



PRISMA PYQ NOTES

UPSC PRELIMS R&D SOLUTIONS
FROM 1979 TO 2025



PART-1 (HISTORY , GEOGRAPHY, ENVIRONMENT)



UPSC

- ▶ 4 OPTION ANALYSIS APPROACH
- ▶ DETAILED EXPLANATION
- ▶ 45 YEARS COVERAGE
- ▶ FUTURE MCQ MAPPING
- ▶ BOLD KEYNOTES
- ▶ BEST OF ACCURACY.
- ▶ REVIEWED BY TOPPERS
- ▶ ONE STOP SOLUTION
- ▶ VISUAL LEARNING IMAGES

FEATURES

UPSC PYQs

PRISMA
PYQ

45 YRS
PYQ

ZERO
JUNK



DOWNLOAD FROM : WWW.XIAS.IN



Download
the app

ABOUT THE “PRISMA PYQ”

Decoding UPSC — Scientifically. Systematically. Strategically.

The “**PRISMA PYQ NOTES**” is *research-driven question intelligence program* for UPSC Prelims. It is a result of years of analytical work by **Rankers, Mentors, and PYQ Researchers** from the **X IAS Team**.

Born from a single question “*What if we could decode how UPSC thinks?*” PRISMA transforms forty-five years of question papers (1979 – 2025) into a structured framework that helps aspirants **understand, anticipate, and outperform** the evolving UPSC pattern.

Core Philosophy

UPSC does not merely test knowledge it tests **decision-making under doubt**.

PRISMA trains aspirants to **think like the paper setter**, not just react to the paper.

Through layered analysis, predictive trend mapping, and a mindset-based approach, the series bridges the gap between *content mastery* and *exam intelligence*. (Better explained in PRISMA PYQ CLASSES, visit: www.xias.in)

Who This Series Is For

- Serious UPSC aspirants who want to **build pattern intelligence** rather than rote recall.
- Working professionals seeking **self-guided, research-ready resources**.
- Prelims veterans aiming to **convert marginal scores into secure cut-offs** through smarter strategy.

Our Promise

“PRISMA isn’t just about solving questions — it’s about solving the examiner’s mind.”

Each page has been designed to train you in **clarity, calmness, and analytical agility** the real tools of UPSC success.

Why 45 Years in PRISMA?

Because **UPSC never forgets its past it many times reframes it**.

Time and again, questions and options from the **1980s and 1990s** have resurfaced in new forms in recent Prelims papers. PRISMA’s **45-year coverage (1979–2025)** gives you that rare **competitive edge** from others who do just 10 years PYQ, helping you identify recurring patterns, recycled ideas, and re-engineered options that others miss.

Raunak Sharma (AIR 659, UPSC CSE 2024)

PRISMA PYQ isn’t just a book it’s actually a strategy guide.

The option analysis and pattern decoding helps to understand how UPSC frames questions.

It trains mind to eliminate smartly and trust logic over instinct.

A genuine game-changer for anyone serious about clearing Prelims.

Shivali Thakur (Selected, UPSC CSE 2024)

“I’ve seen many PYQ compilations, but PRISMA feels different, it teaches **how to think like UPSC**.

The clarity of explanations and detailed insights will surely help students to rebuild one’s MCQ confidence.

We must know, it’s not just about solving questions, it’s about learning the art behind them.”

HOW TO UTILISE THIS BOOK EFFECTIVELY

The Ranker's Way to Decode UPSC —

This e-book isn't meant to be *read* — it's meant to be **decoded**. Every question hides a pattern; every option conceals a clue. Learn to think like a **Ranker**, not a reader.

◆ Step 1: Build the UPSC Mindset

Start with the *Art of MCQ Solving by Rankers* section. Understand UPSC's psychological traps and patterns of logic.
Goal: Develop the "UPSC Brain Wiring" — precision, patience, pattern recognition.

◆ Step 2: Apply the 4-Option Analytical Framework

Never skip analysis of wrong options. Ask — *Why is this right? Why are the others wrong?*
Goal: Turn guesswork into guided elimination.

◆ Step 3: Study "Bold Keynotes" Under Each Explanation (Revise them after highlighting)

These are your distilled takeaways — UPSC's favourite conceptual traps, and memory triggers.

Goal: Strengthen conceptual clarity & fast recall. Don't worry about bulkiness. Consider these as primary notes too.

◆ Step 4: Decode Future MCQ Mapping

Observe question evolution from **1979–2025** to understand UPSC's dynamic mind.

Goal: Predict trends through pattern recognition.

◆ Step 5: Revise Visually

Each PRISMA diagram is a *visual retention device*. Use them to recall topics instantly. Note down important things on "top of pages". For better results use this PRISMA PYQ NOTES with the PRISMA PYQ classes at X IAS.

Goal: Retain more through design, not rote learning or "ratta".

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF PRISMA PYQ

- **Maintain a "Pattern Journal"** — Note recurring topics, phrasing traps, and conceptual overlaps.
- **Follow the 45-Year Timeline** — Study chronologically to watch how UPSC evolved.
- **Integrate with Static Sources** — Connect PYQs with NCERTs, Laxmikanth, Spectrum, etc.
- **Learn from Ranker's Notes** — Understand how toppers eliminate and reason.
- **Simulate Exam Conditions** — Attempt 100 questions in 2 hours; analyze errors deeply.
- **Revisit Future Mapping Pages** — Focus on *probability zones* for last-mile preparation.

COPYRIGHT & LEGAL DISCLAIMER

© X IAS Education | All Rights Reserved

All explanations, diagrams, and frameworks are original intellectual property of the X IAS.

Unauthorized **reproduction, resale, distribution, or screenshot sharing** (in any digital or printed form) is a violation under the **Indian Copyright Act, 1957** and will attract **strict legal action**. Each e-book carries a **unique digital signature traceable** to the registered user with the hidden KYC details.

Use this material **only for personal learning**; any commercial or institutional use is strictly prohibited.

(contact: xiaseducation@gmail.com/8287115435)

Remember: Respecting intellectual property is part of ethical preparation.

PRISMA PYQ isn't just a book it's your *digital mentor* designed to make you think like a Ranker. Use it with discipline, and it will reward you with direction.

LEGAL NOTICE

These PRISMA PYQ NOTES include visible watermarks and embedded hidden KYC markers to protect intellectual property and author integrity. Please use the content only for your personal exam preparation. Unauthorized sharing, reproduction, or modification is strictly forbidden and actionable under applicable laws – hidden identifiers (Purchaser KYC details) can still be traced if visible marks are removed. Uphold academic integrity; for authorized sharing, institutional subscriptions, or queries, reach out at [xiaseducation@gmail.com/8287115435].

STAY ETHICAL. GET SELECTED.

PRISMA PYQs Index

01

INDIAN HISTORY

- Ancient 06
- Art & Culture..... 71
- Medieval..... 139
- Modern204

02

GEOGRAPHY

- World Geography..... 376
- Indian Geography..... 489

03

ENVIRONMENT..... 605

- Climate Change
- Environmental Laws & Policies
- Sustainable Development etc..

04

POLITY (in Part-2)... 06

- Constitution of India
- Fundamental Rights
- Parliament & State Legislatures etc...

05

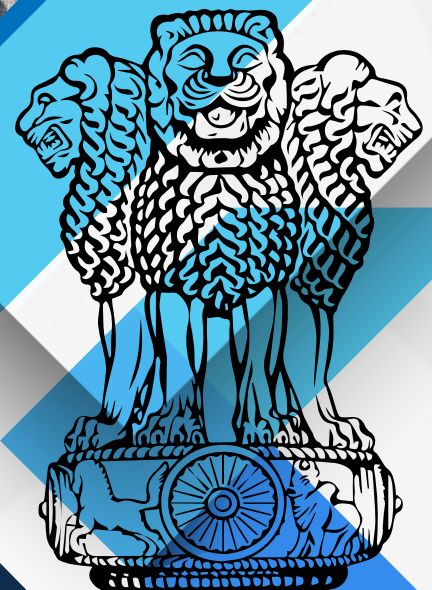
ECONOMY (in Part-2). 168

- Economic Planning in India
- Sectors of Indian Economy
- Budget & Fiscal Policy etc...

06

SCIENCE & TECH (in Part-2).. 375

- Technology
- Biology
- Physics
- Chemistry

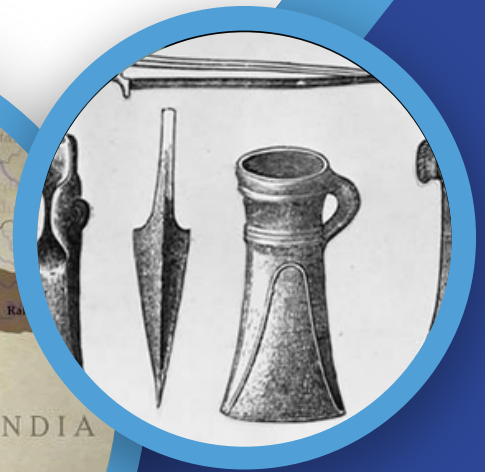
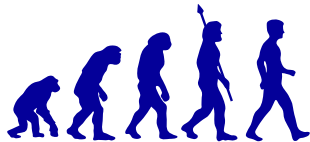




UPSC PYQ's

Detailed Explanations

ANCIENT HISTORY



UPSC PYQs - 1980

Q1. Which of the following throws light on Harappan Culture?

- (a) Archaeological excavations
- (b) The script on copper sheets
- (c) Rock edicts
- (d) All of the above

Answer: (a)

- Harappan culture is primarily understood through archaeological excavations at sites like **Harappa and Mohenjo Daro**.
- The Indus script remains undeciphered, and no copper sheet inscriptions or rock edicts have been found from this civilization.
- Excavations revealed urban planning, trade links with **Mesopotamia, and material culture**.

Hence, **option (a)** is the correct answer.



Q2. Who is regarded as the greatest law giver of ancient India?

- (a) Megasthenese
- (b) Panini
- (c) Manu
- (d) Kautilya

Answer: (c) Manu

- Manu is considered the first man and legendary lawgiver in Indian mythology.
- He authored **the Manusmriti, a foundational Sanskrit legal text among Hindu Dharmashastras**.
- Medieval Indian rulers traced their lineage to **Manu**—solar and lunar dynasties.

- **Manusmriti** was translated into English by Sir William Jones in 1794 and used by the British to codify Hindu law.

Hence, **option (c)** is the correct answer.

Q3. At which place Gautama Buddha delivered his first sermon?

- (a) Sarnath
- (b) Lumbini
- (c) Bodh Gaya
- (d) Vaishali

Answer: (a) Sarnath

- After enlightenment at Bodh Gaya, Buddha went to Sarnath to teach his five former companions.
- His first sermon, **Dhammacakkhapavattana Sutta**, marked the **“Turning of the Wheel of Dharma.”**
- This event also established the Sangha, the Buddhist monastic community.
- Core teachings: Four Noble Truths and Noble Eightfold Path.
- **Ashoka later commemorated the site with the Lion Capital, now India’s national emblem.**

Hence, **option (a)** is the correct answer.

Q4. Neolithic period of age is not characterised by

- (a) Agriculture
- (b) Use of copper
- (c) Domestication of animals
- (d) Fishing

Answer: (b) Use of copper

- The Neolithic period marked the shift to food production—**agriculture and animal domestication**.
- **Early crops:** wheat and barley; early animals: dog, goat, sheep.
- People settled in villages and used tools made of stone, **not metal**.
- Copper use began only towards the end, leading to the **Chalcolithic phase**.

Hence, **option (b)** is the correct answer.

Q5. Name the God who lost his importance in the beginning of Christian era?

- (a) Indra
- (c) Vishnu
- (b) Brahma
- (d) Mahesh

Answer: (a) Indra

- Indra was the chief deity in the Rigveda—**god of thunder, rain, and war.**
- He had around 250 hymns dedicated to him and led the Vedic pantheon.
- By the beginning of the **Christian era, his prominence declined.**
- Devotional cults like **Bhagavatism** (centered on Vishnu) gained popularity.
- Ritual sacrifices gave way to personal devotion and **newer traditions.**

Hence, **option (a)** is the correct answer.

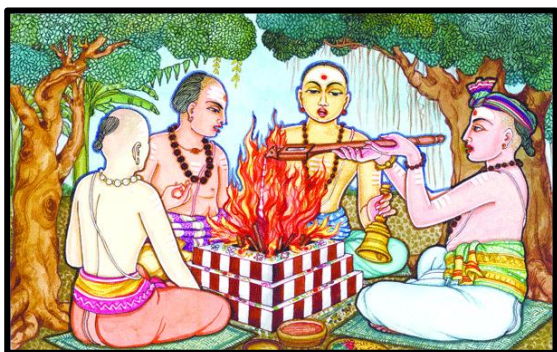
Q6. We can know about early Vedic period from

- (a) Archaeological excavations
- (b) Contemporary cultures
- (c) Rigveda
- (d) Jatak Katha

Answer: (c) Rigveda

- The *Rigveda* (c. 1500–1200 BCE) is the oldest and most authentic source of Early Vedic history.
- It contains **1,028 hymns across 10 mandalas; Books II–VII are the oldest and reflect early Vedic life.**
- It provides insights into Aryan society, religion, polity, and economy after the decline of the Indus Valley Civilization.
- The **Gayatri Mantra** (3.62.10), dedicated to Savitr, is a key spiritual verse from Mandala 3.

Hence, **option (c)** is the correct answer.



Q7. Upanishads are

- (a) Religious books of Hindus
- (b) Books dealing with ancient Hindu laws
- (c) Books on social behaviour of man
- (d) Prayers to God

Answer: (a) Religious books of Hindus

- The Upanishads are philosophical and spiritual texts **composed between 800–500 BCE.**
- They explore concepts like Brahman (universal reality) and Atman (individual soul).
- Focus is on self-realization, liberation (moksha), and the **nature of existence.**
- Around 200 exist, but 13 are considered principal—e.g., **Chandogya, Brihadaranyaka, Kena, Katha.**
- India's national motto "**Satyameva Jayate**" comes from the Mundaka Upanishad.

Hence, **option (a)** is the correct answer.

Q8. The Indus Valley people had contacts with

- (a) Egyptians
- (b) Sumerians
- (c) Chinese
- (d) Mesopotamians

Answer: (d) Mesopotamians

- Mesopotamian texts refer to **Meluhha, likely the Indus Valley region, as a major trading partner.**
- Harappans exported goods like beads, gems, and cotton via sea routes to **Mesopotamian ports.**
- Some **Meluhhans** even settled in Sumer; interpreters were appointed for their language.
- **Dilmun (modern Bahrain) acted as a trade intermediary between the two civilizations.**
- No evidence suggests Mesopotamians reached the Indus—**Harappans managed the trade.**

Hence, **option (d)** is the correct answer.

Q9. In which way Sarnath is associated with Lord Buddha?

- (a) He resided there
- (b) He was born there

(c) He ruled there

(d) He preached his first Sermon there

Answer: (d) He preached his first Sermon there

- After attaining **enlightenment in Bodhgaya**, Buddha went to **Sarnath** to meet his **five former companions**.
- He delivered his **first sermon**, known as the **Dhammacakkhappavattana Sutta**, marking the **“Turning of the Wheel of Dharma.”**
- This event led to the founding of the **Sangha**—the **Buddhist monastic community**.
- His teachings included the **Four Noble Truths** and the **Noble Eightfold Path**.
- **Sarnath** flourished as a **Buddhist center**, especially during the **Gupta period (4th–6th century AD)**.
- **Hsuan Tsang**, the Chinese pilgrim, recorded **30 monasteries** and **3000 monks** in the 7th century.
- It became a hub for **Sammatiya (Hinayana)** and **Vajrayana Buddhism**, with images of **Heruka** and **Tara**.

Hence, **option (d)** is the correct answer.



Q10. Lothal is connected as excavation site of the civilisation of

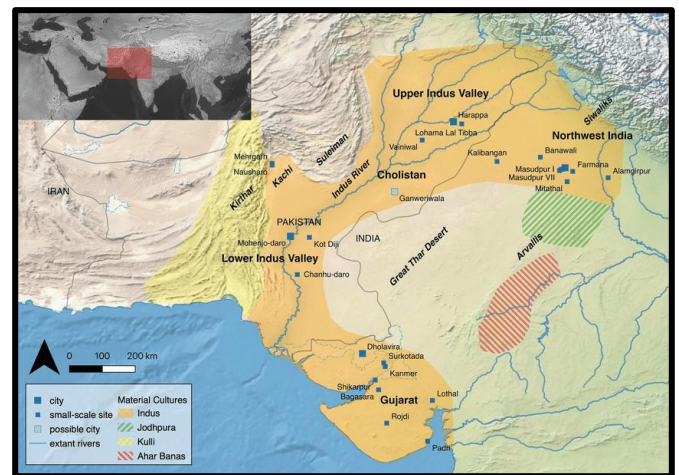
- (a) Indus Valley Civilisation
- (b) Sumerians
- (c) Mesopotamians
- (d) Vedic Aryan

Answer: (a) Indus Valley Civilisation

- **Lothal**, located in **Gujarat**, was a major city of the **Indus Valley Civilization**, dating to around **2400 BCE**.

- Excavated by **S.R. Rao (ASI)** between 1955–1960, it revealed advanced urban planning and maritime trade.
- It had the **world’s earliest known dockyard**, linked to the **Sabarmati River**, facilitating trade with **West Asia and Africa**.
- Artifacts include **beads, gems, and ornaments**, indicating a thriving commercial hub.
- The site was protected by a **massive brick wall**, likely for **flood control**.
- The name **Lothal** means **“mound of the dead,”** similar to **Mohenjo-daro** in Sindh.

Hence, **option (a)** is the correct answer.



Q11. Which of the following is not related to the Gandhara School of Art?

- (a) Ellora
- (b) Ajanta
- (c) Khajuraho
- (d) Elephanta

Answer: (c) Khajuraho

- The **Gandhara School of Art** flourished between 1st century BCE and 5th century CE, blending **Greco-Roman** and **Indian styles**, mainly in **Buddhist sculptures**.
- Sites like **Ajanta**, **Ellora**, and **Elephanta** show Buddhist influence and stylistic connections to Gandhara.
- **Khajuraho**, however, is known for its **distinct temple architecture** and **erotic sculptures**, developed under the **Chandella dynasty (950–1050 CE)**.

- Temples at Khajuraho are **Hindu and Jain**, with no link to Gandhara's Buddhist art tradition.

Hence, **option (c)** is the correct answer.



Q12. Which of the following is the most important cause for the decline of Buddhism after Ashoka?

- Non-patronage by the kings
- Condemnation of animal sacrifices
- Growth of licentious practices in Buddhist centres
- Allegiance to the middle path

Answer: (a) Non-patronage by the kings

- After rulers like **Ashoka, Kanishka**, and **Harshavardhan**, Buddhism lost significant **royal support**.
- **Rajput rulers**, known for their **militant nature**, opposed Buddhism's **non-violent ideals**.
- **Brahmanical revival** under the **Guptas** further weakened Buddhist influence.
- Without **state patronage**, Buddhist institutions declined and were overshadowed by **Hindu traditions**.

Hence, **option (a)** is the correct answer.

Q13. Saka era commenced from

- 78 AD
- 1000 AD
- 120 AD
- 1953 AD

Answer: (a) 78 AD

- The **Saka Era** began with the accession of **Kanishka I**, the most renowned ruler of the **Kushana dynasty**.
- Kanishka was of **Central Asian origin**, succeeding **Vima Kadphises**, who introduced **gold coinage**.

- The Kushanas, also known as **Yueh-Chis or Tocharians**, migrated from **North Central Asia** into India.
- Kanishka's reign, starting in **78 AD**, marked the formal start of the **Saka calendar**, still used in Indian official contexts.

Hence, **option (a)** is the correct answer.

Q14. Which of the following was the most important characteristic of Kanishka's rule?

- Expansion of Buddhism outside India
- Re-emergence of Jainism
- Fourth Buddhist Council at Srinagar
- Gandhara School of Art

Answer: (c) Fourth Buddhist Council at Srinagar

- **Kanishka**, the greatest **Kushan ruler**, presided over the **Fourth Buddhist Council** at **Kundalvana (Srinagar)** in **72 AD**.
- The council focused on **Buddhist theology and doctrine**, led by **Vasumitra** with **Asvaghosa** as deputy.
- It marked a turning point in **Mahayana Buddhism** and helped systematize Buddhist texts.
- Though Kanishka also promoted **Gandhara art** and **Buddhist expansion**, the council was his most defining contribution.

Hence, **option (c)** is the correct answer.

UPSC PYQs - 1981

Q1. Megasthenes visited the court of

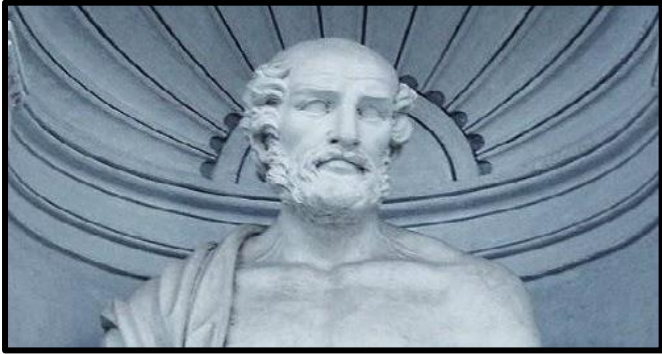
- Ashoka
- Harsha
- Chandragupta Maurya
- Vikramaditya

Answer: (c) Chandragupta Maurya

- **Megasthenes** was the Greek ambassador sent by **Seleucus Nicator** to the court of **Chandragupta Maurya**.
- Their treaty in **305 B.C.** marked the withdrawal of Greek forces and fixed the **Mauryan Empire's western boundary** at the **Hindu Kush**.

- Megasthenes authored **Indica**, a detailed account of Indian society, administration, and urban life.
- He praised **Pataliputra**, comparing its grandeur to **Persepolis**, the Persian capital.

Hence, **option (c)** is the correct answer.



Q2. Earliest Indian coins belonged to which period?

- (a) 5th century B.C.
- (b) Ashoka's reign
- (c) 1st century A.D.
- (d) 3rd century A.D.

Answer: (c) 1st century A.D.

- The **Indo-Greeks** were the first to issue coins with **ruler's name, title, and portrait**, starting in the **1st century A.D.**
- These coins reflected **high craftsmanship** and supported **international trade** with West Asia and the Mediterranean.
- Indigenous coinage evolved, with rulers like the **Satavahanas** and **Kanishka** minting coins in **gold, copper, and alloys**.
- **Kanishka's coins** featured the king in various poses and deities on the reverse, showing artistic and religious diversity.

Hence, **option (c)** is the correct answer.

UPSC PYQs – 1982

Q1. Out of the following the oldest dynasty is

- (a) Mauryas
- (b) Nandas
- (c) Pallavas
- (d) Guptas

Answer: (b) Nandas

- The **Nanda dynasty** originated in **Magadha** around **345 BCE**, making it the earliest among the listed dynasties.
- They expanded their empire across the **Ganga plains** and are considered **India's first empire builders**.
- **Dhana Nanda**, the last Nanda ruler, was in power during **Alexander's invasion** in **326 BCE**.
- The **Mauryas** succeeded the Nandas; **Pallavas** and **Guptas** emerged much later.

Hence, **option (b)** is the correct answer.

Q2. The script of Indus Valley civilisation was

- (a) Persian
- (b) Dravidian
- (c) Sanskrit
- (d) Undeciphered

Answer: (d) Undeciphered

- The **Indus Valley Civilization** (2600–1900 BCE) was South Asia's earliest urban culture.
- Its script, known as the **Harappan script**, remains **undeciphered** to this day.
- Writing was often **boustrophedon**—alternating right-to-left and left-to-right lines.
- Though some scholars suggest a **Proto-Dravidian** link, no consensus exists.
- Inscriptions are short, with around **375–400 unique signs**; the longest has just **26 characters**.
- Over **4,000 inscribed objects** have been found, including some in **Mesopotamia**, indicating trade links.

Hence, **option (d)** is the correct answer.



UPSC PYQs – 1983

Q1. The philosophical systems of the Hindus were propounded and properly codified in the

- (a) Vedic age
- (b) Maurya age
- (c) Kanishka age
- (d) Gupta age

Answer: (a) Vedic age

- Hindu philosophy emerged during the **Vedic age**, rooted in the **Vedas** and later texts like the **Upanishads** and **Vedangas**.
- The six orthodox systems—**Samkhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Mimamsa, and Vedanta**—were developed from Vedic thought.
- These systems are known as **Astika darsanas**, as they accept the **Vedas as authoritative**.
- The **Rigveda**, especially its later mandalas, and auxiliary texts like the **Vedangas**, laid the foundation for codifying philosophical ideas.

Hence, **option (a)** is the correct answer.

Q2. Which of the following statements is not correct about Nalanda University?

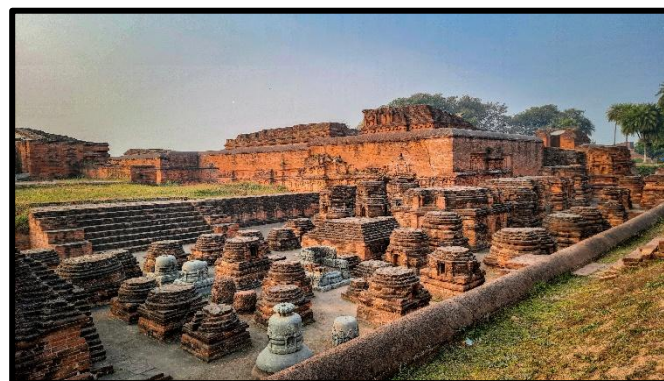
- (a) It was an ancient Buddhist learning centre
- (b) A Chinese Hiuen Tsang studied here
- (c) We came to know about it only through the writings of Chinese pilgrims
- (d) It was mainly responsible for spreading Buddhism to China, Japan and South East Asia

Answer: (c) We came to know about it only through the writings of Chinese pilgrims

- **Nalanda University** was a renowned **Buddhist learning centre** in **Magadha (modern Bihar)**.
- It flourished under the **Gupta Empire** and later **Harsha of Kannauj**.
- **Hiuen Tsang (Xuanzang)** studied here and documented its grandeur.
- However, **information about Nalanda** comes from **multiple sources**, including **Indian inscriptions, archaeological evidence, and literary texts**, not just Chinese pilgrims.
- It was a hub for **international students** and contributed to the **spread of Buddhism**, but

not solely responsible for its expansion to **China, Japan, and Southeast Asia**.

Hence, **option (c)** is the correct answer.



Q3. Ancient Indian art and architecture reached its zenith during the period of

- (a) Rajputs
- (b) Mauryas
- (c) Guptas
- (d) None of these

Answer: (c) Guptas

- The **Gupta period** (4th–6th century CE) marked the **golden age** of Indian art and architecture.
- It introduced **freestanding stone temples**, replacing earlier brick and wood structures.
- Temples like the **Dasavatara Temple at Deogarh** and **Bhitargaon** show advanced design and ornamentation.
- **Sanchi, Udaygiri, and Tigawa** reveal early Gupta shrines and sculptural finesse.
- **Sarnath Buddhas** and **mukhalingas** reflect spiritual depth and artistic perfection.
- Gupta art absorbed elements from **Gandhara**, especially in facial stylization.
- Hence, **option (c)** is the correct answer.

Q4. The following were famous scholars in ancient India

1. Ashvaghosh
2. Nagarjuna
3. Vasumitra
4. Buddhaghosa

Q3. Which of them was/were contemporary of Kanishka?

- (a) 1, 2, 3, 4

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

Answer: (d) 1, 2 and 3

- **Ashvaghosha:** Court poet and religious advisor to **Kanishka**; authored *Buddhacharita* and *Saundaranandakavya*.
- **Nagarjuna:** Founder of **Madhyamika school** of Mahayana Buddhism; his doctrine of **Shunyavad** was influential during Kanishka's reign.
- **Vasumitra:** Presided over the **Fourth Buddhist Council** convened by Kanishka at **Kundalavana, Kashmir**.
- **Buddhaghosa:** Lived in the **5th century AD**, much later than Kanishka; known for *Visuddhimagga* and contributions to **Theravada Buddhism**.

Hence, **option (d)** is the correct answer.

UPSC PYQs – 1984

Q1. Rigveda, the oldest of the Vedas, chiefly contains

- (a) Collection of hymns to gods
- (b) Methods of Vedic yagnas
- (c) Early Aryan culture
- (d) Origin and works of Hindu gods

Answer: (a) Collection of hymns to gods

- The **Rigveda** is the **earliest** of the four Vedas and comprises **1,028 hymns** dedicated to various **deities**.
- These hymns were composed by ancient **rishis** like **Atri, Kanwa, Vashistha, Vishwamitra, Jamadagni, Gotama, and Bharadwaja**.
- It reflects the **religious and philosophical thought** of the **Early Vedic period**, focusing on **divine worship** rather than rituals or mythology.
- Though it also provides insights into **social and political life**, its primary content is **devotional hymns**.

Hence, **option (a)** is the correct answer.

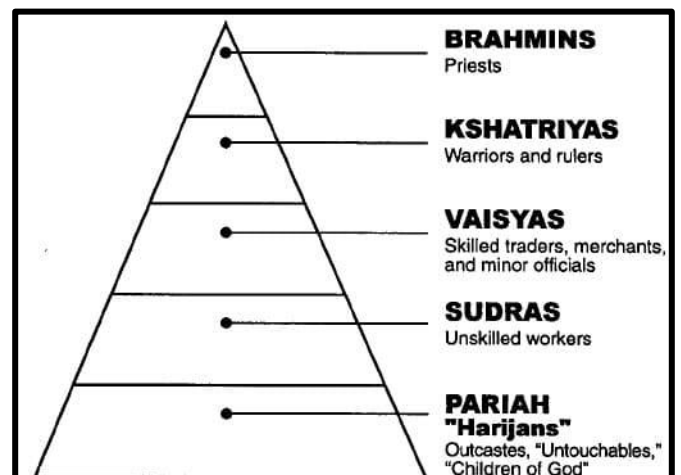
Q2. Major difference between 'Varna' and 'Jati', is that

- (a) Jatis are limited whereas Varnas are unlimited
- (b) Jatis are only four whereas Varnas are many
- (c) Varnas are only four whereas Jatis are many
- (d) Jati is decided by birth but not Varna

Answer: (c) Varnas are only four whereas Jatis are many

- The **Varna system** is a **theoretical classification** into four broad categories: **Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Sudras**.
- **Jati** refers to the **numerous endogamous sub-groups** across India, often based on **occupation, region, and lineage**.
- While **Varna** was originally linked to **duties and qualities**, **Jati** became more **rigid and birth-based** over time.
- Thousands of **Jatis** evolved, making it a more **complex and localized social structure** than the Varna model.

Hence, **option (c)** is the correct answer.



Q3. Ajanta paintings depict

- (a) Ramayana
- (b) Mahabharata
- (c) Jatakas
- (d) Panchatantra

Answer: (c) Jatakas

- The **Ajanta caves**, located in **Maharashtra**, were rediscovered in **1819** during a British tiger hunt.
- These caves served as **Buddhist Viharas** and **Chaitya-grihas**, ideal for **meditation and worship**.

- The murals primarily illustrate **Jataka tales**—stories of **Buddha’s previous births**, conveying moral and spiritual lessons.
- The **second phase** of paintings (5th–6th century AD) features **Bodhisattvas** like **Vajrapani, Manjusri, and Avalokitesvara**.
- The artwork combines **vivid colors, graceful lines, and symbolic imagery**, now classified as **murales**, not frescoes.
- Hence, **option (c)** is the correct answer.

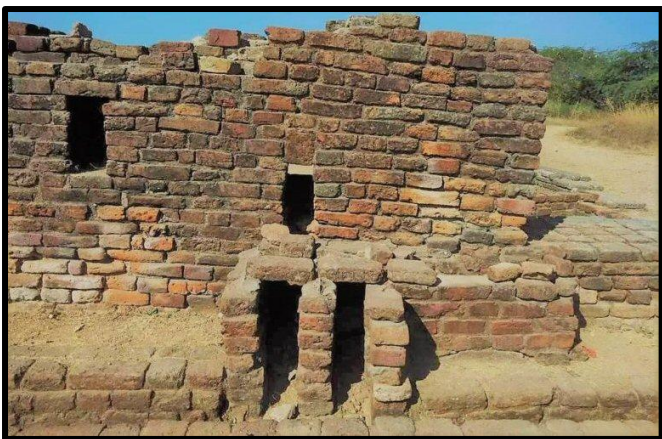
Q4. Which of the following presents the most significant features of Indus Valley Civilisation?

- (a) Buildings with perfect arches
- (b) Use of burnt mud bricks
- (c) Use of sun dried mud bricks
- (d) None of these

Answer: (b) Use of burnt mud bricks

- The **Indus Valley Civilization** was known for its advanced **town planning**, with streets laid out in a **grid pattern**.
- Cities like **Harappa, Mohenjodaro, and Kalibangan** had **citadels and lower towns** built using **burnt bricks**, not stone or sun-dried bricks.
- **Burnt bricks** were used extensively in **houses, walls, and drainage systems**, showcasing engineering skill.
- The civilization lacked **perfect arches**, and **stone architecture** was virtually absent.

Hence, **option (b)** is the correct answer.



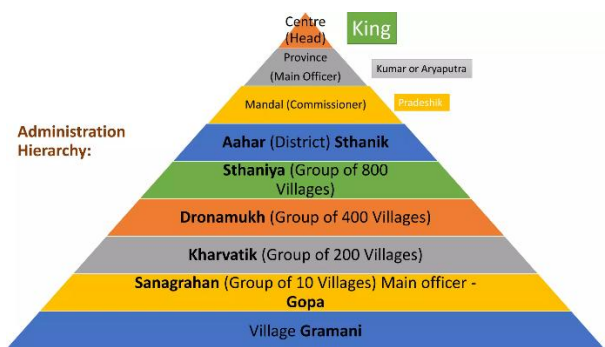
Q5. What was the main feature of Maurya dynasty in India?

- (a) Education was widespread
- (b) Terrorists were driven out of Sind and Punjab
- (c) Removal of land tax for the first time
- (d) Decentralisation of administration

Answer: (d) Decentralisation of administration

- The **Maurya dynasty** marked the rise of **monarchy**, replacing earlier **republics and oligarchies**.
- **Kautilya’s Arthashastra** emphasized a **consultative administration**, not royal absolutism.
- A **Mantriparishad (Council of Ministers)** assisted the king—members included **Purohita, Mahamantri, Senapati, and Yuvaraja**.
- **Amatyas**, akin to modern civil servants, managed daily governance; their selection was systematized.
- **Ashoka** appointed **Dhamma Mahamatras** to oversee moral and religious affairs.
- The administration was divided into **18 departments (tirthas)**, each handling specific functions like **industry, treasury, and security**.

Hence, **option (d)** is the correct answer.



Q6. Indus Valley Civilisation was spread over

- (a) Baluchistan, Sind, Punjab and Rajasthan
- (b) Sind, Punjab and Kashmir
- (c) Afghanistan, Sind, Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Kashmir
- (d) None of these

Answer: (a) Baluchistan, Sind, Punjab and Rajasthan

- The **Indus Valley Civilization** extended across **Baluchistan, Sind, Punjab, Rajasthan, and**

parts of **Afghanistan, Jammu, Kathiawar, and Gujarat.**

- Major sites include **Kot Diji (Sind), Kalibangan (Rajasthan), Rupa (Punjab), Banawali (Haryana), and Lothal, Surkotada, Dholavira (Gujarat).**
- **Mohenjodaro**, the largest city, covered around **200 hectares.**
- Despite broader spread, **option (a)** best captures the **core regions** of Harappan culture.

Hence, **option (a)** is the correct answer.

Q7. Main preachings of Buddha were in regard to

- (a) Right faith and conduct
- (b) Love of God
- (c) Practice of rituals
- (d) Idol worship

Answer: (a) Right faith and conduct

Core Teachings of Buddha

- **Buddha's philosophy** centers on **ethical living, mental discipline, and spiritual insight**, not ritualism or theism.
- His teachings are encapsulated in the **Four Noble Truths**:
 - Life is full of **suffering (dukkha)**
 - Suffering is caused by **desire (tanha)**
 - Ending desire ends suffering
 - The path to end suffering is the **Eightfold Path**

The Eightfold Path (Right Conduct Framework)

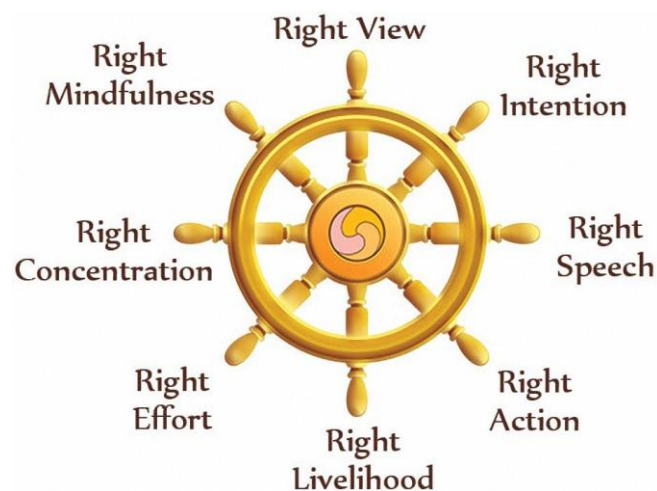
- **Right View**
- **Right Resolve**
- **Right Speech**
- **Right Conduct**
- **Right Livelihood**
- **Right Effort**
- **Right Mindfulness**
- **Right Concentration**

Additional Principles

- **Ahimsa (non-violence)** and **compassion** were central to his moral code
- He emphasized **karma** and rejected the **existence of a permanent soul**

- Buddha neither affirmed nor denied **God's existence**, focusing instead on **self-realization and ethical living**

Hence, **option (a)** is the correct answer, as Buddha's teachings were fundamentally about **right faith and conduct.**



UPSC PYQs – 1985

Q1. Gautam Buddha attained Nirvana at

- (a) Bodh Gaya
- (b) Sarnath
- (c) Kushi Nagar
- (d) Lumbini

Answer: (a) Bodh Gaya

- **Nirvana** in Buddhist context refers to **Enlightenment**, not physical death.
- **Gautam Buddha** attained Nirvana at **Bodh Gaya**, under the **Bodhi tree**, after intense meditation at the age of **35**.
- This moment transformed him into "**The Buddha**", meaning "**The Enlightened One.**"
- He later delivered his **first sermon** at **Sarnath**, and passed away at **Kushinagar**, which is referred to as **Mahaparinirvana** (final liberation).
- **Emperor Ashoka**, a devout Buddhist, commemorated Bodh Gaya by establishing the **Mahabodhi Temple** and the **Vajrasana (Diamond Throne)**—the symbolic **Seat of Enlightenment.**

Hence, **option (a)** is the correct answer.

Q2. Which of the following can be regarded as the chief contribution of Buddhism to India?

- (a) Art and literature
- (b) Architecture
- (c) Ahimsa and self-purification
- (d) Rituals

Answer: (c) Ahimsa and self-purification

Main contribution of Buddhism to India:

- **Rejected rituals and caste system**
- Emphasized **non-violence (Ahimsa)** and **moral living**
- Focused on **self-effort**, not divine intervention
- Promoted **purity in thought, speech, and action**

Hence, **option (c)** is the correct answer.

Q3. Which of the following statements is incorrect?

- (a) Chandragupta Vikramaditya killed the Saka
- (b) Samudragupta is known as Indian Napoleon
- (c) Skandagupta defeated Huns
- (d) Kumaragupta restored the embankment of Sundarsana Lake

Answer: (d) Kumaragupta restored the embankment of Sundarsana Lake

- **Chandragupta Vikramaditya** defeated the **Sakas**, earning the title **Sakari** (destroyer of Sakas).
- **Samudragupta** is called the **Indian Napoleon** due to his extensive military conquests and strategic campaigns.
- **Skandagupta** successfully repelled the **Huna invasions**, preserving Gupta sovereignty.
- The **embankment of Sudarshana Lake** was actually restored by **Rudradaman I**, a **Saka ruler**, as recorded in the **Junagadh inscription (150 AD)**.
- Hence, **option (d)** is the incorrect statement.

Q4. Which of the following was not known to Indus Valley people?

- a) Silver
- (b) Copper
- (c) Iron
- (d) Bronze

Answer: (c) Iron

- The **Indus Valley Civilization** (also called **Harappan Civilization**) was highly advanced in **metalworking**.
- They used **gold, silver, copper, and bronze** to craft **tools, ornaments, and sculptures**.
- The famous **bronze dancing girl** from **Mohenjodaro** was made using the **cire perdue (lost-wax)** casting technique.
- However, **iron** was **not known** to the Harappans; it came into use only during the **later Vedic period**.

Hence, **option (c)** is the correct answer.

Q5. Match the columns :

- 1. Upanishads : 1. World's oldest scriptures
- 2. Samaveda : 2. Magical chants
- 3. Rigveda : 3. Mysterious doctrine
- 4. Atharvaveda : 4. Ritual

Select the correct answer from the codes given below :

A	B	C	D
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)
4	3	1	4
3	4	2	2
2	1	3	1
1	2	4	3

Answer: (b)

Explanation:

- **Upanishads:** Focus on **spiritual philosophy**, metaphysics, and **secret doctrines** taught to select disciples.
- **Samaveda:** Contains **chants and hymns** from Rigveda, set to music for **ritualistic purposes**, especially **Soma sacrifices**.
- **Rigveda:** The **oldest Vedic text**, comprising **1028 hymns**, primarily **invocations to deities**.
- **Atharvaveda:** Reflects **folk traditions**, with **charms, spells, and magical incantations** to ward off evil and disease.

Thus, the correct matching is: **A-3, B-4, C-1, D-2**

Q6. Match the columns :

A. Amarnath	1. Buddhist caves
B. Rock cut temples	2. Jain saint
C. Ajanta	3. Hindu shrine

D. Bahubali

4. Mahabalipuram

Select the correct answer from the codes given below :

A B C D

(a) 3 4 2 1

(b) 4 3 1 2

(c) 3 4 1 2

(d) 4 3 2 1

Answer: (c)

Explanation:

- **Amarnath:** Located in **Jammu & Kashmir**, it is a sacred **Hindu cave shrine** dedicated to **Lord Shiva**, famous for the **ice lingam**.
- **Rock cut temples:** Found in **Mahabalipuram (Mamallapuram)**, carved during the **Pallava period**, especially the **Five Rathas**.
- **Ajanta:** A series of **Buddhist caves** in Maharashtra, dating back to **2nd century BCE**, known for **chaityas, viharas**, and exquisite **murals**.
- **Bahubali:** Revered **Jain saint**, commemorated by the **monolithic statue** at **Shravanabelagola**, Karnataka, consecrated in **981 AD**.

Thus, the correct matching is: **A–3, B–4, C–1, D–2**

UPSC PYQs – 1986

Q1. Which of the following was the principal article of food of the Indus Valley people?

- (a) Fish
- (b) Palm-date
- (c) Eggs
- (d) Wheat

Answer: (d) Wheat

- **Wheat and barley** were the **main crops** cultivated by the Indus Valley people.
- Two types of wheat: **club wheat** and **Indian dwarf wheat** were grown.
- **Barley** was also common, especially the **six-rowed variety**.
- **Rice** was rare and found only at **Lothal and Rangpur** (Gujarat).
- Other crops included **peas, dates, sesame, and mustard** (used for oil).

- Fields were **dug with light tools**, not ploughed.

Hence, **option (d)** is the correct answer.

Q2. Which of the following is a characteristic feature of the Indus Valley Civilisation?

- (a) Their chief deities were Mother Goddess and Shiva
- (b) They worshipped bulls
- (c) They had all amenities of a developed city life
- (d) They did not know of iron

Answer: (c)

- **Urbanisation:** Most remarkable feature
- **City layout:** Divided into **citadel** (elite zone) and **lower town** (residential)
- **Planning:** Based on **grid system** — streets intersecting at right angles
- **Construction:** Use of **baked and unbaked bricks** of standard size
- **Drainage system:** **Underground**, connected to street drains, covered with stone/bricks
- **Citadel examples:** Found in **Harappa, Mohenjodaro, Kalibangan**
- **Wall structures:** Citadel and lower town often **surrounded by walls**
- **Building material:** **No stone buildings**, only bricks

Hence, **option (c)** is the correct answer.

Q3. Gandhara School of Art was developed during the reign of

- (a) Ashoka
- (b) Kanishka
- (c) Chandragupta
- (d) Bindusara

Answer: (b) Kanishka

- **Region:** Originated in and around **Peshawar**, northwestern India
- **Time period:** Flourished during **1st and 2nd centuries A.D.**
- **Initial influence:** Began under **Indo-Greek rulers**
- **Main patrons:** **Sakas** and **Kushanas**, especially **Kanishka**
- **Art style:** Fusion of **Indian** and **Graeco-Roman** elements

- **Key sites:** Sculptures found in **Taxila, Peshawar**, and other northwest Indian locations
- **Themes:** Depictions of **Buddha's birth, renunciation, and preaching**
- **Iconography:** Though stylistically Greco-Roman, the **symbolism is purely Indian**
- **Signature forms:** **Standing or seated Buddha** in various postures and sizes

Hence, option (b) is the correct answer.

Q4. Which of the following was the main reason of the downfall of Mauryan empire?

- (a) Weak successors of Ashoka who could not control the empire properly
- (b) Religious policy of Ashoka
- (c) Ashoka maintained friendly relations with his neighbours
- (d) None of the above

Answer: (a)

- **Post-Ashoka division:** Empire split into **western and eastern parts**
- **Western rule:** Governed by **Kunala** (Ashoka's son), briefly by **Samprati**
- **Centralised administration:** Became **unsustainable** with weak rulers
- **Rapid succession:** **Six rulers** governed the eastern part in just **52 years**
- **Financial decline:** Gradual **weakening of royal finances**
- **Final blow:** Last Mauryan king **assassinated** by **Pusyamitra Sunga**, his own commander-in-chief

Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

Q5. Arrange the following Buddhist councils in a chronological order

- 1. Vaishali 2. Rajagraha
- 3. Patliputra 4. Sreenagar

The correct order is

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

Answer: (d)

- **1st Council – Rajagraha**
 - Held **immediately after Buddha's death**
 - Presided by **Mahakasapa**
 - Aim: Preserve **purity of teachings**
- **2nd Council – Vaishali**
 - Convened by **King Kalasoka** (~383 B.C.)
 - Conflict: **Conservative vs Mahasanghikas** over **Vinaya rules**
 - Outcome: **Mahasanghikas rejected**
- **3rd Council – Patliputra**
 - Patron: **Ashoka**
 - Presided by **Moggaliputta Tissa**
 - Aim: **Reconcile Buddhist schools, purify Sangha**
 - Text: **Kathavatthu** added to **Abhidhamma Pitaka**
- **4th Council – Sreenagar (Kashmir)**
 - Patron: **Kanishka**
 - Presided by **Vasumitra**, attended by **Asvagosha**
 - Outcome: Emergence of **Mahayana Buddhism**
 - Earlier form: **Hinayana Buddhism**

Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

UPSC PYQs – 1987

Q1. Metals known to Indus Valley Civilisation were

- (a) Gold, copper, silver but not iron
- (b) Silver, iron, bronze but not gold
- (c) Iron, copper, gold but not silver
- (d) Zinc, silver, iron but not gold

Answer: (a)

- **Skilled metallurgy:** Indus Valley people were **highly proficient** in metalworking
- **Known metals:** **Gold, silver, copper, and bronze**
- **Iron: Not known** to them
- **Artifacts:**
 - **Jewellery** in gold and silver
 - **Implements** like saws, chisels, knives in copper and bronze
- **Technique used:** **Cire perdue** (lost-wax method) for casting bronze

- **Famous example: Dancing girl of Mohenjodaro** made using this method

Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

Q2. Match the columns :

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| A. Roaper | 1. Informs about Mauryan Empire |
| B. Kumrahar | 2. Treaty of alliance between Bentinck and Ranjit Singh |
| C. Aihole | 3. Statue of Lord Bahubali |
| D. Shravan Belgola | 4. Sites of Chalukyan architecture |

Select the correct answer using the codes given below :

A B C D

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

Answer: (c)

- Ropar is the site where a treaty was signed between **Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Lord William Bentinck**
- **Kumrahar** contains archaeological remains of ancient Pataliputra like the **Eighty Pillared Hall and Arogya Vihar**
- **Megasthenes** gave a vivid account of Pataliputra in his **book Indica**, referring to it as Palibothra
- **Aihole** was the capital of the Chalukya Dynasty and has over 125 temples from the 6th–12th century
- The **Aihole inscription** by Jain poet Ravikeerthi records the achievements of **Pulakesi II**

Q3. Man passed from the food gathering stage to the food producing stage in the

- (a) Neolithic Age
- (b) Mesolithic Age
- (c) Chalcolithic Age
- (d) Palaeolithic Age

Answer: (a)

- Transition to **food production** occurred in the **Neolithic Age**
- Neolithic settlements in India date to around **4000 BC**

- Early sites found in **Sulaiman and Kirtar hills, Vindhya, Garo hills, Baluchistan**
- Humans began to **domesticate animals** like **dog, goat, and sheep**
- **Wheat and barley** were the earliest **crops cultivated**
- Led to **settled life**, formation of **villages and farming communities**
- Tools included **digging stick, sickle, axe, quern, mortar, and pottery**
- Used **Ochre-Coloured Pottery**; discovery of the **wheel**
- End of Neolithic saw **metal use**, leading to **Chalcolithic phase**

Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

Q4. Near the banks of which one of the following rivers, the excavation in recent years has brought to light that Indus Valley Civilization percolated to far south?

- (a) Mahanadi
- (b) Cauvery
- (c) Krishna
- (d) Godavari

Answer: (c)

- Indus Valley Civilization originated in **Sind and Punjab**
- Spread in all directions:
 - **West:** Suktagendor in **South Baluchistan**
 - **East:** **Alamgirpur** in Uttar Pradesh
 - **North:** **Manda** in Jammu & Kashmir
 - **South:** Initially up to **Bhagvatrav** in Narmada estuary
- **Diamabad** (Ahmednagar, Maharashtra): Bronze figurines found on **Pravara River**
- Remnants discovered as far south as **Mumbai**
- **Recent excavations** revealed extension up to **Krishna River**, confirming southern reach

Hence, option (c) is the correct answer.

Q5. Sculptures of the Mathura School of Art, which flourished in the early centuries of the Christian Era, are made out of

- (a) Marble

- (b) Slate stone
- (c) Granite
- (d) Red sandstone

Answer: (d)

- **Mathura School of Art** originated around the **2nd century BC**, flourished by **1st century AD**
- Main production centre was **Mathura**, with **Sarnath** and **Kosambi** as additional hubs
- Sculptures made using **spotted red sandstone**
- Produced large quantities of sculptural works, rivalled only by **Gandhara School**
- Carved images of **Siva, Vishnu, Parvathi**, and **Lakshmi**
- Female figures like **yakshinis** and **apsaras** were depicted with artistic finesse

Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.



Q6. Who among the following was not sent to Lanka for the propagation of Buddhism?

- (a) Rashtriya
- (b) Bhadrasara
- (c) Uttriya
- (d) Sona

Answer: (d)

- **Ashoka** initially followed **Brahmanical faith**, later converted to **Buddhism** after the **Kalinga war**
- Conversion influenced by **Nigrodha**, a young Buddhist novice
- Sent **Mahendra** (son) and **Sanghamitra** (daughter) as **missionaries to Ceylon**
- Also sent a branch of the **original Bodhi tree** to **Sri Lanka**

- Companions of Mahendra included **Itthiya, Uttiya, Sambala, Bhaddasaala, Sumana**, and **Bhanduka**
- **Sona** was **not among** those sent to Lanka for propagation

Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

Q7. The Lingayat movement owes its origin to

- (a) Vidyaranya
- (b) Purandharadasa
- (c) Appar
- (d) Basava

Answer: (d)

- **Lingayat (Virasaiva) movement** was founded by **Basava**, minister of **Chalukya king Bijjala Raya** (1157–68 AD)
- Movement aimed at **social reform** as well as **religious transformation**
- Based on **Visistadvaitavada** philosophy
- Advocated **Saktivisistadvaita** — **non-duality of God (Parasiva)** qualified by **Sakti**
- Emphasized **inseparable union of soul and God** through **Sakti**
- **Para Siva** regarded as the **supreme reality**, the **one Absolute without a second**

Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

Q8. Match the columns :

List-I

1. Rig Veda
2. Yajur Veda
3. Sama Veda
4. Atharva Veda

List-II

1. Musical hymns
2. Hymns and rituals
3. Charms and spells
4. Hymns and prayers

Select the correct answer from the codes given below :

A B C D

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

(d) 2 1 3 4

Answer: (a)

- **Rig Veda** contains **hymns and prayers**, considered the **oldest Veda**
- **Yajur Veda** deals with **rituals and sacrifices**, including **Darsapurnamasa** and **Asvamedha**
- **Sama Veda** focuses on **musical hymns**, derived from Rig Veda and set to **melody**
- **Atharva Veda** includes **charms and spells**, reflecting **folk traditions** and **magical rites**

Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

Q9. Match the columns :

List-I

1. Amaravati
2. Aihole
3. Thanjavur
4. Halebid

List-II

1. Hoysalas
2. Cholas
3. Satavahanas
4. Chalukyas
5. Pandyas

Select the correct answer from the codes given below :

A B C D

- (a) 2 4 1 3
(b) 3 4 5 1
(c) 3 4 2 1
(d) 4 5 2 3

Answer: (c)

- **Amaravati** is associated with the **Satavahanas**, known for early Buddhist art and architecture
- **Aihole** was the capital of the **Chalukya Dynasty**, famous for over **125 temples** and the **Aihole inscription**
- **Thanjavur** was the capital of the **Chola Dynasty**, known for the **Brihadeswara Temple** and **Chola administration**
- **Halebid** was the capital of the **Hoysalas**, known for its **temples, fortifications**, and **prosperity under Ballala II**

Hence, option (c) is the correct answer.

UPSC PYQs – 1989

Q1. The original name of Mahabharata was

- (a) Brihit Katha
(b) Sahastra Samhita
(c) Jaya Samhita
(d) Rajatarangini

Answer: (c)

- Originally known as **Jaya Samhita**
- Later expanded to include **Harivamsha** and **Bhagavad Gita**
- Final form appeared around **400 CE**
- Contains **mythological** and **didactic material**
- Central theme: **struggle for sovereignty** between **Kauravas** and **Pandavas**
- Composed of nearly **100,000 couplets**, divided into **18 parvans (sections)**
- Length is about **seven times** that of the **Iliad** and **Odyssey** combined

Hence, option (c) is the correct answer.



Q2. Jain is differed from Buddhism in which of the following aspects?

- (a) Faith in Karma
(b) Doctrine of Ahimsa
(c) Belief in fasting
(d) Rejection of Yagna

Answer: (a)

- Both **Jainism** and **Buddhism** believe in **karma**, **reincarnation**, and **non-violence**
- **Jainist karma** is viewed as a **real karmic substance** that attaches to the soul

- **Buddhist karma** is seen as the **result of actions**, not a physical entity
- **Jainism** believes the **soul exists in all animate and inanimate things**
- **Buddhism** limits the soul to **living beings** like animals and plants
- **Jainism** follows an **extreme path to salvation**, while **Buddhism** advocates a **middle path**
- **Jainism** emphasizes **lay followers**, **Buddhism** relies on the **Sangha (monastic order)**
- **Jainism** retains **metaphysical discussions**, **Buddhism** avoids them

Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

Q3. Which of the following is not a feature of Gandhara School of Art?

- (a) It was patronised by Sakas and Kushanas
- (b) It has Indian and Greek influence
- (c) It resulted in the origination of Hinayanism
- (d) It portrayed human figures exactly

Answer: (c)

- Developed during **1st century AD** under **Kanishka**, alongside **Mathura School**
- Patronised by **Shakas** and **Kushanas**
- Known for **first sculptural representations of Buddha in human form**
- Influenced by **Greco-Roman style** and **Indian iconography**
- Focused on **Mahayana Buddhism**, not **Hinayanism**
- Sculptures depicted **Buddha's life events** and used **distinct mudras**
- Features like **usina**, **urna**, and **elongated ears** were prominent
- Style included **realistic human figures**, **drapery folds**, and **Apollo-like physiognomy**

Hence, option (c) is the correct answer.

Q4. The Prakrit text "Gathasaptasati" is attributed to the Satavahana king

- (a) Vasishtiputra Pulumavi
- (b) Hala
- (c) Gautamiputra Satkarni
- (d) Amaru

Answer: (b)

- **Gathasaptasati** (also called **Sattasai**) is a **Prakrit anthology of 700 erotic verses**
- Composed by **Satavahana king Hala**, who ruled for **five years**
- Written in **Maharashtri or Paisachi Prakrit**
- Verses are **lyrical, independent**, and rich in **figurative speech**
- Offers a **realistic portrayal of love**, contrasting the **Kamasutra's theoretical tone**
- Depicts **South Indian rural life** and its **emotional depth**

Hence, option (b) is the correct answer.



Q5. "Mitakshara" is associated with

- (a) Yajnavalkya
- (b) Poetics
- (c) Drama
- (d) Grammar

Answer: (a)

- **Mitakshara** is a **commentary on the Smriti of Yajnavalkya**
- Composed by **Vijnanesvara**, a scholar in the **Western Chalukya court**
- Known for its **theory of inheritance by birth**
- Along with **Dayabhaga**, it became a key source of **Hindu Law**
- **Mitakshara** was influential across **most of India**, except **Bengal and Assam**
- Adopted by **British courts** during colonial administration of law

Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

Q6. Match the following :

- | | |
|------------------|---------------|
| A. Chaitya | 1. Amaravat |
| B. Stupa | 2. Besnagar |
| C. Pillar | 3. Karle |
| D. Brick Temples | 4. Bhitragaon |

Select the correct answer from the codes given below :

- | | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|---|
| A | B | C | D | |
| (a) | 1 | 3 | 4 | 2 |
| (b) | 2 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| (c) | 3 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| (d) | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 |

Answer: (c)

- **Chaitya** at **Karle** is the **largest rock-cut chaitya-griha** in India, built during the **Satavahana period**
- **Stupa** at **Amaravati** is one of the **largest Buddhist stupas**, dating to around **200 BC**
- **Pillar** at **Besnagar** is the **Heliodorus pillar**, erected by a **Greek ambassador** in honour of **Vasudeva**
- **Brick Temples** at **Bhitragaon** are the **oldest surviving terracotta Hindu shrines**, built during the **Gupta Empire**

Hence, option (c) is the correct answer.

Q7. Match the following:

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------|
| A. Charak | 1. Samkhya |
| B. Nagarjuna | 2. Sanskrit author |
| C. Kapila | 3. Ayurveda |
| D. Gorakhnath | 4. Rasaratnakara |

Select the correct answer from the codes given below:

- | | | | | |
|-----|---|---|---|---|
| A | B | C | D | |
| (a) | 1 | 2 | 4 | 3 |
| (b) | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 |
| (c) | 4 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| (d) | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 |

Answer: (d)

- **Charak** was a renowned authority on **Ayurveda**, author of the **Charaka Samhita**
- **Nagarjuna** was associated with **Rasaratnakara**, linked to **alchemy and medicine**

- **Kapila** is credited with founding the **Samkhya philosophy**, author of **Samkhya-sutra**
- **Gorakhnath** is traditionally regarded as a **Sanskrit author**, linked to many **yogic and philosophical texts**

Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

Q8. Which of the following statements best explains the nature of tribal polity in the Rig Vedic period?

- (a) It was completely egalitarian
- (b) It had emerging divisions based on lineage and function
- (c) It was based on caste hierarchy
- (d) It was dominated by priests

Answer: (b)

- **Tribal polity** in the **Rig Vedic period** was **not fully egalitarian**
- Division between **rajanyas** (warrior elite, senior lineage) and **vis** (common clansmen, junior lineage)
- **Yajnas (sacrifices)** played a key role in **supporting warrior groups**
- **Purohita (priest)** acted as **mediator** and gained **special status** due to ritual importance
- **Intra and inter-group conflicts** and **resource distribution** led to **social divisions**
- **Purusha Sukta** in the **10th book of Rig Veda** mentions **Brahmana, Rajanya, Vaisya, Sudra** early signs of **caste formation**

Hence, option (b) is the correct answer.

UPSC PYQs – 1990

Q1. Who among the following was not a writer of legal texts?

- (a) Yajnavalkya
- (b) Manu
- (c) Narada
- (d) Bharavi

Answer: (d)

- **Yajnavalkya** authored the **Yajnavalkya Smriti**, a key **code of Hindu law**
- **Manu** composed the **Manu Smriti**, foundational to **Dharmashastra tradition**

- **Narada** wrote the **Narada Smriti**, focused on **procedural and substantive law**
- **Bharavi** was a **Sanskrit poet**, known for **Kiratarjuniya**, a **mahakavya**, not a legal text

Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

Q2. The Harappans did not know the use of

- (a) Bronze
- (b) Gold
- (c) Iron
- (d) Silver

Answer: (c)

- **Iron** was **not known** to the **Harappans**
- Most extensively used metal was **pure copper (unalloyed)**
- **Silver** was the **earliest metal** used, sourced from **Afghanistan, Iran, and Iraq**
- **Gold** came from **Karnataka**, **Copper** from **Rajasthan**, **Lead** from **Kashmir and Rajasthan**
- Harappans also used **Lapis Lazuli** from **Afghanistan**
- They had **advanced metallurgy**, but **iron usage began later**, post-Harappan period

Hence, option (c) is the correct answer.

Q3. The First Buddhist Council met at

- (a) Rajagriha
- (b) Pataliputra
- (c) Jalandhara
- (d) Kashmir

Answer: (a)

- Held **soon after Buddha's death**, around **400 BCE**
- Convened by **Magadha king Ajatasatru** at **Rajagriha**
- Presided by **Mahakasyapa**, a senior monk
- Objective was to **preserve Buddha's teachings (suttas)** and **monastic rules (Vinaya)**
- Marked the **beginning of Buddhist canonical compilation**
- Later councils held at **Vaishali, Pataliputra, Sri Lanka, and Kashmir**

Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

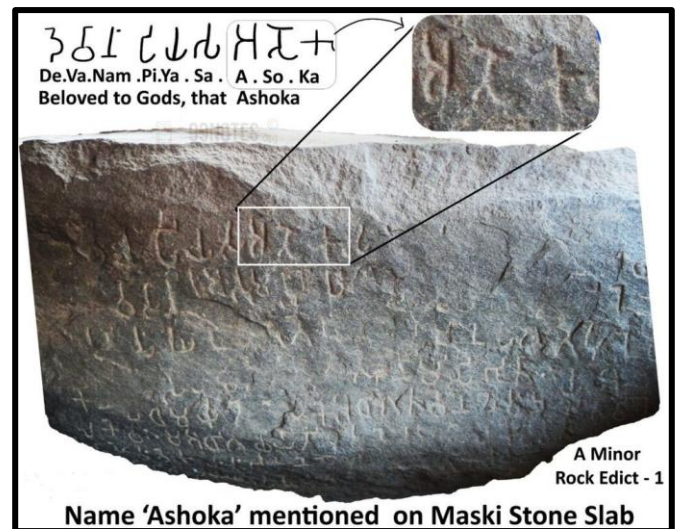
Q4. In which one of the following inscriptions is Ashoka mentioned by name?

- (a) Major Rock edict at Girnar
- (b) Minor Rock inscription at Maski
- (c) Bairat inscription
- (d) Lamghan inscription

Answer: (b)

- **Minor Rock inscription at Maski** is the **only edict** where Ashoka is mentioned by **name**
- Refers to him as **Asoka**, unlike other inscriptions using **titles** like **Devanampiya** and **Piyadassi**
- **Puranas** mention him as **Ashokavardhana**
- **Girnar Inscription of Rudradaman** refers to him as **Asoka Maurya**
- **Babhru Inscription** uses the title **Piyadassi Iaja Magadhe** (King of Magadha)
- **Bairat and Lamghan inscriptions** discuss his **Buddhist affiliation**, but do not name him directly

Hence, option (b) is the correct answer.



Q5. The Stone Age people had the first domestic

- (a) Asses
- (b) Dogs
- (c) Horses
- (d) Sheep

Answer: (d)

- **Sheep** were the **first domesticated animals** by **Stone Age people**

- **Mehrgarh**, located on the **Bolan River**, is one of the **oldest agricultural settlements** in the Indian subcontinent
- Domesticated animals included **cattle, sheep, goat, and water buffalo**
- Cultivated crops were **wheat and barley**, indicating early **farming practices**

Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

Q6. Which one of the following can be classified as a “Pratiloma Marriage”?

- (a) A Brahmin girl marrying a Sudra boy
- (b) A Sudra girl marrying a Brahmin boy
- (c) A Brahmin girl marrying a Brahmin boy
- (d) None of these

Answer: (d)

- **Pratiloma marriage** is when a **man of lower varna** marries a **woman of higher varna**
- Considered **socially unacceptable** in **Dharmashastra tradition**
- Example: **Sudra man** marrying a **Brahmin woman** is **Pratiloma**
- **Anuloma marriage** is the reverse: **upper varna man** marrying **lower varna woman**
- Among the options, **none exactly match** the definition of **Pratiloma marriage**

Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

Q7. Consider the following statements regarding Kautilya’s Arthashastra:

1. It places morality higher than political expediency.
2. It argues the case for a fully-centralised government for the empire.
3. It deals with problems of administration as well as laws of property and crime.
4. It includes section on government of the State and diplomatic relations with other States.

Of these statements

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

Answer: (b)

- **Arthashastra** advocates a **fully-centralised administration**, with the **monarch as the pivot**

- Emphasizes **division of labour** and **coordination** across administrative hierarchy
- Deals extensively with **civil and criminal law**, including **property, crime, and punishment**
- Does **not prioritize morality** over **political expediency**, focusing instead on **pragmatic governance**

Hence, option (b) is the correct answer.

Q8. Match List I with List II and select the correct answer using the codes given below them:

List I (Works)

1. Dayabhaga
2. Mitakshara
3. Nagananda
4. Ramayana

List II (Authors)

1. Harsha
2. Jimutavahana
3. Krittivasa
4. Vijnanesvara

A B C D

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

Answer: (b)

- **Dayabhaga** authored by **Jimutavahana**, commentary on **Yajnavalkya Smriti**
- **Mitakshara** written by **Vijnanesvara**, a key text on **Hindu law**
- **Nagananda** is a **Sanskrit drama** composed by **King Harsha**
- **Ramayana** translated into **Bengali** by **Krittivasa**, known as **Krittivasi Ramayan**

Hence, option (b) is the correct answer.

Q9. Which one of the following was the contemporary Bengal king during the time of Harsha of Kannauj?

- (a) Bhaskaravarman
- (b) Divakaramitra
- (c) Devagupta
- (d) Sasanka

Answer: (d)

- **Sasanka**, ruler of **Gauda (Bengal)**, was the **contemporary and rival** of **Harsha**
- Described by **Bana** and **Hiuen Tsang** as a **hostile figure**
- Harsha launched **military campaigns** against Sasanka, including an invasion of **Pundra**
- After **Sasanka's death**, Harsha annexed **Bengal, South Bihar, and Magadha**
- **Bhaskaravarman** of **Kamarupa** was an **ally** of Harsha and **enemy** of Sasanka

Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

UPSC PYQs – 1991

Q1. It is said that of the five doctrines taught by Jainism, four were taken over by Mahavira from previous teachers and only one was added by him. Which one of the following was the doctrine added by him?

- (a) Do not commit violence
- (b) Observe continence
- (c) Do not acquire property
- (d) Do not speak a lie

Answer: (b)

- **Mahavira**, the **24th Tirthankara**, refined Jain ethical teachings
- Adopted four doctrines from **Parsva**:
 - **Ahimsa** (non-violence)
 - **Satya** (truthfulness)
 - **Asteya** (non-stealing)
 - **Aparigraha** (non-possession)
- Added the fifth vow: **Brahmacharya** (continence or celibacy)
- These five vows became central to **Jain monastic and lay conduct**

Hence, option (b) is the correct answer.



Q2. Indus valley civilisation is also known as the Harappan culture because

- (a) The site of Harappa is six times larger than Mohenjodaro site
- (b) The Indus valley civilisation is considered the elementary/initial stage of the Vedic culture and Harappa is believed to be the same as Harappa mentioned in the Vedas
- (c) Harappa was the first site to be excavated in the Indus valley
- (d) The most important/significant evidence of the achievements of this civilisation have been excavated from Harappa

Answer: (c)

- **Harappa** was the **first site excavated** in the Indus Valley region, in **1921**
- Located in **West Punjab (now in Pakistan)**
- The term **Harappan culture** became synonymous with the **Indus Valley Civilization** due to this early discovery
- Civilization showed **advanced urban planning**, including **wells, bathrooms, and drainage systems**
- Social conditions were **comparable to Sumerians** and **superior to Babylonians and Egyptians**

Hence, option (c) is the correct answer.

Q3. Which one of the following does not indicate the difference between Mahayanism and Hinayanism?

- (a) Belief in the Bodhisattvas
- (b) Worship of the image of Buddha
- (c) Use of the Sanskrit language
- (d) Admission of women into the monasteries

Answer: (d)

- **Mahayanism** emphasizes **Bodhisattvas** and their role in guiding beings to salvation
- **Hinayanism** focuses on **individual liberation**, viewing Buddha as a **human teacher**
- **Mahayana texts** are primarily in **Sanskrit**, while **Hinayana texts** are in **Pali**
- **Image worship** is common in **Mahayana**, less emphasized in **Hinayana**

- **Admission of women** into monasteries was **accepted in both traditions**, not a point of doctrinal difference

Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

Q4. Which one of the following archaeologists initially discovered the Mohenjodaro site of the Indus Valley civilisation?

- (a) Sujohu Marshall
- (b) Daya Ram Sahni
- (c) Rakhal Das Banerji
- (d) Sir Mortimer Wheeler

Answer: (c)

- **Rakhal Das Banerji** (also known as **R.D. Banerji**) was the **first to discover** the site of **Mohenjodaro** in **1922**
- While working in **Sindh province**, he identified **high mounds** with **pottery, seals, beads, and tools**
- This led to the **excavation of a large urban settlement** built with **fired and mortared bricks**
- **Mohenjodaro**, meaning “**Mound of the Dead**” in Sindhi, became one of the **most iconic sites** of the **Indus Valley Civilization**
- Other archaeologists like **Daya Ram Sahni** excavated **Harappa**, and **Sir Mortimer Wheeler** contributed later to the study of the civilization

Hence, option (c) is the correct answer.

UPSC PYQs – 1992

Q1. Some Buddhist rock-cut caves are called chaityas while the others viharas. What is the difference between the two?

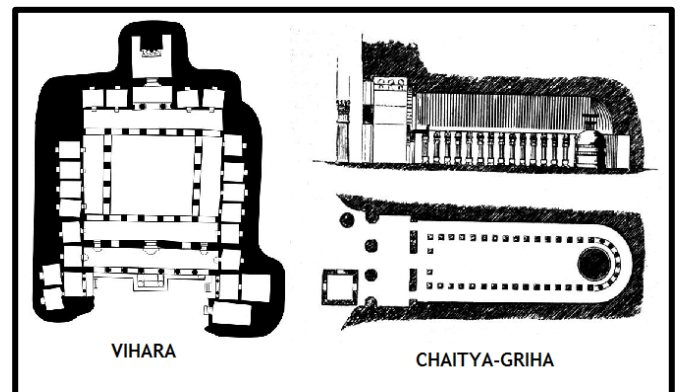
- (a) Chaityas is a place of worship while vihara is the dwelling place of the monks
- (b) Chaityas is the stupa at the far end of the cave while vihara is the hall axial to it
- (c) There is no material difference between the two
- (d) Vihara is a place of worship while chaityas is the dwelling place of the monks

Answer: (a)

Key Differences :

- **Chaitya:**
 - **Place of worship**, primarily for **prayer and assembly**
 - Contains a **stupa** at the **apsidal (semicircular) end**
 - Features include **nave, aisles, pillars,** and **chaitya windows** (horse-shoe shaped)
 - Early chaityas were **wooden**, later **rock-cut**
- **Vihara:**
- **Monastic dwelling**, used as **residence for monks**
- Typically consists of **cells** arranged around a **central hall**
- Lacks a stupa, focused on **living and study**
- Also evolved from **wooden to stone-cut architecture**

Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.



Q2. Which one of the following does not constitute part of the Veda?

- (a) Nirukta
- (b) Samhita
- (c) Brahmana
- (d) Aranyaka

Answer: (a)

Vedic Composition:

- **Vedas** are the foundational scriptures of **Hindu knowledge system**
- Composed of **four Vedas: Rig, Yajur, Sama,** and **Atharva**
- Each Veda has **three main parts:**
 - **Samhita** – hymns and mantras

- **Brahmana** – rituals and sacrificial methods
- **Aranyakas** – forest texts, meditative practices
- **Upanishads** often appear at the end of Aranyakas, forming **Vedanta**

What is Nirukta?

- **Nirukta** is one of the **six Vedangas** (auxiliary disciplines)
- Focuses on **etymology** and **interpretation of Vedic words**
- Helps explain **rare and archaic terms** in the Vedas
- **Not a direct part** of the Vedic corpus itself

Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

Q3. In ancient India the territorial name Tosali referred to

- (a) The region between the rivers Jhelum and Chenab
- (b) The basin of the river Son
- (c) The delta of the river Cauvery
- (d) The area of the river Mahanadi

Answer: (d)

- **Tosali (or Tosala)** was a prominent **political and cultural region** in ancient **Odisha**
- Mentioned in the **Parisistha of Atharva Veda** and **Puranas**, alongside regions like **Kosala**
- Referenced in **Jaina texts** like *Avasyaka Niryukti* and **Ashoka's Dhauli inscription**
- Identified by scholars with **Sisupalgarh**, near modern **Bhubaneswar**
- Divided into:
 - **Uttara Tosali** – covering **Midnapore, Mayurbhanj, Balasore, and northern Cuttack**
 - **Dakshina Tosali** – covering **Puri, southern Cuttack, and Ganjam**
- **River Mahanadi** served as the **dividing line** between the two regions

Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

Q4. Which one of the following was worshipped as a heavenly God by ancient Indians?

- (a) Surya
- (b) Angaraka (Mangala)

- (c) Sukra
- (d) Sani

Answer: (a)

- **Surya**, also known as **Aditya**, was revered as a **heavenly deity** and **source of life**
- First appears in the **Rigveda**, the **oldest Vedic text** (1500–1000 BCE)
- Regarded as the **creator of the universe** and central to **sacrificial rituals**
- **Brahmanas** worshipped Surya as a **Sattvic deity**, symbolizing **purity and illumination**
- Later Vedic texts expanded Surya's role through the **Adityas**, with **Savitr** and **Vishnu** as solar aspects
- Other planetary deities like **Angaraka (Mars), Sukra (Venus), and Sani (Saturn)** were recognized later but not central in early Vedic worship

Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.

Q5. In which one of the following the Gandhara sculptures of the Buddha are typically Indian and not Greek or Roman?

- (a) In the treatment of the robe
- (b) In the rendering of the physiognomy
- (c) In the iconography
- (d) In the style

Answer: (c)

- **Gandhara School of Art** flourished in **northwestern India**, especially around **Peshawar**
- Developed under **Indo-Greek influence**, but patronized by **Sakas and Kushanas**, notably **Kanishka**
- Known for blending **Graeco-Roman techniques** with **Indian themes**
- Features include:
 - **Realistic drapery** and **physiognomy** influenced by **Greek and Roman art**
 - **Iconography** — the **symbolism, gestures (mudras), and spiritual attributes** of Buddha — remained **purely Indian**
 - Depictions of **Buddha's life events** like **birth, renunciation, and preaching** were based on **Indian religious tradition**

Hence, option (c) is the correct answer.

Q6. Fresco paintings in the Ajanta Caves were done, while which of the following dynasties was flourishing?

- (a) Guptas
- (b) Sungas
- (c) Kanvas
- (d) Mauryas

Answer: (a)

- **Ajanta Caves** date back to the **2nd–1st centuries BCE**, but the **fresco paintings** were added during the **Gupta period (5th–6th centuries CE)**
- These paintings are in the form of “**dry fresco**”, applied over **dry plaster**, unlike traditional wet fresco techniques
- The **Gupta dynasty** is known for its **patronage of art and culture**, especially **Buddhist themes**
- Ajanta murals depict **Jataka tales, Buddha’s life**, and **courtly scenes**, with **sophisticated motifs and sculptural influences**
- The style is **fluid, expressive, and panoramic**, breaking away from rigid horizontal compositions

Hence, option (a) is the correct answer.



Q7. Which one of the following is a Vedanga?

- (a) Sruti
- (b) Smriti
- (c) Nirukta

(d) Samhita

Answer: (c)

- **Vedangas** are six **auxiliary disciplines** essential for understanding the **Vedas**
- They include:
 - **Shiksha** – phonetics and pronunciation
 - **Chandas** – metrics and prosody
 - **Vyakarana** – grammar
 - **Nirukta** – **etymology and interpretation of Vedic words**
 - **Kalpa** – rituals and sacrificial procedures
 - **Jyotisha** – astronomy and calendrical science
- **Nirukta** is the **science of word roots and meanings**, helping decode **archaic Vedic terms**
- **Sruti, Smriti, and Samhita** are **categories of sacred texts**, not Vedangas
- **Sruti** – revealed texts (e.g., Vedas)
- **Smriti** – remembered texts (e.g., Dharmashastras)
- **Samhita** – the mantra portion of the Vedas

Hence, option (c) is the correct answer.

Q8. Burma was known to ancient Indians as

- (a) Suvarnabhumi
- (b) Suvarnavdipa
- (c) Yavadvipa
- (d) Malayamandalam

Ans. (a)

The island of Sumatra is often describes as **Suvarnavdipa** (“Islands of Gold”). The term Suvarnabhumi (“Land of Gold”), is commonly thought to refer to the Southeast **Asian Peninsula, including lower Burma and the Malay Peninsula**.

Q1. The last in the succession of Jaina Tirthankaras was

- (a) Parsvanatha
- (b) Rishabha
- (c) Mahavira
- (d) Manisubrata

Answer: (c)

- **Mahavira** was the **24th and last Tirthankara** of the current Jain cycle
- Born in **Kundgram**, near **Vaishali**, to **King Siddhartha** and **Queen Trishala**
- His maternal grandfather was **King Chetak**, President of the **Vaishali Republic**
- His birth is celebrated as **Janma Kalyanak Mahotsava**, with divine rituals led by **Indra**
- He revitalized Jainism and emphasized **non-violence, truth, non-stealing, non-possession, and celibacy**
- The **first Tirthankara** was **Rishabhanatha**, marking the beginning of the Jain tradition

Hence, option (c) is the correct answer.

Q2. The term nishka, which meant an ornament in the Vedic period, was used in later times to denote a/an

- (a) weapon
- (b) agricultural implement
- (c) script
- (d) coin

Answer: (d)

- In the **Vedic period**, **Nishka** originally referred to a **gold ornament**, often worn around the neck
- In **later periods**, it evolved into a term for a **coin**, specifically a **small gold unit of fixed weight**
- Used during the **Mahajanapada era (6th century BCE)** for **large transactions**
- Coinage system included:
 - **Gold coins – Nishka, Suvarna**
 - **Silver coins – Karshapana, Dharana**
 - **Copper coins – Karshapana** for daily use

- This transition reflects the **economic evolution** from **barter and ornamentation** to **monetary exchange**

Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

Q3. The Buddhist sect Mahayana formally came into existence during the reign of

- (a) Ajatashatru
- (b) Ashoka
- (c) Dharmapala
- (d) Kanishka

Answer: (d)

- **Mahayana Buddhism** emerged during the reign of **Kanishka**, a **Kushan emperor**
- He convened the **Fourth Buddhist Council** in **Kashmir or Jullundhar**
- Presided over by **Vasumitra** and **Asvaghosha**, the council addressed doctrinal disputes
- Resulted in the compilation of the **Mahavibhasa**, a massive commentary on the **Pitakas**
- Marked the **rise of Mahayana**, which introduced:
 - **Bodhisattva ideal**
 - **New deities and heavens**
 - Emphasis on **compassion and universal salvation**
- In contrast, **Hinayana (Theravada)** remained focused on **individual liberation, strict adherence** to original teachings, and **rejection of metaphysical speculation**

Hence, option (d) is the correct answer.

Q4. In Jainism 'perfect knowledge' is referred to as

- (a) Jina
- (b) Ratna
- (c) Kaivalya
- (d) Nirvana

Answer: (c)

- **Kaivalya** means **perfect knowledge** or **absolute omniscience**
- Achieved when the **soul (Jiva)** is completely freed from **karmic bondage**
- It is the state of **pure, infinite knowledge**, distinct from **Nirvana** in Buddhism