Humayun’s Tomb

An Activity Book
HUMAYUN'S TOMB

An activity book exploring the history, architecture, and garden of Humayun's Tomb, and the culture of Hazrat Nizamuddin Basti

AGA KHAN TRUST FOR CULTURE

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Have you seen some very big trees, and wondered how old they are?

Do you remember visiting the houses in which your mother and father lived when they were children?

Have you looked at old photographs of your grandparents?

Are there any objects in your house which are very old?

All these are part of “H E R I T A G E”. Heritage can refer to trees, rivers, birds which exist in their natural state; things and ideas which were produced by people who lived before you were born. Some may be hundreds of years old, others may be only 50 years old.

Before we begin reading this Activity Book, let us see whether we can find things which can be called heritage.
FUN with PATTERNS

Standing in front of Humayun’s Tomb, we feel really small, but not frightened. It is because the tomb is a very beautiful and grand building. Start by looking at little details. At home, how does sunlight - or even moonlight - come into the rooms? Through glass windows or open doors? Humayun’s Tomb has no glass windows. But the sunlight does come in, in pretty lines, not in a great glare. The secret is the JAALI.

These jaalis were made by hand using chisels and hammer.

When sunlight falls on the stone Jaali, it creates similar shadow pattern on the floor.

Today, computer-aided drawings are made by architects which are then transferred to the stone by using metal stencils to aid chiseling by the craftsmen.

Think of any other shape and make a pattern out of that!

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Features of Jaali

Jaalis combined Mughal decorative arts with stone craftsmanship that has existed in India, since a very long time. The Mughal builders used geometry to make patterns, and used master craftsmen to create the jaali.

Discuss these words among your friends and see how a Jaali reflects these qualities!

- Privacy
- Ventilation
- Sunlight Reduction
- Temperature drop

Follow the lines and changes and try to make a full pattern out of this drawing

😊 When you go to visit Humayun’s Tomb, try to find this pattern
Imagine the building materials of Taj Mahal with that of Humayun’s Tomb.
How would the monuments look?

Let’s explore some of the building materials of Humayun’s Tomb! Try to touch all the material listed below and write how the surface feels. Is it smooth, rough, grainy, or glossy?

Bricks and Mortar

Humayun’s Tomb and Taj Mahal both have river Yamuna flowing on their eastern side. Both are set in large gardens. Humayun’s Tomb is in the middle of the garden, Taj Mahal at the end of the garden. The materials used to construct these buildings are divided into natural and man-made. Selection of building materials depends largely on durability, availability and the decorative value of materials. Most Mughal architecture is in sandstone and marble because it was easily available. While the red color stood for royalty, white stood for grandeur.

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Sandstone:
Type: Natural - Sedimentary rock
Source: Dholpur, Rajasthan
Texture: ............
Strength: softer than marble
Usage: Exterior construction, flooring, columns, landscaping

Marble:
Type: Natural - Metamorphic rock
Source: Makrana, Rajasthan
Texture: ............
Strength: softer than Delhi Quartzite
Usage: exterior construction, flooring, sculpting, inlay work

Glazed Tiles:
Type: Man-made from sand, clay and glazing
Texture: ............
Usage: decorative uses on the exterior and the interior

Bricks
Type: Man-made from mud
Texture: ............
Strength: Softer than stone
Usage: Masonry, Landscaping

Lime Plaster:
Type: Manmade from sand, water and lime
Texture: ............
Strength: Lasts for thousands of years
Usage: decorative uses for carving and coving the exterior and interior walls

Discuss with your friends and find out which one is natural material and which one is man made? Can you think of any other traditional material?
Building materials and building techniques have greatly changed over the centuries. Traditional materials have been replaced by modern man-made materials, which are cheaper, easily available and require less time to execute. In fact, building techniques have changed with the use of machines, which have taken over the role of craftsmen.

Concrete

Glass

Aluminum sheets

Start thinking about building materials. Then, if you build a house you will know what to use.

Will your choice of building material benefit you? Think about these words. Discuss with your friends.

Energy Efficient

Eco-Friendly

Have Longer Life

Recyclable

If Akbar was living today and wanted to create a memorial for his father, what kind of materials would he choose? Draw a memorial and write the name of the material in each part of your building.

😊 Can YOU think of any other man made material??
The details and the whole

The resting place of Emperor Humayun was located along the banks of river Yamuna.

The tomb was constructed between 1565-72 AD.

The grand mausoleum was located in the center of a geometrically arranged garden intersected by axially arranged water channels, which represented paradise.

The mausoleum stands on a wide plinth housing 68 grave chambers accessed by alcoves on all four sides.

The 140 feet high mausoleum consists a square building with arched bays in the middle and a large dome on top.

The 19 feet high finial is fixed on top of the white marble dome.

Many of the openings have jaalis made in red sandstone and white marble.

**CONSTRUCTING THE TOMB**

- Stone has been used to build the Tomb. (red sandstone, white marble and gray colored Delhi quartzite)
- Some of the walls are 15 feet thick.
- Internal walls are painted with lime plaster.
- The chhatries are covered with blue, green, white and yellow tiles.
- The dome is covered with white marble brought from Rajasthan.

**Let’s Explore!**

While doing the walk:

- Look for the six-sided stars. How many are there?
- How many chhatris and pinnacles do you see on the roof?
- Can you count the number of arches in Humayun’s Tomb?