

ANSWER KEY & MARKING SCHEME · CBSE CLASS 12**Bricks, Beads and Bones — The Harappan Civilisation**

History · Chapter 1 · Use this with the Board Paper · Companion to Quick Drill

HOW TO USE

Attempt the Board Paper first (closed-book, full time). Then come here. For 2-mark+ questions, compare your answer to the model. For 3-4 mark questions, also consult the **Topper Templates** below — these show the exact step-by-step structure that scores full marks per CBSE marking-scheme conventions.

MODEL ANSWERS · BOARD PAPER**Section A — VSA (1 mark × 4)****Q1. Name the founder of the Archaeological Survey of India. [1 mark]****Ans:** Alexander Cunningham (founded ASI in 1861).**Q2. In which year was Harappa first excavated? [1 mark]****Ans:** 1921 (by Daya Ram Sahni).**Q3. What was the Sumerian name for Harappan civilisation? [1 mark]****Ans:** Meluhha.**Q4. Name two crops first cultivated by Harappans. [1 mark]****Ans:** Cotton (world's first) and barley (also wheat, peas, sesame).**Section B — SA-I (3 marks × 2)****Q5. Why is the Harappan script considered enigmatic? (any 3 reasons) [3 marks]****Ans:** (1) SHORT INSCRIPTIONS — average 5-6 signs per inscription; longest known is 26 signs. Not enough text for statistical analysis. (2) NO BILINGUAL TEXT — no Rosetta-Stone equivalent exists. We cannot cross-reference the script with a known language. (3) UNKNOWN UNDERLYING LANGUAGE — could be proto-Dravidian, proto-Indo-Aryan, or extinct. Without knowing the language, decipherment is nearly impossible. ~400-450 signs (between alphabetic and logographic) makes systematic decoding difficult.**Q6. What evidence do we have for social differentiation in Harappan society? [3 marks]****Ans:** Evidence for social differentiation: (1) CITADEL vs LOWER TOWN — citadel (raised, fortified) was separate from residential lower town, suggesting elite/ceremonial uses. (2) HOUSE SIZES — vary from 1-room dwellings to multi-room houses with courtyards, indicating wealth differences. (3) BURIAL GOODS — some graves contain lavish offerings (pottery, ornaments, beads); others are plain, suggesting differing social status. (4) RESTRICTED-ACCESS STRUCTURES — Great Bath and granary in the citadel were not for general use. Note: we have NO clear evidence of kingship or priestly hierarchy (no palaces, no royal tombs).**Section C — SA-II (5 marks × 2)****Q7. Describe the urban planning of Mohenjodaro / Harappa. Why is it called a 'planned city'? [5 marks]****Ans:** Harappan urban centres show systematic large-scale URBAN PLANNING: (1) TWO-PART DIVISION — citadel (raised, fortified, west) separate from larger lower town (residential, east). Functional zoning. (2) GRID STREETS — main roads N-S and E-W intersecting at right angles. Main streets up to 10m wide; side lanes. Required planning before construction. (3) STANDARDISED BRICKS — ratio 1:2:4 (thickness:width:length). Baked for important structures; mud-brick for houses. Uniformity across 1000+ km of geography. (4) INTEGRATED DRAINAGE — every house had a covered drain. Drains connected to brick-lined street sewers with manhole covers. World's earliest urban sanitation. (5) KEY PUBLIC STRUCTURES — Great Bath (citadel, ~12 × 7 × 2.4m, bitumen-lined, ceremonial use), granary, wells. CONCLUSION: Such uniformity + integration could not happen by accident. There MUST have been a central design authority (whether a state, a council, or a class of architects) overseeing the layout. Hence 'planned'.

Q8. Discuss the various theories proposed about the decline of the Harappan civilisation. Which is most accepted today? [5 marks]

Ans: Decline was GRADUAL (c. 1900-1500 BCE), not sudden. Multiple theories: (1) DRYING OF RIVERS — Saraswati/Ghaggar-Hakra drying up deprived sites in Cholistan and Rajasthan of water and agricultural base. STRONGLY supported. (2) CLIMATE CHANGE — reduced monsoons, increased soil salinity, deforestation. Environmental stress reduced agricultural carrying capacity. (3) DEURBANISATION — economic stress, breakdown of long-distance trade (Mesopotamia also declined), urban populations dispersed to rural settlements. (4) TECTONIC SHIFTS / FLOODS — at some sites like Mohenjodaro, floods may have contributed locally; not civilisation-wide. (5) ARYAN INVASION THEORY (Mortimer Wheeler, 1944) — based on Rigvedic war references and skeletons at Mohenjodaro. REJECTED by current scholarship: skeletons were not contemporary; no genetic/archaeological evidence of mass migration; Wheeler over-interpreted. CURRENTLY MOST ACCEPTED: MULTI-CAUSAL — combination of drying rivers + climate change + deurbanisation, with internal pressures. No single 'event' destroyed the Harappans. The civilisation faded over centuries as the conditions that sustained urban life disappeared.

Section D — Source-based (10 marks)

Q9. Read the passage and answer 3 sub-questions. PASSAGE: 'The most fascinating structure in the citadel of Mohenjodaro is the Great Bath. It is a rectangular tank approximately 12 metres long, 7 metres wide, and 2.4 metres deep. The bricks were laid on edge with gypsum mortar, and the entire tank was bitumen-lined to prevent leakage. Steps lead down from the north and south. The bath was filled by water drawn from a nearby well, and water could be drained by a corbelled drain in the south-west corner. A series of small rooms surrounded the bath, possibly for changing clothes.' SUB-QUESTIONS: (a) What does the construction (bitumen lining, gypsum mortar) tell us about Harappan technology? (b) What was the likely function of the Great Bath? (c) What does the location of the Great Bath tell us about Harappan society? [10 marks]

Ans: (a) CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGY [3 marks]: Bitumen lining demonstrates that Harappans understood WATERPROOFING — bitumen is a tar-like substance preventing water seepage through brick walls. Gypsum mortar was used to bind bricks. Brick laying on edge maximised structural strength. The corbelled drain shows advanced drainage engineering. Overall: Harappans had sophisticated mastery of building materials + waterproofing — necessary for permanent urban infrastructure. (b) FUNCTION [3 marks]: Most likely CEREMONIAL or RITUAL bathing by elites or priestly class — supported by: dedicated structure (not daily public bath); private side rooms for changing; located in the citadel (restricted access); construction quality far exceeds practical needs. Possibly used for purificatory rituals before religious ceremonies. (c) LOCATION + SOCIETY [4 marks]: The Great Bath's CITADEL location indicates: SEGREGATED ELITE SPACE — citadel was raised and fortified, separated from the lower-town residential areas. Only people with specific status had access. SOCIAL HIERARCHY — if the bath was for ritual cleansing by elites or priests, this implies an ORGANISED social/religious hierarchy with separated functions. STATE/COMMUNITY INVESTMENT — building such a large, sophisticated structure required organised labour + materials + an authority capable of mobilising them. Conclusion: the Great Bath, by its construction and location, is strong evidence for a stratified society with elite ritual practices distinct from daily life.

★ TOPPER TEMPLATE — 8-mark: 'Describe the urban planning of Mohenjodaro/Harappa.'

Annual

Step 1 [1 mark]	Two-part division	Harappan cities had two clearly demarcated sections: the CITADEL (raised, fortified, west) and the LOWER TOWN (residential, larger, east). This division indicates social or functional differentiation.
Step 2 [2 marks]	Grid plan + streets	Streets followed a GRID PATTERN — running roughly north-south and east-west, intersecting at right angles. Main streets were wide (up to 10m) with narrower side lanes. This systematic layout had to have been PLANNED before construction — supports the term 'planned city'.
Step 3 [2 marks]	Drainage system	Every house had a covered DRAIN connecting to street drains, then to main sewers. Drains were brick-lined, with manholes for cleaning at regular intervals. This is the world's earliest sophisticated urban sanitation. Indicates strong civic administration.
Step 4 [2 marks]	Key public structures	Citadel housed: (a) GREAT BATH — bitumen-lined ceremonial tank at Mohenjodaro; (b) GRANARY — large storage structure; (c) public assembly halls. Lower town had standardised brick houses (1:2:4 ratio bricks), wells, and workshops.
Step 5 [1 mark]	Conclusion — 'planned' justified	Grid streets + standardised bricks + integrated drainage + segregated citadel/lower town = NONE of this happens by accident. Mohenjodaro/Harappa are 'planned' in the modern town-planning sense — designed and built to a master scheme, possibly under central authority.

COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:

- Missing the citadel/lower-town division (foundational point).
- Not stating brick standardisation (1:2:4 ratio).
- Skipping drainage detail.
- Listing without explaining (each feature needs 'why this indicates planning').

★ TOPPER TEMPLATE — 8-mark: 'Discuss theories on the decline of the Harappan civilisation.'

2018, 2020, 2022

Step 1 [1 mark]	Time frame + nature	Decline was GRADUAL, c. 1900-1500 BCE, NOT sudden. Cities were not destroyed simultaneously — different sites declined at different rates. Multi-causal.
Step 2 [2 marks]	Climate + environmental theories	(a) DRYING of Saraswati/Ghaggar-Hakra river → loss of agricultural base for Cholistan/Rajasthan sites. (b) Climate change → reduced monsoon, soil salinity, deforestation. Environmental stress is now the LEADING explanation in current scholarship.
Step 3 [2 marks]	Tectonic + flood theories	(c) Major TECTONIC shifts may have raised land, altered river courses. (d) FLOODS at Mohenjodaro — though localised, not civilisation-wide. Older theories blamed floods for whole decline; current view sees them as one factor.
Step 4 [1 mark]	Aryan invasion — REJECTED	(e) ARYAN INVASION theory (proposed by Mortimer Wheeler, 1944, based on Rigveda war references + skeletons at Mohenjodaro) is NOW LARGELY REJECTED. No genetic / archaeological evidence of mass migration coinciding with decline. Skeletons were not contemporary.
Step 5 [1 mark]	Internal factors	(f) Possibly DEURBANISATION — economic stress, breakdown of long-distance trade, internal conflict. (g) Possibly disease epidemics.
Step 6 [1 mark]	Conclusion	Most likely cause: COMBINATION of climate change + drying rivers + deurbanisation, with internal pressures. No single 'event' destroyed the Harappans — the civilisation faded over centuries as the conditions that sustained urban life disappeared.

COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:

- Stating Aryan invasion as fact (it's rejected).
- Treating decline as sudden (it was gradual).
- Listing without weighing evidence.
- Missing the multi-causal conclusion.

★ **TOPPER TEMPLATE — 5-mark source-based: Read a passage on Great Bath/Lothal/seal, answer 3 sub-questions.**

Annual

Step 1 [2 marks]	Locate + describe	Identify the site/structure mentioned. State its location, dimensions, key features. E.g., 'The Great Bath was located in the citadel of Mohenjodaro, measuring approximately 12m x 7m x 2.4m deep, with bitumen-lined floor and side rooms for changing.'
Step 2 [2 marks]	Function + significance	Explain what scholars believe the structure was USED FOR + why it MATTERS. E.g., 'Likely ritual bathing by elites. Significance: shows sophisticated waterproofing technology + ceremonial use of public space + suggests elite/priestly authority.'
Step 3 [1 mark]	Wider implication	Link to broader theme. E.g., 'The Great Bath + the granary + the citadel together suggest Mohenjodaro had a STRATIFIED society with elite rituals separated from daily life.'

COMMON LOSS OF MARKS:

- Not citing specific evidence from the passage.
- Vague answers — give dimensions, dates, names.
- Missing the wider implication (the 3rd sub-question almost always asks this).

MARKING SCHEME — GENERAL NOTES

- Specific facts (dates, place names) carry marks. Vague answers lose half-mark per instance.
- Source-based questions: must quote/reference evidence from the passage.
- Aryan invasion: state as REJECTED, not as a current view.
- Multi-causal decline arguments earn full marks; mono-causal answers cap at 60%.
- Map work for 'locate the site' MUST identify the modern state/country.