General Knowledge Quiz

Use this key to check answers and read the explanations.

1. Which artist painted the Mona Lisa?
   - A. Leonardo da Vinci
   - B. Raphael
   - C. Michelangelo
   - D. Sandro Botticelli

   Correct answer: A. Leonardo da Vinci
   Leonardo made the portrait, which the Louvre identifies as a painting of Lisa Gherardini.

2. Which month gains an extra date in a Gregorian leap year?
   - A. March
   - B. January
   - C. February
   - D. December

   Correct answer: C. February
   February 29 brings the calendar year to 366 days.

3. Which quantity would a meteorologist read from a barometer?
   - A. Wind speed
   - B. Air pressure
   - C. Relative humidity
   - D. Rainfall total

   Correct answer: B. Air pressure
   A barometer measures atmospheric pressure. Changes in pressure can help forecasters track weather systems.

4. Which system represents letters with groups of short and long signals commonly called dots and dashes?
   - A. The phonetic alphabet
   - B. Braille
   - C. Semaphore
   - D. Morse code

   Correct answer: D. Morse code
   A telegraph operator could send a letter as a specific pattern of brief and longer pulses.

5. Which stone gives the main mausoleum of the Taj Mahal its pale exterior?
   A. Light sandstone
   B. White marble
   C. Pale limestone
   D. White granite
   Correct answer: B. White marble
   The mausoleum is faced in polished white marble. Other buildings in the complex use red sandstone.

6. The Odyssey is traditionally attributed to which ancient Greek poet?
   A. Homer
   B. Sappho
   C. Hesiod
   D. Pindar
   Correct answer: A. Homer
   The Odyssey is traditionally credited to Homer and follows Odysseus on his long journey home.

7. Which ocean receives the Amazon River as it reaches Brazil's coast?
   A. Southern Ocean
   B. Pacific Ocean
   C. Indian Ocean
   D. Atlantic Ocean
   Correct answer: D. Atlantic Ocean
   The Amazon crosses northern Brazil and discharges into the Atlantic near the Equator.

8. Which sport began as a YMCA game called Mintonette?
   A. Basketball
   B. Badminton
   C. Volleyball
   D. Table tennis
   Correct answer: C. Volleyball
   William G. Morgan invented the game in 1895. It acquired the name volleyball because players volleyed the ball across the net.

9. What does a flying buttress chiefly do on a Gothic cathedral?
   A. Transfers force from a high wall to an outer support
   B. Channels rainwater into a cistern
   C. Lets bell ropes reach the floor
   D. Supports temporary boards for painters
   Correct answer: A. Transfers force from a high wall to an outer support
   An exterior arch carries outward force from the upper wall to a separate support, helping stabilize the tall structure.

10. When a scientist reports a quantity in joules, what quantity can that unit express?

A. Pressure
B. Power
C. Electric current
D. Energy

Correct answer: D. Energy
The joule is the SI unit for energy and work. Power is energy transferred per unit time and is measured in watts.

11. Which language on the Rosetta Stone helped scholars interpret the two Egyptian scripts?

A. Aramaic
B. Latin
C. Ancient Greek
D. Old Persian

Correct answer: C. Ancient Greek
The stone records the same decree in Egyptian hieroglyphs, Demotic script, and Ancient Greek. Scholars could already read the Greek text.

12. What does dendrochronology compare to date historic timbers?

A. The thickness of bark
B. Patterns in tree rings
C. The color of tree sap
D. Counts of branch scars

Correct answer: B. Patterns in tree rings
Growth rings often vary in width from year to year. A distinctive sequence can be matched against a dated regional record.

13. Which traditional navigation instrument uses mirrors to sight the horizon and a star at once?

A. Barograph
B. Magnetic compass
C. Marine chronometer
D. Sextant

Correct answer: D. Sextant
A sextant measures the angle between the horizon and a celestial object. Navigators used that angle with time and other observations to work out their position.

14. Which composer's Ninth Symphony is commonly called From the New World?

A. Antonín Dvořák
B. Johannes Brahms
C. Gustav Mahler
D. Jean Sibelius

Correct answer: A. Antonín Dvořák
Dvořák wrote the symphony while living in the United States. Its first performance was at Carnegie Hall in 1893.

15. Which mineral typically forms the thin plates in the shell lining called mother-of-pearl?

A. Gypsum
B. Quartz
C. Aragonite
D. Mica

Correct answer: C. Aragonite
Mother-of-pearl, or nacre, consists of aragonite plates arranged in layers with organic material between them.