

Revision Notes for Class 6 Social Science

Chapter 4 – Timeline and Sources of History

The chapter "Timeline and Sources of History" helps students understand how we learn about the past through different sources and disciplines. It covers the methods historians and scientists use to gather information about ancient times, how time is measured in history, and the early developments in human history, including agriculture.

1. How Do We Learn About the Past?

To understand what life was like in ancient times, we rely on various experts and sources. The following fields help in gathering historical knowledge:

- **Geologists:**

Geologists study the Earth's physical structure and substances, including rocks and minerals. Their work helps us understand the Earth's history and how natural forces have shaped human civilization. For example, they study layers of rock to determine the age of fossils and artifacts.

- **Palaeontologists:**

Palaeontologists specialize in studying fossils, which are the preserved remains of ancient plants, animals, and other organisms. Their findings help us learn about the living organisms that existed millions of years ago, long before humans.

- **Anthropologists:**

Anthropologists study humans, both in the past and present. They focus on human evolution, behavior, and culture. By examining ancient skeletons and artifacts, anthropologists gain insights into how early humans lived and developed societies.

- **Archaeologists:**

Archaeologists dig up and study artifacts like tools, pottery, and ruins from ancient civilizations. They piece together the daily life, culture, and technology of people who lived thousands of years ago.

2. How Is Time Measured in History?

In history, time is measured in various ways to help us understand when events took place. Historians use timelines and specific terms to define periods in history.

- **Timeline: Definition and Meaning:**

A timeline is a visual representation of historical events arranged in chronological order. It helps track the sequence of events over time, from the distant past to the present. Timelines can cover large periods, such as centuries or millennia, or shorter periods like decades or years.

- **Terms to Define Time:**

- BCE (Before Common Era): Refers to the time before the birth of Jesus Christ. This is also known as BC (Before Christ).
- CE (Common Era): Refers to the time after the birth of Jesus Christ, also known as AD (Anno Domini, meaning "In the Year of the Lord").
- Decade: A period of 10 years.
- Century: A period of 100 years.
- Millennium: A period of 1,000 years.

3. The Beginnings of Human History

The earliest humans appeared millions of years ago, evolving from primates. These early humans were hunter-gatherers, meaning they lived by hunting animals and gathering wild plants for food. Over time, humans developed tools and learned to control fire, which improved their chances of survival.

- **The Early Stone Age:**

Early humans used simple stone tools for hunting and gathering. This period is known as the Stone Age and is divided into the Palaeolithic (Old Stone Age), Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age), and Neolithic (New Stone Age) periods.

- **Cave Paintings:**

One of the earliest forms of human expression was cave painting. These paintings, found in caves across the world, depict animals and scenes of hunting and give us insights into early human life.

4. The First Crops

The discovery of agriculture marked a significant turning point in human history. People began to settle in one place and grow crops instead of constantly moving to hunt and gather food. This shift happened during the Neolithic period.

- **Domestication of Plants and Animals:**

Early humans learned to domesticate wild plants and animals. They grew crops like wheat and barley and raised animals like sheep, goats, and cattle. This change allowed them to live in permanent settlements and form communities.

- **Impact of Agriculture:**

Agriculture led to the growth of villages and cities as people could produce surplus food. It also marked the beginning of trade and the development of specialized crafts like pottery and weaving.