

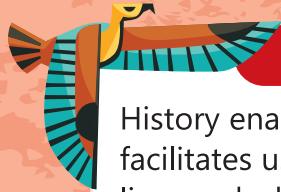


Chapter 1 What, Where, When and How



Learning Outcomes

- What is History?
- Time and Dates
- Sources of History



Get Set Go



History enables us to know the life of people in the past. It also facilitates us to know how the people in certain period led their lives and what objects they used.

WHAT IS HISTORY?

History refers to the study of the past. It has the written record of the events that took place in the distant past. In history, we read not only about politics, but also about social and cultural life of the ancient people. What were their occupations and what did they eat? What kinds of clothes they used to wear? How did villages, cities and kingdoms come up?

The word history has been derived from the greek word *historia*. Which means 'knowing by enquiry'. The scholars who help us to reconstruct the stories of the past are called **historians**. The role of historians is very important in the study of history. They first collect information from the sources, sort them out, study them, analyse them and put them together to write about the past.

Did You Know?

Herodotus is called the 'Father of History'. He was the first historian.



Test Yourself



Answer the following questions.

1. What does the Greek word 'Historia' mean?
2. What type of clothes the ancient people used to wear?

TIME AND DATES

Historians have divided the past into three periods to make the study easier.

- ➔ **Prehistory** is about the period for which there are no written records.
- ➔ **Protohistory** is about the period during which a culture or civilisation had some semblance of written record but are yet to be interpreted and understood.
- ➔ **History** is about the period for which written records are available.

Dating the Events of History

It is important to arrange past events in their order of occurrence. As there is no agreement on when time began, historians adopted the system of recording dates in terms of whether they occurred before or after the beginning of the year of the birth of Jesus Christ. So, the year of Jesus' birth was considered as YEAR ONE.



Knowing About the Past

The years before YEAR ONE are known as Before Christ or BC and the years after that are known as Anno Domini or AD, which in Latin means 'In the Year of Our Lord'. These terms, BC and AD are often replaced with Before the Common Era (BCE) and Common Era (CE). We use the term circa (or C. in short) when the date of an event is not certain.

Test Yourself

Write T for true and F for false statements.

1. History is the study of present.
2. 'Historia' is a Greek word means knowing by enquiry.
3. BCE stands for Before Common Era.
4. The year of Jesus crucifixion is considered as the year one.

Applying Geography To Interpret The Past

The knowledge of Geography is important for a good understanding of History. Geography is helpful in understanding the location of settlements, the movement of people and the creation of states.

Why did the earliest cities developed near the banks of rivers? Answering such a question requires a geographic approach to the study of history. Early cities developed near the banks of rivers because the early inhabitants of the river valley civilisations depended mainly on farming. Their proximity to the river provided them easy access to water which was needed for the crops. In the ancient times, there were no roads. Rivers connected distant places, and were often the only means of transportation at the time.

In ancient times, when irrigation techniques were not known, agriculture was rain fed. In the first century CE, when the direction of monsoon was discovered, traders sailed along with the south-west monsoon from West Asia and the Mediterranean Sea region and reached India and South-east Asia. Thus, the knowledge of monsoon enabled our ancestors to carry out trade and establish cultural relationship with different countries in West Asia and along the Mediterranean Sea.

Sulaiman and Kirthar hills are some of the area where women and men first began to grow crops such as wheat and barley about 8000 years ago are located here. People also began rearing animals like sheep, goat, and cattle, and lived in villages.

In ancient times, the area along the rivers to the south of the Ganga was known as Magadha now lying in the state of Bihar. Its rulers were very powerful, and set up a large kingdom. Kingdoms were set up in other parts of the country as well. Throughout, people travelled from one part of the subcontinent to another. The hills and high mountains including the Himalayas, deserts, rivers and seas made journeys dangerous at times, but never impossible. So, men and women moved in search of livelihood, as also to escape from natural disasters like floods or droughts. Sometimes men marched in armies, conquering others' lands. Besides, merchants travelled with caravans or ships, carrying valuable goods from place to place. And religious teachers walked from village to village, town to town, stopping to offer instruction and advice on the way. Finally, some people perhaps travelled driven by a spirit of adventure, wanting to discover new and exciting places. All these led to the sharing of ideas between people.

Hills, mountains and seas form the natural frontiers of the subcontinent. While it was difficult to cross these frontiers, those who wanted could and did scale the mountains and cross the seas. People from across the frontiers also came into the subcontinent and settled here. These movements of people

Did You Know?

To make it easier for us to remember the dates, historians use a tool called a timeline. A timeline is a way of displaying a list of events in a chronological order.



enriched our cultural traditions. People have shared new ways of carving stone, composing music, and even cooking food over several hundreds of years.

Names of the land

Two of the words we often use for our country are India and Bharat. The word India comes from the Indus, called Sindhu in Sanskrit. The Iranians and the Greeks who came through the northwest about 2500 years ago and were familiar with the Indus, called it the Hindos or the Indos, and the land to the east of the river was called India. The name Bharata was used for a group of people who lived in the northwest, and who are mentioned in the Rigveda, the earliest composition in Sanskrit (dated to about 3500 years ago). Later it was used for the country.

Geography also explains us that India has a long coastline with many harbours and natural ports. These harbours and ports helped our ancestors to trade with people of distant places like Rome, Mesopotamia, Egypt and South Asia.

Geography also explains us how the mountain passes in the Himalayan range made it possible for people from Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia to enter India. These people were either invaders or immigrants. The passes also enabled trade between India and Central Asia, and West Asia during the ancient times.

The seas and the mountains also acted as natural frontiers.

We must observe the past from both—spatial and chronological—points of view to develop a greater understanding of past events.

Test Yourself



Write T for true and F for false statements.

1. Knowledge of geography is not essential for a good understanding of history.
2. Inhabitants of river valley civilisations depended mainly on cattle rearing.
3. India has a short coastline with many harbours and natural ports.
4. People from other countries like Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia came to India via the mountain passes in the Himalayan range.

SOURCES OF HISTORY

How do we study the past? With the help of various sources, historians reconstruct the past. By putting the sources of the past, historians can form an impression of a historical event. The sources of history are broadly divided into two categories.

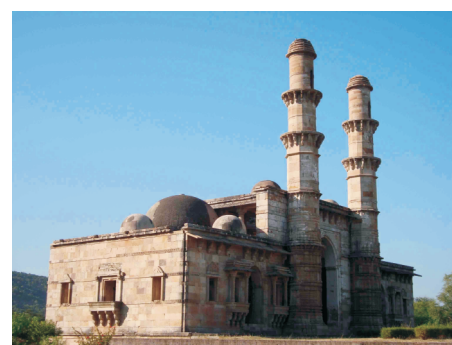
➡ Archaeological Sources

➡ Literary Sources

Archaeological Sources

Archaeology is the study of cultures of the past and of periods of History by examining the remains of buildings and objects found during excavation of the area. It tells us something about the life and other habits of people who lived there before the recorded History.

The people who study these objects, are called **archaeologists**. Occasionally, these sources are buried under the ground and can be recovered by digging up the ground. This process of digging is called **excavation**. Archaeological sources are particularly useful in the study of prehistoric cultures since Prehistory is concerned with periods for which there are no written records available. The plant and animal remains indicate the climatic conditions and vegetation that existed at that time. The study of the bones of animals, which are excavated, help historians to understand the pattern of animal domestication of a particular period.



Archaeological Site



Test Yourself



Which of the following statements is/are associated with archaeology sources?

- I. It includes structures and objects found in excavation, inscriptions and numismatic sources.
- II. Our knowledge of Prehistoric times and the Harappan culture is exclusively based on the sources obtained from excavation.

Options

- a. Only I b. Only II c. Both I and II d. Neither I nor II

Monuments : Monuments are old buildings or old structures which are important for their historic connection or legacy.

Monuments include temples, mosques, tombs, churches, cemeteries, forts, palaces, step-wells and rock-cut caves.

Monuments could also be any building of the past as well as ancient mounds and sites which represent the remains of ancient habitation. Monuments reveal to us the architectural innovations of our ancestors. Monuments provide us with the information about the political, social, cultural and religious lives of the people of the period in which they were built. For example, the Taj Mahal is a monument that tells us about the affluent conditions that prevailed during the Mughal times. It also throws considerable light on the artistic sensibilities prevalent during the Mughal Emperor, Shah Jahan's reign.

Did You Know?

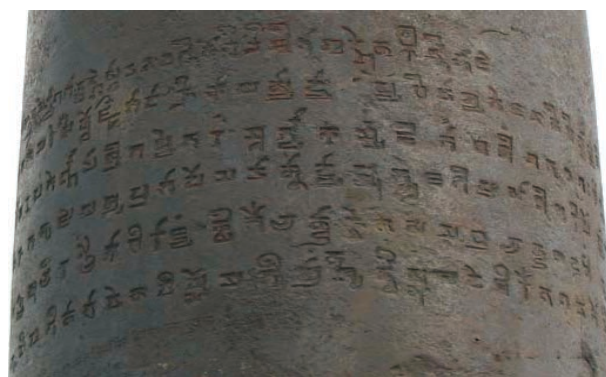
The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) was established in 1861 during the British rule.



The Taj Mahal

Inscriptions

These are writings on relatively hard surfaces *e.g.*, stone or metal. They generally conveyed kings' orders, their deeds, their preachings etc. For example, the inscriptions of Ashoka. Kings often kept records of victories in battles as inscriptions. On the other hand, ordinary men and women did not keep records of what they did as they were generally poor, illiterate and unaware of their advantages. The study of inscriptions is known as **epigraphy**. **Decipherment** is the process of reading and understanding the script used in inscriptions. **Scripts** consist of signs or letters.



The Ashoka Pillar Inscription in Brahmi Script at Lumbini

Test Yourself



Which is/are types of inscriptions?

- a. Cave Inscription b. Pillars Inscription c. Rocks Inscription d. All of these



Coins : Coins mention the names of kings, gods or dates. This has helped us to find out the history of the kings and their dynasties. Coins give us information about trade and commerce and also language of that period. Coins often had images of Gods and religious symbols which tell us about the religious beliefs of those times. The design and polish of the coins tell us about the artistic excellence of people who lived in those periods.

Test Yourself



Fill in the blanks.

1. The study of cultures of the past and of periods of history by examining various objects is called _____.
2. The people studying historical objects are called _____.
3. The Taj Mahal was built during the reign of _____.
4. The process of reading and understanding the script used in inscriptions is called _____.

Did You Know?

The study of the old writing systems found on the inscriptions and other old records is called paleography.

Artefacts : Artefacts are man-made objects, such as pottery, jewellery, seals, tools, implements, etc. The study of artefacts reveals how people of a particular civilization lived. For example,



Artefacts

some archaeologists believe that the carving on some seals found in the Indus Valley Civilisation (IVC), is of Pashupati (the Hindu God). This finding suggests that the people of the IVC were Hindus. Similarly, parts of tools and implements, considered to have been used by hunter-gatherers, have been found in many excavations. These tools reflect their lifestyle, occupation, social environment, etc.

Literary Sources

Literary sources comprise all types of texts written on various materials. Our ancestors wrote on birch bark or palm leaves, known as bhojpatras. At that time text was written on sheep leather and wooden tablets.

Literary sources inform us about the political, social, economic, religious and cultural life of our ancestors. They include religious writings, accounts of travellers, epics, poems, etc.

Literary sources can be broadly divided into three categories :

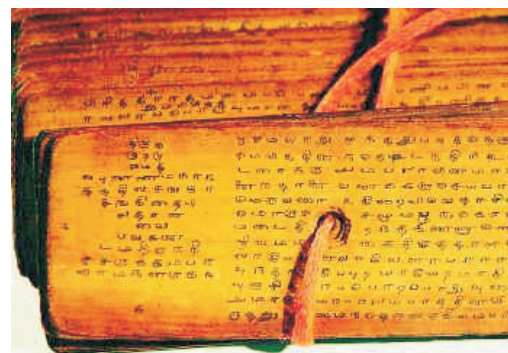
- ➡ Religious Literature
- ➡ Foreign Accounts
- ➡ Secular Literature

Religious Literature : Most of the ancient manuscripts are **religious** in nature. Notable among them are the Vedas, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Bible and the Quran. They throw considerable light on the social and cultural conditions of the periods during which these books were written. Religious literature were usually written on palm leaves which were cut into pages and tied together to form books.

Secular Literature : **Secular Literature** contains manuscripts which are not religious, for example, biographies, plays, stories, travel accounts, books on science and technology, politics, etc.

Did You Know?

The Frome Hoard, a potbellied jar containing 52,503 Roman coins, was discovered at Somerset, England.



The memoirs of travellers, such as Fa Hien and Hiuen Tsang, who visited India long ago, gave detailed account of their experiences. There were others, such as Kalhana, who wrote chronicles to give a detailed account of their kingdom. The *Rajatarangini* is a classic example, which tells about Kashmir till 12th century CE.

We also have the works of Kalidasa, Surdaska, Bhasa and Banabhatta. These works reflect the conditions of the times when they literature composed.



Religious Literature

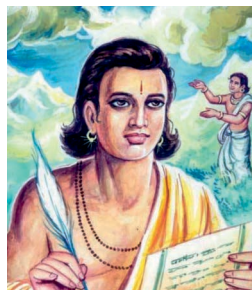
Foreign Accounts : Greek, Roman and Chinese travellers came to India and they left behind accounts of things that they saw. We know of Alexander's invasion on the basis of Greek records. Then, we have the partial reconstruction work of the *Indika* by Megasthenes who was an ambassador to the court of Chandragupta Maurya. It gives us valuable information about the Mauryan administration, social classes and economic activities of that period. Buddhist pilgrims to India, Fa-Hien and Hiuen Tsang from China left accounts which describe the prevalent social, religious and economic conditions in India during their visit.



Fa Hien



Hiuen Tsang



Kalidas

Test Yourself



Answer the following questions.

1. Whose images did the coins have?
2. Which book tells about Kashmir till 12th century.
3. Who wrote Indika?
4. In whose court was Megasthenes an ambassador?

Read and Reflect

- ➔ The period of history for which we have no written records is known as Prehistory.
- ➔ Protohistory refers to the time when some form of written records exist but are yet to be deciphered.
- ➔ The period for which we have written records available is called History.
- ➔ Historians are the people who reconstruct history by studying the evidences of the past.
- ➔ The sources of history are divided into two categories : Archaeological and Literary.
- ➔ People who study ruins are known as archeologists.
- ➔ Archaeological sources include monuments, coins, artefacts, inscriptions, etc.
- ➔ Literary sources are divided into three categories : religious, secular and foreign accounts.

Timeline

- 800 BC** : Settlements were established on the banks of Narmada River
- 2700 BC** : First city emerged on the banks of the Indus River
- 500 BC** : Cities were established in the Ganga Valley
- 2000 AD/CE** : Present Time



Vocabulary

- Historian** : a person who studies records related to history and writes about it.
- Prehistory** : the time during the development of human culture before the appearance of the written word.
- Protohistory** : the study of humans prior to the invention of writing.
- Archaeology** : the branch of anthropology that studies prehistoric people and their cultures through their material remains.
- Artefacts** : a man-made objects taken as a whole.



Exercise

Self-Assessment

A. Choose and tick (✓) the correct option.

- A historian is a scholar who :
 - reconstructs our past
 - studies natural and physical sciences
 - studies the plants
- The process of digging for old objects is called:
 - excavation
 - inscription
 - carvings
- People who study ruins are known as:
 - zoologist
 - archeologists
 - geologists
- The word 'history' has been taken from the Greek word:
 - historia
 - historee
 - histolica
- The period for which there are no written records is called:
 - History
 - Prehistory
 - Urotohistory
- The years before year one are known as:
 - Before Christ or BC
 - Anno Domini or AD
 - Circa or C
- With the help of sources historians reconstruct the:
 - future
 - present
 - past

- The old buildings or other old structures which are important for their historic connection or legacy are called:
 - monuments
 - fortress
 - both of these
- It is the process of reading and understanding the script used in inscriptions:
 - cipherment
 - improvement
 - decipherment
- Who wrote Rajatarangini?
 - Kalhana
 - Aryabhata
 - Kanada

B. Fill in the blanks.

- The year of the birth of Christ is considered as _____.
- The _____ had the images of kings, gods and goddesses.
- _____, _____ and _____ are the three types of literary sources.
- The word history has been derived from the Greek word _____.
- _____ and _____ were the two Chinese travellers who visited India and left their accounts.
- The knowledge of _____ is essential for a good understanding of history.
- Archaeological sources are useful in the study of _____ as it is concerned with periods for which there are no written records available.

8. Our ancestors wrote on birch bark or palm leaves, known as _____.
9. Megasthenes was an ambassador in the court of _____.
10. _____ literature contains manuscripts which are not religious.

C. Very short answer questions

1. Which year is regarded as YEAR ONE?
2. What is the full form of CE?
3. What helped the traders from West Asia find their way to India?
4. What kind of a source are rock-cut caves?
5. Name two Buddhist pilgrims who left behind travel accounts.

D. Short answer questions

1. On what basis do we date historical events?
2. What is paleography?
3. What is the difference between Prehistory and History?
4. Define the term archaeology.

E. Long answer questions

1. What are inscriptions? Why are they considered a reliable source of information?
2. Why is archaeology an important source of information of prehistory?
3. What is numismatics? What information does this source furnish about the past?
4. How has the geography of India shaped its history?
5. Do paintings help us in reconstructing the past? How do paintings help us to understand the past?

HOTS

Critical Thinking

1. Where was Indus Valley Civilization?
2. Who made inscriptions and why?

Class Discussion

Peer Activity

1. What did the ancient people eat? Discuss with your classmates.
2. Knowledge of Geography is very essential for the study of History. Why?

Life Skills

Social and Emotional Learning

1. Vedas are the most important sources of History. Find out more about them.
2. What do Ramayana and Mahabharata tells us about the social life of people during those days?

Activity

Self-Assessment

Historians rely on sources to build up a picture of the past. The more reliable the source, the more accurate their picture of the past is likely to be. Consider newspapers as sources of history. Think about their reliability as evidence of the attitudes of people. Write an article explaining why you consider it as a good source or otherwise.

Teacher Talk

Tell the student about the importance of History.

