

Class 11 · Painting (History of Indian Art) · Unit 1

Chapter 2

Arts of the Indus Valley (Sindhu-Saraswati) Civilisation

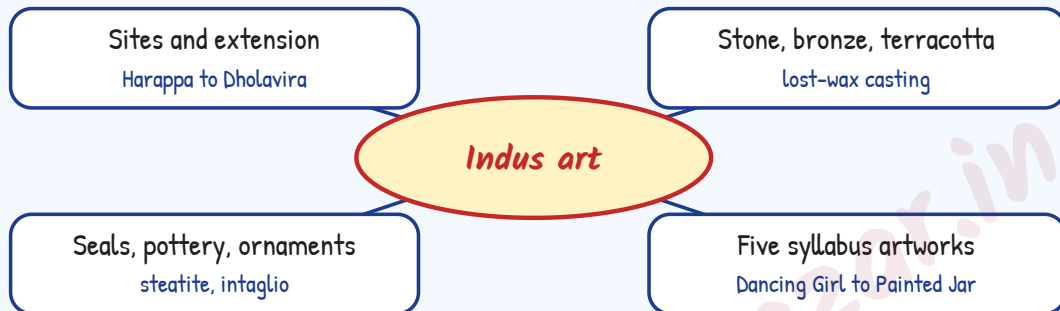


seal · bronze · terracotta

CBSE Painting (049) theory, syllabus 2026-27 · NCERT An Introduction to Indian Art Part

I, Chapter 2 · Unit 1 = 15 of 30 marks

Chapter map



What is inside

1. Concept notes with tables and artwork cards
2. NCERT exercise questions, fully solved
3. Exam-pattern questions (CBSE 049 format), fully solved
4. Practice A-G with a case study, 20 MCQs, 6 A-R, answers, summary

Colour code used

red = key term green = definition

purple = sub-heading black = explanation

★ **Exam tip:** For each of the five artworks learn **material, size, site, date, collection** and two features. The syllabus gives exact sizes: e.g. Dancing Girl 10.5 × 5 × 2.5 cm; Bull seal 2.5 × 2.5 × 1.4 cm.

Based on the CBSE Painting (049) syllabus 2026-27 and NCERT An Introduction to Indian Art Part I. Artworks are described in words; see them in the NCERT book. All answers written by us.

2.1 The civilisation and its sites ★★

The arts of the Indus Valley (Sindhu-Saraswati) Civilisation emerged in the **second half of the third millennium BCE** (about 2500 BCE). Art forms: **sculpture, seals, pottery, jewellery, terracotta**. Its realistic human and animal figures show fine sensibility and imagination.

Extension: about 1500 miles. **Harappa** (north) and **Mohenjo-daro** (south), now in Pakistan; in India: **Ropar** (Punjab), **Lothal** and **Dholavira**, Rangpur (Gujarat), **Kalibangan** (Rajasthan), **Banawali** and Rakhigarhi (Haryana), **Alamgirpur** (UP). Planned cities with a grid layout, drains, public baths, granaries.

Stone sculpture

Few but refined; excellent handling of **three-dimensional volume**: the **Male Torso** in red sandstone and the **Bust of a Bearded Man (priest)** in soapstone (shawl with trefoil pattern, half-closed meditative eyes, fillet round the head).

Bronze casting: lost-wax method ★★

A **wax figure** is coated with **clay** and dried; heated so the wax melts and drains out through a tiny hole; the hollow mould is filled with **molten metal**; when cool, the clay is removed. Examples: **Dancing Girl**, buffalo, goat, Mohenjo-daro bull; copper dog and bird of Lothal; Kalibangan bull; later Daimabad bronzes. The method is still used today.

Terracotta ★

Cruder than stone and bronze in the Indus cities, more realistic in Gujarat and Kalibangan. Most important: **Mother Goddess** figures; bearded males with coiled hair; a horned-deity mask; toys: carts with wheels, whistles, rattles, birds, animals.

Seals ★★★

Thousands found, mostly of **steatite** (also agate, chert, copper, faience, terracotta, ivory). The standard seal is a **square plaque 2 × 2 inches** with animals (unicorn bull, humped bull, rhino, tiger, elephant, bison, goat, buffalo) carved in **intaglio** and a **pictographic script** not yet deciphered. Mainly **commercial**; also **amulets** (like identity cards). The **Pashupati seal**: a cross-legged figure with elephant, tiger, rhino, buffalo and two antelopes. Copper tablets were also amulets.

Pottery ★

Mostly fine **wheel-made** ware; plain red pottery is common; **black-painted ware** on red slip with geometric and animal designs in glossy black; rare polychrome (red, black, green); perforated pots for straining; graceful curves; tiny miniature vessels.

Beads and ornaments

Necklaces, fillets, armlets, rings (both sexes); girdles, earrings, anklets (women); beads of carnelian, amethyst, jasper, lapis lazuli, gold; bead factories at **Chanhudaro** and **Lothal**; spinning of cotton and wool; cosmetics (cinnabar, collyrium).

1. Dancing Girl ★★★

site, date	Mohenjo-daro , about 2500 BCE
material	bronze (lost-wax), 10.5 × 5 × 2.5 cm
collection	National Museum, New Delhi

About four inches high; long hair tied in a **bun**; **bangles cover the left arm**; a bracelet and amulet on the right; a **cowry-shell necklace**; **right hand on the hip**, left hand in a dance gesture; large eyes, flat nose; limbs simplified in tubular form; **full of expression and bodily vigour**, confident pose.

2. Male Torso ★★

site, date	Harappa , about 2500 BCE
material	red limestone (NCERT: red sandstone), 9.2 × 5.8 × 3 cm
collection	National Museum, New Delhi

Socket holes in the neck and shoulders for attaching the head and arms; **frontal** posture deliberately chosen; well-modelled shoulders, slightly prominent abdomen; a realistic, smooth treatment of the human body: an early masterpiece of 3-D modelling.

3. Mother Goddess ★★

site, date	Mohenjo-daro , about 2500 BCE
material	terracotta , 22 × 8 × 5 cm
collection	National Museum, New Delhi

A crude standing female figure; necklaces over prominent breasts; loin cloth and girdle; a **fan-shaped head-dress** with a **cup-like projection on each side** (distinctive); **pellet eyes**, beaked nose, a slit for the mouth: hand-modelled with added clay pellets; linked to worship of fertility.

4. Bull Seal ★★★

site, date	Mohenjo-daro , about 2500 BCE
material	steatite (stone), 2.5 × 2.5 × 1.4 cm
collection	National Museum, New Delhi

A powerful **humped bull** (zebu) in profile, with curving horns, a large hump and heavy folds of the **dewlap** under the neck, carved in **intaglio** (cut into the surface) with great **realism** and strength; pictographic signs at the top. Seals were pressed on clay to make raised impressions, used in **trade** and as amulets.

5. Painted Earthen Jar ★★

site	Mohenjo-daro
material	clay , wheel-made, painted, baked
collection	National Museum, New Delhi

Made on the **potter's wheel**, shape refined by the potter's fingers; after baking, painted in **black** (on red); highly **polished** finish; motifs of **vegetal and geometric** forms; simple designs with a tendency towards **abstraction**; graceful curves.

X Don't do this: Remember sizes and materials: Dancing Girl bronze 10.5 cm; Male Torso red stone 9.2 cm; Mother Goddess terracotta 22 cm; Bull seal steatite 2.5 cm; Jar clay painted black. All from National Museum, New Delhi; Torso from Harappa, the rest Mohenjo-daro.

NCERT exercise, fully solved

1. Would you agree that Indus people were great art lovers?

Ans. Yes. They made refined stone sculpture (Male Torso, Priest bust), cast lively bronzes by the lost-wax method (Dancing Girl), carved thousands of beautiful **seals**, made wheel-turned **painted pottery**, delicate **beads and jewellery**, and charming terracotta toys and figurines. They cared for fashion, hairstyles and cosmetics. Even daily objects were made beautiful.

2. Compare present-day terracotta with Indus terracotta.

Ans. Similar: clay, hand-modelling and baking; toys, animals and goddess figures for daily and ritual use. **Different:** Indus figures are simpler and cruder (pellet eyes, slit mouth); modern terracotta (Bankura horses, Molela plaques) is more refined, decorative and sometimes mould-made.

3. What do the surviving objects tell us about daily life?

Ans. Planned cities and trade (seals), religion (Mother Goddess, Pashupati seal), dance and music (Dancing Girl), dress (dhoti and shawl, spinning), ornaments and cosmetics, toys for children, cooking and storage pots, and skilled crafts like casting and bead-making.

Exam-pattern questions

Exam-style · 1 mark The Dancing Girl is made of: (A) terracotta (B) bronze (C) steatite (D) red stone [1]

Ans. (B) bronze

Exam-style · 1 mark Most Indus seals are made of: (A) gold (B) steatite (C) marble (D) wood [1]

Ans. (B) steatite

Exam-style · 2 marks Describe the Mother Goddess from Mohenjo-daro. [2]

Ans. Terracotta, 22 cm, about 2500 BCE: a crude standing female with necklaces, girdle and loin cloth; a fan-shaped head-dress with cup-like projections on both sides; pellet eyes, beaked nose and slit mouth; linked to fertility worship.

Exam-style · 6 marks Explain the lost-wax method and describe two Indus artworks made in different materials. [6]

Ans. Lost-wax: wax model → coated with clay and dried → heated, wax drained through a hole → hollow mould filled with molten metal → cooled, clay broken away → finished. [2]

Dancing Girl (bronze, Mohenjo-daro, 10.5 cm): hair in a bun, bangles on the left arm, cowry necklace, right hand on hip, confident dance pose, vigour and expression. [2]

Bull Seal (steatite, Mohenjo-daro, 2.5 cm): humped bull with horns, hump and dewlap carved in intaglio, pictographic script above; realistic strength; used in trade and as amulet. [2]

Practice set: test yourself *Exam-style*

A. Fill in the blanks (1 mark each)

1. The Male Torso was found at _____.
2. The standard seal measures _____ × 2 inches.
3. Bead factories were found at Chanhudaro and _____.

4. Figures on seals are carved in _____.
5. The Dancing Girl wears a _____-shell necklace.
6. The Indus script is _____.

B. True or false? (1 mark each)

1. The Male Torso has socket holes for head and arms.
2. Indus pottery was mostly hand-made.
3. Mother Goddess figures are made of bronze.
4. Seals were used in trade.
5. The Painted Jar is decorated in black.
6. The Indus script has been fully read.

C. Very short answer (1 mark each)

1. Name two Indus sites in Gujarat.
2. Where is the Dancing Girl kept?
3. Name the seal with a cross-legged figure.
4. Name two materials of beads.

D. Short answer (2 marks each)

1. Describe the Male Torso.
2. Describe the Painted Earthen Jar.
3. State two uses of Indus seals.
4. Describe the Bust of the Bearded Man.

E. Short answer (2 marks)

1. Compare the Dancing Girl and the Mother Goddess.

F. Long answer (6 marks)

1. "Indus artists worked in many materials." Explain with stone, bronze, terracotta, steatite and clay examples.

G. HOTS

1. Why might Indus seals be compared to identity cards?

Case study: A tiny square stone shows a humped bull with curved horns and some signs above it.

(i) Identify the object and material. (ii) Size. (iii) Carving technique. (iv) Two uses. [4]

20 MCQs

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Indus art dates to about:
(A) 300 CE (B) 500 BCE (C) 2500 BCE (D) 1200 CE | 3. Dholavira is in:
(A) Rajasthan (B) Haryana (C) Punjab (D) Gujarat |
| 2. Harappa and Mohenjo-daro are now in:
(A) Pakistan (B) India (C) Afghanistan (D) Iran | 4. Kalibangan is in:
(A) Gujarat (B) Rajasthan (C) UP (D) Punjab |

5. The Dancing Girl was found at:
(A) Harappa (B) Mohenjo-daro (C) Lothal (D) Ropar
 6. The Dancing Girl's left arm is covered with:
(A) nothing (B) a snake (C) a shawl (D) bangles
 7. The Male Torso is made of:
(A) red stone (B) bronze (C) terracotta (D) gold
 8. The Male Torso is from:
(A) Lothal (B) Mohenjo-daro (C) Harappa (D) Dholavira
 9. The Mother Goddess has a:
(A) turban (B) crown of pearls (C) halo (D) fan-shaped head-dress
 10. The Mother Goddess is made of:
(A) bronze (B) terracotta (C) steatite (D) marble
 11. The Bull seal shows a:
(A) tiger (B) unicorn (C) humped bull (D) elephant
 12. The Bull seal is about:
(A) 2.5×2.5 cm (B) 22 cm (C) 10 cm (D) 1 m
 13. Seal carving is in:
(A) high relief (B) intaglio (C) round (D) painting
 14. The Painted Jar is decorated in:
(A) blue (B) gold (C) black (D) white
 15. Indus pottery was mostly:
(A) carved (B) hand-made (C) mould-made (D) wheel-made
 16. Bronze statues were made by:
(A) lost-wax process (B) carving (C) welding (D) forging only
 17. The bearded priest bust wears a shawl with:
(A) trefoil pattern (B) lotus (C) stripes (D) calligraphy
 18. Bead-making centres:
(A) Sarnath (B) Ajanta (C) Sanchi (D) Chanhudaro and Lothal
 19. The Pashupati seal shows a figure:
(A) dancing (B) seated cross-legged (C) riding (D) standing on a bull
 20. Steatite is a kind of:
(A) clay (B) metal (C) soft stone (D) wood
- 1 (C) · 2 (A) · 3 (D) · 4 (B) · 5 (B) · 6 (D) · 7 (A) · 8 (C) · 9 (D) · 10 (B) · 11 (C) · 12 (A) · 13 (B) · 14 (C) · 15 (D) · 16 (A) · 17 (A) · 18 (D) · 19 (B) · 20 (C)

Assertion-Reason (6)

(A) Both true, R explains A. (B) Both true, R does not explain A. (C) A true, R false. (D) A false, R true.

1. A: The Dancing Girl is a hollow metal figure. R: It was cast by the lost-wax process.
2. A: Indus seals give raised impressions on clay. R: Their figures are carved in intaglio.
3. A: Mother Goddess figures are finely finished. R: They have pellet eyes and slit mouths.
4. A: The Male Torso is in bronze. R: It has socket holes for head and arms.
5. A: Indus people were skilled craftsmen. R: They made seals, bronzes, beads and painted pottery.
6. A: The Painted Jar was wheel-made. R: Harappa is now in Pakistan.

Key: 1 (A) · 2 (A) · 3 (D) · 4 (D) · 5 (A) · 6 (B)

Answers to the practice set

A. 1. Harappa 2. 2 3. Lothal 4. intaglio 5. cowry 6. undeciphered (pictographic)

B. 1. T 2. F 3. F 4. T 5. T 6. F

C. 1. Lothal, Dholavira (also Rangpur) 2. National Museum, New Delhi 3. Pashupati seal 4. carnelian, lapis lazuli (also jasper, gold, steatite)

D. see cards; 3. trade (stamping goods) and amulets (identity) 4. soapstone; shawl with trefoil pattern over left shoulder; half-closed eyes; close-cut moustache and short beard; fillet round the head; armlet

E. Dancing Girl: bronze, lost-wax, slender, lively pose, realistic; Mother Goddess: terracotta, hand-modelled, crude pellet features, fan head-dress, ritual figure

F. stone: Male Torso; bronze: Dancing Girl; terracotta: Mother Goddess; steatite: Bull seal; clay: Painted Jar (see cards)

G. each person or trader had a personal seal with an emblem and script, carried on the body, to identify goods and owner

Case. (i) Bull seal, steatite (ii) $2.5 \times 2.5 \times 1.4$ cm (iii) intaglio (iv) trade (stamping goods) and amulet

Last-night summary

- Indus art c. 2500 BCE; Harappa, Mohenjo-daro (Pakistan); Lothal, Dholavira, Kalibangan, Ropar, Banawali, Rakhigarhi, Alamgirpur (India); about 1500 miles.
- Stone: Male Torso (Harappa, red stone), Priest bust (soapstone). Bronze by lost-wax: Dancing Girl (Mohenjo-daro). Terracotta: Mother Goddess, toys.
- Seals: steatite, 2×2 inches, intaglio animals, undeciphered script; trade and amulets; Bull seal, Pashupati seal.
- Pottery: wheel-made, black on red, Painted Jar (vegetal and geometric motifs). Beads at Chanhudaro, Lothal.