



# SSB PREPARATION TIPS

FROM A

# 'NON SSB SPECIALIST'



# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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## Colonel Amardeep Singh, Sena Medal

Colonel Amardeep Singh (**AD**) has had a distinguished career in the Army. He is a **1993 Batch** Infantry Officer who joined the **National Defence Academy** in July 1989 and the **Indian Military Academy** in Jun 1992. He took pre mature retirement from the Army, after **25 years of service**, in April 2018 to pursue his passion for mentoring and writing.

Colonel Amardeep has been a prolific writer who has five books to his credit. He has been a regular contributor to the professional journals of the Armed Forces. He writes regular columns National dailies. He has been awarded **Army Commander's Scholar Warrior Badge** for his research paper in 2017.

A speaker and motivator par excellence, AD has conducted seminars on varied subjects for Civil Servants, Police Officers and Media. He is a regular speaker on defence issues on the **National Media** including Doordarshan and All India Radio. He has full command over English, Hindi and Punjabi languages.

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## SSB PREPARATION TIPS FROM A 'NON SSB SPECIALIST'

### Interview's Biggest Secrets Revealed

#### **Author's Note :**

*This blog is not meant for readers who have been unsuccessful at the SSB. For them another one is in the draft stage. **This is for young Defence Aspirants (Class 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> Students) and their parents.***

*Running a mentoring institute is a learning experience. On daily basis one gets calls from candidates and mostly from the concerned (also a bit confused) parents, asking for guidance for themselves and for their children. A large number of them really have no idea about the next step. (If you are one such candidate/ parent, then don't worry, even I didn't have any idea about it till about 4 years back).*

*A substantial amount of material written by experts is available on the internet. You can go through that too. If you want a layman's view, continuing to read is not a bad option.*

**- Col AD**

*The most common question is "When should one start preparing for SSB (also for written exam)"?*

*I once again quote my favourite Chinese proverb....*



**'Best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago, the second best is NOW'**

Therefore, ideal is to start from the day you join school, but post class 8<sup>th</sup>, if a child takes care of his own studies, his room and his gadgets and sports equipment, his preparation has started.

Some learned people feel that the SSB preparation should begin only after one has cleared the written exam. **They can't be more wrong.** By preparation, I don't mean that one goes for formal coaching. But it's never too early to start building up your knowledge and personality. Remember, SSB is not a test of your knowledge, it's a test of your personality. *(Knowledge is also part of your personality)*

The problem is that one is not aware of the basic direction. Schools do not work on personality development and building a knowledge base.

The parents think that coaching institutes will do the trick and the candidates think that Youtube videos and Whatsapp Forwards etc will compensate for the hard work and also that knowing short cuts (and also having some contact in SSB) will help them clear the SSB.

Surprisingly, most of popular videos are by the ones who have not been able to clear SSB multiple times. All these are the worst ways to prepare for something as important as SSB.

*I cleared the SSB in the first attempt and I really don't know what I did or didn't do. I also had the same wrong notions.*

The MDQ (Million Dollar Question)  is 'How to go about it?'. Well, there are no secrets.

**Hard Work, Perseverance, Focus** and **Early Start** are the four pillars that will enhance the chances of success.



Follow the simple steps to work upon the OLQs. Get hold of the OLQ Sheet. I have enclosed the OLQ Sheet (yes, it has been taken from the internet) at the end and have mentioned both OLQs and points other than OLQs.

This is a long-term struggle, and it is easier said than done.

If you want the secrets, follow these simple steps.

**Read, read and read.** Let's face it. No one reads. Even on WhatsApp and Facebook, if the message goes beyond 5 lines, we skip. We don't watch videos which are more than one minute long (that's why apps like Vines and TikTok are so popular. We lack the attention span for almost everything. Asking someone to read Newspaper, CSR, good books is a real challenge. Spend 20 minutes a day to feel the change. At the same time, work on vocabulary and grammar in a slow but systematic manner. Adding as little as 5 words to your databank everyday will make you super comfortable.



Give yourself a mobile break. When reading, switch off your mobile, restrict your social media updates to twice a day, at fixed times. Trust me, no one will miss you if you don't post a *selfie* for a week. You can keep the data of your device off. Parents who are reading this should practice on themselves and then motivate children to follow.

**Stay Focussed:** If you keep changing your aim, you will never hit anything. Have a plan B, but stay focussed on whatever you have decided.



**Write:** The entire generation including mine, has been addicted to copy and paste model. We use Google even for simplest of things. The good news is that you can get almost any information on the internet. This exactly is the bad news too. You can't carry your device for the interview and you can't get the solutions to life's problems on Google. Learn to express yourself. Write a paragraph in minimum two languages every alternate day, if not daily. Practice essay writing and comprehension.



**Speak, Discuss, Learn to Listen** and whether you like it or not English language is a must. There are free video lessons available. Hook on to any one channel and upgrade yourself. No short cuts again.

**Build your knowledge base.** Reading newspaper and a career guidance magazine will do 70% of this. Be aware of what is happening around you. Listen to one news (preferably Doordarshan and AIR) and follow current affairs updates/ discussions on Rajyasabha/ Loksabha TV.

**Follow a sport and develop healthy hobbies.** I was an average football and badminton player. I loved to run. All these helped me in staying fit. Playing games helped me understand the team dynamics and I was comfortable in a group. These qualities may not come with having a cup of coffee in CCD or by playing PUBG.

**Do Yoga, Train Your Mind, Learn to Take Failure.** Most of us can't handle failures. Most of us can't handle success too. But failure may lead to something drastic. Most of us appear for exams with little preparation and then pray for success. When we don't succeed, we tend to give up, and give up too soon. Training your mind will help. Two books, **Find Your Why** (Simon Sinek) and **The Secret** (Rhonda Byrne) should be read by one and all. Yoga, just needs 30 minutes a day. It can do wonders. Do *Shav Asan* for 10 minutes and empty your mind (Recycle Bin) at least once every day.

**Stay Physically Fit.** Run, walk, lift weight, move your limbs and do *Surya Namaskar*. Learning it won't even take more than an hour, but then it can change your life.



**Take responsibility of your actions.** This is one aspect which is very difficult to accomplish. We stay dependent on our parents, teachers, coaching institutes and friends for almost everything. The assessors are looking for responsible people and if you don't have it, you won't get through. Start with buying groceries, banking, looking after your books and equipment. Take charge of your younger siblings' studies. Do some social work on Sundays... every bit counts.

**Time Management.** Make a To-Do list, mention a date to complete against each task and start. You will falter initially but then perfection doesn't come easily. **Learn to prioritize things.** In SSB, all these abilities are tested.



Remember, you have to do it yourself. No one else, mind it, not your parents, nor your friends or your teachers or for that matter any coaching institute can do the hard work for you.

I come across candidates blaming the interviewing board for being biased and for being unprofessional and having spent 29 years in uniform, one thing I can say with utmost certainty is that the selection system for the armed forces is absolutely fair. If you don't have it, then you don't have it.

Hey, Congratulations, you have done one task successfully. Some may follow it, some may partially follow it but in a nutshell, it takes time and effort to develop one's personality. Candidates looking for short cuts to succeed in SSB will be shocked.

To sum up, the biggest open secret to clear the SSB are

- ✓ Read
- ✓ Write
- ✓ Speak
- ✓ Manage your time
- ✓ Play a game

- ✓ Develop a hobby
- ✓ Stay fit
- ✓ and
- ✓ Stay focussed.

Hope these tips will come handy. Do not forget to share with someone who will benefit from these simple tips.

### OLQs – OFFICER LIKE QUALITIES

#### Factor -1: Planning and Organising)

- Effective Intelligence
- Reasoning Ability
- Organising Ability
- Power of Expression

#### Factor - 2: Social Adjustment

- Social Adaptability
- Co-operation
- Sense of Responsibility

#### Factor - 3 (Social Effectiveness)

- Initiative
- Self Confidence
- Speed of Decision
- Ability to Influence the Group
- Liveliness



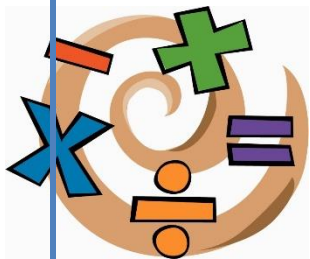
## Factor - 4: Dynamic

- Determination
- Courage
- Stamina.

### OLQs DE-CIPHERED



**Effective Intelligence:** Is the intelligence utilized in coping with practical situations of varying complexity. It is different from basic intelligence which is the capacity to perceive relations or to do abstract thinking. Basic intelligence is assessed by the use of intelligence tests may be verbal or nonverbal effective intelligence.



**Reasoning Ability:** It is the ability to grasp the essentials well and to arrive at conclusions by rational & logical thinking. It includes receptivity, inquiring attitude, logical reasoning and seeing essentials of a problem.

**Organising Ability:** The ability to arrange the resources in a systematic way so as to produce effective results. It can also be defined as the ability to put to the best use of the available means for attainment of a desired objective.

**Power of Expression:** This is the most important tools of personality where his/her ability to put across ideas adequately with ease and clarity are assessed.

**Social Adaptability:** The ability of an individual to adapt himself to the social environment and adjust well with persons and social groups, with special reference to superiors, equal and subordinates. Social adaptability includes social intelligence, attitude towards others, tact, and adaptability.

**Cooperation:** The attitude of an individual to participate willingly in harmony with others in a group, in achieving the group goal. This implies a belief in the collective effort being more productive than the individual effort. Cooperation includes the element of joint effort and team spirit. Team spirit indicates loyalty to the aims and objects of the group to the extent of subordinating individual aim to the group aim.



**Sense of Responsibility:** It enable a person to be dependable and to willingly discharge his obligation. It includes sense of duty but is much more comprehensive in meaning and scope. A thorough understanding of the values of duty, social standard, and of what is required of an individual and then to give it his energy and attention of his own accord.

**Initiative:** The ability to originate purposeful action. It has the following aspects: - (a) Ability to take the first steps in an unfamiliar situation. (b) In the right direction. (c) Sustain it, till the goal is achieved. Persons with higher initiative display plenty of originality in thoughts & actions. Persons with positive initiative never get stuck, they are pushing, enterprising, persistent and will come out with numerous fresh ideas.

**Self Confidence:** It is the faith in one's ability to meet stressful situations particularly those that are unfamiliar.

**Speed of Decision:** The ability to arrive at workable decisions expeditiously. It comprises: - (a) Then appropriateness and cost effectiveness. (b) Feasibility & practicability. (c) The quickness in arriving at the decision.

**Ability to Influence the Group:** The ability which enables an individual to bring about willing effort from the group for achieving the objective desired by him. This influence is the prime cause of cooperative and willing effort of a group towards the achievement of a set objective.

Persons with this quality are highly inspiring with magnetic charm, in dispensable, impressionable, assertive, persuasive, firm & have considerable capacity to overcome opposition.

**Liveliness:** The capacity of an individual to keep himself buoyant when meeting problems and bring about a cheerful atmosphere.

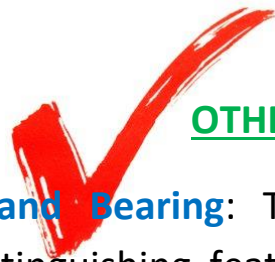
**Determination:** A sustained effort to achieve objectives in spite of



obstacles and setbacks. It implies fixedness of purpose: mental concentration and strength of will.

**Courage:** The ability to appreciate and take purposive risks willingly. It includes: - (a) Ability to meet appreciated dangers (b) Spirit of adventure, and enterprising spirit and a willingness to dare or risk a hazard (c) Capacity to keep oneself composed in adverse situations enabling to be steady in facing and handling such situations. They are doubtless risk takers, daring, aggressive, creative, bold & plucky with tremendous physical & moral courage.

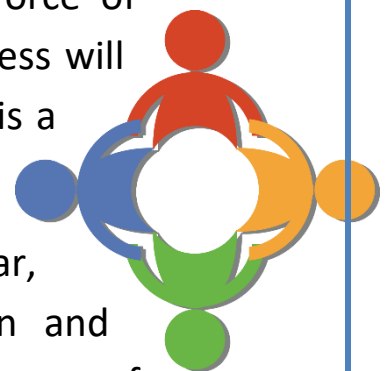
**Stamina:** The capacity to withstand protracted physical and mental strain. It emphasizes endurance. Such persons possess herculean physical & mental capabilities & can withstand plenty of physical & mental stress. They are indefatigable, calm & are very tough individuals.



### OTHER THAN OLQs

**Appearance and Bearing:** The candidate's appearance, bearing, grooming, distinguishing features and general presentation should be readily apparent within the first impressions formed at interview. Keeping yourself physically fit and reading a basic book or paper on body language will help. Get the posture correct from an early stage. Simple things like standing with equal weight on both feet and sitting with back straight will go a long way. If you have been a couch potato all your life, it's time to work hard on this. In an hour long interview, this is something that you can't fake.

**Manner and Impact:** The candidate's conduct throughout the interview, along with his courtesy, tact, confidence, force of personality, presence, poise, polish, humour and alertness will add to the overall impact. Looks simple but again, this is a combination of many factors.



**Speech and Power of Expression:** The quality of grammar, vocabulary, diction, general fluency, logic, projection and animation will all indicate the overall effectiveness of expression. Get into some sensible discussions on day to day topics with family and friends will prepare you for this. Modulation of voice has to be subtle.

**Activities and Interests:** No organisation likes to have boring people



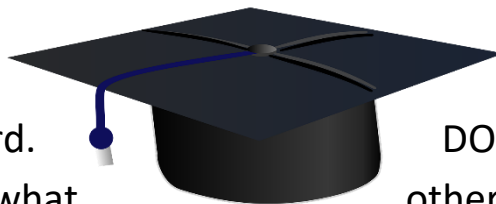
on board. Armed Forces requires their officers to be multi-talented, lively and be able to adaptable. Pursue good hobbies, if you don't have, never too late to develop one. Do some

research and be thorough. Having sports as a hobby and not knowing even its basic rules may be taken negatively. Parents can play a big role by subtly inculcating hobbies. Remember, children learn by observation. Mere sermonizing will not help.



**Good Academic Record:** Good manners have to be supported by a reasonable academic record.

Good marks also indicate your ability to work hard. studies, no matter what



DO NOT overlook your others say.

**General Awareness:** You don't have to be a walking encyclopaedia but you can't say "I don't know" to all questions. A simple habit like glancing through the headlines of the newspaper can save you from this. One year before the exam/ test/ interview, this has to become a routine activity. News from other media lacks depth, relevance and analysis. Also, besides a National Daily, do read your local newspaper also. Be aware of your country, state, district, locality and also your family. You can't be fumbling when you are asked the subjects that your parents or elder brother/ sister had studied in college.

**Motivation:** The candidate's determination towards his military goals should be ascertained. Sometimes the motivation will have previous substantiation. It will be important to ascertain that the candidate is clear about, and would relish, the commitment and dedication demanded of the officer corps



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## **ABOUT THE WINNING EDGE**

The Winning Edge is located at Dehradun. The Company specialises in preparing candidates for Defence Entrance Exams (Officer Entries Only) and Interviews. Besides the Defence Entrance the company offers: -

- Academic mentoring students from Class 7<sup>th</sup> onwards in English, Science and Mathematics. Both Classroom and Online models are available.
- Career Guidance and Aptitude Assessment Solutions.
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- Student and Work Visas & PR for Europe, Britain, Canada, US and Australia.
- Written exams and S.S.B coaching
- RIMC, Sainik School & Rashtriya Military School Coaching

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