



What, Where, How and When?



WHAT IS HISTORY?

History is the story of man's past. It deals with events that have already occurred. It deals with facts of our society, economy and culture. It is based on historical sources which are seen, observed and analysed by the historians. History can also be defined as the record of past events.

WHY DO WE STUDY HISTORY?

It is important to learn History because it helps us understand our present. To understand the world around us we have to know about our past.

In order to tackle the present it is important to have a good understanding of the past as history is a continuous story of events in the past, leading to the present situation. It has been said, "He who knows the past controls the future."

TIME FRAME IN HISTORY

Historians divide history into three time periods :

- **Prehistory** • **Protohistory** • **History**

Prehistory : It is the time when writing had not been invented and there are no written records of this period. Our knowledge of this period is totally dependent on the findings of archaeologists. They dug deep into the earth and discovered physical remains like pots and pans, jewellery, tools, bones, coins etc. With the help of these they learnt about the past.

Protohistory : This period is the period between prehistory and history for which we have a few written records. Our knowledge of this period is based on archaeological findings.

An example of this period is the Indus Valley Civilisation.

History : This refers to the time period after writing was invented. We can trace the history of any event from the written records. Early writings were on stones, rock pillars, bark of birch trees and clay tablets. Many of them have been destroyed, yet we have enough records to write the history.

DATES IN HISTORY

Dates in history are explained by two terms : BC and AD. The years are generally counted from the date given to the birth of Christ, the founder of Christianity. The years **before** the birth of Christ are known as BC. All dates are counted backwards in BC. Now a days, BCE (Before Common Era) is also used in place of BC.

AD means *Anno Domini* (in the year of the Lord). The years after the birth of Christ

Think and Answer :

How to find out time from the Time Period?

- How many years are between 400 BC and 200 BC? (Obviously : 200 years)
- How many years are between AD 200 and AD 400? (Again : 200 years)
- How many years are there between 400 BC and AD 200?

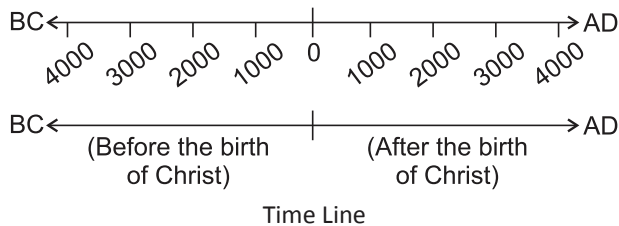
To calculate, you will have to add the two dates, *i.e.*,

$$400 \text{ BC} + \text{AD } 200 = 600 \text{ years.}$$

Now answer : Chandragupta Maurya became the ruler in 321 BC.

- Calculate how many years ago it happened.

are counted as AD. These years go forward, for example AD 99 was followed by AD 100. Nowadays, CE is also used instead of AD. CE stands for 'Common Era'. BCE is also used instead of BC. BCE stands for 'Before Common Era'. In India we have been using BC and AD for the last 200 years.



THE IMPORTANCE OF GEOGRAPHY IN HISTORY

The physical features of a country have always affected its history. India is a vast country with different geographical features which have affected the way people lived in the past.

To understand the geographical divisions of India we need to classify them into the following regions :

- **The Great Himalayas**
- **The Gangetic Plains**
- **The Vindhya of Central India**
- **The Deccan**
- **The Great Himalayas**
The Great Himalayas in the north and northeast provide a barrier to the harsh climates and invasions. It has mountain passes through which men have travelled

The Indus Valley

It was here that the great Harappan civilisation flourished along the river Sindhu or Indus. 'Sindhu' is the Sanskrit word for the river Indus. The cities were built of bricks and stone. The wells, water storage system and the drainage system were one of the most well-planned in the ancient world. The people of the Indus valley made jewellery and toys for their children. They also developed a system of weights and measures.

in search of livelihood, or to escape natural disasters. The Garo, Khasi and Jaintia hills of Meghalaya are an extension of the Himalayan range.

- **The Gangetic Plains**

It is one of the most fertile areas supporting a large population of India. The Ganga, Yamuna and their tributaries provide water for irrigation for the vast plains.

- **The Vindhya of Central India**

The Vindhya range divides the subcontinent into northern India and southern India. While the northern slope is drained by the tributaries of the Ganga, the southern slope is drained by the Narmada river.

- **The Deccan**

Agriculture was first developed in the Deccan. Deccan is known for its unique culture and tradition known as the Dravidian culture. It is also known for megaliths, magnificent temples and Sangam literature.

People lived near the bank of the rivers because of availability of water and fertile soil. Rivers provided water for irrigation, drinking, washing, fishing and navigation by boats. An example is the Narmada Valley of Madhya Pradesh. The first people to grow crops like wheat and barley were people of Sulaiman and Kirthar hills in the northwest.

SOURCES OF HISTORY

How do we find out about the past? Historians have found out many ways to support what they write about the past. What are these sources, evidences or materials? They are :

- **Archaeological Sources**
- **Literary Sources.**

What is archaeology?

It is the study of the past of the ancient people through the things left behind by them.

- The excavations can be planned on a mound or sometimes mounds are found by accident.



A Physical Map of India

Did you know?

- The early man lived in the Narmada valley of Madhya Pradesh for several thousand years. They were skilled food gatherers and hunters.
- The people in the Sulaiman and Kirthar Hills of the northwest regions (now in Pakistan) first began to grow crops like wheat and barley about 8000 years ago. They also reared animals like sheep, goat, cattle in their villages.
- Earliest agricultural practices in India began around the Garo Hills in the northeast. Rice was first grown in the north of Vindhyas.

- The second step is collecting the objects by removing the mud from them and then carefully labelling them. Each object is photographed and labelled according to the layer in which it was found.
- Then the archaeologists **date** the object discovered. For this different scientific techniques are used. The most popular method is called **radio-carbon dating** or **Carbon-14 dating**. For example - dating of bones is done by this method.
- The last and final step is to **interpret** or try to find out what that object tells us - the history of the evidence we have collected. The objects found in Mohenjo-Daro (Indus Valley Civilisation) tell us the kind of jewellery people wore, their houses, customs, toys, pottery etc.



An archaeologist digging at an excavation site

Archaeological Sources

Archaeology is study of the past, of the people who lived long long ago through the things they left behind. What are those things?

- Pottery,
- Paintings,
- Tools,
- Bones,
- Buildings,
- Coins, etc.



Flint and bone tools of the late Palaeolithic period

All these things lie buried in the ground. They remain buried in the ground for thousands of years and a mound of rubbish, soil builds up over them. The archaeologists dig these mounds and find things buried under them. The objects that lie deeper are the oldest evidences or sources of history.

So, the first step is digging or excavation. These excavations can be either vertical or horizontal.

There are four kinds of archaeological sources: sites, monuments, coins and inscriptions.

ACTIVITY

Here are the names of three famous archaeologists. Find out :

- What did they discover?
- When? • Where?

The three archaeologists are :

- M. Wheeler
- Rakhal Das Banerji
- Rai Bahadur Dayaram Sahni

• Sites

Sites are places where material remains of the past are found. Buried towns, cities, skeletal remains, toys are found by careful excavation by archaeologists, geologists and historians.

• Monuments

Any building of historical importance is called a monument. Temples, tombs, caves, forts are important examples.



A temple at Khajuraho

• Coins

The study of coins is called **Numismatics**. Coins were made of copper, bronze, silver and gold.

• Inscriptions

Epigraphy is the study of inscriptions. Inscriptions are written on hard surfaces like copper plates, rocks and stone pillars. Inscriptions also contain scripts and languages of old times. They can be understood by modern people only by decipherment. The Harappan scripts are undeciphered till now.



Birch bark manuscript

Literary Sources

One way of finding out about the past is to search for books or what was written years ago. These are in the form of manuscripts or hand written texts. (**Manu** is a Latin word meaning **hand**)

The manuscripts were written on :

- a palm leaf
- a specially prepared bark of a tree (birch)
- parchments

Many manuscripts have been destroyed but those that have survived, were generally preserved in



A scene from the Ramayana

temples and monasteries. These manuscripts fall under two categories : **Religious** and **Secular**.

- The religious manuscripts describe religious beliefs and rituals (eg. the Vedas, the Epics)
The manuscripts were written in different

languages – Sanskrit, Prakrit, Tamil etc.

Stories of the rule of kings are found in Megasthenes' *Indika* and *Arthashastra* of Kautilya.

The secular books deal with kings, their administration and science. Many plays, poems and epics were also written (e.g. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata).

Did you know?

The study of writing on hard surfaces, like stone or metal, is called **Epigraphy**.

The most famous examples of these are :

- Edicts of Ashoka
- Law Code of Hammurabi of Mesopotamia
- Tablets of Minoan and Mycenaean Civilisation

Case Study

The Story of Rosetta Stone

Rosetta is a small harbour on the Mediterranean coast of Egypt. A French officer of Napoleon's army found this stone near the city of Rashid (Rosetta) in 1799. The Rosetta stone is a black basalt stone (110 cm × 70 cm) with two languages written on it — Egyptian and Greek — and three scripts — Hieroglyphic, Demotic and Greek.

The Rosetta stone is written in three scripts because when it was written, three scripts were being used in Egypt.

- The first was Hieroglyphic script used for religious documents.
- The second was Demotic which was the common script of Egypt.
- The third was Greek which was the language of the rulers of Egypt at that time.

The Rosetta Stone was written in all three scripts so that priests, government officials and rulers of Egypt could read what it said.

The Rosetta Stone inscribed in 196 BC contains a decree praising the Egyptian king Ptolemy V.

No one could read hieroglyphics at the time of the discovery of the Rosetta Stone. Many epigraphists tried to decipher it but were unsuccessful. The structure of the script was very difficult to work out.

After studying the Rosetta Stone for many years, Jean-Francois Champollion deciphered it in 1822.



Rosetta Inscription

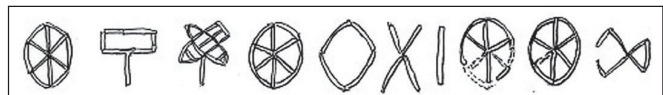


Rosetta Stone

The Indus Script

The term Indus Script (Harappan Script) refers to short strings of symbols associated with the Harappan civilisation. In spite of many attempts, it is still undeciphered.

The script is written from right to left. Since the number of principal signs is about 400–600, many scholars accept the script to be logo-syllabic.



Indus script discovered near the northern gate of Dholavira, 5000 years ago

Points to Remember

- History is the study of man's past. It is based on historical sources which are seen, observed and analysed by the historians.
- Study of History can be divided into :
 - Prehistory
 - Protohistory and
 - History
- Historians depend on reliable sources. Sources are of two kinds : Literary sources and Archaeological sources.
- History is the key through which we can uncode the mysteries of the past.

Glossary

DECIPHERMENT	: To find and work out the meaning of a piece of writing.
EPIGRAPHY	: Study of edicts and inscriptions.
HISTORICAL SOURCES	: Evidence or materials which are helpful in studying about the past.
HISTORY	: The study of the past with the help of written materials or objects found from excavated sites.
MANUSCRIPTS	: Handwritten texts.
NUMISMATICS	: The study of coins as well as of the writing and symbols inscribed on coins.
PREHISTORY	: The period of study when there were no written records but sources are provided by the fossils and buried materials.

TIME TO LEARN

A. Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)

1. Deccan region is well known for
(a) megaliths (b) temples (c) Sangam literature (d) all the above
2. The most popular method of dating used by archaeologists is
(a) carbon-14 dating (b) carbon-18 dating (c) carbon-33 dating (d) none of these
3. The study of coins is called
(a) inscription (b) numismatics (c) epigraphy (d) none of these
4. Epigraphy is the study of
(a) coins (b) inscriptions (c) manuscripts (d) all of these
5. Which of the following is an example of secular literature?
(a) Vedas (b) The Epics (c) Indika (d) None of these

B. Match the following

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 1. Chronology | (a) Megasthenes |
| 2. Prehistory | (b) Study of inscriptions |
| 3. Deccan | (c) When writing had not been invented |
| 4. Epigraphy | (d) Record of events |
| 5. Indika | (e) Dravidian culture |

C. Very short answer type questions

1. What does BC stand for?
2. What does AD stand for?
3. Name the two sources of history.
4. What is archaeology?

D. Short answer type questions

1. Mention the four geographical divisions of India.

2. What are the various kinds of archaeological sources?
3. Differentiate between numismatics and epigraphy.
4. Mention two literary sources of history. Write the names of the authors.
5. The earliest manuscripts were written on which material?
6. Mention the main aspects of Dravidian culture.

E. Long answer type questions

1. How does an archaeologist reconstruct history?
2. How are literary sources helpful in studying history?
3. 'India's geographical features have had a profound effect on its history.' Comment. [HOTS]

F. Project

How can the Ramayana be treated as a literary source of history? Write a project. Take the help of your teachers/parents and friends.

G. Activity

1. Visit the national museum or the nearest museum. Examine and study the artefacts related to the Indus valley civilisation.
2. Visit the nearest archaeological or excavation site with your parents and write what you saw there.
3. Collect pictures of some ancient monuments such as temples, tombs, forts and paste them on your scrapbook.

LIFE SKILLS

Imagine you have joined a new school. How will you adjust to the new environment? Tick (✓) the correct options.

- Make new friends
- Talk to staff members
- Be pleasant to everyone
- Just keep to yourself
- Behave as a shy and withdrawn person
- Try to impress teachers

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