S6 Chinese History Practice Paper: Qin-Han Centralisation and Commanderies, Tang Three Departments and Civil Service Examinations, Song Reform and Commerce, Ming-Qing Absolutism and the Single Whip Reform, Economic Shift to the South, and Confucian Thought (100 marks)

Level: S6 | Subject: Chinese History | 75 minutes | 100 marks | 24 questions | answer key

Section A: Qin-Han Centralisation and Local Administration (17 marks)

Each question is worth 4-5 marks; name the institution, its content and its effect; answer comparison questions point by point.

#	Question	Answer	Marks
1	After unifying China in 221 BC, Qin abolished enfeoffment and adopted the commandery and county system, and set up the Three Lords and Nine Ministers at court. (a) Name the Three Lords of the Qin central government and state the duty of each. (b) Give two main differences between the Qin commandery system and Zhou enfeoffment in local administration.	(a) Chancellor: assisted the emperor in all state affairs and led the officials; Grand Commandant: commanded the army; Imperial Counsellor: supervised officials and handled documents. (b) Commandery heads were appointed and dismissed by the emperor and could not inherit, while Zhou lords held hereditary land; commanderies had no separate army or revenue, while lords could appoint their own officials and raise troops.	5
2	Emperor Wu of Han issued the Decree of Extending Grace. Explain (a) what the decree provided; (b) how it weakened the kingdoms.	(a) When a king died, his eldest son inherited the title while the other sons each received part of the kingdom as marquises. (b) The kingdoms were repeatedly divided, so their land and population shrank and they could no longer challenge the centre; the centre weakened the regions without war and won the gratitude of the junior sons.	4
3	Emperor Wu divided the empire into thirteen provinces, each under an Inspector. (a) Whom did the Inspector supervise? (b) The Inspector ranked only 600 shi yet supervised governors of 2,000 shi; what was the purpose of this design?	(a) He supervised provincial governors, local strongmen and kings under the six-point enquiry. (b) A low rank made him less able to collude with local powers and less likely to act on his own; he reported directly to the emperor through the Imperial Counsellor, so the centre controlled the regions at little cost.	4
4	Han land tax was one part in thirty. A household farms 90 mu, each mu yielding 2 shi of millet on average. Find (a) the annual output in shi; (b) the land tax payable in shi; (c) the tax as a percentage of output (2 decimal places).	(a) 90 x 2 = 180 shi; (b) 180 / 30 = 6.0 shi; (c) 6.0 / 180 x 100 = 3.33%.	4

Section B: Sui-Tang Institutions and Taxation (17 marks)

Each question is worth 4-5 marks; support answers with facts and show working and units in data questions.

#	Question	Answer	Marks
5	The Tang central government used the Three Departments and Six Ministries. (a) Name the three departments and their main duties. (b) State two features of how power operated under this system.	(a) The Secretariat drafted edicts; the Chancellery reviewed them and could return them; the Department of State Affairs executed them through the six ministries of personnel, revenue, rites, war, justice and works. (b) The power of chancellor was split three ways and checked, preventing one man from dominating; every edict passed through drafting, review and execution before the emperor decided, which was careful but slow.	5
6	(a) What marks the formal establishment of the civil service examination system? (b) State two effects of the examinations replacing the nine-rank system on social mobility.	(a) Emperor Yang of Sui set up the jinshi examination in 605, taking men by examination rather than recommendation; the Tang added the palace examination and military examinations. (b) The power to select officials moved from great local families to the central government, so poorer scholars could enter office and the ruling base widened; study for examinations became a route of social advance.	4
7	The early Tang used the zu-yong-diao system and later adopted the two-tax system. (a) State the content of the zu, yong and diao levies. (b) Explain the main difference between the two systems in the basis of taxation.	(a) Zu: two shi of millet per adult male; diao: two zhang of silk and three liang of cotton wadding (or cloth and hemp); yong: twenty days of labour service a year, commuted at three chi of silk a day. (b) Zu-yong-diao was based on adult males and levied per head; the two-tax system of 780 was based on property, set expenditure first, ignored household registration status and collected cash and grain twice a year by land and household grade.	4
8	A taxpayer owes 20 days of labour service and commutes it into silk at 3 chi a day. (a) Find the total silk in chi; (b) convert it into zhang; (c) if he also pays 2 zhang of silk as the diao levy, how many zhang does he pay in the year?	(a) 20 x 3 = 60 chi; (b) 60 / 10 = 6 zhang; (c) 6 + 2 = 8 zhang.	4

Section C: Song Reform and Commerce (17 marks)

Each question is worth 4-5 marks; state both content and aim of each measure and show working in calculations.

#	Question	Answer	Marks
9	Wang Anshi launched his New Policies from 1069. (a) State the content of the green sprouts loan, the hired service law and the market exchange law. (b) Explain the common financial aim of the reforms.	(a) Green sprouts loans: the government lent cash or grain to farmers in the lean season at 20 per cent interest a half year, repaid with the summer and autumn taxes; hired service law: households paid a service exemption levy by grade and the state hired labour, with official and temple households also paying; market exchange law: state trading offices bought surplus goods and lent to merchants to steady prices. (b) The aim was more state revenue without raising tax rates, through interest, commercial taxes and a broader tax base, while curbing land engrossment.	5
10	Green sprouts loans charged 20 per cent interest for half a year. A county lends 1,000 guan. Find (a) the half-year interest; (b) the total repayment; (c) if the same	(a) 1,000 x 20% = 200.0 guan; (b) 1,000 + 200.0 = 1,200.0 guan; (c) 1,200.0 x 20% = 240.0 guan, so the yearly interest is 200.0 + 240.0 = 440.0 guan (an effective annual rate of 44%).	4

	principal is lent twice in a year (interest added to principal for the second loan), the total interest for the year.		
11	Song commerce broke new ground. (a) Give two changes in urban or market organisation. (b) Explain the nature of jiaozi and the background to its appearance.	(a) The walled market quarters lost their monopoly: shops opened along streets at any hour, and night markets and rural markets appeared; commercial taxes and state monopolies became major revenue, managed through customs stations and maritime trade offices. (b) Jiaozi was paper money first issued by Sichuan merchants in the Northern Song and later taken over by the state, because iron coins were heavy for large transactions; it is the world earliest paper currency.	4
12	The Song expanded recruitment by examination and used sealed names and fair copying. (a) Explain these two anti-fraud measures. (b) State two effects of the rise of scholar-official government in the Song.	(a) Sealed names hid the candidate identity and origin on the script; fair copying had clerks recopy each script so examiners could not recognise handwriting, cutting back patronage and fraud. (b) Quotas rose sharply, more scholars entered office and a scholar-official elite of degree holders formed; they prized reputation and spoke freely on policy, which also produced factional strife and slower administration.	4

Section D: Ming-Qing Absolutism and Fiscal Reform (16 marks)

Each question is worth 4-5 marks; identify the institutional change and its consequences rather than listing terms.

#	Question	Answer	Marks
13	In 1380 Emperor Taizu of Ming abolished the Secretariat and the office of chancellor. (a) State two institutional changes that followed. (b) What was the nature of the Grand Secretariat after Emperor Chengzu?	(a) The six ministries answered directly to the emperor, who took personal charge of government, ending the chancellorship; grand secretaries were appointed as advisers, the censorate and six offices of scrutiny supervised officials, and secret police such as the brocade guards were set up. (b) The Grand Secretariat only drafted comments on documents for the emperor; it had no legal power of decision or command and depended on imperial favour, so it was not a chancellery.	4
14	Zhang Juzheng introduced the Single Whip reform in 1581. (a) State three of its main features. (b) Explain its effects on control of persons and on the money economy.	(a) Land tax and corvee were merged into one payment; the levy was assessed on land and paid in silver; labour service was commuted into silver and collected and transported by officials. (b) Peasants could buy off service and were less tied to the land, so they could leave to seek work; silver became the main medium of tax payment, spreading a money economy, but also exposing farmers to swings in silver and grain prices.	4
15	The Qing set up the Grand Council in the Yongzheng reign. (a) Describe its members and how it worked. (b) Explain how the status of the Grand Secretariat changed after its creation.	(a) Grand councillors were appointed by the emperor from trusted officials, with no fixed number and no separate staff; they attended daily, knelt to receive the imperial will and wrote it down, and edicts were sent straight to provincial governors. (b) The Grand Secretariat handled only routine documents and ceremonies and lost its decision-making role; the Grand Council had no statutory establishment and obeyed the emperor alone, so autocracy reached its height.	4
16	In 1712 the Kangxi emperor froze the head tax, and in the	(a) The poll tax was spread into the land tax and collected with the grain levy, so extra adult males no longer raised	4

	Yongzheng reign the head tax was merged into the land tax. (a) Explain what the merger provided. (b) State two social or economic consequences.	the tax and the landless paid less. (b) The head tax in effect disappeared and hidden households declined, so registered and real population rose sharply; the burden shifted from persons to land, falling more on landlords than tenants, and encouraged movement of people.	

Section E: The Southward Shift of the Economy and Maritime Trade (16 marks)

Each question is worth 4-5 marks; give percentages to the nearest whole number and explain the policy effects.

#	Question	Answer	Marks
17	Between the Tang and Song the saying that Suzhou and Huzhou fed the empire gave way to one about Huguang. (a) Explain what the southward shift of the economic centre means. (b) Give two causes of the shift.	(a) It means the main source of grain and revenue and the centre of population and industry moved from the Yellow River valley to the Yangzi valley, so that by the Southern Song the south was the economic core. (b) Long wars in the north drove great numbers south with their skills; the southern climate and irrigation suited rice, early ripening strains spread and polders and terraces were opened; sericulture, tea, porcelain and overseas trade flourished.	4
18	In one year 4 million shi of tribute grain went north by the Grand Canal, 2.6 million shi from the Jiangnan region. (a) Find the Jiangnan share as a percentage. (b) If rice costs 1.5 tael a shi in Jiangnan and 2.4 tael in the north, find how much dearer the northern price is.	(a) 260 / 400 x 100 = 65%; (b) (2.4 - 1.5) / 1.5 x 100 = 60%.	4
19	From the mid-Ming large amounts of silver flowed into China. (a) Name two sources of that silver. (b) Explain how the inflow was linked to the Single Whip reform and to foreign trade.	(a) Silver came mainly from Japanese mines and from the Americas, carried by the Spanish Manila galleon trade. (b) Taxing in silver required a large silver supply, which the inflow provided and which tied the Chinese economy to world markets; but supply depended on foreign mines and trade, and the silver shortage of the late Ming brought price and tax crises.	4
20	In 1757 the Qianlong emperor restricted Western trade to Guangzhou. (a) Describe how the policy worked. (b) State two effects.	(a) Western trade at Xiamen and Ningbo was stopped and only Guangzhou was allowed; the Canton co-hong merchants monopolised the trade, collected customs for the state and managed foreigners confined to the factories in season. (b) Trade was tightly controlled, limiting contact and the inflow of technology; revenue concentrated at Guangzhou and the Canton customs became a major source of funds, but smuggling and the opium trade grew and led to conflict.	4

Section F: Thought, Religion and Social Mobility (17 marks)

Each question is worth 4-5 marks; compare the views or positions and illustrate with examples.

#	Question	Answer	Marks
21	Emperor Wu adopted Dong Zhongshu advice and made Confucianism the state doctrine;	(a) Chairs for the five classics were set up and an imperial academy founded, and officials were selected through the classics; appointment stressed classical learning and	5

	in the Song it developed into Neo-Confucianism. (a) State two concrete measures that promoted Confucianism in Han. (b) Compare Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming on methods of self-cultivation.	moral conduct, so the classics became the basis of education and examination. (b) Zhu Xi held that principle is in things and in the mind, to be reached by investigating things and extending knowledge step by step, and taught keeping heavenly principle and removing selfish desire; Wang Yangming held that principle is in the mind and taught recovering the innate good knowledge by inner reflection, with knowledge and action as one.	
22	From the Wei-Jin period to the Tang and Song, Buddhism and Daoism deeply shaped Chinese society. (a) Give two signs of Buddhist prosperity in the Northern and Southern dynasties. (b) State two features of Tang religious policy.	(a) Monasteries and monks multiplied and held land and dependent labour, forming a temple economy; sutra translation and cave sculpture flourished at Dunhuang, Yungang and Longmen, and scholars blended Buddhist ideas with metaphysical discussion. (b) The Tang court patronised Daoism, claimed Laozi as ancestor and set up Daoist schools and examinations; it also tolerated Buddhism, with Xuanzang fetching scriptures and the Chan school rising, yet persecuted it in 845 to curb monastic wealth.	4
23	In Ming and Qing times examinations and commercial economy expanded. (a) Describe the composition of the gentry and their role in local society. (b) Give two signs that the standing of merchants rose.	(a) The gentry were degree holders such as retired officials and examination graduates; they ran local welfare, arbitrated disputes and spoke for the locality to officials, linking state and society. (b) Merchants could buy ranks and degrees and their sons sat examinations; they formed guild halls and took part in local affairs, some presenting themselves as scholar-merchants, so the line between scholars and traders blurred.	4
24	A county has 12,000 households, of which 360 are gentry households; the examinations take 300 jinshi every three years. (a) Find the gentry share as a percentage. (b) Find the average number of jinshi taken each year.	(a) 360 / 12,000 x 100 = 3%; (b) 300 / 3 = 100 a year.	4