

CLASS 9 SOCIAL SCIENCE

PART 1 • CHAPTER 1 UNDERSTANDING SOCIAL SCIENCE

Exam Preparation Notes

1. Meaning of Social Science

Social Science is the systematic study of human society. It explains how people live together, why events occur, how environments influence life, how governments function, how economies operate, and how the past and present shape the world.

Unlike Physics, Chemistry and Biology, which study the natural world, Social Science focuses on society, institutions, cultures and human interactions.

2. Social Science in Everyday Life

Everyday activities depend on interconnected systems:

- Food passes through harvesting, processing, transportation, buying and selling before reaching our plates.
- Roads are planned and maintained by public authorities.
- Schools are shaped by educational policies and programmes.
- Electricity is generated at power stations and delivered through a network.
- Our lives depend on governance, economic production, social cooperation and the natural environment.

Social Science uses careful observation, evidence and logical reasoning to investigate questions about communities, occupations, languages, traditions, government, floods, agriculture and climate change.

3. Understanding Society through Time and Traditions

Human societies have changed over thousands of years. Early communities depended directly on nature. Over time, people learned to grow crops, domesticate animals, build settlements, develop tools, exchange goods and organise systems of governance. Villages developed into towns, and towns grew into cities.

Indian knowledge traditions valued discussion, questioning, observation, reflection, dialogue and logical reasoning.

- Pañchamahābhūtas: The five great elements are earth (Pṛithvī), water (Āpaḥ), fire (Agni), air (Vāyu) and space (Ākāśha). The concept presents nature as an interconnected system.
- Vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam: Means “the world is one family” and expresses the interconnectedness of human societies.
- Arthaśāstra: Attributed to Kauṭilya and composed about 2,300 years ago, it discusses administration, economic management, taxation and the duties of rulers towards people.

Social scientists study continuity and change by observing people’s lives, conducting interviews and surveys, examining documents and comparing different times and places. They use information from multiple sources to develop evidence-based explanations.

4. Social Science as a Group of Disciplines

Social Science is not a single subject. It includes related disciplines that examine different aspects of human life. In Grades 9–10, the four core disciplines are Geography, History, Political Science and Economics. Sociology, Philosophy, Anthropology and Psychology are also part of the wider Social Science family.

Geography

- Studies the location and distribution of places, objects, materials and people.
- Examines Earth's physical features, human communities and relationships between people and their surroundings.
- Explores where things are located, why they are found there and how places influence one another over time.
- Uses maps, globes, atlases, Geographical Information Systems (GIS), infographics and other tools.

History

- Studies the human past and helps explain people's experiences, values and changes over time.
- Uses sources such as travelogues, memoirs, correspondence, genealogical records, folklore, oral traditions and revenue documents.
- Archaeological sources include monuments, architectural structures, excavated sites, artefacts, objects, sculptures and paintings.
- Modern historiography uses empirical evidence and methods such as archaeology, human genetics and carbon-14 dating.

Political Science

- Studies governance, power, decision-making, policies, constitutions, governments and State institutions.
- Also examines social movements, nation-building, foreign policy and how power is exercised, shared and regulated.
- The Panchayati Raj system represents grassroots democracy and gives citizens a voice in local development planning.
- Indian political thought links governance with dharma (moral duty), artha (economic well-being) and rājadharmā (duties of the ruler).
- The Arthashastra discusses state administration, taxation, the army and public welfare.

Economics

- Studies how individuals and societies use limited resources to meet their needs.
- Examines how goods and services are produced, exchanged and distributed.
- Consumers decide what to buy; producers decide what and how much to produce; governments frame policies to balance goals such as growth, stability, efficiency and fairness.
- Economics considers well-being, equity and justice as well as numbers and markets.
- India's economic development has included improvements in infrastructure, education and technology, reductions in poverty and rising life expectancy, while challenges remain in raising incomes and sharing the benefits of growth.

5. Important Historical Sources and Terms

Empirical evidence

Information collected through actual observation or experimentation.

Genealogical records

Documents or sources that trace family lineage and ancestry by recording relationships between generations and events such as births, marriages and deaths.

Archaeological sources

Material remains used to study the past, including monuments, structures, excavated sites, artefacts, objects and art.

Epigraphic sources

Texts, decrees or records inscribed on durable materials such as stone, metal plates or rock surfaces. They provide evidence about past events, rulers, administration and society.

Numismatic sources

Coins, currency or medals. Their metal content, inscriptions and symbols help historians study the economy, chronology, rulers, trade, political boundaries and culture.

6. Why Should We Study Social Science?

- It helps us understand how social systems developed, function and affect different groups.
- It explains differences in languages, customs and occupations through geographical, historical, cultural and economic factors.
- It builds respect and cooperation among communities and helps us understand the unity underlying India's diversity.
- It prepares citizens to understand laws, rights, responsibilities and government decisions, and to participate responsibly in civic life.
- It develops the ability to ask informed questions about environmental protection, public health, employment and urban growth.
- It connects the past, present and future, helping us make wiser decisions.

7. The Future of Social Science

Social Science helps societies understand changes caused by new technologies, expanding cities, environmental concerns, migration and global connections. It can help address climate change, sustainable development, social harmony and the equitable use of resources. It also supports responsible use of technology and helps communities adapt to changing conditions.

The study of Social Science is a journey from understanding how societies evolved, to analysing how they function today, to imagining how they can improve in the future.

8. Quick Revision Flow Chart



9. Important Exam Questions with Answers

1. What is Social Science?

Answer: Social Science is the systematic study of human society. It explains how people live together and how the environment, institutions, economy, culture, past events and human choices shape society.

2. How is Social Science different from natural sciences?

Answer: Natural sciences such as Physics, Chemistry and Biology study the natural world. Social Science focuses on society, institutions, cultures and human interactions.

3. Give four examples showing the role of Social Science in everyday life.

Answer: Food reaches us through production, processing, transport and trade. Roads are maintained by public authorities. Schools are shaped by education policies. Electricity is generated and supplied through networks.

4. How have human societies changed over time?

Answer: Early communities depended directly on nature. People later learned farming and animal domestication, built settlements, developed tools, exchanged goods and organised governance. Villages grew into towns and towns into cities.

5. What is the meaning of *vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam*?

Answer: It means “the world is one family” and expresses the interconnectedness of human societies across regions and cultures.

6. What are the *Pañchamahābhūtas*?

Answer: They are the five great elements: earth (*Prithvī*), water (*Āpah*), fire (*Agni*), air (*Vāyu*) and space (*Ākāśha*). The concept describes nature as an interconnected system.

7. Name the four core Social Science disciplines studied in Grades 9–10.

Answer: Geography, History, Political Science and Economics.

8. What does Geography study? Name two tools used by geographers.

Answer: Geography studies places, people, Earth's physical features and relationships between people and their surroundings. Tools include maps, globes, atlases and GIS.

9. What is History? Mention four sources used to study the past.

Answer: History is the study of the human past. Sources include travelogues, memoirs, correspondence, genealogical records, folklore, oral traditions, revenue documents and archaeological remains.

10. What is empirical evidence?

Answer: It is information collected through actual observation or experimentation.

11. What are epigraphic sources?

Answer: They are texts, decrees or records inscribed on durable materials such as stone, metal plates or rock surfaces. They provide evidence about past events, rulers, administration and society.

12. What are numismatic sources? What can they tell historians?

Answer: Numismatic sources are coins, currency or medals. Their metal content, inscriptions and symbols help historians study the economy, chronology, rulers, trade, political boundaries and culture.

13. What does Political Science study?

Answer: It studies governance, power, decision-making, policies, constitutions, governments, State institutions, social movements, nation-building and foreign policy.

14. How does the Panchayati Raj system reflect grassroots democracy?

Answer: It gives citizens a voice in local development planning and shows how people can participate in local self-governance.

15. What does Economics study?

Answer: Economics studies how individuals and societies use limited resources to meet needs and how goods and services are produced, exchanged and distributed.

16. How are the four core Social Science disciplines interconnected? Give an example.

Answer: A drought affects the environment and crops, farmers' incomes and the economy, government relief and politics, migration and society, and traditional ways of coping with scarcity and culture.

17. Why should we study Social Science?

Answer: It helps us understand social systems, respect diversity, cooperate with communities, participate responsibly in civic life, examine shared challenges and make informed decisions.

18. How does Social Science connect the past, present and future?

Answer: It explains how past decisions shaped the present and helps people make wiser choices for the future.

19. What is the difference between archaeological and literary sources?

Answer: Archaeological sources are material remains such as monuments, artefacts, structures and sculptures. Literary sources include written works and texts, such as manuscripts and traditional writings.

20. How can Social Science help address present-day challenges?

Answer: It encourages careful observation, questioning, evidence-based reasoning and recognition of connections. These skills help societies consider issues such as climate change, sustainable development, social harmony and fair use of resources.

10. Competency-Based Practice

Case 1: A drought reduces crop production. Farmers earn less, some families move to cities, and the government announces relief measures.

a) Which discipline studies the impact on farmers' income? Economics.

b) Which discipline studies government relief measures? Political Science.

c) Why is more than one discipline needed to understand the situation? Because drought affects the environment, crops, incomes, migration, government action and cultural practices; these aspects are interconnected.

Case 2: A historian studies an old coin with symbols and an inscription.

a) What type of source is the coin? A numismatic source.

b) What can it help reveal? It may provide information about rulers, chronology, trade, the economy, political boundaries and culture.

11. One-Minute Revision

- Social Science = systematic study of human society.
- Four core disciplines = Geography, History, Political Science and Economics.

- Pañchamahābhūtas = earth, water, fire, air and space.
- Vasudhaiva kuṭumbakam = the world is one family.
- Empirical evidence = information from observation or experimentation.
- Epigraphic sources = inscriptions on durable materials.
- Numismatic sources = coins, currency and medals.
- Archaeological sources = material remains used to study the past.
- Social Science develops understanding, evidence-based thinking, respect for diversity and responsible citizenship.