S1 History Practice Paper (Set 1): chronology and timelines, river valley civilisations, Greek city-states and Rome, the medieval manor and the Black Death, Silk Road trade, source reliability

Level: S1 | Subject: History | Time: 75 min | Total: 100 marks | Items: 24

Section A - Chronology and timelines

Study the information below and answer the questions.

1. A man was born in 55 BC and died in 12 BC. How many years did he live? (Note: there is no year 0 between BC and AD.) (4 marks)

Answer: 43 years (55 - 12 = 43).

2. Event A happened in 480 BC and Event B happened in AD 1453. How many years apart were they? (4 marks)

Answer: 1,933 years. Across BC and AD the figures are added: 480 + 1453 = 1,933.

3. Which century does 221 BC belong to? (3 marks)

Answer: The 3rd century BC (201-300 BC is the 3rd century BC).

4. A timeline runs from 3000 BC to AD 500. How long is it, and how many centuries does it span? (3 marks)

Answer: 3,500 years (3000 + 500); 35 centuries (3,500 / 100 = 35).

Section B - The four river valley civilisations

Source 1: Summary table of the four river valley civilisations

Civilisation	Main river	Writing	Other features
Ancient Egypt	Nile	Hieroglyphs	Solar calendar (365 days)
Mesopotamia	Tigris, Euphrates	Cuneiform	Base-60 number system
Ancient India	Indus	Seal script (undeciphered)	Urban drainage
China	Yellow River	Oracle bone script	Bronze technology

With reference to Source 1 and your own knowledge, answer the questions.

5. According to Source 1, which river did each of the four civilisations depend on? Name all four. (5 marks)

Answer: Egypt - the Nile; Mesopotamia - the Tigris and Euphrates; India - the Indus; China - the Yellow River.

6. The Egyptians used a solar calendar of 365 days. If one day has to be added every 4 years, how many days are added in 400 years? (4 marks)

Answer: 100 days (400 / 4 = 100).

7. Mesopotamia used a base-60 system. A day has 24 hours; how many minutes is that? (4 marks)

Answer: 1,440 minutes (24 x 60).

8. Which civilisation in Source 1 still has writing that cannot be fully deciphered? How does that limit our knowledge of its daily life? (3 marks)

Answer: The Indus seal script is still undeciphered, so historians can only infer its society from excavated objects such as houses, drains and seals.

Section C - Greek city-states and the Roman Empire

Study the figures below and answer the questions.

9. Athens in the 5th century BC: 30,000 adult male citizens, 60,000 women and children, 25,000 resident foreigners and 80,000 slaves. What was the total population of Athens? (5 marks)

Answer: 195,000 (30,000 + 60,000 + 25,000 + 80,000).

10. What percentage of the total population were adult male citizens? (1 decimal place) (4 marks)

Answer: 15.4% (30,000 / 195,000 x 100%).

11. The Roman road network was about 80,000 km long. If a legion marched 30 km a day, how many days would it take to cover the whole network? (4 marks)

Answer: About 2,667 days (80,000 / 30 = 2,666.7, rounded up).

12. Athenian democracy allowed only adult male citizens to take part. Name two groups excluded from political participation. (4 marks)

Answer: Women; resident foreigners (slaves were also excluded).

Section D - The medieval manor and the Black Death

Read the situations below and answer the questions.

13. A manor had 1,200 acres of farmland. One third was the lord's demesne and the rest were peasant strips. How many acres was each? (5 marks)

Answer: The demesne was 400 acres (1,200 / 3); the peasant strips were 800 acres (1,200 - 400).

14. A serf had to work 150 days a year unpaid on the lord's demesne. What percentage of the year (365 days) was that? (1 decimal place) (4 marks)

Answer: 41.1% (150 / 365 x 100%).

15. A serf harvested 240 bushels of grain and paid a tithe of 10% to the Church. How many bushels did he keep? (4 marks)

Answer: 216 bushels (the tithe was 24 bushels; 240 - 24 = 216).

16. Between 1347 and 1351 the population of Europe fell from about 80 million to about 50 million. By what percentage did it fall? (4 marks)

Answer: 37.5% ((80 - 50) / 80 x 100%).

Section E - Silk Road trade

Study the caravan data below and answer the questions.

17. A caravan travelled from Chang'an to Samarkand, 3,500 km. If the camels covered 25 km a day, how many days did one journey take? (4 marks)

Answer: 140 days (3,500 / 25).

18. The caravan made the return journey as well and stayed 40 days in Samarkand. How long was the whole trip? (4 marks)

Answer: 320 days (140 x 2 + 40).

19. The caravan carried 40 bolts of silk costing 5 taels each, and paid customs duty of 15% of the value. What was the total cost including duty? (4 marks)

Answer: 230 taels (40 x 5 = 200; duty 200 x 15% = 30; total 230).

20. If the silk was sold in Samarkand at 12 taels a bolt, what was the profit and the profit margin? (1 decimal place) (4 marks)

Answer: Profit 250 taels (480 - 230); margin 108.7% (250 / 230 x 100%).

Section F - Sources and reliability

Source 2A is a travel account written by a 13th-century merchant after his own visit; Source 2B is a 20th-century textbook account. Answer the questions.

21. State whether Source 2A and Source 2B are primary or secondary sources, and give one reason for each. (6 marks)

Answer: 2A: primary (the author visited in person and recorded it at the time); 2B: secondary (compiled later from other people's records, not first-hand).

22. The two sources give different population figures for the same city (2A: 50,000; 2B: 200,000). Give two possible reasons. (5 marks)

Answer: Any two: the merchant exaggerated or underestimated to impress readers; the figures were only estimates; they refer to different periods or city boundaries; the textbook copied a figure incorrectly.

23. To check the city's population, what two other kinds of evidence could be used? (5 marks)

Answer: Any two: official household or tax registers; accounts by other contemporary travellers; the scale of excavated houses and cemeteries; contemporary maps.

24. What two factors should be considered when comparing the reliability of the two sources? (4 marks)

Answer: Any two: the author's motive and standpoint; how close in time the record was to the event; the origin of the information (first-hand or copied); whether other sources corroborate it.
