

CLASSROOM CAPTIVES

‘Tomorrow, children, as you all know, is a very special day,’ announced Mrs Rehman to her class. ‘We will travel by coach to the ancient ruins of Mohenjodaro; you will see for yourselves the streets and buildings of a great city that lay buried and forgotten for nearly four thousand years!’

The children perked up after another long, hard day of arithmetic, spelling tests, writing, and some more arithmetic. A whole day out of school!

‘It’s got to be better than being stuck in here,’ whispered Yasin in his friend Mina’s ear.

If there was a competition for the strictest teacher in Apex Elementary School, Mrs Rehman would win it hands down. Her favourite motto, which she so loved to repeat was: ‘work hard, learn well, and walk

the path of achievement”.

‘This trip will be an excellent opportunity for you to learn what archaeologists have discovered about life in ancient times.’

Mina put her hand up. ‘What is an archaeologist?’ she asked.

‘Good question,’ said Mrs Rehman. ‘A child who asks a question learns the answer! You will find out tomorrow, Mina. I shall now write a list of questions for our trip tomorrow. I expect you to write a paragraph about each question when we are back at school. Copy them in your notebooks, and no talking!’

Mrs Rehman turned her back to the class and began writing on the board.

‘Trust her to make us work on a day out,’ muttered Yasin. ‘She never lets us have any fun.’



Mohenjodaro – a Bronze Age city

1. What are the artefacts in the museum made of?
2. Why is this city built with bricks?
3. Where did people get water from?
4. What are the streets in Lower Town like? Explain.
5. Where did the rulers live?
6. Why was the River Indus so important?

Yasin began to copy the questions, but as usual, his eyes were drawn to the window. The sky was blue; white fluffy clouds went scudding past. They looked a bit like animals with horns. He wondered how fast you'd have to run to keep up with them.

'Yasin is daydreaming again, is he?' It was Mrs Rehman. 'Did you think I wouldn't notice? Have you written down all the questions?'

'I've nearly finished, Miss,' said Yasin. He knew he could copy them from Mina.

I hope Yasin and the rest of you understand how privileged you are to be able to visit one of the most famous ancient places in the world. You can thank the genius of the archaeologists who realised that dusty mounds of old bricks at Mohenjodaro in Sindh, and Harappa in Punjab, were in fact magnificent cities, and they belonged to a civilisation as powerful and advanced as ancient Egypt. People in our subcontinent

were amongst the very first in the world to build cities. We can all be very proud of what we now call the Indus Civilisation!

Mrs Rehman sternly reminded everyone to bring their notebooks, pens, rulers, water bottles, and packed lunches. ‘The coach will leave at 7 a.m. tomorrow morning. Don’t be late. Class dismissed!’