

In the Earliest Cities (Easy Notes for class 6th)

Introduction:

Did you know people built amazing cities long ago in **India and Pakistan**? These cities are called the **Harappan cities**. They are full of cool discoveries! They had **big brick walls** and **mysterious objects**. There was even a **giant water tank** called the **Great Bath**. They made all this without modern machines! Want to know how they lived? Let's explore these ancient cities and find their secrets!

Discovery of Harappa:

- Around **150 years ago**, railway lines were being laid in Punjab (now in Pakistan).
- Engineers found an ancient city while digging, which they called **Harappa**.
 - They used many bricks from the site for building railways, destroying old buildings.
 - **80 years later**, archaeologists discovered that Harappa was one of the **oldest cities** of the subcontinent, about **4700 years old**.
- As Harappa was the first city discovered, other similar ancient cities were also called **Harappan cities**.

What was special about these cities?

1. Divided Layout:

- Cities were divided into **two parts**:
 - **Citadel**: Smaller and higher, usually in the west.
 - **Lower Town**: Larger and lower, mostly in the east.
- Both parts were surrounded by **strong baked brick walls** in an interlocking pattern, which lasted thousands of years.

2. Locations:

- Harappan cities were located in present-day **Pakistan** (Punjab, Sind) and **India** (Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana, Punjab).

3. Common Objects Found:

- **Red pottery** with black designs.
- **Stone weights** and **seals**.
- **Special beads, copper tools, and long stone blades**.

Special Buildings in Harappan Cities:

- **The Great Bath (Mohenjodaro):**
 - A large water tank made with bricks, plaster, and waterproof tar.
 - Steps led into the tank from both sides, with rooms surrounding it.
 - It was likely used for important people on **special occasions**.
- **Fire Altars (Kalibangan, Lothal):**
 - These cities had **fire altars**, where sacrifices might have been performed.
- **Storehouses:**
 - Cities like **Mohenjodaro**, **Harappa**, and **Lothal** had large **storehouses** to store grains and other goods.

Houses, Drains, and Streets in Harappan Cities

1. House Features:

- People built houses that were **one or two stories** high.
- They arranged rooms around a **central courtyard**.
- Most houses included a **separate bathing area**.
- Some houses had **wells** to supply water.

2. Drainage System:

- Many cities featured **covered drains**.
- Workers laid drains in **straight lines**.
- Each drain had a **gentle slope** to help water flow.
- **Smaller drains** connected to **bigger drains**.
- Builders placed inspection holes for easy **cleaning**.

3. Planning and Construction:

- Workers likely planned and built houses, drains, and streets **together**.

Life in City:

Rulers:

- Planned and oversaw the construction of **special buildings**.
- Sent people to distant lands to gather **metal**, **precious stones**, and **other goods**.
- Kept valuable items, like **gold** and **silver ornaments**, for themselves.

Scribes:

- Knew how to **write** and **kept records**.
- Helped prepare seals for trade and possibly wrote on other materials that have not survived.

Craftspersons:

- Men and women created various items, such as **pottery, tools, and jewelry**.
- Worked in their homes or in special workshops to make these products.

Traders:

- Traveled to distant lands for trade.
- Brought back raw materials and interesting stories from their journeys.

Children:

- Played with terracotta toys that archaeologists have found.
- Enjoyed games and stories, adding joy to city life.

New Craft in the City:

Materials Used:

- People made objects from **stone, shell, and metal** (copper, bronze, gold, and silver).
- Craftspeople used copper and bronze for **tools, weapons, ornaments, and vessels**.
- Gold and silver created **ornaments and vessels**.

Unique Finds:

- Archaeologists discovered **beads, weights, and blades**.
- Harappans crafted **seals** from stone, often rectangular with **animal carvings**.
- They decorated pots with **beautiful black designs**.

Cotton Production:

- People likely grew cotton at **Mehrgarh** around **7000 years ago**.
- Archaeologists found cloth pieces with a silver vase and copper objects at **Mohenjodaro**.
- They uncovered **spindle whorls** made of terracotta and faience, used for **spinning thread**.

Specialists in Crafting:

- Many objects came from **specialists**—people trained to perform specific tasks
 - *For Example:* cutting stone, polishing beads, carving seals.
- A well-carved face and detailed beard displayed expert craftsmanship.
- It remains unclear if only men or women became specialists, but both likely participated.

In Search of Raw Materials

- **What Are Raw Materials?**
 - Raw materials are natural items found in nature or produced by farmers and herders.
 - For example, cotton comes from farmers and can be made into cloth.
- **Where Did the Harappans Get Their Materials?**
 - The Harappans sourced some raw materials locally.
 - They imported others, such as copper, tin, gold, silver, and precious stones.
- **Sources of Specific Materials:**
 - **Copper** likely came from areas in **Rajasthan** and possibly from **Oman** in **West Asia**.
 - **Tin**, used with copper to create bronze, might have been sourced from **Afghanistan** and **Iran**.
 - They probably obtained **gold** from **Karnataka**.
 - **Precious stones** likely came from regions in **Gujarat**, **Iran**, and **Afghanistan**.

Food for People in the Cities

- **Food Supply:**
 - Many city dwellers depended on **farmers** and **herders** from the countryside for food.
 - Farmers grew various crops to supply city residents.
- **Crops Grown:**
 - The Harappans cultivated:
 - Wheat, Barley, Pulses, Peas, Rice, Sesame, Linseed, Mustard
- **Farming Tools:**
 - They used a **plough** to dig and plant seeds.
 - While real wooden ploughs have not survived, toy models have been discovered.
- **Irrigation:**
 - Due to low rainfall, the Harappans likely used some irrigation methods.
 - This involved storing water for crops during growth.
- **Animal Rearing:**
 - Harappans kept cattle, sheep, goats, and buffalo.
 - They found water and pastures near their settlements.
 - During dry summers, they moved large herds to find grass and water.
- **Other Food Sources:**
 - They gathered fruits like **ber**, caught fish, and hunted animals like **antelope**.

A Closer Look — Harappan Towns in Gujarat

- **Dholavira:**
 - Found on **Khadir Beyt** in the **Rann of Kutch**.
 - Enjoyed access to **fresh water** and **fertile soil**.
 - Divided into **three distinct sections**, all protected by strong stone walls.
 - Featured **gateways** for entry.
 - Had a large open space for **public gatherings**.
 - Archaeologists uncovered **large letters** of Harappan script carved from white stone, possibly meant for wood inlay.
 - This is notable as most Harappan writing appears on smaller items like seals.
- **Lothal:**
 - Located near a tributary of the **Sabarmati River**, close to the **Gulf of Khambat**.
 - Positioned near deposits of **semi-precious stones**.
 - Served as a significant hub for crafting items from stone, shell, and metal.
 - Contained a **storehouse** where numerous seals and impressions were discovered.
 - Included a workshop for bead production, which contained:
 - Raw pieces of stone
 - Partially finished beads
 - Tools for bead crafting
 - Completed beads

The Mystery of the End

- **3900 years ago:** Many people began leaving cities.
- **Changes observed:**
 - They stopped using **writing, seals, and weights**.
 - Raw materials from distant places became hard to find.
 - In **Mohenjodaro:**
 - Garbage piled up in streets.
 - The drainage system broke down.
 - People built simpler houses over the streets.
- **Possible reasons** for the changes:
 - **Rivers dried up**.
 - **Deforestation** occurred (trees cut down).
 - This might have happened due to fuel needs for making bricks and smelting copper.
 - Large herds of **cattle, sheep, and goats** damaged green areas.
 - Some areas experienced **floods**.
- **Uncertainty:** No single reason explains the end of all cities. Floods or drying rivers would only affect certain areas.

Category

1. Class 6th

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