**Lesson 4. Timeline and sources of history**

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**1. How do we measure historical time?**

**Answer**: Historical time is measured using calendars and eras marked by significant events. The Gregorian calendar is commonly used worldwide, but other calendars like Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, and Chinese are also used. Historical time is divided into periods such as BCE (Before Common Era) and CE (Common Era), with major events marking the beginning of new eras. Timelines help visualize the sequence of historical events.

**2. How can various sources help us understand history?**

**Answer**: Various sources such as archaeological finds, literary texts, oral traditions, and artistic works help us understand history. Archaeologists study physical remains like tools, pottery, and buildings. Literary sources include ancient manuscripts and historical texts. Oral traditions pass down stories and folklore. Artistic sources like paintings and sculptures provide insights into the culture and beliefs of past societies. By gathering information from these diverse sources, historians reconstruct and interpret historical events.

**3. How did early humans live?**

**Answer**: Early humans, or Homo sapiens, lived as hunters and gatherers, relying on hunting animals and collecting edible plants for survival. They lived in temporary shelters like caves and rock shelters. Early humans used fire and made tools like stone axes and blades. They communicated using languages that are now lost and created rock paintings. Over time, they began to cultivate crops and domesticate animals, leading to settled agricultural communities. This marked the beginning of social complexity and technological advancements.

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**→ There are a few images of different sources of history on the next page. Who and what do you think the objects show? Write down in the boxes next to the images any information that you get from these objects.**

**Answer**: **1st Image: Who:** Likely depicts a ruler or deity from ancient times.

* **What:** The coin shows an image of a seated figure, possibly a king or a religious figure. It can provide information about the economy, art, and religion of the period when it was minted.

**2nd Image: Who:** Represents figures from ancient society, possibly depicting a scene from daily life, mythology, or a significant event.

* **What:** This carved stone relief shows intricate details of human figures engaged in various activities. It gives insights into the cultural, social, and artistic practices of the time.

**3rd Image: Who:**Symbol associated with ancient India, particularly the Maurya Empire.

* **What:** The Lion Capital, adopted as the national emblem of India, represents the pillar of Ashoka. It symbolizes power, courage, and pride, providing historical context about the Mauryan dynasty and Ashoka's rule

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**→ In the above picture, look at some activities of early humans in a rock shelter. Which ones can you recognise? Give a brief description for each.**

**Answer** **Hunting and Preparing Food**: Some people are seen preparing animal hides and cooking meat over a fire, showing their dependence on hunting for food and the importance of fire for cooking and warmth.

* **Tool Making**: A few individuals are working with stones, likely making tools. This highlights their skill in creating tools for hunting, cutting, and daily tasks.
* **Gathering and Processing Food**: People collect and grind food, such as grains or nuts, using stone tools. This reflects their foraging habits and early agricultural activities.
* **Art and Communication**: One person is painting or carving images of animals on cave walls, indicating early forms of communication, art, and possibly religious or cultural expression.
* **Community and Social Interaction**: A group of people is working and interacting together, showing a sense of community and cooperation, essential for their survival.

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**→ Observe the scene on the next page. It depicts an agricultural community from a few millenniums ago. List the main activities you can identify.**

**Answer**

* **Farming**: Individuals are harvesting crops, likely grains or wheat, indicating the cultivation of land and the practice of agriculture.
* **Shepherding**: A man is herding sheep with a dog, showing the domestication of animals and livestock management.
* **Cooking and Food Preparation**: A person is preparing food near a cooking area, suggesting the use of agricultural produce for meal preparation.
* **Building and Maintenance**: Someone is constructing or repairing a hut, highlighting the community's effort in building and maintaining shelters.
* **Water Collection and Use**: People are seen near a river, indicating the collection and use of water for irrigation, drinking, and cooking.
* **Weaving or Crafting**: A person is engaged in weaving or making tools, representing the creation of essential goods for daily life.
* **Childcare and Community Living**: Women are caring for children while performing other activities, reflecting the communal nature of raising children and the close-knit community life.

**Question 1. How did early man learn agriculture?**

Early man learned agriculture after the last Ice Age, around 12,000 years ago, when the climate became warmer and more stable. As living conditions improved, humans began to observe patterns in nature — like how seeds grew into plants. Over time, they started settling near rivers where the soil was fertile and water was easily available, and they began cultivating cereals and grains. This gradual shift from hunting-gathering to farming marked the beginning of agriculture.

**Question 2. What are the different sources of history? Give examples of each.**

Answer:History is reconstructed using **various sources**, which help us understand the past. These sources include **Oral, Literary, Artistic**, and **Archaeological** sources.

#### ****1. Oral Sources:****

#### These are passed down by word of mouth from generation to generation.

**Examples:**

* **Genealogical records** (family trees or lineage records)
* **Folklores and oral traditions** like heroic tales of regional heroes (e.g., stories myths, legends, fairy tales, fables, and folk songs

**2. Literary Sources**

**i) Indian Literature** Written texts in various Indian languages that give insight into culture, beliefs, and events.

**Examples:**

* **Vedas and Itihasas** (e.g., Rigveda, Ramayana, Mahabharata)
* **Poems and plays** (e.g., Kalidasa’s Shakuntala)
* **Historical texts** (e.g., The Diary of a Young Girl by Anne Frank)
* **Collections of stories** (e.g., Panchatantra)
* **Scientific and technological texts** (e.g., Sushruta Samhita for medicine)

**ii) Foreign Accounts** Records by foreign travelers and historians about India.

**Examples:**

* **Travelogues** (e.g., Fa-Hien, Hiuen Tsang, Ibn Battuta)
* **Historical chronicles** (e.g., Indica by Megasthenes)

#### ****3. Artistic Sources****

Art forms that depict life, religion, culture, and events of the past.

**Examples:**

* **Paintings** (e.g., Ajanta cave paintings)
* **Sculptures** (e.g., Sarnath Lion Capital)
* **Architecture** (e.g., temples like Brihadeeswara Temple, forts, stupas)

#### ****4. Archaeological Sources****

**i) Excavated Objects**  
Items discovered through archaeological digs.

**Examples:**

* **Human, animal, and plant remains**
* **Tools and weapons**
* **Figurines and ornaments**
* **Pottery** (e.g., Painted Grey Ware)

**ii) Structures** Remains of old constructions.

**Examples:**

* **Monuments** (e.g., Ashokan pillars)
* **Mounds** (e.g., Harappan sites like Mohenjo-daro)

**iii) Inscriptions** Writings found on various materials.

**Examples:**

* **Manuscripts**
* **Copper plates**
* **Coins** (e.g., Gupta period gold coins)