The Gupta Era: An Age of Tireless Creativity

Standard difficulty · 20 questions · 40 marks · Time: 37 minutes

Name: _____ Date: _____ Score: ____ / 40

Write full answers in Sections B and C. Answers are on the last page — try every question first!

Section A — Choose the correct answer — 8 × 1 = 8 marks

1. The capital of the Gupta Empire was:
   (a) Nandivardhana **(b)** Ujjayini **(c)** Kanchipuram **(d)** Pataliputra

2. Who was Aryabhata?
   (a) the author of the Aryabhatiya
   (b) the poet of the Meghadutam
   (c) the regent ruler of the Vakataka kingdom
   (d) the Chinese traveller who wrote about Gupta society

3. Nandivardhana is known as:
   (a) the capital of the Guptas
   (b) the Pallava capital and a centre of learning
   (c) the pillar that carries the Prayaga prashasti
   (d) the Vakataka capital near Nagpur

4. Where did the Guptas rule?
   (a) north India, from Pataliputra **(b)** the Thar Desert
   (c) central India, from Nandivardhana **(d)** the Brahmaputra valley (Assam)

5. If the Iron Pillar was set up around 400 CE, about how old is it in 2013?
   (a) 1,613 years **(b)** 2,413 years **(c)** 1,713 years **(d)** 1,513 years

6. Aryabhata's year was about 23 minutes 45 seconds longer than the modern value. By how much would his calendar drift in 24 years?
   (a) 9 hours 53 minutes 45 seconds **(b)** 9 hours 30 minutes
   (c) 9 hours 6 minutes 15 seconds **(d)** 9 hours 40 minutes

7. Suppose a farmer on royal land gives one-sixth of a 4,200 kg harvest as land tax. How much grain is paid?
   (a) 800 kg **(b)** 3,500 kg **(c)** 600 kg **(d)** 700 kg

8. Which of these did India export in the Gupta era?
   (a) crude petroleum **(b)** tea from Assam
   (c) aircraft **(d)** ivory

Section B — Short answer — 8 × 2 = 16 marks

9. Why is the Gupta period sometimes called a "classical age"?

10. Who was each? (a) Kalidasa (b) Aryabhata

11. What is each place known for? (a) Kusumapura (b) Pataliputra

12. Aryabhata gave the year as 365 days, 6 hours, 12 minutes and 30 seconds. How long are 8 of his years, in days, hours, minutes and seconds?

13. Aryabhata's year was 23 minutes 45 seconds too long. How much would this add up to in 110 years?

14. Where did each rule, and from which capital or region: (a) Kamarupa (b) the Guptas

15. About how many years before 2027 was 500 CE? Around then Aryabhata was working at Kusumapura.

16. Suppose the Guptas gave 6 land grants, each recorded on 12 copper plates. How many plates were made, and why were grants written on copper?

Section C — Longer answers — 4 × 4 = 16 marks

17. How did the Gupta rulers build and hold their empire?

18. Match each with its description: (a) Prayagraj (b) Kusumapura (c) Ajanta. Choose from: the centre of learning where Aryabhata worked; caves famous for their wall paintings; the pillar that carries the Prayaga prashasti.

19. Aryabhata's year was 23 minutes 45 seconds longer than the modern value. (a) How many seconds is that? (b) How much would it add up to in 1,200 years? (c) About how many whole days is that?

20. Write about two figures of the Gupta age: Chandragupta II and Kalidasa. Say who each was and why they are remembered.

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Answer key

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Q	Answer	Working
1	**(d) Pataliputra**	—
2	**(a) the author of the Aryabhatiya**	—
3	**(d) the Vakataka capital near Nagpur**	—
4	**(a) north India, from Pataliputra**	—
5	**(a) 1,613 years**	2013 − 400 = 1613
6	**(b) 9 hours 30 minutes**	24 × 23 min 45 s = 9 hours 30 minutes
7	**(d) 700 kg**	4,200 ÷ 6
8	**(d) ivory**	—
9	**A long period of peace and stability let art, literature, science and mathematics flourish.**	—
10	**(a) the poet of the Meghadutam (b) the author of the Aryabhatiya**	—
11	**(a) the centre of learning where Aryabhata worked (b) the capital of the Guptas**	—
12	**2,922 days 1 hour 40 minutes**	8 × 365 days + 8 × 6 h 12 min 30 s
13	**43 hours 32 minutes 30 seconds**	110 × 1,425 seconds = 156,750 seconds
14	**(a) the Brahmaputra valley (Assam) (b) north India, from Pataliputra**	—
15	**1,527 years**	2027 − 500
16	**72 plates; copper lasts, so the record was safe and accurate.**	6 × 12
17	**Through military campaigns, diplomacy, land grants to local rulers, and marriage alliances such as Prabhavati Gupta's marriage into the Vakataka family.**	—
18	**(a) the pillar that carries the Prayaga prashasti (b) the centre of learning where Aryabhata worked (c) caves famous for their wall paintings**	—
19	**(a) 1,425 seconds (b) 475 hours (c) about 19 days**	23 × 60 + 45 = 1,425; × 1,200; ÷ 86,400
20	**Chandragupta II: the Gupta king also called Vikramaditya. Kalidasa: the poet of the Meghadutam.**	—