# Hands On Learning
## *with Reading Museum Service*

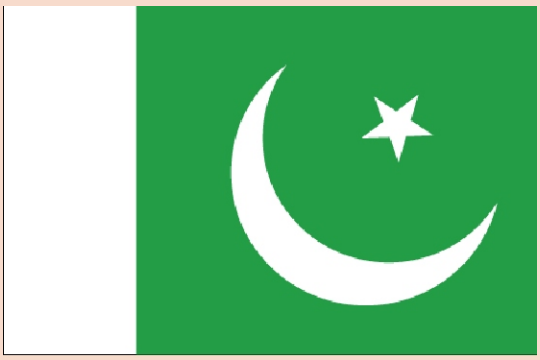
## INDIA AND PAKISTAN G31A

### INDIA: country profile

Capital:New Delhi
Population: About 1.2 billion
Currency: Rupee
Religion: Hinduism (80%), Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Sikhism and Jainism
Language: 17 major languages, 844 dialects and English



### PAKISTAN: country profile



Capital: Islamabad
Population: About 158 million
Currency: Rupee
Religion: Muslim (97%), Hinduism and Christianity
Language: Urdu, other regional languages and English

India and Pakistan became two independent states in 1947 when British rule came to an end. This box contains a variety of objects from both countries.

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### Doll



This doll is wearing a sari, which is the traditional garment worn by women in India. It is also worn in Pakistan but only for special occasions as the salwar-kameez (loose fitting trousers and top) is now more popular.

A sari is a very long piece of material, which can be wrapped around the body in different ways. The most common way is for the material to be wrapped around the waist and then the loose end (called the pallu or pallav) draped over the shoulder, as you can see on the doll.

In the past saris were always made of hand-woven material. The richest women could afford beautiful finely woven silk while the poor wore coarse cotton. It was said that the most expertly made saris could be threaded through a ring, like the one in the box.

Nowadays, saris are often mass-produced in a factory, although handmade material can still be bought and used for special occasions.

### Brass candlestick



The stem of this brass candlestick is in the shape of a peacock and has the candleholder resting on its tail. The peacock is the national bird of India and can be found living across Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka.

### Brass ornament



This ornament shows a person balancing goods on their head and a cow with sacks across its back. Cows are used in India and Pakistan for farming and for producing milk. The breeds used in this area are easy to identify because they have long ears, a hump on the shoulders and a bushy tail.

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### Walnut sikara



This model of a Sikara (sometimes spelt Shikara) boat is made of walnut wood and has some panels of carved patterns as decoration.

Sikaras are small wooden boats most commonly found on Dal Lake in Kashmir. Kashmir is an area in the north of India that has been at the centre of a fierce argument between Pakistan and India, who both want to claim it as part of their own country.



The boats come in many different shapes and sizes and are traditionally used by people to meet on the lake and sell their goods, like a floating market. They trade goods such as vegetables, cattle feed and flowers. This picture shows a boat filled with flowers for sale.

Sikaras are also used as transport between islands, for fishing on the lake and for tourism.

### School bag



This square shaped shoulder bag has a fringe along the bottom and a geometric embroidery pattern. Bags like this are often made in India and Pakistan and sold all over the world. Both countries have a long tradition of producing textiles and natural dyes.

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### Hindu shrine



This small shrine is made of five parts that can be put together. The shrines are placed in front of a statue of a god in a Hindu temple or in the home. Hinduism is the main religion of India and is also practiced in other countries around the world including Britain. It can be seen in neighbouring Pakistan although most people are Muslim.

The central belief of Hinduism is that there is a soul, or God, found in everything called Brahman. Brahman can take the form of many different gods, which people worship.

Hindus believe in reincarnation, which means that when you die you are reborn again in a different body. They believe that the things you did in your previous life/lives affect your present life. This is called Karma.

There are many Hindu holy days and festivals. Two of the most popular are Diwali and Holi. Diwali takes place in October and November and is known as the festival of light because fireworks are set off to scare away evil spirits. Holi is the most colourful festival and takes place in February or March. It is a happy time when people go into the streets and cover each other with coloured powder, ink and paint!

### Brass spoon

A brass spoon is used in Hindu ceremonies to hold ghee - a special butter that has been purified by melting and straining. The butter is made from cow's milk, which is a sacred product. The cow is a very important animal in Hinduism and is worshipped as a symbol of life. It is wrong to harm a cow and most Hindus will not eat beef.



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### Betel nut tin and cutter



The betel nut (sometimes called the areca nut) is the seed of a tree called the Betel Palm. The nut is thought by some to have healing properties, although scientific research has shown that it can actually be very bad for you and addictive. People who chew the nuts over a long period of time will have permanently red-stained teeth and gums.



The chewing of betel nuts can be traced back thousands of years and the nut is still used as an offering in Hinduism today. At Hindu ceremonies it is chopped into pieces using a cutter like the one in this box. The pieces of nut are mixed with spices and some lime and then wrapped in a leaf. The leaves and spices are kept in a special tin like this brass one. Each region has its own style of box and all are beautifully crafted and decorated. The boxes made of brass usually come from the south of India.

### Elephant bell

Bells are attached to elephants in India along with other decorations as part of ceremonies, festivals and processions. You can always recognise an elephant bell by the long thin pieces of metal hanging down from the rim. The style of the bell has not changed for hundreds of years and it makes a very rich sound.



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### Jewellery: Gilt jura pin, Gilt finger ring, Gilt earring, Spiral bangle, Ceremonial necklet

This box has examples of traditional jewellery from India and Pakistan. This type of jewellery can be worn in everyday life and also plays an important part in ceremonies.

In a Hindu wedding ceremony the bride is thought to be like Laxmi, the goddess of wealth, and so wears a beautiful sari with lots of jewellery to match it. She wears necklaces, earrings, finger rings, pins in her hair and bangles, all of which can be seen here. The groom's parents also give gifts of jewellery to the bride during the ceremony.

Spiral bangles are never worn alone. It is common to see many bangles on both arms. Traditionally they were made of glass and metal, although cheaper plastic versions are now worn for everyday use. The bangles made of glass and metal are still preferred at traditional functions such as weddings and festivals and make a lovely jingling sound.



