

Antique Appraisal Specialist: Artifacts From Ancient India

Adventure Description:

In this adventure, you will think like an antique appraisal specialist and analyze artifacts associated with the ancient Indus Valley Civilization.

Activity

Teacher Note: You must place pictures of the artifacts out before students start the activity. See [Handout: Teacher Tips](#) and [Handout: Artifacts to Use](#) for directions.

Step 1: Background Information on Artifacts Belonging to the Indus Valley Civilization (10-15 minutes)

- Show [Video: Artifacts of the Indus Valley Civilization](#).
- As a class, discuss how antique appraisal specialists determine how much an artifact is worth and the history of an item. This means that they place a monetary value on an artifact. The value can be determined by who made it, how old the artifact is, and any other interesting history around the artifact. Antique appraisal specialists are a lot like detectives. For example, they might look at writing or designs on an artifact or the types of materials used to make the object.
- Ask students what would happen if appraisal specialists did not take the time to learn about artifacts (e.g., a museum might end up with fake artifacts instead of real ones, there would be no one to make accurate appraisals of artifacts). Explain that appraisal specialists often determine if artifacts are the property of a particular group or country. For example, many artifacts taken from Egyptian tombs rightfully belong to the Egyptian government. An international law was passed in 1970 by UNESCO. UNESCO stands for the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization and is a part of the United Nations. The law states that artifacts stolen or illegally sent to another country must be returned to the country of origin. This means that artifacts that are displayed in museums or held by private collectors in other countries must make arrangements to return the artifacts where they were originally found. It also means that those artifacts cannot be given away, sold or kept. It is the job of the antique appraisal specialist to identify these items so they can be returned to their rightful owners.
- Explain to students that you will now look at some examples of artifacts that have needed to be returned. Show [Handout: Returning Artifacts](#).

Step 2: Identifying Artifacts (5-10 minutes)

- Explain to students that they will be antique appraisal specialists.
- Explain that the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History, located in Washington, D.C., has recently been asked to assist in identifying and classifying a large group of artifacts. These artifacts were discovered in an abandoned storage locker outside of Boston, Massachusetts. No one knows who the artifacts belong to and what they mean. The museum is particularly interested in knowing if there are artifacts associated with the Indus Valley Civilization for a museum in India. Students will need to determine which artifacts are real and which are fake. Of the real artifacts, students need to determine which are associated with the Indus Valley.
- Show [Handout: Steps to Analyze and Return Artifacts](#). As a class, read through Step 1.
- Explain to students that they must study the groups of artifacts that have been placed on a table. Then, they will walk back to their desk and look at the key to determine whether (a) the artifact is real or counterfeit/fake or (b) the artifact is associated with the Indus Valley Civilization.

Please contact Allison Bischoff, Director of Customer Service, at allison@rozzylearningcompany.com or 314-272-2560 with questions.

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- Provide students with **Handout: Key for Artifacts**.
 - Teacher note: You can print out copies for students or email it to students so they can view it on tablets or computers.
- If students find an artifact that is real and belongs to the Indus Valley Civilization, they should wait at their desk for other students to pick their artifacts. If students find an artifact that is counterfeit or does not belong to the Indus Valley Civilization, they should find another artifact.
 - Teacher Note: The artifact must be real AND belong to the Indus Valley Civilization. Remind students that if they pick an artifact that meets only one of these criteria, they must keep looking.

Step 3: Analyzing and Returning Artifacts (15+ minutes)

- Explain to students that they will now work in a group and write a report about the artifacts they found. They will also write a letter to return the artifacts to the nation they belong to.
- Divide students into groups of 4. Have students complete steps 2-3 on the handout.
- As students are working, ask the following questions:
 - What do the artifacts tell us about the history of the Indus Valley Civilization?
 - Why is it important to return the artifacts to the country they originally came from? (e.g., to preserve that nation's history, to obey international laws that ask that nations work together to return artifacts to rightful owners).
 - What would happen if there were no laws to protect ancient artifacts from being stolen and sold? (Artifacts would be stolen so they could be sold for a lot of money, people could throw them out or destroy them, countries would have no way to recover items that belong to them.)
 - Why is it important to record artifacts that have been found? (e.g., the information on the artifacts can be used to teach others about the history of a culture, the information can be recorded in a database in case they are stolen and found at a later date).

Step 4: Class Discussion (5 minutes)

- Have students discuss differences and similarities among the artifacts and what they tell us about life in the ancient Indus civilization.
- Have a concluding discussion about the role that antique appraisal specialists have in locating and returning artifacts to a country. What would happen if artifacts were not returned? What is it important to preserve artifacts from hundreds of years ago? Why is it important for antique appraisal specialists to determine real artifacts from counterfeit or fake ones?

Materials List

Provided online:

- Video: Artifacts of the Indus Valley Civilization
- Handout: Teacher Tips
- Handout: Artifacts to Use
- Handout: Returning Artifacts
- Handout: Steps to Analyze and Return Artifacts
- Handout: Key for Artifacts

Not Provided Online:

- Optional: Each student or pair of students needs a computer

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