman. It is not pertinent to know who the members are. Have good knowledge about the Chairman of the board and do not tread in his/her area of expertise.

2) How should one prepare for civil service Interview/ personality test?

Work profoundly on your bio-data. Whatever you fill in it is an interview question. That should not stop you from filling actual facts in the bio-data form. Whatever you fill should be truthful and you should be thorough about what you have done in life. For instance, if you were a NSS volunteer you should know every detail about the organization and you should be able to critically analyze its functioning.

3) Is the time sufficient if a candidate start preparation for civil service personality test after the mains exam?

Is there a choice? You have to prepare within the given time frame. There is no point in cribbing about the rules of the game. Do your best within the available time. Put it to effective use. One lifetime is not sufficient to prepare for a personality test because there is always scope for improvement. So effectively use the time available and display the best of you in the interview. This time is like 'warm-up' and at the time of interview you should be in 'sublime form'.

4)What is expected of a candidate by the board in the personality test?

Per se there are no expectations. They gain nothing by selecting/rejecting you. For you it is life, for them it is just another routine day at office. They have a predetermined scale and they rate you according to where you stand in that scale. During preparation stage, I happened to

interact with one former UPSC member and asked him why does the Board award unbelievably high or low marks like 245 or 60? He replied that mammoth marks mean that the board has felt that this is a candidate whom Government cannot miss and he/she is an asset to the Government. Even if his/her Mains marks are low, still this mammoth marks should put him/her in some job. Disproportionately low marks mean that the candidate is unsuitable for the job and he should lose his confidence so much that he should not even apply for CSE again. So their expectations are very simple "are you employable?".

5) What is your advice to aspirants regarding dress code?

I strongly believe that attire maketh the man. It sends a strong message about you. I believed that formal suit with a tie made me look perfect for the occasion, so I went ahead with it. Some candidates did not shave properly, some others wore crushed shirt. Few others wore clumpy tie and it shows that you have not dressed up for the occasion, meaning you don't have much regard for the personality test. Ladies should wear saree or salwar with minimum patterns/motif/design on it so that it looks very formal.

6) What is your advice to candidates to score high marks in personality test?

Have you spotted any sculptor preparing a statue? I would urge you to single mindedly focus on your bio-data with engrossing attention to details like how a sculptor focusses on his work. If you do not know enough about yourself and if you have no idea about the things which you have done earlier in life, it does not send a positive signal about you to the board. Apart from your bio-data, expand your horizon by engaging in intellectual work. For instance, you can attend some discussions, conferences which looks interesting to you. You may watch Discovery Science or History channel about particular themes. Once I watched a program about USA President's photographer and it was brilliantly presented. Such initiatives provide a lot of raw material for you to speak at the interview. Improve your communication skills progressively during your preparation stage.

7) What should an aspirant prepare regarding his / her hobby?

Be aware about every possible detail regarding the same. Differentiate between what is an hobby and what is an area of interest like sports. Read the dictionary definition of 'hobby' and then work upon it. Widely candidates have misunderstood that hobby is something which you do when you have nothing else to do, sadly they get into trouble because of this misunderstanding. Rather hobby is an addiction, you should get stressed without engaging in your hobby and such is the impact of it in your life. It is considered to be such a big stress buster and if candidates take hobbies lightly the board may not be appreciative of this misunderstanding. So develop an in-depth knowledge about your hobby.

8) Whether questions are asked from our educational background?

“That is a good profession, but why did you leave it for CSE?”. “What are the latest advances/research/school of thought in that particular field?”. “Are you in touch with it? If you how?”. “What added advantage does your educational background bring to the job of a civil servant?”.

9) How should an aspirant prepare regarding current affairs?

Nowadays, entire preparation is based on current affairs. I urge you to read one regional newspaper of your state and two english newspapers. Discard the habit of reading Current Affairs magazine and Coaching Institute notes. Even coaching institutes should form a study group and work upon newspapers only, rather than preparing notes on current affairs. Start maintaining a big sized album in which you can stick good articles published in newspaper. Till date, I am continuing with that habit. You get so nourished with information when you peruse through those old articles which you have preserved.

10)What sort of answers are generally being asked by the board regarding candidate's bio data?

A whole array of questions which cannot be predicted by any stretch of imagination. It has to be done on a case by case basis. I am currently posted at Tiruppattur, Vellore. I am herewith sending my invitation to all candidates who have cleared Mains and awaiting call for interview, to come over here in case of anyrequirement for tailor-made help.

11)Sir, please list down certain dos & don'ts inside the interview hall?

- Do not fidget with your digits or shake your leg. People do it unconsciously due to stress.
- Sit in appropriate posture, the chair is completely yours. The way you sit itself sends a message. Lean back fully, use the arm rest and lock your fingers together.
- Sport a smile now and then. Differentiate between 'smile' and 'laugh'. Smile shows you are not stresses.
- Enter with grace. Do not lurk like a thief or do not be doubtful as if you will be kicked out. When to greet is a frequent question; you reach near your chair, stand upright and wish the lady first and then the others, including the Chairman. You don't have to wish them at the door itself. Someone greeted “good morning, beloved ladies and gentlemen”. This is disaster. Just say “Good morning madame. Good morning sirs”. Do not sit until you are asked to sit.

- Look into the eyes when you speak. Some people suggest that you should look at all board members when you answer. According to me that looks funny and irritating. My suggestion would be to look at the person who asked you the question and reply. In case, some other board member gets puzzled or shows disapproval then you can look at him/her. This also helps you gauge the overall acceptance of your answers in the board.
- Sometimes board members might go to the washroom or stand up for smoking. You don't have to stand up or get distracted. If they ask "do you mind?", say "no".
- If stuck or cornered over a particular issue and the board looks agitated over your reply, do not try to show one-upmanship. Accept the mistake and say "sorry sir I stand corrected". Do not say it frequently, you are there to get 'selected' and not to get 'corrected'.
- Lot of distractions will be around you including snacks, noise, power cut, tea break. Interview has to go on and it is a matter of utmost significance to you, so do not get distracted and it is your duty to keep the board engaged and 'entertained'. By 'entertained' I meant that the Board can be kept engaged and entertained only by your knowledge and charm for the job. It should be a learning experience for the board too and they should feel happy to have met you.
- Abruptly the Chairman might call off the interview and say "you may go". Do not get confused and do not react bonkers. It simply means that they have assessed you enough and every additional minute is a waste of time. Leave with grace by wishing them with a smile and walk out confidently.
- Do not discuss about the board before or after your interview with the candidates. This will certainly be a disastrous step for you. You may just find out from earlier candidates about the location of the table, number of members sitting, are there ladies etc. Do not find out what questions were asked to the previous candidates, it doesn't make any relevance to you.

My best wishes to all the candidates. As a Government servant, I reassure you that this is a spectacular job and everyday in this job is a gift. Government pumps in so much resources for Officers and it takes good care of us. The job too is a thoroughly satisfying one and every day you serve so many people that you can't express the sheer happiness that comes out of doing a good job for the welfare of common man. You have to be here to realize what I mean. This is a dream job for me and I am living every minute of my dream so happily. I believe it is a dream for you too and the day you will live your dream is not very far away. It is only a-few-months-of-hardwork away from you. Good luck.