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GNPS

GOMTI NANDAN PUBLIC SCHOOL

Gandhi Ward, Bina (M.P.) 470113. | 9165 609 333. | info@mygnps.com | www.mygnps.com

CLASS XII · HISTORY (027) · THEMES IN INDIAN HISTORY PART I · CBSE BOARD EXAMINATION 2027

HISTORY · THEME 2

Kings, Farmers and Towns

c. 600 BCE to 600 CE

Chapter Practice Booklet · Questions only

16 note blocks + two timelines | 20 keyword cards + link chain | 82 practice questions | Model Answer Booklet

INSIDE THIS BOOKLET

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STUDENT DETAILS

NAME _____

CLASS & SECTION _____

ROLL NO. _____

BOOKLET STARTED ON _____

PRACTICE SCORE ____ / ____

1

READ THIS FIRST

Chapter Notes

The whole theme in short-note form: how inscriptions were read, how the first states and the Mauryan empire grew, how kings changed, how farming and villages changed, and how towns, trade and coins developed. Every picture in the textbook is described in words. Revise from here – you should not need the textbook again.

1 Inscriptions and James Prinsep

Inscription: writing engraved on a hard surface – stone, metal or pottery – recording the achievements, activities or ideas of those who had it made. **Epigraphy** is the study of inscriptions; a specialist is an **epigraphist**.

- Inscriptions are **permanent records**; many carry a date, and the others are dated by the style of the letters (**palaeography**).
- **James Prinsep**, an officer in the **mint** of the East India Company, deciphered **Brahmi** and **Kharosthi** – the two scripts of the earliest inscriptions and coins – by **1838**.
- Most Asokan inscriptions call the king **Piyadassi** ('pleasant to behold') and **Devanampiya** ('beloved of the gods'); a few name him **Asoka** – so scholars could identify him with the Mauryan king of the Buddhist texts.
- This gave a **new direction** to early Indian political history. Scholars first used inscriptions and texts to list **dynasties**; by the early 20th century they also asked about **economic and social changes** and how they were linked to political processes.

2 The earliest states – the sixteen mahajanapadas

The **6th century BCE** is a major turning point: early **states, empires and kingdoms**, the growth of **cities**, the growing use of **iron**, the first **coins**, and new systems of thought such as **Buddhism and Jainism**.

- Early Buddhist and Jaina texts mention **sixteen states** called **mahajanapadas**. The list varies, but **Vajji, Magadha, Koshala, Kuru, Panchala, Gandhara and Avanti** occur often – these were among the most important.
- Most were ruled by **kings**. Some, called **ganas or sanghas**, were **oligarchies** where power was shared by a number of men, often called **rajas**. **Mahavira** and the **Buddha** belonged to such ganas. In the **Vajji sangha** the rajas probably controlled resources such as land **collectively**.
- Each mahajanapada had a **capital**, often **fortified**. Forts, armies and officials needed resources.
- From about the 6th century BCE brahmanas composed Sanskrit texts called **Dharmasutras**, which laid down norms for rulers: ideally a **Kshatriya**, the ruler was to collect **taxes and tribute** from cultivators, traders and artisans. **Raids** on neighbouring states were seen as a legitimate way to gain wealth.
- Gradually some states kept **standing armies** and regular **bureaucracies**; others still relied on a militia drawn from the peasantry.

3 Magadha – the first among the sixteen

Between the 6th and 4th centuries BCE **Magadha** (present-day **Bihar**) became the most powerful mahajanapada.

- **Productive farming:** its fertile land gave good harvests.
- **Iron:** iron mines (in present-day Jharkhand) were within reach – resources for **tools and weapons**.
- **Elephants**, an important part of the army, lived in the forests of the region.
- **Rivers:** the Ganga and its tributaries gave **cheap and convenient communication**.
- **Rulers:** early Buddhist and Jaina writers credit the policies of ambitious kings – **Bimbisara, Ajatasattu and Mahapadma Nanda** – and their ministers.
- **Capitals:** first **Rajagaha** (Prakrit for Rajgir, 'house of the king'), a fortified settlement among **hills**; in the **4th century BCE** the capital moved to **Pataliputra** (Patna), which commanded **routes along the Ganga**.

4 An early empire – the Mauryas and the sources

- **Chandragupta Maurya** founded the empire (**c. 321 BCE**); it stretched as far north-west as **Afghanistan and Baluchistan**. His grandson **Asoka** conquered **Kalinga** (present-day coastal Odisha).

Sources historians use:

- **Archaeological finds**, especially **sculpture**.
- **Megasthenes**, a Greek ambassador to Chandragupta's court – his account (**Indica**) survives only in **fragments**.

- The **Arthashastra**, parts of which were probably composed by **Kautilya** (Chanakya), traditionally Chandragupta's minister.
- Later **Buddhist, Jaina and Puranic** literature and Sanskrit works.
- **Asoka's inscriptions** on **rocks and pillars** – often thought the most valuable. Asoka was the **first ruler** to inscribe his messages to his subjects and officials on stone. He used them to proclaim **dhamma**.

5 Administering the Mauryan empire

- **Five major political centres:** the capital **Pataliputra** and the provincial centres **Taxila, Ujjayini, Tosali and Suvarnagiri** – all named in Asokan inscriptions.
- **Taxila** and **Ujjayini** lay on important **long-distance trade routes**; **Suvarnagiri** ('golden mountain') was important for the **gold mines** of Karnataka.
- Control was strongest around the **capital and provincial centres**. The empire was diverse – from the hills of Afghanistan to coastal Odisha – so control could not be uniform. Communication along **land and river routes** was vital.
- **Army (Megasthenes):** a committee with **six subcommittees** – the **navy**, **transport and provisions**, **foot-soldiers**, **horses**, **chariots** and **elephants**. The transport subcommittee arranged **bullock carts** for equipment, food for soldiers, fodder for animals, and servants and artisans.
- **Dhamma:** Asoka tried to hold the empire together by spreading dhamma – **respect for elders**, **generosity** to brahmanas and to those who renounced worldly life, **kind treatment of slaves and servants**, and **respect for religions and traditions other than one's own**.
- Special officers called **dhamma mahamatta** were appointed to spread the message of dhamma.

6 How important was the Mauryan empire?

- When historians began to rebuild early Indian history in the **19th century**, the Mauryan empire was seen as a **major landmark**. India was under colonial rule, and an early empire with remarkable stone sculpture and inscriptions was **inspiring**.
- **Asoka** seemed a ruler more powerful, hard-working and humble than later kings with grand titles; **20th-century nationalist leaders** saw him as an inspiring figure. The **lion capital** of an Asokan pillar is now India's **national emblem**.
- **But:** the empire lasted only about **150 years**; it did **not** cover the whole subcontinent; and even within its frontiers **control was not uniform**.
- By the **2nd century BCE** new chiefdoms and kingdoms had appeared in many parts of the subcontinent.

7 New notions of kingship – chiefs and kings in the south

- In **Tamilakam** (the ancient Tamil region) the **Cholas, Cheras and Pandyas** emerged; they were stable and prosperous. Early **Tamil Sangam** poems tell us about them.
- Many were **chiefs**, not kings. A chief is a powerful man whose position may or may not be **hereditary**; he gets support from his **kinfolk**. His work: performing **special rituals**, **leading in warfare** and **arbitrating disputes**. He receives **gifts** from his subjects (not regular taxes) and distributes them among his supporters.
- Other rulers: the **Satavahanas** in western and parts of central India, and the **Shakas**, a people of **Central Asian** origin who set up kingdoms in the north-west and west. Their social origins varied but they ruled with the help of resources from trade and farming.

8 Divine kings, the Guptas and prashastis

- One way kings claimed high status was to **identify with deities**. The **Kushanas** (c. 1st century BCE – 1st century CE) ruled from **Central Asia to north-west India**.
- **Colossal statues** of Kushana rulers stood in a shrine at **Mat near Mathura** (UP); similar statues were found in a shrine in **Afghanistan**. Some historians think the Kushanas saw themselves as **godlike**. Many rulers took the title **devaputra** ('son of god'), possibly inspired by Chinese rulers who called themselves **sons of heaven**.
- **Guptas** (from the **4th century CE**): large states, many depending on **samantas** – men who maintained themselves on local resources, including control over land, and offered **homage and military support** to rulers. Powerful samantas could even become kings.
- Gupta history is rebuilt from **literature, coins and inscriptions**, including **prashastis** – poems in praise of kings and patrons, composed by poets.
- **Prayaga prashasti** (Allahabad Pillar Inscription): composed in **Sanskrit** by **Harishena**, court poet of **Samudragupta** – praises him as unequalled on earth, a great warrior and a learned poet. Historians use prashastis **with care**, since they are written to **praise**.

- **Biographies** of kings were also written: the **Harshacharita**, a Sanskrit life of **Harshavardhana**, ruler of **Kanauj** (7th century CE), was composed by his court poet **Banabhatta**.

9 A changing countryside – kings and people; farming

- **Popular view of kings:** stories in the **Jatakas** and the **Panchatantra** show that kings could be harsh. In the **Gandatindu Jataka** the subjects of a wicked king – an old woman, cowherds, farmers, even boys and animals – suffered from heavy taxes and robbers, and the villagers finally **left their village to live in the forest**. Tension between king and subjects was common when kings demanded more.
- **Strategies for more production:** to meet rising demands, people turned to the **plough**. From the **6th century BCE** it spread in the fertile alluvial valleys of the **Ganga and the Kaveri**. The **iron-tipped ploughshare** increased output.
- In areas of heavy rain, **paddy transplantation** (seedlings grown and then planted in fields) raised production greatly, though it was very hard work.
- **Limits:** the iron ploughshare was not used everywhere – cultivators in parts of **Punjab and Rajasthan** did not adopt it till the 20th century; in the hilly **north-east and central** parts people used the **hoe**.
- **Irrigation:** through **wells and tanks** and, less often, **canals** – built by communities and by individuals (including kings).
- **Sudarshana lake** (Girnar, near Junagadh, Gujarat): an artificial reservoir built under the **Mauryas**. When storms broke its embankment, the **Shaka** ruler **Rudradaman** (2nd century CE) had it repaired – his inscription claims he used his **own resources**, without forced labour or extra taxes. It was repaired again under a **Gupta** ruler.

10 Differences in rural society

The new technology **did not benefit everyone equally**; differences among people engaged in agriculture grew sharper.

- **Buddhist texts: landless agricultural labourers**, **small peasants** and **large landholders**.
- The Pali term **gahapati** meant the owner, master or head of a household, who controlled the women, children, slaves and workers who shared the house; he owned land, animals and other things. The term was also used for wealthy **merchants** in towns.
- **Early Tamil literature** uses **vellalar** for large landowners, **uzhavar** for ploughmen and **adimai** for slaves.
- The large landholders and the village headman (often hereditary) became **powerful** and often controlled the other cultivators.

11 Land grants and new rural elites

- From the early centuries CE, **grants of land** were recorded in inscriptions – some on **stone**, most on **copper plates** given to the people who received the land, usually **religious institutions or brahmanas**.
- **Agrahara:** land granted to a brahmana, who was usually **exempt** from land revenue and other dues and often got the **right to collect dues** from local people.
- **Prabhavati Gupta**, daughter of **Chandragupta II**, married into the **Vakataka** family of the Deccan, granted land in a village. Women were not expected to control land independently, yet she did – perhaps because she was a **queen** ruling as regent. Her grant shows the villagers were to obey the new owner and give him the produce and dues once due to the king.
- **Why were grants made? Historians differ:** (1) a strategy to **extend agriculture** to new lands; (2) a sign of **weakening political power** – kings tried to win allies; (3) kings wanted to show themselves as having **supernormal power** and generosity, even when control was slipping.
- Grants say little about **pastoralists, fishing folk, hunter-gatherers, shifting cultivators and craftspeople** – mobile groups rarely left records.

12 Towns and urban populations

- **New cities** grew from about the 6th century BCE, many as **capitals** of mahajanapadas. Most stood on **routes of communication**: **Pataliputra** on a **river route**, **Ujjayini** on **land routes**, **Puhar** on the **coast**. **Mathura** was a busy commercial, cultural and political centre.
- Fortified cities have yielded **fine pottery** called **Northern Black Polished Ware** (NBPW) – a glossy ware probably used by rich people – and ornaments, tools, weapons, vessels and figurines of **gold, silver, copper, bronze, ivory, glass, shell and terracotta**.
- **Short votive inscriptions** in towns record gifts to religious institutions by **washing folk, weavers, scribes, carpenters, potters, goldsmiths, blacksmiths, officials, religious teachers, merchants and kings** – a picture of the town population.

- **Guilds (shrenis):** organisations of craft producers and merchants. They **procured raw materials**, **regulated production** and **marketed** the finished goods. Craftspersons used **iron tools** to meet the demand of urban elites.

13 Trade in the subcontinent and beyond

- From the **6th century BCE land and river routes** criss-crossed the subcontinent and reached **Central Asia** and beyond. **Sea routes** went from the coasts across the Arabian Sea to **East Africa and West Asia**, and across the Bay of Bengal to **Southeast Asia and China**.
- Rulers tried to **control these routes**, perhaps offering protection for a price.
- **Traders: peddlers** on foot; **merchants** with caravans of bullock carts and pack-animals; **seafarers**, whose ventures were risky but very profitable. Tamil uses **masattuvan** and Prakrit uses **setthi** and **satthavaha** for successful merchants, who could become very rich.
- **Goods:** salt, grain, cloth, metal ores and products, stone, timber and medicinal plants. **Spices**, especially **pepper**, were in high demand in the **Roman Empire**, as were **textiles** and **medicinal plants**.
- **Periplus of the Erythraean Sea** (1st century CE): a Greek sailors' guide describing ports of the west coast such as those of **Malabar**, where ships loaded **pepper**. **Rivers** carried goods from the interior down to these ports.
- **Kodumanal** (Erode, Tamil Nadu, on the Noyyal river): an early **bead-making** centre near sources of semi-precious stones such as beryl and quartz, and on the route to the west-coast ports – its beads were traded far and wide.

14 Coins and kings

- Exchange became easier with **coinage**. **Punch-marked coins** of **silver and copper** (from c. 6th century BCE) were among the first; they have been found in excavations at many sites. Their symbols may be royal, but merchants, bankers and townspeople may also have issued some.
- The **first coins with the names and images of rulers** were issued by the **Indo-Greeks**, who ruled the north-west from about the **2nd century BCE**.
- The **first gold coins** were issued by the **Kushanas** (c. 1st century CE). They had the **same weight** as coins of contemporary **Roman emperors** and the **Parthian** rulers of Iran, and are found in north India and Central Asia – a sign of large-scale trade.
- **Hoards of Roman coins** found in **south India** show links with the Roman Empire.
- **Tribal republics** also issued coins: the **Yaudheyas** of Punjab and Haryana (c. 1st century CE) issued several thousand **copper** coins, showing their interest in trade.
- The **Guptas** issued some of the most spectacular **gold coins**, remarkable for their **purity** – useful for long-distance trade.
- From the **6th century CE** gold coins become rare. Historians differ: a **crisis** after the decline of the Western Roman Empire, or **new towns and networks** of trade, or enough coins already in circulation.

15 Back to basics – how are inscriptions deciphered?

- **Brahmi:** most scripts used for modern Indian languages come from it, and it was used in most **Asokan inscriptions**. Scholars worked **backwards** from present-day **Bengali and Devanagari** manuscripts, comparing letters with older forms. They first thought the early inscriptions were in Sanskrit; they were in **Prakrit**. **Prinsep** deciphered Asokan Brahmi in **1838**.
- **Kharosthi** was used in the **north-west**. **Indo-Greek coins** carry the king's name in both **Greek and Kharosthi**. Scholars who could read Greek compared the two, which helped them identify the Kharosthi letters.
- **Reading an inscription for history:** Asoka's inscription on **Kalinga** says that many thousands were deported, killed or died in the war, and that the king felt **deep remorse** and turned to dhamma. Historians check such claims – for example, this edict has not been found in the Kalinga region itself.

16 Limitations of inscriptional evidence

- **Technical limits:** letters may be **faintly engraved**, so readings are uncertain; inscriptions may be **damaged** or have **missing letters**.
- **Meaning:** the exact meaning of words is not always clear – some are specific to a **place or time**.
- **Coverage:** thousands have been found, but not all have been **deciphered, published or translated**; many more must have existed and been **lost**.
- **Silences:** much that was important was **never recorded** – routine farming, the joys and sorrows of daily life.
- **Point of view:** inscriptions show the **perspective of those who commissioned them** – usually kings and the powerful.

> **So:** historians must read inscriptions together with **texts, coins and archaeology**, and ask whether each claim is true, plausible or an exaggeration. Political history should be linked with economic and social change.

Sources for this theme – what each tells us

Source questions and 'how do historians know' answers

Source	What it tells us	Remember
Asokan inscriptions	dhamma, officials, provinces, Kalinga war	rocks and pillars; Brahmi (Kharosthi and Greek in the NW)
Megasthenes, Indica	Mauryan court, army, society	Greek envoy; survives only in fragments
Arthashastra	administration, army, taxes	parts by Kautilya (Chanakya)
Dharmasutras	norms for rulers and society	Sanskrit, by brahmanas, from c. 6th century BCE
Jatakas, Panchatantra	how ordinary people saw kings	Gandatindu Jataka – villagers flee to the forest
Prashastis	achievements of Gupta kings	Prayaga prashasti by Harishena for Samudragupta
Land grants	villages, brahmanas, rural elites	mostly copper plates; Prabhavati Gupta
Votive inscriptions	town occupations, gifts	weavers, goldsmiths, merchants …
Coins	rulers, trade, economy	punch-marked → Indo-Greek → Kushana gold → Gupta gold

Rulers and peoples to remember

Matching and chronology MCQs

Ruler / people	Where and when	Remember for
Bimbisara, Ajatasattu, Mahapadma Nanda	Magadha, 6th–4th c. BCE	ambitious kings who made Magadha powerful
Chandragupta Maurya	c. 321 BCE	founded the Mauryan empire; Megasthenes at his court
Asoka	c. 272/268–231 BCE	Kalinga war, dhamma, inscriptions
Cholas, Cheras, Pandyas	Tamilakam, from c. 2nd c. BCE	chiefs and kings of the south; Sangam poems
Satavahanas	western and central India / Deccan	kingdoms after the Mauryas
Shakas	north-west and west	people of Central Asian origin
Indo-Greeks	north-west, from c. 2nd c. BCE	first coins with names and images of rulers
Kushanas	Central Asia to NW India, c. 1st c. BCE – 1st c. CE	devaputra; colossal statues at Mat; first gold coins
Yaudheyas	Punjab and Haryana, c. 1st c. CE	tribal republic; thousands of copper coins
Samudragupta	Gupta, c. 335–375 CE	Prayaga prashasti by Harishena
Prabhavati Gupta	Vakataka queen, Deccan	daughter of Chandragupta II; land grant

Timeline 2 – the history of epigraphy

Chronology MCQs

Year	Event
1784	Asiatic Society (Bengal) founded
1810s	Colin Mackenzie collects over 8,000 inscriptions

1838	James Prinsep deciphers Asokan Brahmi
1877	Cunningham publishes a set of Asokan inscriptions
1886	First issue of Epigraphia Carnatica
1888	First issue of Epigraphia Indica
1965–66	D. C. Sircar: Indian Epigraphy and Indian Epigraphical Glossary

Key terms

1- and 2-mark answers

Epigraphy – the study of inscriptions

Mahajanapada – one of the sixteen early states of the 6th century BCE

Gana / sangha – a state ruled by a group of men (oligarchy), not one king

Dharmasutras – Sanskrit texts laying down norms for rulers and society

Dhamma – Asoka's moral code: respect, generosity, kindness, tolerance

Dhamma mahamatta – officer appointed to spread dhamma

Samanta – local power-holder giving homage and military support to a king

Prashasti – a poem composed in praise of a king or patron

Devaputra – 'son of god' – title of Kushana rulers

Gahapati – owner or head of a household (also a rich merchant)

Vellalar / uzhavar / adimai – Tamil terms: large landowner / ploughman / slave

Agrahara – land granted to a brahmana, usually free of revenue

Shreni – guild of craftspersons or merchants

NBPW – Northern Black Polished Ware – fine glossy pottery of towns

Punch-marked coins – earliest silver and copper coins, with punched symbols

Setthi / satthavaha – Prakrit words for rich merchants (Tamil: masattuvan)

Timeline to memorise

Chronology MCQs come from here

Year	Event
c. 600–500 BCE	Mahajanapadas; paddy transplantation; towns in the Ganga valley; punch-marked coins
c. 500–400 BCE	Rulers of Magadha consolidate power
c. 327–325 BCE	Alexander's invasion of the north-west
c. 321 BCE	Chandragupta Maurya founds the empire
c. 272/268–231 BCE	Reign of Asoka
c. 185 BCE	End of the Mauryan empire

Year	Event
c. 200–100 BCE	Indo-Greeks in the NW; Cholas, Cheras, Pandyas; Satavahanas
c. 100 BCE – 200 CE	Shakas in the NW; Roman trade; Kushanas
c. 320 CE	Gupta rule begins
c. 335–375 CE	Samudragupta
c. 375–415 CE	Chandragupta II; Vakatakas in the Deccan
c. 606–647 CE	Harshavardhana of Kanauj

People to remember

Matching MCQs and source questions

Person	Remember for
James Prinsep	mint officer; read Brahmi and Kharosthi (1838)
Megasthenes	Greek envoy; Indica; six army subcommittees
Kautilya (Chanakya)	Arthashastra
Harishena	court poet; Prayaga prashasti
Samudragupta	Gupta king praised by Harishena
Banabhatta	Harshacharita, life of Harshavardhana

Person	Remember for
Rudradaman	Shaka ruler; repaired Sudarshana lake
Prabhavati Gupta	Vakataka queen who granted land
Colin Mackenzie	collected 8,000+ inscriptions
Alexander Cunningham	published Asokan inscriptions (1877)
D. C. Sircar	Indian Epigraphical Glossary (1966)

Exam snapshot

What the board asks, and how to prepare

SYLLABUS 2026–27

- Broad overview: political and economic history from the Mauryan to the Gupta period
- Story of discovery: inscriptions and the decipherment of the script
- Shifts in the understanding of political and economic history
- Excerpts: an Asokan inscription and a Gupta-period land grant
- Discussion: how historians interpret inscriptions
- Map work: mahajanapadas and cities

BOARD WEIGHTAGE

4–10 / 80

History is one 80-mark theory paper. In the **six papers checked** (board 2024–2026 and three sample papers) this theme was asked in **every paper**, giving **4 to 10 marks**: 1–2 MCQs, plus a 3-mark answer, a 4-mark source or an 8-mark long answer. The map has asked a mahajanapada (Magadha) and a town (Kannauj).

MOST ASKED, 2024–2026 BOARD PAPERS AND SAMPLE PAPERS (6 PAPERS CHECKED)

How often	Topic / question type	Marks	Papers
★★★	Mauryan empire – sources, administration, Asoka, Megasthenes	1 / 3 / 8	5 of 6
★★☆	Mahajanapadas and the rise of Magadha	1 / 8 / map	2 of 6
★★☆	Coins, trade and commercial networks	1 / 4 / 8	2 of 6
★★☆	Inscriptions, epigraphy, prashastis	1 / 4	2 of 6
★★☆	Land grants, Prabhavati Gupta, rural society	1 / 8	2 of 6
★☆☆	Guilds and towns (Mandasor)	1	1 of 6
★☆☆	Later kings – Shakas, Rudradaman, Sudarshana lake	1	1 of 6
★☆☆	6th century BCE as a turning point	3	1 of 6

ANSWER-WRITING RULES FOR HISTORY (CBSE SAMPLE PAPER 2026–27)

1 mark
MCQ · write the letter and the answer text

3 marks
Short answer · 60–80 words · 3 clear points with evidence

4 marks
Source-based · 1 + 1 + 2 · answer from the source, then add chapter facts

8 marks
Long answer · 300–350 words · 8 points, opening and closing line

Write in points, underline key words, and name a site, an object, a scholar or a date in every point. Read every "OR" choice before you start, and attempt only one.

MISTAKES THAT COST MARKS

- Writing that **Prinsep** deciphered the Harappan script – he read **Brahmi and Kharosthi** (1838); the Harappan script is still unread.
- Calling every mahajanapada a monarchy – some were **ganas or sanghas** (oligarchies), e.g. the **Vajji** sangha.
- Giving only 'good rulers' as the reason for Magadha's rise – add **farming, iron, elephants and rivers**.
- Mixing the five Mauryan centres – **Pataliputra, Taxila, Ujjayini, Tosali, Suvarnagiri**. Suvarnagiri = gold mines of Karnataka.
- Writing that the **Guptas** issued the first gold coins – the **Kushanas** did; the **Indo-Greeks** first put rulers' names and images on coins.
- Writing that the Prayaga prashasti was composed by Samudragupta – it was by his court poet **Harishena**.
- Treating inscriptions as complete truth – always add a line on their **limitations** and point of view.
- 8-mark answers without evidence – name an **inscription, text, ruler, coin or place** in every point.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

1. **Day 1:** Read the Chapter Notes twice; learn the key terms and the timeline.
2. **Day 2:** Part 2 Key Words & Links – learn the cards, read the link chain aloud, do the drills.
3. **Next day:** Parts A and B. **Then:** Parts C and D – MUST DO questions first.
4. Part E: mark every map item on a fresh outline map of India.
5. Check every answer against the **Model Answer Booklet**: same points, same keywords, within the word limit.
6. Write every mistake on the My Mistakes page and redo it after 3 days.

2

READ THIS SECOND · THE THREAD THAT JOINS THE CHAPTER

Key Words & Links

Good students lose History marks because they know the words but not how one topic leads to the next. Learn each word's meaning, its example and its link – then use the link words in every answer.

20 keyword cards

Means · Example · Link →

Epigraphy — PRINSEP, 1838
MEANS the study of inscriptions on stone, metal or pottery
EXAMPLE Brahmi and Kharosthi read by James Prinsep
LINK → opened up POLITICAL HISTORY – Asoka identified as Piyadassi

Mahajanapada — 6TH CENTURY BCE
MEANS one of the sixteen early states
EXAMPLE Vajji, Magadha, Koshala, Kuru, Panchala, Gandhara, Avanti
LINK → the first STATES, with capitals, armies and taxes

Gana / sangha — VAJJI
MEANS a state ruled by a group of rajas, not one king
EXAMPLE Mahavira and the Buddha came from ganas
LINK → shows that not all early states were MONARCHIES

Dharmasutras — BRAHMANICAL NORMS
MEANS Sanskrit texts laying down duties of rulers
EXAMPLE ideal ruler a Kshatriya; taxes and tribute
LINK → made TAXATION a recognised right of kings

Magadha — BIHAR
MEANS the most powerful mahajanapada
EXAMPLE iron, elephants, the Ganga, ambitious kings
LINK → became the base of the MAURYAN EMPIRE

Pataliputra — CAPITAL
MEANS Magadha's later capital, on the Ganga
EXAMPLE replaced hill-fort Rajagaha in the 4th century BCE
LINK → controlled RIVER ROUTES – centre of the empire

Provincial centres — MAURYAS
MEANS Taxila, Ujjayini, Tosali, Suvarnagiri
EXAMPLE on trade routes and near gold mines
LINK → show UNEVEN CONTROL of a huge empire

Megasthenes — INDICA
MEANS Greek envoy at Chandragupta's court
EXAMPLE six army subcommittees
LINK → a FOREIGN SOURCE on Mauryan rule

Dhamma — ASOKA
MEANS a moral code of respect, kindness and tolerance
EXAMPLE inscriptions; dhamma mahamattas
LINK → tried to hold a DIVERSE EMPIRE together

Devaputra — KUSHANAS
MEANS 'son of god' – a claim to divine status
EXAMPLE colossal statues at Mat near Mathura
LINK → a NEW NOTION OF KINGSHIP

Samanta — GUPTAS
MEANS a local power-holder serving a king
EXAMPLE homage and military support
LINK → kings depended on LOCAL ELITES

Prashasti — HARISHENA
MEANS a poem in praise of a king
EXAMPLE Prayaga prashasti for Samudragupta
LINK → a source to be used WITH CARE

Iron ploughshare — GANGA, KAVERI VALLEYS
MEANS iron-tipped plough that dug deeper
EXAMPLE with paddy transplantation
LINK → raised OUTPUT – but not everywhere

Gahapati — PALI TEXTS
MEANS owner or head of a household
EXAMPLE controlled land, women, slaves, workers
LINK → shows growing RURAL DIFFERENCES

Agrahara — LAND GRANT
MEANS land given to a brahmana, free of revenue
EXAMPLE copper plates; Prabhavati Gupta's grant
LINK → created NEW RURAL ELITES

Shreni — GUILD
MEANS organisation of craftspersons or merchants
EXAMPLE silk weavers of Mandasor built a sun temple
LINK → organised URBAN CRAFTS and trade

NBPW — TOWNS
MEANS Northern Black Polished Ware, fine glossy pottery
EXAMPLE found in early historic cities
LINK → marks URBAN ELITES

Punch-marked coin — C. 6TH CENTURY BCE
MEANS the earliest silver and copper coins
EXAMPLE symbols punched, no ruler's name
LINK → made EXCHANGE easier

Kushana gold coin — 1ST CENTURY CE

MEANS the first gold coins of the subcontinent

EXAMPLE same weight as Roman and Parthian coins

LINK → evidence of LONG-DISTANCE TRADE

Limitations of inscriptions — METHOD

MEANS faint, damaged, lost, one-sided records

EXAMPLE silent on daily life

LINK → historians must CROSS-CHECK sources

The link chain – the whole chapter as one story

Read top to bottom; the orange line is the link

From the first states to the Guptas

6th c. BCE **Iron, farming surplus, cities** – sixteen mahajanapadas with capitals and armies

▼ *competition among states*

Magadha **Iron, elephants, the Ganga, ambitious kings** – Magadha wins

▼ *its rulers build an empire*

Mauryas **Chandragupta** founds the empire; five centres; Megasthenes' army

▼ *a diverse empire needs unity*

Asoka **Kalinga war** → remorse → dhamma on rocks and pillars

▼ *after c. 150 years the empire breaks up*

New kings **Chiefs in Tamilakam, Satavahanas, Shakas, Kushanas** (devaputra)

▼ *kings seek new sources of power*

Guptas **Samantas, prashastis, land grants**

▼ *power is shared with local elites*

Rural elites **Agraharas and grantees** stand between king and peasant

From the plough to coins

Plough **Iron ploughshare and paddy transplantation** in the Ganga and Kaveri valleys

▼ *production grows*

Surplus **Taxes** for kings; **differences** – gahapati, vellalar, adimai

▼ *surplus feeds towns*

Towns **Pataliputra, Ujjayini, Puhar, Mathura**; NBPW; votive inscriptions

▼ *crafts are organised*

Guilds **Shrenis** procure, produce and market

▼ *goods travel far*

Trade **Land, river and sea routes** to Central Asia, Rome, Southeast Asia

▼ *trade needs money*

Coins **Punch-marked → Indo-Greek → Kushana gold → Gupta gold**

▼ *after 600 CE gold coins become rare*

Cross-chapter links

Words that come back in other chapters

Board answers score higher when you connect chapters. Learn these 8 bridges.

Key word	In this chapter	Comes back in	A link sentence for your answer
Scripts	Prinsep read Brahmi and Kharosthi	**Theme 1 Bricks, Beads and Bones**: the Harappan script is still undeciphered	*"Asoka can be read; the Harappans cannot."*
Cities	second urbanisation in the Ganga valley	**Theme 1**: first urbanisation on the Indus	*"India's cities rose twice."*
Who could be king	Kshatriya ideal in the Dharmasutras	**Theme 3 Kinship, Caste and Class**: Shakas, Satavahanas and others of varied origins became kings	*"Kingship was not only for Kshatriyas."*
Gahapati and household	rural differences	**Theme 3**: patriliny, property and gender in the Dharmashastras	*"Control of land and household went together."*
Guilds	shrenis; Mandasor silk weavers	**Theme 3**: jatis often linked to occupations and organised in guilds	*"Crafts shaped both towns and castes."*
Asoka and Buddhism	dhamma, pillars, Sanchi pillar	**Theme 4 Thinkers, Beliefs and Buildings**: Sanchi stupa and Buddhist sculpture	*"Asoka's pillars stand beside Buddhist stupas."*
Land grants	agraharas of the Gupta period	**Theme 8 Peasants, Zamindars and the State**: jagirs and zamindars under the Mughals	*"Rights over land and revenue were always shared out."*
Inscriptions as sources	limitations, point of view	**Theme 6 Bhakti–Sufi** and **Theme 7 Vijayanagara**: inscriptions of temples and kings	*"Every inscription speaks for its patron."*

Drill 1 · Explain how X led to Y

2 marks each · 40 words

Use a chain: **cause → what changed → result**. Join the steps with link words:

as a result · this led to · because · therefore · in turn · this made it possible to · on the other hand · however

L1. Explain how **Prinsep's decipherment** led to a **new direction** in early Indian history. [2]

L2. Explain how **iron and elephants** led to the **rise of Magadha**. [2]

L3. Explain how a **diverse empire** led Asoka to spread **dhamma**. [2]

L4. Explain how the **iron ploughshare** led to **differences in rural society**. [2]

L5. Explain how **land grants** led to **new rural elites**. [2]

L6. Explain how **long-distance trade** led to the issue of **gold coins**. [2]

L7. Explain how **weakening royal power** may have led to **more land grants**. [2]

L8. Explain how the **point of view of patrons** leads to **limitations of inscriptions**. [2]

Drill 2 · Use all three words in one answer

3 marks each · 60 words

Underline the three words in your answer. Each must be used with its correct meaning.

L9. Write a 60-word answer using: **Pataliputra · Taxila · Suvarnagiri**. [3]

L10. Write a 60-word answer using: **Kushanas · devaputra · gold coins**. [3]

L11. Write a 60-word answer using: **Harishena · Samudragupta · prashasti**. [3]

L12. Write a 60-word answer using: **gahapati · vellalar · adimai**. [3]

Drill 3 · Fill the missing link

1 mark each

L13. Write the missing step: [1]

Iron mines, elephants, the Ganga → ? → Magadha becomes the most powerful mahajanapada

L14. Write the missing step: [1]

Asoka conquers Kalinga → ? → Asoka spreads dhamma through inscriptions

L15. Write the missing step: [1]

Spices and textiles in demand in Rome → ? → Roman coin hoards found in south India

Drill 4 · Odd one out

1 mark each

L16. Find the odd one out and give the link that joins the other three: **Taxila · Ujjayini · Tosali · Puhar** [1]

A

PART A · NCERT PRACTICE

Textbook Check

Every section of the chapter and every NCERT exercise idea, asked in new words. Model answers for all of these are in the Model Answer Booklet.

Inscriptions and the earliest states

A1. What are inscriptions? How did James Prinsep's work change the study of early Indian history? MUST DO [3]

A2. Why is the 6th century BCE regarded as a major turning point in early Indian history? [3]

A3. Describe three features of the mahajanapadas. MUST DO [3]

A4. Explain the reasons for the growth of Magadha as the most powerful mahajanapada between the 6th and 4th centuries BCE. MUST DO [8]

The Mauryan empire

A5. Which sources do historians use to reconstruct the history of the Mauryas? MUST DO [3]

A6. Describe the administration of the Mauryan empire. MUST DO [8]

A7. What were the main principles of Asoka's dhamma? How did he spread it? MUST DO [3]

A8. "The Mauryan empire was important, but its importance should not be exaggerated." Explain. [3]

New kings and the changing countryside

A9. How did chiefs in early Tamilakam differ from kings? Give three points. [3]

A10. How did rulers like the Kushanas and Guptas try to claim a high status? [3]

A11. Describe the strategies adopted to increase agricultural production from c. 600 BCE. MUST DO [3]

A12. How did the new agricultural technology lead to differences in rural society? [3]

A13. What were land grants? Why do historians think they were made? MUST DO [8]

Towns, trade and coins

A14. Describe the features of the new cities that grew from the 6th century BCE. MUST DO [3]

A15. What were guilds or shrenis? What were their functions? [3]

A16. Trace the development of coinage in the subcontinent from c. 600 BCE to 600 CE. MUST DO [8]

A17. Explain three limitations of inscriptional evidence. MUST DO [3]

B

PART B · PAPER 027 STYLE

Objective Practice

The MCQ types of Section A: statements, matching, chronology, picture-based (described in words) and assertion–reason.

ASSERTION–REASON: HOW TO ANSWER

(a) Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A.
(b) Both A and R are true, but R is not the correct explanation of A.
(c) A is true, but R is false.
(d) A is false, but R is true.

Multiple choice, matching and chronology

1 mark each

B1. James Prinsep deciphered the Brahmi and Kharosthi scripts in: [1]

(a) 1784 **(b)** 1877 **(c)** 1838 **(d)** 1888

B2. In Asokan inscriptions, the title ‘Piyadassi’ means: [1]

(a) beloved of the gods
(b) son of god
(c) king of kings
(d) pleasant to behold

B3. Read the statements about the mahajanapadas: [1]
I. Most were ruled by kings. II. Ganas or sanghas were ruled by a group of men.
III. Capitals were often fortified. IV. Panchala was the most powerful mahajanapada from the 6th to the 4th century BCE.
Which statements are correct?

(a) I, II and III **(b)** II, III and IV **(c)** I, III and IV **(d)** I, II and IV

B4. Match the mahajanapada with its present-day region: [1]
(a) Magadha (b) Avanti (c) Gandhara (d) Koshala
(i) north-west Pakistan (ii) eastern Uttar Pradesh (iii) Bihar (iv) western Madhya Pradesh

(a) a-iii, b-iv, c-i, d-ii
(b) a-iii, b-i, c-iv, d-ii
(c) a-ii, b-iv, c-i, d-iii
(d) a-iv, b-iii, c-ii, d-i

B5. Which of these was NOT a reason for Magadha’s power? [1]

(a) iron mines nearby
(b) elephants in the forests
(c) the Ganga for transport
(d) Roman gold coins

B6. Pataliputra became the capital of Magadha because it: [1]

(a) lay among hills
(b) was near the gold mines
(c) commanded routes along the Ganga
(d) was on the coast

B7. Match Megasthenes' army subcommittees: [1]
(a) First (b) Second (c) Fifth (d) Sixth
(i) elephants (ii) chariots (iii) transport and provisions (iv) navy
(a) a-iv, b-iii, c-ii, d-i **(b)** a-iii, b-iv, c-i, d-ii
(c) a-iv, b-iii, c-i, d-ii **(d)** a-ii, b-iii, c-iv, d-i

B8. Suvarnagiri was an important Mauryan provincial centre because of: [1]
(a) the gold mines of Karnataka **(b)** the port of Bharukachchha
(c) the iron mines of Jharkhand **(d)** its Buddhist stupa

B9. Which of these was NOT a principle of Asoka's dhamma? [1]
(a) respect for elders **(b)** kindness to slaves and servants
(c) respect for other religions **(d)** conquest of neighbouring kingdoms

B10. Match the author with the work: [1]
(a) Kautilya (b) Harishena (c) Banabhatta (d) Megasthenes
(i) Harshacharita (ii) Indica (iii) Prayaga prashasti (iv) Arthashastra
(a) a-iv, b-i, c-iii, d-ii **(b)** a-iv, b-iii, c-i, d-ii
(c) a-ii, b-iii, c-i, d-iv **(d)** a-iii, b-iv, c-ii, d-i

B11. The rulers who called themselves 'devaputra' and whose colossal statues were found at Mat near Mathura were the: [1]
(a) Guptas **(b)** Satavahanas **(c)** Kushanas **(d)** Mauryas

B12. Men who maintained themselves on local resources and offered homage and military support to Gupta kings were called: [1]
(a) samantas **(b)** gahapatis **(c)** setthis **(d)** mahamattas

B13. In early Tamil literature, 'uzhavar' means: [1]
(a) large landowners **(b)** slaves **(c)** merchants **(d)** ploughmen

B14. Prabhavati Gupta was: [1]
(a) a Kushana princess
(b) a Satavahana queen-mother
(c) a Vakataka queen, daughter of Chandragupta II
(d) a Mauryan princess

B15. Land granted to brahmanas, usually exempt from land revenue, was called: [1]
(a) shreni **(b)** agrahara **(c)** jagir **(d)** sangha

B16. The first gold coins in the subcontinent were issued by the: [1]
(a) Mauryas **(b)** Guptas **(c)** Indo-Greeks **(d)** Kushanas

B17. Which tribal republic issued several thousand copper coins in about the 1st century CE? [1]
(a) Vajji **(b)** Yaudheya **(c)** Shaka **(d)** Malla

B18. Arrange in chronological order: [1]
I. Gupta rule begins II. Reign of Asoka III. Alexander's invasion IV. Harshavardhana rules Kanauj
(a) II, III, I, IV **(b)** III, II, I, IV **(c)** III, I, II, IV **(d)** II, I, III, IV

B19. Which Shaka ruler had the Sudarshana lake repaired in the 2nd century CE? [1]

(a) Bimbisara (b) Kanishka (c) Rudradaman (d) Samudragupta

B20. *Picture described:* a small irregular piece of silver, stamped with several symbols such as a sun, a wheel and an animal, with no name of any ruler. It is most likely a: [1]

(a) Kushana gold coin (b) punch-marked coin
(c) Gupta gold coin (d) Roman coin

B21. Which statement about Kharosthi is correct? [1]

(a) it was used in most Asokan inscriptions of the Ganga valley
(b) it was read with the help of Indo-Greek coins bearing Greek and Kharosthi
(c) it is the parent of Devanagari
(d) it is still undeciphered

Assertion–Reason

1 mark each

B22. ASSERTION–REASON [1]
Assertion (A): Magadha became the most powerful mahajanapada.
Reason (R): Iron mines and elephants were available in the region.

B23. ASSERTION–REASON [1]
Assertion (A): Taxila and Ujjayini were important Mauryan provincial centres.
Reason (R): They were located on important long-distance trade routes.

B24. ASSERTION–REASON [1]
Assertion (A): A guild of silk weavers in Mandasor spent its wealth on building a temple of the sun god.
Reason (R): Guilds only regulated production and did not use their wealth for other purposes.

B25. ASSERTION–REASON [1]
Assertion (A): Historians use prashastis with caution.
Reason (R): Prashastis were composed by court poets to praise kings.

B26. ASSERTION–REASON [1]
Assertion (A): Kushana gold coins were used for long-distance trade.
Reason (R): They were identical in weight with coins of the Roman emperors and Parthian rulers.

C

PART C · BOARD PATTERN

Board Pattern Practice

Written-answer questions grouped by topic. ★★★ = asked in 5 or more of the 6 papers checked · ★★ = 2–4 papers · ★ = 1 paper.

The Mauryan empire – sources and administration

★★★ 5 of 6 papers · 1, 3 and 8 marks

C1. Enumerate the features of Mauryan administration. MUST DO [8]

C2. Explain how Asokan inscriptions help us understand the administration of the Mauryan empire. MUST DO [3]

C3. "The history of the Mauryan empire has been reconstructed from a variety of sources." Explain any three. [3]
MUST DO

C4. "Asoka is regarded as an inspiring figure in Indian history." Give three reasons. [3]

Mahajanapadas and Magadha

★★☆ 2 of 6 papers · 1 and 8 marks · map

C5. Explain how modern historians account for the rise of Magadhan power. MUST DO [8]

C6. Distinguish between monarchies and ganas or sanghas among the mahajanapadas. [3]

Coins, trade and towns

★★☆ 2 of 6 papers · 1, 4 and 8 marks

C7. How do coins help numismatists reconstruct the commercial networks of early India? MUST DO [8]

C8. Describe the trade networks of the subcontinent between c. 600 BCE and 600 CE. [3]

C9. Why were the rivers and the Malabar ports important for early trade? Why did bead-making grow at places like Kodumanal? [3]

C10. Describe the role of guilds (shrenis) in early towns, with the example of the silk weavers of Mandasor. [3]

Inscriptions, prashastis and land grants

★★☆ 2 + 2 of 6 papers · 1, 4 and 8 marks

C11. "Land grants give us an insight into the relationship between cultivators and the state." Explain. MUST DO [8]

C12. How do historians date inscriptions, and what do the languages of inscriptions tell us? [3]

C13. Why do historians use prashastis like the Prayaga prashasti with care? [3]

C14. Explain the role of the Sudarshana lake as evidence of state concern for irrigation. [3]

D

PART D · SOURCE-BASED (Q31–Q33 STYLE)

Source-Based Questions

Each source carries 4 marks (1 + 1 + 2), as in Q31–Q33 of the board paper. The sources are written for this booklet in the style of the excerpts in the textbook. Answer from the source and your notes.

D1. Source-Based · A King Speaks to His People [4]

The king who calls himself the beloved of the gods had these words cut into the rock. He says that people perform many ceremonies at births, marriages and journeys, but these bring little fruit. What truly bears fruit is good conduct: proper behaviour towards slaves and servants, respect for teachers and elders, restraint towards living beings, and generosity towards brahmanas and those who have given up the world. He adds that a person who praises his own sect and runs down others only harms his own; all sects deserve honour. For this purpose he has appointed special officers to go among the people.

(i) Who is the 'beloved of the gods' in this source? [1]

(ii) What are the special officers appointed by the king called? [1]

(iii) Explain two ways in which this message could help the king rule a large and diverse empire. [2]

D2. Source-Based · A Queen Gives Away a Village [4]

A copper plate records that a queen of the Deccan, daughter of a great Gupta king, gave a village to a religious teacher. It tells the villagers – the elders, the householders and the rest – that from now on the land is his. The village will not have to feed visiting royal officers, supply grass, hides or charcoal to them, or let them dig for salt or minerals. The teacher may enjoy all its produce and dues, and the villagers must obey his commands. The plate warns that whoever takes the gift back will suffer for it.

(i) Name the queen who could have made such a grant. [1]

(ii) What does the source tell us about the duties villagers once owed to the state? [1]

(iii) Explain two ways in which such grants changed rural society. [2]

D3. Source-Based · When the King Was Unjust [4]

An old story tells of a king who left his subjects at the mercy of his officers and of robbers. One day the king went about in disguise to hear what people said about him. An old woman, a cowherd, a farmer and even the boys of the village all blamed the king for their troubles: taxes were heavy, officers took their goods, and thieves went unpunished. In the end the villagers left their homes and went to live in the forest, where at least no officer could reach them.

(i) From which collection of stories does this kind of tale come? [1]

(ii) What were the people’s main complaints? [1]

(iii) What does the story tell us about the relationship between kings and subjects? Give two points. [2]

E

PART E · MAP SKILL

Map Work – Mahajanapadas, Cities and Asokan Pillars

CBSE's map list for this theme has the seven chief mahajanapadas and their cities. Practise also the Asokan pillar sites and the towns of the period, which help with Theme 2 and Theme 4 map items. Use the political outline map of India; places now in Pakistan are marked beyond the border.

WHAT THE BOARD ASKS

Q34 (5 marks) asks 3 places to locate and 2 to identify. From this theme: **Magadha** (SQP 2025–26) and **Kannauj** (Board 2026). Check the map list in the 2026–27 syllabus each year.

Locate and label	What to remember
☐ Gandhara	mahajanapada; capital Taxila
☐ Kuru	mahajanapada
☐ Panchala	mahajanapada
☐ Koshala	mahajanapada
☐ Vajji	gana / sangha; capital Vaishali
☐ Magadha	most powerful mahajanapada
☐ Avanti	mahajanapada; capital Ujjayini
☐ Rajgir	first capital of Magadha
☐ Ujjain	Mauryan provincial centre
☐ Taxila	Mauryan provincial centre
☐ Varanasi	city of Kashi on the Ganga
☐ Topra	Asokan pillar (now in Delhi)
☐ Meerut	Asokan pillar (now in Delhi)
☐ Kaushambi	Asokan pillar (now at Allahabad)
☐ Sanchi	Asokan pillar; Buddhist stupa
☐ Mathura	Kushana centre; Mat statues
☐ Kanauj	Harshavardhana's capital
☐ Puhar	Chola port
☐ Bharukachchha	western port

Practice drill – use one fresh outline map of India for each round

Round 1: the seven mahajanapadas from north-west to east – Gandhara, Kuru, Panchala, Koshala, Vajji, Magadha – then Avanti in the south-west. **Round 2:** the four cities – Taxila, Ujjain, Varanasi, Rajgir. **Round 3:** the Asokan pillars – Topra, Meerut, Kaushambi, Sanchi – and the towns Mathura, Kanauj, Puhar, Bharukachchha. **Round 4:** all nineteen in 8 minutes, from memory, with names written neatly beside each dot.

PART F · REAL BOARD QUESTIONS

F Board PYQ Index

Real questions from recent board papers and CBSE sample papers, by topic. Open the paper and attempt the listed questions.

Frequency	Topic	Marks	Where asked (year: paper code, question number)	Practise here
★★★	**Mauryan empire – sources, administration, Asoka**	1–8	**2026:** 61/2/3 Q2 (match Kautilya, Harishena, Banabhatta) · **2025:** 61/1/1 Q22(a)/(b)* · **2024:** 61/1/1 Q3, Q23 · **SQP 2026–27:** Q3 (Megasthenes) · **SQP 2025–26:** Q28(A)	A5–A8, B7–B10, B23, C1–C4, D1, L3, L9
★★☆	**Mahajanapadas and Magadha**	1–8, map	**2025:** 61/1/1 Q5 (match regions)* · **SQP 2025–26:** Q3, Q28(B), Q34 (Magadha)	A2–A4, B3–B6, B22, C5–C6, Map, L2, L13
★★☆	**Coins and trade**	1–8	**2026:** 61/2/3 Q4 (first gold coins), Q32 (source: Malabar trade, Kodumanal beads) · **SQP 2026–27:** Q28(B)	A16, B16–B17, B20, B26, C7–C9, L6, L10, L15
★★☆	**Inscriptions and prashastis**	1–4	**2026:** 61/2/3 Q2 · **SQP 2024–25:** Q31 (source on inscriptions)	A1, A17, B1–B2, B21, B25, C12–C13, L1, L8, L11
★★☆	**Land grants and rural society**	1–8	**2025:** 61/1/1 Q6 (Prabhavati Gupta)* · **SQP 2026–27:** Q28(A)	A11–A13, B13–B15, C11, D2–D3, L4–L5, L7, L12
★☆☆	**Guilds and towns**	1	**SQP 2026–27:** Q4 (A–R, Mandasor guild) · **2026:** Q34 (Kannauj on the map)	A14–A15, B24, C10
★☆☆	**Later kings and irrigation**	1	**SQP 2024–25:** Q6 (Rudradaman, Sudarshana lake)	A9–A10, B11–B12, B19, C14
★☆☆	**6th century BCE as a turning point**	3	**2025:** 61/1/1 Q23* (also fits Theme 4)	A2

Papers checked (6): Board 2026 – 61/2/3 · Board 2025 – 61/1/1 · Board 2024 – 61/1/1 (from the marking scheme) · CBSE Sample Papers 2026–27, 2025–26, 2024–25. * Read from a secondary copy of the paper – check against the official paper. Sets of one code family share most questions. Download official papers from cbse.gov.in → Previous Year Question Papers, and sample papers from cbseacademic.nic.in.

PART G · YOUR RECORD

G My Mistakes

Write down each mistake from this chapter, including your school tests and pre-board papers.

Every wrong answer is a free lesson. Write it here, find the point you missed, and redo the question after three days.

Date	Part & Q No.	What went wrong	Correct point or fact	Redone ✓