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SSC CGL

Exam Pattern & Detailed Syllabus

Tier-I and Tier-II | With Previous-Year Question Analysis

Primary source: SSC Notice of Examination,
Combined Graduate Level Examination, 2026
F.No. HQ-C11018/1/2026-C-1, dated 21.05.2026
Staff Selection Commission, ssc.gov.in

Question analysis based on: 5 official SSC CGL 2024
Tier-I question papers (09, 11 & 13 September 2024)
— 499 questions classified topic-wise

Compiled on: 17.08.2026

1. Examination at a Glance

Source: All figures in Sections 1–5 are taken directly from the SSC Notice of Examination for CGL 2026 (Paras 13.8 to 13.11 and Para 16), published on ssc.gov.in on 21.05.2026. Nothing in these sections is an estimate.

Conducting body	Staff Selection Commission (SSC), Department of Personnel and Training, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions
Examination	Combined Graduate Level Examination (CGL)
Posts filled	Group 'B' and Group 'C' posts across Ministries, Departments, Constitutional Bodies, Statutory Bodies and Tribunals of the Government of India
Stages	Two computer-based tiers — Tier-I and Tier-II. Tier-I is used only to shortlist candidates for Tier-II.
Question medium	English and Hindi both, except the English Comprehension / English Language sections
Normalisation	Where the exam runs in multiple shifts, marks are normalised as per the Commission's Notice dated 02.06.2025; normalised scores decide merit and cut-off
Answer key challenge	Tentative answer keys are uploaded after the exam; objections can be filed online at ₹100 per question (non-refundable)
Re-evaluation	Not permitted at any stage

2. Tier-I Exam Pattern

Tier-I is an objective, multiple-choice computer-based test of 100 questions and 200 marks. The critical structural feature is the **sectional timer**: each of the four subjects is locked to its own 15-minute window, so time cannot be carried from one section into another.

Part	Subject	Questions	Marks	Time
A	General Intelligence and Reasoning	25	50	15 min
B	General Awareness	25	50	15 min
C	Quantitative Aptitude	25	50	15 min
D	English Comprehension	25	50	15 min
—	Total	100	200	60 min

Negative marking	0.50 marks deducted for each wrong answer
Sectional timer	15 minutes per subject. For candidates eligible for a scribe under Paras 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3, the total is 1 hour 20 minutes with a 15+5 = 20 minute timer per subject.
Difficulty level	Parts A, B and D are set at graduation level. Part C (Quantitative Aptitude) is set at 10th standard level.
Role in selection	Shortlisting only. Tier-I marks do not carry forward into the final merit; separate cut-offs are fixed for JSO/SI Gr-II, for AAO/AACO, and for all other posts.

3. Tier-II Exam Pattern

Tier-II has three papers. **Paper-I is compulsory for every post.** Paper-II is only for candidates shortlisted for Junior Statistical Officer (MoSPI) and Statistical Investigator Grade-II (RGI, M/o Home Affairs). Paper-III is only for candidates shortlisted for Assistant Audit Officer / Assistant Accounts Officer. The three papers are held in separate shifts or on separate days.

3.1 Paper-I — structure (2 hours 15 minutes + 15 minutes)

Session	Section & Subject	Questions	Marks	Time
Session-I	Section-I A: Mathematical Abilities	30	$60 \times 3 = 180$	1 hour (30 min per part)
	Section-I B: Reasoning and General Intelligence	30		
	Section-II A: English Language and Comprehension	45	$70 \times 3 = 210$	1 hour (40 min English + 20 min GA)
	Section-II B: General Awareness	25		
	Section-III: Computer Knowledge Test	20	$20 \times 3 = 60$	15 min
Session-II	Section-IV: Data Entry Speed Test (DEST)	One task	Qualifying	15 min

How Session-I actually runs. Section-I opens first and closes automatically after exactly one hour. Section-II starts immediately and also closes after one hour. Section-III then runs for 15 minutes, ending Session-I. After a re-registration break, Session-II runs the 15-minute DEST. **It is mandatory to qualify every section of Paper-I separately.**

3.2 Paper-II and Paper-III

Paper	Subject	Questions	Marks	Time	Applicable to
Paper-II	Statistics	100	$100 \times 2 = 200$	2 hours	JSO (MoSPI) and Statistical Investigator Gr-II
Paper-III	General Studies (Finance and Economics)	100	$100 \times 2 = 200$	2 hours	Assistant Audit Officer / Assistant Accounts Officer

3.3 Negative marking in Tier-II

Component	Deduction per wrong answer
Paper-I — Section-I, Section-II and Section-III	1 mark
Paper-II (Statistics) and Paper-III (Finance & Economics)	0.50 marks

Note the difference: a wrong answer costs twice as much in Tier-II Paper-I as it does in Tier-I. Blind guessing is materially more expensive at this stage.

3.4 Computer Knowledge Test and DEST

CKT (Section-III)	Mandatory for all posts but qualifying in nature. A higher qualifying standard is set for posts where computer proficiency is prescribed — ASO in CSS/MEA/AFHQ, Assistant in SFIO, Assistant (GSI), Assistant in IMD, Inspector (CGST & Central Excise), Inspector (Preventive Officer), Inspector (Examiner), Executive Assistant in CBIC, and Postal/Sorting Assistant.
DEST (Section-IV)	A passage of about 2,000 key depressions in 15 minutes . Mandatory for all posts but qualifying. Higher standards apply for Tax Assistant (CBIC), Tax Assistant (CBDT), UDC/SSA in Central Bureau of Narcotics, and for all posts listed above under CKT.
DEST exemption	PwBD-OH candidates certified permanently unfit for typing by a Civil Surgeon are exempt — except for posts where computer proficiency or DEST is prescribed, with Tax Assistant (CBDT) being the one exception where exemption is still available. Candidates eligible for a scribe get 5 minutes of extra time in DEST.

4. Qualifying Marks and Mode of Selection

Category	Minimum qualifying marks (Tier-I; and Sections I, II, III of Paper-I, Paper-II, Paper-III of Tier-II)	Maximum errors allowed in DEST
Unreserved (UR)	30%	20%
OBC / EWS	25%	25%
All other categories	20%	30%

- Tier-II is conducted for all candidates who qualify Tier-I, and every candidate must appear in all four sections of Paper-I (except those exempted from DEST).
- Section-III and Section-IV of Paper-I are qualifying in nature, but carry separate higher cut-offs for the computer-proficiency and DEST-prescribed posts listed above.
- Final merit is built from Tier-II scoring sections. Tier-I performance does not add to the final score.

5. Official Syllabus — Tier-I

This section reproduces the Commission's own "Indicative Syllabus (Tier-I)", Para 13.10 of the Notice of Examination. Topic names are as printed in the notice.

5.1 General Intelligence and Reasoning **25 Q · 50 marks**

Questions of both verbal and non-verbal type. The component may include analogies, similarities and differences, space visualization, spatial orientation, problem solving, analysis, judgment, decision making, visual memory, discrimination, observation, relationship concepts, arithmetical reasoning and figural classification, arithmetic number series, non-verbal series, coding and decoding, statement conclusion and syllogistic reasoning.

Named topics in the notice

Analogy and classification	Series and operations	Figural and perceptual
Semantic Analogy · Symbolic/Number Analogy · Figural Analogy · Semantic Classification · Symbolic/Number Classification · Figural Classification	Semantic Series · Number Series · Figural Series · Problem Solving · Word Building · Coding & de-coding · Numerical Operations · Symbolic Operations · Trends	Space Orientation · Space Visualization · Venn Diagrams · Drawing inferences · Punched hole / pattern folding & unfolding · Figural pattern-folding and completion · Embedded Figures

Clerical and matching type	Aptitude type
Indexing · Address matching · Date & city matching · Classification of centre codes / roll numbers · Small & Capital letters/numbers coding, decoding and classification	Critical thinking · Emotional Intelligence · Social Intelligence

5.2 General Awareness **25 Q · 50 marks**

Questions test general awareness of the environment around the candidate and its application to society, knowledge of current events, and matters of everyday observation and experience in their scientific aspect as may be expected of any educated person. The test also includes questions relating to India and its neighbouring countries, especially pertaining to:

History	Culture	Geography	Economic Scene	General Policy	Scientific Research
These six heads are the complete official scope of the section. The Commission does not publish a sub-topic list for General Awareness — the observed distribution in Section 7.2 of this document fills that gap.					

5.3 Quantitative Aptitude **25 Q · 50 marks · 10th standard level**

Questions test the ability of appropriate use of numbers and number sense. The scope of the test is:

Head	Topics as listed in the notice
Number system	Computation of whole numbers, decimals, fractions and relationships between numbers
Arithmetic	Percentage · Ratio & Proportion · Square roots · Averages · Interest · Profit and Loss · Discount · Partnership Business · Mixture and Alligation · Time and distance · Time & Work
Algebra	Basic algebraic identities of school algebra & elementary surds · Graphs of linear equations
Geometry	Triangle and its various kinds of centres · Congruence and similarity of triangles · Circle and its chords, tangents, angles subtended by chords of a circle, common tangents to two or more circles
Mensuration	Triangle · Quadrilaterals · Regular Polygons · Circle · Right Prism · Right Circular Cone · Right Circular Cylinder · Sphere · Hemispheres · Rectangular Parallelepiped · Regular Right Pyramid with triangular or square base
Trigonometry	Trigonometric ratio · Degree and Radian measures · Standard identities · Complementary angles · Heights and Distances
Data Interpretation	Histogram · Frequency polygon · Bar diagram · Pie chart

5.4 English Comprehension 25 Q · 50 marks

The notice describes this section in a single line: the candidate's ability to understand correct English, basic comprehension and writing ability is tested. **No topic list is published for Tier-I English.** The practical scope is best read from the Tier-II English syllabus (Section 6.3 below), which the Commission does spell out in full, combined with the observed question distribution in Section 7.4.

6. Official Syllabus — Tier-II Paper-I

Reproduced from Para 13.11 of the Notice of Examination. Difficulty levels per Para 13.11.8: Mathematical Abilities is at **matriculation level**; English Language and Comprehension is at **10+2 level**; Paper-II and Paper-III are at **graduation level**.

6.1 Section-I Part A — Mathematical Abilities **30 Q**

Unit	Contents
Number Systems	Computation of whole numbers, decimals and fractions; relationship between numbers
Fundamental arithmetical operations	Percentages · Ratio and Proportion · Square roots · Averages · Interest (simple and compound) · Profit and Loss · Discount · Partnership Business · Mixture and Alligation · Time and distance · Time and work
Algebra	Basic algebraic identities of school algebra and elementary surds (simple problems) and graphs of linear equations
Geometry	Elementary geometric figures and facts: triangle and its various kinds of centres; congruence and similarity of triangles; circle and its chords, tangents, angles subtended by chords of a circle, common tangents to two or more circles
Mensuration	Triangle · Quadrilaterals · Regular Polygons · Circle · Right Prism · Right Circular Cone · Right Circular Cylinder · Sphere · Hemispheres · Rectangular Parallelepiped · Regular Right Pyramid with triangular or square base
Trigonometry	Trigonometric ratios · Complementary angles · Heights and distances (simple problems only) · Standard identities such as $\sin^2\theta + \cos^2\theta = 1$
Statistics and probability	Use of tables and graphs: histogram, frequency polygon, bar diagram, pie chart · Measures of central tendency: mean, median, mode, standard deviation · Calculation of simple probabilities

Difference from Tier-I: Tier-II adds compound interest explicitly, and adds measures of central tendency, standard deviation and simple probability — which do not appear in the Tier-I list at all.

6.2 Section-I Part B — Reasoning and General Intelligence **30 Q**

Verbal and non-verbal questions on: Semantic Analogy · Symbolic operations · Symbolic/Number Analogy · Trends · Figural Analogy · Space Orientation · Semantic Classification · Venn Diagrams · Symbolic/Number Classification · Drawing inferences · Figural Classification · Punched hole/pattern folding & unfolding · Semantic Series · Figural pattern-folding and completion · Number Series · Embedded figures · Figural Series · Critical Thinking · Problem Solving · Emotional Intelligence · Word Building · Social Intelligence · Coding and de-coding · Numerical operations · and other sub-topics, if any.

6.3 Section-II Part A — English Language and Comprehension **45 Q**

Vocabulary, grammar, sentence structure, synonyms, antonyms and their correct usage. Named topics:

Vocabulary and usage	Grammar and structure
Spot the Error · Fill in the Blanks · Synonyms / Homonyms · Antonyms · Spellings / detecting mis-spelt words · Idioms & Phrases · One word substitution	Improvement of Sentences · Active/Passive voice of verbs · Conversion into Direct/Indirect narration · Shuffling of sentence parts · Shuffling of sentences in a passage · Cloze Passage · Comprehension Passage

Comprehension specification (exact, from the notice): three or more paragraphs will be given with questions based on them. At least one paragraph should be a simple one based on a book or a story; the other two should be on current affairs, based on a report or an editorial. This tells you precisely what reading material to practise on.

6.4 Section-II Part B — General Awareness **25 Q**

Identical in scope to Tier-I General Awareness: environment and its application to society, current events, everyday observation and experience in their scientific aspect, and India and its neighbouring countries with reference to History, Culture, Geography, Economic Scene, General Policy and Scientific Research.

6.5 Section-III — Computer Knowledge / Proficiency **20 Q · qualifying**

Unit	Contents
Computer Basics	Organization of a computer · Central Processing Unit (CPU) · Input/output devices · Computer memory and memory organization · Backup devices · Ports · Windows Explorer · Keyboard shortcuts
Software	Windows operating system, including basics of Microsoft Office — MS Word, MS Excel and PowerPoint
Internet and e-mail	Web browsing and searching · Downloading and uploading · Managing an e-mail account · e-Banking
Networking and cyber security	Networking devices and protocols · Network and information security threats such as hacking, virus, worms and Trojans, and preventive measures

6A. Official Syllabus — Tier-II Paper-II (Statistics)

For Junior Statistical Officer and Statistical Investigator Grade-II only. 100 questions, 200 marks, graduation level.

#	Unit	Contents
1	Collection, Classification and Presentation of Statistical Data	Primary and secondary data · Methods of data collection · Tabulation of data · Graphs and charts · Frequency distributions · Diagrammatic presentation of frequency distributions
2	Measures of Central Tendency	Mean, median and mode · Partition values — quartiles, deciles, percentiles
3	Measures of Dispersion	Range, quartile deviation, mean deviation and standard deviation · Measures of relative dispersion
4	Moments, Skewness and Kurtosis	Different types of moments and their relationship · Meaning of skewness and kurtosis · Different measures of skewness and kurtosis
5	Correlation and Regression	Scatter diagram · Simple correlation coefficient · Simple regression lines · Spearman's rank correlation · Measures of association of attributes · Multiple regression · Multiple and partial correlation (three variables only)
6	Probability Theory	Meaning of probability · Different definitions of probability · Conditional probability · Compound probability · Independent events · Bayes' theorem
7	Random Variable and Probability Distributions	Random variable · Probability functions · Expectation and variance · Higher moments · Binomial, Poisson, Normal and Exponential distributions · Joint distribution of two discrete random variables
8	Sampling Theory	Population and sample · Parameter and statistic · Sampling and non-sampling errors · Probability and non-probability sampling techniques (simple random, stratified, multistage, multiphase, cluster, systematic, purposive, convenience and quota sampling) · Sampling distribution (statement only) · Sample size decisions
9	Statistical Inference	Point and interval estimation · Properties of a good estimator · Methods of estimation (moments, maximum likelihood, least squares) · Testing of hypothesis · Basic concept of testing · Small and large sample tests · Tests based on Z, t, Chi-square and F statistic · Confidence intervals
10	Analysis of Variance	Analysis of one-way and two-way classified data
11	Time Series Analysis	Components of time series · Determination of trend component by different methods · Measurement of seasonal variation by different methods
12	Index Numbers	Meaning · Problems in construction · Types of index number · Different formulae · Base shifting and splicing · Cost of living index numbers · Uses of index numbers

6B. Official Syllabus — Tier-II Paper-III (Finance and Economics)

For Assistant Audit Officer and Assistant Accounts Officer only. 100 questions, 200 marks, graduation level. The paper is split as Part A: Finance and Accounts (80 marks) and Part B: Economics and Governance (120 marks).

Part A — Finance and Accounts (80 marks)

Unit	Contents
Financial Accounting	Nature and scope · Limitations of financial accounting · Basic concepts and conventions · Generally Accepted Accounting Principles
Basic concepts of accounting	Single and double entry · Books of original entry · Bank reconciliation · Journal, ledgers, trial balance · Rectification of errors · Manufacturing, Trading, Profit & Loss, Appropriation Accounts · Balance Sheet · Distinction between capital and revenue expenditure · Depreciation accounting · Valuation of inventories · Non-profit organisation accounts · Receipts and Payments and Income & Expenditure Accounts · Bills of Exchange · Self-balancing ledgers

Part B — Economics and Governance (120 marks)

Unit	Contents
Comptroller & Auditor General of India	Constitutional provisions, role and responsibility
Finance Commission	Role and functions
Basic Concepts of Economics and Micro Economics	Definition, scope and nature of economics · Methods of economic study · Central problems of an economy · Production possibilities curve
Theory of Demand and Supply	Meaning and determinants of demand · Law of demand and elasticity of demand — price, income and cross elasticity · Theory of consumer behaviour: Marshallian approach and indifference curve approach · Meaning and determinants of supply · Law of supply and elasticity of supply
Theory of Production and Cost	Meaning and factors of production · Laws of production — law of variable proportions and laws of returns to scale
Forms of Market and Price Determination	Perfect competition, monopoly, monopolistic competition and oligopoly, and price determination in these markets
Indian Economy	Nature of the Indian economy and role of agriculture, industry and services — their problems and growth · National income — concepts and methods of measurement · Population: size, growth rate and implications for economic growth · Poverty and unemployment — absolute and relative poverty, types, causes and incidence of unemployment · Infrastructure — energy, transportation, communication
Economic Reforms in India	Economic reforms since 1991 · Liberalisation, privatisation, globalisation and disinvestment
Money and Banking	Monetary and fiscal policy · Role and functions of the Reserve Bank of India · Functions of commercial banks, RRBs and payment banks · Budget and fiscal deficits and balance of payments · Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act, 2003
Governance	Role of Information Technology in Governance

7. Previous-Year Question Analysis — Tier-I

Method. Five official SSC CGL 2024 Tier-I question papers — 09 September (Shifts 1, 2 and 3), 11 September (Shift 1) and 13 September (Shift 1) — were parsed and every question classified by topic. 499 of the 500 questions were recovered from the source files. Counts below are totals across the five shifts; the “per paper” column is the average a candidate can expect in any single 25-question section.

What this is and is not. The syllabus in Sections 5 and 6 is the Commission’s own text and is authoritative. This section is an observed distribution from five real shifts. It reliably shows the shape of the paper, but it is not published by SSC and the exact split moves by a question or two between shifts.

7.1 General Intelligence and Reasoning — observed distribution

Topic	Questions in 5 shifts	Per paper (avg)	Share
Series — number, letter, alphanumeric and figural	24	4–5	19.2%
Analogy — word, number, letter-cluster, figure, number-pair and set-based	24	4–5	19.2%
Coding-Decoding	10	2	8.0%
Mathematical operations — sign interchange, correcting equations	10	2	8.0%
Classification / odd one out	9	2	7.2%
Missing letters — completing a blanked letter series	6	1	4.8%
Mirror image	6	1	4.8%
Word / letter arrangement — positions unchanged in alphabetical order	5	1	4.0%
Counting figures — triangles in a figure	5	1	4.0%
Dice and cube	5	1	4.0%
Paper folding, cutting and punched hole	5	1	4.0%
Blood relations	5	1	4.0%
Syllogism — statements and conclusions	5	1	4.0%
Embedded figures	3	0–1	2.4%
Venn diagram / logical diagram	1	0–1	0.8%
Figure-only questions not machine-readable from the source	2	—	1.6%
Total	125	25	100%

Reading of this section. Series and analogy together are consistently 8–10 of the 25 questions — nearly 40% of the section from two topics. Non-verbal reasoning (mirror image, dice, paper folding, embedded figures, counting figures) accounts for roughly 4–5 questions per paper and is entirely practice-driven with no theory to learn. Every shift in this sample carried exactly one blood relation question, and syllogism appeared in three of five shifts.

7.2 General Awareness — observed distribution

Area	Questions in 5 shifts	Per paper (avg)	Share
History — ancient, medieval and modern India	21	4	16.9%
Art, Culture, festivals and awards	19	4	15.3%
Science — Physics, Chemistry and Biology	18	3–4	14.5%
Current Affairs and Government Schemes	16	3	12.9%
Geography — Indian and physical	15	3	12.1%
Polity and Constitution	13	2–3	10.5%
Economy	11	2	8.9%
Sports	11	2	8.9%
Total	124	25	100%

Reading of this section. Two findings run against common preparation habits. First, **Art and Culture is as heavy as History** — classical dance forms and their states, folk festivals, Padma awards, Sangeet Natak Akademi and National Lata Mangeskar awards, and classical musicians appeared roughly four times per paper. Second, **Sports is a genuine two-question block**, not a stray question. Polity questions were overwhelmingly article-specific (Articles 32, 77, 226 and the DPSP) rather than conceptual, and Science leaned static — chemical formulae, IUPAC names, cell biology and radiation types — rather than current science news.

7.3 Quantitative Aptitude — observed distribution

Topic	Questions in 5 shifts	Per paper (avg)	Share
Algebra, Trigonometry and Simplification (see note)	44	8–9	35.5%
Geometry — triangles, circles, chords and tangents	13	2–3	10.5%
Data Interpretation — table, bar graph and pie chart	12	2–3	9.7%
Profit, Loss and Discount	10	2	8.1%
Mensuration — 2D and 3D	6	1	4.8%
Number System — divisibility, remainders, division algorithm	6	1	4.8%
Percentage — including election problems	6	1	4.8%
Ratio, Proportion, Ages and Mixture-Alligation	6	1	4.8%
Simple and Compound Interest	5	1	4.0%
Time and Work, Pipes and Cisterns	5	1	4.0%
Time, Speed, Distance and Boats	5	1	4.0%
Averages	3	0–1	2.4%
HCF and LCM	1	0–1	0.8%
Total	124	25	100%

About the first row. 31 of the 124 quantitative questions were printed as formula images rather than selectable text, so their stems could not be read mechanically. Their answer options identify them as algebraic identity, trigonometric identity and simplification problems — the question types SSC always renders as images. They are therefore reported together with the 13 readable algebra, trigonometry and simplification questions as one combined block of 44. The combined figure of 8–9 questions per paper is consistent with the long-running SSC pattern of roughly 3 algebra, 3 trigonometry and 2–3 simplification questions.

Reading of this section. Arithmetic word problems — profit and loss, percentage, ratio, interest, time and work, speed and distance, averages — add up to about 9 questions per paper. Together with the 8–9 formula-based questions they account for roughly 70% of the section. Geometry plus mensuration is a reliable 3–4 questions and is the most commonly under-prepared block. Note also that **every one of the five shifts carried at least one dishonest-shopkeeper / false-weight problem** and at least one pipes-and-cisterns problem.

7.4 English Comprehension — observed distribution

Topic	Questions in 5 shifts	Per paper (avg)	Share
Cloze test — one passage with 5 blanks	25	5	20.0%
Synonyms	15	3	12.0%
One-word substitution	13	2–3	10.4%
Antonyms	12	2–3	9.6%
Sentence improvement — substitute the underlined segment	11	2	8.8%
Spelling error	10	2	8.0%
Error spotting — identify the faulty segment	10	2	8.0%
Active and passive voice	10	2	8.0%
Idioms and phrases	8	1–2	6.4%
Para jumbles — sentence and sentence-part rearrangement	7	1–2	5.6%
Fill in the blanks — single sentence	2	0–1	1.6%
Homophones	2	0–1	1.6%
Total	125	25	100%

Two structural findings. First, **no reading comprehension passage appeared in any of the five shifts.** The only passage-based questions were the cloze test, which occupied questions 21 to 25 in every single paper without exception. Second, vocabulary — synonyms, antonyms, one-word substitution, spelling and idioms — accounts for about 11 of the 25 questions. Tier-I English rewards vocabulary volume far more than reading skill. Reading comprehension does return in Tier-II Paper-I, where the notice explicitly promises three or more passages.

8. What the Data Implies for Preparation

The points below follow from the distributions in Section 7 read against the sectional timer in Section 2. They are inferences, not official guidance.

8.1 The sectional timer changes the arithmetic of attempting

Fifteen minutes for 25 questions is 36 seconds per question. Unused time in an easy section is forfeited, not banked. The practical consequence is that accuracy targets have to be set per section rather than for the paper as a whole, and that a long question must be abandoned rather than fought — with 0.50 negative marking, two minutes spent rescuing one mark is a loss even when the answer is right.

8.2 Where the marks concentrate

Section	Topics covering roughly two-thirds of the section	Approx. questions
Reasoning	Series, Analogy, Coding-Decoding, Mathematical operations, Classification	15 of 25
General Awareness	History, Art & Culture, Science, Current Affairs	15 of 25
Quantitative Aptitude	Algebra/Trigonometry/Simplification, Geometry, Data Interpretation, Profit & Loss	16 of 25
English	Cloze test, Synonyms, Antonyms, One-word substitution, Spelling	13 of 25

8.3 Section-specific observations

- **Reasoning is the fastest section to secure.** Roughly 10 of the 25 questions come from series and analogy alone, and both are pattern-recognition skills that improve directly with repetition. The non-verbal block of 4–5 questions needs no theory at all — only practice on figures.
- **General Awareness is the only section that cannot be solved in the exam hall.** It is answered from memory or not at all, which makes it the highest-return section per minute spent in the exam and the highest-cost section per topic left unread. Given the observed weightage, Art & Culture and Sports deserve dedicated preparation rather than being treated as residual topics.
- **Quantitative Aptitude is set at 10th standard level** by the Commission's own statement, which means the constraint is speed rather than difficulty. Since arithmetic word problems make up about nine questions, calculation shortcuts on percentage, ratio and profit-loss convert directly into attempts.
- **English is a vocabulary section at Tier-I and a comprehension section at Tier-II.** Preparation that builds only reading speed will underperform in Tier-I; preparation that builds only word lists will underperform in Tier-II. Both are needed, in that order.

8.4 Do not carry Tier-I habits into Tier-II

- Negative marking doubles to 1 mark in Paper-I Sections I, II and III. The break-even accuracy for guessing rises sharply.
- Every section of Paper-I must be cleared separately, so a weak section cannot be compensated by a strong one.
- Mathematical Abilities adds compound interest, mean, median, mode, standard deviation and simple probability — none of which are in the Tier-I list.
- The Computer Knowledge Test is qualifying for everyone but carries a higher bar for the computer-proficiency posts listed in Section 3.4, and DEST carries a higher bar for Tax Assistant and similar posts. Candidates targeting those posts should not treat either as a formality.

9. Source and Disclaimer

Content	Source
Exam pattern, marks, timing, negative marking, qualifying marks, mode of selection (Sections 1–4)	SSC Notice of Examination, Combined Graduate Level Examination 2026, F.No. HQ-C11018/1/2026-C-1, dated 21.05.2026 — Paras 13.8, 13.9 and 16
Tier-I and Tier-II syllabus (Sections 5, 6, 6A, 6B)	Same notice — Paras 13.10 and 13.11, reproduced without addition
Question distribution (Section 7)	Five official SSC CGL 2024 Tier-I question papers: 09.09.2024 Shifts 1, 2 and 3; 11.09.2024 Shift 1; 13.09.2024 Shift 1 — 499 questions classified
Preparation implications (Section 8)	Inference drawn from the two sources above. Not issued or endorsed by the Commission.

Disclaimer. Sections 1 to 6 reproduce the Staff Selection Commission's published notice and are accurate as of the notice dated 21.05.2026. The Commission may revise the scheme of examination, dates or syllabus through a subsequent notice. Section 7 is an independent analysis of past papers and is indicative of the shape of the paper, not a guarantee of the composition of any future paper. Candidates must verify all details from the current Notice of Examination on <https://ssc.gov.in> before relying on them. Compiled 17.08.2026.