

Some questions from past mid-terms

Usually there are about 10 questions and each question was worth 5 points. The marks on the books are points taken off, from a total of 100.

An actual answer (with maximum points) is given for the first question (as a sample). One could present the answers in two paragraphs, the first descriptive, the second answering the why question.

1. *Where and when did the first network of cities appear? Suggest some causes.*

“The first network of cities appeared in Mesopotamia. The geographical location and landscape was essential to the formation of the cities in this region. The area on which they arose was located between two rivers and provided them the necessary fertile ground and water access. The urbanization of Mesopotamia began in the northern part but eventually grew larger in the southern region. The distance between the cities allowed for communication and competition leading to numerous innovations.”

One could add that the northern part has a higher elevation where water comes from the rain and not from irrigation. That part saw the gradual build-up of villages, probably a necessary phase. The lower part has very low elevation with a system based on irrigation. The width of the valley enables the development of a network of cities (contrast with the linear topography of Egypt). The main reading is Jason Ur.

2. *What taxes were directly levied by the state in Egypt and what taxes were farmed out? Explain why.*
The reading for this question is Jones.
3. *The figure on the next page reports the feature of some coins that circulated in the 6th century B.C., weight on the horizontal axis and percentage of gold on the vertical axis. What was the other metal in the coins? Assuming these coins did circulate, were they traded by weight or by tale. Discuss. (Be careful).*
4. *According to some evidence, were the finances of the Roman Empire centralized? (Your argument and evidence is more important than a “yes” or “no” answer).*
5. *When and where did the first documented charts appear that regulated rights and duties of people? To whom did these charts apply. Explain why they appeared at these places and at that time.*
6. *What were the main changes in public finances that were achieved by Edward I in 13th century England? Explain how such changes were facilitated by special conditions in England.*
7. *What was an essential feature of the first Cortes in order to be called “parliaments”. When (roughly) and where did the first ones appear? Why?*
8. *The Casa di San Giorgio was founded shortly after 1400. Where? Explain the scheme using a stylized description of its balance sheet. Who benefited from such an institution? Was the institution successful?*