

How to prepare for JEE Main

Joint Entrance Examination (Main). Run by National Testing Agency (NTA), under the Ministry of Education.

When

Two sessions a year. In 2026, Session 1 was 21 to 30 January and Session 2 was 2 to 9 April (NTA 2026 bulletin).

The exam

Paper 1 (B.E., B.Tech) in the 2026 bulletin: a 3-hour computer-based test with 75 questions for 300 marks.

Your plan, step by step

- 1 NCERT first, chapter by chapter Now to March 2027 (Class 11)**
Read each NCERT chapter with your school class, then do every NCERT exercise. Then solve that chapter's JEE Main past questions. Keep one notebook of formulas and one of mistakes. If you want B.Arch, start 30 minutes of sketching a day.
- 2 Close the Class 11 gaps April to June 2027**
Class 11 is about half the syllabus. Revise weak chapters, add one reference book per subject, and take your first timed chapter tests on a computer or phone.
- 3 Class 12 NCERT plus practice July to October 2027 (Class 12)**
Study Class 12 chapters with school. Every week, do one part test that mixes old and new chapters. Do not skip school: CBSE requires 75 per cent attendance to sit the boards.
- 4 Weekly full mocks November 2027 to January 2028**
Take one full 3-hour mock every week at the same time as the real shift (9 am or 3 pm), using the NTA mock and SATHEE tests. Spend as long reviewing each mock as taking it.
- 5 Session 1 January 2028**
Sit Session 1. Treat it as a real attempt, not a trial. Then move to board exam preparation, which also helps your NCERT base.
- 6 Session 2 March to April 2028**
After the boards, spend two or three weeks on your weakest chapters from Session 1 and sit Session 2. The better of the two scores counts.

What the exam tests

- Paper 1: 3 hours, computer-based test (CBT, taken on a computer at an exam centre).
- Each subject: Section A has 20 MCQs (choose one option), Section B has 5 numerical questions (type the answer, rounded to the nearest whole number). 25 questions and 100 marks per subject.
- Marking: +4 for a correct answer, minus 1 for a wrong answer, 0 if left blank. The minus 1 applies to the numerical questions too.
- Your raw marks are turned into an NTA score (a percentile) because different shifts get different papers. If you sit both sessions, the better score counts.

Free and official material

NTA mock test (computer-based test practice) (nta.ac.in/Quiz). The official practice screen. Learn how to mark, review and type numerical answers before exam day.

JEE Main official site: 2026 question papers and answer keys (jeemain.nta.nic.in). NTA posts each shift's question paper and final answer keys. These are the best practice papers there are.

SATHEE (Ministry of Education and IIT Kanpur) (sathee.iitk.ac.in). Free live and recorded classes, daily practice problems, an all-India mock test series and doubt support.

NCERT textbooks (free PDF) (ncert.nic.in/textbook.php). The JEE Main syllabus follows these books. Free to download in English and Hindi.

NTA JEE (Main) 2026 syllabus

(cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3f8e59f4b2fe7c5705bf878bbd494cd4f4/pdfs/2025/10/2025031823553056.pdf). The Ministry of Education guidelines bar this. Print it and tick off each unit. Anything not on it is not needed for JEE Main.

Books students use

Commonly used, not endorsed.

NCERT Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics, Class 11 and 12, NCERT

Concepts of Physics, Volumes 1 and 2, H.C. Verma

Objective Physics (series), D.C. Pandey (Arihant)

Physical, Organic and Inorganic Chemistry (series), O.P. Tandon

Concise Inorganic Chemistry, J.D. Lee (adapted editions)

Objective Mathematics, R.D. Sharma

Plane Trigonometry and The Elements of Coordinate Geometry, S.L. Loney

A Complete Self Study Guide for B.Arch Entrance Examination, P.K. Mishra (Arihant)

Coaching: do you need it?

Self-study with free material (school, NCERT, SATHEE, NTA mocks, past papers): Students who can keep a daily routine and have a teacher or senior to ask doubts. Enough for many students aiming for NITs and state colleges.

Online course (live or recorded classes, test series): Students in small towns with a steady internet connection who want structure and a test series without moving away from home.

Classroom coaching (local or in a hub such as Kota): Students who need a fixed timetable and face-to-face doubt clearing. It tends to help most when the student is already motivated; it does not fix a lack of interest in PCM.

Red flags

- Topper photos without the course name and duration. The consumer authority (CCPA) has fined coaching institutes for this.
- Pressure to pay a full year or two years upfront, with no refund policy in writing.
- Very large batches, or batches reshuffled by test marks.
- Advice to skip school or join a 'dummy' school. CBSE requires 75 per cent attendance to sit the boards.

The last months

- Stop starting new books. Revise from your own notes, mistake notebook and NCERT.
- Take a full mock two or three times a week at your actual shift time, and review every wrong and skipped question.
- Numerical questions carry minus 1 too, so do not guess them blindly. Guess an MCQ only when you can rule out two options.
- For Chemistry, reread NCERT inorganic and organic chapters line by line. Many questions come straight from them.

