Mohenjo-daro: Unsealing an Ancient Indus City

A 37-minute documentary filmed at the site, for the ancient India unit. Free, ad-free, no sign-up for you or your students.

RUNTIME	FORMAT	QUIZ	SUBTITLES
37 minutes	**5 chapters**	**In the video, self-check**	**Eng · Hindi · Tamil · Urdu**

Watch it

mohenjodaro.net · youtu.be/BxyxVgAMM_4 · Teacher page, guide and standards: **mohenjodaro.net/teachers.html**

About the quiz

Ten questions run **inside the YouTube player**. They appear as students watch and each student sees their own results — it is a self-check, not a grade. Nothing is reported back to you and there is no score to collect. Where it earns its keep is attention: students who know a question is coming watch differently.

The questions were written by **Ilona Aronovsky**, history educator and author of the children's adventure story *Indus Investigators — Mohenjodaro Mystery* (Scholastic India).

If you need work to hand in, use the discussion questions and writing prompts overleaf — or ask three aloud at the end, three hands each: **(1)** Name one thing that surprised you. **(2)** What do we still not know? **(3)** Why don't we know it? — The third does the work.

Three ways to use it

In class, one period	Watch straight through. Thirty-seven minutes leaves time to settle and to talk afterwards. Nothing needs printing or handing out.
As homework or a sub plan	Students watch and answer on their own. The quiz stays with them, so pair it with the writing prompts overleaf if you need work to collect.
One chapter at a time	Each of the five chapters stands alone in seven to nine minutes. Chapter 2, The City, is the best single choice if you only have one slot.

The five chapters

01:30	**The Story**	A story still told in the villages around Mohenjo-daro opens the film, and introduces the objects — and the questions — that follow.
07:29	**The City**	Grid-planned streets, standardized baked brick, covered drains beneath the roads, the toys and games of ordinary people, and the bronze Dancing Girl.
15:15	**The Citadel**	Who ran this city — priests, merchants, a council? The Great Bath sits at the center of the argument. Trade reaching Mesopotamia; no palaces, no royal tombs.
21:33	**The Writing**	Thousands of carved seals covered in a script no one has ever read, and why every attempt to decipher it has failed.
29:06	**The Future**	Groundwater, salt and underfunding threaten the site, while new methods reopen century-old questions. Students see a field that is still unfinished.

Words students will meet

Harappan	The adjective for this civilization, after Harappa, the first of its cities to be excavated.
Citadel	The raised western quarter of the city, holding its largest public buildings.
Great Bath	A watertight brick tank on the citadel — the oldest known public water tank in the world.
Seal	A small carved stone stamp bearing an animal and a line of script, pressed into clay.
Decipher	To work out how to read an unknown script. The Indus script has never been deciphered.
Standardization	Making things to one shared measure — Indus bricks hold the same proportions across hundreds of miles.

DISCUSSION · WRITING · STANDARDS

Using the film

Before you press play (two minutes)

- The Indus was the largest of the ancient world's first civilizations by area — bigger than Egypt and Mesopotamia combined — and almost nobody has heard of it.
- It was lost. Nobody knew Mohenjo-daro existed until about a hundred years ago.
- Nobody can read a word they wrote. Watch the seals, and see whether you can work out why the script has defeated everyone.

Six discussion questions

1. Mohenjo-daro had covered drains and public wells four thousand years ago — plumbing better than most European cities had until the 1800s. What does a city's water system tell you about the people who built it?
2. Archaeologists have found no palaces, no royal tombs and no monuments to kings here. Give three different explanations that could account for that. Which would be hardest to prove?
3. The Indus script has never been read. How can scholars be confident it is writing at all, and not decoration?
4. Egypt built pyramids; Mesopotamia built ziggurats; the Indus built drains, granaries and standardized bricks. What might a civilization be saying about itself through what it chooses to build well?
5. Indus seals have turned up in Mesopotamia, over a thousand miles away. What would it have taken to move goods that far in 2000 BCE?
6. The film ends without solving the mystery. Why might a historian be comfortable saying “we don't know yet”? What would it take to change that?

Two writing prompts

Evidence. Pick one claim made in the film about how people lived at Mohenjo-daro. Name the physical evidence behind it, then explain one other way that same evidence could be read. (RH.6-8.1, D2.His.10)

Comparison. You have studied Mesopotamia and Egypt. In one paragraph, name the single most surprising difference between them and the Indus, and say what it might mean. (HSS 6.5.1, D2.His.1)

Curriculum alignment — United States

STANDARD	WHAT THE FILM DOES
CA HSS 6.5.1 and 6.1	Locates the Indus river system and its physical setting, on location, and shows what is known about early urban life *through archaeological evidence*.
TEKS §113.42(c)(2) World History Studies	Characteristics of civilization, and how the major river-valley civilizations shaped what followed
C3 D2.His.10.6-8 and D2.Geo.2.6-8	Detects the limits of the evidence — the scholars disagree, and say why — and uses maps and site footage to explain how the river shaped settlement.
CCSS RH.6-8.1 and RH.6-8.7	Integrates visual information with written and spoken sources, and models citing specific evidence: each claim is tied to an object or an excavation.

Curriculum alignment — United Kingdom

REFERENCE	WHAT THE FILM DOES
KS2 History	Names **the Indus Valley** as one of four depth-study options for the earliest civilisations.
KS2 — sources	How knowledge of the past is constructed from sources; interpretation of evidence — or the lack of it. The archaeologists disagree on screen.
KS2 — depth topic	A world-history depth topic for Years 5–6, and a comparison with Egypt, Mesopotamia and Shang China.
KS2 — enquiry	The six questions above are framed around change, cause, similarity and difference, and significance.

References are to the National Curriculum for England; Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland carry equivalent strands.

Free to show, link and share in any classroom — no permission needed, nothing to sign. If it works with your students, or if something falls flat, we would be glad to know: **harappa.com/contact-us**.

***Version 1.1, August 2026 — a first edition**, to be revised as teachers use it; the current one is always at mohenjodaro.net/teachers.html. **Mohenjo-daro: Unsealing an Ancient Indus City** (2026, 37 min) was written and directed by Omar Khan, founder of Harappa.com, a public resource on the ancient Indus Valley Civilization since 1995. Winner, Best Documentary, 15th Bangalore Shorts Film Festival 2026.*