

Art and Culture Previous Year Questions with Solutions [2013-2020]

Year-Wise Art & Culture Prelims Questions in UPSC

Art and Culture Previous Year Questions UPSC Prelims 2020

Q 1. With reference to the religious history of India, consider the following statements:

1. Sthaviravadins belong to Mahayana Buddhism
2. Lokottaravadin sect was an offshoot of the Mahasanghika sect of Buddhism
3. The deification of Buddha by Mahasanghikas fostered Mahayana Buddhism

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q 2. With reference to the cultural history of India, consider the following pairs:

1. Parivrajaka – Renunciant and Wanderer
2. Shramana – Priest with a high status
3. Upasaka – Lay follower of Buddhism

Which of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q 3. With reference to the cultural history of India, which one of the following is the correct description of the term 'paramitas'?

- (a) The earliest Dharmashastra texts written in aphoristic (sutra) style
- (b) Philosophical schools that did not accept the authority of Vedas
- (c) Perfections whose attainment led to the Bodhisattva path
- (d) Powerful merchant guilds of early medieval South India

Q 4. Who among the following rulers advised his subjects through this inscription?

"Whosoever praises his religious sect or blames other sects out of excessive devotion to his own sect, with the view of glorifying his own sect, he rather injures his own sect very severely."

- (a) Ashoka
- (b) Samudragupta
- (c) Harshavardhana
- (d) Krishnadeva Raya

Read in detail about [Buddhism](#), its definition, origin and causes of growth at the linked article.

Art and Culture Previous Year Questions UPSC Prelims 2019

Q 1. In which of the following relief sculpture inscriptions is 'Ranyo Ashoka' (King Ashoka) mentioned along with the stone portrait of Ashoka?

- (a) Kanganahalli
- (b) Sanchi
- (c) Shahbazgarhi
- (d) Sohgaura

Q 2. Consider the following:

1. Deification of the Buddha
2. Treading the path of Bodhisattvas
3. Image worship and rituals

Which of the above is/are the feature/ features of Mahayana Buddhism?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q 3. Building 'Kalyana Mandapas' was a notable feature in the temple construction in the kingdom of

- (a) Chalukya
- (b) Chandela
- (c) Rashtrakuta
- (d) Vijayanagara

Art and Culture Previous Year Questions UPSC Prelims 2018

Q 1. With reference to educational institutions during colonial rule in India, consider the following pairs:

Institution	Founder
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Sanskrit college at Benaras	William Jones
Calcutta Madarsa	Warren Hastings
Fort William college	Arthur Wellesley

Which of the pairs given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 3
- (d) 3 only

Q 2. Consider the following pairs:

Crafts	Heritage of
Puthukkuli shawls	Tamil Nadu
Sujni embroidery	Maharashtra
Uppada Jamdani saris	Karnataka

Which of the pairs given above is /are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 2 and 3

Q 3. With reference to the cultural history of India consider the following statements

Most of the Tyagaraja Kritis are devotional songs in praise of Lord Krishna

1. Tyagaraja created several new ragas
2. Annamacharya nad Tyagaraja are contemporaries
3. Annamacharya kirtanas are devotional songs in praise of Lord Venkateshwara

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 3 only
- (b) 2 and 4 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 3
- (d) 2, 3 and 4

Q 4. With reference to the religious practices in India, the "Sthanakvasi" sect belongs to

- (a) Buddhism
- (b) Jainism
- (c) Vaishnavism
- (d) Shaivism

Q 5. With reference to the cultural history of India, consider the following statements

1. White marble was used in making Buland Darwaza and Khankah at Fatehpur Sikri
2. Red sandstone and marble were used in making Bara Imambara and Rumi Darwaza at Lucknow

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q 6. With reference to Indian history, who among the following is a future Buddha, yet to come to save the world?

- (a) Avalokiteshvara
- (b) Lokeshvara
- (c) Maitreya
- (d) Padmapani

Q 7. Consider the following pairs:

Tradition	State
Chapchar Kut festival	Mizoram
Khongjom Parba ballad	Manipur
Thang-Ta dance	Sikkim

Which of the pairs given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 2 and 3

Art and Culture Previous Year Questions UPSC Prelims 2017

Q 1. With reference to the difference between the culture of Rigvedic Aryans and Indus Valley people, which

of the following statements is/are correct?

1. Rigvedic Aryans used the coat of mail and helmet in warfare whereas the people of Indus Valley Civilization did not leave any evidence of using them.
2. Rigvedic Aryans knew gold, silver and copper whereas Indus Valley people knew only copper and iron.
3. Rigvedic Aryans had domesticated the horse whereas there is no evidence of Indus Valley people having been aware of this animal.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q 2. With reference to Manipuri Sankirtana, consider the following statements:

1. It is a song and dance performance
2. Cymbals are the only musical instruments used in the performance
3. It is performed to narrate the life and deeds of Lord Krishna

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1, 2 and 3
- (b) 1 and 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) 1 only

Q 3. The painting of Bodhisattva Padmapani is one of the most famous and oft-illustrated paintings at

- (a) Ajanta
- (b) Badami
- (c) Bagh
- (d) Ellora

Q 4. Consider the following pairs:

Traditions	Communities
Chaliha Sahib Festival	Sindhis
Nanda Raj Jaat Yatra	Gonds
Wari-Warkari	Santhals

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) None of the above

Q 5. Which of the following is/are famous for Sun temples?

1. Arasavalli
2. Amarkantak
3. Omkareshwar

Select the correct answer using the code given below :

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Art and Culture Previous Year Questions UPSC Prelims 2016

Q 1. With reference to the religious history of India, consider the following statements :

1. The concept of Bodhisattva is central to the Hinayana sect of Buddhism
2. Bodhisattva is a compassionate one on his way to enlightenment
3. Bodhisattva delays achieving his own salvation to help all sentient beings on their path to it

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 2 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q 2. What is/are common to the two historical places known as Ajanta and Mahabalipuram?

1. Both were built in the same period.
2. Both belong to the same religious denomination.
3. Both have rock-cut monuments.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) None of the statements given above is correct

Q 3. With reference to the cultural history of India, the memorizing of chronicles, dynastic histories and

Epictales was the profession of who of the following?

- (a) Shramana
- (b) Parivraajaka
- (c) Agrahaarika
- (d) Magadha

Art and Culture Previous Year Questions UPSC Prelims 2015

Q 1. With reference to the art and archaeological history of India, which one among the following was made earliest?

- (a) Lingaraja Temple at Bhubaneswar
- (b) Rock-cut Elephant at Dhauri
- (c) Rock-cut Monuments at Mahabalipuram
- (d) Varaha Image at Udayagiri

Q 2. Kalamkari painting refers to

- (a) a hand-painted cotton textile in South India
- (b) a handmade drawing on bamboo handicrafts in NorthEast India.
- (c) a block-painted woollen cloth in the Western Himalayan region of India
- (d) a hand-painted decorative silk cloth in North-Western India

Q 3. Which one of the following was given classical language status recently? [Based on current affairs 2014-15]

- (a) Odia
- (b) Konkani
- (c) Bhojpuri
- (d) Assamese

Art and Culture Previous Year Questions UPSC Prelims 2014

Q 1. Consider the following languages:

1. Gujarati
2. Kannada
3. Telugu

Which of the above has/have been declared as 'classical language/languages' by the Government?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 3 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Q 2. With reference to the 'Changpa' Community of India, consider the following statements:

1. They live mainly in the state of Uttarakhand
2. They rear the pashmina goats that yield fine wool
3. They are kept in the category of Scheduled Tribes

Which of the given statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Q 3. Consider the following towns of India:

1. Bhadrachalam
2. Chanderi
3. Kancheepuram
4. Karnal

Which of the above are famous for the production of traditional sarees/fabric?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1, 2 and 3
(d) 1, 3 and 4

Q 4. With reference to the famous Sattriya dance, consider the following statements:

1. Sattriya is a combination of music, dance and drama
2. It is a centuries-old living tradition of Vaishnavites of Assam
3. It is based on classical Ragas and Talas of devotional songs composed by Tulsidas, Kabir and Mirabai

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
(b) 1 and 2 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Q 5. With reference to the Indian history of art and culture, consider the following pairs:

Famous work of sculpture	Site
A grand image of Buddha's Mahaparinivana with numerous celestial musicians	Ajanta

above and the sorrowful figures of his followers below	
A huge image of Varaha Avatar (boar incarnation) of Lord Vishnu, as he rescues Goddess Earth from the deep and chaotic waters, sculptured on rock	Mount Abu
"Arjuna's penance:/ "Descent of Ganga" sculpted on the surface of huge boulders	Mamallapuram

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q 6. With reference to India's culture and tradition, what is 'Kalaripayattu'?

- (a) It is an ancient Bhakti cult of Shaivism still prevalent in some parts of South India
- (b) It is an ancient style bronze and brass work still found in the southern part of the Coromandel area
- (c) It is an ancient form of dance-drama and a living tradition in the northern part of Malabar
- (d) It is an ancient martial art and a living tradition in some parts of South India

Q 7. Consider the following pairs:

Garba	Gujarat
Mohiniattam	Odisha
Yakshagana	Karnataka

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q 8. With reference to Buddhist history, tradition and culture in India, consider the following pairs:

Tabo monastery and temple complex	Spiti Valley
Lhotsava Lhakhang temple, Nako	Zaskar Valley
Alchi temple complex	Ladakh complex

Which of the pairs given above is/are correctly matched?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q 9. A community of people called Manganiyars is well-known for their

- (a) martial arts in North-East India
- (b) musical tradition in NorthWest India
- (c) classical vocal music in South India
- (d) pietra dura tradition in Central India

Q 10. Consider the following statements :

1. 'Bijak' is a composition of the teachings of Saint Dadu Dayal
2. The Philosophy of PushtiMarg was propounded by Madhvacharya

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Art and Culture Previous Year Questions UPSC Prelims 2013

Q 1. With reference to the history of Indian rock-cut architecture, consider the following statements:

1. The caves at Badami are the oldest surviving rock-cut caves in India
2. The Barabar rock-cut caves were originally made for Ajivikas by Emperor Chandra Gupta Maurya
3. At Ellora, caves were made for different faiths

Which of the given statements is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q 2. The Chinese traveller Yuan Chwang (Hiuen Tsang) who visited India recorded the general conditions and culture of India at that time. In this context, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. The roads and river-routes were completely immune from robbery
2. As regards punishment for offences, ordeals by fire, water and poison were the instruments for

- determining the innocence or guilt of a person
3. The tradesmen had to pay duties at ferries and barrier stations

Select the correct answer using the codes given below.

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q 3. Some Buddhist rock-cut caves are called Chaityas, while the others are called Viharas. What is the difference between the two?

- (a) Vihara is a place of worship, while Chaitya is the dwelling place of the monks
- (b) Chaitya is a place of worship, while Vihara is the dwelling place of monks
- (c) Chaitya is the stupa at the far end of the cave, while Vihara is the hall axial to it
- (d) There is no material difference between the two

Q 4. Which one of the following describes best the concept of Nirvana in Buddhism?

- (a) The extinction of the flame of desire
- (b) The complete annihilation of self
- (c) A state of bliss and rest
- (d) A mental stage beyond all comprehension

Q 5. Which of the following statements is/are applicable to Jain doctrine?

1. The surest way of annihilation Karma is to practise penance
2. Every object, even the smallest particle has a soul
3. Karma is the bane of the soul and must be ended

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Q 6. With reference to the history of philosophical thought in India, consider the following statements about Sankhya school:

1. Sankhya does not accept the history of rebirth or transmigration of the soul
2. Sankhya holds that it is the self-knowledge that leads to liberation and not any exterior influence or agent

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q 7. Consider the following historical places:

1. Ajanta Caves
2. Lepakshi Temple
3. Sanchi Stupa

Which of the above places is/are known for mural paintings?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 3
- (d) None

Q 8. Consider the following pairs:

1. Limboo (Limbu): Sikkim
2. Karbi: Himachal Pradesh
3. Dongaria: Odisha
4. Bonda: Tamil Nadu

Which of the pairs are correctly matched?

- (a) 1 and 3 only
- (b) 2 and 4 only
- (c) 1, 3 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Q 9. In the context of the cultural history of India, a pose in dance and dramatics called 'Tribhanga' has been a favourite of Indian artists from ancient times till today. Which of the following statements best describes this pose?

- (a) One leg is bent and the body is slightly curved at the waist and neck
- (b) Facial expressions, hand gestures and make-up are combined to symbolise certain epic or historic characters
- (c) Movements of body, face and hand are used to express oneself or to tell a story
- (d) A little smile, slightly curved waist and certain hand gestures are emphasized to express the feeling of love or eroticism

Solutions for Art and Culture Previous Year Questions UPSC Prelims [2013-2020]

UPSC Prelims: Art and Culture Questions 2020 – Answer Key		
Q 1. (b)	Q 2. (b)	Q 3. (c)
Q 4. (a)		

UPSC Prelims: Art and Culture Questions 2019 – Answer Key		
Q 1. (a)	Q 2. (d)	Q 3. (d)

UPSC Prelims: Art and Culture Questions 2018 – Answer Key		
Q 1. (b)	Q 2. (a)	Q 3. (b)
Q 4. (b)	Q 5. (d)	Q 6. (c)
Q 7. (b)		

UPSC Prelims: Art and Culture Questions 2017 – Answer Key		
Q 1. (c)	Q 2. (b)	Q 3. (a)
Q 4. (a)	Q 5. (a)	

UPSC Prelims: Art and Culture Questions 2016 – Answer Key		
Q 1. (b)	Q 2. (c)	Q 3. (d)

UPSC Prelims: Art and Culture Questions 2015 – Answer Key		
Q 1. (b)	Q 2. (a)	Q 3. (a)

UPSC Prelims: Art and Culture Questions 2014 – Answer Key		
Q 1. (c)	Q 2. (b)	Q 3. (b)

Q 4. (b)	Q 5. (c)	Q 6. (d)
Q 7. (c)	Q 8. (c)	Q 9. (b)
Q 10. (d)		

UPSC Prelims: Art and Culture Questions 2013 – Answer Key

Q 1. (c)	Q 2. (b)	Q 3. (b)
Q 4. (a)	Q 5. (d)	Q 6. (b)
Q 7. (b)	Q 8. (a)	Q 9. (a)