



Case Studies

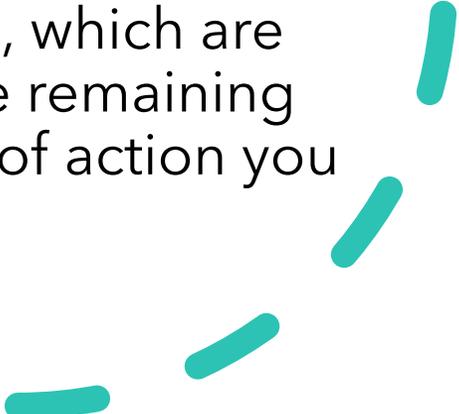
Importance

- More than the theory part, case studies bring out our ethical dilemmas and logical reasoning sharply. Done well, they can propel your score beyond 110. Gone wrong, they may restrict your marks to under 90.
- The purpose of case studies is to make you ready for the field experience. Once you enter the civil service, you may face situations in which competing values clash. Would you strictly adhere to rules or stay flexible at times to help the needy? Would you suspend an erring subordinate, thereby curtailing his income, or overlook his misdeeds and close it with a warning, considering his dependent family?
- These are the real-life situations a civil servant confronts on a daily basis. Through case studies, the examiner can understand how you might behave if you were in a similar situation. So, one of the foremost tips (and one of the obvious) is to put yourself in the shoes of an administrator, and consider yourself a problem solver. This makes the whole exercise enjoyable and inevitably your answers exude passion and cogent articulation.

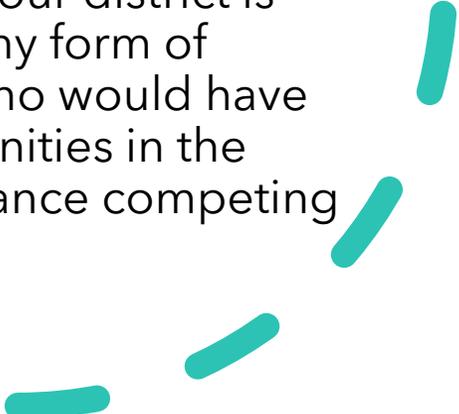
A standard framework for answers

- Having a **concrete framework** ready while answering gives a **sense of flow, coherence and structure to your case study**. Else, it faces the risk of steering away from the question and exceeding the word limit. Therefore, it's helpful to categorise your answer under the following subheadings:
- **Subject Matter: Briefly in a line or two, capture the entire case study.** E.g. In a case Study dealing with an IAS aspirant heading for Interview but sees an accident on the way, subject Matter could be: **Dilemma between achieving career ambition and responding to the accident as a good Samaritan.**
- **Stakeholders: List down the set of people who would be directly and indirectly affected in the case.** For instance, you are the CEO of a PSU which is facing severe unionism and strikes, affecting company profits. Stakeholders are yourself, employees, government, public at large, local families, investors, and shareholders. A diagram can be used to represent this.

A standard framework for answers

- **Ethical Dilemmas/Key Principles: Enumerate the ethical issues in the case study.** This is a crucial part of your answer since you explicitly mention the conflicting values you face in your judgement. For instance, in a case involving mining in a **tribal inhabited forest, ethical issues will be:** development vs. nature conservation; public interest vs protection of tribal land rights; economic growth vs equitable prosperity. Mention these issues in bullet points, sequentially.
 - **Options Available to You: Write 3-4 choices you have in the scenario, along with the pros and cons of choosing each alternative.** Two choices inevitably will be the extreme options, which are generally avoided as your choice. The remaining ones should be the practical courses of action you wish to pursue.
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A standard framework for answers

- **Choosing an Option:** Under this subheading, write about the course of action which can be a combination of the above mentioned options. **It should be followed by clear articulation of your arguments (more on this below) along with quotes and examples to substantiate your point of view.**
 - The best option to choose in any given situation is not the most original but the most practical. If you come up with a spectacular innovative idea, but isn't easily implementable, it's as good as doing nothing. Search for options that can be executed amidst the constraints a govt servant faces.
 - For instance, let's say in your district, tribal are agitating against a mining company planning to raze the forests and explore the mineral wealth. In such a case, a decision to put a complete ban or a moratorium on mining in your district is impractical and sub-optimal. By prohibiting any form of mining, you will not help the cause of tribal who would have benefited from the new employment opportunities in the region. So choose an option in which you balance competing interests.
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A standard framework for answers

- **Articulation:** In this segment, you reason out why you chose a particular option and elaborate on the further of course of action. More than the option you choose, it is the reasoning that led you to choose that particular option that matters more.
 - **It's helpful to narrate from the first person point of view: Use I, wherever possible.** It will personalise your answer and therefore carries the weight of a good argument. But, use your discretion based on your experiences on which perspective you want to use.
 - **The course of action you wish to pursue must be mentioned in detail, enumerating the steps clearly.** Put yourself in the shoes of the administrator, dive into the details, and make your answer as vivid and concrete as possible.
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Articulation

- Consider a case study dealing with gender issues in the district. **Don't write something vague saying you will ensure women empowerment in the area.**
 - Describe concrete steps by writing on the lines of: I will try to set up a livelihood opportunity based on their skills, help them produce marketable goods, procure that material in all govt departments, and then encourage local private sector to buy these goods. Quote examples of successful models like SEWA, Prajwala, Lijjat papad etc.
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Articulation

- Consider a hypothetical case in which you are posted as the DM of a resource-poor district that has a history of vector-borne disease outbreaks. Monsoon season is approaching and you have to prepare for the challenge with limited funds at your disposal. You can narrate the following concrete steps. "Based on the previous years' data, I will rank specific blocks in terms of their vulnerability and prioritise these hotspots for immediate attention.
 - Fogging shall be done and anti-mosquito nets shall be distributed to these blocks on priority. Intense training sessions will be provided for ASHAs to help them detect of malaria/dengue promptly. I will use the District Mineral Fund (if available) and local CSR funds to procure rapid diagnostic kits. I shall designate every Friday where households in the district will be encouraged to drain out stagnant water along with conducting a weekly review meeting with all health workers from village level to district level to assess preparedness and correct any issues."
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Important Points in dealing with case studies

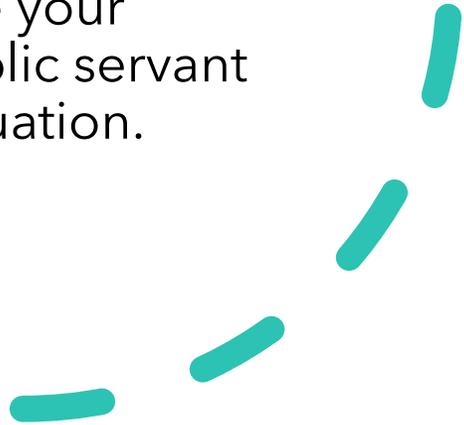
- **Subject Matter:** Briefly in a line or two, capture the entire case study.
- **Stakeholders:** List down the set of people who would be directly and indirectly affected in the case.
- **Ethical Dilemmas/Key Principles:** Enumerate the ethical issues in the case study.
- **Options Available to You:** Write 3-4 choices you have in the scenario, along with the pros and cons of choosing each alternative
- **Choosing an Option:** Under this subheading, write about the course of action which can be a combination of the above mentioned options. It should be followed by clear articulation of your arguments (more on this below) along with quotes and examples to substantiate your point of view.
- **Articulation:** In this segment, you reason out why you chose a particular option and elaborate on the further of course of action.

CASE STUDY-

1

- A fresh engineering graduate gets a job in a prestigious chemical industry. She likes the work. The salary is also good. However, after a few months she accidentally discovers that a highly toxic waste is being secretly discharged into a river nearby. This is causing health problems to the villagers downstream who depend on the river for their water needs. She is perturbed and mentions her concern to her colleagues who have been with the company for longer periods. They advise her to keep quiet as anyone who mentions the topic is summarily dismissed.
- She cannot risk losing her job as she is the sole bread-winner for her family and has to support her ailing parents and siblings. At first, she thinks that if her seniors are keeping quiet, why should she stick out her neck. But her conscience pricks her to do something to save the river and the people who depend upon it. At heart she feels that the advice of silence given by her friends is not correct though she cannot give reasons for it. She thinks you are a wise person and seeks your advice. (2016)
- (a) What arguments can you advance to show her that keeping quiet is not morally right?
- (b) What course of action would you advise her to adopt and why?

CASE STUDY- 2

- You are heading the rescue operations in an area affected by severe natural calamity. Thousands of people are rendered homeless and deprived of food, drinking water and other basic amenities. Rescue work has been disrupted by heavy rainfall and damage to supply routes. The local people are seething with anger against the delayed limited rescue operations. When your team reaches the affected area, the people there heckle and even assault some of the team members. One of team members is even severely injured. Faced with this crisis, some team members plead with you to call off the operations fearing threats to their life.
 - In such trying circumstances, what will be your response? Examine the qualities of a public servant which will be required to manage the situation.
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CASE STUDY-

3

- You are the manager of a spare parts company A and you have to negotiate a deal with the manager of a large manufacturing company B. The deal is highly competitive and sealing the deal is critical for your company. The deal is being worked out over a dinner. After dinner the manager of manufacturing company B offered to drop you to the hotel in his car. On the way to hotel he happens to hit motorcycle injuring the motorcyclist badly. You know the manager was driving fast and thus lost control. The law enforcement officer comes to investigate the issue and you are the sole eyewitness to it. Knowing the strict laws pertaining to road accidents you are aware that your honest account of the incident would lead to the prosecution of the manager and as a consequence the deal is likely to be jeopardised, which is of immense importance to your company. What are the dilemmas you face? What will be your response to the situation? (2017)
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