

CONCEPTS

**OPEN FIELDS AND COMMON LAND**

Peasants cultivated open fields which were strips of land near their villages. These strips were of varying quality. This was a measure to ensure that everyone had a mix of good and bad land. Beyond these strips lay common land which was used by all to graze cattle, gather fruits and berries and firewood.

This began to change from the 16th century. Wool became important. Farmers began to enclose fields to improve sheep breeds and ensure good feed. With enclosed fields there was no concept of common land. This changed the entire landscape of England.

**Thrust in Grain Cultivation :** From the mid-18th century onwards enclosures became different. They were now for grain cultivation. English population was expanding and Britain was industrialising. People moved to urban areas. Lesser people had to produce more grains. The market for foodgrain expanded. Foodgrain prices rose. This encouraged landowners to enclose lands and enlarge the area under grain cultivation.

**Enclosures :** Foodgrain production increased as much as population. England was producing almost 80% of the foodgrain the population consumed. Crop production received a boost through various crop rotation techniques. Enclosures allowed landowners to expand the land under their control and produce more for the market.

**The Farmers — The Poor :** The poor no longer had access to the commons. They were displaced from their lands and found their customary rights disappearing. Work became uncertain, insecure and income unstable.

**Dependency on Machines — The Thresher :** During the Napoleonic wars the threshing machine was introduced to lessen dependency on labour and increase production. After the Napoleonic wars ended soldiers returned home but found no work. At the same time an agricultural depression set in. There was agricultural surplus and labourers without work.

**BREAD BASKET AND DUST BOWL**

**America the Land of Promises :** During the time of enclosed fields in England, in the USA, the white American settlers were confined to a small narrow strip in the east. By early 20th century, these Americans moved westward. America was seen as a land of promises. The American Indians were forced to give up their land and move westward. The white Americans now moved westward, cleared land and cultivated wheat.

**The Demand for Wheat :** From the late 19th century onwards there was a population increase. Export market in wheat was also becoming bigger. Demand for wheat increased. Wheat supply from Russia was cut off. During the First World War the wheat market boomed.

**The Introduction of Inventions :** New technology was introduced which aimed at increasing production. Tractors, disk ploughs, mechanical reapers, combine harvesters, etc., began to be used.

**The Poor :** The machines spelt misery for the poor farmers. Many bought machines on loan which they could not pay later. Jobs were difficult to find. Production expanded and soon there was surplus. Wheat prices fell and export markets were adversely affected. The Great American Depression ruined the farmers in the 1930s.

**Dust Bowl :** In the 1930s, great dust storms were experienced. These killed cattle and destroyed land. Farmers had cleared land of grass which rendered large areas of land coverless and dry. The sod was broken into dust.

### **THE INDIAN FARMER AND OPIUM PRODUCTION**

**Trade with China :** Opium production in India is directly linked to the British trade with China. The western merchants wanted to balance their trade with China and hence searched for a commodity that could sell in China. The English bought tea from China and the Chinese bought opium from them.

**The Opium — Its Source — India :** The Indian peasants were forced to grow opium. The British government bought this opium from them at nominal rates.

**Unwilling Cultivators :** The cultivators were unwilling to produce opium for various reasons :

- opium required fertile land
- rates paid by the British were very low
- it required looking after

The British discovered that opium produced in British territories was declining whereas in territories not under British rule the production was increasing. Traders were selling opium directly to China. This forced the British to establish its monopoly over this trade.

## **I. SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT**

### **A. NCERT TEXTBOOK QUESTIONS**

**Q.1. Explain briefly what the open field meant to rural people in eighteenth-century England.**

**Look at the system from the point of view of :**

- A rich farmer**
- A labourer**
- A peasant woman**

**Ans.** The open field system left large parts of the English countryside open. The fields were not partitioned into enclosed lands privately owned by landlords. At the beginning of the year each villager was allocated a number of strips to cultivate. These strips were usually near the villages. The usual practice was to ensure that each peasant got strips of varying quality and often located in different places, not next to each other. This was done so that everyone got a mix of good and bad land. Beyond these strips lay common land. Everyone had access to these lands and used it as ground for grazing, collecting timber for fuel, berries and fruit. The ponds had fish and rabbit for small game could be found here in abundance. This land was very important for the poor. The use of this land augmented their income, sustained their cattle and helped them tide over bad times when crops failed.

- The rich farmer** — The rich farmer was not unhappy with the system as it had been prevalent since long and hence he accepted it. He could, however, not claim land by

enclosing it. Everyone made use of it. As the price of wool went up in the world markets in the 16th century, rich farmers wanted to expand wool production to earn profits. They realised that the need was to control large areas of land in compact blocks.

- (ii) **A labourer** — A labourer worked on the land. He was satisfied with the open field system which allowed him not only land for cultivation but also common land. Activities such as fishing and hunting on the common land supplemented his meagre income. In addition, he also had another advantage, the land allocated to him for cultivation every year, was a mixture of good and bad land.
- (iii) **A peasant woman** — A peasant woman was much at ease with the open field system. The common land was a boon for her. She could gather fruits and berries and even fish in the ponds. She realised that these activities improved her financial position and helped her in times of crisis.

**Q.2. Explain briefly the factors which led to the enclosures in England. (CBSE 2010)**

**Ans.** From the 16th century onwards the economy of open fields and common lands had started changing.

With the rise in the price of wool, rich farmers wanted to expand wool production to earn profits. They wanted to improve their sheep breeds and ensure good feed for them. They wanted to do this by controlling large areas of land in compact blocks to allow improved breeding. Division and enclosing of common land started. Hedges were built around holdings to separate one's property from others.

Another factor was the new demand for grain. This happened in the 18th century. Land was being enclosed for grain production. English population expanded rapidly during the time. In addition, England during this time was industrialising. More and more people began to move to urban areas. They had to buy foodgrains from the markets.

Enclosures were required to make long-term investments on land and plan crop rotations to improve the soil.

These enclosures also allowed the richer landlords to expand land under their control and produce more for the market.

**Q.3. Why were threshing machines opposed by the poor in England? (CBSE 2010)**

**Ans.** The poor felt that if threshing machines were used in farms there would be no need for manual labour. These peasants would be without jobs and become unemployed.

**Q.4. Who was Captain Swing? What did the name symbolise or represent?**

**Ans.** Captain Swing was no name of a person. It was a mythical name used in letters. The name actually symbolised a group of people who resorted to violence to stop mechanisation in the field of agriculture as they were concerned with poor peasants losing their livelihood to machines.

**Q.5. What was the impact of the westward expansion of settlers in the USA?**

**Ans.** The westward expansion of settlers in the USA had a great impact — the grasslands were transformed into the bread basket of America.

The story of agrarian expansion is closely connected to the westward movement of the white settlers who took over the land and drove the American Indians westward.

As the Indians retreated, the settlers moved in. They slashed and burnt the forests, pulled out the stumps, cleared the land for cultivation and built log cabins in the forest clearings. They

made fences around the fields and ploughed the land to grow corn and wheat. In the early years the soil was fertile and produced good crop. But as time passed, it began to lose its fertility. The settlers swept into the Great Plains across the River Mississippi. In a few years this region became a major wheat-producing area of America.

**Q.6. What were the advantages and disadvantages of the use of mechanical harvesting machines in the USA?**

**Ans.** With the advent of the 19th century, as the settlers moved into new habitats and new lands, they modified their implements to meet their requirements. These implements and machines had many attractions. The price of wheat was high and demand limitless. These new machines allowed farmers to quickly clear tracts, break up the soil, remove the grass and prepare the ground for cultivation. The work could be done within a shorter time period and with a lesser number of labourers.

The mechanical reaper could cut in one day as much as five men could cut with cradles and 16 men with sickles. With one combine harvesters 500 acres of wheat could be harvested in two weeks. With power-driven machinery, four men could plough, seed and harvest 2,000 to 4,000 acres of wheat in a season. These were the advantages of the new technological implements.

There were, however, a few disadvantages too. For the poor, the machines were bad news. They were thrown out of their jobs and they lost their means of livelihood. Even the farmers who bought these machines were affected adversely. The machines were expensive and once the demand crossed its limit there was enough surplus grain in the market. Such farmers needed to pay back the loan they had taken from banks to buy these machines, and the farmers had no money.

**Q.7. What lessons can we draw from the conversion of the countryside in the USA from a bread basket to a dust bowl?**

**Ans.** The expansion of wheat agriculture in the Great Plains created the Dust Bowl. The American dream of a land of plenty had turned into a nightmare.

We need to learn a lesson from this. Use of land is good but overuse of land is bad. We need to realise that land is a precious natural resource which needs to be preserved and conserved. Reckless, improper and unsustainable use of any resource leads to degradation and depletion. This gives rise to serious consequences. We must realise that we need to respect the ecological conditions of each region and work towards sustainable development and look after our earth.

**Q.8. Write a paragraph on why the British insisted on farmers growing opium in India.**

**Ans.** The history of opium production in India has its links with the story of British trade with China. Since the 18th century England was buying tea and silk from China. Tea became a very popular drink and the quantity being bought increased. The East India Company realised that to make profits from this tea trade they must sell something to China which they required. England at this time produced no such thing. The Confucian rulers of China, the Manchus, at this time were suspicious of all foreign merchants. They were unwilling to allow the entry of foreign goods.

The English realised that opium was one such commodity which the Chinese would easily buy as it had already been introduced by the Portuguese. An illegal trade in opium started. But where would the opium come from? The British had conquered Bengal and here they made a determined effort to produce opium.

This was the reason why opium became an important item of trade and the British forced the Indians to grow it.

**Q.9. Why were Indian farmers reluctant to grow opium? (CBSE 2010)**

**Ans.** The Indian farmers were reluctant to grow opium because of the following reasons :

- (i) The crop had to be grown on the best land, on fields that lay near the villages and were well manured.
- (ii) This land was usually used for growing pulses. If opium was grown on fertile and well manured land then pulses would have to be grown on less fertile land and yield would not be good in quality as well as quantity.
- (iii) The cultivation of opium was difficult and time-consuming as the plants required looking after. As a consequence, the cultivators would not have time to look after their other produce.
- (iv) The farmers had to pay the rent for their land to the landlords. This rent was very high. The cultivators owned no land.
- (v) Finally, the price the government paid for the opium produce was very low and would provide the farmers with no profits.

**OTHER IMPORTANT QUESTIONS (AS PER CCE PATTERN)**

**B. MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS [1 MARK]**

**Q.1. There was a frantic effort to enclose lands in Britain because :**

- (a) From the mid-eighteenth century the English population multiplied four times from 7 million in 1750 to 30 million in 1900.
- (b) Britain was industrialising, more people began to live in urban areas, men from rural areas migrated to towns in search of jobs
- (c) As population grew, more foodgrains were needed, so land was enclosed
- (d) All the above

**Ans.** (d)

**Q.2. The continuous movement of the pastoral communities helps in**

- (a) recovery of the pastures
- (b) prevention of their overuse
- (c) reduction in the demand of houses
- (d) both A and B

**Ans.** (d)

**Q.3. Before the late 18th and early 19th century common ground was in the English countryside**

- (a) Open and not partitioned into enclosed lands privately owned by landlords
- (b) At the beginning of the year each villager was allocated a number of strips to cultivate; beyond these strips lay the common land
- (c) Here the villagers pastured their cows, grazed sheep, collected firewood and fruit for food. They fished in ponds, hunted rabbits in common forests
- (d) All the above

**Ans.** (d)

**Q.4. Which practice disappeared by 1800, drastically changing the lives of the labourers?**

- (a) Till 1800, the labourers lived with landowners, ate with their masters and helped them throughout the year doing various jobs

- (b) Now they were paid wages and employed only during harvest times
- (c) To increase their profits the landlords cut the amount they had to spend on their workers
- (d) All the above

**Ans.** (d)

**Q.5. The methods used to oust the Indian Americans were :**

- (a) numerous wars in which Indians were massacred and many villages burnt
- (b) after defeat, the Indian Americans were forced to sign treaties to give up their lands and move westwards
- (c) both (a) and (b)
- (d) peaceful negotiations

**Ans.** (c)

**Q.6. Why did the white settlers want to push away the Indian Americans from their lands?**

- (a) The land possessed by the Indians could be turned into cultivated fields
- (b) Forest timber could be exported, animals hunted for skins, mountains mined for gold and minerals
- (c) Both (a) and (b)
- (d) It was a committed policy of the US Government

**Ans.** (c)

**Q.7. Which is the most appropriate reason that exhorted rioters to destroy the threshing machines in England during the 1830s?**

- (a) It deprived workmen of their livelihood
- (b) They were indulging in loot
- (c) The countryside was partitioned into enclosed lands
- (d) Landlords wanted to earn more profits and pay less to the workers

**Ans.** (a)

**Q.8. Who was Captain Swing?**

- (a) A farmer
- (b) A labourer
- (c) A mythical name
- (d) A landlord

**Ans.** (c)

**Q.9. White American settlements were confined to a small narrow strip of coastal land in the east till the**

- (a) 1750s
- (b) 1780s
- (c) 1800s
- (d) 1850s

**Ans.** (b)

**Q.10. Which of these reasons led to a radical transformation of the landscape by the early 20th century?**

- (a) White Americans had moved westward
- (b) Local tribes were displaced
- (c) Entire landscape was carved into different agricultural belts in the USA
- (d) All the above

**Ans.** (d)

**Q.11. When did the westward movement of White Americans take place?**

- (a) During the 1610s
- (b) the 1650s
- (c) After American War of Independence
- (d) the 1800s

**Ans.** (c)

**Q.12. What were the reasons of the dust storms?**

- (a) Early 1930s were years of persistent drought
- (b) The wind blew with ferocious speed
- (c) The entire landscape had been ploughed over, stripped of all the grass that held it together
- (d) All the above

**Ans.** (d)

**Q.13. What did the settlers of the Great Plains realise after the 1930s?**

- (a) Using older methods of cultivation were better than modern machines
- (b) Competition with other countries was not healthy
- (c) They had to respect the ecological conditions of each region
- (d) None of the above

**Ans.** (c)

**Q.14. In the 19th century, the two major commercial crops India came to produce for the world market were**

- (a) indigo
- (b) opium
- (c) maize
- (d) both (a) and (b)

**Ans.** (d)

**Q.15. In the late 18th century, which of the following goods was bought by the English East India Company from China?**

- (a) tea and silk
- (b) sugar
- (c) cotton
- (d) jute

**Ans.** (a)

**Q.16. Why were the Confucian rulers of China, the Manchus, suspicious of all foreign merchants?**

- (a) The British were buying tea at very low rates
- (b) They feared that the British would interfere in local politics and disrupt their authority
- (c) China was self-sufficient and did not want to trade with any country
- (d) All the above

**Ans.** (b)

**Q.17. When did the White Americans move into the Mississippi Valley?**

- (a) 1800-1820
- (b) 1820-1850
- (c) 1850-1860
- (d) 1860-1870

**Ans.** (b)

**Q.18. Name the US President who said "Plant more wheat, wheat will win the war."**

- (a) President Roosevelt
- (b) President Clinton
- (c) President Bush
- (d) President Wilson

**Ans.** (d)

**Q.19. From 1910 to 1919, the land area under wheat cultivation in the USA had increased by about**

- (a) 50%
- (b) 65%
- (c) 75%
- (d) 80%

**Ans.** (b)

**Q.20. How much land did the wheat barons possess at this time in the USA?**

- (a) 1000-2000 acres of land
- (b) 2000-3000 acres of land
- (c) 3000-4000 acres of land
- (d) 4000-5000 acres of land

**Ans.** (b)

**Q.21. Which agricultural implement was used to mow grass before the mid-nineteenth century?**  
(a) iron sickle                      (b) axes                                      (a) scythe                                      (b) seed drill

**Ans.** (b)

**Q.22. In 1831, Cyrus McCormick invented the first mechanical reaper. What was its most important advantage?**

- (a) It could harvest 50 acres of wheat
- (b) 500 acres of wheat could be harvested in two weeks
- (c) It could cut grass on large areas
- (d) It could prepare the ground for cultivation

**Ans.** (b)

**Q.23. How did the machines bring misery to the poor?**

- (a) They had bought machines thinking that the profits would remain high
- (b) Those who had taken loans found it difficult to pay back their debts
- (c) Many of them deserted their farms and looked for jobs elsewhere
- (d) All the above

**Ans.** (d)

**Q.24. Which one of these is not the correct option for the cause of the Great Agrarian Depression in the USA?**

- (a) Production had declined rapidly
- (b) Storehouses overflowed with grain
- (c) Vast amount of corn and wheat were turned into animal feed
- (d) Wheat prices fell and export markets collapsed

**Ans.** (a)

**Q.25. Which of the following problems were created by the expansion of wheat in the Great Plains in the 1930s?**

- (a) Black blizzards                      (b) Floods                                      (c) Wars                                      (d) Earthquakes

**Ans.** (a)

**Q.26. What did the settlers of the Great Plains realise after the 1930s?**

- (a) Using older methods of cultivation were better than modern machines
- (b) Competition with other countries was not healthy
- (c) They had to respect the ecological conditions of each region
- (d) None of the above

**Ans.** (c)

**Q.27. To balance their trade, which commodity did they decide to sell in China?**

- (a) Opium                                      (b) Silk                                      (a) Spices                                      (b) Gems

**Ans.** (a)

**Q.28. What was Chinese Emperor's order about the use of opium in China?**

- (a) The British were allowed to sell opium in China
- (b) The Chinese Emperor told his people to cultivate more and more opium
- (c) The Emperor had forbidden its production and sale except for medicinal purposes
- (d) None of the above

**Ans.** (c)





**Q.38. Opium was exported from India to:** [2011 (T-2)]  
(a) China (b) Rome (c) U.K. (d) Portugal

**Ans.** (a)

**Q.39. From China the English East India Company imported:** [2011 (T-2)]  
(a) Silk and coffee (b) Silk and tea (c) Coffee and tea (d) Paper and tea

**Ans.** (b)

**Q.40. The Manchus were:** [2011 (T-2)]  
(a) Chinese rulers (b) Roman rulers (c) Indian rulers (d) Portuguese rulers

**Ans.** (a)

**Q.41. Who was the American President under whom maximum expansion of wheat cultivation took place?** [2011 (T-2)]

- (a) President Wilson (b) President Roosevelt  
(c) George Washington (d) Abraham Lincoln

**Ans.** (a)

**Q.42. Why were the Manchus not willing to allow entry of foreign goods into China?** [2011 (T-2)]

- (a) They feared that foreign merchants would meddle in local politics  
(b) They did not need foreign goods  
(c) Foreign goods were very expensive  
(d) All the above

**Ans.** (a)

**Q.43. In 1831 mechanical reaper was invented by:** [2011 (T-2)]  
(a) Cyrus McCormic (b) Dietrich Brandis (c) Alexander Hogue (d) None of the above

**Ans.** (a)

**Q.44. Under which mythical name were threatening letters written to the rich farmers in England?** [2011 (T-2)]

- (a) Captain Swing (b) Captain John (c) Captain Swaine (d) Captain Mark

**Ans.** (a)

**Q.45. Farmers in England began buying the new threshing machines because they:** [2011 (T-2)]

- (a) feared shortage of labour  
(b) wanted to show superiority by buying these machines  
(c) had enough money which they wanted to invest  
(d) None of these

**Ans.** (a)

**Q.46. Who introduced opium in China?** [2011 (T-2)]  
(a) The Dutch (b) The French (c) The American (d) The Portuguese

**Ans.** (d)

**Q.47. Which of the following became the Bread Basket of the world during 20th century?** [2011 (T-2)]

- (a) Japan (b) France (c) Russia (d) America

**Ans.** (d)

**Q.48. Which of the following systems was adopted by the British to convince the unwilling Indian cultivators to produce opium? [2011 (T-2)]**

- (a) Cheap loans (b) Advances  
(c) Collective farming (d) Scientific farming methods

**Ans.** (b)

**Q.49. Why did the ordinary dust storm took the form of Black Blizzard in US plains in the 1930s? [2011 (T-2)]**

- (a) The whole plain was an arid zone  
(b) The entire ploughed landscape was stripped of all grass  
(c) The area faced heavy flooding  
(d) There was no rainfall in the region

**Ans.** (b)

**Q.50. Why peasants protested against the threshing machines? [2011 (T-2)]**

- (a) They were dangerous (b) Difficult to operate  
(c) Deprived the workers of their livelihood (d) Too costly to buy

**Ans.** (c)

**Q.51. Why was the land enclosed in the 16th century in England? [2011 (T-2)]**

- (a) For sheep farming (b) For new houses  
(c) For new factories (d) For more foodgrains

**Ans.** (a)

**Q.52. What was the normal height of terrifying duststorms during the 1930s in USA? [2011 (T-2)]**

- (a) 5000 to 6000 feet (b) 100 to 200 feet (c) 7000 to 8000 feet (d) 700 to 800 feet

**Ans.** (c)

**Q.53. In the early 19th century which were the two major commercial crops grown in India? [2011 (T-2)]**

- (a) Sugarcane and cotton (b) Jute and cotton  
(c) Indigo and opium (d) Wheat and indigo

**Ans.** (c)

### C. SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS [3 MARKS]

**Q.1. Define the following:**

- (a) Agriculture (b) Enclosure (c) Commons

**Ans.** Agriculture : It is the science or practice of farming, i.e. cultivating land for growing crops; keeping animals.

Enclosure : Enclosing land by building hedges around their holdings to separate their land-holdings from that of others is called Enclosure. This deprived poor farmers of using the commons.

Commons : It was land which belonged to the villagers as a whole. Here they pastured their cows and grazed their sheep, collected fuelwood, fruit and berries. They fished in the rivers and ponds and hunted rabbits in the common forests.

**Q.2. Why were the poor farmers of England against the threshing machines? What was the Captain Swing Movement? (CBSE 2010)**

**Ans.** The poor farmers felt the threshing machines would replace people, would deprive them of their livelihood and render them jobless. Captain Swing was a mythical name used in threatening letters, written by workmen against the use of threshing machines by rich farmers.

**Q.3. Why were the Manchus unwilling to allow the entry of foreign goods into China?**

**Ans.** The Confucian rulers of China were suspicious of all foreign merchants. They felt that these foreigners would meddle in local politics and disrupt their authority.

**Q.4. 'Over the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the English countryside changed dramatically.' Explain.**

**Ans.** Over the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the English countryside changed dramatically. Before this time, in large parts of England the countryside was open. It was not partitioned into enclosed lands privately owned by landlords. It was all open fields and common lands.

After the mid-eighteenth century the Enclosure Movement swept through the countryside, changing the English landscape forever. Between 1750 and 1850, 6 million acres of land was enclosed.

**Q.5. Explain three factors which led to the Enclosure Movement in England after the mid-eighteenth century. (CBSE 2010)**

**OR**

**Explain any three causes which led to the enclosure movement in England.**

**Ans.** The factors which led to the Enclosure Movement in England were : (1) Rapid expansion of population from 7 million in 1750 to 21 million in 1850 and 30 million in 1900. (2) Increased demand for foodgrains to feed the growing population. (3) War with France disrupted trade and import of foodgrains from Europe. Prices in England skyrocketed, encouraging landowners to enclose lands and enlarge the area under grain cultivation. Profits flowed in and landowners pressurised the parliament to pass the Enclosure Acts.

**Q.6. Discuss why the British Parliament passed the Enclosure Acts. (CBSE 2010)**

**Ans.** Till the middle of the eighteenth century the Enclosure Movement proceeded very slowly. The early enclosures were usually created by individual landlords. They were not supported by the state or the Church. After the mid-eighteenth century, however, the Enclosure Movement swept through the countryside, changing the English landscape forever. Between 1750 and 1850, 6 million acres of land was enclosed. The British Parliament no longer watched this progress from a distance. It passed 4,000 Acts legalising these Enclosures.

**Q.7. What was the effect of Enclosure Movement on landlords of England? (CBSE 2010)**

**Ans.** The Enclosure Movement was instrumental in making the rich landlords richer by filling. Due to it, the landlords brought various changes in agricultural methods and technology. The richer farmers expanded grain production, sold this grain in the world market, made profits and became powerful. The poor farmers sold their small land pieces to richer farmers. They left the villages.

**Q.8. Enclosure filled the pockets of landlords. What happened to the poor persons who depended on the commons for their survival?**

**Ans.** Enclosures filled the pockets of the rich landlords. When fences came up the enclosed land

become the property of one landowner. The poor could no longer collect apples and berries or hunt small animals for meat, nor could they gather the stalks that lay on the fields after the crop was cut. Everything belonged to the landlord, everything had a price which the poor could not afford to pay. The poor were displaced from the land. They tramped in search of work. From Midlands they moved to the southern countries of England.

**Q.9. Explain three reasons for Captain Swing riots in English countryside.**

**Ans.** Modern agriculture in England: Use of threshing machines deprived workmen of their livelihood.

Enclosures : These deprived the poor of the use of the commons which was essential for their survival. The Enclosures barred them from pasturing their cows, collecting fruits and berries, fuel wood, hunting small animals for food etc., cutting of wages by landlords and cutting down of workmen. All these factors prompted/induced the poor to start the Captain Swing riots.

**Q.10. Discuss the effect of Agricultural Revolution on different sections of people in English countryside. (CBSE 2010)**

**Ans.** The coming of modern agriculture in England led to many different changes. The open fields disappeared, and the customary rights of peasants were undermined. The richer farmers expanded grain production, sold this grain in the world market, made profits, and became powerful. The poor left their villages in large numbers. Some went from Midlands to the southern countries where jobs were available, others to the cities. The income of labourers became unstable, their jobs insecure, their livelihoods precarious.

**Q.11. Which innovations helped farmers to increase agricultural production in England? (CBSE 2010)**

**Ans.** First new lands were brought under cultivation landlords sliced up pasture lands, carved up open fields, cut up forests, took over marshes. The farmers started growing turnips and clover as they discovered that these crops improved the soil and made it more fertile. Turnip was also good fodder for the cattle. So they became part of cropping system.

They also realised that nitrogen was important for crop growth. Turnip and clover restored the nitrogen and made the soil fertile again.

**Q.12. Describe how the Chinese became addicted to opium in the 19th century. (CBSE 2010)**

**Ans.** The Portuguese had introduced opium into China in the early 16th century. It was known for its medical properties and minimal quantities were used for certain type of medicines. The Chinese were aware of the dangers of opium addiction and the emperor had forbidden its production and sale except for medicinal purposes. But western merchants began an illegal trade in opium in the mid-18th century. They unloaded it in a number of seaports of south-eastern China. By the 1820s, about 10,000 crates were being annually smuggled into China, 35,000 crates unloaded every year after 15 years. Thus, the Chinese became addicted to opium.

**Q.13. Explain one main difference between the Enclosure Movement of the late 18th century and the earlier one? What factors led the British Parliament to pass the Enclosure Acts? (CBSE 2010)**

**Ans.** Refer to Answer 6, Short Answer Type Questions.

**Q.14. Why did the British smuggle opium into China? Explain briefly. (CBSE 2010)**

**Ans.** The British had developed a taste for Chinese tea, and the Chinese had become addicted to opium. In 1839 there were 4 million opium smokers in China. As opium trade was banned in

China, the British smuggled opium to China. In 1870, they were exporting 50,000 chests of opium annually and the return from opium sale financed the purchase of tea in China.

**Q.15. Coming of modern agriculture in England meant many changes. Discuss. (CBSE 2010)**

**Ans.** Refer to Question 10, Short Answer Type Questions.

**Q.16. State the factors responsible for rapid increase of foodgrain production in 19th century in England. (CBSE 2010)**

**Ans.** Refer to Answer 11, Short Answer Type Questions.

**Q.17. Explain two methods adopted by the British farmers to meet the demand of the rapidly growing population of the 19th century? (CBSE 2010)**

**Ans.** Refer to Answer 11, Short Answer Type Questions.

**Q.18. Explain any two reasons for enclosure of land in the 18th century in England. (CBSE 2010)**

**Ans.** Refer to Answer 6, Short Answer Type Questions.

**Q.19. Explain how two technological innovations transformed the USA into the bread basket of the world. (CBSE 2010)**

- Ans.** (i) The innovation of using tractors and disk ploughs to clear vast stretches for wheat cultivation.  
(ii) In 1831, Cyrus McCormick invented the mechanical reaper which could cut in one day as much as five men could cut with cradles and 16 men with sickles. By early 19th century, farmers were using combined harvesters to cut grain – 500 acres of wheat could be harvested in two weeks by these machines.

#### D. LONG ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS [4 MARKS]

**Q.1. Why did the farmers feel the need to introduce mechanisation in agriculture during the Napoleonic wars?**

**Ans.** During the Napoleonic wars, prices of foodgrains were high and farmers expanded production vigorously. Fearing a shortage of labour, they began buying the new threshing machines that had come into the market. They complained of the insolvency of labourers, their drinking habits and the difficulty of making them work. The machines, they thought, would help them reduce their dependence on labourers.

**Q.2. Discuss the factors that precipitated the Agricultural Depression. What were the consequences of this Depression? How was the Captain Swing Movement related to this Depression?**

**Ans.** After the Napoleonic wars had ended, thousands of soldiers returned to the villages. They needed alternative jobs to survive. But this was a time when grain from Europe began flowing into England, prices declined and an Agricultural Depression set in. Anxious landowners began reducing the area they cultivated and demanded that the exports of crops be stopped. They tried to cut wages and the number of workmen they employed. The unemployed poor tramped from village to village, and those with uncertain jobs lived in fear of a loss of their livelihood. The Captain Swing riots spread in the countryside at this time. For the poor, the threshing machines had become sign of bad times.

**Q.3. Discuss the westward expansion of the white settlers in America.**

**Ans.** The story of agrarian expansion is closely connected to the westward movement of the white settlers who took over the land. After the American War of Independence from 1775 to 1783

and the formation of the United States of America, the white Americans began to move westward. By the time Thomas Jefferson became the President of the USA in 1800, over 700,000 white settlers had moved into Appalachian plateau through the passes.

**Q.4. What were the problems associated with wheat expansion in USA? Discuss with special reference to mechanisation and 'dust bowl'.**

**Ans.** In the late 19th century, there was a great expansion of wheat cultivation in the USA. With an increase in population, demand for wheat was rising. The expansion was made possible by new technology. Implements and tools were modified to suit their needs. Now farmers were using tractors and disk ploughs to clear land for cultivation. Mechanical reapers were used to reap and cut harvest. By the early 20th century, combined harvesters were being used to cut grain. Now with power-driven machinery large tracts of land could be ploughed, seeded, harvested within a short time.

But there were problems. Poor farmers were hard hit. They could not buy these machines. The bank offered loans but most of them could not repay these loans. Many of them left their farms in search of a job. In addition, terrifying dust storms began to blow, blinding the people, choking the cattle, covering fields, rivers, machines with dust. This was because the entire area had been ploughed and stripped of grass whose roots could have bounded the soil.

**Q.5. Why were the farmers of Bengal unwilling to grow opium in their farms? (CBSE 2010)**

**Ans.** (1) The Indian farmers were reluctant to grow opium in their farms because it had to be grown on the best land, near the villages and it had to be well manured.  
(2) This land was usually used for growing pulses. If opium was grown on less fertile land and yield would not be good in quality and quantity.  
(3) Cultivation of opium was difficult and time-consuming. As a result, the cultivators would not have time to look after their other produce.  
(4) The farmers had to pay rent for the land. This rent was quite high.  
(5) Finally the prices paid by the government were very low and brought no profit to the farmer.

**Q.6. Which system was introduced by the British to make the unwilling cultivators produce opium? How did this system work? Discuss with special reference to it being a drawback for the peasants.**

**Ans.** The unwilling cultivators were made to produce opium by the British through a system of advances. In the rural areas of Bengal and Bihar, there were a large number of poor peasants. They never had enough to survive. It was difficult for them to pay rent to the landlord or to buy food and clothing. The government's opium agents advanced money to them through the headmen of their village. They felt tempted to accept it, hoping to meet their immediate needs and pay back the loan at a later date. But the loan tied the peasant to the headmen and through him to the government. By taking the loan the cultivator was forced to grow opium on a specified area of land and hand over the produce to the agents once the crop had been harvested.

**Q.7. 'After the 1930s, the Americans realised that they had to respect the ecological conditions of each region.' How did they learn this lesson?**

**Ans.** The early 1930s were years of persistent drought. The rains failed year after year and temperatures soared. The wind blew with ferocious speed. The ordinary storms became black blizzards. This was due to the fact that the entire landscape had been ploughed over, stripped of all grass that held it together. Farmers had recklessly uprooted all vegetation; tractors had

turned the soil over and broken the soil into dust. The whole region had become a dust bowl. After the 1930s, they realised that they had to respect the ecological conditions of each region.

**Q.8. 'The history of opium production in India was linked up with the story of British trade with China.' Elaborate.**

**Ans.** The history of opium production in India was linked up with the story of British trade with China. The English East India Company was buying tea and silk from China for sale in England. As tea became a popular English drink, tea trade became more and more important. This created a problem. England at this time was producing nothing that could easily be sold in China. How to finance the tea trade?

They searched for such a commodity. The Portuguese had introduced opium into China. Western merchants began an illegal trade in opium. While the English cultivated a taste for Chinese tea, the Chinese became addicted to opium.

**Q.9. Discuss the reasons for the Opium Wars (1837-42).**

**Ans.** In 1839, the Chinese Emperor sent Lin-Ze-xu to Canton as a Special Commissioner with instructions to stop the opium trade. After he arrived in Canton in the spring of 1839, Lin arrested 1,600 men involved in the trade and confiscated 11,000 pounds of opium. He forced the factories to hand over their stocks of opium, burnt 20,000 crates of opium and blew the ashes to the wind.

When he announced that Canton was closed to foreign trade Britain declared war. Defeated in the Opium War (1837–42) the Chinese were forced to accept the humiliating terms of the subsequent treaties, legalising opium trade and opening up China to foreign merchants.

**Q.10. 'The conflict between the British government, peasants and local traders continued as long as opium production lasted.' Elaborate.**

**Ans.** By 1773, the British Government in Bengal had established a monopoly to trade in opium. No one else was legally permitted to trade in the product. By the 1820s, the British taxed opium production in their territories to make it declining, but it was increasing outside British territories, specially in central India and Rajasthan within princely states, which are not under direct British control. The British tried to stop it. It instructed its agents in princely states to confiscate all opium and destroy the crops.

This conflict between the British Government, peasants and local traders continued as long as opium production lasted.

**Q.11. Discuss the following :**

**(a) how the grasslands were converted into the bread basket of America?**

**(b) problems faced and consequences that followed.**

**Ans.** (a) In the late 19th century, there was great expansion of wheat cultivation in USA. The export market was becoming bigger, coupled with the increase in urban population. The demand for wheat was rising. Prices touched the sky which encouraged farmers to grow more. The construction of railway lines made transportation of wheat easier and faster from the wheat growing areas to the east coast for export. During the First World War, the world market was at a high. Russian wheat supplies were cut off. The USA was left as the only supplier to Europe. In the first decade of the 19th century there was about 45 million acres of land in the USA under wheat cultivation. In the next ten years the area increased to 74 million acres. The major increase was in the Great Plains where new areas were being ploughed to increase production. This expansion was made possible by new technology. Implements and tools were modified and redesigned to suit their needs. Now,



by the early 20th century, farmers in the Great Plains were using tractors and disk ploughs to clear land for wheat cultivation. Mechanical reapers were used to reap and cut the harvest. By the early 20th century, combined harvesters were being used to cut grain. Now with power-driven machinery large tracts of land could be ploughed, seeded and harvested within a short time.

- (b) But there were problems. The poor farmers were hard hit. They could not buy these machines. The banks offered loans but most of them could not repay these loans. Many of them left their farms and went away in search of jobs. Mechanisation had reduced the need for labour. Jobs were very scarce. By the mid-1920s the Agricultural Boom came to an end. Most farmers were faced with problems. As production was at a high there were surplus wheat stocks everywhere. Markets were flooded with corn and wheat. Prices fell and export markets collapsed. This became a cause of the Great Agrarian Depression of the 1930s. This depression ruined farmers everywhere.

In addition, terrifying duststorms began to blow over the southern plains. People were blinded and cattle choked, fields, rivers and implements covered with dust. This was because the entire area had been ploughed and stripped of grass whose roots had bound the soil. The entire region was transformed from the Bread Basket to the Dust Bowl.

**Q.12. Explain the factors which led to the enclosures in England? [2011 (T-2)]**

**OR**

**What was the Enclosure System? Mention any two factors which encouraged the Enclosure system. [2011 (T-2)]**

**Ans.** The sixteenth century enclosures were prompted by sheep farming. The late 18th century enclosure movement was for more and more grain production.

- (i) Between 1750 and 1900, the English population expanded rapidly – from 7 million in 1750 to 21 million in 1850 and 30 million in 1900. This meant an increased demand for foodgrains to feed the population.
- (ii) Britain was fast industrialising. There was mass migration of people from villages to towns to work in factories. To survive they had to buy foodgrains in the market. As the urban population multiplied, the market for foodgrains expanded and foodgrain prices rose. Thus farmers were encouraged to grow more and more crops. Hence, the enclosure movement.
- (iii) By the close of the 18th century, France was at war with England. This disrupted trade and the import of foodgrains from Europe. Prices of foodgrains soared encouraging landowners to enclose lands and enlarge the area under grain cultivation.
- (iv) As profits multiplied the landowners pressurised the Parliament to pass the Enclosure Acts.

**Q.13. 'Seen from the east coast, America seemed to be the land of promise.' Explain. [2011 (T-2)]**

**Ans.** After the formation of the United States of America, the white Americans began to move westward. By 1800, over seven lakh white settlers had moved on to the Appalachian plateau through the passes. Seen from the east coast, America seemed to be a land of promise, of vast richness. Its wilderness could be turned into cultivated fields to grow crops. Forest timber could be cut for export, animals hunted for skin, rich mines in the mountains could be mined for gold and other precious minerals. To achieve this, the American Indians had to be driven further west.

**Q.14. Explain any two advantages and two disadvantages of the Enclosure Movement in England. [2011 (T-2)]**

**Ans. Advantages :**

- (i) The Enclosure movement made England self-sufficient in foodgrains. Grain production grew as quickly as population. In 1868 England produced about 80 percent of the food it consumed.
- (ii) Enclosures prompted the landlords to make long-term investments on land and plan crop rotations to improve the soil. Enclosures allowed landlords to expand the land under their control and produce more for the market. Enclosures filled the pockets of landlords and made them very rich.

**Disadvantages :**

- (i) The poor were hard hit. They could no longer collect their firewood from the forests, or graze their cattle on the commons. They could no longer gather apples, berries, or hunt animals for meat. Everything belonged to the landlords and poor were left helpless and miserable.
- (ii) In areas of extensive enclosures, the poor were displaced from the land. Deprived of their customary rights, the poor people tramped in search of work. But nowhere could the poor find secure jobs. Work became insecure, employment uncertain, income unstable. For a large part of the year the poor had no work.

**Q.15. State any four major features of the 'Open Field' system which prevailed in England in the 18th and early 19th century. [2011 (T-2)]**

- Ans.**
- (i) Before this period, in large parts of England, the countryside was open. It was not partitioned into enclosed lands privately owned by landlords.
  - (ii) Peasants cultivated on strips of land around the village they lived in. Every peasant had a mix of good and bad land.
  - (iii) Beyond the strips of cultivation lay the common land. All villagers had access to the common. Here they pastured their cows and grazed sheep, collected food, fuel and fodder and a variety of fruits. They fished in the rivers and ponds and hunted rabbits in common forests.
  - (iv) For the poor, the common land was very necessary for survival. It supplemented their meagre income, sustained their cattle and helped them tide over bad times when the crops failed. Poor peasants led a comfortable and secure life.

**Q.16. Explain two advantages and two disadvantages of mechanical harvesting machines in USA. [2011 (T-2)]**

**Ans. Advantages :**

- (i) In 1831, Cyrus McCormick invented the first mechanical reaper which could cut in one day as much as five men could cut with cradles and 16 men with sickles. With one of the combined harvesters, 500 acres of wheat could be harvested in two weeks.
- (ii) The prices of wheat were high and the demand limitless. With power-driven machinery, only four men could plough, seed and harvest 2,000 to 4,000 acres of wheat in a season. This helped landlords to earn more and more profit.

**Disadvantages :**

- (i) For the poorer farmers, machines brought misery. Many of them bought these machines with the loans offered to them. Those who borrowed, found it difficult to pay back their debts. Many of them deserted their farms and looked for jobs elsewhere.

- (ii) Production had expanded rapidly and there was a huge surplus. Wheat prices fell and export markets collapsed. This led to Great Agrarian Depression of 1930s.

**Q.17. How was the USA converted into a dust bowl from a bread basket? Describe any four reasons. [2011 (T-2)]**

- Ans.** (i) The early 1930s were years of persistent drought. The rains failed year after year and temperature soared.
- (ii) The wind blew with ferocious speed causing terrible dust storms.
- (iii) The entire landscape had been ploughed over again and again, stripped of all grass that held it together.
- (iv) Zealous farmers had recklessly uprooted all vegetation, and tractors had turned the soil cover, and broken the sod into dust. The whole region had turned into a nightmare.
- Thus the American dream of a plenty had turned into a nightmare.

**Q.18. Why the poor of England were opposed to the threshing machines? [2011 (T-2)]**

- Ans.** The threshing machines led to riots and looting as poor of England opposed them. This directly affected their livelihood. They lost jobs and became unemployed. Work became insecure, employment uncertain and income unstable. For most of the year the poor had no work. The income of labourers became unstable, their jobs insecure, their livelihood precarious.

## II. FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT

### A. PROJECT

- Topic covered** : The Age of Enclosures in England
- Objective** : To create awareness about the background of the agricultural revolution in England which eventually led to the Industrial Revolution.
- Skills Developed** : Critical thinking. An understanding about the inter-connectedness among Enclosure Movements – Agriculture Revolution – Industrial Revolution.
- Time Required** : 3 - 4 days.
- Method** : (a) Focus on the causes of the Enclosure Movement; the time of upper fields and commons; and the effect of enclosures on landlords and on the poor people.
- (b) Explain how the Enclosure Movement was a precursor to the agricultural revolution which began in England.
- (c) Give your own views on the whole process in conclusion.

### B. ACTIVITIES

- (1) Suppose you are a forty years old person living in China in the 1830s. You are serving as an officer in China. The emperor has instructed you to prepare a leaflet for young people advising them not to take opium. You have to highlight the harmful effects of opium on the human body. Design your poster / leaflet. Give it an eye-catching title.
- (2) Imagine that you are the leader of a group of farmers in Bihar protesting against having to grow opium. You have been granted a meeting with the local official of the East India Company. How would the conversation proceed? Divide the class into two groups and act out the conversation you would have.

### C. ASSIGNMENT

Draw a timeline from 1650 to 1930 showing the significant agricultural changes which you have read about in this chapter.

Ans.

#### OPEN FIELDS & COMMON LANDS SYSTEM

