

**ANSWER KEY & MARKING SCHEME · CBSE CLASS 12**

# Through the Eyes of Travellers: Perceptions of Society (c. 10th to 17th century)

History · Chapter 5 · 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 — Objective (1 mark each)****Q1. In which language did Al-Biruni write Kitab-ul-Hind? [1 mark]****Ans:** Arabic.**Q2. Name the scribe to whom Ibn Battuta dictated the Rihla. [1 mark]****Ans:** Ibn Juzayy, at the Marinid court in Morocco.**Q3. To which French king did Francois Bernier dedicate his Travels in the Mogul Empire? [1 mark]****Ans:** King Louis XIV.**Q4. What were the two kinds of state postal service described by Ibn Battuta? [1 mark]****Ans:** The uluq (horse-post, stations every 4 miles) and the dawa (foot-post, runners with bells every one-third of a mile).**Section B — Short Answer (3 marks each)****Q5. Briefly describe Al-Biruni's comparative method. [3 marks]****Ans:** Al-Biruni juxtaposed Indian thought with Persian, Greek and Sufi ideas, using them as a TRANSLATION BRIDGE for his Central Asian Muslim reader. He read Sanskrit texts (Vedas, Puranas, Patanjali, Bhagavad Gita) in the original and met Brahmin scholars. His Kitab-ul-Hind is organised in 80 thematic chapters — religion, philosophy, customs, sciences — making it an encyclopaedic comparative ethnography rather than a narrative history.**Q6. What was Ibn Battuta's description of the coconut and the paan? [3 marks]****Ans:** Ibn Battuta described the COCONUT as resembling a human head — green outer shell, fibrous middle, hard inner stone with sweet milk and white flesh — marvelling that one tree gave food, drink, oil and rope. He described the PAAN as a leaf chewed with areca-nut and lime giving a red mouth and sweet breath, offered at the Sultan's court as a gesture of honour where refusal was rude. These observations show the value of an outsider's eye.**Section C — Long Answer (5 marks each)****Q7. Discuss the strengths and limitations of using travellers' accounts as a source of medieval Indian history. [5 marks]****Ans:** STRENGTHS: (a) Travellers record EVERYDAY LIFE — bazaars, coconut, paan, the postal runner — details court chronicles omit. (b) Their COMPARATIVE eye highlights what was distinctive to India — caste for Al-Biruni, postal system for Ibn Battuta, land tenure for Bernier. LIMITATIONS: (a) Each carried his own FRAME — religious, cultural, political — and wrote for a specific HOME AUDIENCE (Ghaznavid court, Moroccan sultan, French king) that shaped what he stressed. (b) PHYSICAL coverage was partial; none surveyed the south interior. Language gaps caused mistranslation. Conclusion — used CRITICALLY alongside indigenous chronicles, inscriptions and revenue records, travellers' accounts are indispensable; used ALONE they distort.

## Section D — Source-Based (8 marks)

**Q8.** Read the extract from Bernier's Travels and answer below. 'There is no MEUM and TUUM in property of the soil in this Empire. The Great Mogul is sole possessor of all the lands, and rents them out to his Omrahs, who hold them at his pleasure. Thus none cares for what he occupies. They impose no limit on the Peasantry, and the cultivators abandon their fields.' (i) Identify the central claim Bernier is making and name his book. (2) (ii) According to Bernier, what was the consequence of this land system for peasants and towns? (2) (iii) Give TWO reasons modern historians find Bernier's claim of 'no private property' overstated. (4) [8 marks]

**Ans:** (i) Bernier claims there was NO PRIVATE OWNERSHIP of land in Mughal India — the Emperor sole owner, granting jagirs to nobles (Omrahs) who could be dispossessed at his pleasure. Book: 'TRAVELS IN THE MOGUL EMPIRE' (1670), dedicated to Louis XIV. (ii) The consequence was DESTRUCTIVE — holders had no stake, no incentive to invest, exploited peasants without limit; cultivators abandoned fields; prosperous CITIES could not develop because nobles ran 'camps'. He contrasted this with EUROPE, where private property produced wealthier peasants and stable towns. (iii) Historians find the claim OVERSTATED for two reasons. FIRST, the Mughal land system was LAYERED. Khalisa was crown land, jagirs were assignments, but ZAMINDARI rights were hereditary and widespread; MILK/INAM grants were essentially private property; peasants held CUSTOMARY OCCUPANCY. SECOND, Bernier's image served a POLITICAL ARGUMENT — to convince the French court that European private property was superior to 'Asiatic despotism'. The image was picked up by MONTESQUIEU (1748) for 'oriental despotism' and by MARX (1853) for the 'Asiatic mode of production' — shaping European theory for 200 years. Read alongside the Ain-i-Akbari, Bernier captures a core truth about jagir mobility but distorts the broader picture.

## Section E — Map (2 marks)

**Q9.** On the outline map of India, locate and label: (i) Multan (one route by which Al-Biruni's contemporaries entered India), (ii) Daulatabad (the planned twin-city Ibn Battuta described). [2 marks]

**Ans:** (i) MULTAN — south Punjab, on the Chenab/Indus confluence region, the principal north-western gateway for 10th-11th century arrivals. (ii) DAULATABAD — interior Deccan, in modern Maharashtra near Aurangabad, the city to which Muhammad bin Tughlaq attempted to shift his capital from Delhi; described by Ibn Battuta as a planned twin-city.

## ★ TOPPER ANSWER TEMPLATES

5 TEMPLATES · MEMORISE THE FORMAT

### ★ TOPPER TEMPLATE — Describe Al-Biruni's methods and the barriers he identified. (8 marks)

Common

<b>Step 1</b> [1 mark]	<b>Intro</b>	Al-Biruni (973-1048), a Khwarizmi scholar brought to India by Mahmud of Ghazni, wrote Kitab-ul-Hind in Arabic as a comparative ethnography.
<b>Step 2</b> [1 mark]	<b>Method 1 — comparative</b>	PRIMARY method was COMPARATIVE — he juxtaposed Indian thought with Greek philosophy, Sufi ideas and Persian science to make Indian concepts intelligible to a Muslim reader.
<b>Step 3</b> [1 mark]	<b>Method 2 — textual</b>	He learned SANSKRIT and read the Vedas, Puranas, Patanjali and Bhagavad Gita; he met Brahmin scholars, valuing TEXTUAL sources over hearsay.
<b>Step 4</b> [1 mark]	<b>Method 3 — structured</b>	Kitab-ul-Hind is in EIGHTY CHAPTERS, each on one theme — religion, weights, customs, astronomy — an encyclopaedic structure.
<b>Step 5</b> [1 mark]	<b>Barrier 1 — language</b>	LANGUAGE — Sanskrit was difficult and many concepts had no Arabic equivalent.
<b>Step 6</b> [1 mark]	<b>Barrier 2 — religion</b>	RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCE — Hindu philosophy and Islamic theology were hard to translate without distortion.
<b>Step 7</b> [1 mark]	<b>Barrier 3 — isolation</b>	SELF-ABSORPTION — Al-Biruni felt Indians were proud and reluctant to share knowledge with outsiders.
<b>Step 8</b> [1 mark]	<b>Conclusion</b>	Through these methods Al-Biruni produced the earliest sustained outside ethnography of India, still used by historians.

### COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:

- Skipping definitions or terminology mid-answer
- No clear paragraph/point structure
- Conclusion absent or one-line

★ **TOPPER TEMPLATE — Analyse Bernier's critique of the Mughal land system and his Europe comparison. (8 marks)**

Common

<b>Step 1</b> [1 mark]	<b>Intro</b>	Francois Bernier, a French physician attached to Dara Shukoh, wrote Travels in the Mogul Empire (1670) dedicated to Louis XIV.
<b>Step 2</b> [1 mark]	<b>Central claim</b>	He argued there was NO PRIVATE OWNERSHIP OF LAND — the Emperor owned all, granted jagirs in return for service, resumed them at will.
<b>Step 3</b> [1 mark]	<b>Consequence</b>	This DESTROYED INVESTMENT — no zamindar improved land, peasants stayed poor, cities flourished only as camps.
<b>Step 4</b> [1 mark]	<b>Europe comparison</b>	He CONTRASTED with EUROPE — private ownership produced wealthier peasants, prosperous towns, stable middle stratum — arguing European superiority.
<b>Step 5</b> [1 mark]	<b>Critique 1</b>	Historians find this OVERSTATED — khalisa was state land but ZAMINDARI rights were hereditary, peasants held customary occupancy, milk/inam grants gave private holdings.
<b>Step 6</b> [1 mark]	<b>Critique 2</b>	His 'oriental despot' image served a POLITICAL argument back home — it influenced Montesquieu and Marx on 'Asiatic despotism'.
<b>Step 7</b> [1 mark]	<b>Verdict</b>	His observations on jagir mobility hold a CORE of truth, but his sweeping denial reflects his European frame more than Mughal reality.
<b>Step 8</b> [1 mark]	<b>Conclusion</b>	Read alongside Mughal revenue records (Ain-i-Akbari, dastur-ul-amals) to correct the bias.

**COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:**

- Skipping definitions or terminology mid-answer
- No clear paragraph/point structure
- Conclusion absent or one-line

★ **TOPPER TEMPLATE — Discuss Ibn Battuta's account of the postal system and city life. (5 marks)**

Common

<b>Step 1</b> [1 mark]	<b>Intro</b>	Ibn Battuta, a Moroccan jurist who reached Delhi in 1333 and served Muhammad bin Tughlaq as qazi, recorded his travels in the Rihla.
<b>Step 2</b> [1 mark]	<b>Postal system</b>	TWO kinds of state post: ULUQ — horse-post with stations every 4 miles — and DAWA — foot-post, runners with bells every one-third mile, relay style, faster over short distances.
<b>Step 3</b> [1 mark]	<b>Evaluation</b>	He marvelled that fresh fruit from Khurasan and DRINKING WATER reached the Sultan via this network — a sign of imperial reach unmatched in the Maghrib.
<b>Step 4</b> [1 mark]	<b>City life</b>	He described DELHI as 'the largest city in the eastern Islamic world'; DAULATABAD as a planned twin-city; CAMBAY and CALICUT as cosmopolitan ports.
<b>Step 5</b> [1 mark]	<b>Conclusion</b>	His account portrays 14th-century India as URBAN, connected and prosperous — a corrective to the agrarian-only picture.

**COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:**

- Skipping definitions or terminology mid-answer
- No clear paragraph/point structure
- Conclusion absent or one-line

**★ TOPPER TEMPLATE — How useful are travellers' accounts as a source of medieval history? (5 marks)**

Common

<b>Step 1</b> [1 mark]	<b>Intro</b>	Travellers' accounts — Al-Biruni, Ibn Battuta, Bernier — supply <b>OUTSIDER</b> perspectives unavailable in court chronicles.
<b>Step 2</b> [1 mark]	<b>Strength 1</b>	They record <b>EVERYDAY LIFE</b> — bazaars, coconut, paan, postal runners, sati — that chronicles focused on royal events omit.
<b>Step 3</b> [1 mark]	<b>Strength 2</b>	Their <b>COMPARATIVE</b> eye highlights what was distinctive — caste to Al-Biruni, postal system to Ibn Battuta, land tenure to Bernier.
<b>Step 4</b> [1 mark]	<b>Limit 1</b>	Each carried his <b>OWN FRAME</b> and wrote for a home audience that shaped what he stressed and silenced.
<b>Step 5</b> [1 mark]	<b>Limit 2</b>	<b>PHYSICAL</b> coverage was partial — none surveyed the south interior — and language gaps led to mistranslation.
<b>Step 6</b> [1 mark]	<b>Conclusion</b>	Used <b>CRITICALLY</b> alongside indigenous chronicles, inscriptions and revenue records, they are indispensable; used <b>ALONE</b> , they distort.

**COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:**

- Skipping definitions or terminology mid-answer
- No clear paragraph/point structure
- Conclusion absent or one-line

**★ TOPPER TEMPLATE — What did Bernier and Ibn Battuta write about women? (5 marks)**

Common

<b>Step 1</b> [1 mark]	<b>Intro</b>	Both commented on Indian women — Ibn Battuta on slaves and entertainers at the Tughlaq court, Bernier on sati and elite seclusion.
<b>Step 2</b> [1 mark]	<b>Ibn Battuta</b>	<b>FEMALE SLAVES</b> were routine gifts at the Sultan's darbar; female <b>DANCERS</b> performed at court; women in Malabar enjoyed remarkable public roles.
<b>Step 3</b> [1 mark]	<b>Bernier on sati</b>	Bernier wrote a horrified description of a <b>SATI</b> near Lahore — a young widow led to the pyre, sometimes under social pressure rather than free will.
<b>Step 4</b> [1 mark]	<b>Bernier on elite</b>	He described the <b>SECLUSION</b> of harem women, yet noted their influence — Jahanara owned ships, ran a market; Roshanara influenced court politics.
<b>Step 5</b> [1 mark]	<b>Conclusion</b>	Their accounts show medieval women's lives as <b>HIGHLY VARIED</b> by class, region and faith — neither uniformly oppressed nor uniformly free.

**COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:**

- Skipping definitions or terminology mid-answer
- No clear paragraph/point structure
- Conclusion absent or one-line

**MARKING SCHEME — GENERAL NOTES**

- Section A — full mark for exact person/place/book; half for partial.
- Section B — 1 mark identification + 2 for three substantive points. Dates/numbers add credit.
- Section C — strengths **AND** limits required; one-side caps at 3. 'Use with indigenous sources' closing earns mark.
- Section D Q(i) — 1 claim, 1 book name.
- Section D Q(ii) — 1 peasant consequence, 1 Europe/urban comparison.
- Section D Q(iii) — 2 per reason. Accept: zamindari/milk/inam; customary occupancy; French audience; Montesquieu/Marx legacy. Mark **BEST TWO**.
- Section E — 1 mark per correct labelled location.