

**ANSWER KEY & MARKING SCHEME · CBSE CLASS 12****Thinkers, Beliefs and Buildings: Cultural Developments (c. 600 BCE – 600 CE)**

History · Chapter 4 · Use this with the Board Paper · Companion to Quick Drill

**HOW TO USE**

Attempt the Board Paper first (closed-book, full time). Then come here. For 2-mark+ questions, compare your answer to the model. For 3-4 mark questions, also consult the **Topper Templates** below — these show the exact step-by-step structure that scores full marks per CBSE marking-scheme conventions.

**MODEL ANSWERS · BOARD PAPER****Section A — VSA (1 mark × 4)****Q1. Who deciphered the Brahmi script and in which year? [1 mark]**

**Ans:** JAMES PRINSEP in 1837, using donor inscriptions ending with the formula 'danam'.

**Q2. Name the hemispherical dome at the core of a stupa. [1 mark]**

**Ans:** The ANDA — the solid hemispherical mound originally raised over the Buddha's relics.

**Q3. Who was Mahavira? [1 mark]**

**Ans:** VARDHAMANA MAHAVIRA (c. 599-527 BCE), the 24th and last Tirthankara of the Jaina tradition, who systematised its teaching.

**Q4. What is meant by anekantavada? [1 mark]**

**Ans:** The Jaina doctrine of MANY-SIDEDNESS of truth — that reality can be viewed from many perspectives and no single statement is absolute.

**Section B — SA-I (3 marks × 2)****Q5. Describe the structure of a stupa. (any 3 points) [3 marks]**

**Ans:** (1) CORE = ANDA, a hemispherical solid dome, originally raised over the Buddha's bodily relics. On top is the HARMIKA, a square railing-like balcony marking the abode of the gods, from which rises the YASHTI (mast), crowned by one or more CHHATRIS (umbrellas) — symbols of sovereignty.

**Q6. Briefly explain the main features of the Mahayana school of Buddhism. (any 3 points) [3 marks]**

**Ans:** (1) DEVELOPMENT — Mahayana ('Great Vehicle') emerged around the 1st century CE alongside the older Hinayana / Theravada stream. (2) BODHISATTVA IDEAL — its central religious goal: a being who, near enlightenment, chooses to remain in the world to help all beings reach liberation, rather than enter nibbana immediately.

**Section C — SA-II (5 marks × 2)****Q7. Explain the main teachings of the Buddha and the role of the Sangha in spreading them. [5 marks]**

**Ans:** The Buddha — SIDDHARTHA GAUTAMA of the Shakya clan — taught the DHAMMA based on FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS: (1) the world is full of SUFFERING (dukkha); (2) suffering is caused by DESIRE (tanha); (3) by removing desire, suffering can be ended; (4) the EIGHTFOLD PATH is the way — right view, intention, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, concentration, a MIDDLE WAY between indulgence and severe asceticism.

**Q8. Discuss the main principles of Jainism with special reference to Mahavira's teachings. [5 marks]**

**Ans:** Jainism took its final form under VARDHAMANA MAHAVIRA (c. 599-527 BCE), the 24th and last TIRTHANKARA of an older tradition. Its core teachings are: (1) TRIRATNA — the Three Jewels by which one attains liberation: SAMYAK-DARSHANA (right faith), SAMYAK-JNANA (right knowledge), and SAMYAK-CHARITRA (right conduct).

**Q9.** Read the passage and answer the 3 sub-questions. **PASSAGE:** 'The Great Stupa at Sanchi was first built as a brick mound under the emperor Ashoka in the third century BCE. In later centuries it was enlarged, faced with stone, and surrounded by a great stone railing. Four richly carved gateways (toranas) were added at the cardinal directions; on them craftsmen carved jataka tales, scenes from the life of the Buddha shown by symbols, processions of devotees, and folk motifs of yakshas and yakshis. When European travellers reached the site in the early nineteenth century, the monument had begun to suffer from neglect and from the depredations of treasure-hunters. It was preserved through the funding given by the Begums of Bhopal — Shahjehan Begum and Sultan Jehan Begum — who paid for a museum and for the publication of John Marshall's volumes, and through the campaigns of officials like H.H. Cole. The mahachaitya at Amaravati, in contrast, fared very differently.' **SUB-QUESTIONS:** (a) What does the passage tell you about how Sanchi was built and decorated? (b) Why did Sanchi survive while Amaravati was largely lost? (c) What does this episode reveal about the history of preservation of Indian monuments? [6 marks]

**Ans:** (a) BUILDING AND DECORATION [2 marks]: The passage tells us that Sanchi began as a brick mound under ASHOKA in the 3rd century BCE, was later enlarged and faced in stone, and was surrounded by a stone railing. Four richly carved TORANAS at the cardinal directions were added.

## ★ TOPPER ANSWER TEMPLATES

4 TEMPLATES · MEMORISE THE FORMAT

## ★ TOPPER TEMPLATE — 8-mark: 'Explain the main teachings of the Buddha (Four Noble Truths, Eightfold Path, Sangha).'

Annual

<b>Step 1</b> [1 mark]	<b>Context</b>	The BUDDHA — Siddhartha Gautama of the Shakya clan (c. 563-483 BCE) — attained enlightenment under the Bodhi tree at Bodh Gaya and delivered his first sermon at SARNATH.
<b>Step 2</b> [3 marks]	<b>The Four Noble Truths</b>	The core teaching is the FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS (chattari ariya saccani): (1) the world is full of SUFFERING (dukkha); (2) suffering is caused by DESIRE / craving (tanha); (3) by removing desire, suffering can be ENDED; (4) the way to do this is by following the Eightfold Path.
<b>Step 3</b> [2 marks]	<b>The Eightfold Path</b>	The EIGHTFOLD PATH (ariya atthangika magga) is the middle way between self-indulgence and severe asceticism. Its eight steps are RIGHT VIEW, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.
<b>Step 4</b> [1 mark]	<b>The Sangha</b>	The Buddha established the SANGHA — an organised order of monks (BHIKSHUS) and, later, nuns (BHIKSHUNIS) — to preserve and spread the teaching. The Sangha lived by a code of conduct (the Vinaya), accepted men of all varnas, and depended on lay donors for food and shelter.
<b>Step 5</b> [1 mark]	<b>Conclusion</b>	The Buddha thus offered a non-Vedic, non-caste path of ethical conduct and mental discipline; the popularity of his teaching among traders, artisans and even kings (Ashoka) explains the rapid rise of Buddhism between 600 BCE and 600 CE.

**COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:**

- Listing only three Noble Truths or only some of the Eightfold Path steps.
- Calling the Buddha a Hindu god rather than a historical teacher.
- Omitting the Sangha and the three jewels.
- Confusing Buddhism with Jainism (e.g. attributing the five vows to the Buddha).

**★ TOPPER TEMPLATE — 5-mark: 'Discuss the main principles of Jainism (Mahavira, Triratna, five vows, anekantavada).'**

2019, 2022, 2024

<b>Step 1</b> [1 mark]	<b>Mahavira context</b>	VARDHAMANA MAHAVIRA (c. 599-527 BCE), the 24th and last TIRTHANKARA of the Jaina tradition, gave the religion its final form. Older than the Buddha, Jainism traces itself to a long line of teachers; Mahavira systematised the doctrine.
<b>Step 2</b> [1 mark]	<b>Triratna</b>	Liberation depends on the THREE JEWELS (TRIRATNA): RIGHT FAITH (samyak-darshana), RIGHT KNOWLEDGE (samyak-jnana), and RIGHT CONDUCT (samyak-charitra).
<b>Step 3</b> [2 marks]	<b>Five vows</b>	Jaina ethical practice rests on FIVE GREAT VOWS (mahavratas) — strict for monks, milder for laity: AHIMSA (non-violence to all life), SATYA (truth), ASTEYA (non-stealing), BRAHMACHARYA (celibacy/chastity), and APARIGRAHA (non-possession).
<b>Step 4</b> [1 mark]	<b>Anekantavada + conclusion</b>	Philosophically, Jainism taught ANEKANTAVADA — the doctrine of many-sidedness, that no single viewpoint captures all truth — and SYADVADA, the corresponding 'maybe' logic, fostering intellectual humility.

**COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:**

- Listing only three or four of the five vows.
- Confusing Triratna with the Three Jewels of Buddhism.
- Defining anekantavada as polytheism.
- Forgetting Mahavira's place as the 24th Tirthankara, not the founder.

**★ TOPPER TEMPLATE — 5-mark: 'Describe the structure of a stupa and explain why it was venerated.'**

2018, 2020, 2023

<b>Step 1</b> [1 mark]	<b>What a stupa is</b>	A STUPA is a sacred MOUND built originally over the bodily relics (sharira) of the Buddha or a senior monk. After the Buddha's death his relics were distributed among ruling clans, each of which raised a stupa over its share.
<b>Step 2</b> [2 marks]	<b>Parts of a stupa</b>	The core is the ANDA — the hemispherical dome of brick or stone covering the relics. On top sits the HARMIKA, a square railing-like balcony marking the abode of the gods.
<b>Step 3</b> [1 mark]	<b>Devotional practice</b>	Worshippers VENERATED the stupa by walking around it CLOCKWISE (pradakshina) and offering flowers, lamps, and donations recorded in inscriptions on the railings.
<b>Step 4</b> [1 mark]	<b>Why it was sacred + Sanchi</b>	Because relics were believed to embody the Buddha's continuing presence, stupas became powerful sacred centres.

**COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:**

- Calling a stupa a temple with an inner shrine.
- Missing the harmika, yashti, or torana in the structure.
- Forgetting to mention pradakshina (clockwise circumambulation).
- Not naming Sanchi as the prime surviving example.

**★ TOPPER TEMPLATE — 5-mark source-based: Read a Sanchi/Amaravati/Buddhist passage, answer 3 sub-questions.**

Annual

<b>Step 1</b> [2 marks]	<b>Identify + contextualise</b>	Name the SITE or text the passage refers to and state its significance. E.g., 'This describes the Great Stupa at SANCHI in Madhya Pradesh — the best preserved early Buddhist monument, with its anda, harmika, yashti, and four carved toranas, begun under Ashoka in the 3rd c. BCE.'
<b>Step 2</b> [2 marks]	<b>Explain the religious / artistic meaning</b>	Explain what the passage tells us about devotional practice or artistic content.
<b>Step 3</b> [1 mark]	<b>Historian's use</b>	State what the historian learns.

**COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:**

- Not naming the site/text the passage is from.
- Retelling a jataka story instead of explaining its purpose.
- Forgetting the donor-inscription evidence point.
- Confusing Sanchi (preserved) with Amaravati (largely lost).

**MARKING SCHEME — GENERAL NOTES**

- Specific facts (names, terms, dates) carry marks. Vague answers lose half-mark per instance.
- Source-based questions: must quote / reference evidence from the passage.
- Four Noble Truths, Eightfold Path, Triratna, the five vows, and the parts of a stupa MUST be listed fully to earn the structure-mark.

- Treating Buddha or Mahavira as gods, or confusing Buddhism with Jainism, caps the answer at 50%.
- For preservation answers, credit Begums of Bhopal + H.H. Cole + Sanchi-vs-Amaravati contrast.