

NDA HISTORY

Complete Study Notes • 50 Practice MCQs • Answer Key

GENERAL ABILITY TEST — PART B

Indian History • Culture & Civilisation • Freedom Movement
World Revolutions • Constitution & Administration • Global Institutions

PREPARED FOR NDA ASPIRANTS
Clear explanations • Exam-focused facts • Chronology • Quick revision • Practice test

ENGLISH MEDIUM | STUDY + PRACTICE EDITION

How to Use This Book

This study pack is designed around the History, Freedom Movement and related social-studies themes in the NDA General Ability Test. It combines a broad survey of Indian history with selected world-history developments and the constitutional, civic and international themes traditionally included in the syllabus.

Suggested method: First read each unit, then revise the timelines and quick-recall boxes. Attempt all 50 MCQs without looking at the answer key. Review incorrect answers and revisit the relevant unit.

Exam note: The UPSC syllabus describes the scope of the General Ability Test broadly; topics of a similar nature may also be asked. This material is a focused preparation aid, not a substitute for the latest official examination notification and previous-year papers.

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1. Ancient India: Prehistory, Indus Valley and Vedic Age

Ancient Indian history is studied through archaeological remains, inscriptions, coins and literary sources. Remember the broad sequence: prehistoric cultures → Harappan civilisation → Vedic society → mahajanapadas.

1.1 Prehistoric cultures

- **Palaeolithic Age:** Old Stone Age; hunting and gathering; crude chipped stone tools; people used caves and rock shelters. Bhimbetka in Madhya Pradesh is famous for prehistoric rock shelters and paintings.
- **Mesolithic Age:** Middle Stone Age; microliths (small stone tools), hunting, fishing and early animal domestication; examples include Bagor in Rajasthan and Adamgarh in Madhya Pradesh.
- **Neolithic Age:** New Stone Age; polished stone tools, agriculture, animal domestication and settled village life. Mehrgarh (in present-day Pakistan) is an early farming settlement.
- **Chalcolithic Age:** Copper and stone tools used together; village communities expanded; examples include Ahar-Banas, Malwa and Jorwe cultures.

1.2 Indus Valley / Harappan Civilisation (c. 2600–1900 BCE)

- A Bronze Age urban civilisation spread across present-day Pakistan and north-western India. Major sites: Harappa (Punjab, Pakistan), Mohenjo-daro (Sindh), Dholavira (Gujarat), Lothal (Gujarat), Kalibangan (Rajasthan), Rakhigarhi (Haryana) and Banawali (Haryana).
- Town planning featured grid-pattern streets, baked-brick buildings, drainage systems, wells and often a citadel and lower town.
- The Great Bath at Mohenjo-daro is a notable public structure. Dholavira is known for water management and a large signboard. Lothal is associated with a dockyard-like basin and craft/trade activity.
- The economy included agriculture (wheat, barley, pulses, cotton), animal husbandry, craft production and long-distance trade with Mesopotamia. Standardised weights and seals indicate organised exchange.
- The script remains undeciphered. Seals often show animals; the unicorn motif is common. There is evidence of bronze casting, bead-making, pottery and shell work.
- The civilisation did not simply disappear in one event. Changes in river systems, climate, trade and settlement patterns likely contributed to gradual de-urbanisation.

1.3 Vedic Age (c. 1500–600 BCE)

- The Rigveda is the oldest Veda and a major source for the Early Vedic period. The four Vedas are Rig, Sama, Yajur and Atharva.
- Early Vedic society was largely pastoral, with cattle as an important measure of wealth. The jana (tribe) and assemblies such as sabha and samiti are mentioned.

- Important deities in the Rigvedic hymns include Indra, Agni, Varuna and Soma. The later Vedic period saw greater importance of agriculture, territorial kingdoms and elaborate rituals.
- The varna framework became more pronounced in later Vedic texts. The four ashramas became a later idealised scheme of life stages.
- The Upanishads explore philosophical questions about the self (atman), ultimate reality (brahman), knowledge and liberation.

Exam focus: Match sites with states and distinctive features; distinguish Early Vedic pastoral society from later Vedic agrarian and ritual developments.

2. Ancient India: Mahajanapadas, Buddhism, Jainism and Mauryas

2.1 Sixteen Mahajanapadas (c. 6th century BCE)

- The Buddhist Anguttara Nikaya lists sixteen major states. Important examples: Magadha, Kosala, Vatsa, Avanti, Vajji, Malla, Kashi, Anga and Gandhara.
- Magadha became powerful due to fertile alluvial land, access to iron ore, elephants, river routes and capable rulers. Early capitals included Rajagriha (Rajgir) and later Pataliputra.
- Bimbisara and Ajatashatru were important Haryanka rulers. The Nandas preceded the Mauryas and maintained a large army.

2.2 Buddhism

- Gautama Buddha was born at Lumbini, attained enlightenment at Bodh Gaya, delivered his first sermon at Sarnath and attained mahaparinirvana at Kushinagar.
- The Four Noble Truths explain suffering (dukkha), its cause (craving), its cessation and the path leading to cessation. The Noble Eightfold Path is the practical route.
- The Middle Path avoids extremes of luxury and severe self-mortification. The Sangha was the monastic community.
- The First Buddhist Council is traditionally associated with Rajagriha under Ajatashatru; the Second with Vaishali; the Third with Pataliputra under Ashoka; the Fourth is associated in some traditions with Kashmir under Kanishka.
- Buddhist teachings spread through monastic networks, trade routes, royal patronage and missions. Ashoka's support helped Buddhism travel beyond the subcontinent.

2.3 Jainism

- Jain tradition recognises 24 Tirthankaras. Rishabhanatha is regarded as the first; Vardhamana Mahavira, the 24th, was born near Vaishali and attained nirvana at Pavapuri.
- The five great vows are ahimsa (non-violence), satya (truth), asteya (non-stealing), aparigraha (non-possession) and brahmacharya (celibacy/chastity).
- Jainism emphasises strict non-violence, self-discipline, karma and liberation (moksha). Digambara and Shvetambara are the two major traditions.

2.4 Mauryan Empire (c. 322–185 BCE)

- Chandragupta Maurya founded the empire after overthrowing the Nandas, with the guidance traditionally attributed to Chanakya/Kautilya. Megasthenes, a Greek ambassador, wrote Indica.
- Bindusara succeeded Chandragupta. Ashoka became the best-known Mauryan ruler; the Kalinga War (c. 261 BCE) deeply influenced his public policy.
- Ashoka's edicts, inscribed on rocks and pillars, communicate dhamma: respect, restraint, compassion, welfare and religious tolerance. Most were in Prakrit using Brahmi script; north-western inscriptions also used Kharosthi, Greek or Aramaic.
- The Lion Capital at Sarnath is the source of India's State Emblem. The Ashoka Chakra appears at the centre of the National Flag.
- The Arthashastra, traditionally attributed to Kautilya, discusses statecraft, administration, economy, diplomacy and military organisation.

Remember: Buddha’s four key places are Lumbini–Bodh Gaya–Sarnath–Kushinagar. Ashoka’s turning point was the Kalinga War; his messages are known mainly from inscriptions.

3. Post-Mauryan India, Gupta Age and Early South India

3.1 Post-Mauryan developments

- After the Mauryas, several powers emerged, including the Shungas, Kanvas, Indo-Greeks, Shakas, Parthians and Kushanas.
- Kanishka, a major Kushana ruler, patronised Buddhism and is associated with the spread of Mahayana Buddhism. The Kushana realm linked India with Central Asian trade routes.
- The Gandhara school shows strong Greco-Roman artistic influence, often using grey schist; the Mathura school used red sandstone and developed indigenous styles. Both produced Buddha images.
- The Satavahanas ruled much of the Deccan. Gautamiputra Satakarni is a prominent ruler. Their inscriptions and coins are important sources; Prakrit was widely used.

3.2 Gupta Age (c. 4th–6th centuries CE)

- The Gupta dynasty rose under rulers such as Chandragupta I, Samudragupta and Chandragupta II. The Allahabad Pillar inscription, composed by Harisena, praises Samudragupta's campaigns.
- Chandragupta II is associated with the title Vikramaditya and the expansion of Gupta power. Fa-Hien, a Chinese pilgrim, visited India during his reign.
- The period saw major developments in Sanskrit literature, mathematics, astronomy, sculpture and temple architecture. It is often called a classical age, though prosperity and cultural achievements varied across regions and communities.
- Aryabhata wrote the Aryabhatiya and made important contributions to mathematics and astronomy. Kalidasa is associated with works such as Abhijnanashakuntalam and Meghaduta.

- Gupta coins, inscriptions and land grants are key historical sources. Nalanda developed as an important centre of learning over time.

3.3 Early South India and Sangam Age

- Sangam literature, composed in ancient Tamil, is a major source for early historic south India. It refers to the Cheras, Cholas and Pandyas.
- The Cheras were associated with the western coast; the Cholas with the Kaveri region; and the Pandyas with Madurai. Trade connected south India with the Roman world and the Indian Ocean network.
- The five Tamil landscapes (tinai) in Sangam poetry reflect ecological zones and associated ways of life.
- The Pallavas, with centres at Kanchipuram and Mamallapuram, are known for rock-cut and structural temples. The Chalukyas of Badami and the Rashtrakutas were major Deccan powers.

4. Early Medieval India and Regional Kingdoms

4.1 North India and the tripartite struggle

- After Harsha's death in the 7th century, north India saw several regional powers. Harsha's court poet Banabhatta wrote Harshacharita; the Chinese traveller Xuanzang visited during Harsha's reign.
- The Palas of Bengal and Bihar, Pratiharas of western/northern India and Rashtrakutas of the Deccan competed for control of Kannauj. This is called the tripartite struggle.
- The Palas supported Buddhist institutions such as Vikramashila and were important patrons of learning and art.

4.2 Cholas and temple-centred polity

- The Imperial Cholas expanded from the Kaveri delta. Rajaraja I built the Brihadisvara Temple at Thanjavur; Rajendra I founded Gangaikondacholapuram and led overseas expeditions.
- Chola administration used village assemblies. The Uttaramerur inscriptions provide details of local self-government and committee selection.
- Chola bronzes, especially the Nataraja image, are celebrated examples of South Indian metal sculpture.

4.3 Other regional traditions

- The Hoysalas built richly sculpted temples at Belur, Halebidu and Somanathapura.
- The Kakatiyas were associated with Warangal; the Yadavas with Devagiri; and the Paramaras with Malwa.
- Bhakti traditions emphasised personal devotion. Alvars were Vaishnava poet-saints and Nayanars were Shaiva poet-saints of Tamil region.
- The growth of regional languages and temple networks shaped social, cultural and political life.

5. Medieval India: Delhi Sultanate and Vijayanagara

5.1 Delhi Sultanate (1206–1526)

- The five dynasties were Mamluk/Slave, Khalji, Tughlaq, Sayyid and Lodi.
- Qutb-ud-din Aibak founded the Mamluk rule in 1206. Iltutmish consolidated the Sultanate and received recognition from the Abbasid Caliph. Razia was the first and only woman to rule Delhi as Sultan.
- Balban strengthened kingship and court discipline. Alauddin Khalji expanded the empire and introduced market-control measures, price regulations and military reforms.
- Muhammad bin Tughlaq is remembered for ambitious experiments, including the transfer of the capital towards Daulatabad and token currency; their implementation faced serious difficulties.
- Firoz Shah Tughlaq undertook public works and canal projects. The Lodi dynasty was the last Sultanate dynasty; Ibrahim Lodi was defeated by Babur at the First Battle of Panipat in 1526.
- Indo-Islamic architecture developed through arches, domes, minarets, calligraphy and local building traditions. Qutub Minar's construction began under Aibak and was continued by Iltutmish.

5.2 Vijayanagara Empire

- Founded in 1336 by Harihara and Bukka, the empire became a major power in south India. Its capital was Vijayanagara (Hampi).
- Krishnadevaraya of the Tuluva dynasty was a celebrated ruler. His reign saw military success, literary patronage and temple building. He authored Amuktamalyada in Telugu.
- The empire's economy included agriculture, irrigation, craft production and overseas trade. Portuguese travellers such as Domingo Paes and Fernao Nuniz left accounts.
- The Battle of Talikota (1565) dealt a major blow to Vijayanagara, though successor rulers continued in other centres.

5.3 Bhakti and Sufi movements

- Bhakti saints such as Kabir, Guru Nanak, Mirabai, Tulsidas, Surdas, Chaitanya and Namdev stressed devotion and, in different ways, challenged rigid social or ritual hierarchies.
- Sufi orders (silsilas) emphasised spiritual discipline, love, service and remembrance of God. The Chishti order became influential in India; Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti is associated with Ajmer and Nizamuddin Auliya with Delhi.
- The teachings and poetry of saints helped shape vernacular languages, music and shared cultural spaces. Their ideas were diverse; they should not be treated as one uniform movement.

6. Mughal India, Marathas and Later Regional Powers

6.1 Mughal Empire

- Babur defeated Ibrahim Lodi at the First Battle of Panipat (1526), Rana Sanga at Khanwa (1527) and established Mughal power in north India.

- Humayun lost power to Sher Shah Suri, who introduced administrative and revenue measures and improved roads, including the road later known as the Grand Trunk Road. Humayun regained Delhi in 1555.
- Akbar expanded the empire, strengthened the mansabdari system, introduced a more systematic revenue arrangement associated with Todar Mal, and pursued sulh-i-kul (peace with all).
- Jahangir's reign is associated with painting and the influence of Nur Jahan. Shah Jahan built the Taj Mahal, Red Fort and Jama Masjid in Delhi. Aurangzeb's long reign saw territorial expansion but also prolonged conflicts and fiscal strain.
- Mughal administration combined central authority, provincial government, mansabdars and jagirdars. Persian was the main language of court administration.

6.2 Marathas and regional states

- Shivaji established a strong Maratha state and was crowned at Raigad in 1674. He used forts, mobile forces and a capable administrative system; the council of eight ministers was called Ashtapradhan.
- The Peshwas later became the effective leaders of the Maratha confederacy. The Third Battle of Panipat (1761) was fought between the Marathas and Ahmad Shah Abdali.
- The 18th century saw the rise of regional powers such as Bengal, Awadh, Hyderabad, Mysore and the Sikh misls. Haidar Ali and Tipu Sultan of Mysore resisted British expansion.

Chronology anchor: 1206 — Delhi Sultanate begins; 1336 — Vijayanagara founded; 1526 — Mughal rule begins in north India; 1565 — Talikota; 1674 — Shivaji's coronation; 1761 — Third Battle of Panipat.

7. Art, Architecture, Literature and Cultural Heritage

7.1 Architecture and sculpture

- **Stupa:** A hemispherical mound associated with Buddhist relics and worship. Sanchi is a major example; gateways (toranas) carry narrative reliefs.
- **Rock-cut architecture:** Ajanta is famous for Buddhist caves and paintings; Ellora contains Buddhist, Hindu and Jain monuments. The Kailasa temple at Ellora was commissioned under the Rashtrakutas.
- **Temple styles:** Nagara is broadly associated with north India and a curvilinear shikhara; Dravida with south India and a tiered vimana; Vesara is a term used for Deccan combinations and regional forms.
- **Indo-Islamic architecture:** Uses arches, domes, minarets, geometric ornament and calligraphy, often combined with Indian craft traditions. Examples include Qutub complex, Alai Darwaza, Humayun's Tomb and the Taj Mahal.
- **Paintings:** Ajanta murals, Mughal miniatures, Rajput schools and Pahari paintings reflect distinct courtly, religious and regional traditions.

7.2 Literature, science and education

- The Vedas, Upanishads, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Puranas, Buddhist Pali texts and Jain Prakrit texts are foundational literary traditions.
- Kalidasa, Banabhatta, Bhavabhuti and Bharavi are major Sanskrit writers. Sangam works are important for early Tamil history.
- Amir Khusrau contributed to Persian literature and Indo-Persian cultural life. Abul Fazl wrote Akbarnama and Ain-i-Akbari.
- Ancient and medieval India contributed to mathematics, astronomy, medicine and metallurgy. Aryabhata, Brahmagupta and Bhaskara II are important mathematicians/astronomers; Charaka and Sushruta are associated with medical traditions.

7.3 Music and cultural traditions

- The broad traditions of Hindustani and Carnatic classical music developed through long histories of interaction and regional evolution.
- Temple festivals, pilgrimage networks, crafts, textiles, dance and oral traditions helped transmit culture across generations.
- For objective questions, practise matching monuments, patrons, locations, texts and authors.

8. Modern India: Europeans, British Expansion and Administration

8.1 Arrival of Europeans

- The Portuguese reached the Indian Ocean route after Vasco da Gama arrived at Calicut in 1498. The Portuguese captured Goa in 1510 under Afonso de Albuquerque.
- The Dutch, English, Danes and French established trading settlements. The English East India Company was chartered in 1600; the French East India Company was established in 1664.
- The Carnatic Wars (1746–1763) were part of Anglo-French rivalry in India. British victory strengthened the English position.

8.2 Expansion of British power

- The Battle of Plassey (1757) gave the Company decisive influence in Bengal after the defeat of Siraj-ud-Daulah. The Battle of Buxar (1764) strengthened Company power against the combined forces of Mir Qasim, Shuja-ud-Daulah and Shah Alam II.
- The Treaty of Allahabad (1765) granted the Company diwani rights (revenue collection) in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa.
- Warren Hastings was the first Governor-General of Bengal under the Regulating Act of 1773. The Charter Act of 1833 made the Governor-General of Bengal the Governor-General of India; Lord William Bentinck was the first to hold that title.
- The Subsidiary Alliance is associated with Lord Wellesley. The Doctrine of Lapse is associated with Lord Dalhousie.

- Anglo-Mysore Wars ended with Tipu Sultan's death at Seringapatam in 1799. The Anglo-Maratha Wars (1775–1818) ended Maratha political supremacy.

8.3 Colonial policies and administration

- **Permanent Settlement (1793):** Introduced by Lord Cornwallis in Bengal; zamindars were recognised as revenue-collectors/proprietors with a fixed state demand.
- **Ryotwari:** Revenue settlement made directly with cultivators (ryots), associated with Thomas Munro and Alexander Read in parts of south and west India.
- **Mahalwari:** Revenue settlement with village estates or mahals, associated with Holt Mackenzie and later reforms in north-western India.
- The Charter Act of 1813 ended the Company's trade monopoly in India except for tea and trade with China; the Charter Act of 1833 ended its commercial activities.
- The English Education Act and Wood's Despatch (1854) were important in colonial education policy. Railways, telegraph and postal systems expanded, primarily to serve colonial administration, commerce and military movement.

9. Revolt of 1857 and Socio-Religious Reform

9.1 Revolt of 1857

- The immediate trigger was the introduction of the Enfield rifle cartridges, believed by many sepoys to be greased with cow and pig fat. Deeper causes included annexations, revenue policies, military grievances and social-religious anxieties.
- The revolt began at Meerut on 10 May 1857 and spread to Delhi, Kanpur, Lucknow, Jhansi, Bareilly and other centres.
- Bahadur Shah II was proclaimed symbolic emperor. Key leaders included Rani Lakshmibai (Jhansi), Nana Sahib and Tantia Tope (Kanpur region), Begum Hazrat Mahal (Awadh), Kunwar Singh (Bihar) and Khan Bahadur Khan (Bareilly).
- The revolt was suppressed, but the East India Company's rule ended. The Government of India Act 1858 transferred authority to the British Crown. The Governor-General also became Viceroy; Lord Canning was the first Viceroy.
- The revolt was geographically uneven and involved different groups with varied aims. Its interpretation as a national uprising or a series of regional rebellions has been debated by historians.

9.2 Socio-religious and educational reform

- Raja Rammohan Roy founded the Brahmo Sabha in 1828 (later Brahmo Samaj); he campaigned against sati and for modern education. Sati was prohibited in 1829 under Lord William Bentinck.
- Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar supported widow remarriage; the Hindu Widows' Remarriage Act was passed in 1856.
- Swami Dayanand Saraswati founded Arya Samaj in 1875 and promoted a return to the Vedas. Swami Vivekananda founded the Ramakrishna Mission in 1897.

- Sir Syed Ahmad Khan promoted modern education and founded the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh in 1875; it later developed into Aligarh Muslim University.
- Jyotirao Phule and Savitribai Phule worked for education and social equality. Narayana Guru challenged caste hierarchy in Kerala. The Theosophical Society became influential through figures such as Annie Besant.
- Reform movements differed in theology, methods and social priorities; many promoted education, debate and social change.

10. National Movement: 1885–1947

10.1 Formation of the Indian National Congress

- The Indian National Congress was founded in 1885. Its first session was held in Bombay, presided over by W.C. Bonnerjee.
- Moderate leaders such as Dadabhai Naoroji, Gopal Krishna Gokhale and Surendranath Banerjea used petitions, speeches and constitutional methods. Naoroji developed the drain theory to explain the economic transfer of wealth from India.
- Assertive nationalists included Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal and Lala Lajpat Rai (Lal-Bal-Pal). Tilak popularised the slogan, “Swaraj is my birthright and I shall have it.”

10.2 Swadeshi to Home Rule

- The Partition of Bengal in 1905 by Lord Curzon triggered the Swadeshi and Boycott movements. The partition was annulled in 1911.
- The Muslim League was founded at Dacca in 1906. The Surat Split of the Congress occurred in 1907.
- The Morley-Minto Reforms (Indian Councils Act 1909) introduced separate electorates for Muslims.
- The Home Rule Leagues were led by Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Annie Besant in 1916. The Lucknow Pact (1916) brought Congress and the Muslim League to an agreement on constitutional reforms.

10.3 Gandhian phase

- M.K. Gandhi returned to India from South Africa in 1915. Early satyagrahas: Champaran (1917), Ahmedabad mill strike (1918) and Kheda (1918).
- The Rowlatt Act (1919) allowed detention without trial. The Jallianwala Bagh massacre took place at Amritsar on 13 April 1919 under the command of General Dyer.
- The Non-Cooperation Movement (1920–22) was launched with the Khilafat issue as a major contemporary context. Gandhi withdrew it after the Chauri Chaura incident in February 1922.
- The Simon Commission (1927; arrived in India in 1928) had no Indian member and was opposed with the slogan “Simon Go Back.” The Nehru Report (1928) proposed a constitutional framework.
- At the Lahore session in December 1929, presided over by Jawaharlal Nehru, Congress declared Purna Swaraj. 26 January 1930 was observed as Independence Day.

- The Civil Disobedience Movement began with the Dandi March (12 March–6 April 1930), challenging the salt law. The Gandhi-Irwin Pact was signed in March 1931; Gandhi attended the Second Round Table Conference.
- The Government of India Act 1935 introduced provincial autonomy and proposed an all-India federation (which did not come into operation). Provincial elections were held in 1937.

10.4 Final phase and Independence

- The Cripps Mission came in 1942 with proposals for post-war constitutional arrangements; Congress rejected them. The Quit India Movement began in August 1942 with the call “Do or Die.”
- Subhas Chandra Bose led the Indian National Army (INA) in its later phase and established the Provisional Government of Azad Hind in 1943. The INA trials of 1945–46 generated widespread public interest.
- The Cabinet Mission arrived in 1946. The Interim Government was formed in September 1946 with Jawaharlal Nehru as Vice-President of the Executive Council.
- The Mountbatten Plan was announced on 3 June 1947. The Indian Independence Act received royal assent in July 1947. India became independent on 15 August 1947; Partition created India and Pakistan.

Freedom movement must-know dates: 1885 INC founded • 1905 Bengal partition • 1919 Jallianwala Bagh • 1920 Non-Cooperation • 1930 Dandi March • 1942 Quit India • 1947 Independence.

11. World History: Renaissance to Russian Revolution

11.1 Renaissance and the Age of Exploration

- The Renaissance began in Italian city-states and spread across Europe from roughly the 14th to 16th centuries. It renewed interest in classical learning, humanism, art and scientific inquiry.
- Important figures include Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael and writers such as Petrarch. The printing press associated with Johannes Gutenberg helped spread ideas.
- European maritime exploration expanded in the 15th and 16th centuries. Bartholomeu Dias rounded the Cape of Good Hope; Vasco da Gama reached India by sea in 1498; Christopher Columbus reached the Americas in 1492.
- Exploration was driven by trade, political rivalry, missionary ambitions and navigational advances. It also led to conquest, colonisation, forced labour and major demographic changes.

11.2 Reformation and Scientific Revolution

- Martin Luther's challenge to Church practices in 1517 helped trigger the Protestant Reformation. It reshaped religion and politics in Europe.
- The Scientific Revolution involved observation, experiment and mathematical explanation. Copernicus proposed a heliocentric model; Galileo used telescopic observations; Newton

formulated laws of motion and universal gravitation.

- The spread of print culture and scientific societies helped new ideas circulate.

11.3 American War of Independence (1775–1783)

- The thirteen British colonies in North America resisted taxation and imperial control without adequate representation.
- The Declaration of Independence was adopted on 4 July 1776, primarily drafted by Thomas Jefferson. George Washington led the Continental Army.
- The Treaty of Paris (1783) recognised the independence of the United States. The US Constitution was drafted in 1787 and came into effect in 1789.

11.4 French Revolution (1789)

- Causes included social inequality among the Estates, financial crisis, food shortages, Enlightenment ideas and opposition to absolute monarchy.
- The Estates-General met in 1789; the Third Estate formed the National Assembly. The storming of the Bastille occurred on 14 July 1789.
- The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen proclaimed liberty and equality before law. The monarchy fell; France became a republic in 1792.
- The Reign of Terror (1793–94) was associated with the Committee of Public Safety and Maximilien Robespierre. Napoleon Bonaparte seized power in 1799.
- The Revolution popularised ideas of citizenship, popular sovereignty and legal equality, while its violence and political instability remain important parts of its history.

11.5 Industrial Revolution

- The Industrial Revolution began in Britain in the 18th century and spread to Europe and beyond. It transformed production from handcraft and home-based systems towards mechanised factory production.
- Key developments included the steam engine (improved by James Watt), mechanised textile production, iron and coal industries, railways and steamships.
- Consequences included urbanisation, new industrial working classes, growth of capitalism, labour movements, environmental change and imperial competition.

11.6 Russian Revolution (1917)

- Long-term causes included autocracy, land inequality, industrial hardship and dissatisfaction with the monarchy. World War I intensified food shortages and military defeats.
- The February Revolution (March in the Gregorian calendar) of 1917 led to the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II and the formation of a Provisional Government.
- The Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Lenin, seized power in the October Revolution (November in the Gregorian calendar) of 1917.

- The Bolshevik government withdrew Russia from World War I through the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk (1918). Civil war followed; the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) was formed in 1922.

12. Constitution, Governance, Gandhi and Global Themes

12.1 Constitution and administration of India

- The Constituent Assembly first met on 9 December 1946. Dr Rajendra Prasad was its President; the Drafting Committee was chaired by Dr B.R. Ambedkar.
- The Constitution was adopted on 26 November 1949 and came into force on 26 January 1950. India became a sovereign democratic republic; the words socialist and secular were added to the Preamble by the 42nd Amendment (1976).
- The Preamble expresses justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. Fundamental Rights are in Part III; Directive Principles of State Policy in Part IV; Fundamental Duties in Part IVA.
- India has a parliamentary system. The President is the constitutional head of the Union; the Prime Minister and Council of Ministers exercise executive authority and are collectively responsible to the Lok Sabha.
- Parliament consists of the President and two Houses: Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. The Supreme Court is the apex judicial body.
- The 73rd Constitutional Amendment (1992) gave constitutional status to Panchayati Raj institutions; the 74th Amendment did so for urban local bodies.

12.2 Gandhi's basic teachings

- **Satya:** Truth as a guiding principle in personal and public life.
- **Ahimsa:** Non-violence in thought, word and action.
- **Satyagraha:** Non-violent resistance grounded in truth and moral courage.
- **Sarvodaya:** Welfare and uplift of all; the idea was later developed by Vinoba Bhave and others.
- **Swadeshi:** Preference for local production and self-reliance; khadi became a symbol of the freedom struggle.
- Gandhi linked political freedom with social reform, communal harmony, dignity of labour and the removal of untouchability.

12.3 Panchayati Raj, Bhoodan and development

- Panchayati Raj promotes democratic decentralisation and local participation. The Balwant Rai Mehta Committee (1957) recommended a three-tier system.
- Vinoba Bhave launched the Bhoodan Movement in 1951 at Pochampally (Telangana), appealing to landowners to donate land for distribution to the landless.
- Community Development Programme began in 1952. Co-operatives organise people for shared economic activity, such as credit, dairy and marketing.

- Five-Year Plans were central to India's planned development after Independence. The Planning Commission was established in 1950; the First Five-Year Plan (1951–56) focused strongly on agriculture and irrigation. The Planning Commission was replaced by NITI Aayog in 2015.

12.4 Global institutions and ideas

- The United Nations was founded in 1945 to promote international peace, security, cooperation and human rights. Its principal organs include the General Assembly, Security Council, ECOSOC, International Court of Justice, Secretariat and Trusteeship Council.
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted in 1948. India became a founding member of the UN.
- Panchsheel refers to five principles of peaceful coexistence, articulated in the 1954 India-China agreement: mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty; mutual non-aggression; mutual non-interference; equality and mutual benefit; and peaceful coexistence.
- Democracy emphasises popular participation and accountable government. Socialism broadly stresses social/economic equality and public welfare. Communism, in its classical theory, envisages common ownership of productive resources and a classless society.
- The Non-Aligned Movement emerged during the Cold War. India, under Jawaharlal Nehru, was among its prominent founding leaders, along with leaders such as Tito, Nasser, Sukarno and Nkrumah.

13. Rapid Revision Timelines and Key Facts

13.1 Indian history timeline

- c. 2600–1900 BCE — Mature Harappan phase.
- c. 1500–600 BCE — Broad Vedic period (dates are approximate and debated).
- 6th century BCE — Mahajanapadas; rise of Buddhism and Jainism.
- c. 322 BCE — Chandragupta Maurya establishes Mauryan Empire.
- c. 261 BCE — Kalinga War under Ashoka.
- 4th–6th centuries CE — Gupta age.
- 1336 — Foundation of Vijayanagara Empire.
- 1206–1526 — Delhi Sultanate (overlaps chronologically with regional powers).
- 1526 — First Battle of Panipat; Mughal rule established in north India.
- 1757 — Battle of Plassey; 1764 — Battle of Buxar; 1765 — Diwani rights.
- 1857 — Revolt; 1858 — Crown rule begins.
- 1885 — Indian National Congress founded.
- 1905 — Partition of Bengal; 1919 — Jallianwala Bagh; 1930 — Dandi March; 1942 — Quit India; 1947 — Independence.

13.2 World history timeline

- c. 14th–16th centuries — Renaissance in Europe.
- 1492 — Columbus reaches the Americas; 1498 — Vasco da Gama reaches Calicut.
- 1517 — Luther's Reformation challenge.
- 1775–1783 — American War of Independence; 1776 — Declaration of Independence.
- 1789 — French Revolution begins.
- 18th century onwards — Industrial Revolution begins in Britain.
- 1917 — February and October Revolutions in Russia; 1922 — USSR formed.

13.3 High-value match-the-following facts

- Great Bath — Mohenjo-daro; Dockyard-like basin — Lothal; water management — Dholavira.
- First sermon of Buddha — Sarnath; enlightenment — Bodh Gaya; Mahaparinirvana — Kushinagar.
- Arthashastra — Kautilya; Indica — Megasthenes; Allahabad Pillar inscription — Samudragupta.
- Brihadisvara Temple — Rajaraja I; Amuktamalyada — Krishnadevaraya; Nataraja bronzes — Chola tradition.
- First Battle of Panipat (1526) — Babur vs Ibrahim Lodi; Second (1556) — Akbar's forces vs Hemu; Third (1761) — Marathas vs Ahmad Shah Abdali.
- Permanent Settlement — Cornwallis; Subsidiary Alliance — Wellesley; Doctrine of Lapse — Dalhousie.
- INC first session — Bombay, 1885, W.C. Bonnerjee; Lahore session 1929 — Purna Swaraj; Dandi March — 1930.

Study strategy: Revise chronology daily. For every event, learn four things: date/period, personality, place and significance. In MCQs, eliminate options that mismatch even one of these.

14. Practice Set: 50 MCQs

Choose the one best answer for each question. Each question has four options. Attempt the complete set before checking the answer key.

1. Which Harappan site is especially famous for its large water-reservoir system and water management?

A. Harappa

B. Dholavira

C. Mohenjo-daro

D. Kalibangan

2. The Great Bath was discovered at:

A. Lothal

B. Rakhigarhi

C. Mohenjo-daro

D. Banawali

3. Which is regarded as the oldest Veda?

A. Samaveda

B. Yajurveda

C. Atharvaveda

D. Rigveda

4. The assemblies called Sabha and Samiti are mentioned in:

A. Rigvedic literature

B. Arthashastra

C. Sangam literature

D. Indica

5. Which of the following was a major reason for the rise of Magadha?

A. Absence of rivers

B. Access to iron resources and fertile land

C. Lack of agriculture

D. Isolation from trade routes

6. Gautama Buddha delivered his first sermon at:

A. Lumbini

B. Kushinagar

C. Sarnath

D. Rajagriha

7. Mahavira was the:

A. 20th Tirthankara

B. 22nd Tirthankara

C. 23rd Tirthankara

D. 24th Tirthankara

8. Who founded the Mauryan Empire?

A. Ashoka

B. Bindusara

C. Chandragupta Maurya

D. Pushyamitra Shunga

9. The Kalinga War is associated with:

A. Chandragupta I

B. Ashoka

C. Samudragupta

D. Kanishka

10. The Lion Capital adopted as India's State Emblem is from:

A. Sanchi

B. Sarnath

C. Amaravati

D. Bodh Gaya

11. Who wrote Indica?

A. Fa-Hien

B. Xuanzang

C. Megasthenes

D. Al-Biruni

12. The Allahabad Pillar inscription praising Samudragupta was composed by:

A. Kalidasa

B. Harisena

C. Banabhatta

D. Ravikirti

13. Which Chinese pilgrim visited India during Chandragupta II's reign?

A. Fa-Hien

B. Xuanzang

C. I-Tsing

D. Marco Polo

14. The Sangam corpus is primarily associated with which language?

A. Sanskrit

B. Pali

C. Prakrit

D. Tamil

15. Who built the Brihadisvara Temple at Thanjavur?

A. Rajendra I

B. Rajaraja I

C. Krishnadevaraya

D. Pulakeshin II

16. The tripartite struggle was mainly for control of:

A. Delhi

B. Kannauj

C. Madurai

D. Kanchi

17. The Qutub Minar was begun by:

A. Iltutmish

B. Balban

C. Qutb-ud-din Aibak

D. Alauddin Khalji

18. Which Sultan introduced extensive market-control measures?

A. Alauddin Khalji

B. Firoz Shah Tughlaq

C. Ibrahim Lodi

D. Balban

19. Vijayanagara Empire was founded in 1336 by:

A. Harihara and Bukka

B. Krishnadevaraya and Achyuta

C. Rajaraja and Rajendra

D. Deva Raya and Bukka

20. The Battle of Talikota took place in:

A. 1526

B. 1556

C. 1565

D. 1576

21. Who among the following was a prominent Chishti Sufi saint of Delhi?

A. Nizamuddin Auliya

B. Basavanna

C. Kabir

D. Tukaram

22. The First Battle of Panipat (1526) was fought between Babur and:

A. Rana Sanga

B. Ibrahim Lodi

C. Hemu

D. Sher Shah Suri

23. The Mughal mansabdari system was associated with:

A. Akbar

B. Babur

C. Aurangzeb

D. Bahadur Shah I

24. Shivaji was crowned at:

A. Sinhagad

B. Raigad

C. Pratapgad

D. Purandar

25. The Third Battle of Panipat (1761) was fought between the Marathas and:

A. Nadir Shah

B. Ahmad Shah Abdali

C. Robert Clive

D. Tipu Sultan

26. Vasco da Gama reached Calicut in:

A. 1453

B. 1492

C. 1498

D. 1510

27. The English East India Company received its charter in:

A. 1498

B. 1600

C. 1664

D. 1757

28. The Battle of Plassey was fought in:

A. 1757

B. 1764

C. 1765

D. 1773

29. The Company's Diwani rights in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa were granted in:

A. 1757

B. 1761

C. 1765

D. 1772

30. The Subsidiary Alliance is most closely associated with:

A. Lord Dalhousie

B. Lord Wellesley

C. Lord Curzon

D. Lord Cornwallis

31. The Doctrine of Lapse is associated with:

A. Lord Hastings

B. Lord Ripon

C. Lord Dalhousie

D. Lord Canning

32. The Revolt of 1857 began at:

A. Delhi

B. Kanpur

C. Meerut

D. Lucknow

33. Who was the symbolic emperor during the Revolt of 1857?

A. Akbar II

B. Bahadur Shah II

C. Shah Alam II

D. Wajid Ali Shah

34. The Government of India Act 1858 transferred power to the:

A. East India Company

B. British Crown

C. Indian National Congress

D. British Parliament's elected Indian members

35. Who founded the Brahmo Sabha in 1828?

A. Swami Dayanand Saraswati

B. Raja Rammohan Roy

C. Swami Vivekananda

D. Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar

36. The Indian National Congress held its first session in:

A. Calcutta, 1883

B. Bombay, 1885

C. Madras, 1887

D. Allahabad, 1890

37. The Partition of Bengal (1905) was carried out during the viceroyalty of:

A. Lord Ripon

B. Lord Curzon

C. Lord Minto

D. Lord Hardinge

38. The Jallianwala Bagh massacre occurred on:

A. 13 April 1919

B. 15 August 1919

C. 26 January 1930

D. 8 August 1942

39. The Non-Cooperation Movement was withdrawn after:

A. Kakori incident

B. Chauri Chaura incident

C. Dandi March

D. Jallianwala Bagh

40. The Dandi March was launched in:

A. 1920

B. 1922

C. 1930

D. 1942

41. The Quit India Movement began in:

A. 1930

B. 1935

C. 1940

D. 1942

42. The Renaissance first flourished in:

A. Italy

B. Russia

C. Spain

D. Sweden

43. The Declaration of Independence of the United States was adopted in:

A. 1775

B. 1776

C. 1783

D. 1789

44. The storming of the Bastille took place on:

A. 4 July 1776

B. 14 July 1789

C. 5 May 1789

D. 21 January 1793

45. The Industrial Revolution first began on a major scale in:

A. France

B. Germany

C. Britain

D. Russia

46. The Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917 was led by:

A. Joseph Stalin

B. Vladimir Lenin

C. Leon Trotsky alone

D. Tsar Nicholas II

47. The Constitution of India came into force on:

A. 15 August 1947

B. 26 November 1949

C. 26 January 1950

D. 2 October 1950

48. The Drafting Committee of the Constituent Assembly was chaired by:

A. Rajendra Prasad

B. Jawaharlal Nehru

C. Sardar Patel

D. B.R. Ambedkar

49. The Bhoodan Movement was launched by:

A. Jayaprakash Narayan

B. Vinoba Bhave

C. M.K. Gandhi

D. B.R. Ambedkar

50. The United Nations was founded in:

A. 1919

B. 1939

C. 1945

D. 1948

15. Answer Key

Check your responses and revise the corresponding unit for every incorrect answer.

1. B	**2.** C	**3.** D	**4.** A	**5.** B
6. C	**7.** D	**8.** C	**9.** B	**10.** B
11. C	**12.** B	**13.** A	**14.** D	**15.** B
16. B	**17.** C	**18.** A	**19.** A	**20.** C
21. A	**22.** B	**23.** A	**24.** B	**25.** B
26. C	**27.** B	**28.** A	**29.** C	**30.** B
31. C	**32.** C	**33.** B	**34.** B	**35.** B
36. B	**37.** B	**38.** A	**39.** B	**40.** C
41. D	**42.** A	**43.** B	**44.** B	**45.** C
46. B	**47.** C	**48.** D	**49.** B	**50.** C

Quick Score Guide

45–50: Excellent command of this practice set. | 38–44: Good; revise missed facts. | 30–37: Strengthen chronology and culture. | Below 30: Re-read the notes unit-wise and attempt the test again.

Selected References & Further Study

1. Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), National Defence Academy and Naval Academy Examination notifications and syllabus: upsc.gov.in.
2. NCERT, Themes in Indian History (Parts I–III) and Our Pasts series.
3. NCERT, India and the Contemporary World (relevant world-history chapters).
4. Archaeological Survey of India resources on monuments and archaeological sites.

Disclaimer: Dates for ancient periods are approximate and may vary by scholarly interpretation. Verify the latest exam notification and use official previous-year papers for final exam alignment.

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