

Notes by Net Explanations

CLASS VIII SOCIAL STUDIES HISTORY, CHAPTER I HOW, WHEN AND WHERE?

1. **Things to answer after reading the context:**
 - a. **Why do you think dates are important?**
 - b. **What kind of events had their exact dates documented in history?**
 - c. **Which events do you think cannot be assigned a perfect date, and why?**

- ❖ **Dates: Making history boring or interesting:**

How cool do you think it is of your parents to remember your exact birth date and year? Do you think everyone should remember their birth dates, anniversaries or anything that they did for the first time, or had great victories and failures? History is somewhat just like that, everything revolves around dates, be it some war, starting of the civilizations, invention of papers, setting up of empires, wars, birth and deaths of the great warriors and everything else, everything has a date. And by date, we do not mean exact numbered date, but suggested periods of time when it happened. Like say for an example, we cannot really tell when the evolution of an ape to human actually started, as it never particularly started in one day, but took years to happen. There is no exact date when the first ever pan India empire, the great Mauryan Empire, came into being. We just have the year, that is, 321 BC.

History is just like that. We do have dates for a number of events in history, but there are no recorded dates or even exact year when a particular period happened. Historians have assumed or have discovered only the span of time when such events, like that of the early men and the start of civilizations, happened. History, as per specific dates is written from the time of the king's birth, his accession to the throne, his marriage, when he had a child, some important battles and the day he died. There are also sources, some very important sources which give us specific data, or date regarding the events. These sources were particularly written by the court historians.

Dates are important because they give us a direction, a clear direction in which the history is to be studied and understood. Just imagine, if you are given a book to read, in which the papers are not in exact coherence, and the page numbers and the next relatable topic is completely different. Will you be able to read it, or understand it? No right! We need dates for the same reason in history. Dates give you a coherence, a sequence to understand the parts of history, which are kind of puzzling, which has been solved by the historians through their sheer dedication and hardwork. Dates help us divide history into chapters, which makes it easier for us to understand.

- **Dates are categorized on the priorities of the events studied:**

When you study history, you particularly do not study the details of each and everyday, or months or years of the topic that you're studying, but instead you read the particular events. Let's take the three stages of the development of the early man. We start reading it to the times when its thumb started evolving to the times when it started

Notes by Net Explanations

hunting animals, living in caves, and started making tools. We read about the three stages, Paleolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic and then we read about the forming of societies and civilizations and so on. We do not have particular dates for these events, but an approximate period or span of time when it happened.

Historians do not really study or bring into light everything that they have studied or discovered about the past. They only covered events which were important enough for them to cover. Let's take an example from the British History in India. There were so many important things that happened during their stay, but what actually the British historians covered was the period of the Governor Generals, with the very first Governor General being Warren Hastings and the last Viceroy being, Lord Mountbatten. They write about their policies in a manner which praises them. But they do not cover how they tortured the poor people with their extreme tax policies, and how India was ripped off her "self sufficient" economy by them. **Historians write history based on the events that they want to study, and often dates are periodised based on their priorities of the events.** Not everything about a particular society is covered by one historian. You'd see no space for the Indians, their struggles, their culture and glory in the history of British, but you'd definitely see praises for the British history for their heinous policies in their chapters.

2. Things to answer after reading the context:

- a. How did James Mill classify Indian history?
- b. Why do you think Mills' way of classifying history is unacceptable?
- c. How do other historians classify Indian history?
- d. How would you classify history, if you were a historian?

❖ Classification of History with Reference to James Mill:

India is a diverse country with multiple faiths and religions existing at the same time, and it has been shaped into the present form, through the struggles and contributions by these multiple faiths. So in this case, it would be very wrong to describe India's history on the basis of different faiths or religions. James Mill, a Scottish philosopher and economist classified Indian history into:

- **Hindu:** period ranging from the Indus Valley Civilization upto the period till the Muslim invaders arrived and the Sultanate established itself
- **Muslim:** period of the Sultanate and the Mughals
- **British:** period the British coming as traders, living as rulers and then leaving India.

India's ancient past has been a glorious past where there were highest level of knowledge regarding mathematics, science, astrology, astronomy, medical, surgeries were performed, knowledge was given in "Gurukuls", epics like the Vedas, Bhagavad Gita, Ramayan, Mahabharat, Purana and Upanishads were written. There were a lot of universities like Takshilla, Nalanda where people from all over the world came to study. Despite being a country with high morals, knowledge and self sufficient economy, many historians like Mill tend to deteriorate the image of ancient India, but popularizing their own mindset, that all the Asian countries were uncivilized and barbaric, and that the European Masters civilized them, by bringing in control the Hindu and Muslim despots in the country.

The most problematic part with Mills' history in his three volumes, "A History of British India" is that he thought India needed British to do well in his manners and civilization. Written in 1817, the book only mentions drawbacks

Notes by Net Explanations

like religious intolerance, superstitions and tends to ignore the actual heritage of India at that time. Mills' version of history brings out the British as heroes, and shadows their acts of barbarism.

History cannot be considered a fact if it has been written with a biased mind and heart. James Mills' version of history does not show India in the fine light that it was. Mills' version of history is unacceptable, because at the time when it was written, there were different faiths existing together in the country.

3. Things to answer after reading the context:

- a. What is the problem with the modern classification of history?
- b. Which part of Indian history is the best according to you?
- c. Find out about one ancient kingdom, which was known as the "Golden Period of India." Do write why it was known so.

➤ Modern Classification of History

Apart from Mills' classification of history, the modern historians classified Indian history into three parts:

- **Ancient:** the period of the Indus Valley Civilization, immigration of the Aryans, setting up of the greatest empires
- **Medieval:** the rule of the Sultans and the Mughals
- **Modern:** the British period in India

However, even this modernised form of history periodisation cannot be taken into consideration for it misleads one reading history. The modern period, for an example, is said to be the period where ideologies of democracy, liberty, fraternity came into being. It also refers to the period of the British rule. So, the Indian past with British rule cannot be considered modern because they did not follow any of these ideologies for the Indians, were racist towards them, and deprived them off their lands and rights.

3. Things to answer after reading the context:

- a. What do you mean by the process of colonisation?
- b. Why do you think the modern classification of history needs to be changed?
- c. What do you mean by sources? Which sources helped us in finding out about the black days of India during the British rule?
- d. What did the sources from the British rule hide from us?

❖ Colonisation in India: Sources and their importance

Colonisation is defined as the subjugation of one country by another country, and establishing its rule over that area, controlling its political, social, economic and cultural life. India was one colonial country, which had to bear a lot of torture. Many documents and written records tell us about the colonial rule in India, and what the British do to the flourishing Indian economy, destroying it from riches to rags.

Notes by Net Explanations

- **Records from the administration office:** Records from the administration office are said to be of utmost importance, as these gave us information regarding the British rule. The British kept a written record of every instruction, plan, policy, decision, agreement and investigation. There were different offices for different purposes like the tehsildar's office, the administration office, the commissioner's office, and these offices had their documents preserved. Later on, these records were preserved in museums and archives, and later on, calligraphists were called upon to write them beautifully. When print culture came into being, they were printed.
- **Surveys:** Another source that helped us were the survey reports conducted by the British administration all over India, in order to administer it effectively. There were reports regarding the geographical features of the country, like its topography, flora and fauna, its local history, and there were surveys conducted to know about different castes, religion and occupation. Botanical, archeological, forests, anthropological were some other surveys that were taken.
- ❖ **The Official Records and Actual History:**

We cannot entirely rely on these official records created by the British officials, as they do not really cover their actual deeds. Whenever you mean to read the actual history, read autobiographies, biographies, journals, and try to grasp knowledge from your surroundings. The official records do not bring out the actual intentions of the British officials, and just portrays them in a good light. To understand more, learn from the local history, records or diaries of old people and go through the pilgrim journals as well. Because history do not just confides till the rich and powered British officials and kings, but the poor who were tortured.

www.netexplanations.com