

Konark Sun Temple

On land | India | about 1250 CE | Grades 3-5

Name _____ Date _____

Konark's carved stone wheels work like sundials, so you can tell the time by their shadows.

Read the story

Around 1250 CE, King Narasimhadeva I of the Eastern Ganga dynasty built the Konark Sun Temple to honor Surya, the Hindu sun god. The whole temple was designed as Surya's chariot racing across the sky.

It has 24 giant wheels, each about 3 meters across, carved with tiny scenes. Seven horses pull the chariot, standing for the seven days of the week. The temple faced east, so the first light of dawn struck its entrance.

The tall main tower once rose high above the coast. Sailors called it the Black Pagoda and used it as a landmark. The tower later collapsed, but the great hall in front still stands.

How it ended

The main tower collapsed, maybe from weak foundations, storms or the loss of iron supports. The temple stopped being used for worship. In 1903, the British filled the main hall with sand and sealed it to keep it from falling down.

Key words

- sundial: a tool that tells time using a shadow from the sun
- chariot: a two-wheeled cart pulled by horses
- Surya: the Hindu god of the sun

Wow facts

- The spokes of the wheels cast shadows that can tell the time.
- The seven horses stand for the seven days of the week.
- Carved elephants, lions and musicians cover almost every surface.

Talk about it

1. Why would people design a temple to look like the sun's chariot?

2. How could you tell time without a clock or phone?

Try this

Draw a map of Konark Sun Temple as it looked at its busiest. Label three things people did there.

Quick quiz

Circle the best answer.

1. **Which god was Konark built for?**
 - A. Surya, the sun god
 - B. Shiva
 - C. Ganesha
 - D. Vishnu
2. **What can the carved wheels do?**
 - A. Tell time like sundials
 - B. Roll the temple
 - C. Make music
 - D. Pump water
3. **What do the seven horses stand for?**
 - A. Days of the week
 - B. Colors of a rainbow
 - C. Kings
 - D. Seas

Go further

Open ruinscape.live/konark-sun-temple/ for photos, the Then and Now picture where there is one, and links to museum collections and research. On the globe, Lyra Kael can fly the class there and answer questions.

Answer key (for teachers)

1. A. Konark honors Surya, the sun god.
2. A. Shadows on the spokes show the time.
3. A. The seven horses represent the seven days of the week.