

The Lost Cities of the Indus: Architects of the Ancient World

Materials Needed

- Large map of Asia (physical or digital)
- Timeline graphic (showing 3300 BCE – 1300 BCE)
- Printed images of Mohenjo-Daro/Harappa (Great Bath, grid streets, seals, drainage system)
- Whiteboard or large paper pad
- Markers, colored pencils, or crayons
- Paper, cardstock, or recycled cardboard (for the city planning project)
- Ruler or straight edge
- Optional: Small building blocks, clay, or simple craft materials for 3D modeling.

Learning Objectives (We Will Be Able To...)

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

1. **Locate and Time:** Identify the geographical location of the Indus River Valley and place the civilization correctly on a timeline (around 4,500 years ago).
2. **Describe Key Features:** Explain what made Harappan cities (like Mohenjo-Daro) unique, focusing on city planning and sanitation.
3. **Connect to Governance:** Understand how detailed city planning suggests a well-organized government or civic structure.
4. **Design:** Create a simple map or plan of an ancient city that follows organized rules.

Lesson Structure (120 Minutes)

I. Introduction: The Great Mystery of the Forgotten River (15 Minutes)

Hook: Imagine You're an Explorer!

Educator Script/Talking Points: Imagine you are digging in the dirt in India or Pakistan 100 years ago, and you find a strange brick. You keep digging, and you realize these bricks form walls. You dig more, and you discover an entire city—an entire civilization that nobody remembered! This is the mystery of the Indus Valley Civilization (IVC).

- **Quick Q&A:** What is the biggest, most organized city you have ever visited? What kind of rules do people need to live together peacefully?
- **Objective Review (Tell them what you'll teach):** Today, we are going to act like archaeologists. We will find out where these people lived, what their amazing cities looked like, and why they disappeared.

Activity 1: Mapping the Start (I Do)

- **Geography & Time:** Show the map of Asia. Point out the Indus River (modern-day Pakistan/India).

- **Timeline Check:** Place the IVC (approx. 3300 BCE – 1300 BCE) next to other civilizations (e.g., Egyptians building pyramids). Emphasize that these civilizations existed at the same time, but far away from each other.

II. Body: Built by Brilliant Engineers (60 Minutes)

A. Structure and Society (25 Minutes)

Activity 2: Organized Living (I Do / We Do)

Content Focus: Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro were the main cities. What made them different from other ancient towns?

- **I Do (Modeling):** Show images of the city layout. Draw a simple grid on the board. Explain that these cities were planned perfectly. Streets ran straight and crossed at perfect right angles. This is called a **grid plan**.
- **Key Feature 1: Standardization:** Explain that all the bricks were almost exactly the same size! This shows careful planning and organization.
- **Key Feature 2: The Great Bath:** Show the image. Discuss its possible function (religious rituals, community gathering).
- **Key Feature 3: Drainage and Sanitation (Civics Connection):** This is the most amazing part! Explain the covered sewer systems and indoor plumbing. This required rules (governance) about cleanliness and public health.
- **We Do (Interactive Discussion):** If your city has clean water and sewer systems, what does that tell you about the people in charge? (Success Criteria: They care about everyone's health; they have strong rules; they can organize big projects.)

B. Civics and Governance: What Rules Did They Follow? (35 Minutes)

Content Focus: We don't know who the king or ruler was because they didn't leave huge temples or statues of kings like the Egyptians. But we know they had excellent governance based on their infrastructure.

Activity 3: Rules for the Citadel (You Do - Group Discussion/Reflection)

- **Think-Pair-Share:** If you were the mayor of Mohenjo-Daro, what three rules would you make to keep the city clean and fair?
- **Harappan Civic Benchmarks:** Review the results based on what we know:
 1. Rule about keeping the drainage system clear.
 2. Rule about building houses with standardized bricks.
 3. Rule about access to the Great Bath (community resource).
- **Formative Assessment Check:** What is one piece of evidence that tells us the Harappans were organized? (Wait for answers like: "Straight streets," or "Drainage systems.")

III. Body: The Mysterious Decline (10 Minutes)

Activity 4: Solving the Case (I Do / We Do)

Educator Script/Talking Points: Around 1700 BCE, these amazing cities started to disappear. People

left, and the systems broke down. Why? It's a huge archaeological puzzle!

- **Theories (Offering Choice):** Present the three main theories simply:
 1. **Environmental Change:** The Indus River changed course or dried up, making farming impossible.
 2. **Invasion/Migration:** Other groups moved into the area, perhaps causing conflict.
 3. **Earthquakes/Disasters:** Massive natural events destroyed the careful infrastructure.
- **Quick Vote/Prediction:** Which theory do you think is most likely, and why? (Encourage learners to defend their choice using logic, not just guessing.)

IV. Application and Conclusion (35 Minutes)

Project: Design a Smart City Plan (Summative Assessment) (30 Minutes)

Goal: Apply the key lessons of organization, sanitation, and structure learned from the Harappan civilization.

Instructions (You Do):

1. **Identify Purpose:** You are a Harappan City Planner. You need to design a new small city called "New Harappa."
2. **Requirements:** Your plan (a blueprint or map) must include:
 - A section for housing built on a grid plan (straight streets).
 - A public structure (like the Great Bath, but maybe a Great Park or Meeting Hall).
 - A clear system for managing water (either a river or a drainage path).
3. **Labeling:** Label your structures clearly (e.g., "The Water Manager's Office," "Standardized Housing Block").
4. **Presentation:** Explain your city to the educator, pointing out how your design solves a governance problem (e.g., "This drainage path keeps the central market clean.")

Success Criteria for the Project:

I know my design is successful if it:

- Uses straight lines and right angles (grid pattern).
- Shows a clear system for managing waste or water.
- Includes at least one communal building.

Conclusion and Recap (5 Minutes)

- **Exit Ticket Question (Tell them what you taught):** What is the one thing you learned today that surprised you the most about the Indus Valley people?
- **Reinforcement:** Remind the learner that even though we can't read their writing (yet!), their organized streets and clean bathrooms tell us they were super smart engineers and organized citizens.

Differentiation and Extensions

Scaffolding (For learners needing extra support):

- Provide a pre-drawn partial city grid for the project, allowing the learner to focus only on adding the public structures and water systems.
- Use a Venn Diagram to compare the IVC with modern cities (e.g., both use sewer systems, both need traffic rules).

Extension (For learners ready for a challenge):

- **The Language Mystery:** Research the undeciphered script (seals). Challenge the learner to invent three possible meanings for the symbols they see on the seals.
- **Advanced Civics:** Design a government structure for "New Harappa." Who makes the rules? How are they enforced without visible kings or armies? (A council of elders, priests, or engineers?)