

Follow-up 4

Writing on different shapes

Objectives: To demonstrate that different people use different shapes

to write on so that the contents are recognizable. To

understand how epigraphers begin to understand ancient

scripts and languages.

Materials: Pictures of different shaped Indus seals, cuneiform tablets,

modern book with writing, telephone directory, coins,

texts in different languages, etc.

Class set-up: Class discussion, individual work

Vocabulary: Seal, communication.

Activity: Remind the pupils that the people of ancient India used different shaped metal or stone seals to record different types of information. Ask the class why this might be useful.

- Why use different shapes for different kinds of information?
- Why would it be useful to use different shapes?
- Why might we use different shapes to communicate today?

Show the class the modern examples.

- What kind of information would you expect to find on this?
- How did you know that without looking inside/reading the text?

Ask the pupils to look around the classroom and find different objects with writing on.

• How does the shape help you decide what is written on it?

Ask each pupil to draw up a table with the range of objects, sizes and uses.

Background Information:
How to decipher an unknown script

Seals

Writing

Language