



## 1. The Big Questions

- ① How did humans live before the beginning of civilisation?
- ② How did humans communicate before writing was invented?
- ③ How is archaeology helpful in understanding our past?
- ④ How did early civilisations interact with each other?

## 2. Early Writing Systems

**SINDHU LIPI** → Pictographic **Harappan script** found on seals & pottery — still **undeciphered**

- **Cuneiform** (Sumerians, Mesopotamia) & **Hieroglyphic** (Egypt) — both deciphered, mark the start of the historical period (~5000 years ago)
- **Brahmi** script used from ~400 BCE in southern India & Ganga Valley; formalised by Emperor Aśhoka (3rd century BCE)



### 3. The Invention of Writing — Before & After

| Aspect              | Before Writing                | After Writing                             |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Human History       | >99% (3 million–5000 ya)      | <1% (last 5000 years)                     |
| Main Source         | Artefacts (tools, implements) | Material remains + written documents      |
| Lives of People     | Hard to know thoughts/ideas   | Literature reveals names, events, culture |
| Measurement of Time | Approximate dating            | Relatively accurate (dated documents)     |

### 4. Why Should We Study Early Human History?

**BIOLOGICAL EVOLUTION** → Gradual physical & genetic change of ancestors (**australopithecines**) into **Homo sapiens**

**CULTURAL EVOLUTION** → How humans adapted to surroundings during the **Quaternary Period** (last 26 lakh years) through tools & technology



## 5. Who Were Our Human Ancestors?

**HOMININ** → Group including modern humans & early human-like ancestors — "**tool makers**"

**OLD WORLD** → Geographical area of the oldest human settlements — Africa, Asia & Europe

→ Earliest stone tools made ~3.3 million years ago — the start of "human behaviour"

**FOSSIL** → Preserved remains/traces of plants, animals or humans from the distant past

## 6. Out of Africa

**HOMO ERECTUS** → Upright/bipedal ancestor; **first hominin to exit Africa** (~2 million years ago) with handaxes & cleavers

→ **Homo sapiens** evolved in Africa ~300,000 years ago; major migration wave ~125,000 years ago, spreading worldwide



## 7. Early Human Species

| Species                      | Where / When                      | Tools                           |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Homo habilis</b>          | Olduvai Gorge, Africa; 2–6 mya    | Chopper stone tools             |
| <b>Homo erectus</b>          | E. African Rift Valley; 2 mya     | Handaxes & cleavers             |
| <b>Homo neanderthalensis</b> | Europe & SW Asia; till ~40,000 ya | Middle Palaeolithic flake tools |
| <b>Homo sapiens</b>          | Worldwide, present                | Complex technologies            |

## 8. Periods in Early Human History

| Period              | Key Features                                                      |
|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Palaeolithic</b> | Hunting-gathering; simple stone tools                             |
| <b>Mesolithic</b>   | Microlithic (tiny) tools; transitional phase                      |
| <b>Neolithic</b>    | Shift to agriculture, settled life, domestication, polished tools |
| <b>Chalcolithic</b> | Copper + stone tools; early metallurgy                            |
| <b>Bronze Age</b>   | Bronze (copper+tin) metallurgy; trade, towns, civilisations       |
| <b>Iron Age</b>     | Widespread iron metallurgy; stronger tools & weapons              |



## 9. Palaeolithic Hunter–Gatherers (India)

- Oldest Indian settlement ~2 million years ago; **Attirampakkam** (TN) 1.5–1.7 mya; **Isampur** (Karnataka) 1.2 mya
- Tools: handaxes, cleavers, scrapers, choppers (quartzite, limestone) — used to chop meat, dig tubers, scrape skin
- Later: scrapers, borers, points (improved hunting); bow & arrow; sharp microblade tools
- Developed symbolic communication, cave/rock-shelter paintings, body pigments & beads (stone, bone, shell)



## 10. Mesolithic Hunter–Gatherers

- ~12,000 years ago — warmer climate → forests/grasslands expanded → **first population explosion** in human history
- Microlithic tools for gathering aquatic food (marine & freshwater); fishing central to subsistence

★ Bhimbetka (Madhya Pradesh) — World Heritage Site with hundreds of painted rock shelters

## 11. The Neolithic Revolution

**NEOLITHIC REVOLUTION** → Shift to a **food-producing** way of life; domestication of animals & plants; new tools for food production & processing

- Development of earthenware pottery; first village settlements — laid the foundation for the urban revolution



## 12. Neolithic Period in the Indian Subcontinent

**MEHARGARH** → Oldest Neolithic site (Bolan River, Pakistan), ~7000 BCE — earliest agricultural village

- Sun-dried brick houses & granaries, burial in graves, ornaments (lapis lazuli, carnelian, shells)
- Cultivated wheat & barley; raised sheep, goats & zebu cattle; first to make copper objects (~4000 BCE) → became Chalcolithic people

★ By 2500 BCE, most of the Indian subcontinent was occupied by Neolithic agricultural communities

## 13. Sindhu–Sarasvatī Civilisation — Early Stages

- Copper extraction from ores began ~4000 BCE in Baluchistan & the Indus/Ghaggar-Sarasvatī basins

| Phase           | Period                                    |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Early Harappan  | ~4000–2600 BCE (standardised by 2500 BCE) |
| Mature Harappan | 2600–1900 BCE                             |
| Late Harappan   | 1900–1300 BCE                             |



## 14. Early Harappan Developments

- Continuity in pottery, stone bead-making, shell bangles, terracotta objects & copper work
- Perimeter walls, seals & early Harappan writing/script likely began in this stage

★ Kalibangan's ploughed fields show double-crop cultivation (Rabi & Kharif) — a tradition nearly 5,000 years old

- Harappans used a binary (1,2,4,8,16...) weight system + multiples of ten for larger units — enabling standardised trade

## 15. Bronze Age Civilisations Outside India

- 4 early world civilisations emerged in river plains: **Harappan** (Sindhu-Sarasvatī), **Mesopotamian** (Euphrates-Tigris), **Egyptian** (Nile), **Chinese** (Huang He)
- Mesopotamia & the Indus/Ghaggar-Sarasvatī valleys were geographically close → strong trade contact; Egypt & China show little evidence of direct Harappan contact



## 16. Mesopotamian Civilisation

**MESOPOTAMIA** → "Land in between" the Euphrates & Tigris rivers (West Asia); the '**fertile crescent**' had high agricultural potential

| City-State        | From     | Notes                                                                         |
|-------------------|----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Sumerian</b>   | 3500 BCE | Earliest city-based civilisation; dams/canals, mud & burnt bricks, ziggurats  |
| <b>Akkadian</b>   | 2334 BCE | First dynastic empire; traded with Meluhha (Sindhu-Sarasvatī), Dilmun & Magan |
| <b>Assyrian</b>   | 2154 BCE | Spread across Mesopotamia & neighbouring regions                              |
| <b>Babylonian</b> | 1900 BCE | Hammurabi (1792 BCE) — Code of Hammurabi, a foundational legal system         |

**CUNEIFORM** → Sumerian writing system (~3200 BCE); wedge-shaped marks pressed into clay tablets



## 17. Egyptian Civilisation

→ Along the Nile River; annual floods brought fertile '**kemet**' (black mud) for farming

**PAPYRUS** → Paper-like material made from papyrus plant strips, used for records

→ Pharaohs ruled; pyramids built for the '**ka**' (spiritual double), preserved via mummification

→ Rosetta Stone (found 1799) + Jean-François Champollion (1822) deciphered Egyptian hieroglyphics

| Kingdom        | Period        |
|----------------|---------------|
| Old Kingdom    | 2686–2181 BCE |
| Middle Kingdom | 2030–1650 BCE |
| New Kingdom    | 1570–1069 BCE |



## 18. Chinese Civilisation

- Flourished along the **Huang He** (Yellow River) & **Yangtze**; Neolithic cultures from ~7000 BCE
- Bronze Age: Shang (1600–1046 BCE), Zhou (1046–256 BCE); Iron Age from 600 BCE — Qin (221–206 BCE, gave "China" its name), Han (206 BCE–220 CE)
- **Oracle bones** (animal bones/tortoise shells) — earliest Chinese historical records
- Jade craftsmanship, bronze metallurgy, the Great Wall (built from 680 BCE), and the Silk Route (Han dynasty)

## 19. Before We Move On — Key Takeaways

- ① Early human history is studied via archaeological evidence — tools, fossils, cave art
- ② Humans evolved in Africa and migrated worldwide
- ③ Palaeolithic → Mesolithic → Neolithic → Chalcolithic → Bronze → Iron Age
- ④ Neolithic Revolution: farming, domestication, permanent villages
- ⑤ Bronze Age civilisations — Sindhu-Sarasvatī, Mesopotamia, Egypt, China — all rose in fertile river valleys