

Early Civilisations

Learning Objective:

To explore the buildings and architecture of early civilisations.

NEXT

When do you think this was built?

What is it made of?

How was it built?



BACK

NEXT

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BACK

NEXT

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Before people started farming and creating permanent settlements, they lived in tents that could be moved from place to place as people needed to travel to find food. These were usually made from animal hides.



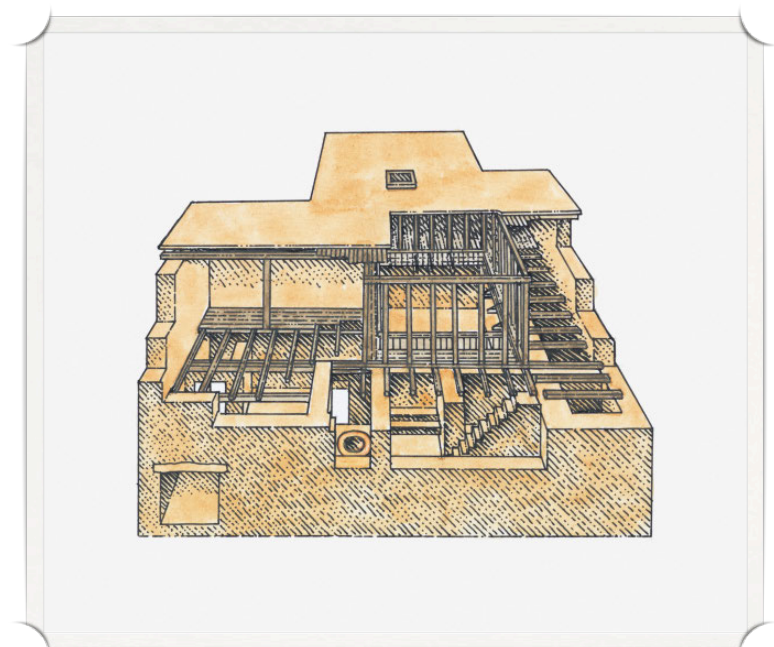
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Homes then started to be made from mud, thatch or reeds. As technology developed, people started making homes out of brick.



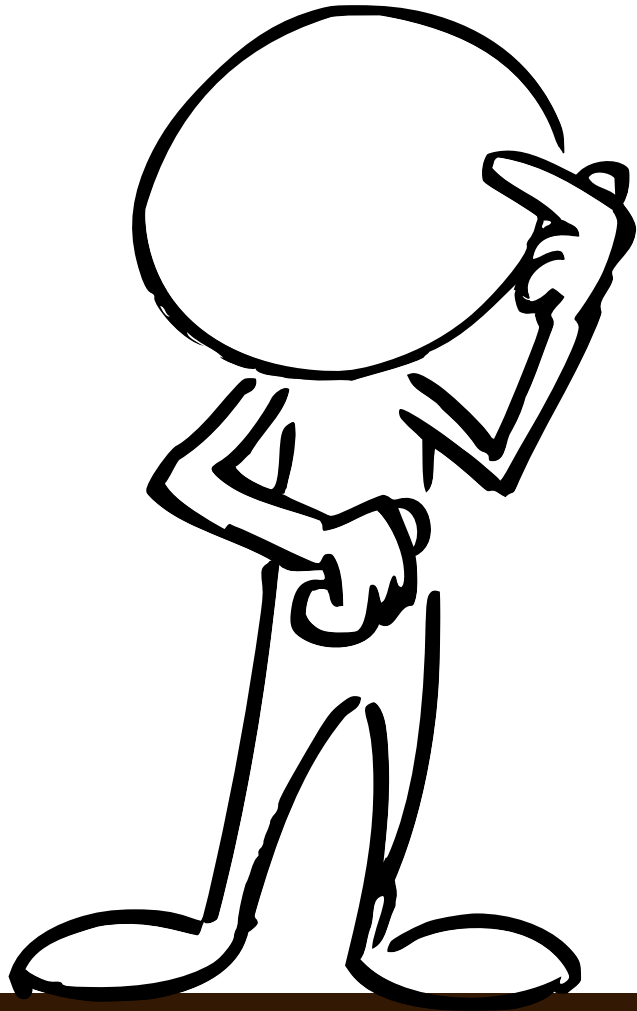
A Shang Dynasty home



An Indus Valley home

BACK

NEXT



Once people had learnt to build sturdy homes, what other kinds of buildings might they have needed?

BACK

NEXT



Even before the Sumerian civilisation, people had built monuments and temples to worship their gods. The very earliest example of a temple is Gobekli Tepe which was built around the year 10,000 BC. Archaeologists have found evidence of pillars up to six metres high. These would have been very heavy to move, especially without wheels to help them!

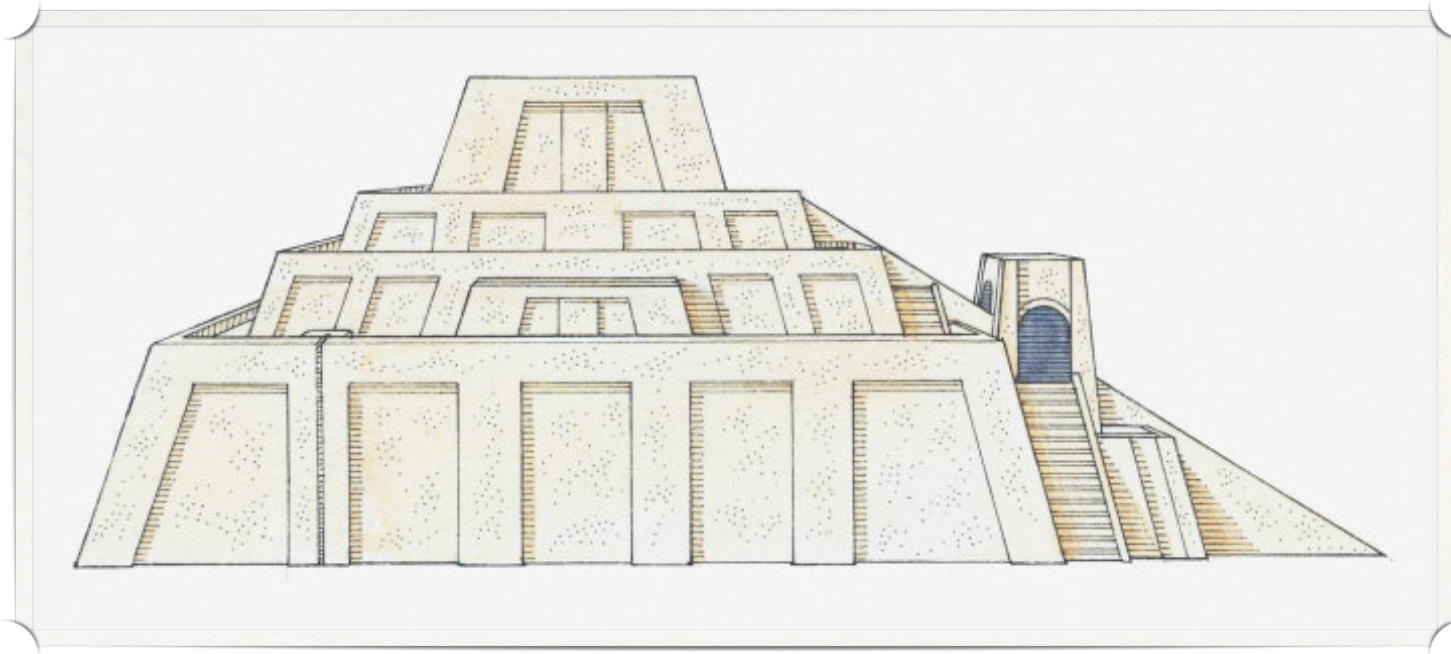


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The ancient Sumerians built temples called ziggurats. Originally, these would have been temples made from mud bricks on raised platforms. Over the centuries they got bigger and taller. They were pyramids made up of layers of steps.



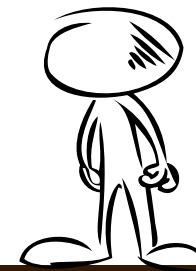
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This photo shows the ziggurat at Ur which was built around 2100 BC. The front has been reconstructed as much of the ziggurat was in ruins but you can see the original structure at the top.



Did you know that the four corners of this ziggurat are aligned with the four points of the compass?



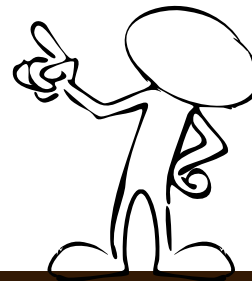
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The ancient Egyptians built enormous pyramids. These weren't temples but tombs for pharaohs (kings). The Great Pyramid at Giza is the oldest and largest pyramid that is still intact. The pyramid was started in 2560 BC and was finished twenty years later in 2540 BC.



Look at the size of the people in the picture to see how big the pyramid is! How do you think they built it?

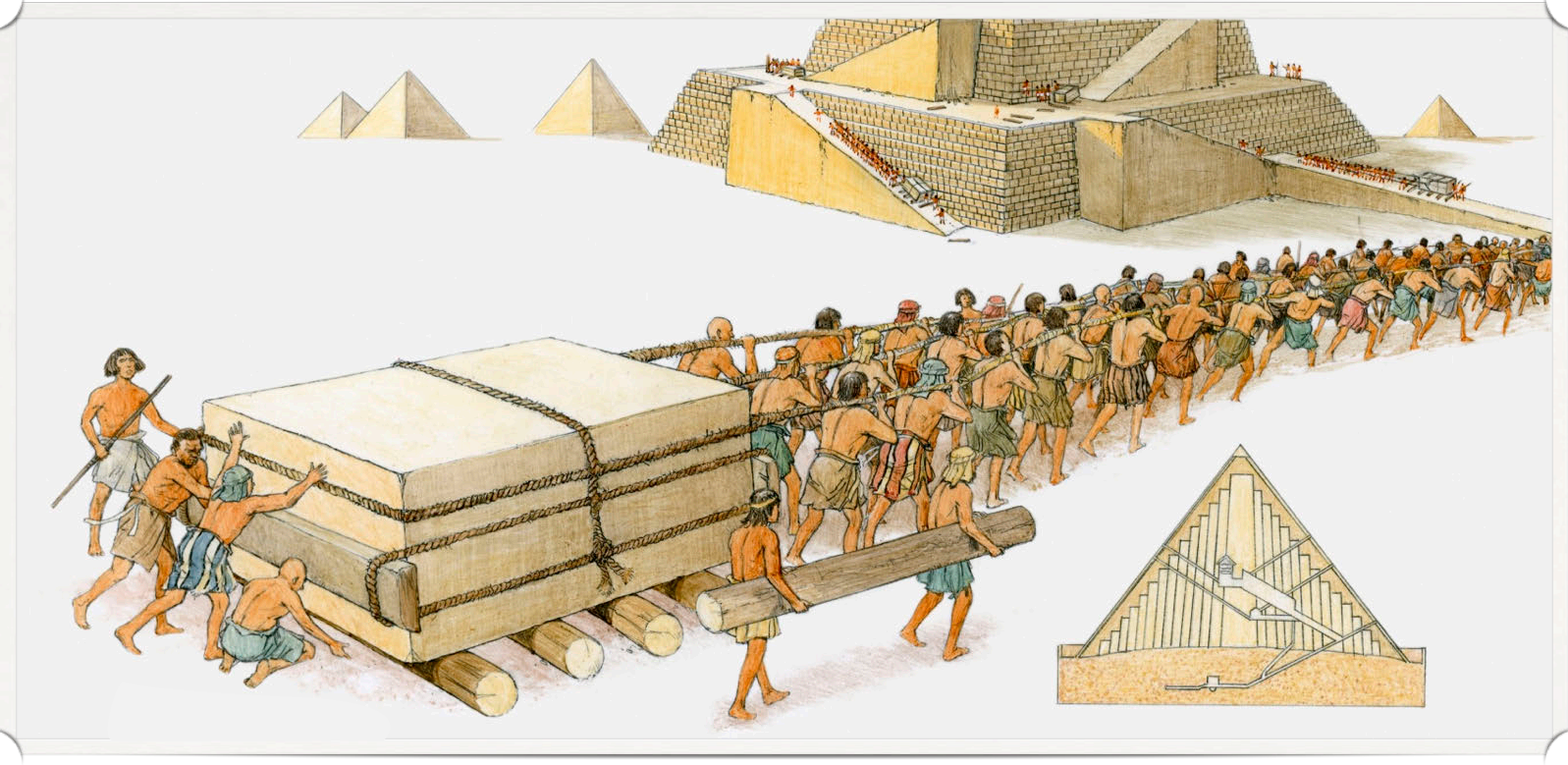


BACK

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What can you see in this illustration?

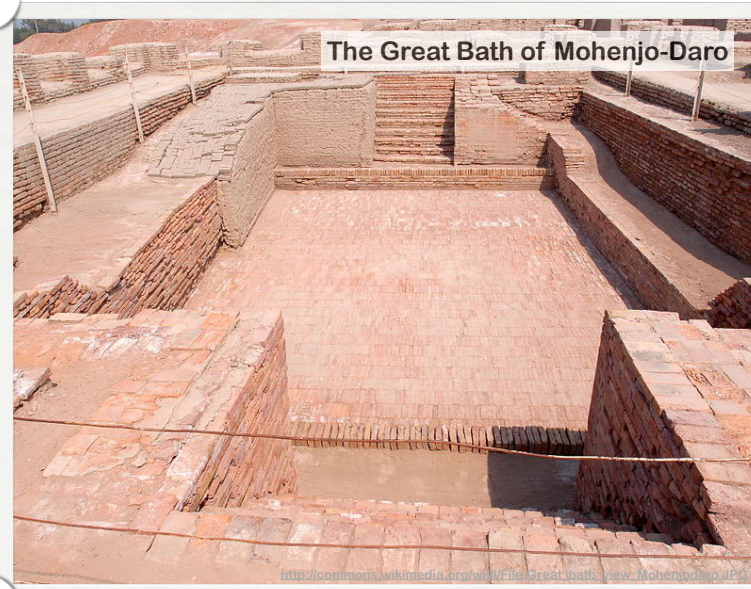


BACK

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The Indus Valley civilisation built impressive structures too. In the city of Mohenjo-Daro there are the remains of a citadel. This was a large mound which had structures at the top which are thought to have been used for religious ceremonies. One of the structures is a large bath that was sealed with tar to stop the water seeping into the walls.



BACK

NEXT



These early structures are all very impressive and show advanced technology and engineering skills. Which do you think is most impressive and why?



BACK

NEXT