

# The lost city of gold: Mapungubwe

<b>Grade 6, Term 1</b>	<b>Social Science: History</b>	<b>Lesson Topic:</b> The lost city of gold: Mapungubwe
<b>Lesson 1 of 8</b>	<b>CAPS reference:</b> page 42	<b>Total time:</b> 1 hour

## Aims

- Engage higher order thinking through questions
  - Build on prior knowledge
- Develop own cognition through application of knowledge and comprehension
- Allow an opportunity for learners to conduct their own research independently

## Resources

- Worksheet

## Introductory activity

- Class discussion: Movie: *The Road to El Dorado*
- Mapungubwe is like Africa's El Dorado, the City of Gold

## Questions

15 minutes

- What were the people in the movie looking for?
- Do you know South Africa had a City of Gold as well?
  - Have you ever heard of Mapungubwe?

## Activity

35 minutes

- Read through the text, explain any terms that are unfamiliar
  - Allow for a brief discussion of the content
- Have the learners complete the rest of the worksheet

## Consolidation

10 minutes

- Mark the questions of the comprehension
- Introduce the rest of the lesson series

## Outcomes

- Develop ability to infer data from context
  - Develop cognitive reasoning
- Learners have a basic knowledge of the structure of the society of the people of Mapungubwe

## Terms: (see worksheet)

- Hierarchy
- Class system
- Traders

## Means of Assessment

Either to be marked in class or by educator.

**Total Marks for entire worksheet: 27 Marks**

Adapted from:

<http://www.soutpansberg.com/history/mapungubwe.htm> <http://www.nature-reserve.co.za/lost-civilization-mapungubwe-history.html>

Carruthers, Jane. 2006. Mapungubwe: an historical and contemporary analysis of a World Heritage cultural landscape. *Koedoe* 49(1): 1-13. Pretoria.

[http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.uct.ac.za/stable/41464956?seq=2#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.uct.ac.za/stable/41464956?seq=2#page_scan_tab_contents)

Preliminary Report on the Paleodemography of the K2 and Mapungubwe Populations (South Africa) M. HENNEBERG and M. STEYN *Human Biology* Vol. 66, No. 1

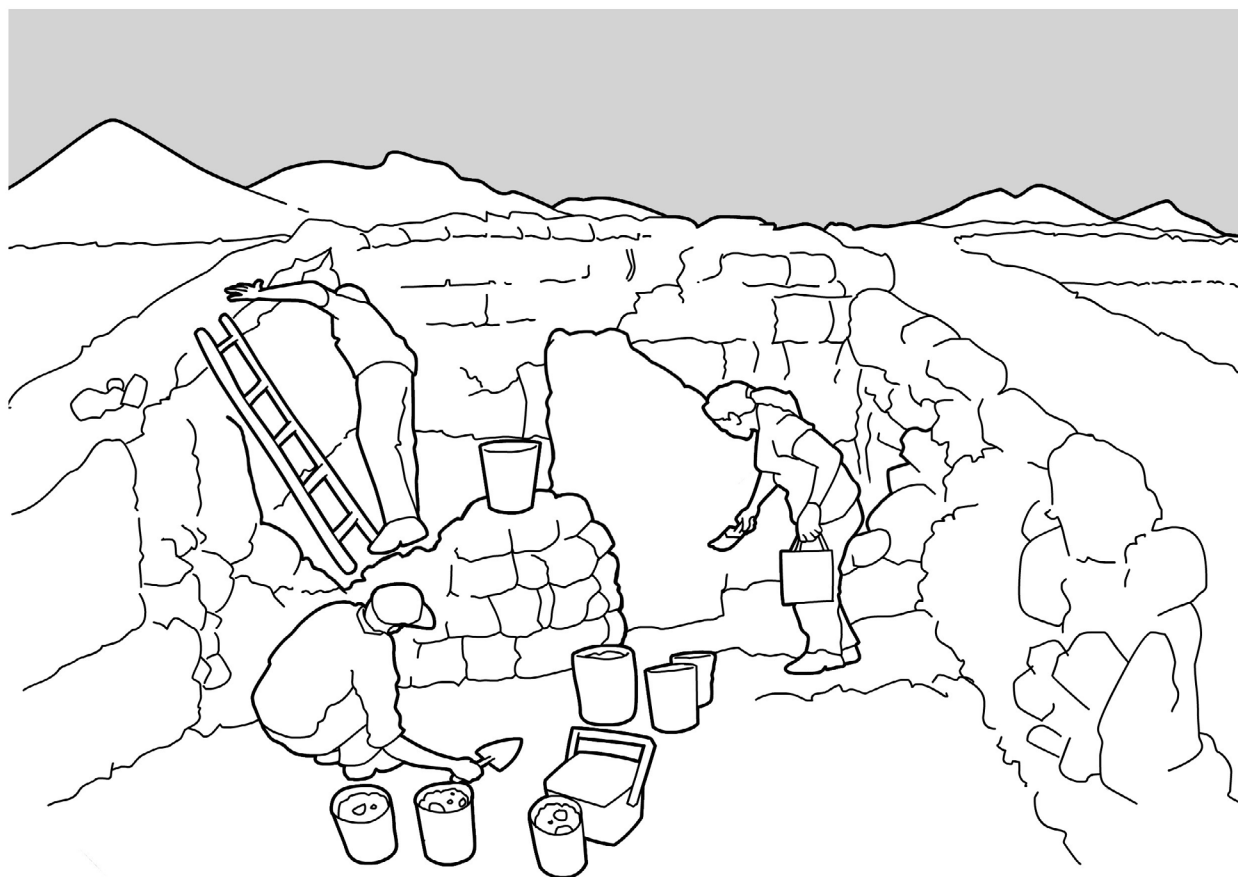
(February 1994), pp. 105-120 Published by: Wayne State University Press Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41464956>

Mapungubwe 1935-1940 G. A. Gardner *The South African Archaeological Bulletin* Vol. 10, No. 39 (Sep., 1955), pp. 73-77 Published by: South African Archaeological Society

# The lost city of gold: Mapungubwe

Name:

## The Lost City of Gold: Mapungubwe



Until about a century ago, the city of Mapungubwe went undiscovered and undisturbed. It was only when a curious Mr van Graan, his son and a few friends decided to climb up a steep sandstone escarpment in the Limpopo River Valley, one evening in 1932 that they uncovered an area on the plateau that had not only soil, but also ash and artefacts. These artefacts were Iron Age tools, pots and copper beads.

Not only did they uncover a lost civilisation, but they discovered a civilisation that had traded with the East, mined gold and had a successful agricultural empire.

Once the University of Pretoria had been notified, the biggest excavation in all of South Africa had begun and is still ongoing today.

Due to archaeological research we now know that this part of the Limpopo River Valley was inhabited from about 970AD to 1200AD.

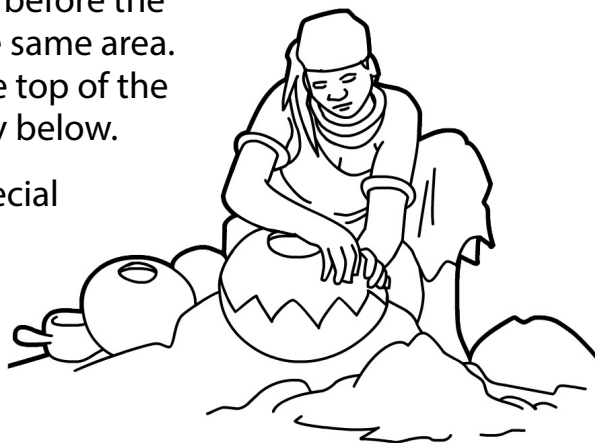
We also know from the artefacts left behind that this was unlike any other in Southern Africa at that time. They had specific burial rites for the rich and the poor, they had mined and worked with gold and copper, they were accomplished potters and were excellent farmers of livestock and crops.

When grave sites were uncovered, the archaeologists were able to identify the rich by their adorned graves, where assorted items such as gold and copper jewellery, ivory, clay figurines, special pots and glass beads were found around the remains.

The remains of wealthy people were easily identified because when they were buried, they were arranged in a seated foetal position that was different to the other remains that were placed lying flat in the graves.

After uncovering these details about the Mapungubwe community, the archaeologists were now able to analyse the landscape and they noticed that there were places where only the wealthy lived and other places where only the poor lived. This was the first kind of geographical distinction and division that had been seen in Southern Africa, as before the wealthy and the poor would all live in the same area. In Mapungubwe, the wealthy lived on the top of the hill and the commoners lived in the valley below.

It was also discovered that there were special areas for discarding rubbish, holding gatherings and even storing food, which meant that this community was settled, and had been living in that area for generations.



Write down all the words from the passage that you are unfamiliar with and look them up in your dictionary and write down their definitions in the space below:

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**Answer the Questions below:**

1. Why is Mapungubwe called the Lost City of Gold?

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2. What impression is given to indicate that the city of Mapungubwe was part of the Iron Age?

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3. In the space below, draw and label a picture of Mapungubwe's hierarchical living arrangements:



4. Why do you think the commoners had to live separately from the wealthy people?

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5. What types of metals were found in Mapungubwe?

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6. How are archaeologists able to identify that many generations lived in Mapungubwe?

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7. Why did the people of Mapungubwe have glass beads?

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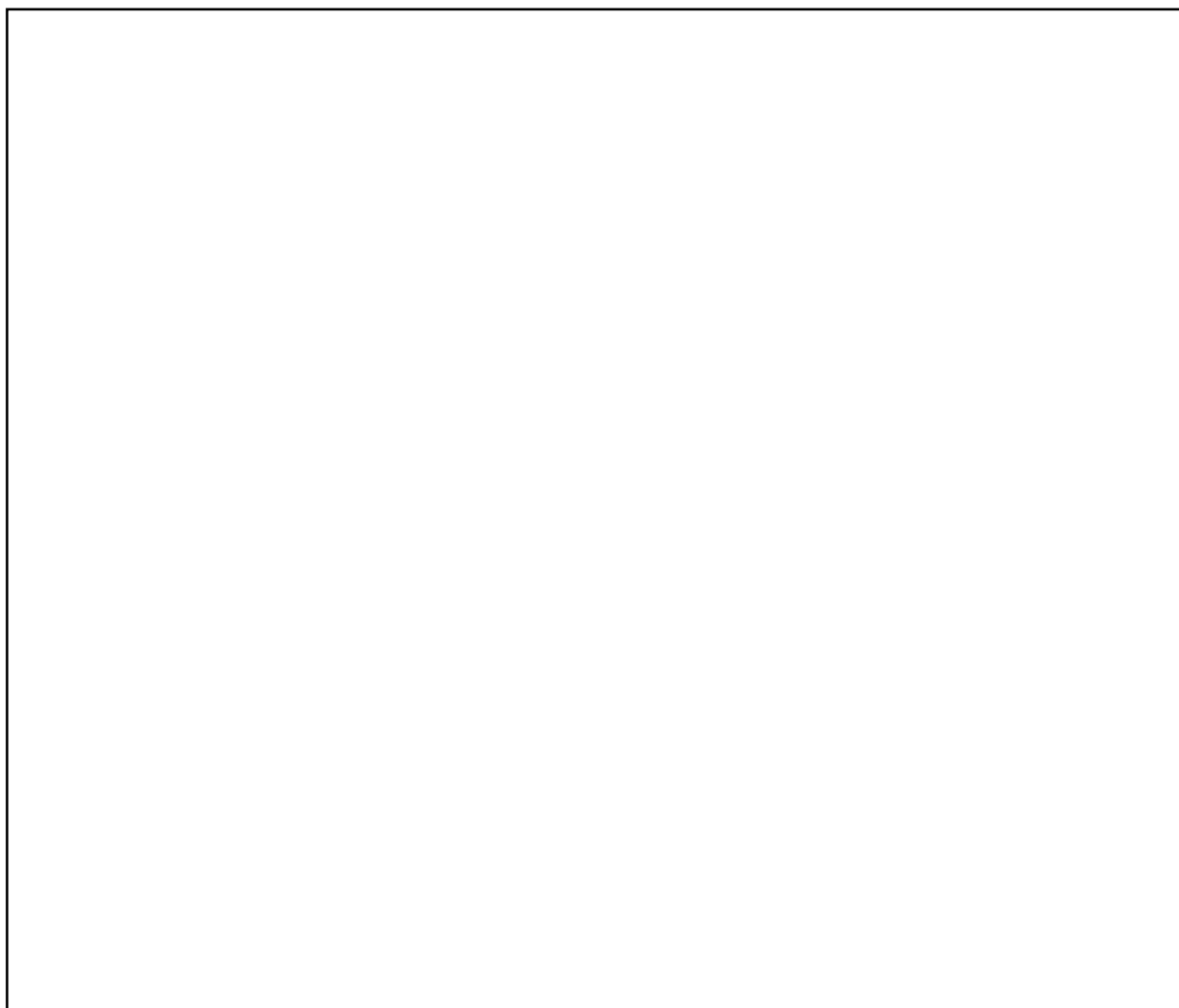
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8. In which province can you find Mapungubwe?

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9. In the space below, draw a picture of how the wealthy and the poor were buried. Remember to label your picture.



10. What is ivory?

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11. What was different about the lifestyle of the people of Mapungubwe compared to the rest of the people in Southern Africa at that time?

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12. Why do you think the wealthy people were buried differently to the poor people?

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# Answer sheet

Write down all the words from the passage that you are unfamiliar with and look them up in your dictionary and write down their definitions in the space below:

**Any appropriate answer, not for marks.**

Answer the Questions below:

1. Why is Mapungubwe called the Lost City of Gold? (2)

**Any appropriate answer.**

**Mapungubwe is called the Lost City of Gold because gold and other materials were discovered there.**

2. What impression is given to indicate that the city of Mapungubwe was part of the Iron Age? (2)

**Any appropriate answer.**

**The archaeologists found metals that had been worked and made into jewellery and objects.**

3. In the space below, draw and label a picture of Mapungubwe's hierarchical living arrangements: (Total: 4 marks)

**Any appropriate answer.**

**All wealthy people on the top of the hill**

**All poor people in the valley**

4. Why do you think the commoners had to live separately from the wealthy people? (2)

**Any appropriate answer.**

**The people of Mapungubwe had a class system where each class had a specific place to live, so the poor people could only live in the valley and not on top of the hill.**

5. What types of metals were found in Mapungubwe? (2)

**Copper and gold.**

6. How are archaeologists able to identify that many generations lived in Mapungubwe? (2)

**Any appropriate answer.**

**The archaeologists found burial grounds of people of different ages OR The archaeologists found places where they stored food and put there rubbish OR The archaeologists found artefacts that show that people had been living in Mapungubwe for a very long time.**

# Answer sheet

7. Why did the people of Mapungubwe have glass beads? (1)

**The people traded for glass beads with people from the East.**

8. In which province can you find Mapungubwe? (1)

**Limpopo Province**

9. In the space below, draw a picture of how the wealthy and the poor were buried. Remember to label your picture. (Total: 4 marks)

**Any appropriate drawing:**

- **Wealthy people in a foetal position, adorned with jewellery, clay figurines, etc. (2)**
- **Poor people lying flat with no adornments (2)**

10. What is ivory? (2)

**Ivory is the tooth or tusk from an elephant.**

11. What was different about the lifestyle of the people of Mapungubwe compared to the rest of the people in Southern Africa at that time? (2)

**The rest of the people in Southern Africa were living as hunter gatherers and herders OR None of them were trading with the East OR The rich did not live separately from the poor.**

12. Why do you think the wealthy people were buried differently to the poor people? (2)

**The wealthy were buried differently to the poor people to show the hierarchical status of the family. The wealthy also had many possessions so they would place the possessions with the dead, whereas the poor people had few possessions, so they would rather keep them than place them with the body of a dead relative.**