



BRAINIACS OLYMPIAD

HISTORY SAMPLE PAPER

SOURCE-BASED QUESTIONS
(TEXTUAL AND VISUAL ANALYSIS)



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info@brainiacsolympiad.com



www.brainiacsolympiad.com

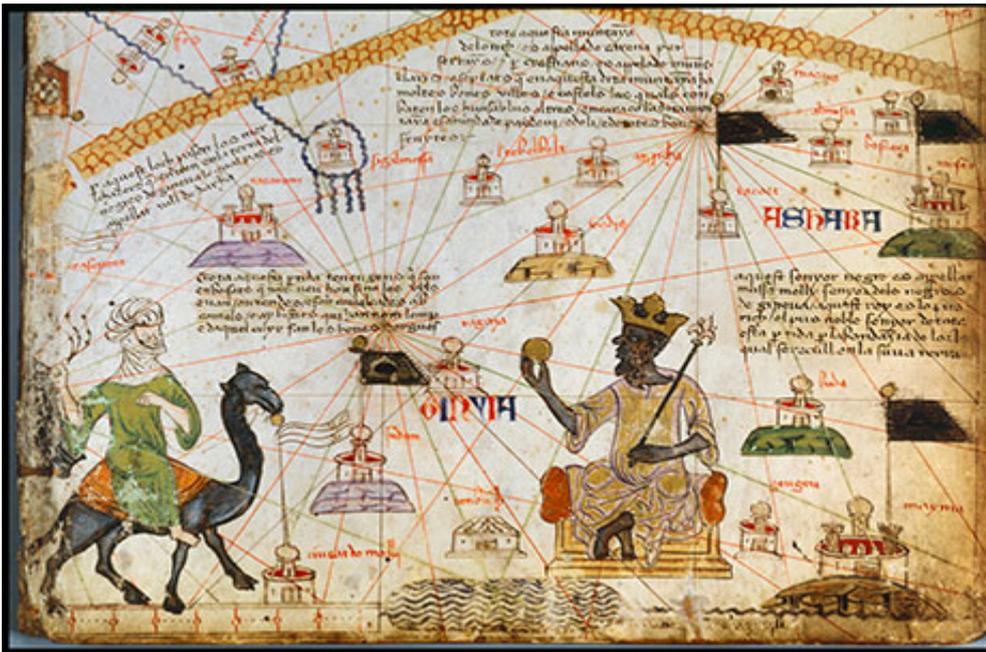
SOURCE-BASED QUESTIONS

Olympiad: Analyzing Two Sources

Source A: Textual Source – The Edicts of Ashoka (Maurya Empire, India)

«All men are my children. Just as I desire my own children to be happy in this world and the next, so do I desire the same for all men. I promote Dharma, moral living, and tolerance among all faiths».

Source B: Visual Source – Image of Mansa Musa in the Catalan Atlas (1375 CE)



(Mansa Musa is shown seated on a golden throne, wearing a crown, holding a golden orb, and surrounded by trade routes and cities.)

Q1: What do both sources suggest about the leadership values of Emperor Ashoka and Mansa Musa?

Model Answer:

Both sources show that Ashoka and Mansa Musa were leaders who used their power not just for conquest, but to promote values. Ashoka emphasized moral duty (dharma), compassion, and religious tolerance, reflecting a shift from military rule to ethical leadership. Mansa Musa, shown with wealth and trade routes, demonstrates a leader who promoted prosperity, Islamic values, and cultural exchange. Both rulers were deeply connected to religion and saw leadership as a moral responsibility.

Q2: How is religion reflected in both sources, and what role did it play in their empires?

Model Answer:

In Ashoka's edict, religion plays a central role in governance he promotes Buddhist ideals like compassion and tolerance across his diverse empire. In Mansa Musa's depiction, his identity as a Muslim ruler is clear: the gold orb symbolizes both wealth and pilgrimage (Hajj), which helped spread Islam in West Africa. Religion guided both rulers in state policy, education, and diplomacy.

Q3: What similarities and differences can you find in how each ruler displayed power and influence?

Model Answer:

Both rulers linked their power to religion and morality. Ashoka displayed influence through written edicts carved into stone pillars across the empire, promoting peace and ethical governance. Mansa Musa, by contrast, displayed power through immense wealth, trade networks, and public acts like his famous pilgrimage. A key difference is that Ashoka emphasized spiritual reform after warfare, while Mansa Musa emphasized Islamic piety alongside economic strength.

Q4: What do these sources reveal about the relationship between government, religion, and economy in ancient civilizations?

Model Answer:

They reveal that in both India and West Africa, religion was deeply tied to governance and public policy. Ashoka used Buddhism to unify and morally guide his empire, while Mansa Musa used Islam to strengthen cultural unity and global connections. Both leaders used economic and religious strategies to stabilize and expand their empires one through moral teachings and edicts, the other through wealth and global diplomacy.

ANALYZING TWO SOURCES

Source A: Textual Source – Pericles' Funeral Oration (Athens, 431 BCE)

«Our constitution is called a democracy because power is in the hands not of a minority but of the whole people. We are all equal before the law. The freedom we enjoy in our government extends to our private lives».

Source B: Visual Source – Roman Forum (Ancient Rome)



(Image shows ruins of temples, government buildings, and public spaces that once served as the center of Roman public life.)

Q1: What core political ideas are reflected in Pericles' speech about Athens?

Model Answer:

Pericles emphasizes democracy, citizen participation, equality before the law, and personal freedom. These ideas show that Athens valued civic engagement and individual rights, especially for male citizens.

Q2: What does the Roman Forum reveal about Roman civilization and its values?

Model Answer:

The Roman Forum was the heart of political, religious, and social life in Rome. It reflects the Roman values of law, public debate, and civic organization. Government buildings and temples together show how Rome combined religion and politics in public life.

Q3: Compare the role of citizens in Athens and Rome based on the two sources.

Model Answer:

In both Athens and Rome, citizens played active roles in public life. In Athens, democracy allowed direct voting on laws. In Rome, citizens elected representatives

and participated in legal debates. While Athens practiced direct democracy, Rome developed a republic, showing different approaches to civic involvement.

Q4: How do both sources show the connection between political systems and architecture?

Model Answer:

Pericles' speech shows pride in Athens' political system, while the Roman Forum's buildings physically represent that system through courts, temples, and senates. Both civilizations built public spaces to support civic life Athens through assemblies, Rome through forums linking their political ideals to their infrastructure.

Bonus Extension Question (Optional):

If you could visit either Classical Athens or Republican Rome, which would you choose and why?

Sample Answer:

I would visit Republican Rome to witness how a complex republic functioned and how Roman law influenced modern governments. Seeing the Roman Forum in action would help me understand how ancient citizens interacted with their leaders.

Analyzing Two Sources

Source A: Textual Source – Feudal Oath of Loyalty (France, 11th century)

«I promise on my faith that I will in future be faithful to Count William and will never, willingly or knowingly, take part in any action which is to his harm, in life or limb, or in any other respect».

Source B: Visual Source – Map of the Islamic Caliphate under the Umayyads (c. 750 CE)



(Map shows the Islamic empire spreading from Spain in the west to India in the east, connected by trade routes and cities like Baghdad, Cordoba, and Cairo.)

Q1: What political system is described in Source A, and how did it maintain order in Medieval Europe?

Model Answer:

Source A reflects feudalism, where nobles (vassals) pledged loyalty to lords in exchange for land and protection. This system created local networks of control and loyalty, maintaining order without a strong central government.

Q2: What does the map in Source B reveal about the nature of the Islamic Caliphate during the Umayyad period?

Model Answer:

The map shows that the Caliphate was a vast, unified empire with efficient trade routes and urban centers. Unlike feudal Europe's fragmented states, the Caliphate had a strong central authority and cultural unity across regions.

Q3: Compare the structure of government in feudal Europe and the Islamic Caliphates based on the sources.

Model Answer:

Feudal Europe had a decentralized structure, where local lords had real power and kings were often weak. In contrast, the Islamic Caliphate was centralized under a Caliph, who governed religiously and politically across diverse lands. Loyalty in Europe was personal and local, while in the Caliphate it was to a central religious authority.

Q4: What role did religion play in shaping both societies, and how is that reflected in these sources?

Model Answer:

In feudal Europe, the oath was sworn under Christian values of loyalty and duty, and the Church was a major landowner. In the Islamic Caliphate, the unity of the empire was strongly tied to Islam, which influenced laws, education, and culture. Both societies used religion to legitimize authority and maintain social order.

Bonus Question (Critical Thinking)

Based on these sources, which system-feudalism or the caliphate do you think provided greater stability? Defend your answer.

Model Answer:

The Islamic Caliphate likely provided greater stability because it had centralized governance, a shared religion, and integrated trade. Feudal Europe was fragmented and depended on personal loyalty, which often broke down during times of conflict.

Analyzing Two Sources

Source A: Textual Source – Excerpt from the Sermon on the Mount (Christianity, New Testament)

«Blessed is the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who persecute you».

Source B: Visual Source – Statue of the Buddha (Ancient India)



(An image showing a seated Buddha in meditation pose, symbolizing enlightenment and peace.)

Q1: What key moral teachings are shared in Source A, and how do they reflect Christian values?

Model Answer:

Source A teaches humility («meekness»), forgiveness, and love even toward enemies. These reflect core Christian values of compassion, nonviolence, and unconditional love.

Q2: What does the statue in Source B symbolize in Buddhist philosophy?

Model Answer:

The Buddha statue symbolizes enlightenment, inner peace, meditation, and the path to overcoming suffering through self-awareness.

Q3: Compare the ideas about suffering and compassion in Christianity and Buddhism based on the sources.

Model Answer:

Both religions emphasize compassion and kindness. Christianity encourages love and forgiveness of others to overcome hatred and suffering. Buddhism focuses on overcoming personal suffering through meditation and wisdom to achieve enlightenment.

Q4: How did these religions spread and influence societies, according to historical context?

Model Answer:

Christianity spread through missionary work, the Roman Empire's adoption, and later European expansion, influencing laws and ethics. Buddhism spread through trade routes like the Silk Road, missionary journeys, and royal patronage in Asia, shaping culture and philosophy.

Bonus Critical Thinking Question:

How do the teachings of forgiveness and meditation help individuals and societies cope with conflict?

Model Answer:

Forgiveness helps reduce cycles of violence and hatred, promoting peace in communities. Meditation encourages self-control and understanding, helping people manage stress and act wisely, which can lead to more peaceful societies.

Modern History Olympiad –Analyzing Two Sources

Source A: Textual Source – Excerpt from a factory worker's letter, England, 1850

"The hours are long, from dawn to dusk, with little rest. The air is thick with smoke and dust, and many fall ill. Yet, the machines run without stopping. We hear the factory bell more than the church bells."

Source B: Visual Source – Political Cartoon from 1914



(Image shows European leaders standing on a barrel of gunpowder labeled "Europe," with each holding a match. The barrel is about to explode.)

Q1: What conditions of the Industrial Revolution are described in Source A, and how did these affect workers?

Model Answer:

Source A describes harsh working conditions long hours, pollution, poor health highlighting the difficult life of industrial workers. These conditions often caused sickness and limited workers' quality of life.

Q2: What warning or message does the cartoon in Source B convey about Europe in 1914?

Model Answer:

The cartoon warns that European leaders were dangerously close to causing a large conflict (World War I). The "barrel of gunpowder" symbolizes tensions that could explode, and the leaders' holding matches represent the risk of war triggered by political rivalries.

Q3: How do both sources reflect causes and effects of major historical changes in Europe from the 19th to early 20th century?

Model Answer:

Source A reflects industrialization's social effects urbanization, labor struggles, and technological change. Source B reflects the political tensions and nationalism leading to World War I. Together, they show how economic changes and political rivalries shaped Europe's transformation.

Modern World: Analyzing Two Sources

Source A: Textual Source – Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf (1925)

«All great cultures of the past perished only because the original creative race died out from blood poisoning. A state which preserves racial purity is the only state capable of greatness».

Source B: Visual Source – Propaganda Poster from Nazi Germany (1930s)



(Poster shows a strong, idealized Aryan man holding a Nazi flag with the words “Ein Volk, Ein Reich, Ein Führer” – “One People, One Empire, One Leader”)

Q1: What does Source A reveal about Nazi ideology and its impact on society?

Model Answer:

It reveals the racist and nationalist beliefs that underpinned Nazi ideology. The focus on racial purity encouraged discrimination and violence, especially against Jews, and led to genocidal policies during WWII.

Q2: How does Source B visually support the ideas found in Source A?

Model Answer:

The poster promotes unity and strength under a single race and leader, glorifying Hitler's vision. It reinforces Nazi propaganda by portraying the Aryan man as superior and aligning with the call for a racially pure state.