UPSC Mains practice – reference note

GS-I · 23-11-2026 · 15 marks · https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/upsc-mains-practice/2026-11-23-integration-of-princely-states

At independence, the integration of more than 550 princely states was achieved largely through persuasion, with the use of force only in a few cases. Discuss the methods adopted for their integration and the lessons the process holds for Indian federalism today. (15 marks, 250 words)

1. Key facts to quote

Fact	Detail
States Department	Set up in July 1947; Sardar Patel in charge, V.P. Menon as Secretary
Instrument of Accession	Accession on three subjects – defence, external affairs and communications
Junagadh	Indian control 9 November 1947; plebiscite 20 February 1948
Hyderabad	Standstill Agreement November 1947; Operation Polo September 1948; Nizam surrendered 17 September 1948
Jammu and Kashmir	Instrument of Accession signed on 26 October 1947
Manipur	Merger agreement September 1949
Privy purses	Abolished, with the recognition of rulers, by the 26th Amendment (1971)
Book	V.P. Menon, "The Story of the Integration of the Indian States" (1956)

2. Tamil Nadu angle

Tamil Nadu link	Detail
Pudukkottai	The only princely state in present-day Tamil Nadu; merged with Madras in March 1948 (last ruler Rajagopala Tondaiman)
Kanniyakumari and Shenkottai	Areas of the former Travancore-Cochin State joined Madras State on 1 November 1956 under the States Reorganisation Act

3. Static links

- GS-I: post-independence consolidation and reorganisation; the role of leaders such as Patel.
- GS-II: federalism, special provisions (Articles 371–371J), Seventh Schedule; States Reorganisation (1956).

- Source to read: NCERT Class XII Political Science, "Politics in India since Independence", Chapter 1 – Challenges of Nation Building.

4. Common mistakes

- Quoting a single exact number of princely states as certain.
- Writing that force was the main method – it was used only in a few cases.
- Forgetting the second stage (merger, Part B States, abolition of privy purses) – integration did not end in 1947.

Official sources

- NCERT Class XII Political Science – Politics in India since Independence, Chapter 1 (Challenges of Nation Building) – https://ncert.nic.in/textbook.php
- Constitution of India – Seventh Amendment (1956) and Twenty-sixth Amendment (1971) (Legislative Department) – https://legislative.gov.in/constitution-of-india/
- Ministry of Home Affairs – Department of Jammu, Ladakh and Kashmir Affairs – https://www.mha.gov.in/
- Pudukkottai district administration – history – https://pudukkottai.nic.in/

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