Unit One: India, North America, Mesopotamia, and Sumer

Lesson One: Ancient India

The civilization of ancient India started along the Indus River. The water in the river comes from melting glaciers and natural springs from the mountains surrounding the river.


The early people in the Indus River valley were nomadic hunters and gatherers. Farming developed slowly in this arid land. As in other ancient civilizations, the small farming communities grew and formed cities. These cities were the beginnings of the Ancient Indian civilization which was also known as the Indus Valley Civilization and the Harappan Civilization. The farmers grew barley, wheat, cotton, melons, and dates, among other crops. Instead of horses, water buffalo and elephants were used to pull the plows and other farm equipment.

The two largest cities in the Indus Valley were Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. These were built using mud bricks that were baked in a wood-fired oven.

Mud brick activity:

Supplies: One brick air-dry clay, rolling pin, pizza cutter, sheet to dry clay, and glue

Instructions:
1. Open air-dry clay and roll into sheets approximately 1-inch thick.
2. Cut into 1-inch by 1-inch squares using the pizza cutter.
3. Separate the cut squares and lay to dry; this might take a day or two.
4. Assemble the city using glue or stack dried blocks.

The homes contained a toilet, places to cook, and rooms to sleep, much like our own homes. The cities contained markets to buy food and supplies and areas for craftsmen to make pots and clothing. Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro were thought to contain as many as 40,000 people.

http://ancientindia.co.uk/indus/home_set.html

The civilization of Ancient India is still a bit of a mystery as the language has not yet been translated. Archaeologists have made some very interesting discoveries. They believe the people who lived in the valley traded with their neighbors and were peaceful. The cities had an amazing
way of dealing with the waste from the 40,000 people. Ditches were dug and then covered so the citizens were not exposed to the waste. Both cities also had garbage chutes. 
http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/zcsbr82

Where did the people go? No one really knows the answer to that question. The civilization lasted about 800 years, and then it mysteriously ended. Was it disease, floods, war, or drought? Archaeologists are still searching for the answer. The residents of the cities were gone, and the vegetation and sands covered the ruins until they were discovered in the 1920s.

Explore the ancient city of Mohenjo-Daro by clicking on this link: 
http://ancientindia.co.uk/indus/explore/exp_set.html

Hungry for more information? Here are some other links and videos: 
https://www.youtube.com/watch/?v=FzOKUTJK8Wc.

Parents: This video does have references to Indian religious beliefs.

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