



UPSC PREVIOUS YEAR QUESTIONS
ANCIENT INDIA (2024-2011)

PREHISTORIC PERIOD

1. Consider the following Pairs:(2024)

	<i>Archaeological Site</i>	<i>State</i>	<i>Description</i>
1	Chandraketugarh	Odisha	Trading Port Town
2	Inamgaon	Maharashtra	Chalcolithic Site
3	Mangadu	Kerala	Megalithic Site
4	Salihundam	Andhra Pradesh	Rock Cut Cave Shrine

In which of the above rows is the given information correctly matched?

- (a) 1 and 2
- (b) 2 and 3
- (c) 3 and 4
- (d) 1 and 4

2.Consider the following Pairs:(2021)

(Historical Place)	(Well-Known for)
1. Burzahom	: Rock – Cut shrines
2. Chandra-Ketugarh	: Terracotta art
3. Ganeshwar	: Copper artefacts

Which of the following pairs given above is/are Correctly Matched?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 2 and 3

INDUS VALLEY CIVILISATION

1.Which one of the following ancient towns is well-known for its elaborate system of water harvesting and management by building a series of dams and channelizing water into connected reservoirs? (2021)

- (a) Dholavira
- (b) Kalibangan
- (c) Rakhigarhi
- (d) Roper

2.Which one of the following is NOT a Harappan site?(2019)

- (a) Chanhudaro

- (b) KotDiji
- (c) Sohgauna
- (d) Desalpur

3. Which of the following characterizes/characterize the people of Indus Civilization?

(2013)

- 1. They possessed great palaces and temples
- 2. They worshipped both male and female deities.
- 3. They employed horse-drawn chariots in warfare.

Select the correct statement/statements using the codes given below.

- (a) 1 and 2 (b) 2 only (c) 1, 2 and 3 (d) None of these

4. Regarding the Indus Valley Civilization, consider the following statements

(2011)

- 1. It was predominantly a secular civilization and the religious element, through present, did not dominate the scene.
- 2. During this period, cotton was used for manufacturing textiles in India.

Which of the statements given is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

VEDIC PERIOD

1. Consider the following statements:

- 1. There are parables in Upanishads.
- 2. Upanishads were composed earlier than the Puranas

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

2. With reference to the difference between the culture of Rigvedic Aryans and Indus Valley people, which of the following statements is/are correct? (2017)

- 1. Rigvedic Aryans used the coat of mail and helmet in warfare whereas the people of Indus Valley Civilization did not leave any evidence of using them.
- 2. Rigvedic Aryans knew gold, silver and copper whereas Indus Valley people knew only copper and iron.
- 3. Rigvedic Aryans had domesticated the horse whereas there is no evidence of Indus Valley people having been aware of this animal.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

3. The national motto of India, 'Satyameva Jayate' inscribed below the Emblem of India is taken from (2014)

- (a) Katha Upanishad
- (b) Chandogya Upanishad
- (c) Aitareya Upanishad
- (d) Mundaka Upanishad

4. The religion of early Vedic Aryans was primarily of (2012)

- (a) Bhakti
- (b) Image worship and Yajnas

- (c) Worship of nature and Yajnas
- (d) Worship of nature and Bhakti

5. The “dharma” and “rita” depict a central idea of ancient Vedic civilization of Indian. In this context consider the following statements: (2011)

1. Dharma was a conception of obligations and of the discharge of one’s duties to oneself and to others.
2. Rita was the fundamental moral law governing the functioning of the universe and all it contained

Which of the statements given is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) Both 1 and 2
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

BUDDHISM AND JAINISM

1. With reference to ancient India, Gautama Buddha was generally known by which of the following epithets?

1. Nayaputta
2. Shakyamuni
3. Tathagata

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 3
- (d) None of the above are epithets of Gautama Buddha

2. Sanghabhuti, an Indian Buddhist monk, who travelled to China at the end of the fourth century AD, was the author of a commentary on:

- (a) Prajnaparamita Sutra
- (b) Visuddhimagga
- (c) Sarvastivada Vinaya
- (d) Lalitavistara

3. “Souls are not only the property of animal and plant life, but also of rocks, running water and many other natural objects not looked on as living by other religious sects.”The above statement reflects one of the core beliefs of which one of the following religious sects of ancients India? (2023)

- (a) Buddhism
- (b) Jainism
- (c) Shaivism
- (d) Vaishnavism

4. With reference to ancient India, consider the following statements: (2023)

1. The concept of the Stupa is Buddhist in origin.
2. Stupa was generally a repository of relics.
3. Stupa was a votive and commemorative structure in the Buddhist tradition.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) All three
- (d) None

5. In which one of the following regions was Dhanyakataka, which flourished as a prominent Buddhist centre under the Mahasanghikas, located?(2023)

- (a) Andhra
- (b) Gandhara
- (c) Kalinga
- (d) Magadha

6. With reference to Indian history, consider the following texts: (2022)

- 1. Nettipakarana
- 2. Parishishtaparvan
- 3. Avadanashataka
- 4. Trishashtilakshana Mahapurana

Which of the above are Jaina texts?

- (a) 1, 2 and 3
- (b) 2 and 4 only
- (c) 1, 3 and 4
- (d) 2, 3 and 4

7. With reference to Indian History, consider the following pairs (2022)
Historical person Known as

- 1. Aryadeva — Jaina scholar
- 2. Dignaga — Buddhist scholar
- 3. Nathamuni — Vaishnava scholar

How many pairs given above are correctly matched?

- (a) None of the pairs
- (b) Only one pair
- (c) Only two pairs
- (d) All three pairs

8. With reference to religious history of India, consider the following statements:(2020)

- 1. Sthaviravadins belong to Mahayana Buddhism.
- 2. Lokottaravadin sect was an offshoot of Mahasanghika sect of Buddhism.
- 3. The deification of Buddhism by Mahasanghikas fostered the Mahayana Buddhism.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

9. With reference to the cultural history of India, which one of the following is the correct description of the term ‘paramitas’? (2020)

- (a) The earliest Dharmashastra texts written in aphoristic (sutra) style
- (b) Philosophical schools that did not accept the authority of Vedas
- (c) Perfections whose attainments led to the Bodhisattva path
- (d) Powerful merchant guilds of early medieval South India

10. With reference to the cultural history of India, consider the following pairs: (2020)

- 1.Parivrajaka -- Renunciant and Wanderer
- 2.Shramana -- Priest with a high status
- 3.Upasaka -- Lay follower of Buddhism

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

11. Consider the following:(2019)

- 1.Deification of the Buddha
- 2.Treading the path of Bodhisattvas
- 3.Image worship and rituals

Which of the above is/are the feature/features of Mahayana Buddhism?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

12. With reference to Indian History, who among the following is a future Buddha, yet to come to save the world? (2018)

- (a)Avalokiteshvara
- (b)Lokesvara
- (c)Maitreya
- (d)Padmapani

13. With reference to the religious practices in India, the “Sthanakvasi” sect belongs to (2018)

- (a)Buddhism
- (b)Jainism
- (c)Vaishnavism
- (d)Shaivism

14. With reference to the religious history of India, consider the following statements: (2017)

- 1.Sautrantika and Sammitiya were the sects of Jainism.
- 2.Sarvastivadin held that the constituents of phenomena were not wholly momentary, but existed forever in a latent form.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

15. With reference to the religious history of India, consider the following statements: (2016)

- 1. The concept of Bodhisattva is central to Hinayana sect of Buddhism.
- 2. Bodhisattva is a compassionate one on his way to enlightenment.
- 3. Bodhisattva delays achieving his own salvation to help all sentient beings on their path to it.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 2 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

16. Which of the following kingdoms were associated with the life of the Buddha? (2015)

1. Avanti
2. Gandhara
3. Kosala
4. Magadha

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1, 3 and 4 (d) 3 and 4 only

17. With reference to the cultural history of India, the memorizing of chronicles, dynastic histories and Epic tales was the profession of who of the following? (2016)

- (a) Shramana (b) Parivraajaka (c) Agrahaarika (d) Maagadha

18. Which of the following Kingdoms were associated with the life of the Buddha? (2014)

1. Avanti 2. Gandhara 3. Kosala 4. Magadha

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 (b) 2 and 4 (c) 3 and 4 only (d) 1, 3 and 4

19. With reference to Buddhist history, tradition and culture in India, consider the following pairs: (2014)

Famous shrine	Location	Famous shrine	Location
1. Tabo	monastery and temple complex	Spiti	Valley
2. Lhotsava	Lhakhang temple, Nako	Zaskar	Valley
3. Alchi	temple complex	Ladakh	

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

20. Which one of the following describes best the concept of Nirvana in Buddhism? (2013)

- a) The extinction of the flame of desire
- b) The complete annihilation of self
- c) A state of bliss and rest
- d) A mental stage beyond all comprehension

21. Which of the following statements is/are applicable to Jain doctrine? (2013)

1. The surest way of annihilating Karma is to practice penance.
2. Every object, even the smallest particle has a soul.
3. Karma is the bane of the soul and must be ended.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below.

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 and 3 (c) 1 and 3 (d) 1, 2 and 3

22. With reference to the history of ancient India, which of the following was/were common to both Buddhism and Jainism? (2012)

1. Avoidance of extremities of penance and enjoyment
2. Indifference to the authority of the Vedas

3. Denial of efficacy of rituals

Select the correct answer

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 and 3 only (c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

23. Lord Buddha's image is sometimes shown with the hand gesture called 'Bhumisparsha Mudra'. It symbolizes (2012)

- a) Buddha's calling of the Earth to watch over Mara and to prevent Mara from disturbing his meditation
b) Buddha's calling of the Earth to witness his purity and chastity despite the temptations of Mara
c) Buddha's reminder to his followers that they all arise from the Earth and finally dissolve into the Earth, and thus this life is transitory
d) Both the statements (a) and (b) are correct in this context

24. The Jain philosophy holds that the world is created and maintained by (2011)

- a) Universal law
b) Universal Truth
c) Universal Faith
d) Universal Soul

MAURYAN EMPIRE

1 According to Kautilya's Arthashastra, which of the following are correct?(2022)

1. A person could be a slave as a result of a judicial punishment.
2. If a female slave bore her master a son, she was legally free.
3. If a son born to a female slave was fathered by her master, the son was entitled to the legal status of the master's son.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
b) 2 and 3 only
c) 1 and 3 only
d) 1, 2 and 3

2) Consider the following pairs : (2022)

<i>Site of Ashoka's major rock edicts</i>	<i>Location in the State of</i>
1. Dhauli 2. Erragudi 3. Jaugada 4. Kalsi	– Odisha – Andhra Pradesh – Madhya Pradesh – Karnataka

How many pairs given above are correctly matched?

- (a) Only one pair
(b) Only two pairs
(c) Only three pairs
(d) All four pairs

3. Who among the following rulers advised his subjects through this inscription?

“Whosoever praises his religious sect or blames other sects out of excessive devotion to his own sect, with the view of glorifying his own sect, he rather injures his own sect very severely.”(2020)

- (a) Ashoka

- (b) Samudragupta
- (c) Harshavardhana
- (d) Krishnadeva Raya

4. In which of the following relief sculpture inscriptions is “Ranyo Asoka ‘(King Ashoka) mentioned along with the stone portrait of Ashoka? (2019)

- (a) Kanganahalli
- (b) Sanchi
- (c) Shahbazgarhi
- (d) Sohgaurya

5. Who of the following had first deciphered the edicts of Emperor Ashoka? (2016)

- (a) Georg Buhler
- (b) James Prinsep
- (c) Max Muller
- (d) William Jones

POST MAURYAN PERIOD

1. With reference to ancient Indian History, consider the following parts: (2023)

Literary work	Author
---------------	--------

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1 | Devichandragupta : Bilhana |
| 2 | Hammira-Mahakavya : Nayachandra Suri |
| 3 | Milinda-panha : Nagarjuna |
| 4 | Nitivakyamrita : Somadeva Suri |

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- (a) Only one
- (b) Only two
- (c) Only three
- (d) All four

2. Which one of the following books of ancient India has the love story of the son of the founder of Sunga dynasty? (2016)

- (a) Swapnavasavadatta
- (b) Malavikagnimitra
- (c) Meghadoota
- (d) Ratnavali

SANGAM AGE

1. With reference to ancient South India, Korkai, Poompuhar and Muchiri were well known as (2023)

- (a) capital cities
- (b) ports
- (c) centres of iron-and-steel making
- (d) Shrines of Jain Tirthankaras

2. Which one of the following explains the practice of ‘Vattakirutal’ as mentioned in Sangam poems? (2023)

- (a) Kings employing women bodyguards
- (b) Learned persons assembling in royal courts to discuss religious and philosophical matters

- (c) Young girls keeping watch over agricultural fields and driving away birds and animals
- (d) A king defeated in a battle committing ritual suicide by starving himself to death

3. Which one of the following statements about Sangam literature in ancient South India is correct? (2022)

- (a) Sangam poems are devoid of any reference to material culture.
- (b) The social classification of Varna was known to Sangam poets.
- (c) Sangam poems have no references to warrior ethic.
- (d) Sangam literature refers to magical forces as irrational.

GUPTA EMPIRE

1. Which one of the following is a work attributed to playwright Bhasa?

- (a) Kavyalankara
- (b) Natyashastra
- (c) Madhyama vyayoga
- (d) Mahabhashya

2. With reference to the history of India, the terms “kulyavapa” and “dronavapa” denote (2020)

- (a) measurement of land
- (b) coins of different monetary value
- (c) classification of urban land
- (d) religious rituals

3. With reference to the period of Gupta dynasty in ancient India, the towns Ghantasala, Kadura and Chaul were well known as (2020)

- (a) ports handling foreign trade
- (b) capitals of powerful kingdoms
- (c) places of exquisite stone art and architecture
- (d) important Buddhist pilgrimage centres

4. With reference to forced labour (Vishti) in India during the Gupta period, which one of the following statements is correct? (2019)

- (a) It was considered a source of income for the State, a sort of tax paid by the people.
- (b) It was totally absent in the Madhya Pradesh and Kathiawar regions of the Gupta Empire.
- (c) The forced labourer was entitled to weekly wages.
- (d) The eldest son of the labourer was sent as the forced labourer.

5. With reference to the guilds (Shreni) of ancient India that played a very important role in the country's economy, which of the following statements is/are correct? (2012)

- 1. Every guild was registered with the central authority of the State and the king was the chief administrative authority on them.
- 2. The wages, rules of work, standards and prices were fixed by the guild.
- 3. The guild had judicial powers over its own members.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 3 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

6. With reference to the scientific progress of ancient India, which of the statements given below are correct? (2012)

1. Different kinds of specialized surgical instruments were in common use by 1st century AD.
2. Transplant of internal organs in the human body had begun by the beginning of 3rd century AD.
3. The concept of sine of an angle was known in 5th century AD.
4. The concept of cyclic quadrilaterals was known in 7th century AD.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 3 and 4 only
- c) 1, 3 and 4 only
- d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

POST GUPTA PERIOD

1. From the decline of Guptas until the rise of Harshavardhana in the early seventh century, which of the following kingdoms were holding power in Northern India? (2021)

1. The Guptas of Magadha
2. The Paramaras of Malwa
3. The Pushyabhutis of Thanesar
4. The Maukharis of Kanauj
5. The Yadavas of Devagiri
6. The Maitrakas of Valabhi

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- (a) 1, 2 and 5
- (b) 1, 3, 4 and 6**
- (c) 2, 3 and 4
- (d) 5 and 6

2. In the context of the history of India, consider the following pairs: (2016)

Term	Description
1. Eripatti	: Land, revenue from which was set apart for the maintenance of the village tank
2. Taniyurs	: Villages donated to a single Brahmin or a group of Brahmins
3. Ghatikas	: Colleges generally attached to the temples

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

- (a) 1 and 2
- (b) 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3
- (d) 1 and 3

3. The Chinese traveller Yuan Chwang (Hiuen Tsang) who visited India recorded the general conditions and culture of India at that time. In this context, which of the following statements is/are correct? (2013)

1. The roads and river-routes were completely immune from robbery.
2. As regards punishment for offences, ordeals by fire, water and poison were the instruments for determining the innocence or guilt of a person.
3. The tradesmen had to pay duties at ferries and barrier stations.

Select the correct answer using the codes given below.

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

4. With reference to the scholars/litterateurs of ancient India, consider the following statements: (2020)

1. Panini is associated with Pushyamitra Shunga.
2. Amarasingha is associated with Harshavardhana.
3. Kalidasa is associated with Chandra Gupta - II.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

MISCELLANEOUS

1. With reference to the Indian History, Alexander Rea, A. H. Longhurst, Robert Sewell, James Burgess and Walter Elliot were associated with (2023)

- (a) archaeological excavations
- (b) establishment of English Press in Colonial India]
- (c) establishment of Churches in Princely States
- (d) construction of railways in Colonial India

2. With reference to the history of ancient India, Bhavabhuti, Hastimalla and Kshemeshvara were famous (2021)

- a) Jain monks
- b) Playwrights
- c) Temple architects
- d) Philosophers

3. With reference to the history of ancient India, which of the following statements is/correct? (2021)

1. Mitakshara was the civil law for upper castes and Dayabhaga was the civil law for lower castes.
2. In the Mitakshara system, the sons can claim right to the property during the lifetime of the father, whereas in the Dayabhaga system, it is only after the death of the father that the sons can claim right to the property.
3. The Mitakshara system deals with the matters related to the property held by male members only of a family, whereas the Dayabhaga system deals with the matters related to the property held by both male and female members of a family.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) 1 and 2
- b) 2 only
- c) 1 and 3
- d) 3 only