

# Lesson Plan: History Detectives in the Indus Valley

**Subject:** Ancient History/Social Studies

**Age Group:** 7-year-old (Adaptable for 6-9)

**Time Allotment:** 120 minutes (can be broken into two 60-minute sessions)

## Materials Needed

- Globe or world map
- Printed pictures of Indus Valley artifacts (e.g., seals with animals, pottery, the "Dancing Girl" statue, ruins of Mohenjo-Daro, the Great Bath)
- Blue yarn or string
- Building blocks (like LEGOs or wooden blocks)
- Air-dry clay or play-doh
- A small tub of water
- A toothpick or popsicle stick for carving
- Drawing paper, crayons, or markers
- A simple, printable map of the Indian subcontinent
- Optional: Small snacks like crackers (to represent wheat bread) and berries.

## Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will be able to:

- Point to the area where the Indus Valley Civilization was on a map.
- Explain why living near a river was important for the people.
- Describe two cool things about their cities, like straight streets or drains.
- Create a model of an Indus Valley artifact (a seal).
- Tell one idea about why the civilization disappeared.

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## Lesson Plan

### Part 1: Introduction - Becoming a History Detective (15 minutes)

#### 1. The Hook: A Message from the Past!

- **I do:** Show the student a picture of an Indus Valley seal, especially one with an animal and strange writing. Say, "Look at this! It's a mystery message from thousands of years ago. We are going to be history detectives today to figure out who made this, where they lived, and what their life was like. Are you ready to solve the case?"

#### 2. Setting Our Mission (Learning Objectives)

- **I do:** "Okay, Detective! Here is our mission for today. By the end of our investigation, we will

know:"

- Where these secret cities were hidden.
- How the people used a giant river to live.
- What made their cities so special and smart.
- And we will try to solve the biggest mystery of all... where did they go?

## Part 2: The Investigation - Exploring the Clues (90 minutes)

### Activity 1: Finding the Secret Location (15 minutes)

- **I do:** "Every good detective needs a map! Let's look at our big world map." Point to your own country. "This is where we are. Now let's travel across the world to a place where modern-day India and Pakistan are." Point to the region. "Right here, a long, long time ago, was a huge river called the Indus River. A whole group of people built their homes right next to it."
- **We do:** "Why would you want to live next to a river? What can a river give you?" (Guide them to answers like water for drinking, washing, and growing food). "Exactly! The river was like their supermarket and their water faucet all in one! It was super important."
- **You do:** Give the student the printable map. "Your turn, Detective. Take this blue yarn and lay it down on the map to show where the Indus River was. Now, let's mark the spots of their two most famous cities, Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, with a dot."

### Activity 2: The Super-Smart City Builders (25 minutes)

- **I do:** "These people weren't just living in tents. They were some of the best builders in the ancient world! Look at this picture of their city." (Show ruins of Mohenjo-Daro). "They used bricks that were all the same size, like LEGOs, to build strong houses. And look at the streets—they are super straight! This made it easy to get around."
- **I do (Demonstration):** "But here is the coolest clue! They had pipes and drains to carry dirty water away from their houses. They even had bathrooms! This kept their city clean and healthy. They also built a giant pool called the Great Bath. We think it might have been for special ceremonies."
- **We do:** "Let's plan our own block city. What are the two most important things the Indus Valley people had in their cities?" (Straight streets and drains/water systems).
- **You do (Hands-On):** "Now it's your turn to be a city planner. Using these blocks, build a small part of Mohenjo-Daro. I want to see at least one straight street and a special building for your city—maybe a Great Bath or a tall lookout tower."
- **Success Criteria Check:** Does your city have a straight street? Does it have a special building? Great work!

### Activity 3: A Day in the Life (25 minutes)

- **I do:** "So what was it like to be a kid back then? Well, you might eat flatbread made from wheat, kind of like these crackers." (Optional: share snack). "You wouldn't have video games, but you would have awesome toys made out of clay, like little carts with wheels and animal figures." (Show pictures of toy artifacts).
- **I do:** "Your parents might be farmers growing food, or artists making beautiful pottery or beads. They traded these things with people who came from far away."
- **We do:** "Let's go back to our first clue—the mystery seal." (Show the picture again). "People used these like stamps. Maybe to mark their property or to show who they were. We see lots of animals on them, but we can't read the writing. It's a secret code we still haven't cracked! What animal do you see on this one?"
- **You do (Creative):** "Let's make our own secret seals. Take this clay and roll it into a flat cookie

shape. Now, use your toothpick to carve an animal that represents you. It could be your favorite animal or a pet. This is your personal seal, just like an Indus Valley trader would have had."

- **Formative Assessment:** As they work, ask, "What would you use your seal for if you lived back then?"

#### Activity 4: The Mystery of the Missing People (25 minutes)

- **I do:** "After being an amazing civilization for hundreds of years, the people started leaving their wonderful cities. This is our final, biggest mystery. What happened? Detectives have a few theories."
  1. **The River Moved:** "Maybe the river changed its path. If your water source moved far away, it would be very hard to live."
  2. **The Weather Changed:** "Maybe it stopped raining for a very long time, and they couldn't grow any food."
  3. **New People Arrived:** "Maybe another group of people moved in, and things changed."
- **We do:** "Which idea do you think makes the most sense? Could it be a mix of all of them? There is no wrong answer because nobody knows for sure! That's what makes being a history detective so exciting."
- **You do (Summative Assessment):** "Your final mission is to draw a picture. I want you to draw what YOU think happened to the people of the Indus Valley. You can draw the river drying up, or people packing their bags to find a new home. You are the chief detective on this case!"

### Part 3: Conclusion - Case Closed! (15 minutes)

#### 1. Report Your Findings (Recap)

- **We do:** "Detective, you have done an amazing job today! Let's go over the clues we uncovered." Ask questions to recap the lesson:
  - "What was the name of the big river they lived by?" (Indus River)
  - "What was one smart thing about their cities?" (Straight streets, drains, bricks)
  - "What did we make out of clay that they also used?" (Seals)
  - "And what is the big mystery about them?" (We don't know why they disappeared).

#### 2. Show What You Know

- **You do:** Ask the student to present their block city, their clay seal, and their drawing. Let them explain their choices. For example: "Tell me about your city. Why did you make the street straight?" "Show me your seal. Why did you pick that animal?" "Tell me the story of your drawing."

#### 3. Final Takeaway

- **I do:** "The people of the Indus Valley were incredible. They show us how people can work together to build amazing things and live smart lives, even thousands of years ago. Even though they're gone, the clues they left behind help us learn so much. Great work closing the case today, Detective!"

## Differentiation and Adaptability

- **For Younger Learners or More Support:**
  - Focus on just one city (Mohenjo-Daro).

- Provide a pre-drawn animal outline on the clay seal to be traced.
- Build the block city together, step-by-step.
- Use storytelling with puppets or figures to explain daily life.

- **For Older Learners or Extension:**

- Introduce more vocabulary like 'granary' (food storage) and 'citadel' (fortress).
- Have them compare an Indus city to your own town. What's the same? What's different?
- Let them write a short story from the perspective of a child living in Harappa.
- Research another ancient civilization (like Egypt) and find one similarity and one difference.