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SECTION 2真题原题破解 历史出现3次：分别是 2009年2月28日；2008年6月21日；2007年5月12日考题 此题还会在未来考试出现！！ Venus Transit加入收藏 A. There is a common

misconception that science, like most features of the modern world, started in the 19th century, with earlier time swallowed in the dusk of ignorance. But the onset of modern science occurred no later than the 17th century. It was then that major breakthroughs were made in understanding the workings of the universe through the work of Galileo, Kepler and especially of Newton, who, in 1687, determined that the planets moved because there was no force to stop them, and that they circled the Sun because of gravity, a universal force of attraction between all bodies. B. In the 18th century science continued to flourish. There were discoveries about the nature of gas, about electricity and about chemical reactions. The Swedish scientist Carolus Linnaeus developed schemes for classifying plants and animals based on the concept of individual species in relational hierarchies. Within this growing framework of science, some of the first great questions were addressed. How large is the solar system? How distant is the Sun from the Earth? C. Most of us probably heard the phrase "transit of Venus" or "transit of Mercury" during primary school, in connection with Captain Cooks observation of the transit of Mercury at Mercury Bay, on the Coromandel Peninsula. It is a

phrase of some significance in the development of science. But what does it mean? When Venus or Mercury passes directly between Earth and the Sun, the planet can be seen (with the proper equipment) as a small black circle against the large brilliant orb of the Sun. Such events are known as transits. In 1663, James Gregory suggested that observation of a transit from widely spaced locations on Earth could yield an accurate estimate of the distance between the Earth and the Sun. D. Jeremiah Horrocks, a young Englishman with a passion for astronomy, was the first person to accurately calculate the time of a transit and then observe it. From 3:15 P.M. on November 24, 1639, the 20-year-old watched a small black spot creep across the lower left side of the sun. A telescope in his darkened room projected the image onto a card. Using trigonometry and such other limited information as was available, he estimated the size of Venus and the solar distance. While his estimate (59 million miles) was only about half the actual distance of the Earth to the Sun, it was better by a factor of ten than anyone else's up to that time. Horrocks died at the age of 22, almost unknown, but his observations gradually seeped out into the astronomical community. E. By the time of the long predicted transits of Venus in 1761 and 1769, an international collaboration of observers had been set up under the direction of the French astronomer Delisle—although hostilities between France and England did little to assist matters. The frigate on which Charles Mason and George Dixon had been dispatched to observe the transit from South Africa was attacked by the French while en route to the Cape. F. Guillaume le Gentil set out

to observe the event from Pondicherry, in the south of India, but didn't arrive until after it had taken place. The luckless le Gentil stayed on in the area for eight more years, getting ready to observe the 1769 transit, which was completely obscured by cloud—the only bad morning in an otherwise clear month. When he eventually returned to France, he found that he had been given up for dead, and relatives had divided up his estate. So much for the rewards of science!

G. In 1761, the transit was observed from 62 sites around the world, with 120 observers—French, British, Danish, German, Italian, Dutch, Swedish, and Portuguese. The outcome was inconclusive, but waves of enthusiastic effort were renewed for 1769, when there were 63 sites and 138 observers. Although hostilities between the French and British had only recently diminished, the French were reported to have instructed their forces not to molest Cook, as he was on a mission of service to all mankind. When the calculations were later averaged, the distance estimated was within a million miles of the actual distance of 93 million—a laudable effort.

H. Observing the transit of Venus was the first great act of international scientific co-operation, and it involved generous financial support by both government and commercial bodies. (The East India Company, for example, provided free passage to India for observers.) The work was underpinned by organisations which existed to sponsor science. In Britain this was the Royal Society, founded in 1663 by a group of philosophers who met in London to exchange views on "experimental philosophy" (the word science was not used until the 1820s). In France, at about the same time, the Academy des Sciences

and the Académie Française were established. The societies were clearing houses which published scientific papers and provided access to scientific work to the wider community. I. Public attitudes to science were also undergoing a change at this time. Up until the 17th century, astronomy was a semi-secret activity pursued only by a few experts who were in danger of religious persecution. But by the 18th century everyone was agog for celestial news. French newspapers covered the story of the transit of Venus with the same enthusiasm modern media might cover a mission to Mars. Part of this change was provoked when people found that scientific discovery could be applied for fun and profit in the real world. Newtonian philosophers became involved in engineering projects: pumps to put air into and take water from mines, and to supply water. Mathematics became linked with the new insurance business-the Sun Insurance Company was founded soon after 1700. J. Part of the excitement over science also sprang from a sense of liberation shared by the non-scientific community as reason swept aside superstition and dogma. It was felt to be a time of enlightenment. Yet by the end of the century, intellectuals found that that they had jumped too soon, and that science did not assuage the pain of being human. It has taken nearly two centuries to resume "the quest for enlightenment," to use the words of sociobiologist Edward O. Wilson, who considers that a web of causal explanations for all aspects of human existence can now, at last, be seriously contemplated.

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