CBSE Class 10 History: Important Questions and Answers

2026–27 board exam | Printable question and answer sheet

What's covered: Chapter 1 (The Rise of Nationalism in Europe), Chapter 2 (Nationalism in India), Chapter 3 (The Making of a Global World, sub-topics 1 to 1.3) and Chapter 5 (Print Culture and the Modern World). Chapter 4 is assessed only through Periodic Assessment in school. History carries 20 marks (18 theory + 2 map pointing). Always cross-check with the official syllabus on CBSE Academic. The model questions in Part 4 are for practice only and are not predicted board questions.

Part 1: Important Questions and Answers

Chapter 1: The Rise of Nationalism in Europe

Q1. Who was Giuseppe Mazzini, and what did he contribute to nationalism in Italy?

Mazzini was an Italian revolutionary born in Genoa in 1807. He joined the secret society of the Carbonari and was exiled for trying to start a revolution in Liguria in 1831. He founded two secret societies: **Young Italy** in Marseilles and **Young Europe** in Berne. He believed that God had intended nations to be the natural units of mankind, so Italy could not remain a patchwork of small states and had to become one republic. His ideas inspired a whole generation, even though the monarchies saw him as a dangerous radical.

Q2. What was the Treaty of Vienna (1815), and what were its main provisions?

After Napoleon's defeat, European powers met at Vienna under the Austrian Chancellor Duke Metternich. Britain, Russia, Prussia and Austria wanted to undo most of the changes Napoleon had made. The main provisions were:

- The Bourbon dynasty was restored to power in France.
- A series of states was set up on France's borders to prevent future expansion: the Netherlands (including Belgium) in the north, and Genoa added to Piedmont in the south.
- Prussia got important new territories on its western frontier, and Austria got control of northern Italy.
- Russia was given part of Poland, and Prussia a part of Saxony.

The aim was to restore conservative order in Europe.

Q3. What was the Frankfurt Parliament (1848)? Why did it fail?

In May 1848, 831 elected representatives marched in a festive procession to take their places in the Frankfurt Parliament, held in the Church of St Paul. They drafted a constitution for a German nation headed by a monarchy, subject to a parliament. When they offered the crown to Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia, he rejected it and joined other monarchs to oppose the elected assembly. The parliament was dominated by the middle classes, who resisted the demands of workers and artisans, and it lost their support. The aristocracy and the military then dissolved it. Women, who had played an active role in the movement, were allowed to attend only as observers in the visitors' gallery.

Q4. How was Germany unified? What was Bismarck's role?

After 1848, nationalism in Germany was taken over by the state, and Prussia led the movement. Its chief minister, Otto von Bismarck, used the Prussian army and bureaucracy. Over seven years he fought three wars, against Austria, Denmark and France, and won all three. In January 1871, in the Hall of Mirrors at Versailles, the Prussian king Kaiser William I was proclaimed German Emperor.

Q5. How did Italy become a unified nation-state?

Italy was divided into seven states in the mid-nineteenth century, and only Sardinia-Piedmont was ruled by an Italian princely house. After the failure of Mazzini's revolutionary uprisings, the responsibility fell on Sardinia-Piedmont under Victor Emmanuel II. Chief Minister Cavour led the movement and, through a diplomatic alliance with France, defeated the Austrian forces in 1859. Giuseppe Garibaldi's armed volunteers, the Red Shirts, marched into South Italy and the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies in 1860 and won the support of the local peasants. In 1861 Victor Emmanuel II was proclaimed king of a unified Italy.

Q6. How did the French Revolution create a sense of collective identity among the French people?

The revolutionaries took several steps:

- They introduced ideas such as *la patrie* (the fatherland) and *le citoyen* (the citizen).
- A new French flag, the tricolour, replaced the royal standard.
- The Estates General was renamed the National Assembly and elected by active citizens.
- New hymns were composed, oaths taken and martyrs commemorated, all in the name of the nation.
- A centralised administrative system made uniform laws for all citizens, and internal customs duties were abolished.
- French, as spoken and written in Paris, became the common language of the nation.

Q7. What were the important features of the Napoleonic Code of 1804?

- It did away with all privileges based on birth.
- It established equality before the law and secured the right to property.
- It simplified administrative divisions.
- It abolished the feudal system and freed peasants from serfdom and manorial dues.
- It removed guild restrictions in towns, and transport and communication systems were improved.

Q8. Explain the symbolism of Germania and Marianne.

Artists personified nations as female figures. Marianne, a Christian name that stood for the ideas of liberty and the republic, represented the French nation. Her features were drawn from symbols like the red cap and the tricolour. Germania, the female allegory of the German nation, wore a crown of oak leaves, because the German oak stands for heroism.

Chapter 2: Nationalism in India

Q9. How did the First World War create a new economic and political situation in India?

The war led to a huge rise in defence expenditure, which was financed by war loans and increased taxes. Customs duties were raised and income tax was introduced. Prices roughly doubled between 1913 and 1918, which hit the common people hard. Villages were pressed to supply soldiers, and forced recruitment angered rural India. Crop failures in 1918–19 and 1920–21 caused food shortages, and an influenza epidemic killed millions.

Q10. Why was the Rowlatt Act opposed in India?

The Rowlatt Act was hurriedly passed through the Imperial Legislative Council in 1919 despite the united opposition of the Indian members. It gave the government enormous powers to repress political activity and allowed detention of political prisoners without trial for two years. Indians saw it as an unjust and undemocratic law, which is why Gandhiji called for a nationwide satyagraha against it.

Q11. What happened at Jallianwala Bagh?

On 13 April 1919, a large crowd gathered in the enclosed ground of Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar. Some had come to protest against the government's repressive measures and others to attend the Baisakhi fair. Many did not know about the martial law that had been imposed in the city. General Dyer blocked the only exit and ordered his troops to fire on the crowd, killing hundreds. The massacre caused outrage across India and pushed the national movement forward.

Q12. What was Gandhiji's idea of satyagraha? Name three early satyagrahas.

Satyagraha emphasised the power of truth and the need to search for truth. It suggested that if the cause was true, physical force was not necessary to fight the oppressor. A satyagrahi could win through non-violence, by appealing to the conscience of the oppressor. Gandhiji's early satyagrahas were:

- **Champaran (1916):** he inspired peasants against the oppressive plantation system.
- **Kheda (1917):** in Gujarat, supporting peasants who could not pay revenue after crop failure.
- **Ahmedabad (1918):** among cotton mill workers.

Q13. Why did Gandhiji link the Khilafat issue with the Non-Cooperation Movement?

The Ottoman emperor, the spiritual head (Khalifa) of the Islamic world, had been treated harshly after the war, and Muslims in India were angry. Gandhiji saw this as an opportunity to bring Hindus and Muslims together under a unified national movement. At the Calcutta session in September 1920 he convinced other leaders of the need to start a Non-Cooperation Movement, and the programme was adopted at Nagpur in December 1920.

Q14. Describe the Non-Cooperation Movement. Why was it withdrawn?

The movement began in January 1921. People gave up government titles, boycotted civil services, the army, police, courts, legislative councils, schools and foreign goods. Different groups joined in their own ways. Peasants in Awadh took part under Baba Ramchandra, tribal people in the Gudem Hills rose under Alluri Sitaram Raju, and plantation workers in Assam left the plantations. The movement slowed in the cities because khadi was costlier than mill cloth and there were few alternative institutions. In February 1922, a crowd at Chauri Chaura set a police station on fire. Gandhiji, committed to non-violence, called the movement off.

Q15. Why was the Salt March an effective symbol of resistance?

Salt was consumed by the rich and the poor alike and was one of the most essential items of food, so the tax on it was deeply unpopular. Gandhiji first sent a letter to Viceroy Irwin with eleven demands. When it was ignored, he began the march on 12 March 1930 from Sabarmati Ashram to Dandi with 78 volunteers. They walked about 240 miles over 24 days. On 6 April he broke the salt law by making salt from seawater. It was an act of defiance that every ordinary Indian could understand, and it started the Civil Disobedience Movement.

Q16. How did different social groups participate in the Civil Disobedience Movement?

- **Rich peasants** (Patidars, Jats) were hit by falling prices and joined enthusiastically, but were disappointed when the movement was called off without revenue rates being reduced.
- **Poor peasants** wanted unpaid rent to the landlords cancelled, and some were not keen on the Congress.
- **Business classes** wanted protection against imports and formed organisations like the FICCI.
- **Industrial workers** in Nagpur joined in larger numbers, though many stayed away.
- **Women** marched in processions, manufactured salt and picketed shops, although many saw this as a service to the nation, not a change in their status.

Q17. What was the Poona Pact?

Dr B.R. Ambedkar demanded separate electorates for the Depressed Classes, and the British accepted it in the Communal Award. Gandhiji began a fast unto death against it, fearing it would slow the process of integration. Ambedkar accepted his position, and the Poona Pact of September 1932 gave the Depressed Classes reserved seats in provincial and central legislative councils, though they were to be voted in by the general electorate.

Q18. How did cultural processes create a sense of collective belonging?

Nationalism spread through the identity of the nation being given an image. Bharat Mata, painted by Abanindranath Tagore, became an icon, and Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's "Vande Mataram" was sung widely. Folklore was collected by nationalists such as Natesa Sastri, who published a collection of Tamil folktales. A tricolour flag with a spinning wheel was designed during the Swadeshi movement, and Gandhiji's version in 1921 carried the charkha. Nationalists also reinterpreted history to instil pride in India's glorious past.

Chapter 3: The Making of a Global World (1 to 1.3)

Q19. What were the Silk Routes? Why were they important?

The Silk Routes were pre-modern trade and cultural links connecting Asia with Europe and northern Africa. They get their name from the Chinese silk cargoes that travelled along them. Textiles and spices also moved from India, and precious metals flowed from Europe and Asia. They carried ideas too: Christian missionaries, Muslim preachers and Buddhist monks travelled the same roads, so religion and culture spread along with trade.

Q20. How did "food travel" shape the world before the nineteenth century?

Many familiar foods were unknown in other continents until trade and exploration connected them. Potatoes, soya, groundnuts, maize, tomatoes, chillies and sweet potatoes were introduced to the rest of the world only after Columbus reached the Americas in 1492. Introducing the humble potato changed the lives of the poor in Europe, who ate better and lived longer. But dependence on one crop could be disastrous: the Irish potato famine of the 1840s killed over a million people.

Q21. How did conquest and disease shape the Americas after the sixteenth century?

The Portuguese and Spanish conquered and colonised the Americas from the mid-sixteenth century. Their most powerful weapon was not a gun but germs such as smallpox. The original inhabitants had no immunity to these diseases, which had come from Europe, and the epidemic wiped out whole communities. This made conquest far easier and opened the way for European settlement.

Chapter 5: Print Culture and the Modern World

Q22. Who was Johann Gutenberg? How did he develop the printing press?

Gutenberg was a German who grew up on a large agricultural estate and had seen wine and olive presses. Working in Strasbourg, he adapted the olive press and moulds to create metal types for the letters of the alphabet. The first book he printed was the Bible, producing about 180 copies in three years, which was fast for those times. This invention started the print revolution.

Q23. How did print help the Protestant Reformation?

Martin Luther wrote his Ninety-Five Theses in 1517, criticising the practices of the Roman Catholic Church. Printed copies were read widely, which led to a division within the Church and the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. Luther's translation of the New Testament sold thousands of copies within weeks. Print allowed ordinary people to read and interpret religious ideas for themselves.

Q24. How did print culture create conditions for the French Revolution?

Print popularised the ideas of Enlightenment thinkers such as Voltaire and Rousseau, who attacked the Church and the despotic power of the state. It created a new culture of dialogue and debate, where old beliefs were questioned by a public aware of the importance of reason. Cartoons and caricatures mocked the monarchy. Together these made people willing to challenge the existing social order.

Q25. How did print help the growth of nationalism in India?

Nationalist newspapers reported colonial misrule and encouraged nationalist activities. The government responded with censorship: the Vernacular Press Act of 1878 was passed to control vernacular newspapers. Newspapers like Bal Gangadhar Tilak's *Kesari* wrote sharply about colonial rule and its effect on the people. Authorities were worried by the way print could spread revolutionary ideas, which shows how powerful it had become.

Q26. How did print affect women's lives in nineteenth-century India?

Women became both readers and writers. Rassundari Devi's *Amar Jiban* (1876), written in Bengali, was the first full-length autobiography published in the language. Kailashbashini Devi wrote about women's experiences of domestic life, and Tarabai Shinde, in Maharashtra, wrote *Stripurushtulna* criticising the social differences between men and women. Women's magazines sprang up, and printed material on women's education reached homes in new ways.

Part 2: Previous Year Questions (CBSE Board Papers)

Please verify each question against the official CBSE papers; set and question numbers can differ between sources.

CBSE Class 10 Social Science, 2026 (Set 1, Code 32/5/1)

1. "Print culture created the favourable conditions for the French Revolution." Explain the statement with examples. (OR: "Throughout the nineteenth century, there were a series of innovations in printing technology." Explain with examples.)

See Q24 and Q22–23.

2. Source-based question on collective belonging: (i) How did icons help to unite Indians during the freedom struggle? (ii) Why did nationalists feel the need to rewrite Indian history? (iii) How did nationalist histories portray India's past and present?

See Q18.

3. Map-based question: (i) Name the place where Gandhiji launched satyagraha for the indigo planters. (ii) Name the place where the Congress session of 1920 was held in Maharashtra.

(i) **Champaran** (Bihar). (ii) **Nagpur**.

CBSE Class 10 Social Science, 2026 (MCQ)

4. Arrange in chronological order: Salt Satyagraha, Kheda Satyagraha, Rowlatt Satyagraha, Ahmedabad Mill Workers' Satyagraha.

Kheda (1917), Ahmedabad (1918), Rowlatt (1919), Salt (1930).

CBSE Class 10 Social Science, 2026 (Set 3, Code 32/1/3)

5. Explain the role of Johann Gutenberg in the spread of print culture in Europe. / Explain the role of print in the expansion of the Protestant Reformation.

See Q22 and Q23.

CBSE Class 10 Social Science, 2025

6. Why was the Rowlatt Act opposed in India?

See Q10.

Part 3: Competency-Based Questions

Original practice questions in the competency-based style (not taken from CBSE papers).

Case 1: The Salt March

In 1930, a salt tax made a basic household item more expensive for everyone. Instead of speeches, Gandhiji walked for days towards the sea with a group of volunteers. Along the way, village after village came out to see him. At the end, he picked up a handful of natural salt.

(a) Why was salt a better issue than, say, income tax, for mobilising the whole country? (2 marks)

Income tax affected only a few wealthy Indians, whereas salt was used by every household, rich or poor. A protest about salt was therefore a protest everyone could relate to, and it linked a daily need to the larger idea of freedom.

(b) What does this episode tell us about the way Gandhiji's methods differed from earlier forms of protest? (2 marks)

Instead of petitions and appeals, Gandhiji used peaceful law-breaking and public participation. The march was visible and symbolic, it turned an abstract idea of swaraj into action, and it involved ordinary people directly.

Case 2: A Printed Page

A school librarian notices that students in a small town are reading newspapers aloud to others who cannot read. Some people discuss what they hear in the market.

(a) How does this scene reflect the way print reached non-literate people in nineteenth-century India? (2 marks)

Reading aloud and group discussions in public places extended the reach of print beyond those who could read, much as reading circles and libraries did historically.

(b) Why were colonial governments worried about this kind of discussion? (2 marks)

Print could spread criticism of the government and nationalist ideas to wide audiences, which is why the Vernacular Press Act (1878) tried to control the press.

Assertion–Reason

Assertion (A): The Frankfurt Parliament failed to unify Germany in 1848. Reason (R): The Prussian king rejected the crown offered by the elected assembly, and the monarchy and military opposed it.

Both A and R are true, and R correctly explains A.

Part 4: Model Questions (Practice Only) with Answer Key

These questions are for practice. They are not predictions, and no one can guarantee what will appear in a board paper.

1. How did Mazzini's ideas influence the national movement in Italy? (3 marks)

Born in Genoa, Carbonari member, founded Young Italy and Young Europe, believed nations are the natural units of mankind, and inspired later leaders.

2. Describe any three consequences of the Treaty of Vienna on the map of Europe. (3 marks)

Bourbons restored in France, buffer states set up against France, Austria given control of northern Italy.

3. "The First World War created conditions for the growth of the national movement in India." Explain. (5 marks)

See the step-by-step explanation in Part 5.

4. Explain how different social groups participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement. (5 marks)

See Q16.

5. Why did Gandhiji withdraw the Non-Cooperation Movement in 1922? (3 marks)

Chauri Chaura violence, his commitment to non-violence, and the movement slowing down. See Q14.

6. How did the Silk Routes link the world before the modern age? (3 marks)

Silk, spices and textiles travelled along with ideas and religions. See Q19.

7. "Print popularised the ideas of the Enlightenment." Explain with two examples. (3 marks)

Voltaire and Rousseau's ideas, and the culture of debate and caricature. See Q24.

8. Evaluate the role of women as writers and readers in nineteenth-century India. (5 marks)

See the step-by-step explanation in Part 5.

9. MCQ: Which of these was the Italian unification leader whose volunteers were known as the Red Shirts? (a) Cavour (b) Garibaldi (c) Mazzini (d) Victor Emmanuel II

(b) Garibaldi.

10. Map: On an outline map of India, locate Champaran, Dandi and Amritsar.

Champaran (Bihar), Dandi (Gujarat coast), Amritsar (Punjab).

Part 5: Answer Explanations (Step by Step)

Model answer: Question 3 (5 marks)

"The First World War created conditions for the growth of the national movement in India." Explain.

Step 1: Decide on a structure. Make 5 distinct points (roughly one per mark) under economic, social and political headings.

Step 2: Write each point with a fact.

- Defence expenditure shot up, financed by war loans and increased taxes.
- Customs duties were raised and income tax was introduced.
- Prices doubled between 1913 and 1918, hitting the poor hardest.
- Villages were forced to supply soldiers, creating anger among peasants.
- Crop failures and the influenza epidemic caused hunger and deaths, and the government's response made people resentful.

Step 3: Close with a connecting line. "This widespread hardship created discontent that the national movement turned into a mass struggle."

Model answer: Question 8 (5 marks)

Evaluate the role of women as writers and readers in nineteenth-century India.

Step 1: Split your answer into readers and writers.

Step 2: Give named examples for each: Rassundari Devi's *Amar Jiban* (1876), Kailashbashini Devi's writing on women's lives, and Tarabai Shinde's *Stripurushtulna*.

Step 3: Add the context. Women's education spread through magazines and textbooks. Some conservative families objected and restricted women's reading, while reformers supported it.

Step 4: Conclude with the idea that print gave women a public voice for the first time.

Part 6: Frequently Asked Questions

Q1. Which chapters of History are in the CBSE Class 10 board exam for 2026–27?

Chapters 1, 2, 3 (sub-topics 1 to 1.3 only) and 5. Chapter 4 is assessed internally. Always cross-check with the official syllabus.

Q2. How many marks does History carry?

20 marks in total: 18 for theory and 2 for map pointing.

Q3. Are the questions in this sheet guaranteed to come in the exam?

No. The important questions are based on recurring themes, and the model questions are for practice only. No one can promise a specific question.

Q4. How should I prepare for the long-answer questions?

Break each answer into 4 or 5 points, support each with a fact or name, and practise writing within the time limit.

Q5. Is NCERT enough for History?

For the board exam, yes: the NCERT textbook is the base for the questions. Add past papers and sample papers for practice.