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Life in the Indus Valley

Read the text carefully and then answer the following questions in as much detail as you can.

1. Where was the Indus Valley civilisation?
2. When did the Indus Valley civilisation begin?
3. How do we know that the Indus Valley civilisation was advanced for its time?
4. When and why did the Indus Valley civilisation begin to decline?
5. How were the lost cities of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa first discovered?
6. Explain why the cities were built near rivers.
7. What types of buildings were in the cities? Describe their purposes.
8. Why do you think some people chose not to live in the cities?
9. Evidence shows that the Indus Valley civilisation probably did not have any priests or kings. Do you agree? What do you think the rulers of the cities were and what was their role?
10. What features did the houses have that reflected the physical environment of the city? Draw a picture of what you think a typical house may have looked like and label the features.
11. Would you have liked to have lived in the Indus Valley civilisation? Explain your answer in detail.
12. Exploration and excavation of the Indus Valley civilisation is still ongoing. If you could ask an archaeologist or historian any question about the Indus Valley civilisation, what would it be? Why?

Challenge:

Can you design and draw your own Indus Valley civilisation city?

What would you call it?

What features would it have?

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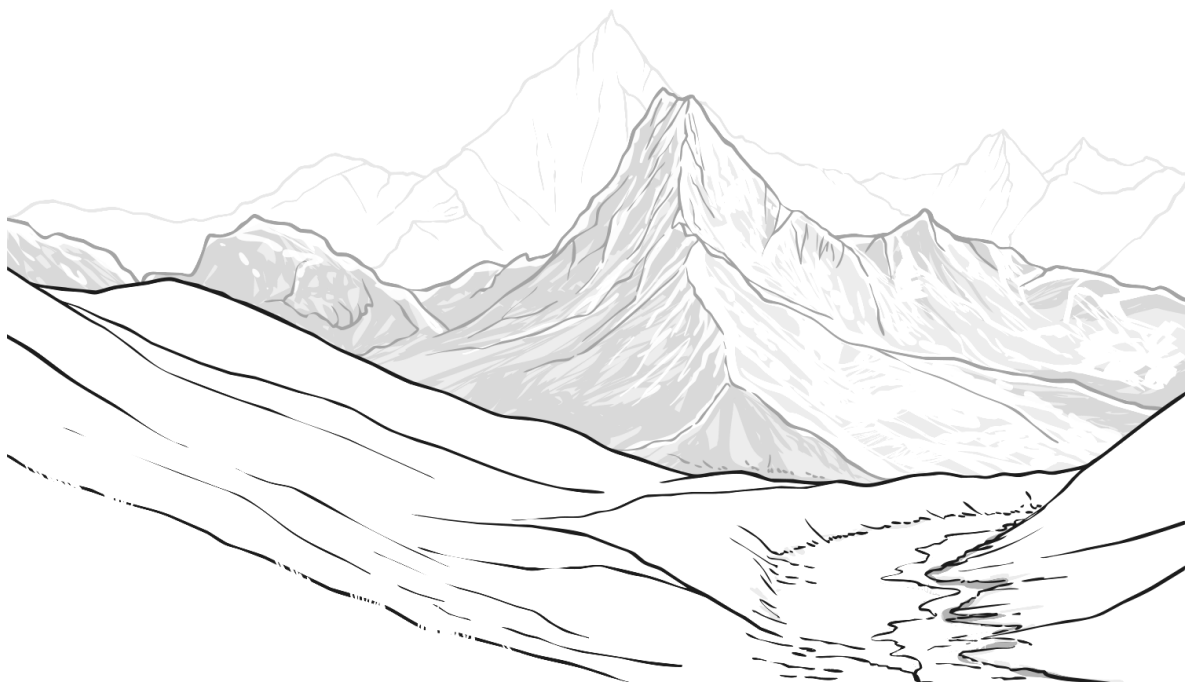
1. When did the Indus Valley civilisation start?
2. Who first lived in the Indus Valley civilisation?
3. What did Charles Masson find?
4. Give three reasons why water was important to the people of the Indus Valley civilisation.
5. What were the buildings made from?
6. Draw a picture of what you think a house may have looked like and label the windows, the walls and the roof.
7. Would you have liked to have lived in the Indus Valley civilisation? Why/why not?

Challenge:

Can you design and draw your own Indus Valley civilisation city?

What would you call it?

What features would it have?



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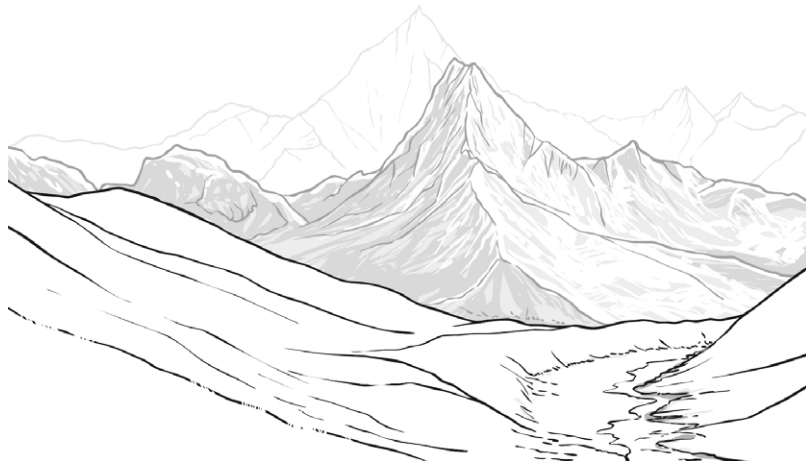
1. Where was the Indus Valley civilisation?
2. When did the Indus Valley civilisation begin?
3. Who first lived in the Indus Valley civilisation?
4. By what date had all the major cities been abandoned?
5. What did Charles Masson discover in 1826?
6. Give five reasons why water was important to the people of the Indus Valley civilisation.
7. What types of buildings were found in the cities?
8. What were the buildings made from?
9. What features did the houses have that show the Indus Valley was a hot place to live? Draw a picture of what you think a typical house may have looked like and label the features.
10. Would you have liked to have lived in the Indus Valley civilisation? Explain why.

Challenge:

Can you design and draw your own Indus Valley civilisation city?

What would you call it?

What features would it have?



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Life in the Indus Valley

The Indus Valley civilisation covered a massive area, four times as large as the UK. It centred on the river Indus that runs through modern day northeast Afghanistan, Pakistan and Northwest India. At the time there was a second major river but this dried up around 2000 BC and it now only flows during the monsoon rain season. The river is called the Ghaggar upstream of the Ottu barrage and the Hakra downstream.

The Indus Valley civilisation started around 3200 BC. When farmers moved into the area they established small farming settlements where they kept cows and sheep. In time these grew into major cities like Mohenjo-Daro and a sophisticated, advanced civilisation began to flourish. Evidence shows that the people from the Indus Valley civilisation made objects from clay; had their own Indus writing script and used tools like ploughs to farm the land. They were also skilled traders and they had commercial links with other advanced civilisations like ancient Sumer. The civilisation thrived until around 1900 BC, after which it began to slowly decline. By 1300 BC all the major cities had been abandoned and the civilisation ceased to exist. It is thought that the drying up of the Ghaggar-Hakra river could have led to the desertion of the area.

The lost cities of The Indus Valley civilisation lay undiscovered until 1826 when a British soldier called Charles Masson noted mounds of bricks that he thought looked like castles. They were actually buildings from Mohenjo-Daro. Thirty years later, in 1856, workers building The Great Indian Railway found and used old bricks that turned out to be from buildings in Harappa. Subsequent exploration of the area revealed exciting evidence of these lost cities.



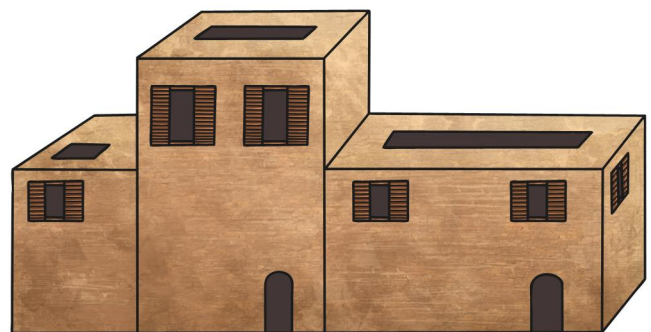
Cities

The Indus Valley civilisation was the biggest of the ancient civilisations and its main cities were huge and complex with many thousands of inhabitants. The cities were built near rivers, which provided water for cooking, washing and drinking. The water, which flooded the riverbanks each year, transferred nutrients into the earth that kept it rich and fertile for growing crops. The river also provided a mode of transport for traders to carry their goods to other cities. Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa were the biggest cities of the Indus Valley civilisation and it is thought that up to 80 000 people could have lived there. Other Indus Valley cities included Kalibangan, Lothal and Banawali. However, not everyone lived in cities; lots of farmers, fishermen and traders lived outside the cities in small villages. Buildings in the cities were made from mud bricks that were dried in the sun. There were lots of buildings built for different purposes; these included granaries, dockyards, public baths, warehouses and, of course, houses for people to live in. Unlike other ancient civilisations, there has been no evidence of temples or palaces found. This suggests that the Indus Valley probably did not have priests or kings. Water was very important in the Indus Valley civilisation and the cities had complex drainage systems and wells to manage the water flow in and out of the city and to separate clean and dirty water. Some cities also had a citadel that was an area on a mound of land that was higher than the rest of the city. It is thought that the most important buildings were located there and that they were probably the place in which the rulers of the city lived.

Homes

There were big and small houses in the Indus Valley cities. Some had one floor and others (probably those belonging to richer people) had two or even three. The walls of the houses were very thick as this kept them nice and cool inside. There were no windows in the walls facing the main street so that people inside were not disturbed by the noise outside. Richer people's houses had many rooms which were sometimes arranged around a central courtyard, but some poorer people only had one or two rooms in which to live. Houses had flat roofs and this created an outdoor space where people could keep cool, socialise with their friends and families and store some of their goods. The rooms inside the houses were used for different purposes. There were designated places to eat, sleep and wash. The people from the Indus Valley cooked on fire made by burning wood, charcoal or even animal dung! They also had ovens in which they baked bread. Hygiene and cleanliness was very important and houses had bathrooms with toilets and showers. Toilet seats were made from bricks and waste from the toilets was channelled out into the street drains through clay pipes. Showers were really just a brick platform on which people would stand and pour water over themselves from jugs. Again, the dirty water would flow out of the house through the pipes and enter the city drain. Clean water was obtained from wells that were accessible out in the streets, although some wealthier households actually had their own private wells.

Life in the Indus Valley civilisation was very advanced for its time with living conditions comparable to those in ancient Sumer and better than those in ancient Egypt. Historians and archaeologists are still working hard to discover more about this fascinating lost civilisation.



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Life in the Indus Valley

The Indus Valley civilisation covered a massive area. It was built around the river Indus that runs through modern day northeast Afghanistan, Pakistan and northwest India. At the time there was a second big river called the Ghaggar-Hakra but this dried up.

The Indus Valley civilisation started around 3200BC. Farmers moved into the area and set up small farms where they kept cows and sheep. In time these grew into major cities. Evidence shows that the people from the Indus Valley made objects from clay, had their own writing and used tools to farm the land. They also traded (sold and swapped goods) with other people like those in the ancient Sumer.

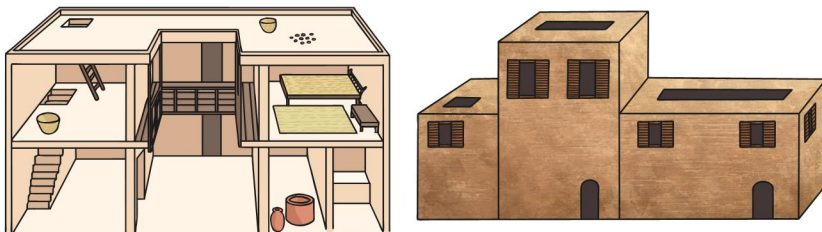
The lost cities of The Indus Valley civilisation were not found until 1826 when a British soldier called Charles Masson saw mounds of bricks that he thought looked like castles. In 1856, workers that began building The Great Indian Railway found and used old bricks that turned out to be from buildings in the Indus Valley.

Cities

The Indus Valley civilisation was the biggest of its time and many thousands of people lived in the main cities. The cities were built near rivers that gave water for cooking, washing and drinking. The water, which flooded the river each year, kept the soil good for growing crops. The river also allowed traders (people who bought and sold) to sail to other cities. However, not everyone lived in cities; lots of farmers, fishermen and traders lived outside the cities in small villages. Buildings in the cities were made from mud bricks that were dried in the sun.

Homes

There were big and small houses in the Indus Valley cities. Some had one floor but richer people had two or even three. The walls of the houses were very thick, which kept them nice and cool inside. There were no windows in the walls facing the main street so that people inside could not hear the noise outside. Richer people's houses had many rooms and some even had a central courtyard, but some poorer people only had one or two rooms to live in. Houses had flat roofs and people would use them to keep cool, meet friends and store goods. The rooms inside the houses were used as places to eat, sleep and wash. Keeping clean was very important so houses had bathrooms with simple toilets and showers. Clean water was brought in from wells in the streets, although some richer people had their own wells.



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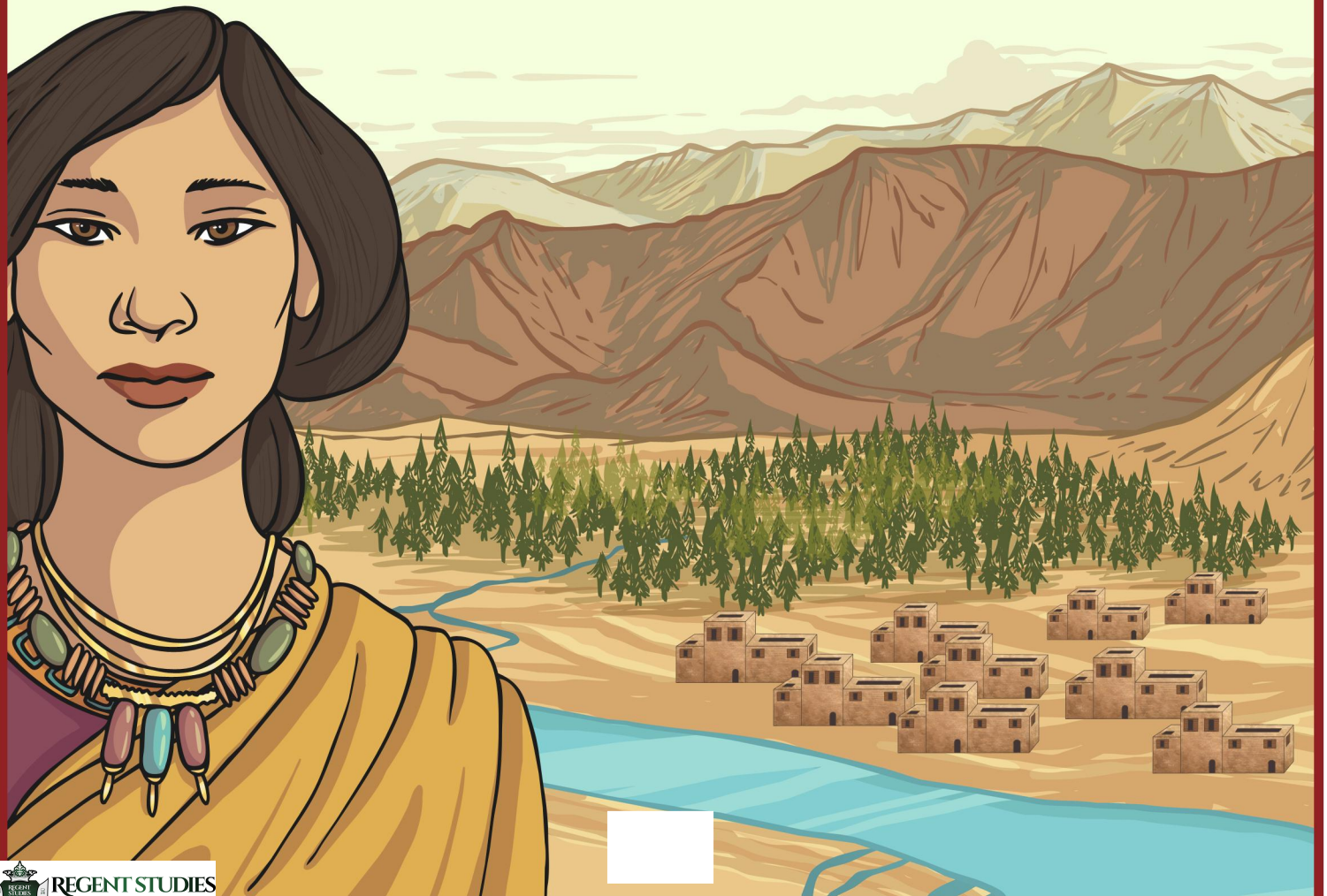
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