

WORLD HISTORY I
Sample Questions 1–40

1. Based on the course goals as stated on the syllabus and in the lectures, which of the following statements would you say most accurately describes the instructor's approach to this course: (A) You have to agree with everything the instructor says because he is one of those know-it-all teachers who can't stand being questioned. (B) You should not criticize the textbook—after all, it was written by experts, wasn't it? (C) History is a “dead” subject because we already know the facts of what really happened in the past. (D) We study history in order to learn the lessons of the past so we can prevent wars. (E) Students need to be allowed from the very beginning to form their own views based on their own critical thinking abilities.

2. According to the lectures, the astronomer Edwin Hubble found that in order to interpret the evidence that led him to postulate the existence of an expanding universe he had to assume (A) a belief in Creationism—moving from complex to simple. (B) a belief in Evolution—moving from simple to complex. (C) that sound waves and light waves behave in a similar way. (D) that the chicken came before the egg (except on those days when he had eggs for breakfast and chicken for lunch). (E) that, as Ellsworth Huntington tried to demonstrate, people cannot think so well when the temperature is below 38° F or above 69° F.

3. In the video *Cosmos* shown in class, Carl Sagan uses Edwin A. Abbott's *Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions*, a place inhabited by two-dimensional people, to demonstrate that (A) a big bang was the origin of the universe. (B) there is a connection between Hindu views of the universe and those of modern astrophysicists. (C) we don't have it so bad in a three-dimensional world because we have an entire other dimension to work with. (D) our own three-dimensional universe may be contained within another, four-dimensional one. (E) people who live in the hills are more interesting than people who live in the flatlands.

4. According to the lectures, the theory of evolution (or “transmutation”) as originally formulated by Charles Darwin (1809–1882) (A) claimed that there exists a “missing link” between human beings and apes. (B) was overturned by the discovery of the Piltdown man. (C) was severely criticized by religious leaders of the day and continues to be criticized by present-day Creationists. (D) attempted to reconcile the biblical account of the creation with that of modern scientific theory. (E) has been demonstrated to be wrong because of the absence of fossils of intermediate species (punctuated equilibrium).

5. In the lectures, I stated that Charles Dawson (1844–1916) was the person who found the jaw and skull in the quarry near Piltdown, England, associated with the discovery of Dawn Man in 1912, and that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (1859–1916) (A) is one of the people suspected of having put them there. (B) is the person who revealed to the world that they were a hoax. (C) wrote about the discovery in his popular book *The Lost World*. (D) claimed he had discovered an even earlier jaw and skull near Baskerville, England. (E) was inspired by Dawson’s detective work to write the Sherlock Holmes adventures.

6. According to *World Civilizations: The Global Experience*, 3rd ed., by Peter N. Stearns, Michael Adas, Stuart B. Schwartz, and Marc Jason Gilbert (henceforth: *World Civilizations*) (p. 14), given the location of Paleolithic cave paintings and the consistent choice of game animals as subject matter, it is likely that the early art served (A) to relieve the otherwise drab interiors of caves. (B) as maps to locate game herds. (C) ritual purposes to assist future hunting parties in the wild. (D) to indicate the limited level of thinking of Paleolithic men and women. (E) to shock Paleolithic men and women into realizing the banality of their own shallow lives.

7. According to *World Civilizations* (p. 15), Natufian lifestyles of intensive hunting and gathering groups living in permanent locations remained precarious because (A) they failed to develop better shelters or more secure supplies of food. (B) they failed to increase the size of the hunting and gathering bands. (C) they remained vulnerable to attacks from nomadic groups. (D) they were dependent on particular animals and plants that could disappear if changes in the climate occurred. (E) Robin Leech did not consider them to be Rich and Famous enough, so he never interviewed them on his program.

8. According to *World Civilizations* (pp. 18–19), during the Neolithic Revolution, agricultural systems in the Middle East, Africa, China, Southeast Asia, and the Americas were all (A) based on the same grains—wheat and barley. (B) based on the same combination of domesticated plants and animals. (C) based on different domesticated plants in each region. (D) dependent on pastoral forms of social organization. (E) abandoned in favor of hunter-gatherer methods.

9. According to the lectures, all of the following are models used to explain the turn toward domestication of plants during the Neolithic Revolution *except* (A) the oasis hypothesis in which places like Jericho provided water necessary for agricultural in a desert environment. (B) the nuclear zone hypothesis in which a coincidence of wild plants and wild animals allowed for a relative sedentary existence of human folk in the area. (C) Sauer’s fish model in which fishermen in riverine environments domesticated wild poisonous plants to kill fish. (D) the competitive feasting model in which “big men” sought more exotic foods to serve at feasts to make their guests more indebted to them. (E) the reification model in which warriors returning from battle forced their women folk to work the fields while they sat back to enjoy the fruits of their pillaging.

10. According to *World Civilizations* (p. 19), in the first civilizations, the creation of farming surpluses often resulted in (A) specialization of occupation and social stratification. (B) an industrial revolution. (C) matrilineal patterns of marriage. (D) a lack of social stratification. (E) government subsidies to farmers for not planting certain crops. _____
11. According to *World Civilizations* (p. 20), in comparison to the position of women in hunting and gathering societies, the social status of women in sedentary agricultural communities (A) allowed them to monopolize the religious and political elites. (B) improved because their husbands stayed home more. (C) remained about the same even though their husbands stayed home more. (D) declined due to greater social stratification and division of labor as men took all the best jobs for themselves. (E) improved at first, but then declined, then after awhile got a little better but not for long as it declined somewhat but not as much as before. _____
12. According to *World Civilizations* (p. 23), the concept of “barbarians” (A) was invented by Conan to describe men like himself who are really macho. (B) was commonly used by urban-based cultures to distinguish between themselves, on the one hand, and non-city folk, on the other. (C) was strictly an ancient Chinese idea. (D) was only picked up in nineteenth-century European culture. (E) has been dropped in modern cultures because everyone is so tolerant of one another. _____
13. According to *World Civilizations* (p. 24), in densely populated Middle Eastern agricultural settlements, occupational specialization and political-military elites (A) remained at the level of hunting and gathering societies. (B) failed to develop at all. (C) were retarded by the general failure of organized religion. (D) were prohibited by law. (E) advanced significantly to occupy first place in these societies. _____
14. According to *World Civilizations* (p. 30), the organization of irrigation systems for major rivers required all of the following *except* (A) larger supplies of labor. (B) organization of the population into small villages. (C) regulations to distribute the supply of water equitably. (D) new kinds of political organization. (E) somebody who knew how to dig irrigation ditches. _____
15. According to *World Civilizations* (p. 32), which of the following is *not* an accurate description of the Sumerian form of cuneiform writing? (A) It was done on clay tablets. (B) It was based on new needs for commercial property and political records. (C) It never made the transition from pictograms to phonetic symbols. (D) Specialized scribes monopolized it because it was difficult to learn. (E) It was used in the Middle East over the course of several thousand years for many different languages. _____

16. Which of the following statements about Sumerian religion best corresponds to the view expressed in *World Civilizations* (p. 38)? (A) The Sumerians believed in a single god who weighed all souls at death. (B) The Sumerians believed in a joyous afterlife for the righteous. (C) The Sumerians believed in the separation of Church and State. (D) Sumerian religion rejected a belief in the divine force behind and within natural objects, like rivers, trees, and mountains, in favor of abstract and distant deities. (E) Some of the basic elements of Sumerian religion, like their creation myth and idea of divine punishment, continued to have force in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. _____
17. According to *World Civilizations* (pp. 33–34), which of the following statements concerning the relationship of civilization and writing is most correct? (A) Writing promoted trade and agriculture. (B) Writing was more important for the development of civilization than sedentary agriculture. (C) Most civilizations developed without writing. (D) No sophisticated civilization developed without a system of writing. (E) Our civilization is falling apart because we no longer write correctly like we used to do. _____
18. Which one of the following statements does *not* describe a significant aspect of Sumerian society as presented in the lectures? (A) Belief in gods in the shape of humans who were pictured as frivolous, quarrelsome, selfish, and often childish. (B) Social stratification that was reinforced by the law codes. (C) The religious temple, called ziggurats and tended by priests headed by an *ensi*, was the main and largest building in Sumerian cities. (D) A welfare state that provided benefits for each individual from the womb to the tomb. (E) Independent city-states scattered across the delta region of the Fertile Crescent. _____
19. Which of the following statements do you think the writers of *World Civilizations* would consider to be a positive result of civilization? (A) Aggressive behavior and warlike qualities were added to the list of society’s virtues. (B) Greater inequality between men and women were established with the result that women were more oppressed. (C) Stricter social stratification into classes or castes and distinctions between “superior” and “inferior” people. (D) Governments were able to organize huge resources in order to kill large numbers of people in other societies. (E) Writing provided an important means for passing on learning from one generation to the next. _____
20. In the lectures, I suggested that one of the main themes of the *Epic of Gilgamesh* is the importance of human relationships whereas Marvin Perry, in *Sources of the Western Tradition*, seems to agree with those historians who see the following as its key theme: (A) pessimism among the Mesopotamians. (B) the battle between good and evil. (C) the creation of men and women. (D) the destruction of the world. (E) the eternal question: “What’s in it for me?” _____

21. According to the lectures, a close reading of the law code of Hammurabi (or Hammurapi) (1848–1806 B.C. or 1792–1750 B.C. or 1728–1686 B.C.) shows us that the Babylonian government was concerned with (A) creating a law code that would be the basis of all the laws in Western countries. (B) handing down mild punishments for almost all crimes. (C) protecting the seller at the expense of the buyer (*caveat emptor*). (D) maintaining a highly stratified society in which privileges were given to members of the aristocracy. (E) establishing a system of participatory democracy. _____
22. According to the section on Hammurabi in *Makers of World History*, ed. J. Kelley Sowards, James Breasted suggests the originality of Hammurabi in combining existing laws with new ones and arranging them systematically in a law code, but Sabatino Moscati makes a different point: (A) it was the Hebrew scribe Baruch who created the first law code. (B) the law code of Hammurabi is a forgery carved on the stele by the archaeologist Schiel at Susa in 1902. (C) the Sumerians had arranged their laws into codes centuries before Hammurabi. (D) if Akhnaton was the first individual in history, then Hammurabi was the first lawyer. (E) it was not Hammurabi's originality that created the law code but that of the gods Anum and Enlil at the direction of Marduk who did so. _____
23. According to *World Civilizations* (p. 33), which of the following was characteristic of the power of the pharaohs in Egyptian civilization? (A) Their authority was limited to their own city-state. (B) Their power was limited by the lack of a formal bureaucracy. (C) They were regarded as gods with power to assure prosperity and to control the Nile River. (D) Their authority was limited by do-nothing Congresses. (E) Their authority was limited to building pyramids with poured concrete. _____
24. According to *World Civilizations* (p. 41), which of the following statements best summarizes the differences in social organization between Egypt and Mesopotamia? (A) Unlike Mesopotamia, Egyptian society was not socially stratified. (B) Mesopotamian civilization had no formal institution of slavery. (C) Egyptian civilization had no formal institution of slavery. (D) Women had a higher social status in Egyptian society than in Mesopotamian society. (E) People who lived in Egypt were depressed and pessimistic because the Nile overflowed so regularly (always the same, how boring!), whereas Mesopotamians were cheerful and optimistic because their rivers overflowed in surprising and unpredictable ways. _____
25. According to the lectures, for most of its history Egyptian civilization *differed* from Mesopotamian civilization in that it (A) was unified and relatively secure from invaders. (B) was based on river valley conditions. (C) developed a system of writing. (D) constructed irrigation ditches to take advantage of periodic flooding. (E) developed religious practices that were predominantly polytheistic in content. _____
26. According to the lectures, the Pharaoh Menes (Nahmer [Catfish]) who united the two lands of Egypt around 3100 B.C. was the first Egyptian ruler, so far as we know, (A) to be eulogized in epic and song. (B) to claim divinity for himself. (C) to borrow ideas of kingship from Hammurabi. (D) to be elected by a majority of Egyptian voters. (E) to resign while in office. _____

27. According to the Egyptian religious texts known collectively as “The Book of the Dead,” as excerpted in *The Human Record: Sources of Global History*, 4th ed., ed. Alfred J. Andrea and James H. Overfield (p. 21), the concept of Ma’at (Maat) as far as individual action is concerned included all of the following *except* (A) not blaspheming a god, not committing murder, and not fornicating. (B) not doing evil to humanity, not oppressing the members of one’s family, and not seeing evil. (C) not advancing one’s name for exaltation to honors, not ill-treating servants, and not defrauding an oppressed person of their property. (D) not accepting a lower-paying job than one is entitled, not allowing anyone to take advantage of oneself, and not having a good lawyer. (E) not defaming a slave to his superior, not causing anyone to go hungry, and not encroaching on the fields of others.

28. According to the lectures, the Pharaoh Akhnaton, or Ikhnaton, or Akhenaton (formerly known as Amenophis IV or Amenhotep IV), who ruled Egypt 1370–1353 B.C. (or 1367–1350 B.C.), of whom we have but a few artistic artifacts, seems to have been realistically portrayed in the statues and carvings of the time. In these artifacts he is portrayed as: (A) somewhat of a Yul Brenner look alike. (B) resembling an Olympic swimmer. (C) a muscular man with strong features and lots of hair. (D) an effeminate-looking man with protruding breasts and a distended belly. (E) looking like all the other pharaohs both before and after him.

29. One theory presented in the lectures argues that the religious and political revolution of Akhnaton was opposed by vested interests in Egyptian society and ultimately failed primarily because (A) it attempted to strengthen the political and economic position of the priesthood. (B) it meant a radical change in the whole manner of worship of the Egyptians and thus threatened the social structure of the society. (C) it attempted to substitute a Confucian worldview in place of the traditional nature worship. (D) it overemphasized preparation for the next world and was polytheistic. (E) it did not raise taxes, and thus created a larger budget deficit.

30. According to *World Civilizations* (p. 47), which of the following statements most accurately describes the impact of the Indo-Europeans on the ancient civilizations of the Middle East? (A) They had a minimal impact, because they rapidly adapted to Mesopotamian civilization. (B) They came in successive waves, disrupted the civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia, and introduced the use of iron. (C) Although the Indo-European invasions had a temporary impact, the ancient civilizations soon recovered. (D) The Indo-European impact was limited to Asia Minor and the Greek mainland. (E) The Indo-Europeans destroyed Mesopotamian culture completely and replaced it with an exact duplicate.

31. According to the lectures, the environment of early Mesopotamia was characterized by (A) violent storms and unpredictable floods. (B) geographic isolation from the outside world. (C) sufficient rainfall, which made irrigation unnecessary. (D) mountainous terrain, which separated the city-states and prevented them from making war on one another. (E) air pollution, smog, and the greenhouse effect.

32. According to the lectures, Western historians have been fond of saying that Assyrian rule of conquered peoples was characterized by (A) making them into allies. (B) making them into alleys (or perhaps streets). (C) granting them local self-government. (D) tolerance and justice, thus accounting for the longevity of their empire. (E) cruelty and terror, thus accounting for the downfall of their empire.

33. According to the lectures, a consensus of modern scholarship agrees that the Hebrews had a concept of their god YHWH (Yahweh or Jehovah) that (A) was the same as that of the Canaanite god Ba'al. (B) did not allow YHWH to interfere in the affairs of mankind. (C) remained constant throughout the history of the Hebrew people. (D) prevented them from engaging in farming. (E) evolved from a tribal to a universal god.

34. According to the lectures, the prophet Isaiah (ca. 540 B.C.) of the Old Testament formulated, or at least was the first one insofar as we have evidence to articulate, the idea that (A) YHWH was a jealous god. (B) the Hebrews had to unite to overthrow their oppressors. (C) the disaster that had befallen the Hebrew nation was a proof of their god's love for them. (D) everyone should follow Shabtai Tzvi. (E) only Gentiles are allowed to turn on the lights in the synagogue on the Sabbath.

35. According to the lectures, the consensus view of modern scholarship is that the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, were (A) written by a single author in one sitting. (B) a composite of at least four narratives, designated E, J, P, and D, written at different times by different authors. (C) intended as the prequel to Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*. (D) a collection of stories gathered and written down by Moses before the Hebrew alphabet was invented. (E) dictated to scribes by a god who lived on top of a mountain.

36. One of the points that Abba Ebban made in the video "The Birth of a People," shown in class, is that one of the original conceptual achievements of ancient Hebrew religion, i.e., that does not have a precedent in earlier religions insofar as we have evidence, is: (A) recognition that each person has a relationship to God and responsibility for their own actions because the law of God was written down for all to read. (B) the introduction of a flood story to religious tradition, exemplifying God's wrath when angry. (C) the idea of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth (*lex talionis*). (D) the idea of a god who lives on top of a mountain. (E) the view that God is on our side in dealing with other peoples and countries.

37. According to the "Sermons of Buddha" found in Walpola Rahula's *What the Buddha Taught*, which of the following statements does *not* represent a teaching of Buddha? (A) Life is suffering. (B) The source of suffering is desire. (C) Escape is possible only by stopping desire. (D) The cessation of desire can be achieved only by following "the eight-fold path". (E) The way to Enlightenment is through extreme asceticism.

38. According to the lectures, how did the northern tradition of Buddhism change Buddha's teachings in the years after his death? (A) They offered miraculous tales of Buddha's life, equated Nirvana with heaven, and stressed the salvationist qualities of the new religion. (B) They sought to downplay Buddha as a deity, attempted to limit admission to the religion to the upper-caste groups, and gained the cooperation of the brahmans. (C) They began to emphasize ritual sacrifices of animals as a means of gaining the confidence of the people. (D) They ended the Buddha's emphasis on meditation and taught that all men were condemned to endless reincarnation. (E) They decided that getting rich is the real goal of life and that the person who dies with the most money is the winner.

39. According to the lectures, what was the attitude of Buddhism toward the "caste" (*varna*) system? (A) While the Buddhists did not regard social stratification as critical to the faithful, they only accepted members of upper-caste groups as monks. (B) Buddhists rejected the caste system and admitted untouchables and women as members of the faith. (C) The Buddhists accepted the caste system entirely and incorporated it into their religion. (D) The Buddhists recognized only wealth as a means of defining one's social position. (E) They realized that castes are helpful especially if you have a broken leg or arm.

40. According to the reading "Admitting Women to the Mendicant Life," found in *The Human Record* (pp. 82–85), the Buddha initially rejects the request of his aunt Mahaprajapati and his disciple Ananda to allow women to become monks, but then he allows it on the basis of eight conditions or chief rules, among which are all the following *except* (A) nuns, no matter what their age, must bow down before monks, even a newly initiated monk. (B) nuns are not to spend the time of spiritual retreat in an area where there is no monk. (C) after the spiritual retreat nuns are to hold *Pavarana*, that is discovery of one's faults, in front of both nuns and monks. (D) nuns are not allowed to upbraid or scold a monk for any reason. (E) nuns are required to manage all the finances of monks because monks are not allowed to handle gold and silver.

41. *Optional*: In the space below, compose your own multiple-choice question on the basis of the material studied in this course, and answer it. Try to formulate your question according to the way you think it should be worded on an exam of this type. No one-word answers, please. I hope to use the best questions on future exams. Warning: you need to answer your own question correctly to get credit.
