Life in Harappan Civilization

This activity and trail book is designed to support the history, visual art curriculum in Indian schools and for general interest.

The trail explores a selection of objects from this ancient civilization to understand the life in the Indus Valley.

Time: 50 minutes

Suitable for: 8 + years

Access: The Trail begins on the Ground Floor in the Harappan Gallery. To complete the trail follow instructions in the book. Make sure you have a pencil and eraser with you. Enjoy!
About 5000 years ago, a highly advanced urban civilization called the Indus Valley or Harappan Civilization, existed along the river Indus.

Their towns were well planned and they had brick houses which were situated along the roads. Every house was equipped with a staircase, a kitchen and several rooms. Their courtyards had wells, bathrooms and they had proper drainage systems.

The Harappans wore ornaments made of gold, silver, ivory, shell, clay, semi-precious stones and others. They made figurines and toys and a variety of seals. They farmed the land near their cities, and grew wheat, barley, cotton, dates and other fruits. They traded with other world civilizations like Mesopotamia in Iraq & Iran.

Get ready to sail on the Indus river as this trail leads you on a voyage to discover the ancient Harappan people and treasures in the National Museum.

Enjoy your visit!
Can you write the names of the present day countries where these 3 ancient civilizations originated

Names of the Countries

Nile Valley Civilization

Yellow River Civilization

Mesopotamian Civilization

The area covered by the Harappan Civilization extended from Sutkagendor on the Makran coast about 500 km west of Karachi (now in Pakistan) to Alamgirpur on the river Hindon, near Delhi and from Manda in Jammu to Daimabad in Maharashtra.
The Harappan civilization was known for its accurate town planning and roads that were wide and straight.

Can you find 2 objects in the gallery which were part of a Harappan building in the Citadel area?

Can you locate the showcase in the gallery which shows crops and fruits that were grown by Harappan people?

Now look at the crops, fruits and vegetables below. Are any of them from Harappan times? Tick if yes and cross if no.

When you find them, try to draw and name the objects in the space provided below.

Can you guess which part of the building it must have been?

Can you find 2 objects in the gallery which were part of a Harappan building in the Citadel area?
Tools and Metallurgy

Bronze, copper, gold and silver were the metals known to Harappan people. Their agricultural implements and many of the household utensils were made of copper and bronze.

Find the showcase in the gallery with objects shown below. Think & discuss what could have been the use of each object.

Write your answers in the boxes.

Axe
Double sided Axe
Spear
Spear Head

Dancing Girl

She gets the name ‘dancing girl’ because of her posture. She is shown in her elaborate bangles and her expression looks confident. She has been made using the “Lost Wax Process”, which is still being practised in many parts of India.

Imagine that you are an archaeologist and have found this object in an excavation at Mohenjodaro.

What other title would you like to give this masterpiece?
Harappan children and their toys

The gallery has showcases with little toys and animal figurines which were made for children and for decoration. These toys were representations of animals found in the Harappan civilization.

Now, look around the gallery to spot at least 7 toys/figurines of different animals. Identify the animals represented and write their names on the leaves below.

Trade and seals

The Harappan economy was based on trade. Traders used seals to represent their guilds which they belonged to. Seals were used for transactions in trade and also as official stamps issued on their behalf.

Explore the gallery and sketch 3 different shapes of seals and identify their materials in the boxes.

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Imagine that you own a big dockyard in the Harappan city. You are going to receive a consignment of grain from Mesopotamia. How will you bring the grain from the port in Lothal, Gujarat to the city granary and then to the Harappan market?

Find the image shown here and number the boxes as per the steps.

**Steps**

- Storing in the shops.
- Loading on the bullock cart.
- Unloading from the cart and storing in the godowns.
- Grinding the grains in stone mortars.
- Distributing in portions and handing over to the Merchants.
- Husking the grain.
- Unloading from the boats.
Harappan Women

Tasks:

- Weaving shawls
- Cooking delicious food
- Decorating household objects
- Storing grains and collecting water
- Religious activities
- Grinding wheat

Objects excavated and preserved in this gallery are links which tell us about the daily life and responsibilities of the Harappan people.

Now go around the gallery and spot objects that tell you about the activities of Harappan people.

Can you sketch or try to sketch the objects which represents these activities? You can continue doing this at home too! But do try one or two now.
The Harappan people often made Terracotta jars and painted them with a red slip. They were then decorated with concentric circle patterns and motifs of the Peepal leaf, peacocks, animal figures and others.

The jar is painted with animal and floral designs. It was probably used to store grain and other things. These huge jars were made in two separate parts on potter's wheel. These jars were often used in burials or to make offerings to the dead.

With these image as reference, find the following jars and think what could have been there possible use.

A long perforated jar.
Possible use ......................................

A flat bottom Jar with a small opening and beautiful design.
Possible use ......................................
Burial and tradition

The people of Harappan Civilization probably believed in life after death, as they offered materials as grave offerings. The offerings buried with the dead usually included pottery and grain. Look at the skeleton of a woman that was found wearing ornaments like bangles, necklaces and others.

Find the showcase with the skeleton of a Harappan woman

Can you list 3 objects that she might have used in her lifetime?
Tell us how you found this activity book

- It was Informative
- I had Fun
- I want to do more activities?
- I know a little more about Harappans now

Archaeological evidence & material life span

With the help of objects collected from archaeological excavations we are able to record, study and know about the civilization which is 5000 years old.

Can you fill the clouds with 4 different names of materials that the Harappan objects are made of?

I am ........ yrs old

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