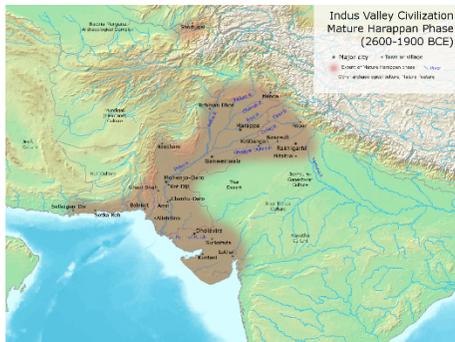


# The Indus Valley Civilisation

## Year 5 Spring 2 History Knowledge Organiser

The **Indus Valley** was home to one of the world's first large civilisations. It began nearly 5,000 years ago in an area of modern-day Pakistan and Northern India. There were more than 1,400 towns and cities in the Indus Valley. The biggest were Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. Around 80,000 people lived in these cities. The names Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro were given to the cities in later times. We do not know what the Indus people called their cities, because nobody has been able to translate their ancient language.



### Where was the Indus Valley?

The **Indus people** lived on the banks of the Indus river, the longest river in Pakistan.

The Indus river begins high up in the Himalayan mountains (the tallest mountain range in the world), and flows nearly 3,000 kilometres to the Arabian Sea. As the river moves downstream it carves out a valley. This is where the Indus people settled. To the Indus people, their river was 'The King River'.



### Was the Indus Valley a peaceful place?

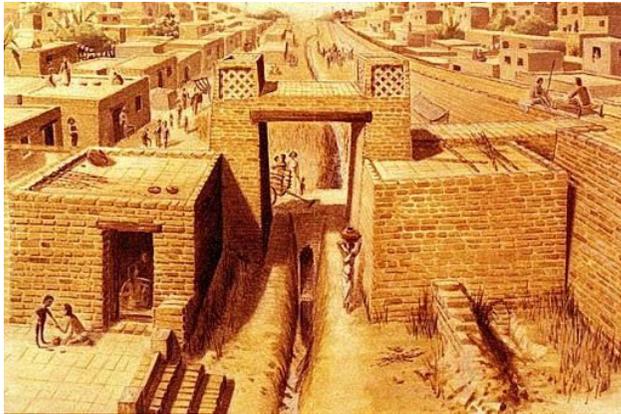
The **Indus civilisation** seems to have been a peaceful one. The cities were built with strong walls and gateways, which usually means they needed protection. However, few weapons have been found and there is no evidence of an army. Often ancient writings can tell us about civilisations, but no one has been

able to translate the Indus writings. We have to look for other clues. Sometimes you are able to see changes in ruins that indicate wars or battles, but the Indus Valley seems to have stayed the same for hundreds of years. However, archaeologists have recently found some skeletons that suggest that the Indus valley might not have been such a peaceful place after all. When they looked closely at the skeletons, they saw that they might have died in a pretty nasty way - being beaten with a heavy club.

### Homes and Cities in the Indus Valley

It was very hot in the Indus Valley so people spent a lot of time **outside**. Most people had small homes which were also used as workshops. There was not much space to relax. Richer families had courtyards. These were nice open spaces. Children could play there with toys or with pets, such as **monkeys** and **birds**. People who did not have a courtyard would still have a **flat roof**. These roofs were strong enough to walk on. Families used them as an extra room. It was a

cool place to sleep on a hot night and somewhere you could sit with friends. The **cities** show clear evidence of town planning with broad streets and efficient access to water, drainage and sewers in even the smallest houses. We can tell that the streets were laid out before the houses were built. Cities were divided into different zones with a fortified citadel containing **baths** and other possibly communal buildings separate from the part of the city where people lived and worked. Many buildings were built on top of earlier buildings.



was like to be a child growing up in the Indus Valley cities.

We don't know how many children went to school. A **scribe** would teach some children how to read and write and a **priest** would teach religious lessons. Even if they didn't go to

school, **most children worked** hard. Even small children helped their families with daily tasks. Children were taught how to **make things**, how to **farm** and how to **hunt**. It wasn't all work though. Children could play in the courtyards of houses, and probably on the flat roofs too. The roof could be a fun place to play. You could wave to your friends across the street! Children might have played **board games** with counters and dice. Archaeologists have found cube dice with six sides and spots, just like the ones we use today. Historians think the Indus people **invented dice**.

**Animals** such as goats, cows, sheep and buffalo were domesticated and other animals were probably hunted. Dogs, cats, monkeys and peacocks may have been kept as pets.



1. Archaeologists discovered the remains of the civilisation and began **excavations** during the 1920s.
2. The **river Indus** and its tributaries created a huge flood plain. The land was very fertile, and this allowed early peoples to grow several sets of crops a year.
3. The area covered by this civilisation was huge; roughly half a million square miles. Most of this area falls between **modern India and Pakistan**.
4. The remains of **over 1,400 cities** have been discovered in this region. Some may have had as many as 80,000 inhabitants. Archaeologists have named the largest cities **Harappa** and **Mohenjo-Daro**.
5. Most people lived in small villages and were **farmers** or **craftsmen**.
6. **Crops** grown by the people included grapes, dates and melons, wheat, peas, mustard, sesame and pulses.
7. The people used a **standardised system of weights and measures**. Even the bricks they used were manufactured to a standard ratio.
8. The **cities** were very advanced, with streets built on a grid pattern and

with an efficient system of wells, drains and sewers.

9. The people who lived in the Indus Valley were the first to grow cotton and weave cloth.
10. Indus Valley people **traded** with ancient Mesopotamia. They exported cotton cloth, exotic animals, copper and ivory. Imports included metal products and ores and shells.

## **Over the holiday - Produce a leaflet**

Find out about the Indus Valley Civilisation today.

What kinds of houses did the people live in? What jobs did they do?

What was family life like in the Indus Valley?

What were the Indus people famous for? Did they invent anything?

What did they do for entertainment?

Is it a holiday destination?

How was the Indus Valley run/ruled?

***Which other facts can you impress your teachers with?***

