

HISTORY I

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. How did ancient historians imagine the passage of time?
2. Was the loss of the library of Alexandria truly 'one of the greatest of the many disasters that accompanied the ruin of the ancient world' (HUGH LLOYD-JONES)?
3. What difference would it make if we could identify the pathogen of **EITHER** the Antonine Plague **OR** the Plague of Cyprian?
4. Was the Roman army a vehicle for social mobility?
5. Did the conversion of Constantine change the Roman empire more than it changed Christianity?
6. Was Judaism a proselytising religion in late antiquity?
7. Did the kings of the successor states in the West have any alternatives to Roman-style rule?
8. Did Justinian establish Europe's first persecuting society?
9. Why did 'the empire that would not die' (JOHN HALDON on Byzantium) not die?
10. Is the Carolingian Renaissance now an obsolete concept?
11. Why was Wu Zetian so exceptional?
12. Who were the beneficiaries, and who the victims, of 'Gregorian reform'?
13. Was there a medieval Sunni revival?
14. What if anything can ancient DNA contribute to the study of medieval ethnicity?
15. Were attitudes to clerical marriage regionally distinct in the Middle Ages?
16. Compare the soft power of abbesses and queens in the Middle Ages.
17. Have historians underestimated the importance of coinage to peasant economies?
18. Was there a kingdom of Ireland in the twelfth century?
19. Why did religious orders proliferate in the twelfth to thirteenth centuries?
20. Should medieval historians read **EITHER** more Biblical exegesis **OR** more charters?

21. Did the Baltic crusades hinder the spread of Christianity in the North?
22. What were the main driving forces behind vernacularisation in the Sanskrit 'Cosmopolis' of medieval **AND/OR** early modern India?
23. 'An instrument of proto-absolutist, colonial control' (SIMON DOUBLEDAY). Discuss this view of the literary patronage of Alfonso X.
24. How successful was Byzantium in its dealings with Kyivan Rus'?
25. To what extent did medieval pilgrimage blur the boundary between sacred and secular?
26. Was Simon de Montfort England's first revolutionary?
27. Was European economic superiority after the Black Death caused by the 'European Marriage Pattern'?
28. How did Ilkhanate rulers legitimate their rule?
29. To what extent was secular learning promoted in madrasas?
30. Account for the rise of the Kingdom of Kongo.
31. To what extent did early Spanish Mexico continue Aztec governance structures?
32. What did women contribute to the Renaissance?
33. How much did the achievements of the Mughal state under Akbar owe to his personal qualities?
34. 'Printing did not cause the Reformation; the Reformation caused printing to matter.' Discuss.
35. To what extent was prophecy political in **EITHER** the late medieval **OR** early modern worlds?
36. In early modern Europe, were religion and magic substitutes or complements?
37. Why did Shi'ism become central to the Safavid Empire?
38. 'Early modern people were born, married and died in the same village.' How true is this?
39. How did the Manchu conquest of China transform Joseon Korea?
40. Was there ever a Republic of Letters?

41. What, if anything, united the various strands of seventeenth-century 'republicanism'? You may answer with reference to **ANY ONE OR MORE** polities.
42. Did the Glorious Revolution of 1688 mark a discontinuity in English economic history?
43. Did Atlantic commerce make the Caribbean more or less connected to the wider world?
44. 'The nation-state was not the natural outcome of modernity, but one of its accidents.' Discuss.
45. Did a new 'homosexual' identity emerge in the 18th century?
46. 'The decline of the political power of the Church had little to do with ideas – it was just the state appropriating Church property.' Discuss.
47. 'The English East India Company's move from trade to political dominion in India was inevitable.' Discuss.
48. What role did the peasant economy play in the Industrial Revolution?
49. 'The concept of a "Russian Enlightenment" is meaningless, given the feeble literacy rates as late as 1800.' Discuss.
50. To what extent was the financial landscape for women in 18th-century America one of 'interdependence' rather than 'dependence'?
51. Did the Grand Tour educate those who undertook it, or merely confirm the prejudices they arrived with?
52. To what extent was the Bahian Conspiracy of 1798 'the first Brazilian social revolution'?
53. What was the relationship between orientalist scholarship and conceptions of race? Discuss with reference to the early modern **AND/OR** modern periods.
54. 'Christian universalism was more encompassing than Enlightenment universalism.' Discuss.
55. What role did emotion play in the abolition of the slave trade?
56. Was the fall of the Qing dynasty primarily a crisis of legitimacy or a crisis of capacity?
57. To what extent was Indian nationalism a movement of, by, and for the educated middle classes?

58. Was the Meiji Restoration a revolution imposed on Japanese society by its rulers, or a transformation that Japanese society was already demanding from below?
59. Did colonial borders make African states, or unmake African societies?
60. Why did nineteenth-century Latin American independence produce so many republics but so little republicanism?
61. 'The novel did not reflect bourgeois society; it produced it.' Discuss.
62. 'The museum is not a neutral space but an argument about whose past deserves to be preserved.' Discuss with reference to **ANY ONE OR MORE** countries or periods.
63. 'In both Russia and the Americas, abolition transferred the burdens of unfreedom rather than removing them.' Discuss.
64. Was Social Darwinism a coherent intellectual programme or a retrospective label applied to too many things?
65. How far did the gold standard constrain or enable economic development in the nineteenth century?
66. Did informal empire serve British economic interests more effectively than formal empire?
67. 'The scramble for Africa tells us more about European domestic politics than about European foreign policy.' Discuss.
68. Did missionary Christianity serve colonial power or subvert it?
69. 'The nineteenth-century European bourgeoisie was defined less by what it owned than by what it feared.' Discuss.
70. Did the expansion of the franchise in nineteenth-century Europe transform the content, as opposed to the form, of politics?
71. Was Liberal Theology a creative response to modernity or a surrender to it?
72. Was Gandhi's political genius essentially theatrical?
73. To what extent did the overseas Chinese diaspora shape the economic development of Southeast Asia between 1850 and 1950?
74. How far did the avant-garde movements of the early twentieth century depend on the very bourgeois culture they claimed to be destroying? Discuss with reference to **ANY ONE OR MORE** countries or periods.

75. Soviet foreign policy in the 1930s was driven primarily by the 'concern of the elite to maintain power' (JIRI HOCHMAN). Discuss.
76. 'Appeasement was not a policy of cowardice but of calculation.' Discuss
77. Did the Japanese occupation of Southeast Asia accelerate or merely complicate the process of decolonisation?
78. Did the post-war Bretton Woods settlement represent a new internationalism or American hegemony in disguise?
79. 'The history of human rights after 1945 is inseparable from the history of their violation.' Discuss.
80. How useful is the concept of 'transitional justice' for understanding post-conflict societies after 1945?
81. 'Secularisation was a European exception rather than a global rule.' Discuss.
82. 'Religious nationalism is simply nationalism that has run out of secular arguments.' Discuss with reference to **AT LEAST TWO** polities.
83. Was the 1960s a revolution that succeeded, a revolution that failed, or not a revolution at all?
84. 'The 1997 Asian financial crisis revealed that the East Asian economic miracle had always rested on fragile foundations.' Discuss.
85. Did the global spread of American popular music in the twentieth century represent cultural imperialism, cultural exchange, or cultural transformation – and can these three things be meaningfully distinguished?
86. What, if anything, did decolonisation change for women in formerly colonised societies?

The following questions may be answered with reference to any period or periods in the Common Era, and any location.

87. Why has millenarianism been a powerful force in some periods and places and not in others?
88. What is, or should be, the relationship between intellectual history and social history?
89. How would you write the history of **ONE** of the following: seas, oceans, rivers, mountain ranges, steppes, marshes, deserts, forests?

90. Have historical epidemics been especially revealing moments in which societies disclose how they work and what they value?
91. What would a history of silence look like – and what would it tell us that a history of speech cannot?
92. Has debt shaped civilisations more profoundly than war?
93. Has medicine ever been separable from the social structures within which it was practised?
94. 'Every archive is a theory of what matters.' Discuss.
95. Is 'the peasant' a historical category or historians' projection?
96. 'Intellectuals always overestimate the influence of other intellectuals in history.' Discuss.

HISTORY II

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions

1. Was antiquity ever truly global?
2. What was the long-term impact of Hellenistic science and technology?
3. Explain the expansion of Buddhism across Asia in the first millennium CE.
4. Was the persecution of Christians under the Roman emperors more myth than reality?
5. Did the British Isles have a late antiquity?
6. Was the fall of the Roman Empire the dawn of a peasant golden age?
7. Does the ceramic record provide the best proxy for economic complexity in the early Middle Ages?
8. Did the Sassanian empire fail more from internal weakness than external pressure?
9. Was there a 'Viking Age'?
10. How Carolingian was Carolingian Italy?
11. How orderly was the Norman takeover of England?
12. 'The surprise is that they lasted so long.' Discuss this view of the Crusader States in the Levant.
13. What were the ingredients of successful state formation in central and eastern Europe, up to c. 1100CE?
14. Explain the prosperity of Song China.
15. When and why was female sanctity a problem in the Middle Ages?
16. How can we tell whether slavery played a significant role in medieval societies? Answer with reference to the area and period of your choice.
17. Explain the speed of **EITHER** the early Islamic conquests **OR** those of the Seljuks.
18. How did the Capetians attain and preserve dynastic legitimacy?
19. Was the Hohenstaufen empire too large to be governable?

20. What role did hygiene play in medieval religious practice? You may confine your answer to any **ONE** religious group.
21. How should we explain the gender wage gap in medieval societies?
22. Why was the medieval inquisition more effective against heretics than crusade?
23. In what ways did visual culture sustain lay devotion in **EITHER** the central **OR** the later Middle Ages?
24. When and how was Scotland first unified?
25. What was the Komnenian restoration and what, if any, was its legacy?
26. Was there a consciousness of national identity in **EITHER** traditional China **OR** traditional Japan **OR** traditional Korea?
27. How important is the role of caste and hierarchy for an understanding of the social and political history of **EITHER** medieval **OR** early modern India?
28. Did land abundance cause serfdom in Europe and slavery in the Americas?
29. Were medieval universities conservative institutions?
30. How important were the Sufis to the social and political structures of Mamluk Egypt?
31. Was there such a thing as childhood in the medieval and early modern worlds?
32. Did Timbuktu really experience a 'Golden Age' in the sixteenth century?
33. How well did early modern Christian missionaries understand the beliefs of the people they were trying to convert? Answer with reference to **ONE OR MORE** continents.
34. Is length of reign a good way of comparing Ottoman and European state capacity?
35. Given its lack of political centralisation, how can we explain the longevity of the Hanseatic League?
36. 'The Radical Reformation had no chance of success.' Discuss.
37. Was there a distinctively Protestant aesthetic, or did confessional difference matter less to artists than patronage and geography?
38. How repressive was Prussian serfdom between 1648 and 1807?
39. To what extent was the Great Inflation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries responsible for western Eurasian political and social change?

40. Was there a Ukrainian identity between 1600 and 1800?
41. How much did the inheritance of Mongol structures shape Russian political culture before 1800?
42. Was Poland-Lithuania more important for the development of constitutional government in early modern Europe than Britain?
43. How prominent was Buddhism **AND/OR** Daoism in late imperial Chinese society?
44. Does it make sense to speak of 'religious tolerance' in Islamic societies before 1800?
45. Was Voltaire right to describe the Holy Roman Empire as neither holy nor Roman nor an empire?
46. Did the Enlightenment create the modern idea of happiness?
47. To what extent was medicine in the period 1500–1800 a free market?
48. Why did Philhellenism develop in the German lands specifically?
49. To what extent did science affect technological change between 1650 and 1800?
50. How central was religion to American politics in the second half of the 18th century?
51. How 'liberal' was the Swedish 'Age of Liberty' (1719–72)?
52. How 'secular' was the eighteenth-century public sphere?
53. Was the Jacobin Terror a pragmatic response to foreign threats?
54. What enabled the cultural flourishing of Japan's Edo period?
55. How and why did the English East India Company move from trade to political dominion in India, c. 1740–1820?
56. Was the nineteenth-century railway more important as a political than an economic technology?
57. 'The British Empire was, above all, a financial institution.' Discuss.
58. 'The history of capitalism cannot be written without the history of housework.' Discuss.
59. What does the endurance of the Habsburg Empire tell us about the relations between dynastic loyalty, religious identity, and cultural pluralism in early modern and modern Europe?

60. 'The Indian Mutiny of 1857 was neither Indian nor a mutiny.' Discuss.
61. Did Romanticism represent a revolt against reason, or was it reason's most extravagant expression?
62. Did mass literacy transform political life more than it transformed private life?
63. 'The history of Western classical music from Bach to Brahms is the history of Protestantism thinking out loud.' Discuss.
64. 'The nineteenth century invented tradition more often than it inherited it.' Discuss with reference to **ANY ONE OR MORE** societies.
65. Was the separation of church and state in the nineteenth century a liberal achievement or a liberal fantasy? Discuss with reference to **AT LEAST TWO** cases.
66. Did religious revival movements in the nineteenth century represent a rejection of modernity or an attempt to master it?
67. Did the plantation system retard or accelerate the development of capitalism in the Atlantic world?
68. Did the Meiji state's relationship with Shinto constitute a religion, a political ideology, or something that makes the distinction look inadequate?
69. How far did the spread of print culture transform Islamic religious authority in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries? Discuss with reference to **AT LEAST TWO** cases.
70. 'The papacy grew stronger precisely as its temporal power collapsed.' Discuss with reference to the period 1848–1960.
71. Did Islam provide a more effective basis for anti-colonial resistance than nationalism in **ANY ONE** region between 1880 and 1960?
72. 'The history of Hindu nationalism cannot be understood without the history of British colonial categorisation of religion.' Discuss.
73. How far did the experience of the First World War delegitimise liberal democracy in Europe before the rise of fascism had begun?
74. 'Fascism was less a doctrine than an aesthetic.' Discuss with reference to **AT LEAST TWO** cases.
75. Did Partition leave a deeper mark on Pakistan than on India?
76. Why did the Cold War produce so little armed conflict between its principal protagonists?

77. 'By 1960, western Europe had rebuilt its economies but not its self-confidence.' Discuss.
78. 'The Chinese Communist Party won the Civil War not on the battlefield but in the village.' Discuss.
79. Was Japanese imperialism in Asia driven more by economic necessity, strategic anxiety, or ideological conviction?
80. 'African nationalism was strongest where settler colonialism was most brutal.' Discuss.
81. Was Peronism a form of fascism, a form of socialism, or something that makes both categories look inadequate?
82. Was the rise of Pentecostalism in the twentieth century a religious phenomenon, a social one, or both?
83. How far did anti-communism, rather than democracy, define the political culture of the post-war United States?
84. 'Postcolonial states inherited borders but not sovereignty.' Discuss.
85. 'The twentieth century did not kill God so much as multiply the forms in which the divine could be imagined.' Discuss.
86. Is the Vietnam War best understood as a civil war, an anti-colonial struggle, or a Cold War proxy conflict?
87. Did the Iranian Revolution of 1979 represent a refutation of modernisation theory?
88. How far did the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 represent the triumph of liberalism rather than simply the exhaustion of Soviet communism?

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89. Is 'violence' too amorphous a category to have a history?
90. 'Great nations write their autobiographies in three manuscripts: the book of their deeds, the book of their words, and the book of their art. Not one of these books can be understood unless we read the two others, but of the three the only trustworthy one is the last' (JOHN RUSKIN). Discuss.
91. 'Every map is an argument about power.' Discuss.
92. Is 'the economy' a modern invention or a modern name for something much older?

93. Has the family always existed, or have historians mistaken a contingent social arrangement for a natural fact?
94. Can a language die peacefully?
95. Can the history of labour be written without the history of leisure?
96. Has anonymity always been a form of freedom — or has it been equally a form of oppression?
97. 'Although never used explicitly, the concept of the Zeitgeist still lurks behind much historical writing.' Discuss.