

1. Who was considered a “foreigner” in the past?

Answer: According to the medieval period, any stranger who did not belong to a certain society or culture and was not a part of that particular village was regarded as a foreigner. For example, a city-dweller, therefore, might have regarded a forest-dweller as a foreigner. But, if two people belong to the same village, they are not foreigners in spite of their different religious or caste backgrounds.

2. State whether true or false:

- (a) We do not find inscriptions for the period after 700.
- (b) The Marathas asserted their political importance during this period.
- (c) Forest-dwellers were sometimes pushed out of their lands with the spread of agricultural settlements.
- (d) Sultan Ghiyasuddin Balban controlled Assam, Manipur and Kashmir.

Answer:

- (a) False
- (b) True
- (c) True
- (d) False

3. Fill in the blanks:

1. Archives are places where _____ are kept.
2. _____ was a fourteenth-century chronicler.
3. _____, _____, _____, _____ and _____ were some of the new crops introduced into the subcontinent during this period.

Answer:

- (a) Archives are places where **manuscripts** are kept.
- (b) **Ziyauddin Barani** was a fourteenth-century chronicler.
- (c) **Potatoes, corn, chillies, tea** and **coffee** were some of the new crops introduced into the subcontinent during this period.

4. List some of the technological changes associated with this period.

Answer: The following are some of the technological changes that were associated with this period:

1. The Persian Wheel in irrigation
2. The Spinning Wheel in weaving
3. Firearms in combat

5. What were some of the major religious developments during this period?

Answer: Some of the important and major religious developments that took place during this particular period are as follows:

1. Worship of new deities
2. Construction of temples by royalty
3. The growing importance of Brahmanas; the priests, as dominant groups in society.
4. The emergence of the idea of bhakti – of a loving, personal deity that devotees could reach without the aid of priests or elaborate rituals.
5. The appearance of many new religions occurred during this period. During the 7th century, the merchants and the migrants introduced the teachings of the Holy Quran in India.

6. In what ways has the meaning of the term “Hindustan” changed over the centuries?

Answer: The meaning of the term ‘Hindustan’ has changed over the past centuries. Today, the term ‘Hindustan’ is referred to denote India. But during the 13th century, the term was used by Minhaj-i-Siraj – a chronicler (in a political sense) to denote lands that belonged to the Delhi Sultan. During the 14th century, the term ‘Hind’ was used by Amir Khusrau to refer to the culture and people of the Indus river. Whereas, during the early 16th century, Babar used the term ‘Hindustan’ to describe the culture, geography and fauna of the inhabitants of the sub-continent.

7. How were the affairs of Jatis regulated?

Answer: During this period, several social and economic differences emerged among the people, which led to the introduction of Jatis or sub-castes, where people were ranked on the basis of their occupations and backgrounds. The affairs of jatis were regulated by an assembly of elders known as the jati panchayat in some areas. The jatis were required to follow the rules of their villages, which were governed by a chieftain.

8. What does the term pan-regional empire mean?

Answer: A pan-regional empire is an empire that spans several regions of diverse cultures, geography and religion. For example, the dynasties of the Mughals, Cholas, Khaljis and Tughluqs.

9. What are the difficulties historians face in using manuscripts?

Answer: In the past, historians faced many difficulties in using manuscripts. Due to the lack of a printing press during those periods, historians had to scribe the manuscripts by hand, and copying the manuscripts with new changes was not an easy job. Small differences and mistakes grew over the centuries of copying, until manuscripts of the same text became substantially different from one another. As a result, we rarely find an author's original manuscript today.

10. How do historians divide the past into periods? Do they face any problems in doing so?

Answer:

Indian history was divided into three different periods by British historians in the middle of the nineteenth century. The three periods were divided into “British”, “Muslim”, and “Hindu”. British Historians believed that there were no significant developments in terms of culture, society, and economy apart from the change in the religion of the rulers.

Such a division by the British historians has problems. Such a division ignores the diversity of the Indian subcontinent. The eleventh and eighth centuries were completely different from the sixteenth or eighteenth centuries.

Historians do not see time just as a calendar or clock showing years, days, or hours. The study of history becomes easier by dividing them into different periods or segments with similar characteristics. It reflects the similarities and changes in economic organisation, social changes, beliefs, and ideas.

Historical records exist in different languages, which keep changing considerably over time. For example, modern Persian is different from Medieval Persian. The differences are not just in vocabulary and grammar but also the meanings, which keep changing over time.

When Historians read texts, maps, and documents of the past, they have to be careful about the contexts and different historical backgrounds in which they were produced, as the cartography was different in two different periods.

11. Compare either Map 1 or Map 2 with the present-day map of the subcontinent, listing as many similarities and differences as you can find.

Answer:

Map 2 was made by a French cartographer. Map 1 was made by the Arab geographer Al-Idrisi. Map 1 was made in 1154 C.E., whereas Map 2 was made in the 1720s. The first modern maps of India were produced by Survey of India.

In Map 1, places are marked in Arabic, whereas in present-day maps, the places in the subcontinent are marked in English. In Map 1, South India is located where North India is located on the present-day map.

In Map 2, the coastal areas are well-detailed, whereas in Map 1, the coastal areas are not marked in detail like in Map 1. Some of the well-known names are spelt differently in Map 1. Map 2 was used by merchants and European sailors on their voyages.

