

COMPETENCY-BASED QUESTIONS (CBQs)

Class 9 Social Science • Part 1 • Chapter 4 Early Humans and Beginning of Civilisation

Instructions: Read each situation carefully and answer all parts. Questions are based on the uploaded chapter.

1. Archaeological Evidence

A team excavating an ancient site finds stone tools, animal bones, pieces of pottery and a painted rock shelter. No written records are found.

- Which field of study uses these finds to investigate the past?
- Why are the tools and bones important sources of information?
- Name one method archaeologists may use to understand how a stone tool worked.

2. Identifying a Human Ancestor

A museum label describes an early human ancestor from Africa as ‘handy man’ and displays chopper stone tools.

- Identify the ancestor.
- What does the name ‘handy man’ refer to?
- Why are tools useful in reconstructing early human history?

3. Comparing Prehistoric Periods

A student makes three cards: Card A shows handaxes and a hunter-gatherer lifestyle; Card B shows tiny microlithic tools and fishing; Card C shows farming, domesticated animals and permanent villages.

- Match each card with the correct period: Palaeolithic, Mesolithic or Neolithic.
- Which card represents the shift towards food production?
- State one way the lifestyle on Card C differed from that on Card A.

4. Reading Evidence from Mehrgarh

An archaeologist finds remains of sun-dried brick houses, granaries, wheat and barley, and bones of sheep, goats and cattle at a site near the Bolan River.

- Name the site described.
- What do the plant remains suggest about the community’s food supply?
- What do the houses and granaries suggest about settlement and storage?

5. A Change in Climate

A warmer climate leads to the expansion of forests and grasslands in areas previously covered by ice. People find more fish, small game and edible wild grains, and use very small stone tools.

- a) Which prehistoric period is associated with microlithic tools?
- b) Give two resources people could use in this situation.
- c) How could a wider variety of resources affect human life?

6. Interpreting Harappan Evidence

At an archaeological site, researchers find standardised weights, beads made from semi-precious stones, pottery and evidence of water tanks and channels.

- a) What do standardised weights suggest about Harappan economic activity?
- b) What do the beads and pottery suggest?
- c) What was the likely purpose of tanks and channels?

7. A Script That Cannot Yet Be Read

A researcher finds symbols on seals from the Sindhu–Sarasvatī civilisation. Another researcher studies clay tablets with wedge-shaped marks from Mesopotamia.

- a) What is the name of the Harappan script's current status?
- b) Identify the Mesopotamian writing system.
- c) Why can deciphered writing provide information that artefacts alone may not provide?

8. Rivers: Benefits and Risks

A settlement grows beside a river. Farmers use river water for crops, and traders move goods along the river. In some years, flooding damages homes and fields.

- a) State two benefits of settling near rivers.
- b) State one risk shown in the situation.
- c) Name one early civilisation from the chapter that developed along a major river or river system.

9. Mesopotamian City Life

A student studies a reconstruction of Ur. The city has irrigation canals, mud-brick buildings, a stepped temple and clay tablets marked with wedge-shaped signs.

- a) Which civilisation did Ur belong to?
- b) What is the stepped temple called?
- c) Identify the writing system used on the clay tablets.

- d) Explain one way irrigation supported city life.

10. Comparing Early Civilisations

A map shows four civilisations: one near the Nile, one between the Tigris and Euphrates, one in the Sindhu–Sarasvatī region, and one along the Huang He and Yangtze.

- a) Identify the civilisation associated with the Nile.
- b) Identify the civilisation associated with the Tigris and Euphrates.
- c) Name the two rivers associated with early Chinese civilisation.
- d) Give one reason river valleys supported early civilisations.

11. Weighing the Evidence

Two students make claims. Student A says, ‘All information about early humans comes from written records.’ Student B says, ‘Tools, fossils and cave art are important because writing did not exist for much of early human history.’

- a) Which student’s claim is supported by the chapter?
- b) Give two examples of archaeological evidence.
- c) Why should conclusions be based on several kinds of evidence where possible?

12. Trade and Contact

Mesopotamian records mention a place called Meluhha. Archaeologists also find evidence of goods and craft products associated with long-distance exchange between Mesopotamia and the Sindhu–Sarasvatī region.

- a) Which civilisation is generally identified with Meluhha?
- b) Name one type of item mentioned in the chapter as part of Harappan trade.
- c) How can trade links help historians understand relations between early societies?

13. Timeline and Historical Reasoning

A timeline in a textbook places the emergence of major Mesopotamian city-based civilisations from around 3500 BCE onwards. Another section explains that writing made it easier to record transactions and events.

- a) How did writing help growing cities?
- b) Why is the period before writing often reconstructed differently from later history?
- c) Name the writing system associated with Mesopotamia.

14. Metals and Changing Societies

A community first uses stone tools, later works copper along with stone, and eventually makes bronze by combining copper and tin.

- a) Which period is associated with the use of copper along with stone?
- b) What is bronze made from?
- c) State one way metalworking could change a community's economic life.

15. Using Sources Carefully

A student reads a textbook section about the Harappan civilisation and then adds a claim about the exact meaning of a symbol on a Harappan seal, even though the script has not been deciphered.

- a) Is the student's claim justified by the evidence described? Why or why not?
- b) What can archaeologists responsibly infer from seals and other artefacts?
- c) What new information might become available if the script were deciphered?

ANSWER KEY

1. Archaeological Evidence

- a) Archaeology.
- b) They are material evidence of people's activities and can help reconstruct food habits, technology and ways of living.
- c) They may make and test a replica of the tool; this is experimental archaeology.

2. Identifying a Human Ancestor

- a) Homo habilis.
- b) It refers to the association of Homo habilis with making and using stone tools.
- c) Tools provide evidence of technology and activities that written records from that time cannot describe.

3. Comparing Prehistoric Periods

- a) Card A—Palaeolithic; Card B—Mesolithic; Card C—Neolithic.
- b) Card C, the Neolithic period.
- c) Neolithic communities increasingly cultivated crops and domesticated animals and lived in permanent villages, while Palaeolithic communities mainly hunted and gathered.

4. Reading Evidence from Mehrgarh

- a) Mehrgarh.
- b) The community cultivated crops such as wheat and barley, showing a food-producing way of life.
- c) The houses indicate settled living, while granaries suggest that people stored food for later use.

5. A Change in Climate

- a) The Mesolithic period.
- b) Any two: fish, small game animals and edible wild grains.
- c) It could broaden food sources and help people adapt to different environments and habitats.

6. Interpreting Harappan Evidence

- a) They suggest that consistent measurement was used, supporting exchange and trade.
- b) They indicate specialised craft production and skilled workmanship.
- c) They were part of water management and water storage.

7. A Script That Cannot Yet Be Read

- a) The Harappan script remains undeciphered.
- b) Cuneiform.
- c) Readable texts can reveal names, events, transactions, laws and aspects of social or political life.

8. Rivers: Benefits and Risks

- a) Water for farming and daily needs; transport and trade. Fertile land is also acceptable.
- b) Flooding can damage homes, fields and livelihoods.
- c) Any one: Sindhu–Sarasvatī, Mesopotamian, Egyptian or Chinese civilisation.

9. Mesopotamian City Life

- a) Sumerian civilisation in Mesopotamia.
- b) A ziggurat.
- c) Cuneiform.
- d) Irrigation supplied water to fields, helping agriculture and food production.

10. Comparing Early Civilisations

- a) Egyptian civilisation.
- b) Mesopotamian civilisation.
- c) Huang He (Yellow River) and Yangtze.
- d) Rivers provided water and supported agriculture; fertile land and transport routes also helped.

11. Weighing the Evidence

- a) Student B.
- b) Any two: tools, fossils, bones, cave art, pottery or settlement remains.
- c) Different sources can provide complementary clues and help researchers develop a more reliable interpretation of the past.

12. Trade and Contact

- a) The Sindhu–Sarasvatī (Harappan) civilisation.
- b) Any one: semi-precious stone beads, ivory, timber, gold dust or probably copper.
- c) Trade evidence can show that societies exchanged goods and maintained links across regions.

13. Timeline and Historical Reasoning

- a) It helped record transactions, administration, laws and other information.
- b) Before writing, historians rely mainly on material evidence; readable written records later provide names and details of events.
- c) Cuneiform.

14. Metals and Changing Societies

- a) The Chalcolithic period.
- b) Copper and tin.
- c) Metalworking could support new crafts and tools and encourage exchange of raw materials and finished goods.

15. Using Sources Carefully

- a) No. The script remains undeciphered, so the exact meaning cannot be stated with certainty.
- b) They can describe the objects, materials, symbols and archaeological context, and make cautious interpretations supported by evidence.
- c) It might reveal names, records, beliefs, administration, trade or other aspects of society, depending on what the texts contain.