

SIXTH GRADE SCHOOL TOURS AT THE HACKETT HOUSE

Agra City, India

GREETING: Namaste

(Meaning: “I bow to the divine in you.” Join hands vertically in front of chest. Bowing is optional. One bows to elders, generally.)

Languages of Agra City: Hindi, Urdu, English

I. Location/Geography (Arizona History and Social Science Standards 6.G1.1, 6.G2.1, 6.G3.2, 6.G4.1)

A. Hemisphere/continent

1. Agra City is in the country of India.
2. India is on the continent of Asia in the northern hemisphere
3. India has 1.2 billion people, the 2nd largest population in the world after China (1.4 billion).
4. Agra City is in the Northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. It is at an elevation of 561 feet as compared to Tempe that is about 1,100 - 1,500 feet.
5. It has a semi-arid climate with mild winters and hot, dry summers.
6. Like Tempe, Agra City has a monsoon season.
7. The population of Agra City is 1.6 million.

B. Influence of Water on Development

1. Agra City is located on the banks of river Yamuna, a tributary of the Ganges River.
2. The river is sacred in Hinduism and worshipped as the Hindu goddess, Yamuna.
3. The river was historically used for drinking water and a canal system.
4. Yamuna today is one of the most polluted rivers in the world.

II. Historical Perspective (Arizona History and Social Science Standards 6.SP1.1, 6.SP1.3, 6.SP2.1, 6.C4.1)

A. Agra, capital of the Mughal Empire

1. Ptolemy, 2nd century geographer, located Agra on a world map.
2. Agra was recognized as the capital of the Mughal Empire established and ruled by a Muslim Persianate dynasty from 1526-1658.
3. Agra became a center of Islamic learning, arts, commerce and religion noted for square, Persian-style gardens.
4. The Mughals were great architects, building the sites of Agra Fort, Taj Mahal, and Fatehpur Sikri during their reign.
5. The British formally assumed direct control of India in 1858.
6. 1983: Taj Mahal is declared a UNESCO World Heritage site.
7. 2008: Taj Mahal is declared as one of the new 7 Wonders of the World.

B. Taj Mahal, India's most famous architectural wonder

1. Shah Jahan, the 5th Mughal emperor, started building Taj Mahal in 1631 in memory of his wife, Mumataz Mahal.
2. Mumataz Mahal died after the birth of her 14th child.
3. It has been described as a “symbol of eternal love.”
4. It is an immense mausoleum of white marble and one of the most well-preserved and architecturally beautiful tombs in the world.
5. The minarets lean slightly outward to protect the dome from earthquakes.
6. Sir Edwin Arnold, English poet, described, “Not a piece of architecture, as other buildings are, but the proud passions of an emperor's love wrought in living stones.”
7. It took 22 years to build and 20,000 workers, masons and jewelers to create - one of the masterpieces of Indian Muslim architecture.
8. Emperor Shah Jahan was dethroned by his son and imprisoned in Agra Fort, across the river from Taj Mahal. Shah Jahan gazed at the tomb for the last 8 years of his life.

III. Cultural/Connections (Arizona History and Social Science Standards 6.SP1.2, 6.SP1.3, 6.H1.2, 6.H3.2)

- A. How are we in Tempe connected to Agra City, India?
1. Agra City, Tempe and Cusco became the first trilateral relationship in Tempe Sister City history.

2. These three cities all boast a Wonder of the World: Tempe near the Grand Canyon; Cusco gateway to Machu Picchu; and Agra City, home of Taj Mahal.
3. Agra City is Tempe's 11th Sister City formalized in 2016.

IV. Economic/Trade (Arizona History and Social Science Standards 6.E3.2, 6.E5.1, 6.G3.1, 6.G3.2, 6.H1.2)

1. Like Arizona, Agra City relies on tourism for much of the economy.
2. Agra City is located in the Golden Triangle of Indian tourism with Delhi and Jaipur.
3. Agra City is 40% agricultural with an industrial base making autos, leather goods, and handicrafts, especially a marble stone inlay called pietra dura.
4. Because of the British occupation, cricket is the favorite sport.
5. Education is greatly encouraged, and there are many schools near Agra.
6. Like all of India, Agra City is diverse. 80% Hindu, 15% Islam, 1% Jainism. Cows are sacred to Hindus and can be seen roaming freely through the city.

V. Conclusion

Agra City and Tempe both are sister cities with Cusco, Peru creating a trilateral arrangement. The three cities each claim a Wonder of the World: Agra City is home to the Taj Mahal; Cusco is the gateway to Machu Picchu; and Tempe is not far from the Grand Canyon. Agra is home to three World Heritage sites itself, including the Taj Mahal. The Taj Mahal is one of the most famous buildings in the world, and many believe it is the most beautiful.

Timeline:

2nd century – Ptolemy locates Agra on map of the world

1526 – Mughal Empire established with Agra as capital

1631 - Taj Mahal began by Shah Jahan as a tomb for his most beloved wife

1858 – British formally assume direct control of India

1983 – Taj Mahal becomes a UNESCO World Heritage Site

2016 – Agra City becomes the 11th Sister City of Tempe