

Name: _____

The gold of Mapungubwe

The gold of Mapungubwe

Gold was one of the most profound discoveries during the archaeological excavation of Mapungubwe. Initially, archaeologists suspected that the gold had come from India, but were proven wrong when they discovered it was a gold rich area.

One of the most well-known gold artefacts discovered was a gold rhinoceros which has become synonymous with Mapungubwe.

The gold rhinoceros measures only 15 centimetres in length and was the only complete figurine that emerged from a gravesite of one of the wealthy inhabitants.

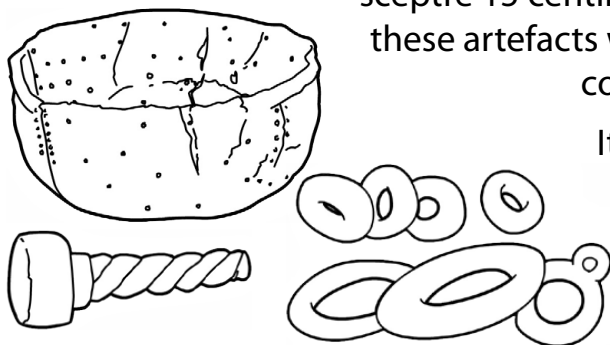


It is believed that the artefact once had a carved wooden core to which the gold was covered. The outer layer of gold was beaten into a thin sheet and then shaped around the wooden core and attached using small gold nails.

The tail was made of solid gold, and its eyes made using tiny gold nails.

Other artefacts discovered in the same gravesite indicated the hierarchical standing of the grave owner.

A gold bowl, necklaces made of gold beads and a golden sceptre 15 centimetres in length were also found. All these artefacts were made using a wooden core and covered with gold.



It is believed that artefacts discovered in certain grave sites indicated that those buried there were royals or people of high-ranking stature.

Answer the questions below:

1. In the space below, draw a mind map about the gold of Mapungubwe:

2. Describe in your own words how the people of Mapungubwe made their gold figurines and objects:

3. What do you call someone who works with gold and other metals?

4. Why do you think archaeologists first thought that the gold found in Mapungubwe was from India? What do you think changed their minds?

5. What were the gold objects found in the royal grave?

6. Why do you think the gold artefacts are now hollow inside?

7. Do you think the people of Mapungubwe were good gold sculptors?
Explain your answer.
