

PRACTICE EXAM 26 — NEW YORK REGENTS GLOBAL HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY II

1. The French Enlightenment thinker Denis Diderot is most closely associated with
 - A. drafting the Declaration of the Rights of Man during the early French Revolution
 - B. editing the Encyclopédie that compiled human knowledge from a rationalist perspective
 - C. founding the first European university to admit women on equal terms with men
 - D. negotiating the Edict of Nantes that granted toleration to French Protestants

2. Olympe de Gouges is best remembered for her 1791 work
 - A. Common Sense, which urged the American colonies to declare independence from Britain
 - B. Reflections on the Revolution in France, defending traditional monarchy against radical change
 - C. On the Origin of Species, applying natural selection to the history of human society
 - D. Declaration of the Rights of Woman, demanding political equality with men under law

3. Cesare Beccaria's On Crimes and Punishments (1764) is historically significant because it
 - A. argued against torture and the death penalty and influenced modern criminal justice reform
 - B. justified the use of torture and harsh punishments to maintain order in modern societies
 - C. defended absolute monarchy as the only form of government able to administer justice
 - D. created the first modern police force in Europe to investigate and prevent serious crime

4. Eli Whitney's invention of the cotton gin in 1793 had which major global consequence?
- A. It immediately ended the use of enslaved labor on cotton plantations in the American South
 - B. It reduced demand for raw cotton exports from the United States to British textile mills
 - C. It dramatically increased cotton production and expanded the slave system across the American South
 - D. It shifted global cotton production from the Americas to West African coastal plantations
5. The Bessemer process, patented in the 1850s, was important because it
- A. produced the first practical electric lights for use in homes and city streets
 - B. allowed cheap, large-scale production of steel and accelerated industrial growth
 - C. invented the telegraph that enabled instant communication across long international distances
 - D. introduced refrigeration that transformed the global food production and shipping industries
6. Thomas Edison and his contemporaries contributed to the late 19th-century "Second Industrial Revolution" by developing
- A. practical electric lighting, the phonograph, and other technologies powered by electricity
 - B. the first internal-combustion engines used in modern automobiles and aircraft engines
 - C. the wireless radio broadcasting system that linked European empires across oceans
 - D. the cotton-spinning machinery that transformed the British textile industry in the 1700s
7. During the second half of the 19th century, organized labor unions in industrial Europe sought primarily to
- A. restore the medieval guild system of strict workshop apprenticeships and trade monopolies
 - B. overthrow the existing capitalist system through armed uprisings in major industrial cities
 - C. abolish factory production altogether and return industrial workers to the family farms
 - D. improve wages, working conditions, and hours through collective bargaining and political action

8. Tsar Alexander II's 1861 Emancipation of the Serfs in Russia

- A. immediately ended the practice of serfdom across all of Eastern Europe and Asia
- B. abolished the Russian monarchy and established a constitutional parliamentary form of government
- C. freed roughly 23 million serfs but left many in poverty bound by redemption payments
- D. transferred all aristocratic landholdings directly to the Russian Orthodox Church's possession

9. The Ottoman Tanzimat reforms of 1839–1876 attempted to

- A. modernize the empire by reorganizing administration, finance, education, and the military
- B. expand the empire by reconquering the lost Ottoman territories in southeastern Europe
- C. impose strict Islamic law throughout the empire and reject Western European influences
- D. unify all Ottoman ethnic and religious groups under a single Turkish-language identity

10. The Battle of the Somme in 1916 is historically significant because it

- A. ended trench warfare on the Western Front by producing a breakthrough victory for the Allies
- B. produced more than one million casualties for limited territorial gain on the Western Front
- C. forced the German army to surrender and accept Allied terms before war's end
- D. resulted in the immediate entry of the United States into the First World War

11. In July 1918, Tsar Nicholas II and his immediate family were

- A. allowed to flee Russia and live in exile under British royal protection until their deaths
- B. restored to the Russian throne briefly by anti-communist White Russian armed forces
- C. tried publicly for treason by a revolutionary tribunal in Moscow and formally exiled
- D. executed by Bolshevik forces in the city of Yekaterinburg during the Russian Civil War

12. The Lend-Lease Act passed by the U.S. Congress in March 1941

- A. ended American neutrality by formally declaring war against the Axis powers in Europe
- B. created a permanent military alliance between the United States and Imperial Japan
- C. authorized the U.S. to supply arms and equipment to Britain, the USSR, and other Allied nations
- D. closed all U.S. ports to British and French shipping during the early war years

13. The Battle of Midway in June 1942 is widely considered a turning point of World War II because

- A. U.S. naval forces destroyed four Japanese aircraft carriers and halted Japanese expansion in the Pacific
- B. Japan successfully invaded the Hawaiian Islands and forced the United States to negotiate a peace
- C. American B-29 bombers used atomic weapons against Japanese naval forces for the first time
- D. Allied forces landed on the Japanese home islands and forced the immediate surrender of Tokyo

14. The 1969 Apollo 11 mission is historically significant because it

- A. carried the first artificial satellite into orbit around the Earth during the Cold War
- B. landed Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin on the Moon and returned them safely to Earth
- C. produced the first manned flight to the planet Mars during the height of the Cold War
- D. established a permanent joint U.S.-Soviet space station in low orbit around the Earth

15. The 1944 Bretton Woods Conference held in New Hampshire established

- A. a global military alliance designed to maintain peace through collective security agreements
- B. a permanent worldwide free-trade zone with no tariffs among the participating member states
- C. the headquarters of the United Nations and the General Assembly's annual meeting location
- D. the IMF, the World Bank, and a system of exchange rates fixed to the dollar

16. The Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), nicknamed "Star Wars," was announced by U.S. President Ronald Reagan in 1983 as a plan to

- A. expand U.S. ground forces stationed in West Germany along the Iron Curtain border
- B. test new generations of intermediate-range nuclear missiles to be deployed in Western Europe
- C. develop a space-based shield to defend the United States from incoming Soviet nuclear missiles
- D. negotiate the simultaneous withdrawal of all U.S. and Soviet forces from Eastern European states

17. The Romanian Revolution of December 1989 differed from other Eastern European revolutions that year because it

- A. peacefully transferred power from the Communist Party to a coalition of multiparty leaders
- B. involved violent street fighting and ended with the execution of Nicolae and Elena Ceaușescu
- C. was suppressed by a Soviet military intervention that reinstated the communist government
- D. preserved communist rule under reformist leadership for several more years after 1989

18. The Velvet Revolution of November–December 1989 in Czechoslovakia

- A. peacefully ended communist rule through mass protests led by playwright Václav Havel
- B. produced a violent civil war between Czech and Slovak nationalist political movements
- C. resulted in a Warsaw Pact invasion that overturned reformist Czechoslovak demands
- D. began with a coup by Czechoslovak generals against the existing communist government

19. The end of apartheid in South Africa in the early 1990s involved

- A. an armed revolution that overthrew the Afrikaner government through violent civil war
- B. a unilateral United Nations military intervention that forced South African political change
- C. negotiations between President de Klerk and Nelson Mandela leading to multiracial elections
- D. the partition of South Africa into separate states for Black, white, and mixed-race populations

20. China's accession to the World Trade Organization in 2001

- A. forced China to abandon Communist Party rule and adopt Western-style political democracy
- B. resulted in the immediate decline of Chinese economic output and rising mass unemployment
- C. ended China's diplomatic relations with the United States and major European nations
- D. accelerated China's integration into the global economy and its rise as a manufacturing power

21. The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), implemented in 1994, was a trade pact between

- A. all 35 nations of the Organization of American States across the Western Hemisphere
- B. the United States, Canada, and Mexico that eliminated most tariffs among them
- C. the United States and the member nations of the European Economic Community
- D. the United States and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum member countries

22. The Rohingya crisis in Myanmar (Burma) since 2017 has been characterized by

- A. a Myanmar military campaign of mass killing and displacement against the Muslim Rohingya minority
- B. peaceful resettlement of the Rohingya into newly created autonomous regions of Myanmar nation
- C. successful integration of the Rohingya as full citizens of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar
- D. economic prosperity for Rohingya communities through expansive state-sponsored development programs

23. The Yemen civil war that escalated after 2014 has been characterized by

- A. a peaceful negotiated power-sharing settlement supervised by the United Nations Security Council
- B. quick military victory by the internationally recognized government over Houthi rebel forces
- C. a multi-sided conflict that has produced one of the world's worst humanitarian crises
- D. economic prosperity for Yemen following the discovery of large new petroleum reserves

24. North Korea's nuclear weapons program has been characterized since the early 2000s by

- A. a complete and verifiable dismantling of all its nuclear facilities under international supervision
- B. repeated nuclear weapons tests, sanctions by the United Nations, and tensions with neighbors
- C. the peaceful transfer of nuclear technology and weapons to South Korea and Japan for defense
- D. North Korean acceptance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons regime

25. Territorial disputes in the South China Sea involve competing claims among

- A. Russia, the United States, and Canada over Arctic shipping lanes near the North Pole
- B. Brazil, Argentina, and Chile over territorial waters near the southern tip of South America
- C. Egypt, Sudan, and Ethiopia over the waters of the Nile River and its tributaries
- D. China, Vietnam, the Philippines, and several other states over islands and maritime rights

26. The Indus River, one of the cradles of ancient civilization, flows primarily through

- A. modern Pakistan and provides water for one of the world's largest irrigation systems
- B. modern Egypt and supplies the fertile floodplain that supported ancient Egyptian pharaohs
- C. modern China and is the principal source of fresh drinking water for the city of Shanghai
- D. modern Iran and irrigates the agricultural plains of the central Iranian high plateau region

27. The Yellow River (Huang He) in China is sometimes called "China's Sorrow" because it

- A. provides drinking water for less than 5% of China's modern population and industry
- B. forms the geographic border between China and the Russian Far East Pacific provinces
- C. has flooded catastrophically many times, killing millions while also supporting Chinese civilization
- D. is the major route of Chinese maritime trade with Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asia

28. The Red Sea is geographically important because it

- A. forms a permanent freshwater lake separating the continents of Africa and Asia at the equator
- B. connects the Mediterranean (via the Suez Canal) to the Indian Ocean through Bab el-Mandeb
- C. is the world's largest inland sea, with no connection to any global ocean shipping routes
- D. lies entirely within the Arctic Circle and is frozen for most of the calendar year annually

29. The Strait of Gibraltar is strategically important because it

- A. is the only ice-free shipping passage connecting the Baltic Sea to the North Atlantic Ocean
- B. provides the only land bridge between the African and Asian continents along the equator
- C. divides the territorial waters of the United Kingdom from the Republic of Ireland's coastline
- D. is the narrow passage between Spain and Morocco linking the Atlantic and Mediterranean

30. The Persian Gulf is one of the world's most important bodies of water because it

- A. is bordered by states holding a large share of the world's proven petroleum reserves
- B. is the principal freshwater source for the populations of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh
- C. forms the largest tropical coral reef system in the world along the Asian continent
- D. connects the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans through a series of locks across the Arabian Peninsula

31. The Korean Peninsula in East Asia is geographically significant because it

- A. lies entirely within the Arctic Circle and contains some of the world's largest glaciers
- B. forms the only direct land link between Japan's islands and the mainland of East Asia
- C. extends southward from the Asian mainland between the Yellow Sea and the Sea of Japan
- D. is the world's largest archipelago, containing over 17,000 separate inhabited and uninhabited islands

32. The Volga River, the longest river in Europe, runs through Russia and

- A. forms the northern border between the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China
- B. drains into the Baltic Sea after passing through the cities of Helsinki and Stockholm
- C. flows northward into the Arctic Ocean across the Russian tundra and through Murmansk
- D. flows into the Caspian Sea and has historically connected Russia's economic regions to trade

33. The Iberian Peninsula in southwestern Europe is shared primarily by

- A. France and Switzerland, which together form the western edge of the European continent
- B. Spain and Portugal, which together pioneered early European overseas exploration and colonization
- C. Italy and Greece, which together make up the southern Mediterranean coast of Europe
- D. Germany and Austria, which together form a central European area south of the Baltic Sea

34. The Bering Strait is significant in world geography because it

- A. separates Asia from North America at the narrowest point between Russia and Alaska
- B. divides South America from Antarctica along a long ice-free shipping passage south
- C. forms the southern boundary between the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean basin
- D. connects the Mediterranean Sea to the Indian Ocean across the modern Egyptian territory

35. Antarctica is unique among the world's continents because it

- A. contains the largest tropical rainforest belt and is home to more than half of humanity
- B. is divided politically among more than 50 sovereign nations under United Nations supervision
- C. is governed by the 1959 Antarctic Treaty system that bans military activity and preserves science
- D. is the most densely populated continent and source of most of the world's wheat and corn

ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS (Questions 1–35)

- 1. B** — Co-edited with Jean d'Alembert and published from 1751 to 1772, the 28-volume Encyclopédie gathered articles on science, technology, philosophy, and the arts from contributors such as Voltaire, Rousseau, and Montesquieu. Despite official censorship, it spread Enlightenment ideas across Europe and challenged religious and political authority by treating knowledge as the product of reason and observation.
- 2. D** — A playwright and abolitionist, de Gouges modeled her declaration on the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and demanded that women receive the same legal, political, and civil rights as men. She was guillotined in 1793 during the Reign of Terror, but her work is now recognized as a foundational document of modern feminism.
- 3. A** — The Milanese jurist's short treatise argued that punishment should be proportionate, public, certain, and aimed at deterrence rather than vengeance, condemning torture as both cruel and unreliable and the death penalty as ineffective. The work influenced reformers from Catherine the Great to the founders of the United States and helped shape modern criminal codes.
- 4. C** — Before Whitney's machine, separating seeds from short-staple cotton fiber by hand was so slow that the crop was barely profitable; the gin made it economical to grow cotton across the Lower South. Slave-based plantations expanded rapidly, the enslaved population grew from about 700,000 in 1790 to nearly 4 million by 1860, and cotton became the foundation of antebellum Southern wealth.
- 5. B** — Henry Bessemer's converter blew air through molten pig iron to burn off impurities, slashing the cost of steel and making mass production possible. Cheap steel enabled longer railroads, taller buildings, larger ships, and heavy machinery, fueling the rapid industrial growth of Britain, the United States, and Germany in the late 19th century.
- 6. A** — Working at his Menlo Park "invention factory," Edison developed the long-lasting incandescent light bulb, the phonograph for recording sound, and an integrated system of electrical generation and distribution that made urban electrification possible. Alongside contemporaries such as Nikola Tesla and George Westinghouse, his work shifted industry, transportation, and daily life onto an electric foundation.
- 7. D** — Unions grew out of earlier mutual-aid societies as industrial workers in Britain, France, Germany, and the United States sought to negotiate with employers from a position of collective strength. By the late 1800s they had achieved gains such as shorter working days, factory safety laws, and the right to strike, and they also drove the rise of labor and social-democratic political parties.
- 8. C** — The reform freed 23 million privately owned serfs from legal bondage, but the land they received was small, of mixed quality, and had to be paid off through "redemption payments" stretched over decades. Many former serfs remained tied to peasant communes in conditions of grinding poverty, helping fuel the radicalism that exploded in the 1905 and 1917 revolutions.
- 9. A** — Issued by Sultan Abdülmejid I and his successors, the Tanzimat ("Reorganization") decrees promised equality before the law for all subjects, modernized the army along European lines, restructured

the tax system, and created secular schools and law codes. The reforms slowed Ottoman decline but could not reconcile the centralizing state with rising ethnic and religious nationalisms.

10. B — British and French forces attacked entrenched German positions north of the Somme River from July to November 1916; on the first day alone the British army suffered nearly 60,000 casualties. By the time the offensive ended, the three armies combined had lost more than a million men killed, wounded, or missing in exchange for an advance of only a few miles.

11. D — Held under guard after the tsar's abdication, Nicholas, his wife Alexandra, their five children, and four attendants were shot in the basement of the Ipatiev House in Yekaterinburg on the night of July 16–17, 1918, as White forces approached. The killings ended the Romanov dynasty and were not officially acknowledged by the Soviet state until decades later.

12. C — Promoted by President Roosevelt as a way to "lend" arms to nations whose defense was vital to U.S. security, the program eventually delivered roughly \$50 billion in aid to Britain, the Soviet Union, China, and other Allies. The act effectively ended American neutrality, made the United States the "arsenal of democracy," and proved decisive for Allied victory.

13. A — Forewarned by intelligence officers who had broken Japanese naval codes, Admiral Nimitz set a trap near Midway Atoll that destroyed the carriers Akagi, Kaga, Sōryū, and Hiryū and killed many of Japan's most experienced naval pilots. The defeat shifted the initiative in the Pacific to the United States, which then moved island by island toward the Japanese home islands.

14. B — Launched on July 16, 1969, Apollo 11 placed astronauts Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin on the Sea of Tranquility on July 20 while Michael Collins orbited above in the command module. Armstrong's "one small step for man" was broadcast live to roughly 600 million viewers worldwide, fulfilling President Kennedy's 1961 pledge to land a man on the Moon by decade's end.

15. D — Representatives of 44 Allied nations met at the Mount Washington Hotel in July 1944 to design the postwar economic order, creating the International Monetary Fund to stabilize currencies and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (the World Bank) to fund recovery. Member currencies were pegged to the U.S. dollar, which was in turn convertible into gold until the system collapsed in 1971.

16. C — Reagan unveiled the program as a research effort to deploy ground- and space-based weapons — including lasers and interceptor missiles — that could destroy Soviet ICBMs in flight. Although critics doubted SDI was technically feasible, the prospect of an arms race in space contributed to Soviet willingness to pursue arms control agreements during the late Cold War.

17. B — As crowds in Bucharest and Timișoara turned against the regime, security forces opened fire and killed protesters, but the army eventually sided with the people. The Ceaușescus were captured, tried by a hastily convened military tribunal, and shot on Christmas Day 1989, making Romania the only Warsaw Pact country whose 1989 transition produced significant bloodshed.

18. A — Massive but disciplined demonstrations in Prague, Bratislava, and other cities, supported by students, intellectuals, and the Civic Forum led by Václav Havel, persuaded the Communist Party

leadership to give up its monopoly of power without violence. By the end of 1989, Havel — once a jailed playwright — had been elected president of a newly democratic Czechoslovakia.

19. C — Released from prison in 1990 after 27 years of confinement, Mandela negotiated with President F.W. de Klerk over several years to dismantle apartheid laws and design a new constitution. The first all-race elections in April 1994 brought Mandela's African National Congress to power, and the two leaders shared the 1993 Nobel Peace Prize for their joint efforts.

20. D — After 15 years of negotiation, China joined the WTO on December 11, 2001, committing to reduce tariffs, open markets, and protect intellectual property. The move attracted enormous foreign investment, made China the workshop of the world, and helped lift hundreds of millions out of poverty, though critics blame it for hollowing out manufacturing in many Western economies.

21. B — NAFTA went into force on January 1, 1994, phasing out most tariffs and many non-tariff barriers among the three signatories and creating one of the world's largest free-trade zones. Supporters credited it with boosting cross-border investment and Mexican exports; critics blamed it for U.S. manufacturing job losses, and it was replaced in 2020 by the USMCA.

22. A — In August 2017, the Myanmar military launched "clearance operations" in Rakhine State following attacks by a small Rohingya militant group, burning villages and driving more than 700,000 Rohingya across the border into Bangladesh. UN investigators concluded the campaign was conducted with "genocidal intent," and a case is currently before the International Court of Justice.

23. C — When Houthi rebels seized the capital Sana'a in 2014, a Saudi-led coalition intervened to restore the internationally recognized government, while Iran provided support to the Houthis. Years of bombing, blockade, and ground combat have killed hundreds of thousands directly or through famine and disease, displaced millions, and made Yemen one of the worst humanitarian disasters of the 21st century.

24. B — Despite the 1994 Agreed Framework and the later Six-Party Talks, North Korea has conducted multiple nuclear tests since 2006 and continues to develop longer-range missiles. Successive rounds of UN Security Council sanctions have tightened restrictions on the country's exports and finances without halting the program, keeping the Korean peninsula a major flashpoint.

25. D — China asserts sovereignty over almost the entire sea inside its "nine-dash line," conflicting with claims from Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei, and Taiwan. The 2016 Permanent Court of Arbitration ruled against China's expansive claims under UNCLOS, but Beijing has continued to build and militarize artificial islands, making the area a focal point of U.S.-China rivalry.

26. A — Originating in the Tibetan Plateau and flowing roughly 3,200 kilometers through Pakistan to the Arabian Sea, the Indus once supported the Bronze Age cities of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro and today underpins Pakistan's economy through one of the world's largest integrated irrigation networks. Water-sharing with India is regulated by the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty, brokered by the World Bank.

27. C — Carrying enormous quantities of fine yellow silt from the Loess Plateau, the Huang He has shifted course and overflowed its banks repeatedly, including catastrophic floods such as the 1887 disaster that

may have killed over a million people. The same silt also made the surrounding plains exceptionally fertile, sustaining the wheat-and-millet civilizations that became the heart of ancient and modern China.

28. B — Running for roughly 2,250 kilometers between northeastern Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, the Red Sea links the Mediterranean (through the Suez Canal in the north) to the Indian Ocean (through the Bab el-Mandeb strait in the south). It is one of the world's busiest shipping lanes and a strategic chokepoint for oil and goods traveling between Asia and Europe.

29. D — At its narrowest point, only about 14 kilometers separate the European mainland near Tarifa, Spain from the Moroccan coast near Tangier, making the strait the principal gateway between the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea. Its strategic value has made it a focus of contestation since antiquity, and the British naval base at Gibraltar still guards the route today.

30. A — The states surrounding the Persian Gulf — Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Bahrain — together hold roughly half of the world's proven petroleum reserves and a large share of its natural gas. Their oil flows out through the Strait of Hormuz, making the region a focus of global energy security and frequent military tensions.

31. C — Roughly 1,100 kilometers long, the Korean Peninsula juts south from China and the Russian Far East, with the Yellow Sea on the west, the Sea of Japan (East Sea) on the east, and the Korea Strait separating it from Japan. Its location made it a historical bridge for cultural exchange — and a flashpoint of great-power rivalry from the Sino-Japanese War to the Korean War and beyond.

32. D — Stretching about 3,500 kilometers from the Valdai Hills northwest of Moscow southeast to the Caspian Sea, the Volga drains roughly a third of European Russia and has linked cities such as Kazan, Volgograd, and Astrakhan into a single trade network for centuries. Soviet-era canals connect it to the Don, Baltic, and White Sea systems, reinforcing its role as Russia's economic backbone.

33. B — The Iberian Peninsula covers about 580,000 square kilometers in southwestern Europe and is bounded by the Atlantic, the Mediterranean, and the Pyrenees mountains separating it from France. Spanish and Portuguese voyages from Iberian ports launched the Age of Exploration in the 15th and 16th centuries, producing vast empires across the Americas, Africa, and Asia.

34. A — Approximately 85 kilometers wide at its narrowest, the strait connects the Chukchi Sea (Arctic Ocean) to the Bering Sea (Pacific Ocean) and divides the Russian Chukotka Peninsula from the U.S. state of Alaska. During the last ice age it was a land bridge across which the earliest human migrants are believed to have moved from Asia into the Americas.

35. C — Signed by 12 nations in 1959 and now including more than 50, the Antarctic Treaty designates the continent as a scientific preserve, bans military activity and weapons testing, and freezes existing territorial claims. Subsequent protocols protect Antarctic wildlife and ban mining, making the continent a rare model of international cooperative governance.