



Class 9 Social Science – Chapter 4

Important Questions – Early Humans and Beginning of Civilisation

Book: *Understanding Society: India and Beyond – Grade 9, Part 1*

Session: 2026–27

These questions are based on **Chapter 4 of the official textbook**. The chapter covers early human history, archaeological evidence, human migration, the Palaeolithic, Mesolithic, Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods, and the emergence of Bronze Age civilisations.



Very Short Answer Questions

1. What is meant by **early human history**?
 2. What are the main sources used to study early human history?
 3. Where did early humans evolve?
 4. Why is Africa important in the study of human evolution?
 5. What is the **Palaeolithic Age**?
 6. What is the **Mesolithic Age**?
 7. What is the **Neolithic Age**?
 8. What is the **Chalcolithic Age**?
 9. What were the main occupations of Palaeolithic humans?
 10. What are microliths?
 11. What is meant by domestication of animals?
 12. Why was the development of agriculture important?
 13. What is meant by a permanent settlement?
 14. Why was pottery important in Neolithic communities?
 15. What is the Bronze Age?
 16. Why were rivers important for early civilisations?
 17. Name the four major early river-valley civilisations discussed in the chapter.
 18. Where did the Mesopotamian civilisation develop?
 19. Which river was central to the Egyptian civilisation?
 20. Where did the Chinese civilisation develop?
-



Short Answer Questions

1. What is early human history? How do historians study it?

Early human history refers to the long period before the invention of writing. It is studied mainly through archaeological evidence such as **tools, fossils and cave art**.

2. Explain the importance of archaeological evidence in understanding early humans.

3. Describe the lifestyle of Palaeolithic humans.

4. What changes took place during the Mesolithic period?

5. Explain the major changes brought about by the Neolithic period.

The Neolithic period saw the development of **agriculture, animal domestication, permanent villages, pottery and weaving**.

6. How did agriculture change human life?

7. What was the significance of animal domestication?

8. What were the important features of the Chalcolithic period?

9. Why is the transition from hunting and gathering to farming considered a major change in human history?

10. How did permanent settlements develop?

11. Why were rivers important for the growth of early civilisations?

The textbook explains that the major early civilisations developed in fertile river plains, including the Sindhu–Sarasvatī, Mesopotamian, Egyptian and Chinese civilisations.

12. Name the four major Bronze Age civilisations discussed in the chapter and identify their river valleys.

13. Describe the main features of Bronze Age civilisations.

14. How did agriculture contribute to the growth of cities?

15. How did trade contribute to the development of early civilisations?



Long Answer Questions

1. Describe the major stages of early human development from the Palaeolithic to the Chalcolithic period.

Include:



Palaeolithic → Hunter-gatherers and stone tools



♦ **Mesolithic** → Microlithic tools and temporary settlements



🌾 **Neolithic** → Agriculture and animal domestication



♦ **Chalcolithic** → Copper along with stone tools

The textbook's summary follows this progression and links these developments to the emergence of Bronze Age civilisations.

2. Explain how the beginning of agriculture transformed human societies.

Discuss:



Farming



Animal domestication



Permanent settlements



Food production



Pottery



Weaving



Growing communities



Development of later urban settlements

3. Explain the relationship between the environment and the development of early human societies.

Discuss how the environment provided:

-  Water
-  Fertile land
-  Animals
-  Plant resources

But also created challenges such as floods, droughts and other environmental difficulties.

The textbook asks students specifically to examine how the environment provided both **opportunities and challenges** to early farming communities and river-valley civilisations.

4. Why do historians divide early human history into different ages such as Stone Age, Bronze Age and Iron Age?

Explain how such classifications help historians understand changes in:

-  Technology
-  Agriculture
-  Settlements
-  Tools and materials
-  Urbanisation
-  Social organisation

The textbook itself asks students to consider what this classification tells us about human progress.

5. Explain the major features of the early river-valley civilisations.

Discuss:

Sindhu–Sarasvatī Civilisation

- Planned cities
- Water management
- Drainage
- Trade
- Standard weights and measures

Mesopotamian Civilisation

- Euphrates and Tigris rivers
- Farming

- Cities
- Trade
- Writing and administration

Egyptian Civilisation

- Nile River
- Agriculture
- Cities
- Calendar
- Writing
- Monumental architecture

Chinese Civilisation

- Huang He basin
- Agriculture
- Settlements
- Early political and cultural development

The textbook identifies these four civilisations as major early civilisations that emerged in fertile river plains.

HOTS / Analytical Questions

- 1. Why do you think humans shifted from hunting and gathering to farming?**
- 2. Did farming make human life easier or more challenging? Give reasons.**

This is directly based on the textbook's first end-of-chapter question.
- 3. Why might early farmers have preferred to settle near rivers?**
- 4. How could the same river provide both opportunities and challenges to an early civilisation?**
- 5. Why did permanent settlements encourage the development of new occupations?**

6. How might agriculture have contributed to population growth?
 7. Why were technological developments important in the transition from small settlements to civilisations?
 8. Why did several early civilisations develop in river valleys?
 9. What advantages did river valleys provide to early farmers?
 10. Why is the development of writing considered an important feature of Bronze Age civilisations?
-



Civilisation-Based Questions

1. Why were rivers important in the growth of early civilisations?
2. Compare the role of the Sindhu–Sarasvatī, Tigris–Euphrates, Nile and Huang He river systems in the development of early civilisations.
3. How did fertile river plains support agriculture?
4. How did agricultural surplus contribute to urbanisation?
5. Why did trade develop between early civilisations?

The textbook notes that the geographical proximity of Mesopotamia and the Sindhu–Sarasvatī region facilitated contacts and trade between them.



Comparison Questions

1. Differentiate between the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods.

Palaeolithic



Stone tools

Mesolithic



Microlithic tools

 Hunting and gathering

 Hunting, gathering and changing subsistence patterns

 Caves/open camps

 Temporary settlements

Earlier period

Later period

2. Differentiate between the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods.

3. Differentiate between the Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods.

4. Compare the four major river-valley civilisations.

Case-Based Questions

Case Study 1

A group of humans begins growing crops and domesticating animals. Over time, they stop moving frequently from one place to another and establish a permanent village.

Questions:

- a. Which period does this development mainly represent?
 - b. What major change allowed people to settle permanently?
 - c. Name two other developments associated with this period.
 - d. How could permanent settlements lead to social changes?
-

Case Study 2

A community settles beside a large river. The river provides water for farming and fertile soil after floods. However, excessive flooding sometimes destroys crops and settlements.

Questions:

- a. What opportunity does the river provide?

- b. What challenge does it create?
- c. Why would people continue to settle near such a river?
- d. How might they try to manage the risks?

This reflects the textbook's emphasis that the environment could provide both **opportunities and challenges** to early farming communities.



Assertion–Reason Questions

1. Assertion:

The Neolithic period marked a major change in human history.

Reason: Humans began agriculture and domestication of animals and established permanent settlements.

2. Assertion:

Rivers played an important role in the emergence of early civilisations.

Reason: River valleys provided water and fertile land that supported agriculture.

3. Assertion:

Early human history is studied mainly through archaeological evidence.

Reason: Writing had not yet been invented for much of this period.

4. Assertion:

Bronze Age civilisations developed more complex forms of social organisation.

Reason: Urban centres, trade, writing and administration became important features.

The textbook identifies **urban centres, trade, writing, administration and social organisation** as characteristics of Bronze Age civilisations.

Top 10 Questions for Exam Revision

If students have limited time, prepare these first:

1. ★ Explain the major stages from the **Palaeolithic to the Chalcolithic period**.
 2. ★ What were the major changes brought about by the **Neolithic Revolution**?
 3. ★ Explain the importance of agriculture and animal domestication.
 4. ★ Why were rivers important for early civilisations?
 5. ★ Explain the relationship between environment and early human societies.
 6. ★ Why do historians divide early human history into different ages?
 7. ★ Describe the main features of **Bronze Age civilisations**.
 8. ★ Compare the four major early river-valley civilisations.
 9. ★ How did agriculture contribute to permanent settlements and urbanisation?
 10. ★ Did farming make human life easier or more challenging? Give reasons.
-

Quick Revision Chart

EARLY HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Palaeolithic

 Stone tools →  Hunter-gatherers →  Caves/Open camps



Mesolithic

♦ Microliths →  Temporary settlements →  Rivers/Lakes



Neolithic

 Agriculture →  Domestication →  Permanent villages →  Pottery +  Weaving



Chalcolithic

🔱 Copper + 🪨 Stone tools → 🌾 Farming communities



Bronze Age Civilisations

🏙️ Cities + 📝 Writing + 🤝 Trade + 🏛️ Administration + 👥 Social organisation