

## The Idea of India

### Lesson Plan

**Title of the lesson:** Creating the story: Using the evidence to re-create a lost story

**Subject:** History

**Appropriate age group/ Class:** 12 -13 or 14-15 (Classes VII or IX)

**Time required:** 35 minutes

**Objectives of the lesson:** (two)

1. To understand how history is written/created from sources
2. The uses and limitations of evidence in writing the history of a civilization or a particular time period

**Materials required:**

PowerPoint showing an image of a Coin: Obverse and reverse of a 5 Rupee coin (the 5 or 10 rupee coins are useful because one is a golden yellow and the other combines two metals)

PowerPoint about sources of history.

**Method:** Ask the students to imagine that this is the year 4017 AD and this is the only material remnant of the civilization. What would they be able to tell about the civilization?

Expect some initial hesitation and then students will point to numbers, point to the lotus, point to the Indian emblem.

At this stage the questions could become more specific. These questions could be used as a worksheet or the questions can be split up to be used as a group work.

Social:

- What can you find out about possible occupations?
- Was this a literate society?
- Did they have a number system?
- Do they have writing? can the script be read? ( here it can get interesting – the students may claim that it can be read. Some students may like to say no, it cannot)
- How was society organized?
- Was this an artistic society?
- What kind of jobs did the people have?

Economic:

- Did the system know the use of money?
- What is the currency? What more do we know about it?
- Does the civilization know about weights and measures?
- Where was this coin found?
- Did they know about trade?

- Did they know about metal working?  
Were these a technologically advanced society?
- What about the metals? What does that tell us about the resources?

Political:

- Did they have a government? (the uniform shape and size of the coin would lead some to say that there was a government)
- The smooth shape would indicate machinery

Religion:

Did these people have a religion?

Who did they worship?

The lotus: What does it symbolize? What does this tell us about the environment?

For the lotus: some students may say that this was a Buddhist culture

This part of the activity can take from 15 minutes to half an hour

This should be followed up by a debrief

### **Points to made through the discussion**

- Evidence is often incomplete the further back in history. (degraded or destroyed)
- History is based on inference, corroboration and confirmation
- Identification of an unknown object is based on what WE know and therefore the observation can be flawed
- Scripts if they can be read, is useful, if not interpretations can be open to question
- Interpretations can change as more new evidence is found

Follow –up:

This lesson on the coin-based evidence can be followed up with a general lesson on sources or as we did it with Mrs. Aparna Sen's lesson where the figurine of the Dancing girl was used to build on what was learned in this lesson.