

CBSE Notes Class 6 History Chapter 3 - In the Earliest Cities

CBSE Notes Class 6 History Chapter 3 - In the Earliest Cities, describes the story of the Harappa civilization and Harappan cities. The chapter ends with the mystery of how the Harappa civilization got destroyed. Go through the notes to know the complete story of the Harappa.

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The story of Harappa

Harappa was one of the oldest cities in the subcontinent, which archaeologists found 80 years ago. This was the first city to be discovered. All other cities where buildings similar to Harappa were found, were described as Harappan.

What was special about Harappan cities?

These cities were divided into 2 or more parts.

1. **Citadel:** The part to the west which was smaller but higher was called the citadel.
2. **Lower town:** The part to the east was larger but lower was called the lower town.

The walls of baked brick were built around each part. The bricks were so well baked that they have lasted for thousands of years. The bricks were laid in an interlocking pattern and that made the walls strong. In some cities, special buildings were constructed on the citadel. For example, in Mohenjodaro, a very special tank, which archaeologists call the **Great Bath**, was built in this area. Some cities like Mohenjodaro, Harappa, and Lothal had elaborate storehouses.

Houses, drains and streets

Most houses had a separate bathing area and some had wells to supply water. Many cities had covered drains. Each drain had a gentle slope so that water could flow through it. Drains in houses were connected to streets and smaller drains which ultimately led into bigger ones. All three i.e. houses, drains and streets were planned and built at the same time.

Life in the city

Harappan city was a very busy place.

1. **Rulers** were the people who planned the construction of special buildings in the city. Rulers sent people to distant lands to get metal, precious stones, and other things that they wanted.

2. **Scribes** were the people who knew how to write and help in preparing the seals and perhaps write on other materials that have not survived.
3. There were men and women, crafts persons who used to make all kinds of things.
4. Many terracotta toys have been found in Harappan cities which shows that children must have played with these.

New crafts in the city

1. Most of the objects that were made and found in Harappan cities were of stone, shell and metal, including copper, bronze, gold and silver.
2. Copper and bronze were used to make tools, weapons, ornaments and vessels.
3. Gold and silver were used to make ornaments and vessels.
4. The Harappans made seals out of stone which were rectangular in shape and have an animal carved on them.
5. The Harappans also made pots with beautiful black designs
6. Actual pieces of cloth were found attached to the lid of a silver vase and some copper objects at Mohenjodaro.
7. Archaeologists have also found spindle whorls, made of terracotta and faience which were used to spin thread.
8. Many of the things that were produced at Harappan were probably the work of specialists.

In search of raw materials

Raw materials are substances that are either found naturally or produced by farmers or herders. Raw materials are processed to produce finished goods. The raw materials that the Harappans used were available locally. Whereas many items such as copper, tin, gold, silver and precious stones were brought from distant places.

1. The Harappans probably got copper from present-day Rajasthan, and from Oman in West Asia.
2. Tin, which was mixed with copper to produce bronze, had been brought from present-day Afghanistan and Iran.
3. Gold had been brought from present-day Karnataka, and precious stones from present-day Gujarat, Iran and Afghanistan.

Food for people in the cities

People living in the countryside grew crops and reared animals. The Harappans grew wheat, barley, pulses, peas, rice, sesame, linseed and mustard.

1. The **plough** was used to dig the earth for turning the soil and planting seeds.
2. Water was stored and supplied to the fields when the plants were growing.
3. Harappans reared cattle, sheep, goat and buffalo. In the dry summer months large herds of animals were probably taken to greater distances in search of grass and water.
4. People also collected fruits like ber, caught fish and hunted wild animals like the antelope.

A closer look - Harappan towns in Gujarat

The city of Dholavira was located on Khadir Beyt in the Rann of Kutch.

1. This city has freshwater and fertile soil.
2. Dholavira was divided into three parts, and each part was surrounded with massive stone walls, with entrances through gateways.
3. There was also a large open area in the settlement, where public ceremonies were held.
4. Large letters of the Harappan script were carved out of white stone and inlaid in wood.

The city of Lothal stood beside a tributary of the Sabarmati, in Gujarat, close to the Gulf of Khambat.

1. The raw materials such as semi-precious stones were easily available in the city.
2. There was also a store house in the city.
3. Workshop for making beads: pieces of stone, half made beads, tools for bead making, and finished beads have all been found here.

The mystery of the end

Around 3900 years ago we find the beginning of a major change. People stopped living in many of the cities. Writing, seals and weights were no longer used. Raw materials brought from long distances became rare. In Mohenjodaro, we find that garbage piled up on the streets, the drainage system broke down, and new, less impressive houses were built, even over the streets.

Why did all this happen?

We are not sure. Some scholars suggest that the rivers dried up. Others suggest that there was deforestation. In some areas there were floods. But none of these reasons can explain the end of all the cities. It appears as if the rulers lost control. Sites in Sind and west Punjab (present-day Pakistan) were abandoned, while many people moved into newer, smaller settlements to the east and the south.

