



The Savvy Humanities

SIMPLIFYING MINDS, SHAPING THINKERS

CLASS 12 · HISTORY · CBSE 2026-27 SYLLABUS

Themes in Indian History Part – I · Chapter I

Bricks, Beads and Bones: The Harappan Civilisation

32

pages of notes

25

marks for Part I (Themes 1–4)

15

board questions solved

31

key terms defined

What's inside

- Mind map, two timelines and one drawn plan
- Phases, sites and the Saraswati basin
- Food, farming and irrigation
- Mohenjodaro — Citadel, Lower Town, drains, Great Bath
- Burials, luxuries and social differences
- Beads, shells and craft centres
- Trade with Oman, Bahrain and Mesopotamia
- Seals, script, weights and authority
- The end, the discovery and the debates
- CBSE's map list with every site placed
- Every NCERT exercise, solved

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Handwritten-style, for revision

Every page inside is handwritten-style with highlighting, boxes and a mind map — built to be read the night before, not skimmed.



How to use these notes

What the paper wants

CBSE marks Part I as one block — 25 marks out of 80, shared by Themes 1 to 4; it gives no separate marks for each theme. From Part I the paper brings seven 1-mark MCQs, two 3-mark short answers, one 8-mark long answer and one 4-mark source-based question — so expect about two MCQs from this theme, and possibly one of the longer questions. Map work (5 marks of the 80) uses CBSE's list of Mature Harappan sites, all covered here. CBSE's learning outcomes ask you to interpret early urban centres and social institutions, the many sides of the Harappan civilisation, and the sources and viewpoints of the ASI and historians. All nine NCERT exercises are solved, the map exercise is worked out, and both projects are explained.

Study order that works

1. Keep your NCERT open beside you — these notes describe its maps and pictures in words.
2. Read the mind map first. It is the whole chapter on one page.
3. Read the notes once, slowly.
4. Cover the page and say each **Definition** box aloud.
5. Write the model answers by hand, timed.

What the boxes mean

- Definition — exact wording to write ■ Exam tip — how to score
■ Remember — board favourite ■ Common mistake

CBSE topics in this chapter — and your revision tracker

Tick a box each time you finish a pass. Three ticks across a row means that topic is exam-ready.



Syllabus topic	Read	Practised	Revised
Terms, places and phases of the Harappan civilisation	☐	☐	☐
Beginnings and subsistence strategies	☐	☐	☐
Agricultural technologies	☐	☐	☐
Mohenjodaro — a planned urban centre	☐	☐	☐
Drains, houses and the Citadel	☐	☐	☐
Tracking social differences — burials and luxuries	☐	☐	☐
Craft production — beads and Chanhudaro	☐	☐	☐
Procuring materials — the subcontinent and distant lands	☐	☐	☐
Seals, script and weights	☐	☐	☐
Ancient authority	☐	☐	☐
The end of the civilisation	☐	☐	☐
Discovering the Harappan civilisation	☐	☐	☐
Problems of piecing together the past	☐	☐	☐

Not in these notes

Nothing CBSE prescribes for this theme is left out — every section of the NCERT theme is covered. The textbook's 2026-27 reprint has new material (the phases from 6000 BCE, the Saraswati basin, the archaeogenetic study at Rakhigarhi); the notes give it exactly as the book states it. NCERT's maps and pictures are described in words, not reproduced; the one drawn plan is a simple sketch for these notes. Facts the textbook does not give are deliberately not added.



Chapter at a Glance — Mind Map

Bricks, Beads and Bones: The Harappan Civilisation

Time and Place

- 6000–1300 BCE
- Mature phase 2600–1900 BCE
- Over 2000 sites
- Two-thirds in the Saraswati basin

Mohenjodaro

- Citadel and Lower Town
- Grid streets, drains first
- Courtyard houses, 700 wells
- Great Bath

Crafts

- Chanhudaro — 7 hectares
- Carnelian beads, drilling
- Shell at Nageshwar, Balakot
- Waste shows workshops

Seals and Authority

- Seals and sealings
- Script — 375–400 signs
- Binary weights in chert
- Many views on rulers

Food and Farming

- Wheat, barley, pulses
- Plough models, Kalibangan field
- Canals at Shortughai
- Reservoirs at Dholavira

Social Differences

- Burials with ornaments
- Utilitarian vs luxuries
- Faience, gold hoards
- Rare objects in big cities

Materials

- Shortughai — lapis lazuli
- Khetri copper
- Oman — Magan
- Meluhha — land of seafarers

End and Discovery

- Decline from 1900 BCE
- Cunningham's confusion
- Marshall, 1924
- Wheeler and stratigraphy



Where This Theme Sits

The first theme of *Themes in Indian History Part – I* is about the subcontinent's earliest cities. The **Harappan civilisation** — also called the **Indus valley civilisation** — is named after **Harappa**, the first site where it was found. Everything we know about it comes from what it left behind: "their houses, pots, ornaments, tools and seals – in other words, from archaeological evidence".

Marks

CBSE marks **Part I** as one block — **25 marks out of 80**, shared by Themes 1 to 4; there are **no separate marks for each theme**. From Part I the paper brings **seven 1-mark MCQs**, **two 3-mark short answers**, **one 8-mark long answer** and **one 4-mark source-based question**. Map work (5 marks) includes CBSE's list of **Mature Harappan sites** — see 1.12.

1.1 Terms, Places and Time

Phase	Dates (as in your textbook)	What it was
Early Harappan	6000 BCE – 2600 BCE	The formative phase
Mature Harappan	2600 BCE – 1900 BCE	The most prosperous, urban phase
Late Harappan	1900 BCE – 1300 BCE	The phase of decline

- The civilisation spread over **Afghanistan, Baluchistan, Sind and Punjab** (now in Pakistan) and **Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Maharashtra**.
- Its sites share distinctive **pottery, baked and unbaked bricks, seals, weights, beads, and objects of copper and bronze**.
- **More than 2,000 sites** are known, most between the **Indus and the Saraswati** river basins — "Nearly two-thirds of these settlements are in the Saraswati basin, suggesting its immense importance."
- The **five major cities**: **Rakhigarhi, Mohenjodaro, Harappa, Dholavira and Ganweriwala**.