Hands On Learning
with Reading Museum Service

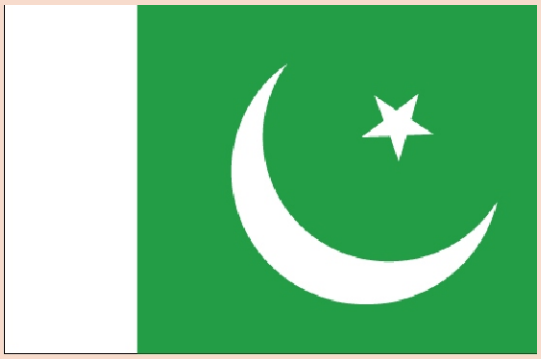
INDIA AND PAKISTAN G31B

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



Captial: Islamabad
Population: about 158 million
Currency: Rupee
Religion: Muslim (97%), Hinduism, 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.

Chappals

These shoes are called chappals and are very popular across Pakistan and India. Some have a strap between the toes like these and others have a loop over the toes. Traditionally they are made from leather and are decorated with colourful dyes and patterns.



Reading Borough Council
Heritage Lottery Fund

Hands On Learning
with Reading Museum Service

INDIA AND PAKISTAN G31B

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.



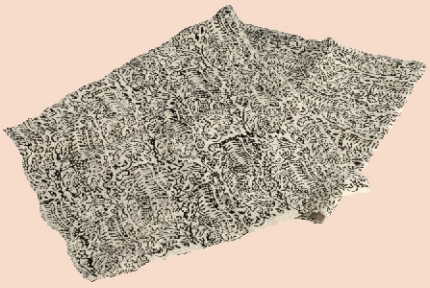
A sari is a very long piece of material, which can be wrapped around the body in different ways. The most common way is for the material to be wrapped around the waist and then the loose end (called the pallu or pallav) draped over the shoulder, as you can see on the doll.

In the past saris were always made of hand-woven material. The richest women could afford beautiful finely woven silk while the poorer women wore coarse cotton.

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

Khadi cotton

Khadi is a hand-spun cotton made popular in the 1920s by Mahatma Gandhi who was a very important person in India's struggle for independence from Great Britain. Ghandi didn't believe in violence and encouraged people to show strength through peaceful campaigns and wear clothes made of khadi cotton that had been hand produced in India. Even today Indian politicians only wear khadi and the Indian flag should not be made of any other material.



This piece of khadi cotton has a printed pattern on it depicting a tiger carrying a deer in its mouth.

Hands On Learning
with Reading Museum Service

INDIA AND PAKISTAN G31B

Walnut sikara



This model of a sikara (sometimes spelt shikara) boat is made of walnut wood and has some panels of carved patterns for 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 elephants, peacocks and butterflies embroidered into the material. Bags like this are often made in India and Pakistan and sold all over the world.

Bean pincushion



This delicate pincushion is covered with orange and brown beans. It is tightly stuffed so that pins can be pushed into the surface and held upright.

Hands On Learning
with Reading Museum Service

INDIA AND PAKISTAN G31B

Jewellery: Jura pin, Spiral bangle, Ceremonial necklet



This box has examples of traditional jewellery from India and Pakistan. Jewellery like this 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 and lots of jewellery to match. She wears necklaces, earrings, finger rings, pins in her hair and bangles, some of which can be seen here. The groom's parents also give gifts of jewellery to the bride during the ceremony.



Bangles like this spiral one 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.

Mala necklace



This necklace is called a mala and is used by Hindus when they are reciting a mantra (a special sound or word, often 'Om'). A mala is usually made of 108 beads, which are turned in the hand for every mantra that is chanted. When the person reaches the last bead, which is bigger than the others (called the sumeru bead) then they know they have finished. Feeling the beads helps to focus on the meaning of the manta, rather than trying to count how many have been chanted.

The beads can be made from many different materials such as wood, seeds or bone. These are very light and are, perhaps, made of sandalwood, which is the most common material.

Hands On Learning
with Reading Museum Service

INDIA AND PAKISTAN G31B

Brass ornament

This ornament shows a person balancing goods on the 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 are easy to identify because they have long ears, a hump of the shoulders and a bushy tail.



Rosewood elephant



Carved wooden elephants are very popular ornaments. This one is carved from rosewood, which is a heavy dark brownish colour.

You can tell this is an Indian elephant because it has small ears and two humps on its head. The African species has larger ears, a smooth head and is generally bigger.

Brass Ladle

This ladle is made of brass and is used during Hindu ceremonies to pour liquid onto images of the gods. On top of the handle is a peacock head.
The peacock is the national bird of India and can be found living across Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka.



Card case

This beautiful card case is known to have been made in the south of India in the early Victorian period (1837 to 1901). It is made of ebony wood and is decorated with ivory.

