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## Reading

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***Part I. Read the following passage and answer the questions below: (70 marks)***

It is hard to get any agreement on the precise meaning of the term 'social class'. In everyday life, people tend to have a different approach to those they consider their equals from that which they assume with people they consider higher or lower than themselves in the social scale. The criteria we use to 'place' a new acquaintance, however, are a complex mixture of factors. Dress, way of speaking, area of residence in a given city or province, education and manners all play a part.

In ancient civilizations, the Sumerian, for example, which flourished in the lower Euphrates valley from 2000 to 5000 B.C. social differences were based on birth, status or rank, rather than on wealth. Four main classes were recognized. These were the rulers, the priestly administrators, the freemen (such as craftsmen, merchants or farmers) and the slaves.

In Greece, after the sixth-century B.C., there was a growing conflict between the peasants and the landed aristocrats, and a gradual decrease in the power of the aristocracy when a kind of 'middle class' of traders and skilled workers grew up. The population of Athens, for example, was divided into three main classes which were politically and legally distinct. About one-third of the total were slaves, who did not count politically at all, a fact often forgotten by those who praise Athens as the nursery of democracy. The next main group consisted of resident foreigners, the 'metics', who were freemen, though they too were allowed no share in political life. The third group was the powerful body of 'citizens', who were themselves divided into sub-classes.

In ancient Rome, too, a similar struggle between the plebs, or working people, and the landed families was a recurrent feature of social life.

The medieval feudal system, which flourished in Europe from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries, gave rise to a comparatively simple system based on birth. Under the king there were two main classes – lords and 'vassals', the latter with many subdivisions. The vassal owed the lord fidelity, obedience and aid, especially in the form of military service. The lord in return owed his vassal protection and an assured livelihood.

In the later Middle Ages, however, the development of a money economy and the growth of cities and trade led to the rise of another class, the 'burghers' or city merchants and mayors. These were the predecessors of the modern middle classes. Gradually high office and occupation assumed importance in determining social position, as it became more and more possible for a person born to one station in life to move to another. This change affected the towns more than the country areas, where remnants of feudalism lasted much longer.

With the break-up of the feudal economy, the increasing division of labour and the growing power of the growing power of the town burghers, the commercial and professional middle class became more and more important in Europe, and the older privileged class, the landed aristocracy, began to lose some of its power.

**A) Select the most accurate answer: (30 marks)**

1. We 'place' people in society in relation to ourselves .....
  - a) because we dislike them.
  - b) because we feel superior to them
  - c) mainly by their dress.
  - d) according to a complex mixture of factors.
2. We evaluate other people's social position by .....
  - a) questioning them in great detail.
  - b) their dress, manners, area of residence and other factors.
  - c) finding out how much their salary is.
  - d) the kind of job they do.
3. The four main classes of Sumerian civilization .....
  - a) did not include slaves.
  - b) took little account of financial standing.
  - c) took little account of status or rank.
  - d) were not clearly defined.
4. The decline of the Greek aristocracy's power in the sixth century B. C. ....
  - a) caused international conflicts in the area.
  - b) coincided with the rise of a new 'middle class' of traders and peasants.
  - c) was assisted by a rise in the number of slaves.
  - d) lasted for only a short time.
5. Slaves in Greece in the sixth century B.C. ....
  - a) were not allowed to count votes at elections.
  - b) were kept ignorant as a political measure.
  - c) were not politically significant.
  - d) controlled one-third of the democratic vote.
6. Athens is often praised as the nursery of democracy .....
  - a) even though slaves were allowed to vote.
  - b) because its three main classes were politically and legally distinct.
  - c) in spite of its heavy dependence on slave labour.
  - d) because even very young children could vote.
7. Under the medieval feudal system .....
  - a) there were four main divisions.
  - b) the lords mercilessly exploited the vassals.
  - c) the lords had certain duties towards their peasants.
  - d) the vassals often fought against the lords.
8. Medieval lords recruited their armies .....
  - a) from among their peasants.
  - b) from among the freemen.
  - c) by offering the soldiers high rates of pay.
  - d) in order to get an assured livelihood.
9. The 'burghers' of the later Middle Ages .....
  - a) became more powerful than the old aristocracy.

- b) ignored class distinctions.
  - c) created an entirely new social class.
  - d) were mainly to be found in country areas.
10. The rise of the commercial and professional middle class .....
- a) was predominantly an urban, as opposed to a rural phenomenon.
  - b) predated the establishment of the feudal system.
  - c) had little effect on the feudal system.
  - d) was bitterly opposed by the feudal lords.

**B) Choose the word or phrase which is closest in meaning to the following words in the context of the passage. (20 marks)**

1. **assume**
  - a) guess
  - b) use
  - c) disguise
  - d) imagine
2. **criteria**
  - a) characteristics
  - b) words
  - c) standards of judgement
  - d) criticisms
3. **count**
  - a) have importance
  - b) add
  - c) calculate
  - d) total
4. **recurrent**
  - a) rare
  - b) powerful
  - c) re-occurring
  - d) electrical
5. **predecessors**
  - a) supporters
  - b) descendants
  - c) ancestors
  - d) most important
6. **office**
  - a) work room
  - b) wealth
  - c) office work
  - d) official position
7. **occupation**
  - a) profession
  - b) space occupied
  - c) taking over
  - d) invasion
8. **station**
  - a) stopping place
  - b) goal
  - c) village
  - d) social rank
9. **remnants**
  - a) remains
  - b) opponents
  - c) torn clothing
  - d) garments
10. **landed**
  - a) stranded
  - b) isolated
  - c) having land
  - d) tenant

**C) Choose the phrase or sentence which identifies the main point made by the paragraph indicated. (20 marks)**

1. **Para. 1**
  - a) Evaluating a person's social class is a very complex procedure.
  - b) A person will vary his social class in everyday life.
  - c) Guessing a person's social class by his clothes and the way he speaks.
2. **Para. 2**
  - a) Social differences based on birth and wealth in the ancient world.
  - b) Sumeria had both ruler and priestly administrators.
  - c) The four classes of ancient Sumerian society.
3. **Para. 3**
  - a) The struggle of the Greek peasants in the fifth century B.C.