

## Short-Answer Questions

**1. What was the most important military achievement of Samudragupta?**

**Ans.** The most important military achievement of Samudragupta was his Deccan Campaign.

**2. What is the importance of the Allahabad Pillar Inscription?**

**Ans.** The Allahabad Pillar Inscription contains knowledge about Samudragupta's reign. It describes the reign of the Guptas. It also provides an impressive list of kings and tribal republics that were conquered by Samudragupta.

**3. Who was Fa-Hien?**

**Ans.** Fahien was a Buddhist pilgrim who visited India during the reign of Chandragupta Vikramaditya.

**4. Give any two achievements of the Guptas in the field of administration.**

**Ans.** (i) The Gupta administration was mild and liberal and never interfered in the day-to-day life of the people.  
(ii) The punishments were mild, yet there were no crimes. Roads were safe.

**5. How can you say that the Gupta rulers followed the policy of religious tolerance?**

**Ans.** The Gupta rulers practised Hinduism but they donated money for building places of worship of other religions. Buddhism was flourishing in Punjab, Bengal and Mathura. Buddhists and Hindus lived at peace.

**6. Name the two lyrical poems, two epics and three dramas written by Kalidasa.**

**Ans.** The great skill of Kalidasa in lyrical poetry is exhibited in his poems *Meghaduta* and *Ritusamhara* while *Kumarasambhava*

and *Raghvamsha* are his two great epics. *Abhijnanshakuntalam*, *Vikramorvasiya* and *Malavikagnimitra* are his great dramas.

**7. Name three poets and three dramatists of the Gupta period.**

**Ans. Three poets of the Gupta period:** (i) Kalidasa (ii) Harisena (iii) Bharavi

**Three dramatists of Gupta Period:** (i) Vishakhadatta (ii) Shudraka (iii) Bhasa

**8. Who were the two great grammarians of the Gupta period?**

**Ans.** Patanjali and Amar Singh

**9. Give two great works of each of the following:**

(a) Vishakhadatta; (b) Bhasa; and (c) Banabhatta.

**Ans. (a) Vishakhadatta wrote two plays:** (i) *Mudra-Rakshasa*. and (ii) *Devi Chandra Gupta*.

(b) **Bhasa's two plays:** (i) *Svapana-Vasavdatta* and (ii) *Pratigya Yogandhrana*.

(c) **Banabhatta two plays:** (i) *The Harshacharita* and (ii) *Kadambari*.

**10. Mention one great work of each of the following:**

(a) Shudraka; (b) Bharavi;

(c) Dandin; and (d) Bhatti

**Ans. (a)** Shudraka wrote the play *Mrichchhakatikam*.

(b) Bharavi wrote the play *Kiratarjuniya*

(c) Dandin wrote the play *Dash Kumar Charita*

(d) Bhatti wrote the play *Ravana Vadha*

**11. What is the importance of the 'Panchtantra'?**

**Ans.** *Panchtantra*, a collection of animal stories, in which animals and birds play the parts of kings, ministers and common men, is full of wit and humour. It is said that Vishnu Sharma wrote those fables to preach the art of statecraft to disinterested princes.

**12. Name two centres of learning during the Gupta period.**

**Ans.** Nalanda and Mathura

**13. How can you say that art and architecture made a great progress in the Gupta period?**

**Ans.** Art and architecture made great progress under the Guptas. The great centres of art were located in Mathura, Varanasi and Pataliputra. The Vishnu temple at Deogarh and the brick temple at Bhitrigaon are examples of early temple architecture. Not only this, three of the finest Ajanta Caves, assigned by the historians to the Gupta period, further illustrate the great advancement that the Guptas had made in the field of architecture.

**14. Name the important sciences that flourished in the Gupta period.**

**Ans.** Astronomy flourished in the Gupta period.

**15. Name two great physicians of the Gupta period.**

**Ans.** Vagbhata and Dhanavantri.

**16. Who was the great astronomer of the Gupta period after whose name an Indian satellite was named?**

**Ans.** Aryabhatta

**17. Name the three great astronomers and mathematicians of the Gupta period.**

**Ans.** Aryabhatta, Varahamihira and Brahmagupta.

**18. Give the names of three scientists of the Gupta period.**

**Ans.** Aryabhatta, Varahamihira and Brahmagupta.

**19. Give the names of any two works of Aryabhatta.**

**Ans.** (i) Aryabhatta in his famous book *Aryabhattachiya* deals with the rules of solving problems of Algebra, Geometry and Trigonometry.

(ii) Aryabhatta's other book, *Surya Siddhanta*, proves that the earth revolves round the sun and rotates on its axis.

**20. Give the names of any two works of Varahamihira.**

**Ans.** *Brihat Samhita* and *Panch Siddhantika*.

**21. What were the two features of the architecture of the Gupta period?**

**Ans.** (i) A large number of beautiful temples with the Shikhara Symbol were built during the Gupta period.



- (ii) The temples consisted of a central room in which the image was placed. This room was called the *Garbhagriha*.

**22. Name two famous temples of the Gupta period.**

- Ans.** (i) The stone temple at Deogarh (District Lalitpur)  
(ii) The brick temple at Bhitrigaon (District Kanpur)

**23. Give two main features of the Vishnu Temple at Deogarh.**

- Ans.** The temple at Deogarh (presently in Lalitpur district, UP) was built during the Gupta period. It has a simple, one cell square plan and shows the ornate Gupta style architecture. It is a temple made in stone with fine pieces of sculpture on the panels of its walls.

**24. Give two main features of the Gupta sculpture.**

- Ans.** (i) The Gupta sculptures show an exquisite beauty of execution and a high degree of skill.  
(ii) Both the art and the subjects chosen became completely Indian in their Character.

**25. Where are the best specimens of the Gupta paintings found?**

- Ans.** The specimens of the Gupta paintings are found at Ajanta and the Bagh Caves.

**26. What are the two features of the Ajanta paintings?**

- Ans.** The Ajanta paintings have the following features :  
(i) Most of the paintings in the Ajanta caves were done in torch light as there was not much light inside the caves.  
(ii) The colours used in the paintings were made of animal and plant products. Even after 1,500 years, these are still vivid.

**27. What were the main subjects of the paintings of the Ajanta Caves?**

- Ans.** The main subjects of the Ajanta Caves are the depiction of the past lives and rebirths of the Buddha, pictorial tales from Aryasura's *Jatakamala*, and rock-cut sculptures of Buddhist deities.

**28. Why are the paintings of Avalokiteshvara Padmahari so famous?**

**Ans.** The figure of Avalokiteshvara Padmahari is the best known single figure from Ajanta found in Cave No.1 This figure is as much known for its colours and designs as for its expressions. The face of the figure clearly reflects compassion and tenderness which is characteristic of Padmahari whose main mission is to relieve human beings by taking upon himself the sorrows of the earthly being.

**29. Name any two Gupta paintings found in Bagh Caves.**

**Ans.** (i) The scene depicting a procession of elephants  
(ii) The scene of dancer and women musicians.

**30. How can you say that the Gupta period made great progress in the field of metallurgy?**

**Ans.** The art of casting metals reached a high degree of development during the Gupta age. The Iron Pillar at Delhi, near the Qutab Minar, reveals the metallurgical skill of the Gupta artists. It has been exposed to sun, rain and storms for centuries but it has not yet rusted.

### **Structured Eassay-Type Questions**

**1. With reference to Samudragupta, explain the following :**

- (a) His Deccan campaign,
- (b) The extent of his empire.
- (c) Importance of Allahabad Pillar Inscription.

**Ans.** (a) The most important military exploit was Samudragupta's Deccan campaign. He covered a long distance of 3,000 miles through dense forests with the same boldness as that of Alexander and Napoleon. While marching towards the south, he defeated various powerful rulers, sometimes a confederacy of various rulers. All bowed before his mighty power. However, he did not annex any portion of the Deccan as it would make his empire too big to rule. He felt contented to make the southern kings accept his suzerainty. It shows that he was a wise statesman.

- (b) His empire extended from river Brahmaputra in the east to rivers Yamuna and Chambal in the west and from Himalayas in the north to the river Narmada in the south. Samudragupta is also said to have subjugated the forest tribes dwelling in Central India and defeated nine republican tribes of Rajasthan. The five frontier states— (1) Samtata or modern Bengal, (2) Devaka or modern North Assam, (3) Kamrup or Assam, (4) Nepal, and (5) Kartarpur or modern Terai Region — accepted his suzerainty and paid him heavy tributes.
- (c) **The Allahabad Pillar Inscription:** The most important source of information regarding Samudragupta is the inscription that is found written on the Ashokan Pillar which stands in the Allahabad fort. This inscription was written by Harisena, the court poet of Samudragupta, and so it contains a first hand knowledge about Samudragupta's reign. It describes the reign of the Guptas. It also provides an impressive list of kings and tribal republics that were conquered by Samudragupta. Emphasising the importance of this inscription one historian has rightly remarked, "*Upon this single record rests the name and fame of the real founder of the Gupta Empire.*"

**2. With reference to Chandragupta Vikramaditya, explain the following :**

- (a) His conquests; (b) Extent of his empire;  
(c) The title he adopted.

- Ans.** (a) Like his father, Chandragupta II was also a great conqueror. His greatest achievement was to destroy forever the power of the Shakas of Malwa, Gujarat and Saurashtra. He assumed the title of "*Shakari*" or the enemy of the Shakas. His empire now touched the Arabian Sea and included the important ports of Broach, Cambay and Sopara.
- (b) In this way, Chandragupta II laid the foundation of a vast empire which extended from the Brahmaputra river in the east to the Chenab river and the Arabian



Sea in the west. His empire touched the Himalayas in the north and the Narmada river in the south.

- (c) **Chandragupta II, 380-414 A.D.:** Chandragupta II, the son and successor of Samudragupta, was another powerful ruler of the Gupta dynasty. He is popularly known as Vikramaditya (or Sun of Power) and is often identified with the Vikramaditya of Ujjain who patronised the famous "Nav Ratnas".

**3. There was a great development in science in the Gupta period. In this connection, explain the achievements made in the following fields of science :**

- (a) Medicine; (b) Mathematics; and (c) Astronomy.

**Ans. (a) Medicine:** Vagbhata was the most distinguished physician of this period. He wrote his famous treatise *Ashtanga-Hridaya* and continued the tradition of Charaka. In this period, surgeons performed operations of cataract etc. Dhanavantari was also a great physician whose name has become synonymous with Ayurveda. *Astanga-Sangraha*, *Charaka-Samhita* and *Sushruta Samhita* were other important works on Ayurveda. Charaka was a great physician who taught at Taxila during the reign of Kanishka.

- (b&c) **Mathematics and Astronomy:** The greatest mathematicians and astronomers of this period were Aryabhatta, Varahamihira and Brahmagupta. By this time, Indian mathematics had already discovered the decimal system and the use of zero which were later borrowed by Arabs from India. Aryabhatta, in his famous book *Aryabhattiya*, deals with the rules of solving problems of Algebra, Geometry and Trigonometry. He even calculated the exact value of  $\pi$  (pi) which was equal to 3.1416 and formulated how to find the area of a triangle. Aryabhatta's other book, *Surya Siddhanta*, proves that the earth revolves round the sun and rotates on its axis. In this way, he discovered the causes of the Solar and the Lunar eclipses. He also measured by speculation the exact circumference of the earth.

**4. The Guptas attained much perfection in the fields of culture and paintings. In this context, explain :**

- (a) Main characteristics of the Gupta Sculptures;
- (b) Ajanta Paintings;      (c) Bagh Paintings.

**Ans. (a) Sculpture and Fine Arts:** In the field of **Sculpture**, India made such great progress under the Guptas that the famous art of Gandhara was completely forgotten. The Gupta sculptures show an exquisite beauty of execution and a high degree of skill. Both the art and the subjects chosen became completely Indian in their character. The discovery of a large number of images and sculptures at Sarnath and various other places shows that side by side depicting scenes from Buddha's life, now subjects from Puranic mythology had also begun to be treated with remarkable freshness.

The stone temple at Deogarh contains some fine pieces of sculpture on the panels of its walls and the second is known for its well-designed figures in terracotta.

- (b) The art of painting reached its height of glory and splendour in the Gupta Age. The best specimens of the Gupta paintings are represented by the beautiful frescoes found in the Ajanta caves. These frescoes are so excellent in their design and technical skill that tourists from all over the world specially come to see them. The words of a *Danish artist* are worth mentioning in this connection. According to him, *"They represent the climax which the genuine Indian art has attained. Everything in these pictures from composition as a whole to the smallest pearl or flower testifies the depth of insight coupled with the greatest technical skill."*
- (c) The paintings in **Bagh Caves** (Madhya Pradesh) are similar to those of Ajanta. They have same variety of designs, vigorous execution, decorative quality and secular nature. The scene depicting a procession of elephants and a lovely scene of a dancer and woman musicians are very impressive compositions.