

# Unit 1

## What is History?



### Learning Objectives

- To know what history is all about
- To understand the importance of history
- To learn about the lifestyle of the pre-historic man
- To know how paintings portray the daily activities of the pre-historic man
- To understand the importance of history and historical researches



Tamilini enters her house from school. Her mother, who was reading a book, greets Tamilini with a hug. She collects her school bag and asks Tamilini to refresh herself. She gives Tamilini some snacks to eat. She then asks Tamilini about the school activities of that day.

**Mother:** Tamilini, what subject did you study today?

**Tamilini:** History, ma.

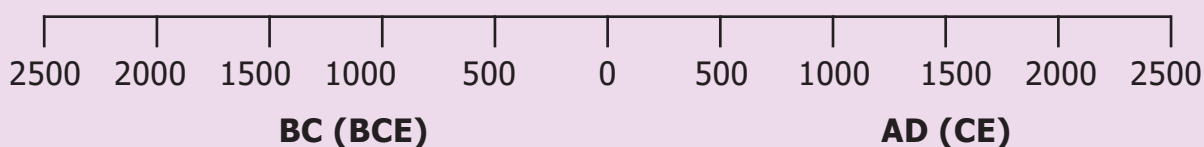
**Mother:** Oh nice! Did you properly understand what history is?

**Tamilini:** Yeah! I understood something about history. Can you please tell me more about history?

### Info Bits

#### Telling the Time in History

Time in history is calculated in years using BC (BCE) Before Christ (Before Common Era) and AD(CE) Anno Domini (Common Era).





History is the study of past events in chronological order.

**Mother** : What is your name?

**Tamilini** : Tamilini.

**Mother** : Tell me your mother's name.

**Tamilini** : Mrs. Sumathi.

**Mother** : Father's name?

**Tamilini** : Mr. Adhiyaman.

**Mother** : Tell me the name of your father's father?

**Tamilini** : You mean grandpa? Mr. Chidambaram.

**Mother** : Do you know the name of great grandpa. Mr. Chidambaram's father?

**Tamilini** : Grandma always used to tell me about one 'great grandpa'. You want that great grandpa's name, amma? mmm...

### Info Bits

The term history has been derived from the Greek word "*Istoria*" which means 'learning by enquiry'.

**Mother:** Yes, Your great grandpa's name is Mr. Ramasamy. OK.

Often your father shows proudly a very old wooden pen and used to tell us that it was his grandpa's pen. Do you remember it?

**Tamilini:** Yes, amma! Normally he keeps it in a beautiful wooden case on his table. Is that the one?

**Mother:** You are right, Tamilini. We cannot write with that pen now. But, father has kept it as a treasure. If you ask your father about that, he will show you the diary written by your great grandpa with that old pen. From that diary, we come to know that your great grandpa was a literate, while most of his villagers were illiterates. Further, we can understand the lifestyle of that period and also about activities from his diary writings.

**Tamilini:** Can this small diary record so much of news, amma?

**Mother:** Yes, Tamilini. We understand the period and lifestyles of people of Old Stone

Age from used stone tools, like what you understand about your grandpa and his time from his diary writing.



In ancient period, the people lived in caves, used to draw paintings in rocks called Rock Painting. They might have wished to record their activities through these paintings.



## SOME MAJOR INDIAN EXCAVATED SITES



**Tamilini:** What are the other sources that help us understand the lifestyles of Stone Age people?

**Mother:** We came to know their hunting style through their paintings on the rocks and the walls of the caves.

**Tamilini:** Rock paintings? It sounds really surprising. Why did they draw these paintings?

### Info Bits

Numismatics – The study of Coins  
Epigraphy- The study of inscription

**Mother:** Some would have stayed back, without joining the hunting team. So for their benefit, these pictures could have been drawn. They might have done it as a part of their pastime.

**Tamilini:** Certainly amma. That's how we identify their lifestyles. Isn't it, amma?

**Mother:** Well said, Tamilini. The period between the use of first stone tools and the invention of writing systems is pre-history. Stone tools, excavated materials and rock paintings are the major sources of pre-history.

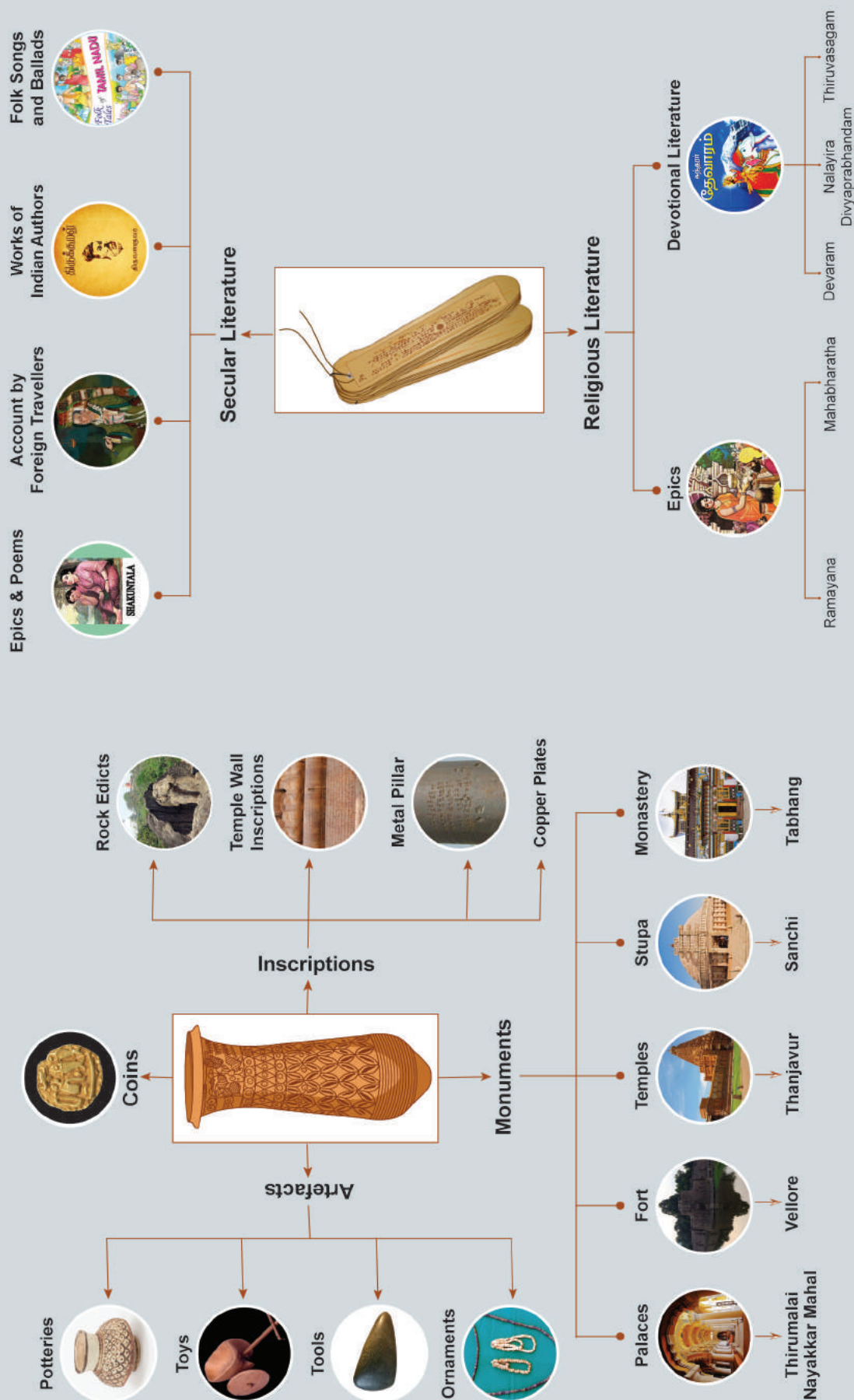




# Sources of History

## Archaeological Sources

## Literary Sources



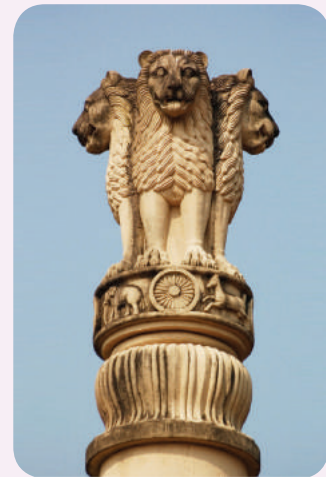
## CASE STUDY

### A Mighty Emperor Ashoka

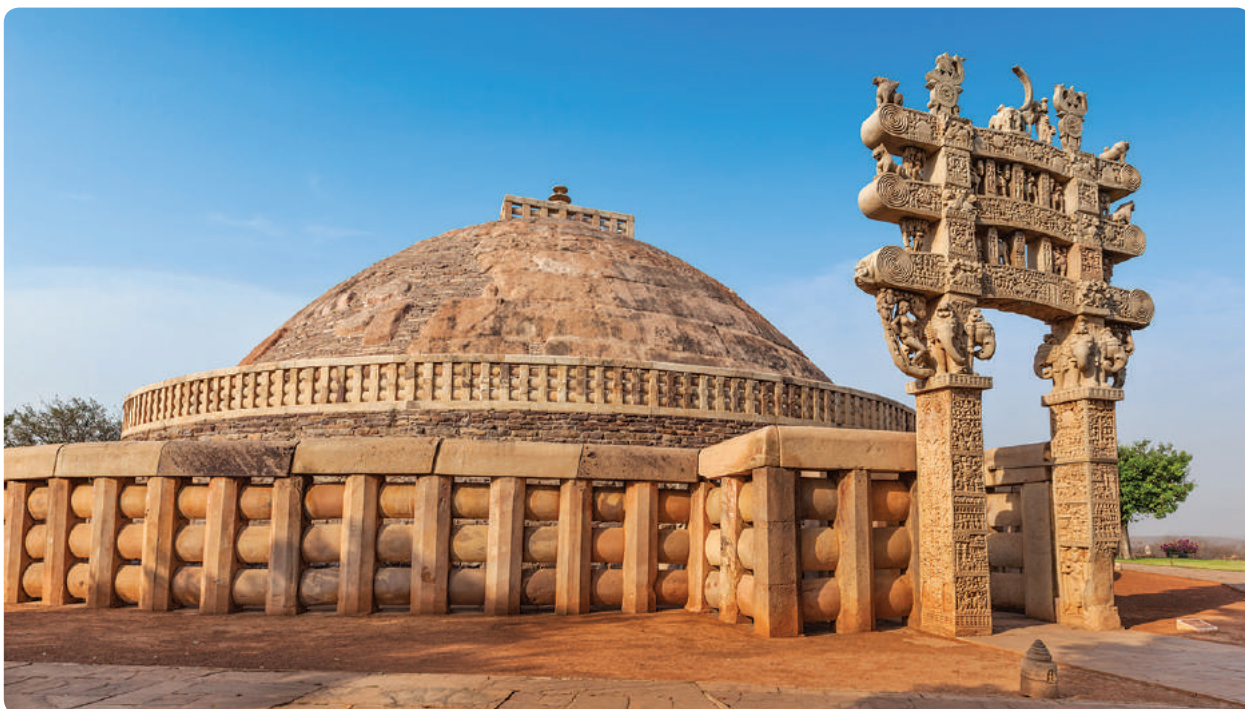
The most famous ruler of ancient India was Emperor Ashoka. It was during his period that Buddhism spread to different parts of Asia. Ashoka gave up war after seeing many people grieving death after the Kalinga war. He embraced Buddhism and then devoted his life to spread the message of peace and dharma. His service for the cause of public good was exemplary. He was the first ruler to give up war after victory. He was the first to build hospitals for animals. He was the first to lay roads. Ashoka Chakra with 24 spokes in our national flag was taken from the Sarnath Pillar of Ashoka.

Even though Emperor Ashoka was great, his greatness had been unknown until 19th century. The material evidence provided by William Jones, James Prinsep and Alexander Cunningham revealed the greatness of Emperor Ashoka.

Based on these accounts, Charles Allen wrote a book titled *The Search for the India's Lost Emperor*, which provided a comprehensive account of Ashoka. Many researches made thereafter brought Ashoka's glorious rule to light. These inscriptions were observed on the rocks, Sanchi Stupa and Sarnath Pillar and helped to understand the greatness of Ashoka to the world.



**Sarnath Pillar**



**Sanchi Stupa**



Now one can understand the importance of historical research. But for the efforts of scholars, the greatness of Emperor Ashoka would not have come to light.

**Mother :** Do you know what proto history is?

**Tamilini:** That is the period between pre history and history.

**Mother :** Exactly. The period for which records in writing are available but not yet deciphered is called proto history. Today, we are leading a safe life with all modern equipment. But our ancestors did not live in such a safe environment. There

might have been chances of wild animals entering their caves. But, they realised that dogs could help them to prevent the entry of such dangerous animals by its sniffing skill. Hence they started domesticating dogs for their protection and hunting activities.

From this, we also know how inscriptions, monuments, copper plates, accounts of foreigners or foreign travellers and folk tales play a vital role in constructing and reconstructing history.

**Tamilini:** Now, I completely understand what history is, amma.

Thank you, amma.

## Summary

- ❖ The life styles of pre historic people can be understood from the stone tools, rock paintings, fossils and other excavated materials.
- ❖ Proto history is the period between pre-history and history.
- ❖ Early humans domesticated dogs for their protection and hunting activities.
- ❖ Mighty Emperor Ashoka followed the path of peace and dharma.
- ❖ Ashoka Chakra with 24 spokes in our national flag was taken from Sarnath Pillar of Ashoka.

## A-Z GLOSSARY

1. Sources	-	a place, person, text or object from which some data can be obtained
2. Ancestor	-	a person related to you who lived a long time ago
3. Dharma	-	righteousness
4. Monument	-	a statue, building or other structure built by a notable person
5. Inscription	-	written records engraved on stones, pillars, clay or copper tablets, caves and walls of temples.
6. Historian	-	A person who excelled in history

### Exercises

#### I. Choose the correct answer



- What was the step taken by the early man to collect his food?
  - Trade
  - Hunting
  - Painting
  - Rearing of animals

#### II. Match the statement with the Reason. Tick the appropriate answer

- Statement:** Pre historic man went along with the dog for hunting.

**Reason:** Dogs with its sniffing power would find out other animals.

- Statement is true, but reason is wrong.
- Statement and reason are correct.

- Statement is wrong, and reason is correct.
- Both statements and reasons are wrong.

- Statement:** The objects used by the early man are excavated. They are preserved to know the lifestyle of the people.

Find out which of the following is related to the statement:

- Museum
- Burial materials
- Stone tools
- Bones

#### 3. Find out the wrong pair

- Old stone age - Stone tools
- Rock paintings - Walls of the caves
- Copper plates - A source of history
- Cats - First domesticated





#### 4. Find the odd one

- Paintings were drawn on rocks and caves.
- There were paintings depicting hunting scenes.
- It was drawn to show his family members about hunting.
- The paintings were painted by using many colours.

#### III. Fill in the blanks

- The Old Stone Age man lived mostly in \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ is the father of history.
- \_\_\_\_\_ was the first animal tamed by Old Stone Age man.
- Inscriptions are \_\_\_\_\_ sources.
- Ashoka Chakra has \_\_\_\_\_ spokes.

#### IV. State True or False

- Stone tools belonging to Old Stone Age have been excavated at Athirampakkam near Chennai.
- The materials used by the ancient people are preserved in the museums by the Archaeological Department.
- During the period of Ashoka, Buddhism spread across the country.

#### V. Match the following

- |                         |                               |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| a. Rock paintings       | - copper plates               |
| b. Written records      | - the most famous king        |
| c. Ashoka               | - Devaram                     |
| d. Religious Literature | - to understand the lifestyle |

#### VI. Answer in one word

- Can you say any two advantages of writing diary?
- How do we know the people's lifestyle of the Old Stone Age?
- Is inscription a written record?
- What is proto history?
- Name an epic.

#### VII. Answer the following

- What is history?
- What do you know about the pre historic period?
- What are the sources available to know about the pre-historic period?
- Mention the places from where we got pre-historic tools.
- What are the benefits of a museum?
- Name some tools used by early man to hunt animals.
- Why were paintings drawn on rocks?
- Name any two artefacts?

#### VIII. HOTS

- How were dogs useful to pre historic men?
- Compare the lifestyle of Old Stone Age man with present day lifestyle.

#### IX. Student Activity

- Write down the important events of your family with years. Draw a timeline with the help of your teacher or with your classmates.
- Early man used stones as a weapon. Make an album showing the various uses of stone.





3. Identify the category of the following sources of history.

- Urns excavated from Adhichanallur.
- Copper plates of Velvikudi.
- Mahabharatha*.
- Sanchi Stupa.
- Pattinappaalai*.
- The earthenwares from Keezhadi.
- Toys of Indus Civilisation.
- Big Temple of Thanjavur.

### X. Life Skill

- Make some weapon models used by the Old Stone Age man using clay.
- Discuss with your grandpa, grandma, neighbours and teachers and collect information about your street, village, town or school.

With that collected data, try to write its history titling your writing as "I am a Historian".

### XI. Answer Grid

Early men scribbled and painted on me...Today they used me to build houses and lay roads. who am I? <b>Ans:</b>	Name any two archaeological sources? <b>Ans:</b>	Name the types of literary sources? <b>Ans:</b>
Expand BC(BCE). <b>Ans:</b>	what is the meaning of the Greek word "Istoria" ? <b>Ans:</b>	Expand AD(CE). <b>Ans:</b>
_____ is the study of inscriptions. <b>Ans:</b>	_____ is the study of coins. <b>Ans:</b>	I can help you to talk, see, hear, write and read. There is no world without me. Who am I? <b>Ans:</b>

### XII. Map work

Mark the following places in the political map of India.

- Delhi
- Chennai
- Tamil Nadu
- Andhra Pradesh
- Kerala
- Karnataka



### Internet Resources

- What is History? [www.community.dur.ac.uk](http://www.community.dur.ac.uk)
- Helping Your Child Learn History. [www.ed.gov](http://www.ed.gov)



## ICT CORNER

### What is History?

History in your hand,  
create a timeline.



#### Steps:

- Open the Browser and copy and paste the link given below (or) type the URL given (or) Scan the QR Code.
- Timeline page will open. Type your name and the project name in the corresponding boxes.
- Click on the empty timeline. A menu box will appear with Label, Description and Choose image boxes. Enter the details, choose the image and click the tick mark.
- After entering all the details in chronological order click “Finish” and “Save Final” to save your project.



Step1



Step2



Step3



Step4

#### Timeline Project's URL::

[http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/  
timeline\\_2/](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/timeline_2/)



***Pictures are indicative only***