

What, Where, How and When

Class 6 Social Science

Complete Study Notes

Learning Objectives

Understand the importance of studying history and how it helps us learn about the past. Explore where early humans lived, how farming and settlements developed, and how ancient kingdoms emerged. Learn how India got its names, discover the different sources used to study history, and understand how historians arrange historical events using dates and timelines.

Introduction to History

History is the study of the past. It helps us understand how people lived thousands of years ago, how they found food, built homes, developed villages and cities, and created civilizations. By studying history, we learn about the journey of human development and understand how our present society has evolved over time.

Historians gather information from many different sources to reconstruct the past. Ancient objects, written records, monuments, inscriptions, and archaeological discoveries help us understand the lives, cultures, beliefs, and achievements of our ancestors. History not only teaches us about important events but also helps us appreciate our rich cultural heritage.

Early Human Settlements and the Beginning of Civilization

The earliest humans lived close to rivers, forests, and mountains where food and water were easily available. Thousands of years ago, people settled near the banks of the Narmada River and survived by hunting wild animals and gathering fruits, roots, seeds, and other forest products. Gradually, humans learned new skills that improved their way of life.

Around 8,000 years ago, people living in the Sulaiman and Kirthar Hills began cultivating crops such as wheat and barley. They also domesticated animals like sheep, goats, and cattle, which marked the beginning of agriculture and animal husbandry. As farming became more successful, people started living in permanent villages instead of moving from place to place.

Rice cultivation later developed in the regions north of the Vindhya Mountains. Over time, villages expanded into towns and cities. Around 4,700 years ago, some of the world's earliest cities were built along the Indus River and its tributaries. Later, many important settlements developed along the Ganga River, where fertile land supported growing populations.

One of the most powerful ancient kingdoms was Magadha, located in present-day Bihar. With fertile land, rich natural resources, and capable rulers, Magadha grew into a powerful empire that played a major role in Indian history.

How India Got Its Name

Origins of Our Names: The name India comes from the River Indus, which was called Sindhu in Sanskrit. Ancient Persian and Greek travelers pronounced it as Hindos or Indos, and the land beyond the river gradually became known as India. The name Bharat originally referred to a group of people mentioned in the ancient Rigveda, one of the oldest Sanskrit texts in the world. Over time, the name Bharat came to represent the entire country and continues to be the official name of India in the Constitution.

Sources of History

Since no one today witnessed ancient events, historians depend on different historical sources to understand the past. One of the most important sources is manuscripts, which are handwritten books prepared on palm leaves or birch bark. These manuscripts contain valuable information about religion, science, medicine, literature, administration, and the lives of kings.

Another important source is inscriptions, which are writings engraved on stones, pillars, temples, caves, or metal plates. Kings often issued royal orders, recorded victories, or announced public messages through inscriptions that have survived for centuries.

Archaeologists also discover valuable evidence by excavating ancient sites. Objects such as pottery, coins, ornaments, tools, weapons, buildings, seals, sculptures, and human or animal bones provide important clues about the daily lives of ancient people. Together, these sources help historians reconstruct the story of India's past with greater accuracy.

Understanding Historical Dates and Timelines

History follows a chronological order, allowing historians to arrange important events according to time. Events that happened before the birth of Jesus Christ are generally written as BC (Before Christ) or BCE (Before Common Era), while events after his birth are written as AD (Anno Domini) or CE (Common Era).

Using dates and timelines makes it easier to understand when important kingdoms, civilizations, discoveries, and historical events took place. Chronology also helps historians compare events that occurred in different parts of the world during the same period.

Importance of Studying History

History teaches us how human societies have changed over thousands of years. It helps us understand the achievements, struggles, inventions, and traditions of earlier civilizations. By learning about the past, students develop respect for cultural heritage and understand how present-day society has been shaped by previous generations.

Studying history also improves analytical thinking by encouraging students to examine evidence, compare different sources, and understand the reasons behind historical events. It helps us become informed citizens who appreciate the importance of preserving monuments, traditions, and historical records for future generations.

Practice Questions

1. Why do we study history?
2. Where did early humans first settle?
3. How did India get its name?
4. What is the difference between manuscripts and inscriptions?
5. What are the major sources of history?

Answer Key

- **ANSWER 1:** We study history to understand how people lived in the past, how civilizations developed, and how human society has changed over time. History also helps us preserve our cultural heritage and learn from past experiences.
- **ANSWER 2:** Many early humans settled near rivers such as the Narmada River, where water, food, and natural resources were easily available for survival.
- **ANSWER 3:** The name India comes from the River Indus (Sindhu), while Bharat comes from the Bharata people mentioned in the Rigveda.
- **ANSWER 4:** Manuscripts are handwritten documents prepared on palm leaves or birch bark, whereas inscriptions are writings carved on stone, metal, pillars, caves, or temples.
- **ANSWER 5:** The major sources of history include manuscripts, inscriptions, monuments, coins, pottery, tools, buildings, sculptures, and archaeological remains discovered through excavations.