

Model Question Paper 2
Half-Yearly Examination 2026-27
SOCIAL SCIENCE

Time Allowed: 3 Hours

Maximum Marks: 80

General Instructions:

1. This question paper has 38 questions divided into 6 Sections: A, B, C, D, E and F.
2. Section A: Question numbers 1 to 20 are multiple choice/Assertion-Reason questions of 1 mark each.
3. Section B: Question numbers 21 to 25 are very short answer questions of 2 marks each. Answers should not exceed 40 words.
4. Section C: Question numbers 26 to 30 are short answer questions of 3 marks each. Answers should not exceed 60 words.
5. Section D: Question numbers 31 to 34 are long answer questions of 5 marks each. Answers should not exceed 120 words.
6. Section E: Question numbers 35 to 37 are source-based/case-based questions with four sub-parts each, carrying 4 marks each.
7. Section F: Question number 38 is a map-based question of 3 marks, based on physical and historical geography.
8. This paper covers Chapters 1-5 of the new integrated Social Science textbook (Introduction to Social Science; Earth's Surface: Interior and Landforms; Atmosphere and Climate; Early Humans and the Rise of Civilisation; State and Society in Early India up to c. 1000 CE).
9. There is no overall choice, but internal choices have been provided in a few questions. Attempt only one option wherever an internal choice is given.

SECTION A

Question numbers 1 to 20 carry 1 mark each.

1. The word 'History' is derived from a Greek word that originally meant: [1]

- (a) Inquiry/investigation
- (b) Government
- (c) Mountain
- (d) Currency

Answer: (a) — It comes from a Greek word meaning inquiry or investigation.

2. A gold coin issued by an ancient king, bearing his portrait and title, is classified by historians as a source of history under the category of: [1]

- (a) Numismatic (coin-based) evidence
- (b) Oral tradition
- (c) Genealogical record
- (d) Secondary literature

Answer: (a) — Numismatic (coin-based) evidence.

3. The thin, outermost solid layer of the Earth on which we live is called the: [1]

- (a) Mantle
- (b) Core
- (c) Crust
- (d) Asthenosphere

Answer: (c) — The crust.

4. Landforms such as river valleys, floodplains and deltas are mainly formed by the action of: [1]

- (a) Running water (rivers)
- (b) Wind alone
- (c) Glaciers alone
- (d) Ocean currents alone

Answer: (a) — Running water/rivers.

5. The layer of the atmosphere closest to the Earth's surface, where almost all weather phenomena occur, is the: [1]

- (a) Stratosphere
- (b) Troposphere
- (c) Mesosphere
- (d) Thermosphere

Answer: (b) — The troposphere.

6. Which of these best describes 'humidity'? [1]

- (a) The speed of wind at a place
- (b) The amount of water vapour present in the air
- (c) The pressure exerted by the atmosphere
- (d) The average temperature of a season

Answer: (b) — The amount of water vapour present in the air.

7. The earliest stone tools used by early humans were mainly used for: [1]

- (a) Writing records
- (b) Cutting, chopping and scraping, for hunting and processing food
- (c) Building large temples
- (d) Minting coins

Answer: (b) — Cutting, chopping and scraping for hunting/processing food.

8. The term 'Mahajanapada' refers to: [1]

- (a) A large, powerful early Indian kingdom/state that emerged around the sixth century BCE
- (b) A type of ancient coin
- (c) A religious festival
- (d) A modern administrative district

Answer: (a) — A large, powerful early Indian kingdom/state.

9. Oral traditions — stories, songs and legends passed down by word of mouth across generations — are useful to historians mainly because they: [1]

- (a) Are always completely accurate and unchanged over time
- (b) Can preserve memories of events, migrations or social customs not recorded in writing, though they must be used carefully
- (c) Are considered more reliable than any inscription
- (d) Cannot provide any historical information at all

Answer: (b) — They preserve otherwise-unrecorded memories, but must be used with caution.

10. A 'plateau' is best defined as a landform that is: [1]

- (a) Elevated with a broad, relatively flat top, standing above the surrounding land
- (b) Always found below sea level
- (c) A narrow strip of flat land along a coast
- (d) A landform created only by wind deposition

Answer: (a) — Elevated with a broad, flat top.

11. The gradual wearing away and removal of rock and soil by agents such as running water, wind and glaciers is known as: [1]

- (a) Weathering
- (b) Erosion
- (c) Deposition
- (d) Folding

Answer: (b) — Erosion.

12. Which of the following is a major factor that makes Mumbai's climate more moderate (less extreme) than that of a city like Delhi, even though both lie at broadly similar latitudes? [1]

- (a) Mumbai's location on the coast, close to the sea
- (b) Mumbai's higher altitude
- (c) Mumbai's distance from the equator
- (d) Mumbai receiving no rainfall at all

Answer: (a) — Its coastal location moderates temperature extremes.

13. Which of these correctly explains why the interior parts of India generally experience hotter summers and colder winters than coastal areas? [1]

- (a) Land heats up and cools down faster than the sea, leading to greater temperature extremes away from the coast
- (b) Interior areas receive more rainfall than coastal areas
- (c) Interior areas are always at a higher altitude
- (d) The sea has no effect on the temperature of nearby land

Answer: (a) — Land heats/cools faster than sea, causing greater extremes inland.

14. The uniform brick sizes and standard weights found across widely separated Harappan sites suggest: [1]

- (a) That each city acted completely independently with no shared standards
- (b) Some form of common standards/authority connecting different Harappan settlements
- (c) That the Harappans had no trade at all
- (d) That these objects were imported from a completely unrelated civilisation

Answer: (b) — Common standards linking different Harappan settlements.

15. Archaeologists have found very few large palaces or grand royal monuments at Harappan sites, unlike in some other early civilisations. This observation has led some historians to suggest that: [1]

- (a) The Harappans had no cities at all
- (b) Harappan society may have had a less visibly centralised/monarchical form of authority than some contemporary civilisations, though this remains debated
- (c) The Harappans definitely had no rulers of any kind
- (d) All Harappan buildings have been completely destroyed with no exceptions

Answer: (b) — It suggests a possibly less visibly monarchical authority, though this is debated.

16. Village assemblies and local bodies in early India commonly handled matters such as: [1]

- (a) Declaring war on neighbouring kingdoms
- (b) Managing local irrigation, resolving minor disputes, and maintaining local land records
- (c) Minting the kingdom's official coinage
- (d) Appointing the king's successor

Answer: (b) — Local irrigation, minor disputes and land records.

17. Two tectonic plates sliding past each other horizontally, without much upward or downward movement, describes which type of plate boundary? [1]

- (a) Convergent boundary
- (b) Divergent boundary
- (c) Transform boundary
- (d) Subduction boundary

Answer: (c) — Transform boundary.

18. In which of the following situations would you expect the LEAST difference between day and night temperatures? [1]

- (a) A desert region far from the sea
- (b) A small island surrounded by the sea on all sides
- (c) A high plateau in the middle of a continent
- (d) A landlocked region with very low humidity

Answer: (b) — A small island — the surrounding sea moderates temperature swings.

19. This question consists of two statements — Assertion (A) and Reason (R). Choose the correct option: [1]

Assertion (A): Even though the Harappan civilisation had a written script found on seals and other objects, historians have not been able to reconstruct a detailed political history (such as a list of kings) for this civilisation.

Reason (R): The Harappan script has not yet been deciphered, so historians cannot read the content of the inscriptions that survive.

- (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

Answer: (a) — Both true; the undeciphered script explains the gap in political history.

20. This question consists of two statements — Assertion (A) and Reason (R). Choose the correct option: [1]

Assertion (A): Fold mountains such as the Himalayas are geologically 'young' and are still rising slowly today.

Reason (R): The tectonic plates responsible for their formation have stopped moving completely, and no further folding is taking place.

- (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

Answer: (c) — A is true, but R is false — the Indian Plate is still moving, which is why the Himalayas continue to rise.

SECTION B

Question numbers 21 to 25 carry 2 marks each.

21. Mention two differences between a primary source and a secondary source of history, with one example of each. [2]

Marking Scheme / Value Points:

- Primary source: created during the period being studied, e.g. an ancient coin or inscription — 1 mark
- Secondary source: created later, based on other sources, e.g. a history textbook written today — 1 mark

22. State two functions of the ozone layer found in the Earth's atmosphere. [2]

Marking Scheme / Value Points:

- It absorbs most of the Sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation — 1 mark
- By doing so, it protects living organisms on Earth from UV-related harm, such as skin damage and harm to plant/marine life — 1 mark

23. Give two reasons why river valleys have traditionally attracted early human settlements. [2]

Marking Scheme / Value Points:

- Rivers provide a reliable source of fresh water for drinking, farming and daily needs — 1 mark
- River valleys usually have fertile alluvial soil ideal for agriculture, and rivers also served as routes for transport and trade — 1 mark

24. Mention two pieces of evidence that suggest the Harappans had contact with the civilisation of Mesopotamia. [2]

Marking Scheme / Value Points:

- Harappan seals and beads have been discovered at Mesopotamian archaeological sites — 1 mark
- Mesopotamian texts refer to trade contact with a region called 'Meluhha', which many historians identify with the Indus/Harappan region — 1 mark

25. Explain why historians find it more difficult to reconstruct the political history (such as a list of kings and their reigns) of the Harappan civilisation compared to some later Indian kingdoms. [2]

Marking Scheme / Value Points:

- The Harappan script found on seals remains undeciphered, so any political information it may contain cannot be read — 1 mark
- Unlike later periods, no dated inscriptions, coins bearing rulers' names, or detailed chronicles have been found for the Harappan civilisation, leaving mainly archaeological remains to interpret — 1 mark

SECTION C

Question numbers 26 to 30 carry 3 marks each.

26. Explain any three ways in which rivers shape the land as they flow from their source to the sea. [3]

Marking Scheme / Value Points:

- In their upper course over hilly/mountainous terrain, rivers erode the land, cutting steep V-shaped valleys and gorges — 1 mark
- In their middle course, rivers erode banks and deposit sediment, forming winding meanders on gentler slopes — 1 mark
- In their lower course near the sea, rivers deposit fine silt, building flat floodplains and deltas — 1 mark

27. Explain any three characteristics of the Northern Plains of India and the process by which they were formed. [3]

Marking Scheme / Value Points:

- Formed mainly by the deposition of alluvial sediment brought down by rivers such as the Ganga, Indus and Brahmaputra systems over thousands of years — 1 mark
- They are extremely fertile due to rich alluvial soil, making them one of the most intensively cultivated regions of India — 1 mark
- They are largely flat and level, with a very gentle slope, unlike the mountains to their north or the plateau to their south — 1 mark

28. Explain any three effects of deforestation on the climate and environment of a region. [3]

Marking Scheme / Value Points:

- Reduced tree cover can lower local rainfall over time, since trees contribute to the water cycle through transpiration — 1 mark
- Loss of forest cover increases soil erosion, as tree roots no longer bind the soil together — 1 mark
- It can raise local temperatures, reduce biodiversity by destroying habitats, and reduce the absorption of carbon dioxide (any other valid effect) — 1 mark

29. "The Harappans were skilled town planners." Justify this statement with any three pieces of evidence. [3]

Marking Scheme / Value Points:

- Cities were laid out on a grid pattern, with streets crossing each other at right angles — 1 mark
- A covered/underground drainage system ran along streets, connected to individual houses, showing attention to sanitation — 1 mark
- Cities were often divided into a raised 'citadel' area (possibly for public/administrative buildings) and a larger residential 'lower town', suggesting planned zoning — 1 mark

30. Explain any three reasons why early Indian states, such as those of the Gangetic plains, were able to grow into large and powerful kingdoms during the period after the Vedic age. [3]

Marking Scheme / Value Points:

- Fertile alluvial soil of the Gangetic plains supported surplus agricultural production, able to support armies, officials and cities — 1 mark
- The use of iron tools allowed forests to be cleared and land ploughed more effectively, expanding cultivable area — 1 mark

- Control over important trade routes and river transport allowed some kingdoms to grow wealthy through trade and taxation, funding larger armies and administration — 1 mark

SECTION D

Question numbers 31 to 34 carry 5 marks each.

31. Explain any five methods used by historians to determine the exact or approximate date of an ancient event, object or text. [5]

OR

Explain the meaning of 'stratigraphy' in archaeology, and explain why the deepest layer at an excavation site is generally considered the oldest.

Marking Scheme / Value Points:

- Dated inscriptions or coins that mention a specific year (often in a ruler's regnal year) provide a fairly precise date — 1 mark
- Radiocarbon dating and other scientific techniques can estimate the age of organic remains such as wood, bone or charcoal found at a site — 1 mark
- Comparing the style of pottery, script or architecture with objects of known date from another site can help date an undated find — 1 mark
- References to eclipses, astronomical events, or genealogies (lists of successive rulers) in ancient texts can sometimes be matched with known dates — 1 mark
- Stratigraphy — the study of layers of soil and debris at an excavation site — helps determine the relative order in which objects were deposited — 1 mark

OR (value points):

- Stratigraphy is the study of the layers (strata) of soil, debris and remains that build up at a site over time — 1 mark
- Each layer represents a period of occupation/deposit, with new layers forming above older ones as time passes — 1 mark
- Since layers are generally deposited one on top of another over time, the lowest/deepest layer, if undisturbed, represents the earliest period of occupation — 1 mark
- By examining objects found within each layer, archaeologists can build a relative chronology of different periods at the site — 1 mark
- Disturbances such as pits dug by later inhabitants can complicate this picture, so archaeologists must record layers very carefully during excavation — 1 mark

32. Explain any five major landform types found on the Earth's surface, giving one example of each from India where possible. [5]

Marking Scheme / Value Points:

- Mountains — high, steeply rising landforms, e.g. the Himalayas — 1 mark
- Plateaus — elevated areas with a broad, flat top, e.g. the Deccan Plateau — 1 mark
- Plains — large, level, low-lying stretches of land, e.g. the Northern Plains — 1 mark
- Valleys — long, low-lying areas between hills or mountains, often carved by a river, e.g. the Kashmir Valley — 1 mark
- Deserts — dry regions with sparse vegetation, formed due to very low rainfall, e.g. the Thar Desert — 1 mark

33. Explain any five reasons why the climate of different parts of India varies so widely, from the cold Himalayan region to the hot Thar Desert and the humid coastal areas. [5]

Marking Scheme / Value Points:

- Latitude — northern parts lie farther from the equator, giving relatively cooler winters compared with southern India — 1 mark
- Altitude — high mountainous regions like the Himalayas remain cold through the year due to elevation — 1 mark
- Distance from the sea — coastal regions have a more moderate, humid climate, while interior regions have more extreme, drier conditions — 1 mark
- The Himalayas act as a barrier, blocking cold winds from Central Asia in winter and trapping monsoon moisture in summer — 1 mark

- The direction and strength of monsoon winds bring heavy rainfall to some regions (e.g. the west coast) while leaving others, like parts of Rajasthan, comparatively dry — 1 mark

34. Explain any five ways in which trade and craft production were organised in early Indian towns (up to about 1000 CE). [5]

OR

Explain any five ways in which the study of inscriptions recording land grants and trade transactions helps historians reconstruct the economic history of early India.

Marking Scheme / Value Points:

- Craftspeople and merchants often organised themselves into guilds (shrenis) that set standards, trained apprentices, and sometimes acted like a bank, accepting deposits — 1 mark
- Towns along major trade routes and river/sea ports grew as centres of exchange, connecting inland producers with distant markets, including overseas trade — 1 mark
- Guilds and rich merchants sometimes funded public works or religious buildings, as recorded in inscriptions, showing their social and economic importance — 1 mark
- Standardised coins issued by the state facilitated trade transactions across a kingdom — 1 mark
- Specialised craft production, such as textiles, metalwork and beads, developed in particular towns known for that craft, which was then traded over long distances — 1 mark

OR (value points):

- Inscriptions recording land grants tell us which lands were valued and how land ownership and revenue rights were organised — 1 mark
- They mention the officials involved, offering insight into the structure of local administration — 1 mark
- Some inscriptions record donations by merchants and guilds, indicating the wealth and status merchants had achieved — 1 mark
- References to specific goods, weights or coins in inscriptions provide evidence of the items traded and the monetary system in use — 1 mark
- By comparing inscriptions from different regions and periods, historians can trace changes in trade routes, agriculture and prosperity over time — 1 mark

SECTION E

Question numbers 35 to 37 are source-based/case-based questions carrying 4 marks each.

Case Study 1 — Question 35 [4 Marks]

Ramnagar is a hilly village where farmers have traditionally grown crops on the steep slopes surrounding their homes. In recent years, after several patches of forest on the upper slopes were cleared for firewood and new farmland, villagers noticed that heavy monsoon rain now washes away the fertile topsoil much faster than before, and a nearby stream carries far more mud after every downpour.

(i) What term describes the process by which topsoil is worn away and carried off by agents such as running water? [1]

Answer: Soil erosion.

(ii) Explain how the clearing of forest cover on the upper slopes has increased soil erosion in Ramnagar. [1]

Answer: Tree roots normally bind the soil together and tree cover slows the speed at which rainwater hits and flows over the ground; once the forest is cleared, rainwater flows faster and more directly over the bare slope, loosening and washing away the topsoil more easily.

(iii) Suggest one farming method the villagers of Ramnagar could adopt on their steep slopes to reduce soil erosion. [1]

Answer: Terrace farming (cutting step-like level terraces into the slope) or contour ploughing, both of which slow the flow of rainwater down the slope.

(iv) Explain one long-term consequence for agriculture in Ramnagar if the current rate of soil erosion continues unchecked. [1]

OR Suggest one reason why the stream near Ramnagar now carries more mud after every downpour.

Answer: Continued loss of fertile topsoil would gradually reduce the land's fertility, lowering crop yields over time and potentially making some slopes unfit for farming, forcing families to seek other means of livelihood.

OR Answer: The eroded topsoil from the bare slopes is being washed directly into the stream by rainwater run-off, increasing the amount of sediment/mud it carries.

Case Study 2 — Question 36 [4 Marks]

At a site believed to belong to a very early farming community, archaeologists found charred grains of wheat and barley, the bones of domesticated sheep and goats, simple polished stone tools, and the remains of small mud-and-reed huts arranged close together, unlike the scattered temporary camps found at earlier sites in the same region.

(i) Based on the evidence described, to which broad stage of human history does this site most likely belong? [1]

Answer: The Neolithic (New Stone Age)/early agricultural stage, when humans had begun farming and keeping domesticated animals.

(ii) What does the presence of permanent mud-and-reed huts, arranged close together, suggest about the way of life of this community compared with earlier hunter-gatherer groups? [1]

Answer: It suggests the community had adopted a settled way of life in one place, rather than the mobile, temporary camps typical of hunter-gatherers who moved frequently in search of food.

(iii) Explain how the presence of charred grains and the bones of domesticated animals together support the idea that this was a farming community rather than a hunting-gathering one. [1]

Answer: Charred/stored grains of wheat and barley suggest deliberate cultivation and storage of crops rather than only gathering wild plants, while the bones of domesticated (not wild) sheep and goats suggest the community was raising and controlling animals for food — both hallmarks of farming rather than hunting-gathering.

(iv) Suggest one way in which the shift to farming and animal domestication, seen at this site, would have changed the size and organisation of human communities over time. [1]

OR Suggest one reason why polished (rather than roughly chipped) stone tools are associated with this later stage of the Stone Age.

Answer: A reliable food supply from farming and herding could support larger, more settled populations than hunting-gathering, leading to bigger villages, the beginnings of task specialisation, and eventually more complex social organisation.

OR Answer: Polishing/grinding produced sharper, more durable and more effective tools — useful for tasks like harvesting crops or working wood — reflecting improved toolmaking skill in this period.

Case Study 3 — Question 37 [4 Marks]

An early Indian text describes a kingdom where the king was advised by a council of ministers, taxes were collected from farmers as a share of their harvest, and merchants travelling with caravans of goods had to pay tolls at certain points along the route. The text also mentions that village headmen were responsible for maintaining local order and settling minor disputes without always referring matters to the king's court.

(i) What was the main basis on which taxes were collected from farmers according to the passage? [1]

Answer: A share of their harvest/agricultural produce.

(ii) Who, according to the passage, generally settled minor disputes at the village level? [1]

Answer: The village headman.

(iii) Explain why the king relied on a council of ministers rather than ruling entirely alone. [1]

Answer: A council of ministers could offer advice and expertise on different matters of administration, help the king make more informed decisions, and share the burden of governing a large kingdom that the king could not manage single-handedly.

(iv) Explain how tolls collected from merchants and taxes collected from farmers, as mentioned in the passage, would have benefited the kingdom's administration. [1]

OR Suggest one reason why local, village-level resolution of minor disputes (rather than always referring them to the king) would have been useful for the kingdom's administration.

Answer: These collections formed a major part of the kingdom's revenue, which could be used to pay officials and soldiers, maintain infrastructure such as roads, and fund the day-to-day running of the administration and the king's court.

OR Answer: It would have saved time and effort for the king's central court, allowed disputes to be resolved more quickly by people familiar with local conditions, and reduced the administrative burden of managing a large, spread-out kingdom.

SECTION F

Question number 38 is a map-based question of 3 marks.

38. Map-Based Question [3 Marks]

On an outline map of India/the world, mark and label: (i) the approximate zone where the Indian Plate meets the Eurasian Plate, associated with the formation of the Himalayas [1 mark]; (ii) the location of any ONE Harappan site, such as Harappa, Dholavira or Lothal [1 mark]; (iii) the location of any ONE important early Indian city/capital, such as Taxila or Ujjain [1 mark].

Answer: (i) The Indian Plate-Eurasian Plate boundary runs along the Himalayan belt in India's north; their collision folded sediments upward to form the Himalayas. (ii) Example: Dholavira (Gujarat) or Lothal (Gujarat) or Harappa (on the Ravi river, in present-day Pakistan) — major Harappan sites. (iii) Example: Taxila (in present-day Pakistan, near Rawalpindi), an important ancient centre of learning and trade; or Ujjain (Madhya Pradesh), an important early Indian city. (Any one correct example for ii and iii, correctly located and labelled, to be given full credit; for visually impaired candidates, a list of related places may be provided in lieu of the map exercise, as per CBSE guidelines.)

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