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

HISTORY · THEME 3 MODEL ANSWERS

Kinship, Caste and Class

Board-Style Answer Booklet · Answers as CBSE expects them

CBSE marking-scheme pattern | Word count on every answer | 73 model answers | Most-probable 2027 answers marked

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HOW TO USE IT

1. Write your own answer first, in the practice notebook.
2. Then open this booklet. Tick each numbered point you also wrote.
3. Give yourself 1 mark per matching point – that is how the examiner marks.
4. Copy any point you missed into My Mistakes (last page of the Chapter Booklet).
5. Rewrite the answer after 3 days, from memory.

USE WITH **Chapter Booklet, History Theme 3**

M

READ THIS FIRST · BASED ON THE CBSE SAMPLE PAPER AND MARKING SCHEME 2026–27

How CBSE Marks History

Every answer in this booklet follows the official marking-scheme pattern: numbered value points, keyword first, inside the word limit. Under each answer you will see its word count and how the marks are split.

The History paper in 2027 (as in Sample Paper 2026–27)

Paper 027 · 80 marks · 34 questions · 3 hours

Item	Type	Marks	Words	What earns the marks
Q1–Q21	MCQs: statements, matching, picture-based, chronology, assertion–reason	1 each	–	Letter + answer
Q22–Q27	Short answer; some with (A) **or** (B)	3 each	60–80	3 points × 1 mark
Q28–Q30	Long answer, (A) **or** (B)	8 each	300–350	8 points × 1, or 4 + 4
Q31–Q33	Source-based: three sub-questions each	4 each	–	1 + 1 + 2, from the source + chapter facts
Q34	Map: mark 3 places (Harappan, Buddhist, Vijayanagara, Mughal…) + identify 2 places of 1857 or the national movement	5	–	Right place + name written

Theme 3 came in every paper checked: an MCQ (Ekalavya, Satakani, polyandry, kinship terms, Manusmriti, Hastinapura) plus a **3-mark** answer on the Mahabharata or ruling lineages, a **4-mark source** (Gandhari, SQP 2026–27 Q31) or an **8-mark** choice (Board 2025 Q28). Our 8-mark answers give the eight value points in about 150–230 words; the Model Answer Booklet then gives a full 300–350 word answer that shows how to expand them in the exam.

How the marking scheme gives marks

SEVEN RULES

- **Marks come from value points.** Each correct, relevant point earns 1 mark: one value point per mark – 3 marks = 3 points, 8 marks = 8 points (or 4 + 4 when the question has two parts). The scheme accepts “any other relevant point”, so a correct NCERT point that is not in our answer also scores.
- **Points are numbered and backed by evidence.** The examiner wants a fact in each point: a site, a find, a writer, a date, a place or an example. Our long answers add one opening and one closing line so the answer reads well; the marks come from the numbered points.
- **Keyword first.** Start each point with the key word and underline it – the examiner scans for it. Then give one fact: a name, a date, a number or an example.
- **MCQs:** write the letter and the answer text. Combination questions are answered like “(b) Only a, b and d”.
- **Case / source-based:** (i) and (ii) need one clear line each; the 2-mark part needs two separate points. Use the passage’s own clues, then add chapter facts.
- **Internal choice:** write “(A)” or “(B)” in the margin and attempt only one. Map questions: attach the map to the answer book.
- **Do not repeat** one idea in two points – it earns one mark only.

Answer frames – copy this shape

3-mark answer — 60–80 words

1. Keyword: point + site / find / date.
2. Keyword: point + example.
3. Keyword: point + result.

One or two sentences per point.

8-mark answer — 300–350 words

→ Opening line that answers the question in short.

1–8 Eight numbered points, keyword first, each with evidence: a site, a find, a writer or a date.

→ Closing line: “Thus / Hence …”.

If the question has two parts, answer under two sub-headings.

Source-based 1 + 1 + 2 · Q31–Q33

(i) One line, from the source.
(ii) One line: source clue + chapter fact.
(iii) Two separate points, one line each.

Never copy the whole passage.

Short of time? Learn these ten first

Most probable for 2027

C1	Explain the features of familial relations in the …	[8]	C2	What do Gandhari's advice to Duryodhana and his response …	[3]
C4	Explain the stages by which the critical edition of the …	[3]	C5	"The Mahabharata is a dynamic text." Justify the statement.	[3]
C6	How does the Mahabharata reflect the multicultural nature …	[3]	C8	"From the 6th century BCE, kingship was not confined to …	[8]
C9	Substantiate that several important ruling lineages had …	[3]	D1	Source: A Mother's Last Appeal	[4]
D2	Source: Digging at Hastinapura	[4]			

Link words that make an answer flow

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

ANSWERS · PART A

A Textbook Check – Answers

Model answers to every Textbook Check question. Underlined words are the keywords the examiner looks for.

The critical edition and kinship

A1. Describe how the critical edition of the Mahabharata was prepared. What did the scholars find? [3]

1. **Collection:** from 1919 V. S. Sukthankar and dozens of scholars collected Sanskrit manuscripts in many scripts from all over India.
2. **Method:** they compared verses and selected those common to most versions; the work filled over 13,000 pages and took 47 years.
3. **Findings:** common elements from Kashmir to Kerala, but also huge regional variations, recorded in footnotes and appendices.

58 words · limit 80 | Marking: 3 points × 1 = 3 | MUST DO

A2. Explain the terms kula, jnati, vamsha, patriliny and matriliny. [3]

1. **Kula and jnati:** kula is the family; jnati is the larger network of kinfolk.
2. **Vamsha:** the lineage, such as the Kuru vamsha of the Mahabharata.
3. **Patriliny and matriliny:** patriliny traces descent from father to son; matriliny traces it through the mother.

41 words · limit 80 | Marking: 3 points × 1 = 3

A3. How did the Mahabharata reinforce the idea of patriliny? [3]

1. **Story:** it is a war between Kuru cousins, the Kauravas and Pandavas, over land and power.
2. **Outcome:** after the Pandavas won, patrilineal succession was proclaimed.
3. **Practice:** most dynasties claimed it: sons inherited the throne; brothers or other kinsmen succeeded when there was no son.

44 words · limit 80 | Marking: 3 points × 1 = 3 | MUST DO

A4. Explain the brahmanical rules of marriage and of gotra. [3]

1. **Exogamy:** daughters were married outside the kin group; kanyadana was the father's religious duty.
2. **Eight forms:** the Dharmashastras recognised eight forms of marriage – four good, four condemned.
3. **Gotra rules:** a woman took her husband's gotra on marriage, and people of the same gotra could not marry.

46 words · limit 80 | Marking: 3 points × 1 = 3 | MUST DO

A5. "The Satavahanas did not always follow the brahmanical rules of marriage." Give evidence. [3]

1. **Mother's name:** kings were known by metronymics, e.g. Gotami-puta Siri-Satakani, son of Gotami.
2. **Father's gotra:** several queens kept their father's gotra names, such as Gotama and Vasistha.
3. **Endogamy:** some queens were of the same gotra as their husbands – marriage within the kin, common in south India; succession stayed patrilineal.

49 words · limit 80 | Marking: 3 points × 1 = 3 | MUST DO

Varna, jati and kingship

A6. What were the ideal occupations of the four varnas? How did brahmanas try to enforce this order? [8]

The Dharmasutras and Dharmashastras laid down an ideal social order of four varnas.

1. **Brahmanas:** to study and teach the Vedas, perform sacrifices and get them performed, and give and receive gifts.
2. **Kshatriyas:** to fight, protect people, administer justice, study the Vedas, get sacrifices performed and make gifts.
3. **Vaishyas:** to study the Vedas, get sacrifices performed, make gifts and take up farming, herding and trade.
4. **Shudras:** only one occupation – to serve the three higher varnas.
5. **Divine origin:** brahmanas claimed the order came from god – the Purusha sukta of the Rigveda describes the varnas emerging from the primeval man.
6. **Kings as enforcers:** they advised kings to make sure the norms were followed in their kingdoms.
7. **Birth decides status:** they persuaded people that status came from birth, using stories from the Mahabharata and other texts.
8. **Not fully obeyed:** in practice kings of many origins, guild members who changed jobs and new jatis show the order was never rigid.

Thus the varna order was an ideal that brahmanas tried hard to enforce, with only partial success.

Full answer – as you would write it in the exam (337 words)

From about 500 BCE, brahmanas composed Sanskrit texts known as the Dharmasutras and Dharmashastras, which laid down norms for an ideal social order. The most important of these, the Manusmriti, was compiled between c. 200 BCE and 200 CE. At the heart of this order was the division of society into four varnas, each with its own ideal occupations.

Brahmanas were to study and teach the Vedas, perform sacrifices and get sacrifices performed, and give and receive gifts. Kshatriyas were to engage in warfare, protect people and administer justice; they could also study the Vedas, get sacrifices performed and make gifts. Vaishyas were expected to study the Vedas, get sacrifices performed and make gifts, and in addition to engage in agriculture, pastoralism and trade. Shudras were assigned only one occupation: serving the three higher varnas.

The brahmanas developed several strategies to enforce these norms. First, they asserted that the varna order was of divine origin. They cited a verse from the Purusha sukta of the Rigveda, which describes the brahmana emerging from the mouth of the primeval man, the Kshatriya from his arms, the Vaishya from his thighs and the Shudra from his feet. This gave the order the authority of sacred tradition.

Second, they advised kings to ensure that these norms were followed within their kingdoms. Rulers were thus made responsible for upholding the social order.

Third, they attempted to persuade people that their status was determined by birth. This was often done through stories in the Mahabharata and other texts. The story of Ekalavya, a forest-dweller whose skill threatened the Kshatriya Arjuna and who was asked by Drona to give up his thumb, reinforced the idea that occupations belonged to particular groups by birth.

In practice, however, the order was never followed fully. Kings came from many different backgrounds, members of guilds sometimes changed occupations, and new groups were absorbed as jatis.

Thus the four-varna system was an ideal that brahmanas tried hard to enforce through religion, royal power and stories, with only partial success.

172 words · limit 350 | Full answer: 337 words · board asks 300–350 | Marking: 8 points × 1 = 8 | Opening + closing line: 1 line each, no extra mark | MUST DO

A7. "Kingship was not confined to Kshatriyas." Give three examples. [3]

1. **Mauryas:** brahmanical texts said they were of 'low' origin; the Shungas and Kanvas were brahmanas.
2. **Shakas:** Central Asian 'mlechchhas', yet Rudradaman ruled and left a Sanskrit inscription.
3. **Satavahanas:** Gotami-puta Siri-Satakani called himself a unique brahmana and destroyer of the Kshatriyas' pride.

41 words · limit 80 | Marking: 3 points × 1 = 3 | MUST DO

A8. How was jati different from varna? How were new groups fitted into the system? [3]

1. **Number:** varnas were fixed at four; there was no limit to the number of jatis.
2. **New groups:** forest peoples like the nishadas and occupations like goldsmiths (suvarnakara) were classified as jatis.
3. **Guilds:** jatis sharing an occupation were sometimes organised into shrenis, like the silk weavers of Mandasor.

47 words · limit 80 | Marking: 3 points × 1 = 3

A9. How were the chandalas treated according to the Manusmriti and Chinese pilgrims? [3]

1. **Polluting work:** they handled corpses and dead animals and were placed below the varnas as 'untouchable'.
2. **Manusmriti:** they had to live outside villages, use discarded bowls, wear clothes of the dead and act as executioners.
3. **Pilgrims:** Fa Xian said they sounded a clapper in the streets; Xuan Zang saw them living outside cities.

53 words · limit 80 | Marking: 3 points × 1 = 3 | MUST DO

Property, gender and the epic

A10. Explain the differences in access to property between men and women. [3]

1. **Sons inherit:** the Manusmriti divided the paternal estate equally among sons, with a special share for the eldest.
2. **Stridhana:** women could keep marriage gifts, inherited by their children, but not hoard family wealth without the husband's permission.
3. **Control:** land, cattle and money were usually controlled by men; Draupadi's staking raised the question of women as property.

56 words · limit 80 | Marking: 3 points × 1 = 3 | MUST DO

A11. Explain the Buddhist idea of the origin of kingship. [3]

1. **Golden age:** the Sutta Pitaka says beings first lived in peace, taking only what they needed from nature.
2. **Decline:** as people became greedy and deceitful, they chose one person to punish wrongdoers, paying him in rice.
3. **Great elect:** he was the mahasammata, chosen by the people – kingship was a human choice and taxes a payment for service.

57 words · limit 80 | Marking: 3 points × 1 = 3

A12. Discuss how historians classify the contents of the Mahabharata and date its composition. [8]

The Mahabharata was composed over about a thousand years.

1. **Two kinds of content:** historians divide it into narrative sections (stories) and didactic sections (teachings on social norms).
2. **Story first:** most think it began as a dramatic story, with didactic portions added later; it was called itihasa.
3. **Language:** its Sanskrit is simpler than that of the Vedas or prashastis, so it was widely understood.
4. **Sutas:** the original story was probably composed by charioteer-bards who accompanied Kshatriya warriors and was passed on orally.
5. **Brahmanas write it down:** from about the 5th century BCE brahmanas took it over and wrote it down, as the Kurus and Panchalas became kingdoms.
6. **Krishna and Vishnu:** between c. 200 BCE and 200 CE Krishna came to be identified with Vishnu, whose worship was growing.
7. **Didactic additions:** between c. 200 and 400 CE large didactic sections like the Manusmriti were added; the text grew from under 10,000 to about 100,000 verses.
8. **Vyasa and the critical edition:** tradition names Vyasa as author; the 20th-century critical edition showed how much it varied by region.

Thus the Mahabharata is a layered text that historians must read with care.

Full answer – as you would write it in the exam (338 words)

The Mahabharata is one of the richest texts of early India. It contains over 100,000 verses and was composed over a period of about a thousand years, from c. 500 BCE onwards. Historians have studied it carefully to understand both its contents and how it developed.

Historians usually classify its contents into two broad heads. The narrative sections contain stories, such as the conflict between the Kauravas and the Pandavas. The didactic sections contain prescriptions about social norms, such as the duties of kings and the rules of the varna order. Most historians agree that the Mahabharata was meant to be a dramatic, moving story, and that the didactic portions were probably added later. Within the tradition itself the text is described as itihasa, meaning "thus it was", which suggests a story believed to be true.

The language of the Mahabharata is Sanskrit, but it is far simpler than that of the Vedas or the prashastis. It was therefore probably widely understood.

The dating of the text has been worked out in stages. Historians suggest that the original story was composed by charioteer-bards known as sutas, who accompanied Kshatriya warriors to the battlefield and composed poems celebrating their victories. These compositions circulated orally. From about the fifth century BCE, brahmanas took over the story and began to commit it to writing, at a time when chiefdoms such as the Kurus and Panchalas were becoming kingdoms.

Between c. 200 BCE and 200 CE, another phase began. The worship of Vishnu was growing, and Krishna, an important figure in the epic, came to be identified with Vishnu. Later, between c. 200 and 400 CE, large didactic sections resembling the Manusmriti were added. With these additions, a text that originally had perhaps fewer than 10,000 verses grew to about 100,000 verses.

Tradition attributes the composition to the sage Vyasa. The critical edition prepared in the twentieth century showed how much regional variation existed.

Thus the Mahabharata is a layered text that grew over centuries, and historians must read it with care.

187 words · limit 350 | Full answer: 338 words · board asks 300–350 | Marking: 8 points × 1 = 8 | Opening + closing line: 1 line each, no extra mark | MUST DO

A13. What did B. B. Lal find at Hastinapura? Why are historians careful in linking it with the epic? [3]

1. **Finds:** in 1951–52 he found mud-brick and burnt-brick houses, soakage jars, brick drains and terracotta ring-wells.
2. **Possible link:** the site lies in the upper Ganga doab, where the Kuru kingdom was.
3. **Caution:** the shared name may be a coincidence; the finds do not prove the epic's story.

48 words · limit 80 | Marking: 3 points × 1 = 3

A14. "The Mahabharata is a dynamic text." Explain. [3]

1. **Many versions:** after the Sanskrit version, it was written in many regional languages.
2. **Local episodes:** stories from particular regions and peoples were added to it.
3. **Many forms:** it was retold in sculpture, painting, plays, dance and storytelling, and still is today.

41 words · limit 80 | Marking: 3 points × 1 = 3 | MUST DO

B

ANSWER KEY · PART B

Objective – Answer Key

All 22 MCQ and assertion–reason answers, each with a one-line reason so you learn the fact, not only the letter.

Write the option letter **and** the answer, as the marking scheme does – e.g. "(b) ..." followed by the answer text.

Q	Answer	Why (one line)
B1	**(d) V. S. Sukthankar**	1919–1966; over 13,000 pages.
B2	**(a) a-ii, b-iv, c-iii, d-i**	SQP 2025–26 asked a similar match.
B3	**(c) He gave his right thumb as guru dakshina**	Board 2026 Q1; Drona refused to teach him.
B4	**(b) Satavahana dynasty**	SQP 2024–25 Q2; named after his mother Gotami.
B5	**(b) He stopped intermarriage among the four varnas**	Yet he allied by marriage with Rudradaman's family.
B6	**(c) divided equally among sons, with a special share for the eldest**	Women could not claim a share.
B7	**(d) B. B. Lal**	SQP 2026–27 Q5.
B8	**(c) polyandry**	Board 2024 Q7 key: polyandry.
B9	**(c) I, II and IV**	Same-gotra marriage was forbidden.
B10	**(a) the great elect**	A king chosen by the people.
B11	**(a) Fa Xian**	c. 5th century CE.
B12	**(b) silk weavers**	They moved from Lata to Dashapura and built a sun temple.
B13	**(b) IV, II, III, I**	c. 500–200 BCE → c. 200 BCE–200 CE → 1951–52 → 1966.
B14	**(c) charioteer-bards (sutas)**	Brahmanas wrote it down from c. 5th century BCE.
B15	**(d) administering justice**	Justice was a Kshatriya duty.
B16	**(d) Rudradaman**	'Outsiders' adopted Sanskritic traditions.
B17	**(a) a rakshasa woman of the forest**	Their son was Ghatotkacha.
B18	**(c) A is true, but R is false.**	A is true; R is false – succession was generally patrilineal.
B19	**(a) Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A.**	R explains how the guild did it.
B20	**(b) Both A and R are true, but R is not the correct explanation of A.**	Both true; R does not explain A.
B21	**(a) Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A.**	R explains A.
B22	**(d) A is false, but R is true.**	A is false; R is true.

C

ANSWERS · PART C

Board Pattern – Answers

Model answers in the marking-scheme pattern. Orange tags show where a similar question came in a board or sample paper.

Kinship, family and marriage

★★★ 4 of 6 papers · 1, 4 and 8 marks

C1. Explain the features of familial relations in the Mahabharata period with suitable examples. **[8]**

The Mahabharata gives a vivid picture of family life among the ruling elite.

1. **Kinship networks:** families were part of larger kin networks – kula (family), jnati (kinfolk) and vamsha (lineage).
2. **Patriliny:** the Kuru cousins fought over land and power; after the war patrilineal succession was proclaimed.
3. **Sons inherit:** sons claimed the father's resources and throne; brothers or kinsmen succeeded when there was no son.
4. **Exogamy and kanyadana:** daughters were married outside the kin; giving a daughter in marriage was the father's duty.
5. **Gotra rules:** women took their husband's gotra, and same-gotra marriage was forbidden – though Satavahana queens kept their father's.
6. **Polyandry:** Draupadi married the five Pandavas, showing that marriage forms varied.
7. **Mothers' voice:** Gandhari urged Duryodhana to make peace; he ignored her – mothers had moral authority but limited power.
8. **Women and property:** in the game of dice Yudhishthira staked Draupadi, raising the question of whether women were their husbands' property.

Thus the epic shows families bound by patriliny, with women in a subordinate but not voiceless position.

Full answer – as you would write it in the exam (348 words)

The Mahabharata, though composed over centuries, offers a vivid picture of family life, especially among the ruling elite. Its story is itself about a feud between two groups of cousins, so familial relations lie at its very heart.

Families were part of larger networks of kinfolk. Sanskrit texts use the term kula for families and jnati for the larger network of kinsfolk; vamsha is used for lineage. People were expected to support their kinsmen, though these ties could also break down into conflict.

The epic strengthened the idea of patriliny. The Kauravas and Pandavas, both belonging to the Kuru ruling family, fought over land and power. After the war, the Pandavas won, and patrilineal succession was proclaimed. Under patriliny, sons could claim the resources of their fathers, including the throne in the case of kings. Where there was no son, a brother succeeded, and sometimes other kinsmen claimed the throne.

Daughters were viewed very differently. They had no claims to the resources of the household. It was considered desirable to marry them outside the kin group, a system called exogamy. Giving a daughter in marriage, or kanyadana, was regarded as an important religious duty of the father. Women were expected to give up their father's gotra and adopt that of their husband, and members of the same gotra could not marry. Not all families followed this; several Satavahana queens retained their fathers' gotra names.

Marriage forms also varied. Draupadi's marriage to the five Pandavas is an example of polyandry, which may have been practised among some groups.

Mothers had moral authority but limited power. Gandhari pleaded with her eldest son Duryodhana to make peace with the Pandavas, warning him that war would bring ruin, but he ignored her advice and went to war.

The epic also raises the question of whether women were their husbands' property. In the game of dice, Yudhishthira staked and lost Draupadi, and she later questioned whether he had the right to do so.

Thus the Mahabharata shows families bound by patriliny and kinship, in which women held a subordinate yet not voiceless position.

166 words · limit 350 | Full answer: 348 words · board asks 300–350 | Marking: 8 points × 1 = 8
Opening + closing line: 1 line each, no extra mark | Board 2025 61/1/1 Q28(A)* | MUST DO

C2. What do Gandhari's advice to Duryodhana and his response tell us about family relations? [3]

1. **Advice:** she urged peace: a king who controls his senses guards his kingdom; greed and anger must be conquered.
2. **Response:** Duryodhana ignored her, went to war and was defeated.
3. **Meaning:** a mother had moral authority, but sons, as heirs, made the decisions – his character was proud and stubborn.

48 words · limit 80 | Marking: 3 points × 1 = 3 | SQP 2026–27 Q31 (source) | MUST DO

C3. Analyse why the Satavahana evidence challenges the brahmanical rules of gotra. [3]

1. **Metronymics:** kings like Gotami-puta Siri-Satakani were identified by names derived from their mothers, not their fathers.
2. **Father's gotra kept:** several queens retained names from their fathers' gotras, such as Gotama and Vasistha, instead of taking the husband's gotra.
3. **Same gotra:** some queens belonged to the same gotra as their husbands – endogamy, common among communities of south India.

57 words · limit 80 | Marking: 3 points × 1 = 3 | SQP 2024–25 Q2; Board 2026 61/2/3 Q5 (MCQs)

The Mahabharata as a text

★★★ 4 of 6 papers · 1 and 3 marks

C4. Explain the stages by which the critical edition of the Mahabharata was compiled in the 20th century. [3]

1. **Gathering:** from 1919, under V. S. Sukthankar, scholars collected Sanskrit manuscripts in different scripts from all over India.
2. **Comparing:** they compared verses and kept those common to most versions, publishing over 13,000 pages by 1966.
3. **Recording variety:** regional variations were recorded in footnotes and appendices, showing dialogue between Sanskrit and local traditions.

52 words · limit 80 | Marking: 3 points × 1 = 3 | SQP 2025–26 Q23; Board 2024 61/1/1 Q22(b) | MUST DO

C5. "The Mahabharata is a dynamic text." Justify the statement. [3]

1. **Growth:** it grew from under 10,000 to about 100,000 verses as brahmanas added didactic sections.
2. **Regional versions:** it was retold in many languages, absorbing local episodes and characters.
3. **Living tradition:** it inspired sculpture, painting, plays, dance and storytelling, and is still retold today.

43 words · limit 80 | Marking: 3 points × 1 = 3 | Board 2024 61/1/1 Q22(a) | MUST DO

C6. How does the Mahabharata reflect the multicultural nature of early Indian society? Give examples. [3]

1. **Forest peoples:** Bhima married Hidimba, a rakshasa woman of the forest; their son Ghatotkacha fought for the Pandavas.
2. **Nishadas:** Ekalavya, a nishada, learnt archery on his own – showing contact, and also discrimination.
3. **Regional variety:** the critical edition found many regional versions and practices, such as polyandry, alongside Sanskrit norms.

49 words · limit 80 | Marking: 3 points × 1 = 3 | SQP 2024–25 Q23 | MUST DO

C7. What did the excavations at Hastinapura reveal? Can they be linked with the Mahabharata? [3]

1. **Houses:** mud-brick and burnt-brick houses, and earlier walls of reeds plastered with mud.
2. **Drainage:** soakage jars, brick drains and terracotta ring-wells used as wells or drainage pits.
3. **Link uncertain:** it lies in the Kuru region, but the name may be a coincidence.

42 words · limit 80 | Marking: 3 points × 1 = 3 | SQP 2026–27 Q5 (MCQ)

Kings of different origins

★★★ 3 of 6 papers · 1, 3 and 8 marks

C8. "From the 6th century BCE, kingship was not confined to those born as Kshatriyas." Explain with examples. [8]

In practice, rulers came from many social backgrounds.

1. **The ideal:** the Dharmashastras and Dharmasutras said that only Kshatriyas should be kings.
2. **Mauryas:** Buddhist texts call them Kshatriyas, but brahmanical texts describe them as of 'low' origin.
3. **Shungas and Kanvas:** the dynasties that followed the Mauryas were brahmanas.
4. **Shakas:** Central Asian rulers regarded as mlechchhas by brahmanas still ruled large areas.
5. **Rudradaman:** the Shaka ruler had the Sudarshana lake rebuilt and left a Sanskrit inscription.
6. **Satavahanas:** Gotami-puta Siri-Satakani called himself a unique brahmana who destroyed the pride of Kshatriyas.
7. **Contradictions:** he claimed to stop intermarriage among varnas, yet married into Rudradaman's family.
8. **Real basis:** kingship went to anyone who could gather enough support and resources, often with the backing of brahmanas who declared him legitimate.

Thus political power depended more on support and resources than on birth.

Full answer – as you would write it in the exam (309 words)

The Dharmasutras and Dharmashastras laid down that only Kshatriyas should be kings. Yet historical evidence shows that, from about the sixth century BCE, many powerful rulers came from other social backgrounds.

The Mauryas, who ruled a large empire, are a good example. Their origins were hotly debated. Later Buddhist texts suggested that they were Kshatriyas, but brahmanical texts described them as being of "low" origin. The dynasties that succeeded the Mauryas in parts of north India, the Shungas and the Kanvas, were brahmanas, not Kshatriyas.

Political power was also held by people of foreign origin. The Shakas, who came from Central Asia, were regarded by brahmanas as mlechchhas, barbarians or outsiders, and yet they ruled large areas. Rudradaman, the best-known Shaka ruler of the second century CE, rebuilt the Sudarshana lake and left a long Sanskrit inscription, showing that he was keen to present himself as an ideal ruler within Sanskrit traditions.

The Satavahanas provide another interesting case. Gotami-puta Siri-Satakani, the best-known ruler of the dynasty, claimed to be a unique brahmana and also claimed to have destroyed the pride of Kshatriyas. He even claimed that he had ensured there was no intermarriage among members of the four varnas.

At the same time, he entered into a marriage alliance with the kin of Rudradaman, the Shaka ruler. This shows how claims of upholding the varna order could coexist with practices that contradicted it. Political convenience mattered more than strict rules.

These examples suggest that kingship was open to anybody who could muster support and resources. Rulers often depended on the support of brahmanas, who could declare them legitimate and create genealogies or inscriptions that presented them in the best light.

Thus, although the texts said that only Kshatriyas should rule, in practice political power depended far more on support, resources and recognition than on birth into a particular varna.

136 words · limit 350 | Full answer: 309 words · board asks 300–350 | Marking: 8 points × 1 = 8 | Opening + closing line: 1 line each, no extra mark | Board 2025 61/1/1 Q28(B)* | MUST DO

C9. Substantiate that several important ruling lineages had different origins in early India. [3]

1. **Brahmana kings:** the Shungas and Kanvas were brahmanas; the Mauryas were Kshatriyas in Buddhist texts but of 'low' origin in brahmanical ones.
2. **Shakas:** Central Asian 'outsiders', called mlechchhas, ruled; Rudradaman left a Sanskrit inscription.
3. **Satavahanas:** Gotami-puta Siri-Satakani called himself a unique brahmana who destroyed the pride of Kshatriyas.

48 words · limit 80 | Marking: 3 points × 1 = 3 | Board 2026 61/2/3 Q23 | MUST DO

Varna, jati and outsiders

★☆☆ 1 of 6 papers · 1 mark

C10. Examine how brahmanical texts treated people outside the four varnas. [3]

1. **Forest peoples:** nishadas, like Ekalavya, were seen as uncivilised and kept out of learning and status.
2. **Mlechchhas:** nomadic pastoralists and speakers of non-Sanskrit languages were viewed with suspicion and called outsiders.
3. **Chandalas:** those doing 'polluting' work were treated as untouchable and made to live outside settlements.

46 words · limit 80 | Marking: 3 points × 1 = 3 | Board 2026 61/2/3 Q1 (Ekalavya MCQ)

C11. "The guild of silk weavers of Mandasor shows that society was more complex than the varna order suggests." Explain. [3]

1. **Migration:** the weavers moved from Lata in Gujarat to Dashapura with their families.
2. **Many occupations:** some members became archers, astrologers or religious teachers.
3. **Wealth:** the guild built a sun temple – occupation and status could change, unlike the fixed varna ideal.

40 words · limit 80 | Marking: 3 points × 1 = 3 | SQP 2026–27 Q4 (A–R)

Property and gender

★☆☆ 1 of 6 papers · 1 mark

C12. "Social differences between men and women sharpened because of differences in access to resources." Explain. [3]

1. **Inheritance:** the Manusmriti gave the paternal estate to sons, with a special share for the eldest.
2. **Stridhana:** women kept only marriage gifts and could not hoard family wealth without permission.
3. **Control:** land, cattle and money were mostly controlled by men, even if a few queens were rich.

47 words · limit 80 | Marking: 3 points × 1 = 3 | SQP 2025–26 Q5 (Manusmriti MCQ)

D

ANSWERS · PART D

Source-Based – Answers

One line each for the 1-mark parts; separate points for the 2-mark parts. The whole answer stays within the word limit.

D1. Source-Based · A Mother's Last Appeal (printed in the booklet) [4]

(i) **Identify the queen and her son.** [1]

Gandhari and Duryodhana.

(ii) **Which two vices does she ask a king to overcome?** [1]

Greed and anger.

(iii) **What does the son's response tell us about his character and about family relations? Give two points.** [2]

(i) Duryodhana was proud and stubborn; he ignored wise advice and chose war, which ended in his defeat.

(ii) A mother had moral authority, but in a patrilineal family the son, as heir, made the decisions.

42 words in all · limit 100 | Marking: 1 + 1 + 2 = 4 | SQP 2026–27 Q31 was a source on Gandhari's appeal

D2. Source-Based · Digging at Hastinapura (printed in the booklet) [4]

(i) **Name the archaeologist and the site.** [1]

B. B. Lal, at Hastinapura (1951–52).

(ii) **What was the use of the terracotta ring-wells?** [1]

As wells and as drainage pits.

(iii) **Why are historians careful in linking this site with the Hastinapura of the Mahabharata? Give two reasons.** [2]

(i) The similar name may be a coincidence; nothing found names the Kurus.

(ii) The epic was composed and expanded over centuries, so its descriptions may not match any one period at the site.

47 words in all · limit 100 | Marking: 1 + 1 + 2 = 4 | SQP 2026–27 Q5 asked who excavated Hastinapura

D3. Source-Based · The First King (printed in the booklet) [4]

(i) **In which Buddhist text is this story found?** [1]

The Sutta Pitaka.

(ii) **What was the chosen person called?** [1]

Mahasammata – the great elect.

(iii) **How does this idea of kingship differ from the brahmanical view? Give two points.** [2]

(i) Kingship is a human institution chosen by the people, not a divine order based on birth.

(ii) Taxes (the share of rice) are a payment for the king's service, so people could change the arrangement.

43 words in all · limit 100 | Marking: 1 + 1 + 2 = 4

ANSWERS · PART 2 KEY WORDS & LINKS

2 Link Drills – Answers

Watch how each answer joins cause to result with a link word. Copy this habit into every History answer.

Drill 1 · Explain how X led to Y

link words in bold

L1. Explain how **patriliny** led to **women's weak claim to property**. [2]

> Under patriliny, sons inherited the father's land and throne. **As a result**, daughters had no claim and women kept only stridhana.

22 words · limit 40

L2. Explain how the **rule of exogamy** led to the **gotra** rules for women. [2]

> Daughters were married outside the kin group. **Therefore** a woman was expected to give up her father's gotra and take her husband's.

22 words · limit 40

L3. Explain how **Satavahana inscriptions** lead historians to doubt that **brahmanical rules** were followed everywhere. [2]

> Satavahana queens kept their fathers' gotras and some shared their husbands'. **So** historians see that the Sanskrit rules were not universal.

21 words · limit 40

L4. Explain how the **support of brahmanas** helped **non-Kshatriyas become kings**. [2]

> Brahmanas could declare a ruler legitimate. **Because of this**, Shakas, brahmanas and others of varied origins could rule with their backing.

22 words · limit 40

L5. Explain how **new groups** led to the growth of **jatis**. [2]

> Forest peoples and new occupations did not fit four varnas. **This led** brahmanas to classify them as jatis, whose number had no limit.

23 words · limit 40

L6. Explain how the idea of **'polluting' work** led to **untouchability**. [2]

> Handling corpses and dead animals was declared polluting. **As a result**, chandalas were pushed below the varnas and treated as untouchable.

22 words · limit 40

L7. Explain how **oral composition by sutas** led to a text that kept **changing**. [2]

> The story was passed on orally by bards and later expanded by brahmanas. **Therefore** it grew and changed into many versions.

21 words · limit 40

L8. Explain how the **critical edition** revealed **regional variety**. [2]

> Scholars compared manuscripts from all regions. **This revealed** a common core and many regional variations, recorded in footnotes and appendices.

20 words · limit 40

Drill 2 · Three words in one answer

the three words underlined

L9. Write a 60-word answer using: **Gotami · metronymic · patriliny**. [3]

> Satavahana kings like Gotami-puta Siri-Satakani bore a metronymic, a name from the mother. Yet the throne passed from father to son – succession followed patriliny.

27 words · limit 60

L10. Write a 60-word answer using: **Drona · Ekalavya · nishada**. [3]

> Drona refused to teach Ekalavya because he was a nishada, a forest-dweller. Ekalavya practised alone and later gave his right thumb as fee.

24 words · limit 60

L11. Write a 60-word answer using: **Manusmriti · stridhana · eldest son**. [3]

> The Manusmriti divided the paternal estate among sons, with a special share for the eldest son. Women kept only stridhana, their marriage gifts.

25 words · limit 60

L12. Write a 60-word answer using: **Sukthankar · manuscripts · 13,000 pages**. [3]

> From 1919 V. S. Sukthankar led scholars who compared Sanskrit manuscripts from all over India and published the critical edition in over 13,000 pages.

25 words · limit 60

Drill 3 · The missing link

1 mark each

L13. Missing step between "Duryodhana and Yudhishthira play dice" and "Draupadi asks whether a wife is her husband's property". [1]

> Yudhishthira loses everything and finally stakes Draupadi.

7 words

L14. Missing step between "People become greedy and deceitful" and "Taxes are paid as a share of rice". [1]

> People choose one person – the mahasammata – to keep order.

9 words

L15. Missing step between "Silk weavers migrate from Lata to Dashapura" and "A temple of the sun god is built". [1]

> Some members take up other occupations and the guild grows rich.

11 words

Drill 4 · Odd one out

1 mark each

L16. Find the odd one out and give the link that joins the other three: **Mauryas · Shungas · Shakas · Pandavas** [1]

> Odd one out: **Pandavas** (Kshatriyas of the epic). The other three were **historical dynasties** whose origins were not Kshatriya, or were disputed.

22 words