



SHARJAH ARCHAEOLOGY MUSEUM

Pre and Post Visit Materials

Sharjah Archaeology Museum narrates the story of excavations in Sharjah as well as the important role of archaeologists in discovering various artifacts. The museum includes a series of galleries arranged chronologically for the visitor to enjoy a journey from the Stone Age followed by the Bronze Age, Iron Age, and the Greater Arabia Age.



هيئة الشارقة للمتاحف
Sharjah Museums Authority



متحف الشارقة للآثار
SHARJAH ARCHAEOLOGY MUSEUM

AD/CE	This period refers to the years after death “Anno Domini”.
Alexander the Great	Emperor of the ancient Greek kingdom of Macedon from 336 BCE to 323 BCE and one of the most successful military commanders in history.
Amphorae	Tall jars or jugs with two handles and a narrow neck that were used in the ancient world for storing and offering drinks and food.
Aramaic	Ancient language used as a common tongue in the Near East between around 800 BCE and 500 AD/CE. Now mainly used as the liturgical language of Eastern Christianity but still used in parts of Iraq, Syria and Turkey.
Archaeological site	The place where archaeologists found a clear evidence of human existence (perhaps they date back to prehistoric or historical period up to the contemporary history).
Archaeologist	The person who studies the past using archaeological methods to discover the history of the artifact, with the motive of recording, interpreting and understanding ancient cultures and their behaviour.
Archaeology	The systematic study of the past human life and culture by the recovery and examination of the remaining material evidence, such as graves, buildings, tools and pottery.
Artifact	An object produced or shaped by human for their living needs.
BCE	‘Before the Common Era’. This can also appear as BC, ‘Before Christ’.
Bronze Age	Subdivision of time roughly corresponding to 3000 to 1300 BCE in the Arabian Peninsula. It was called by that name because of the common use of bronze.
Bronze	An alloy, made of copper and tin, but having a large copper content.

Restoration	Measures taken to prolong the life of an object as long as possible in its original form. These measures may involve chemical treatment or physical strengthening.
Copper	A metal extracted from the copper ore. Copper ores are abundant in the Al-Hajar mountain in the Arabian Peninsula. The bronze is produced by mixing copper with a small amount of tin.
Dilmun period	Related to Dilmun, which is the ancient name of Bahrain Island and adjacent areas.
Excavation	Digging up and removing soil layers and artifacts from an archaeological site in order to analyse and interpret human behaviour in the past.
Looting	The destruction of archaeological sites to obtain artifacts for personal use or sale.
<i>Falaj</i> (plural <i>aflaaj</i>)	Gently sloping underground channels used to divert water from its source to irrigate crops.
Flint	A sort of a hard stone commonly shaped into arrowheads or used as a cutting tool during the Stone Age.
Frankincense	Aromatic resin derived from trees in south Arabia (modern Yemen and Dhofar, Oman). Widely used in incense, medicine and perfume in ancient and modern times, and its the source of the great trade wealth in the Arabian Peninsula.
Greater Arabia	Subdivision of time roughly corresponding to 300 BCE to 611.
Hellenistic	Term relating to the Greek culture from the death of Alexander the Great in 323 BCE to the defeat of Cleopatra and Marc Antony by the Roman Emperor Octavian in 31 BCE.

Al Hisn (Fort)	A fortified castle surrounded by strong walls, trench and other defensive methods.
Iron Age	Subdivision of time roughly corresponding to 1300 to 300 BCE in the Arabian Peninsula.
Levant	Geographical term historically refers to a large area in the Middle East south of the Taurus Mountains, bounded by the Mediterranean Sea on the west, and by the northern Arabian Desert and Upper Mesopotamia to the east.
Mesopotamia	Region located between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, largely corresponding to modern-day Iraq and north-eastern Syria, which was home to modern societies from the 6th millennium BCE onwards.
Neolithic	A term used to describe the final phase of the Stone Age that dates back to between 6500 BCE and 3000 BCE.
Palaeolithic	The early part of the Stone Age (meaning 'Old Stone Age') beginning about 750,000 to 500,000 years BCE and lasting until the end of the last ice age about 8,500 BCE.
Petroglyphs	Carvings or other designs etched on stones and rocks.
Seal (also stamp seal & cylinder seal)	A carved object, usually stone, used to stamp or roll onto wax or clay to leave a distinctive symbol. Often used by merchants and officials to authenticate transactions.
Softstone	A variety of soft minerals, frequently known as steatite or chlorite, and commonly carved into bowls, boxes and jewellery during the Bronze and Iron Ages. It was also used in the Greater Arabia period.
Stone Age	A broad prehistoric time period when human widely used stone tools. The period is between 5000 and 3000 BCE.

Tetradrachm	Ancient Greek currency (coins).
Ubaid	Period in Mesopotamian (Iraq) prehistory lasting from about 5500 to 4000 BCE.
Umm al-Nar period	Period in the Bronze Age named after the settlement and tombs in the island of <i>Umm al-Nar</i> , currently Abu Dhabi. It evolved sometime between 3000 and 2500 BCE and ended at around 2000 BCE.
Wadi Suq period	Period in the Bronze Age named after sites located in the <i>Wadi Suq</i> valley, currently Oman. It came after the <i>Umm an-Nar</i> period at around 2000 BCE and ended at around 1600 BCE.

These key questions are designed to help families, school groups and individuals to get more out of their visit to the museum. Please ask any of the museum staff to help you answering these questions if you need further support.

Introduction to Sharjah Archaeology Museum

1. What do archaeologists do?
2. What kind of artifacts do archaeologists look for?
3. What are the archaeological sites that have been found in UAE?

Stone Age Period Between 5000 to 3000 BC

1. The Stone Age inhabitants from this region were nomadic. What does that mean?
2. Why was the Stone Age called by that name?
3. Why have archaeologists found many artefacts in and around the Stone Age burial sites?

Bronze Age Period Between 3000 to 1300 BC

1. Why was the Bronze Age called by that name?
2. What is the name of the tree which provided people with food, building materials and fibers to make ropes and baskets during the Bronze Age?
3. How can we know that the Bronze Age inhabitants traded with neighbouring countries?

Rock Art

1. In which period did the rock art appear?
2. Which tools did people use to create rock drawings?
3. What do these drawings look like? What do they represent?

Iron Age Period Between 1300 to 300 BC

1. What was invented during the Iron Age that enabled the inhabitants to establish permanent settlements?
2. What method of transport was used in the Iron Age?
3. Which tool was used to grind grains?

Greater Arabia Period Between 300 BC to 611 AD/CE

1. How do we know that the Arabian Peninsula became part of a huge trading network that linked the countries of the Indian Ocean with those of the Mediterranean during this period?
2. Why did archaeologists find coins only from the Greater Arabia Period and none from the Stone Age, Bronze Age or Iron Age?
3. What other artifacts can be found in the Greater Arabia period that we still use today?

Carry on your journey through time at Sharjah Heritage Museum and Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization.

Be the Archaeologist

The work of the archaeologists is similar to the detectives as they collect evidence and use it to deduce the stories of people who lived in ancient times. Archaeologists carefully photograph, weigh and measure every artifact they find in order to better understand the daily lives of the people who originally used them.

Through the below activity, you will discover the archaeologist's tools, how to use them and how archaeologists explicate the artifact.

Resources:

- A sturdy wooden box or an old drawer
- Play sand
- Broken crockery pieces
- Pearl, coral or wooden beads (natural materials rather than plastic)
- Small metal pieces (coins, charm & bracelet)
- A medium size paint brush
- A kitchen sieve
- A beach bucket and spade
- Kitchen scales
- Ruler
- Pencil
- Paper
- Digital camera

Method:

- 1) Fill the sturdy wooden box or the old drawer with sand and bury the pieces of the broken crockery, beads and metal pieces.
- 2) Start to dig one spade full of sand and sieve it into the bucket to discover the hidden pieces.
- 3) If you find a piece in the sieve you should handle it very carefully as it may be very fragile. Then you should measure, weigh, draw and photograph the uncovered pieces. Now, you can discover the materials used to create the uncovered artifact and its uses. Suggest more than one answer to see how artifacts may be interpreted in different ways.

- 4) If you reveal a bigger artifact is still hidden in the sand you should carefully brush the sand away instead of digging and exposing the piece to damage. You have to notice if your uncovered artifact is a completed piece or fragments of a larger artifact. If it is just fragments then the other pieces may be hidden close by.

- 5) Display your artifact on a table and write labels describing where the artifact was found, its uses and by whom it was used.

Life as a frankincense trader during the Greater Arabia period

The Arabian Peninsula became part of a huge trading network that linked the countries of the Indian Ocean with the Mediterranean. The fame of pearls from the Arabian Gulf spread as far as Rome, and the frankincense trade enriched the people of that area. This was the time of great prosperity for Southeast Arabia which resulted in settlements flourishing. Manufacturing and industrial techniques continued to develop during this period as they produced fine gold, silver and bronze vessels as well as cloth and baskets. Also colourful pigments were used to colour jewellery and fabric.



Writing Prompts:

- 1) Imagine that you are a frankincense trader travelling from Cana (Bir Ali) to Mleiha via Hadhramaut and Dhofar between 300 BCE and 116 AD/CE to sell your frankincense.
- 2) How will you travel? Traders were traveling by boat, by camel and sometimes on foot at different stages of their journey. It was a long and arduous trip that may last for several weeks or months.
- 3) What else do you have to take with you for the journey? Traders needed to carry all of their necessities such as water and food.
- 4) What will you eat during the journey? Perhaps dates or meat such as desert hares or deer if you were lucky enough to find them on route. You may starve for few days!
- 5) What other goods might you buy on your route and sell them later? You may have purchased some raw ivory that originally came from India or spices, pearls or precious stones.
- 6) What dangers do you face on route? Traders faced storms on their sea trip and perhaps they were attacked by competing traders.
- 7) Remember that incense was as valuable as gold nowadays. Your customers might be wealthy. Think about how your income and your successful trading will affect your life when you return back home. What will you do with your wealth? Perhaps you will buy a camel or a horse!

Create a replica of jewellery from the Stone Age

Archaeologists found a variety of jewellery in and around Stone Age burial sites in this region. This kind of jewellery was worn around the waist, neck, wrists, elbows and ankles. It was made from natural materials found in the local environment such as shells, stone, fish bones and pearls. Archaeologists said that the Stone Age inhabitants believed in the second life as dead people were buried with their belongings for afterlife. This explains the archaeologists' interpretation of the artifact.

You can create a replica of jewellery from the Stone Age to learn how skilled those early craftsmen were. The jewellery was made using flint (stone) tools as they did not know yet how to extract metals from the surrounding mountains.

Resources:

- Artificial pearl beads
- Seashells, stones and pebbles
- wool thread or fishing wire



Method:

- 1) Search on the beach and in the local environment for shells, pebbles and other naturally occurring materials that could be used to create a replica of jewellery from the Stone Age.
- 2) Cut your determined length of fishing wire or wool thread according to the required size of your necklace or bracelet. Tie a knot at the end of the thread to prevent the beads from falling off.
- 3) Add pebbles and seashells to create a decorative design.
- 4) You may use glue to make sure those non-pierced seashells and pebbles are glued securely.
- 5) Make a loop between the two threads to have the shape of a necklace bracelet.

Are you interested in learning more about jewellery in the region? Visit Sharjah Heritage Museum and Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization.

Iron Age *Falaj* Irrigation System

During the Iron Age, people of this region (Sharjah) developed a method of irrigating in order to quench their crops, known as *falaj*. This system allowed people to establish more permanent settlements and leave of their former nomadic lifestyle.



Create a model of the *falaj* irrigating system whilst discussing the effects of innovation on the daily lives of the early inhabitants.

Resources:

- Thin wood, cardboard or cork for the base, approximately 40cm square
- Plastic cups or plastic small bottles
- Clay
- String glue
- Pebbles and small stones
- Sand (from a reputable toy store)
- Poster paints
- Paint brushes
- Plastic grass and bushes

Method:

- 1) Use the thin wood, cardboard or cork as a base to build the *falaj*.
- 2) Stick one or two of the plastic cups or plastic bottles onto the edge of the board.
- 3) When the plastic cup or bottle is securely glued, roll the clay and put it over the plastic cup or bottle to create the impression of a mountainous area.
- 4) Add pebbles near the clay to further give the impression of a rocky, mountainous area.
- 5) Roll out the clay on the base to create *falaj* channels.

- 6) When the clay is dry and the pebbles are glued, use blue colour and paint the *falaj* irrigation channels to show where the water would flow and spill downward from the mountain top into the fields.
- 7) Stick the plastic grass and bushes in rows around the *falaj* channels.
- 8) Finally put glue around the *falaj* and sprinkle sand and grass on it to complete your model.

Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization displays working models of other irrigation systems used in the region, in Ibn Al-Haytham Gallery of Science and Technology.

Create your own replica pottery

The study of pottery in archaeology has become increasingly important over the last century, providing archaeologists with information on many aspects of the past including chronology, trade and technology. The shapes and decorations found on pottery helped archaeologists to work out when and where the pottery was made.

Look carefully at the distinctive surface decorations of the pottery at Sharjah Archaeology Museum to create your own patterns on a pot after your visit.



Resources:

- Unfired, unglazed pre formed ceramic pot (often available in garden markets)
- Black coloring pens with different thicknesses of nib

Method:

- 1) During your visit, look at various patterns of a range of different pots from different times to start sketching on a piece of paper.
- 2) Compare and contrast these patterns to identify the distinguishing features..
- 3) Draw your patterns (sketches) on your pot using a black colouring pen.
- 4) You may create labels for your artifacts to describe its time period according to its decorations.