Class 10 History Chapter 3: The Making of a Global World - Notes, Important Questions and MCQs (2026-27)

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These The Making of a Global World Class 10 notes cover Class 10 History Chapter 3 completely: the pre-modern world of silk routes, food exchanges and conquest; the nineteenth-century world economy with the Corn Laws, technology, colonialism, rinderpest and indentured labour; the inter-war economy and the Great Depression; and the rebuilding of the world economy through the Bretton Woods system, decolonisation and globalisation.

You also get a clear note on what is examined in the 2026-27 board exam, an important dates timeline, a three flows table, India trade data, NCERT-style questions with answers, 10 MCQs and a free PDF with no signup.

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Chapter Overview

Globalisation is often thought of as something that began about 50 years ago, but the making of the global world has a long history of trade, migration, movement of capital and exchange of ideas, crops and even diseases. From as early as 3000 BCE, coastal trade linked the Indus valley with West Asia, and cowries from the Maldives reached China and East Africa.

The chapter follows this story through four phases: the pre-modern world, the nineteenth

Important Topics and Concepts

Silk routes link the world

- The silk routes were land and sea routes knitting together Asia and linking Asia with Europe and northern Africa; the name comes from the importance of west-bound Chinese silk cargoes.
- They existed before the Christian Era and thrived almost till the fifteenth century.
- Chinese pottery, and textiles and spices from India and Southeast Asia travelled along them; in return, gold and silver flowed from Europe to Asia.
- Trade and culture went together: early Christian missionaries, Muslim preachers and Buddhism spread along these routes.

Food travels: spaghetti and potato

- Noodles are believed to have travelled west from China to become spaghetti, or Arab traders may have taken pasta to fifth-century Sicily.
- Potatoes, soya, groundnuts, maize, tomatoes, chillies and sweet potatoes came to Europe and Asia only after Christopher Columbus reached the Americas; many came from the American Indians.
- Europe’s poor ate better and lived longer with the potato. When disease destroyed Ireland’s potato crop in the mid-1840s, hundreds of thousands died; in the Great Irish Potato Famine (1845–1849) around 1,000,000 people died and double that number emigrated.

Conquest, disease and trade

- In the sixteenth century the world ‘shrank’ as European sailors found a sea route to Asia and crossed the western ocean to America.
- The Indian subcontinent was central to the busy Indian Ocean trade; Europeans redirected some of these flows towards Europe.
- Silver from mines in present-day Peru and Mexico increased Europe’s wealth and financed its trade with Asia; legends of El Dorado, the city of gold, sent many expeditions.
- The Portuguese and Spanish conquest of America was under way by the mid-sixteenth century. Their most powerful weapon was germs such as smallpox, to which the isolated American people had no immunity.
- Poverty, disease and religious persecution in Europe made thousands flee to America, where slave-worked plantations grew cotton and sugar for Europe.
- Until the eighteenth century China and India were among the richest countries; as China withdrew and the Americas rose, the centre of world trade shifted west to Europe.

The nineteenth century: three flows

Economists identify three flows in international economic exchange: the flow of trade (mainly goods like cloth or wheat), the flow of labour (migration of people for work) and the flow of capital (short-term or long-term investment over long distances). All three were closely interwoven in the nineteenth century, though labour migration was usually more restricted than goods or capital.

A world economy takes shape: the Corn Laws

- Population growth in Britain raised demand and prices for food grains; under pressure from landed groups, the government restricted corn imports through the Corn Laws.
- Industrialists and urban dwellers forced their abolition. Cheaper imported food meant British agriculture could not compete; land was left uncultivated and thousands lost work, moving to cities or overseas.
- As food prices fell, consumption rose. Lands were cleared in Eastern Europe, Russia, America and Australia; railways, ports and settlements were built with capital from London.
- Nearly 50 million people emigrated from Europe to America and Australia, and around 150 million people worldwide left their homes in search of a better future.
- By 1890 a global agricultural economy had taken shape. In west Punjab, the British built Canal Colonies to grow wheat and cotton for export.
- Between 1820 and 1914 world trade multiplied 25 to 40 times; nearly 60 per cent of it was primary products.

Role of technology

- Railways, steamships and the telegraph transformed the nineteenth-century world, but technology also responded to social, political and economic needs such as colonisation.
- Till the 1870s animals were shipped live from America to Europe, which was costly. Refrigerated ships allowed meat to be slaughtered in America, Australia or New Zealand and shipped frozen.
- This lowered meat prices, gave Europe’s poor a more varied diet, and promoted social peace at home and support for imperialism abroad.

Late nineteenth-century colonialism

Trade expansion also meant a loss of freedom and livelihoods for colonised people. In 1885 the big European powers met in Berlin to complete the carving up of Africa, which is why some African borders run straight. Britain and France expanded their territories, Belgium and Germany became new colonial powers, and the US took over some former Spanish colonies in the late 1890s. Explorers such as Henry Morton Stanley mapped Africa in ways that helped conquest.

Rinderpest, or the cattle plague

- Africa had abundant land and few people; with land and livestock, Africans had little reason to work for wages.
- Europeans wanted labour for plantations and mines, so they imposed heavy taxes payable only through wage work, changed inheritance laws so only one family member inherited land, and confined mineworkers in compounds.
- Rinderpest arrived in Africa in the late 1880s through infected cattle from British Asia brought to feed Italian soldiers invading Eritrea. It reached the Atlantic coast in 1892 and the Cape five years later, killing 90 per cent of the cattle.
- Loss of cattle destroyed livelihoods; Europeans monopolised the remaining cattle and forced Africans into the labour market, helping them conquer and subdue Africa.

Indentured labour migration from India

- Indentured labourers were hired under contracts promising return travel to India after five years of work. Most came from eastern Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, central India and the dry districts of Tamil Nadu, where cottage industries declined, rents rose and lands were cleared.
- Main destinations: the Caribbean (Trinidad, Guyana, Surinam), Mauritius and Fiji; Tamil migrants went to Ceylon and Malaya; others went to Assam's tea gardens.
- Agents gave false information about destinations, work and conditions, and sometimes abducted migrants. Indenture has been called a 'new system of slavery'.
- Workers found ways to survive: some escaped into the wilds, and new cultural forms emerged, such as Hosay in Trinidad, Rastafarianism and chutney music.
- Nationalist leaders opposed the system from the 1900s, and it was abolished in 1921. Writer V.S. Naipaul and cricketers Shivnarine Chanderpaul and Ramnaresh Sarwan descend from these migrants.

Indian entrepreneurs abroad

Shikaripuri shroffs and Nattukottai Chettiars financed export agriculture in Central and Southeast Asia, using their own funds or money borrowed from European banks, and had a sophisticated system to transfer money over long distances. Indian traders followed Europeans into Africa, while Hyderabadi Sindhi traders set up flourishing emporia at busy ports worldwide from the 1860s.

Indian trade, colonialism and the global system

- Britain imposed tariffs on Indian cloth imports, so fine Indian cotton exports declined; the share of cotton textiles in India's exports fell from about 30 per cent around 1800 to 15 per cent by 1815 and below 3 per cent by the 1870s.
- Raw cotton exports rose from 5 per cent to 35 per cent between 1812 and 1871; indigo was another major export, and Britain sold Indian opium to China to pay for tea imports.
- British manufactures flooded India, giving Britain a trade surplus with India. Britain used this surplus to balance deficits with other countries (a multilateral settlement system) and to pay 'home charges': remittances, interest on India's external debt and pensions of British officials.

The inter-war economy: wartime transformations

- The First World War (1914–18) was fought between the Allies (Britain, France, Russia, later the US) and the Central Powers (Germany, Austria-Hungary, Ottoman Turkey).
- It was the first modern industrial war, with machine guns, tanks, aircraft and chemical weapons; 9 million died and 20 million were injured, mostly men of working age.
- Industries were restructured for war, and women took up jobs earlier done by men.
- Britain borrowed heavily from US banks and the US public, so the US changed from an international debtor to an international creditor.

Post-war recovery and mass production

- Britain faced a long crisis: industries had grown in India and Japan, and Britain carried huge debts to the US. In 1921, one in every five British workers was out of work.

- Wheat production in Canada, America and Australia had expanded during the war; when Eastern Europe recovered, there was a glut, prices fell and farmers fell into debt.
- The US recovered quickly through mass production. Henry Ford adapted the assembly line of a Chicago slaughterhouse to his Detroit car plant; cars came off the line every three minutes, and the T-Model Ford was the first mass-produced car.
- Ford doubled the daily wage to $5 in January 1914 but banned trade unions and speeded up the line. US car production rose from 2 million in 1919 to more than 5 million in 1929.
- Hire purchase and loans fuelled buying of refrigerators, washing machines, radios and houses. In 1923 the US resumed exporting capital and became the largest overseas lender.

The Great Depression (1929 to mid-1930s)

- Production, employment, incomes and trade fell catastrophically across the world; agricultural regions were the worst affected because agricultural prices fell more and for longer.
- Cause 1: agricultural overproduction. Farmers raised output to protect income as prices fell, worsening the glut.
- Cause 2: withdrawal of US loans. US overseas loans fell from over $1 billion in the first half of 1928 to a quarter of that a year later, causing bank failures in Europe, the collapse of the pound sterling and deeper slumps in Latin America.
- The US doubled import duties, which hurt world trade further.
- In the US, banks called back loans, households lost homes and cars, over 4,000 banks closed by 1933 and about 110,000 companies collapsed between 1929 and 1932. Modest recovery began by 1935.

India and the Great Depression

- India’s exports and imports nearly halved between 1928 and 1934, and wheat prices fell by 50 per cent.
- The colonial government refused to reduce revenue demands, so peasants suffered most; raw jute prices in Bengal crashed by more than 60 per cent.
- Peasants used up savings, mortgaged land and sold jewellery; India became an exporter of gold, which helped Britain’s recovery but not the Indian peasant.
- Rural unrest was high when Gandhiji launched the Civil Disobedience Movement.
- Urban India suffered less: people with fixed incomes gained from falling prices, and industrial investment grew under tariff protection.

Rebuilding a world economy: the post-war era

- The Second World War, between the Axis (Germany, Japan, Italy) and the Allies (Britain, France, Soviet Union, US), killed at least 60 million people, about 3 per cent of the 1939 world population.
- Reconstruction was shaped by the US as the dominant Western power and by the Soviet Union as a world power.
- Two lessons: mass production needs mass consumption, which needs stable incomes and full employment, so governments must intervene; and full employment needs government control over flows of goods, capital and labour.
- The Bretton Woods conference (July 1944, New Hampshire, USA) set up the IMF and the World Bank (Bretton Woods twins), which began operations in 1947. The US has an effective veto over key decisions.

- The system used fixed exchange rates: currencies were pegged to the dollar, and the dollar to gold at $35 per ounce.
- From 1950 to 1970, world trade grew over 8 per cent a year and incomes nearly 5 per cent.

Decolonisation, G-77 and globalisation

- Most colonies in Asia and Africa became independent within two decades after 1945, but remained poor and came under the guidance of agencies dominated by former colonial powers.
- Developing countries formed the Group of 77 (G-77) to demand a New International Economic Order (NIEO): control over natural resources, more development aid, fairer raw material prices and better market access for their manufactures.
- MNCs spread in the 1950s and 1960s, partly because high tariffs forced them to produce locally.
- From the 1960s rising overseas costs weakened the US dollar, leading to the end of fixed exchange rates and the start of floating exchange rates.
- From the mid-1970s developing countries had to borrow from Western commercial banks, leading to debt crises; from the late 1970s MNCs shifted production to low-wage Asian countries such as China, transforming the world's economic geography.

What Is Examined in 2026-27

As per the CBSE 2026-27 curriculum, sub-topics 1 to 1.3 (The Pre-modern World: silk routes, food travels, and conquest, disease and trade) are evaluated in the board exam, while sub-topics 2 to 4.4 are part of an interdisciplinary project. Learn sections 1 to 1.3 in full detail for theory questions, and use the rest of these notes for your project and for understanding. Confirm the exact scope with your school, as CBSE can revise it.

- Board theory: Pre-modern world, silk routes, food travels, conquest, disease and trade
- Project / internal assessment: nineteenth century, inter-war economy, post-war era

Important Dates and Timeline

Revise these dates in sequence.

Year	Event
3000 BCE	Coastal trade links Indus valley with West Asia
Mid-16th century	Portuguese and Spanish conquest of America under way
1845–1849	Great Irish Potato Famine
1820–1914	World trade multiplies 25 to 40 times
1870s	Refrigerated ships begin to carry frozen meat
1885	Berlin conference to divide Africa
Late 1880s–1890s	Rinderpest spreads across Africa
1914–1918	First World War
January 1914	Henry Ford raises wage to $5 a day
1921	Indentured labour abolished; one in five British workers unemployed
1923	US becomes the largest overseas lender

Year	Event
1929	Great Depression begins
1928–1934	India’s exports and imports nearly halve; wheat prices fall 50%
July 1944	Bretton Woods conference
1947	IMF and World Bank begin operations
1950–1970	World trade grows over 8% a year
Mid-1970s	Floating exchange rates; developing countries borrow from commercial banks

Three Flows of International Economic Exchange

A favourite 3-mark question. Learn one example of each, including one involving India.

Flow	Meaning	Example
Trade	Movement of goods such as cloth or wheat	Indian raw cotton and indigo exported to Britain
Labour	Migration of people in search of work	Indian indentured labourers to the Caribbean, Mauritius and Fiji
Capital	Short- or long-term investment over long distances	Capital from London for railways and ports; Chettiars financing Southeast Asian agriculture

Bretton Woods Institutions vs G-77

Feature	Bretton Woods institutions (IMF, World Bank)	G-77
Formed	Bretton Woods conference, July 1944; operations from 1947	Group of developing countries after decolonisation
Main aim	Economic stability and full employment in the industrial world; post-war reconstruction	A New International Economic Order (NIEO) for developing countries
Controlled by	Western industrial powers; US has effective veto	Newly independent developing nations
Key demands / functions	IMF handles external surpluses and deficits; World Bank finances reconstruction	Control over natural resources, more aid, fair prices for raw materials, market access for manufactures

Important Definitions and Terms

Term	Meaning
Silk routes	Pre-modern land and sea trade routes linking Asia with Europe and northern Africa
Dissenter	One who refuses to accept established beliefs and practices
Corn Laws	British laws restricting the import of corn
Indentured labour	A bonded labourer under contract to work for an employer for a specific time, to pay off his passage
Rinderpest	A fast-spreading cattle plague that killed 90% of cattle in Africa in the 1890s
Tariff	A tax imposed on a country’s imports from the rest of the world

Term	Meaning
Assembly line	Production method where workers repeat one task on a moving conveyor belt
Hire purchase	Buying goods on credit repaid in weekly or monthly instalments
Great Depression	Worldwide economic slump from around 1929 to the mid-1930s
Bretton Woods twins	The IMF and the World Bank
Exchange rate	The rate linking national currencies for international trade
Fixed exchange rate	Exchange rate kept fixed through government intervention
Floating exchange rate	Exchange rate that changes with demand and supply of currencies
MNC	A large company operating in several countries at the same time
G-77	Group of developing countries demanding a New International Economic Order

Short Answer Questions

Q1. Give two examples of global exchanges before the seventeenth century, one from Asia and one from the Americas.

Asia: the silk routes carried Chinese silk and pottery, and Indian textiles and spices, to Europe, while gold and silver flowed to Asia. Americas: crops such as potatoes, maize, tomatoes and chillies travelled from the Americas to Europe and Asia after Columbus.

Q2. How did the global transfer of disease help in the colonisation of the Americas?

The Spanish conquerors carried germs such as smallpox. America’s original inhabitants had been isolated for a long time and had no immunity. Smallpox spread deep into the continent, killing whole communities and paving the way for conquest.

Q3. What was the effect of abolishing the Corn Laws?

Food could be imported more cheaply than it could be produced in Britain, so British agriculture could not compete. Vast areas of land were left uncultivated and thousands of people were thrown out of work, moving to cities or migrating overseas.

Q4. What was the effect of rinderpest in Africa?

Rinderpest killed 90 per cent of the cattle, destroying African livelihoods. Planters, mine owners and colonial governments monopolised the remaining cattle and forced Africans into the labour market, helping Europeans conquer Africa.

Q5. Give two examples of the impact of technology on food availability.

Railways and larger ships moved food cheaply from distant farms to markets. Refrigerated ships allowed meat to be slaughtered in America, Australia or New Zealand and shipped frozen to Europe, lowering prices and adding meat to the diet of the poor.

Q6. What was the effect of the death of working-age men in Europe due to the First World War?

The war killed 9 million and injured 20 million, mostly working-age men. This reduced the able-bodied workforce, lowered household incomes after the war, and made women take up jobs earlier done only by men.

It was the framework agreed at the United Nations Monetary and Financial Conference at Bretton Woods in July 1944. It set up the IMF and the World Bank and created a system of fixed exchange rates to preserve economic stability and full employment in the industrial world.

Q8. What was the effect of MNCs relocating production to Asian countries?

From the late 1970s MNCs moved production to low-wage countries such as China. This stimulated world trade and capital flows and transformed the world's economic geography, with countries like India, China and Brazil seeing rapid economic change.

Long Answer Questions

Q1. Explain the causes of the Great Depression.

Agricultural overproduction: as prices fell, farmers produced more to maintain their income, which worsened the glut and pushed prices down further.

Dependence on US loans: many countries financed investment through US loans. US overseas loans fell from over $1 billion in early 1928 to a quarter of that a year later, causing crises across Europe and Latin America.

European bank failures and currency collapse, including the British pound sterling.

The US doubled import duties to protect its economy, dealing a severe blow to world trade.

In the US, banks called back loans, households defaulted, over 4,000 banks closed and about 110,000 companies collapsed, spreading the slump worldwide.

Q2. Describe the impact of the Great Depression on India.

India's exports and imports nearly halved between 1928 and 1934.

Wheat prices fell by 50 per cent, and raw jute prices in Bengal fell by more than 60 per cent.

The colonial government refused to reduce revenue demands, so peasants were hit hardest and fell deeper into debt.

Peasants used savings, mortgaged land and sold jewellery; India exported gold, which helped Britain's recovery but not Indian peasants.

Rural unrest grew and fed into the Civil Disobedience Movement.

Urban fixed-income groups were better off due to falling prices, and industrial investment grew under tariff protection.

Q3. Describe the condition of Indian indentured labourers in the nineteenth century.

They were hired under contracts promising return to India after five years, mostly from eastern UP, Bihar, central India and Tamil Nadu.

Poverty, falling cottage industries and rising rents pushed them to migrate.

Agents gave false information about destinations and work, and sometimes abducted them.

On plantations in the Caribbean, Mauritius and Fiji, living and working conditions were harsh and they had few legal rights; it was called a new system of slavery.

They survived by escaping or by creating new cultural forms like Hosay and chutney music. The system was abolished in 1921, but many stayed on, forming large Indian-descent

MCQs with Answers

1. As early as 3000 BCE, coastal trade linked the Indus valley with(a) China (b) West Asia (c) East Africa (d) EuropeAnswer: (b) West Asia

2. Which food crop's failure caused a famine in Ireland in the 1840s?(a) Wheat (b) Rice (c) Potato (d) MaizeAnswer: (c) Potato

3. The most powerful weapon of the Spanish conquerors in America was(a) Gunpowder (b) Horses (c) Germs such as smallpox (d) Steel swordsAnswer: (c) Germs such as smallpox

4. The Corn Laws were laws that(a) Encouraged corn exports (b) Restricted the import of corn (c) Fixed wages of farm workers (d) Abolished slaveryAnswer: (b) Restricted the import of corn

5. Rinderpest killed about what share of cattle in Africa?(a) 50 per cent (b) 70 per cent (c) 90 per cent (d) 100 per centAnswer: (c) 90 per cent

6. Indentured labour migration from India was abolished in(a) 1900 (b) 1914 (c) 1921 (d) 1947Answer: (c) 1921

7. Henry Ford adapted the assembly line from a(a) Chicago slaughterhouse (b) Detroit steel mill (c) British textile mill (d) New York shipyardAnswer: (a) Chicago slaughterhouse

8. Between 1928 and 1934, wheat prices in India fell by(a) 20 per cent (b) 35 per cent (c) 50 per cent (d) 60 per centAnswer: (c) 50 per cent

9. The Bretton Woods conference was held in(a) 1919 (b) 1929 (c) 1944 (d) 1947Answer: (c) 1944

10. Under the Bretton Woods system, the dollar was anchored to gold at(a) $20 per ounce (b) $35 per ounce (c) $50 per ounce (d) $100 per ounceAnswer: (b) $35 per ounce

Quick Revision Points

- Globalisation has a long history: Indus–West Asia trade (3000 BCE), cowries from the Maldives.
- Silk routes: Chinese silk, pottery, Indian spices; gold and silver to Asia; spread of religions.
- New World crops: potato, maize, tomato, chilli; Irish famine 1845–49.
- Smallpox helped Spanish conquest of America.
- Three flows: trade, labour, capital.
- Corn Laws abolished: cheap food imports, migration; 50 million Europeans emigrated.
- World trade grew 25–40 times (1820–1914); 60% primary products.
- Refrigerated ships cut meat prices in Europe.
- Berlin 1885: partition of Africa. Rinderpest killed 90% of cattle.
- Indenture: five-year contracts; Caribbean, Mauritius, Fiji; abolished 1921.
- Chettiars and Shikaripuri shroffs financed export agriculture abroad.
- Britain's trade surplus with India paid home charges.
- First World War: 9 million dead; US became creditor.
- Henry Ford: assembly line, $5 wage; T-Model Ford.
- Great Depression (1929): overproduction and withdrawal of US loans.
- India: trade halved, wheat prices fell 50%, jute fell 60%+, gold exports.

- Bretton Woods 1944: IMF and World Bank; fixed exchange rates, $35 per ounce of gold.
- G-77 demanded NIEO; MNCs moved to low-wage Asia.

Chapter Summary

The Making of a Global World shows that globalisation is not new. Pre-modern trade along the silk routes, the exchange of foods like potatoes and noodles, and the European conquest of America linked distant societies, sometimes through germs rather than guns.

In the nineteenth century, flows of trade, labour and capital created a world economy, helped by technology, but colonialism, rinderpest and indentured labour showed its darker side. The First World War, Britain’s decline, US mass production and the Great Depression disrupted this economy, hurting Indian peasants badly. After the Second World War, the Bretton Woods system brought stable growth for industrial nations, while newly independent countries formed the G-77. The end of fixed exchange rates and the shift of MNCs to Asia began the present phase of globalisation.

Exam Tips and PYQ Pattern

- For the 2026-27 board exam, focus on the Pre-modern World (sections 1 to 1.3): silk routes, food travels, and conquest, disease and trade.
- Common questions: how the world shrank in the 1500s, how disease helped colonise America, and examples of pre-modern exchanges.
- Sections 2 to 4 are useful for your interdisciplinary project with Geography (Lifelines of National Economy) and Economics (Globalisation).
- Use facts like 3000 BCE, mid-sixteenth century, El Dorado and smallpox to make answers precise.
- Write long answers point-wise with an introduction and a short conclusion.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main idea of The Making of a Global World?

It explains how the world became interconnected through trade, migration, capital flows, technology and colonialism from pre-modern times to modern globalisation.

Which part of this chapter is in the 2026-27 board exam?

As per the CBSE 2026-27 curriculum, sub-topics 1 to 1.3 (The Pre-modern World) are evaluated in the board exam, and sub-topics 2 to 4.4 are part of an interdisciplinary project. Confirm with your school.

What were the causes of the Great Depression?

Agricultural overproduction and falling prices, withdrawal of US loans, bank failures, currency collapses and higher US import duties.

What are the Bretton Woods twins?

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, set up at the Bretton Woods conference in 1944.

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Conclusion

The Making of a Global World shows that our interconnected world was built over centuries of trade, migration, conquest and technological change, with gains for some and great suffering for others. Learn the pre-modern section thoroughly for the board exam, and use the tables on flows, trade data and Bretton Woods for your project and for deeper understanding.

More Notes: Class 10 History Chapter 2: Nationalism in India notes | Class 10 History Chapter 4: The Age of Industrialisation notes | Class 10 History Chapter 2: Nationalism in India notes | Class 10 History Chapter 1: The Rise of Nationalism in Europe notes | All Class 10 Social Science notes

Author Bio: Written and reviewed by the Nextoper Editorial Team, a group of CBSE social science educators who build chapter notes directly from the NCERT textbook and past board paper patterns.

Freshness Note: These notes follow the NCERT Class 10 History textbook, India and the Contemporary World – II (Reprint 2026-27), and the CBSE syllabus for the 2026-27 session. Last checked on 8 November 2026.