

Periodization of History: Prehistory, Proto-History, and History

1. DEFINITION

Periodization of history is the process of dividing the long and continuous stream of human past into smaller, meaningful time periods based on certain criteria.



3. WHY PERIODIZATION IS NECESSARY?

- Human history is vast and complex.
- Events happened at different times and places.
- Division into periods helps in better organization and comprehension.



4. BASIS / CRITERIA

Periods are made on the basis of important changes or developments in human life, such as:

- Invention of writing
- Discovery of new tools
- Social, cultural or religious changes
- Political events or revolutions
- Economic or technological advancements



2. PURPOSE / IMPORTANCE

- Makes the study of history easy and systematic.
- Helps in understanding change and continuity.
- Highlights important events, developments and turning points.
- Provides a clear framework for teaching, research and analysis.



Meaning of PERIODIZATION OF HISTORY

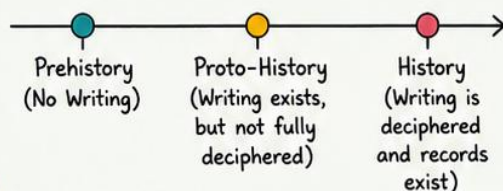
“Periodization of history means dividing the continuous flow of past events into distinct time periods for better understanding, study and interpretation.”

5. KEY POINTS

- Periods are not fixed everywhere.
- They may vary from country to country and historian to historian.
- New discoveries and research can lead to new periodization.



6. EXAMPLES OF PERIODIZATION



7. OVERALL SIGNIFICANCE

Periodization helps us to understand 'when' and 'how' important events happened and how human civilization evolved over time.



IN SHORT



Periodization of history is a method of dividing the past into different time periods based on significant changes, to make the study of history more meaningful and organized.



1. ON THE BASIS OF DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN SOCIETY



Prehistory

- Before the invention of writing (c. before 3000 BCE)
- No written records
- Known through archaeology and material remains



Proto-History

- Writing existed but not deciphered or not well understood
- Partly known from texts, partly from archaeology



History

- Writing is invented and deciphered
- Written records are available
- Events can be recorded and verified

Example:
Prehistory → Proto-History → History

3. ON THE BASIS OF CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS CHANGES



Cultural Periodization

- Based on development of art, literature, architecture, science and philosophy
- Example: Classical Age, Medieval Age, Renaissance Age



Religious Periodization

- Based on growth or spread of religions or belief systems
- Example: Vedic Age, Buddhist Age, Bhakti Period

Example:
Vedic Age / Renaissance Age

5. ON THE BASIS OF GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE



Universal / World Periodization

- Applied to the entire world
- Example: Ancient Age, Medieval Age, Modern Age, Contemporary Age



Regional / Local Periodization

- Applied to a particular region or country
- Example: Ancient India, Medieval India, Modern India

Example:
Ancient Age (World) / Ancient India (Regional)

2. ON THE BASIS OF MAJOR HISTORICAL EVENTS



Political / Dynastic Periodization

- Based on rise and fall of dynasties, kingdoms or empires
- Example: Mauryan Period, Gupta Period, Mughal Period



Revolutionary / Event-based Periodization

- Based on important events or revolutions
- Example: French Revolution, Industrial Revolution



War-based Periodization

- Based on major wars or conflicts
- Example: World War I Period, World War II Period

Example:
Mauryan Period / World War II Period

4. ON THE BASIS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Economic / Mode of Production Periodization

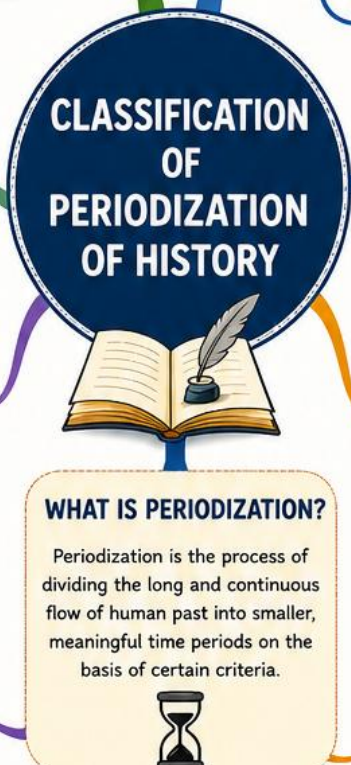
- Based on the dominant economic system or mode of production
- Example: Primitive Communal Period, Feudal Period, Capitalist Period



Technological Periodization

- Based on major technological advances
- Example: Stone Age, Iron Age, Industrial Age, Information Age

Example:
Stone Age / Industrial Age



6. ON THE BASIS OF TIME SCALE



Long-term Periodization

- Broad and long periods
- Example: Ancient, Medieval, Modern, Contemporary



Short-term Periodization

- Shorter, more specific periods
- Example: 18th Century, Inter-War Period, Post-Independence Period

Example:
18th Century / Post-Independence Period

KEY POINTS



- ➔ There is no single, fixed periodization applicable to all times and places.
- ➔ Different historians use different criteria based on the purpose of their study.
- ➔ Periodization helps in better understanding, comparison and teaching of history.





QUICK COMPARISON TABLE: PREHISTORY vs PROTO-HISTORY vs HISTORY



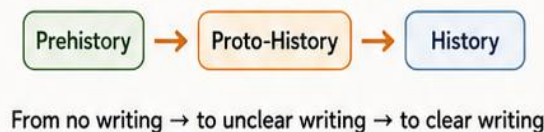
ASPECT	PREHISTORY	PROTO-HISTORY	HISTORY
DEFINITION	The period of human past before the invention of writing.	The period of human past when writing existed but not yet deciphered or not widely understood.	The period of human past from the invention and decipherment of writing onwards.
WRITING	No writing.	Writing exists but undeciphered or not fully understood.	Writing exists and is deciphered.
SOURCES	Material remains: Stone tools, pottery, bones, fossils, cave paintings, settlements, monuments.	Combination of material remains and limited written records (from other civilizations).	Written records, inscriptions, manuscripts, documents, along with archaeological evidence.
NATURE OF KNOWLEDGE	Based entirely on archaeological evidence.	Partly known from archaeology and partly from external written accounts.	Known from written records and archaeological evidence.
EXAMPLES	Palaeolithic Age, Mesolithic Age, Neolithic Age, Chalcolithic Age.	Indus Valley Civilization (Harappan Civilization).	Vedic Age (later period onwards), Mauryan Period, Gupta Period, Medieval Period, Modern Period.
TIME PERIOD	From the origin of humans till the invention of writing (c. 3000 BCE).	From the invention of writing till its decipherment or clear understanding.	From the decipherment of writing onwards.
MAIN FEATURE	Human life was simple; no written communication.	Transition period between prehistory and history.	Development of civilizations, kingdoms, societies and recorded events.
STUDY METHOD	Archaeology, anthropology, palaeontology, geology, scientific methods.	Archaeology + comparison with contemporary written records.	History, epigraphy, literature, documents, archaeology.
ALSO CALLED	Age of Man	Age of Unreadable Writing	Age of Recorded Events

IN SHORT

- **Prehistory** – No writing (Man lived, but left no written records)
- **Proto-History** – Writing existed, but not yet understood
- **History** – Writing exists and is understood



TRANSITION FLOW



KEY TAKEAWAY

This division helps historians organize the human past based on the development of writing and sources of information.



PART 1: JAMES MILL'S CLASSIFICATION OF INDIAN HISTORY



James Mill divided Indian history into three periods on the basis of the type of government and the condition of society.

1. HINDU PERIOD

(From earliest times to 1000 A.D.)



- Ruled by Hindu kings and dynasties.
- No sense of history among the people.
- Society was stagnant and despotic.
- Literature was fabulous, full of myths and superstitions.
- No progress in science, philosophy or arts.

2. MUHAMMADAN PERIOD (1000 A.D. to 1765 A.D.)



- Rule of Muslim invaders and emperors.
- Some improvement in government and law.
- Development in art, architecture and literature.
- But still, society remained despotic and intolerant.
- No real progress in science or industry.

3. BRITISH PERIOD (1765 A.D. onwards)



- British rule is the most beneficial for India.
- Brought the rule of law, justice and order.
- Introduced modern education, science, industry and liberty.
- Led India towards progress, civilization and enlightenment.

Key Points of James Mill's View

- ✓ India had no real history before the British.
- ✓ Hindus and Muslims were despotic rulers.
- ✓ Only the British brought progress and civilization.
- ✓ His view was based on Eurocentric and utilitarian philosophy.

INTRODUCTION



- James Mill, in his 'History of British India' (1817), was the first historian to attempt a systematic classification of Indian history.
- He divided Indian history into three periods on the basis of rule and progress of society.

PART 2: THE MODERN CRITIQUE OF JAMES MILL'S CLASSIFICATION

Modern historians have strongly criticized James Mill's classification as biased, shallow and based on incorrect assumptions.



1. EUROCENTRIC AND BIASED VIEW



James Mill judged India from European standards and considered Western civilization superior.

2. IGNORANCE OF SOURCES



He did not know Indian languages or study original sources. His work was based on hearsay and secondary accounts.

3. OVERLY NEGATIVE ABOUT INDIA



He described ancient Indian literature, culture and society as fabulous and worthless, which is historically incorrect.

4. GENERALIZATIONS



He ignored regional variations and treated India as a homogeneous civilization.

5. IGNORING ACHIEVEMENTS



He neglected the great achievements of ancient and medieval India in science, philosophy, art, literature, trade and governance.

6. COLONIAL AGENDA



His aim was to justify British rule in India and show it as a civilizing mission.

Modern Historians' View

- ✓ Indian history is long, continuous and diverse.
- ✓ All periods have their own achievements.
- ✓ History should be studied objectively, using Indian sources and perspectives.
- ✓ Indian civilization has made significant contributions to world heritage.

JAMES MILL'S CLASSIFICATION OF INDIAN HISTORY & THE MODERN CRITIQUE



SIGNIFICANCE



James Mill's classification influenced many early British historians.



It reflects the colonial mindset of the 19th century.



Modern critique helps us understand the importance of objective and inclusive historical writing.

QUICK COMPARISON

ASPECT	JAMES MILL'S VIEW	MODERN CRITIQUE
Basis of Division	Based on type of rulers (Hindu, Muslim, British)	Based on multiple factors – culture, economy, society, ideology, region, and change over time
View of Ancient India	Superstitious, backward and stagnant	Rich in knowledge, philosophy, science, art and culture
View of Medieval India	Some improvement, but still despotic	A period of cultural synthesis, trade, art, literature and administration
View of British Rule	Best and most benevolent rule	Colonial rule exploited India economically and politically
Overall Approach	Eurocentric, negative and biased	Objective, balanced and evidence-based
Purpose	To justify British rule and superiority	To understand India's past in its true historical context

KEY TAKEAWAY



James Mill's classification was an early attempt but full of biases and limitations. Modern historians provide a more accurate, inclusive and balanced understanding of India's glorious past.



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2. BC (BEFORE CHRIST)



- Refers to the years before the traditional birth of Jesus Christ.
- Counts backward from the year 1.
- There is no year 0.

Example:

500 BC = 500 years before the birth of Jesus Christ.

1. WHAT IS HISTORICAL TIME?

- History is the study of past events in a sequence of time.
- To organize these events, we use a timeline.
- The most commonly used system is based on the birth of Jesus Christ.

4. BCE (BEFORE COMMON ERA)



- A modern, neutral alternative to BC.
- Stands for 'Before Common Era'.
- Used to avoid religious references.

Example:

500 BCE = 500 years before the common era.

3. AD (ANNO DOMINI)



- Refers to the years after the birth of Jesus Christ.
- 'Anno Domini' is Latin for 'In the year of the Lord'.
- Counts forward starting from the year 1 AD.

Example:

2024 AD = 2024 years after the birth of Jesus Christ.

5. CE (COMMON ERA)



- A modern, neutral alternative to AD.
- Stands for 'Common Era'.
- Used in academic and international contexts.

Example:

2024 CE = 2024 years in the common era.

UNDERSTANDING TIME IN HISTORY: BC, AD, BCE & CE



6. IMPORTANT POINTS

- There is NO YEAR 0.
- 1 BC is immediately before 1 AD.
- The timeline goes: ... 3 BC, 2 BC, 1 BC, 1 AD, 2 AD, 3 AD ...
- Centuries are counted in both directions.

KEY POINT



BC/BCE → Before the birth of Jesus Christ
 AD/CE → After the birth of Jesus Christ
 Both systems refer to the same timeline.
 BC/AD are traditional.
 BCE/CE are modern and inclusive.

7. WHY USE BCE & CE? 🌍



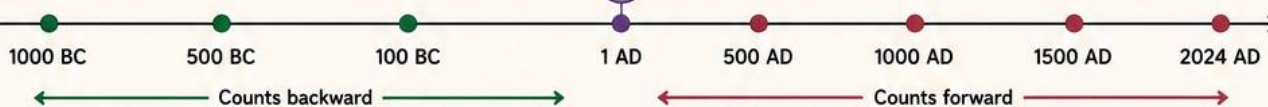
- More neutral and inclusive.
- Avoids religious context.
- Widely accepted in education, publishing and international discourse.
- Encourages a more universal approach to history.

BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST



BEFORE CHRIST / BEFORE COMMON ERA

AFTER CHRIST / COMMON ERA



9. EXAMPLES

- Ashoka the Great: 273–232 BC (or 273–232 BCE)
- Buddha: c. 563–483 BC (or BCE)
- Christ was born in 1 AD (or 1 CE)
- India gained independence in 1947 AD (or CE)

10. COMPARISON CHART

Term	Full Form	Meaning	Used Since	Nature
BC	Before Christ	Before the birth of Jesus Christ	Traditional	Religious Reference
AD	Anno Domini	In the year of the Lord	Traditional	Religious Reference
BCE	Before Common Era	Before the common era	Modern	Neutral
CE	Common Era	In the common era	Modern	Neutral

11. OVERALL TAKEAWAY



Understanding BC, AD, BCE and CE helps us place events accurately on the timeline of history. While BC and AD are traditional terms rooted in religion, BCE and CE are modern terms that promote inclusivity and neutrality in historical studies.



1. RADIOCARBON DATING (CARBON-14)



- Used for organic materials (wood, bones, charcoal, cloth, seeds).
- Measures the decay of Carbon-14.
- Effective up to about 50,000 years.

Example: A wooden tool found at an archaeological site is dated to 2500 ± 50 years BP.

7. OTHER METHODS



- Amino Acid Racemization (organic remains)
- Electron Spin Resonance (ESR)
- Archaeomagnetism (earth's magnetic field changes)
- Varve Counting (annual sediment layers)

These methods are used in specific conditions and materials.

4. THERMOLUMINESCENCE DATING (TL DATING)



- Used for heated materials like pottery, bricks, ceramics, fired clay.
- Measures the last time the material was heated.
- Effective up to about 1,00,000 years.

Example: A clay pot is dated to 1200 ± 100 years ago.

2. POTASSIUM-ARGON DATING (K-AR DATING)



- Used for volcanic rocks and minerals.
- Measures the decay of Potassium-40 to Argon-40.
- Effective for dates older than 100,000 years.

Example: Lava layers around a burial site are dated to 2 million years ago.

5. OPTICALLY STIMULATED LUMINESCENCE (OSL DATING)



- Used for sediments like sand, silt, and loess.
- Measures the last time sediments were exposed to sunlight.
- Effective up to about 2,00,000 years.

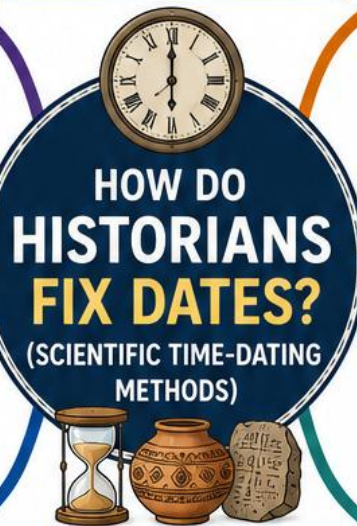
Example: Sediment layer beneath a settlement is dated to 15,000 years ago.

3. URANIUM-LEAD DATING (U-PB DATING)



- Used for very old rocks and minerals.
- Measures the decay of Uranium to Lead.
- Effective for billions of years.

Example: Zircon crystals from a rock formation are dated to 1.2 billion years old.



WHAT IS TIME-DATING?

Time-dating methods help historians and archaeologists determine the age or date of artefacts, fossils, rocks, and other materials using scientific techniques.



6. DENDROCHRONOLOGY (Tree-Ring Dating)



- Used for wooden materials.
- Matches tree ring patterns to a master chronology.
- Effective for last 10,000 years.

Example: A beam from an old structure is dated to the year 1154 AD.

PRINCIPLES BEHIND TIME-DATING



- **RADIOACTIVE DECAY:** Some elements decay at a constant rate.



- **STRATIGRAPHY:** Lower layers are generally older than upper layers.



- **CLOSED SYSTEM:** No gain or loss of parent or daughter elements.



- **CALIBRATION:** Results are calibrated using known standards.

COMPARISON OF MAJOR TIME-DATING METHODS

Method	Material Used	Age Range	Principle
Radiocarbon (C-14)	Organic remains	Up to 50,000 years	Decay of Carbon-14
Potassium-Argon (K-Ar)	Volcanic rocks	100,000 to 4 billion years	Decay of Potassium-40 to Argon-40
Uranium-Lead (U-Pb)	Zircon, minerals	Millions to billions of years	Decay of Uranium to Lead
Thermoluminescence (TL)	Pottery, bricks, fired clay	Up to 1,00,000 years	Last time material was heated
OSL Dating	Sediments (sand, silt)	Up to 2,00,000 years	Last exposure to sunlight
Dendrochronology	Wood (tree rings)	Up to 10,000 years	Tree ring patterns

EXAMPLES OF APPLICATION



- Carbon dating helps date ancient human remains.



- Potassium-Argon dating helps date volcanic eruptions that buried ancient cities.



- TL dating helps date ancient pottery and bricks.



- OSL dating helps date early human footprints in sediments.



- Dendrochronology helps date old wooden structures.

KEY TAKEAWAYS



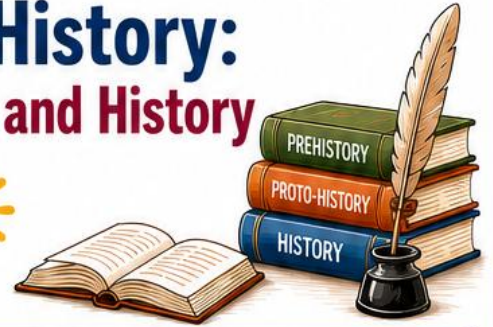
- Historians use scientific methods to find accurate dates.
- Different methods are used for different materials and time ranges.
- These methods help build a reliable timeline of human history.
- They are combined with archaeological and historical evidence for better understanding.



Periodization of History: Prehistory, Proto-History, and History

MCQs

PAGE 1



1 Which of the following best defines Prehistory?

- A Period beginning with the invention of writing
- B Period of written records and documents
- C Period before the invention of writing
- D Period during the medieval age

Answer: C



Explanation

- Prehistory refers to the time before humans invented writing.
- It is known only through material remains like tools, fossils, cave paintings, etc.
- Hence, **option C** is correct.

2 Proto-History is best described as:

- A Time before humans existed
- B Time when writing existed but was not yet deciphered or fully understood
- C Time after the invention of printing
- D Time of recorded events in chronicles

Answer: B



Explanation

- Proto-History is a transitional period where writing existed but is not yet deciphered.
- The Indus script is a classic example.
- Thus, **option B** is correct.



3 Which of the following is an example of a Proto-Historic source?

- A Vedic hymns
- B Indus Valley seals
- C Ashokan edicts
- D Mughal farmans

Answer: B



Explanation

- Indus Valley seals contain a script that is not yet deciphered.
- They belong to the Proto-Historic period.
- Therefore, **option B** is correct.



4 Which of the following marks the beginning of the Historical period?

- A Development of agriculture
- B Invention of writing
- C Rise of early man
- D Discovery of metals

Answer: B



Explanation

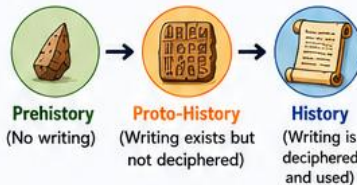
- History begins when writing is invented and used to record and convey information.
- This allows us to know people's thoughts, events, and society better.
- Hence, **option B** is correct.



5 Which of the following correctly arranges the periods in chronological order?

- A History → Proto-History → Prehistory
- B Prehistory → History → Proto-History
- C Prehistory → Proto-History → History
- D Proto-History → Prehistory → History

Answer: C



Explanation

- Chronological order of human past: Prehistory → Proto-History → History
- First no writing, then undeciphered writing, and finally deciphered writing.
- So, **option C** is correct.



Key Takeaway



- Prehistory – No writing; known through archaeological remains.
- Proto-History – Writing exists but not yet deciphered.
- History – Writing is deciphered and used as a source of knowledge.



Prehistory

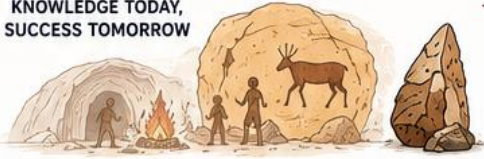


Proto-History



History

Periodization of History: Prehistory, Proto-History, and History



MCQs

PAGE 2



1 Which of the following is NOT a source of studying Prehistory?

- A Cave paintings
- B Inscriptions
- C Fossils
- D Stone tools



Answer: B

Explanation

- ✓ Prehistory does not use written records like inscriptions.
- ✓ It is studied through material remains such as cave paintings, fossils, stone tools, etc.
- ✓ Hence, **option B** is correct.



2 The use of coins is generally associated with which period?

- A Prehistory
- B Proto-History
- C History
- D Palaeolithic Age



Answer: B

Explanation

- ✓ Coins are an important source of information but they appear in the Proto-Historic period.
- ✓ This is because writing existed but was not yet fully deciphered.
- ✓ Hence, **option B** is correct.



3 The period from the invention of writing till its decipherment is called:

- A Prehistory
- B History
- C Proto-History
- D Ancient History



Answer: C

Explanation

- ✓ Proto-History is the period when writing existed but was not yet deciphered or fully understood.
- ✓ It is a bridge between Prehistory and History.
- ✓ Hence, **option C** is correct.



4 Which of the following best describes History?

- A Based only on archaeological remains
- B Based only on oral traditions
- C Based on written records along with archaeological evidence
- D Based on myths and legends



Answer: C

Explanation

- ✓ History uses written records such as inscriptions, manuscripts, documents, etc.
- ✓ It is also supported by archaeological evidence.
- ✓ Therefore, **option C** is correct.



5 Which statement is TRUE?

- A Prehistory has written literature.
- B Proto-History has deciphered inscriptions.
- C History begins with the decipherment of writing.
- D All three periods are based only on archaeology.

Explanation

- ✓ History begins when writing is not only invented but also deciphered and understood.
- ✓ Prehistory has no writing, and Proto-History has undeciphered writing.
- ✓ Hence, **option C** is correct.



Key Takeaway



- **Prehistory** → No writing (evidence: tools, fossils, cave paintings)
- **Proto-History** → Writing existed but not yet deciphered (evidence: coins, seals, undeciphered scripts)
- **History** → Writing invented, deciphered and used (evidence: inscriptions, documents, literature)



Prehistory



Proto-History



History

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MCQs

PAGE 3



1 Which of the following is an example of a Prehistoric site in India?

- A Nalanda
- B Bhimbetka
- C Sanchi Stupa
- D Hampi



Answer: B

Explanation

- ✓ Bhimbetka contains cave paintings and belongs to the Prehistoric period.
- ✓ Nalanda, Sanchi Stupa, and Hampi are from the Historical period as they have written records.
- ✓ Hence, **option B** is correct.



2 Which of the following best describes Proto-History?

- A Time before the existence of humans
- B Time when writing existed but was not deciphered
- C Time after the invention of printing
- D Time of written literature and documents



Answer: B

Explanation

- ✓ Proto-History is the period when writing existed but is not yet deciphered or fully understood (e.g., Indus script).
- ✓ Options A, C, and D do not define this transition period.
- ✓ Hence, **option B** is correct.



3 The decipherment of scripts like Brahmi and Kharoshthi belongs to which period?

- A Prehistory
- B Proto-History
- C History
- D Medieval History



Answer: C

Explanation

- ✓ Brahmi and Kharoshthi scripts are deciphered and belong to the Historical period.
- ✓ Prehistory has no writing, and Proto-History has undeciphered writing.
- ✓ Hence, **option C** is correct.



4 Which type of sources are primarily used to study Prehistory?

- A Inscriptions and coins
- B Manuscripts and documents
- C Archaeological remains and tools
- D Biographies and chronicles



Answer: C

Explanation

- ✓ Prehistory is studied using material remains like tools, fossils, cave paintings, etc.
- ✓ Inscriptions, manuscripts, and chronicles belong to the Historical period.
- ✓ Hence, **option C** is correct.



5 Arrange the following periods in the correct chronological order:

(i) History (ii) Prehistory (iii) Proto-History

- A (i) → (ii) → (iii)
- B (ii) → (iii) → (i)
- C (iii) → (ii) → (i)
- D (ii) → (i) → (iii)



Answer: B

Explanation

- ✓ First comes Prehistory (no writing), then Proto-History (undeciphered writing), and finally History (deciphered writing).
- ✓ So, the correct order is (ii) → (iii) → (i).
- ✓ Hence, **option B** is correct.



Key Takeaway

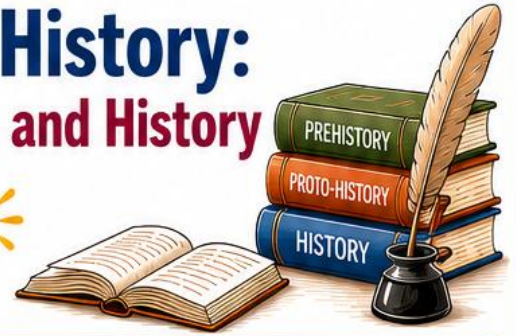
- **Prehistory** – No writing; studied through archaeological remains.
- **Proto-History** – Writing existed but not yet deciphered.
- **History** – Writing is deciphered, recorded, and used as sources.



Periodization of History: Prehistory, Proto-History, and History

MCQs

PAGE 4



1 Which of the following is NOT used to study Prehistory?

- A Excavation of sites
- B Study of cave paintings
- C Reading ancient manuscripts
- D Analysis of fossils



Answer: C

Explanation

- ✓ Prehistory has no written records or manuscripts.
- ✓ It is studied through material remains like tools, fossils, cave paintings, etc.
- ✓ Reading manuscripts is used in the Historical period.
- ✓ Hence, **option C** is correct.



2 The Indus script is an example of:

- A Prehistoric source
- B Proto-Historic source
- C Historic source
- D Medieval source



Answer: B

Explanation

- ✓ The Indus script has been found on seals, tablets, and pottery.
- ✓ Writing existed but is not yet deciphered.
- ✓ Therefore, it belongs to the Proto-Historic period.
- ✓ Hence, **option B** is correct.



3 Which of the following best describes the transition from Prehistory to Proto-History?

- A Discovery of new continents
- B Invention of metal tools
- C Invention of writing, but not yet deciphered
- D Rise of kingdoms and empires



Answer: C

Explanation

- ✓ Prehistory ends with the invention of writing.
- ✓ Proto-History begins when writing exists but has not been deciphered.
- ✓ This marks the transition between the two periods.
- ✓ Hence, **option C** is correct.



4 Which one of the following periods has undeciphered writing?

- A Prehistory
- B Proto-History
- C History
- D Modern History



Answer: B

Explanation

- ✓ Prehistory has no writing at all.
- ✓ Proto-History has writing that is not yet decoded.
- ✓ History has deciphered writing.
- ✓ Hence, **option B** is correct.



5 Which of the following statements is TRUE?

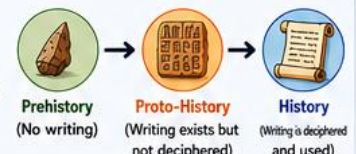
- A Prehistory is based on written records.
- B History is based only on archaeological remains.
- C Proto-History bridges Prehistory and History.
- D History begins with the invention of tools.



Answer: C

Explanation

- ✓ Prehistory has no writing.
- ✓ History has deciphered writing.
- ✓ Proto-History is the middle phase with undeciphered writing.
- ✓ Thus, **option C** is correct.



Key Takeaway



- ✓ Prehistory – No writing; known through material remains.
- ✓ Proto-History – Writing exists but not yet deciphered.
- ✓ History – Writing is deciphered and used to record events.





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