

**SAT I TEST PASSAGE: Early River Valley Civilizations**

*This passage is from a book exploring some of the great mysteries of world history. It describes a civilization that existed from about 2500 B.C. to about 1500 BCE along the Indus River in present day Pakistan.*

Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, which both cover hundreds of acres, are the two most important known urban centers of the Indus civilization. In addition there are about another 100 known sites  
5 which either belonged to the same culture or were strongly influenced by it. Few of these cover more than 24 acres. Most are situated in Pakistan though some have been found in India....

The layout of Indus settlements is regular, with  
10 streets crossing one another at right angles. The plan of the buildings and the materials are severely functional with little ornamentation. The larger cities and towns each seem to have been divided into districts, each principally housing workers of  
15 a particular trade.

This leads to the conclusion that the cities were conceived almost in their entirety before they were built. There was no room for fussy additions or whims, and scrupulous care was taken over  
20 matters of hygiene and utility. In short, the Indus cities are the first manifestation of town planning....

It is thought that Mohenjo-Daro at its peak must have housed some 40,000 inhabitants, a substantial number for an era and a place in which  
25 the principal sources of wealth were agricultural land and domestic animals. But the city itself was a commercial metropolis serving an extensive territory.

More astonishing than its extent is the grid-plan: a fabric of streets about ten yards wide running from north to south and from east to west formed rectangular blocks of roughly equal size, about 400 x 300 yards. From this it is an easy  
30 step, if not strictly correct in a scientific sense, to imagine the inhabitants of Mohenjo-Daro measuring distances by blocks in the modern American manner....

Impressive as its size and regularity may be,  
40 Mohenjo-Daro possessed another, equally admirable attribute: It had a complex sanitary and sewerage system.

For the people of Mohenjo-Daro developed both public and private hygiene to a remarkable degree, one unparalleled in pre-classical  
45 times and still unmatched in many parts of the world today. Most private dwellings, for example, both large and small, were equipped with a special kind of trash chute that was built into one of the outside walls and passed through to the street.  
50 These chutes allowed householders to slide debris into small individual gutters outside, and these gutters in turn were connected to a covered central sewer system.

At intervals along the central system there were  
55 sumps, or drainage pits, designed to collect the heaviest waste so that it would not obstruct the main passageways. In addition, wells were liberally placed throughout the city, some directly accessible from the streets and therefore public,  
60 some constructed as part of individual houses and thus reserved for private use.

What was life like in Mohenjo-Daro and the other cities? It was undoubtedly austere, tending towards trade and labor rather than festivals the  
65 arts, and the sweet life. All the houses were alike in their basic plan. The only difference between the home of the rich merchant and that of the poor craftsman was in their size and in a few technical refinements. The overall impression is one of  
70 perfect coherence a coherence amounting to uniformity. The miles of uninterrupted brickwork would have been featureless, and the absence of any kind of meeting place—apart from the streets and what might have been an eating hall in Mohenjo-Daro—adds to the impression of monotony....

In many ways the cities of the Indus remain mysterious, and the supply of certainties about the Harappan culture is almost as thin as the supply  
80 of theories is inexhaustible. There are several theories as to how the civilization ended, and it is likely that there were several contributory causes. It has been suggested that a spectacular rise in the waters of the Indus (such as still occurs today)  
85 finally overcame the energy of the people who had previously been determined to keep the river

under control. On the other hand, it has been suggested than an Aryan invasion, occurring around 1500 BCE, was responsible for the decline. Neither of these two arguments has completely convinced archaeologists working on the Harappan culture. It seems that both explanations are too simple to account for the eclipse of such a well-

organized society; moreover, there is evidence of a general decline over a period of 500 years before the arrival of the Aryans. Some have suggested that the abandonment of the two major cities was directly related to an internal breakdown of the political and economic institutions that long distinguished the society.

## Questions

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. **According to the author, both Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro were**
  - A. the only cities in the Indus civilization
  - B. capital cities
  - C. impressive urban centers
  - D. cities in decline economically and politically
  - E. primarily large agricultural towns
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. **In line 63 the author uses the word "austere" to note that life in Mohenjo-Daro was**
  - A. coherent
  - B. mysterious
  - C. highly advanced
  - D. well-organized
  - E. very plain
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. **What evidence does the author cite to support the conclusion that the cities of the Indus were planned?**
  - A. Settlements were located along rivers for purposes of trade.
  - B. All houses were similar in layout.
  - C. Few cities covered more than 24 acres.
  - D. Temples were accessible from all parts of the city.
  - E. Wells were located throughout the city.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. **This passage suggests that Mohenjo-Daro was**
  - A. home to many different religions
  - B. a cultural center
  - C. a center of learning and higher education
  - D. a center of commerce and trade
  - E. a military city-state
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. **According to the author, one of the most admirable characteristics of Harappan society was its**
  - A. sanitation system
  - B. traditions and customs
  - C. functional building materials
  - D. domesticated animals
  - E. large eating halls
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. **In the Indus settlements, the streets were laid out to form**
  - A. city centers and outlying areas
  - B. drainage pits and gutters
  - C. agricultural and residential areas
  - D. rectangular blocks of approximately the same size
  - E. public meeting areas
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. **The passage suggests that people living in Mohenjo-Daro may have measured distances by using**
  - A. Arabic numerals
  - B. acres
  - C. yards and miles
  - D. a complex scientific system
  - E. American-type city blocks
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. **The statement in lines 78–80 that "the supply of certainties about the Harappan culture is almost as thin as the supply of theories is inexhaustible" means that**
  - A. most information about Harappan culture is guesswork
  - B. there are more theories about Harappan culture than there are facts
  - C. many theories about this early culture are not logical
  - D. there are too many sites for archaeologists to study
  - E. the study of ancient cultures constantly reveals new information
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. **The author thinks it is most probable that the Indus civilization collapsed because of**
  - A. floods
  - B. invasion
  - C. many contributing factors
  - D. loss of trade
  - E. political turmoil