KAGZI · ORIGINAL STUDY SERIES

STUDY BOOK 01 · ENGLISH EDITION

Indian History

Ancient, Medieval and Modern India

Initial English Edition · 7 November 2026

Initial edition · Chapter-wise expansion in progress

For UPPSC / UPSSSC, UPSC, SSC and Railway examination preparation.
This is an initial, chapter-wise edition. It does not claim to cover the complete syllabus. Check changing administrative and current-affairs facts against official sources before an examination.

About this book

The study of history is not merely the memorisation of dates. It involves understanding society, economy, governance, culture and processes of change. Indian history is commonly studied through ancient, medieval and modern periods.

Chapter 01 · Indus Valley (Harappan) Civilisation

Learning objective: *Understand the main concepts, identify key terms and answer factual as well as conceptual examination questions.*

1. Sources of History

The major sources of history are archaeological and literary. Archaeological sources include inscriptions, coins, monuments, tools, pottery and objects recovered through excavations. Literary sources include religious texts, secular literature, travellers' accounts and royal records. Conclusions should be based on a comparative study of multiple sources.

2. Introduction to the Harappan Civilisation

The Harappan Civilisation was a Bronze Age urban civilisation of the Indian subcontinent. Its Mature phase is generally dated to approximately 2600–1900 BCE. Harappa (Punjab, Pakistan) and Mohenjo-daro (Sindh, Pakistan) were major cities. Important sites in present-day India include Dholavira, Rakhigarhi, Kalibangan, Lothal and Banawali.

3. Town Planning and Economy

Many cities had planned streets, drainage systems, baked-brick buildings and public structures. Agriculture, animal husbandry, craft production and long-distance trade supported the economy. Standardised weights and measures and seals indicate organised exchange and administrative activity.

4. Script, Beliefs and Decline

The Harappan script has not yet been conclusively deciphered. Beliefs are cautiously inferred from seals, figurines and burial practices. Possible factors behind the weakening of urban systems include climate change, changes in river systems and the transformation of trade networks. No single cause is universally accepted.

Quick Revision

- Mature Harappan phase: approximately 2600–1900 BCE
- Dholavira: Gujarat
- Lothal: Gujarat
- Kalibangan: Rajasthan
- Rakhigarhi: Haryana

Practice and Self-Assessment

What is the commonly accepted period of the Mature Harappan phase?

Answer and explanation: Approximately 2600–1900 BCE. This is the commonly used chronology for the mature urban phase.

Name two major Harappan cities in present-day Pakistan.

Answer and explanation: Harappa and Mohenjo-daro.

Has the Harappan script been conclusively deciphered?

Answer and explanation: No. It has not yet been conclusively deciphered.

Chapter 02 · The Vedic Period: Early and Later Vedic Society

Learning objective: *Identify the four Vedas, compare the regions, economy, society and political institutions of the Early and Later Vedic phases, and solve source-based questions.*

Chronology: an approximate framework

Standard textbook divisions commonly place the Early Vedic phase at approximately 1500–1000 BCE and the Later Vedic phase at approximately 1000–600 BCE. These are approximate study ranges, not exact or universally fixed dates.

1. Introduction to Vedic Literature

The Vedas are major sources of ancient Indian religious and literary traditions. Rigveda: hymns in praise of deities; generally regarded as the oldest Veda, with 10 mandalas and 1,028 hymns. Samaveda: associated with chants and musical recitation at ritual occasions. Yajurveda: contains material related to sacrificial rites and rituals. Atharvaveda: includes material associated with domestic life, popular beliefs, prayers and healing traditions. Other layers include the Brahmanas (explanations of rituals), Aranyakas (forest reflections and meditation-related ideas) and Upanishads (philosophical discussions of the self and Brahman).

2. Early Vedic Phase: Region and Life

The Early Vedic society is described mainly in the Rigveda and is commonly associated with the Sapta-Sindhu region. Animal husbandry and cattle were particularly important, although agriculture was also known. Family, clan and jana were important social relationships. The rajan was a community leader, not necessarily an all-powerful monarch in the modern sense. Sabha and samiti are mentioned as community institutions associated with deliberation and decision-making.

3. Later Vedic Phase: Changes

Later Vedic literature describes eastward expansion towards the Ganga–Yamuna plains, the growing importance of agriculture and more settled communities. References and evidence relating to the use of iron become more visible. Political organisation and kingship gained importance, and sacrificial rituals became more elaborate. Social divisions associated with varna are described more systematically; these should not be treated as identical to all later caste arrangements, which developed over a long period. The Upanishads also emphasised philosophical questions concerning knowledge, the self and Brahman.

4. Main Differences between the Early and Later Vedic Phases

Region: Early Vedic — associated with Sapta-Sindhu; Later Vedic — expansion towards the Ganga–Yamuna region. Economy: Early — pastoralism was prominent and agriculture was known; Later — agriculture and settled communities became more important. Politics: Early — jana-based leadership and references to sabha/samiti; Later — growing importance of kingship and larger political organisations. Society: Early — clan and jana relationships; Later — clearer social stratification. Religious thought: Early — Rigvedic hymns; Later — more elaborate ritual practices alongside philosophical reflection in the Upanishads.

5. Key Examination Terms

Jana: a community or people in Early Vedic literature. Rajan: political leader of a community. Sabha and samiti: institutions associated with deliberation; their form should not be assumed to have remained identical in every period. Yajna: a Vedic ritual, with more elaborate procedures in Later Vedic literature. Upanishads: philosophical texts discussing the self, Brahman, knowledge and liberation.

6. Learn through Examples

If a question links the Samaveda with singing, recall its musical recitation tradition. If it mentions sabha and samiti, connect them with Vedic community deliberation. If agriculture, eastward expansion and more organised kingship appear together, the clue generally points to the Later Vedic phase.

> **Quick Revision**
>
> - Oldest Veda: Rigveda
> - Musical recitation: Samaveda
> - Ritual procedures: Yajurveda
> - Domestic and popular-life material: Atharvaveda
> - Sabha and samiti: deliberative community institutions
> - Later Vedic phase: growing importance of agriculture, settled communities and kingship

Practice and Self-Assessment

Which of the four Vedas is generally considered the oldest?

Answer and explanation: The Rigveda. It is a collection of hymns and is generally regarded as the oldest Vedic compilation.

What is the Samaveda chiefly associated with?

Answer and explanation: Musical or sung recitation. Its verses are associated with specific melodies and chanting traditions.

How should sabha and samiti be understood?

Answer and explanation: As community institutions associated with deliberation. They should not be equated directly with a modern parliament.

Name a major economic trend of the Later Vedic phase.

Answer and explanation: The growing importance of agriculture and settled communities, along with eastward expansion and more organised political structures.

What subjects are chiefly discussed in the Upanishads?

Answer and explanation: Philosophical questions such as the self, Brahman, knowledge and liberation.

Sources and further study

This is an original KAGZI explanation translated and adapted from the corresponding Hindi study edition. For verification, consult official NCERT textbooks, relevant Government of India and state-government departments, and examination commission notifications. Administrative and current-affairs facts may change and should be checked against current official sources. No unauthorised coaching book or copyrighted PDF has been reproduced. Official PYQ labels are used only when the exact examination year and official question-paper source have been verified.

© KAGZI Learning Hub · Original Study Series · English Edition