

How to crack the Bank PO Exam???

Every year lakhs of candidates appear for Bank PO exam. Ever since its launch in 2011, IBPS PO has become synonymous with Bank PO. This exam is a gateway to a Bank PO career in any of the 20 public sector banks. As the name suggests, the exam is conducted by IBPS (Institute of Banking Personnel Selection). Candidates who appear and get shortlisted in the exam, are subsequently called for a Common Interview, which is conducted by the participating banks and coordinated by IBPS.

IBPS PO (Exam Pattern)

IBPS Bank PO is an online exam and its duration is 2 hours. The structure of this exam is as follows:

Sr. No.	Section	Maximum Marks
1	Reasoning	50
2	English Language	40
3	Quantitative Aptitude	50
4	General Awareness(with special reference to Banking Industry)	40
5	Computer Knowledge	20
	Total	200

The sections mentioned above except the English Language section are available bilingually, i.e. English and Hindi to the candidates.

Important Points

- Candidates are required to obtain a minimum score in each section and also a minimum total score to be shortlisted.
- The corrected scores obtained by candidates in different sessions are normalized using equipercenile method.
- There is a penalty for wrong answers marked in the Objective Tests. For each question for which a wrong answer has been given by the candidate one fourth of the marks assigned to that question will be deducted as penalty.

IBPS PO (Section-wise Strategy)

Reasoning - The reasoning section tests the ability of the candidate to apply logic. It is basically the test of a candidate's general mental ability. This section can be further divided into Analytical Reasoning, Verbal Reasoning and Non-Verbal Reasoning. The difficulty level of this section is higher in comparison to the difficulty level of other sections in the exam. However, the best part is that these questions don't require the candidate to memorize any rules or formulae. These questions can be mastered by regular practice and are generally considered to be time consuming by candidates.

English Language - In order to score well on this section good reading skills are a must. Apart from good reading skills, the ability to apply grammatical concepts is critical. There are questions in this section where sentence errors have to be spotted. Besides these, a candidate must also have good vocabulary and the ability to use words to fill in the blanks and attempt a cloze test. To score high on this section, regular reading is a must. Quite often candidates commit the mistake of equating their communication skills with an ability to do well in the language part of the exam. This is where it is imperative to understand that the written exam tests the candidates on verbal ability and usage skills, not on communication skills.

Quantitative Aptitude - This section has questions on numeracy and mathematical concepts of class 10th level. Sharp problem solving skills are required to crack this section. In addition to it, the candidate must have the knowledge of shortcuts and time saving tricks. Without knowing these, the requisite speed to attempt a high number of questions on this section can never be achieved. Even if the candidate is

able to solve the questions in this section using a step-based descriptive method learnt at school, then too it does not do any good to his chances of clearing the exam. Precious time is lost when one uses this method and the greater the number of steps in the solution, the higher is the chance of getting the question wrong. To score well on any IBPS Exam, it may be PO or clerk, one needs to master calculations. Doing complex calculations in a very short span time is required. In this regard, memorizing formulae and the values of fractions, squares, cubes, square-roots and cube roots can highly boost the speed of the candidate.

General Awareness – As in any bank exam, IBPS PO puts special emphasis on the issues relating to the banking industry. Indian banking system and its changing dynamics frequently become the source of a lot of questions. However, current affairs is the area which presents the maximum number of questions in this section. Events pertaining to the last six months are crucial and the candidate must be thorough with them. Any new appointments (who is who), sports, awards, budget, book releases, international indices, India's international relations, Government's welfare schemes etc. are some of the favorite areas of exam setters. A candidate's knowledge of financial and economic abbreviations and jargon also gets repeatedly tested by this exam.

Computer Knowledge – The rationale behind this section being a part of IBPS PO is that the human resource becoming a part of public sector banks should be technology savvy. A candidate's fundamentals of information technology are tested here. The level of questioning in this section is basic. The format of the questioning is such that it relates to the application of information technology in our daily functioning. Questions related to MS Office package, internet, computer hardware, the nitty-gritty of software and essential IT jargon are a regular feature of the exam. Overall, it does not present much of a problem provided that the candidate has a working knowledge of the IT domain and keeps himself well versed with the latest developments taking place in the same.

IBPS PO (Preparation Levels)

Preparation for a Bank PO exam requires focused and well guided preparation. The direction in which a candidate takes his preparation often determines his success or failure in IBPS PO. The preparation for the exam can be clubbed into 3 levels.

(a) **Concept Building Level** – At this level the focus should be on developing the fundamentals of different subjects. All the topics from where the questions are put up should be gone through in detail. This is the most time consuming part of the preparation, nonetheless once the concept clarity is there the battle is half won. A strong conceptual foundation will undoubtedly stand a candidate in good stead.

(b) **Practice Level** – Now the candidate must orient himself towards improvement of speed and taking as many sectional tests as possible. The sectional tests should be done under the time constraint. This is the time when one learns to choose the right questions to be attempted. These repeated attempts make a candidate proficient at the art of question selection. Judicious selection of questions greatly impacts both speed and accuracy. This stage also gives clarity as to how each section must be handled individually, on the basis of its difficulty level.

(c) **FLT (Full Length Test) Level** – Quite often candidates commit the grave folly of neglecting the FLT level. This level is the game changer, it can take the exam preparedness of the candidate to a different orbit altogether. It helps the candidate in striking a balance across all sections and clearing individual cut-offs for each of them. The highlight here should be on online testing as the exam happens to be an online one. The candidate can opt for a test series being offered by any of the trusted test platforms so that he is well conditioned to handle the online format of the exam. The experience of the online test format goes a long in improving the confidence level of the candidate.

Ten Golden Rules

1. Concept clarity is a must. Focus on concept building, not on cramming.
2. Start well in advance. Give yourself a time of about 4-5 months for preparation.
3. Set a study schedule and follow it religiously. Preparation without consistency never results in success.
4. Building capabilities across all areas is required as each section has an individual cut-off.
5. Once the individual cut-offs have been cleared the focus should be on maximizing the aggregate score.
6. Devote appropriate time to each of the three levels of preparation mentioned. Don't remain stuck at the concept building level.
7. Strengthen your strengths. The areas of strength should be relied upon to drive up the aggregate score.
8. Weaken your weaknesses. The weak areas must be dealt with in such a way to ensure a hygiene level of performance.
9. Strike a balance between speed and accuracy; one shouldn't be sacrificed to achieve the other.
10. Taking a test is important, but more so is the analysis of the test and learning from the mistakes.

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