

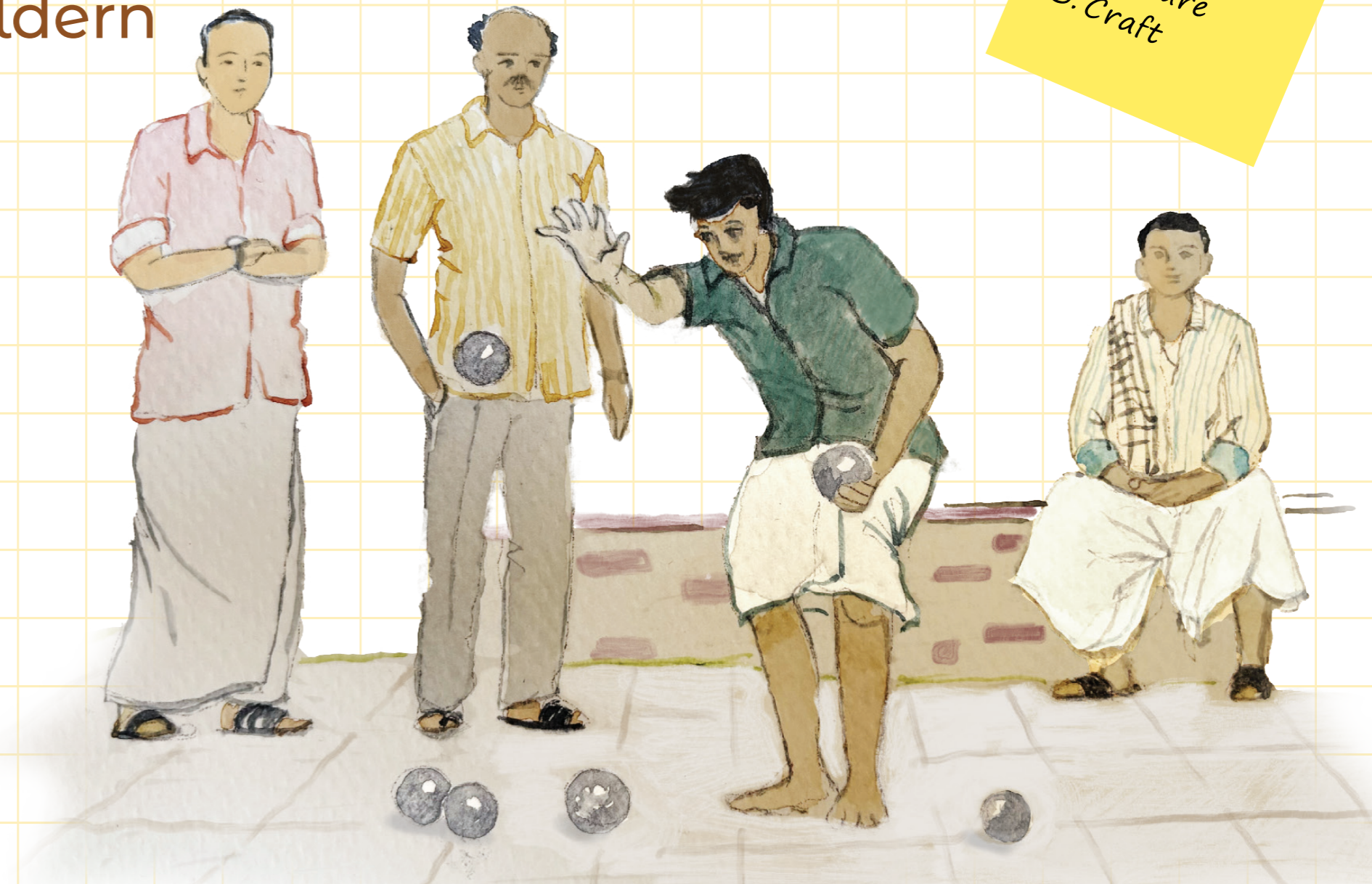
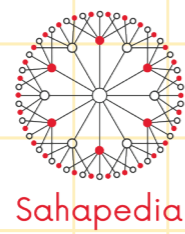
My City
My Heritage

My Puducherry

Explorers' Book

Activity Book for Children

TO DO LIST
1. Food
2. Culture
3. Craft



Located on the Coromandel Coast, Puducherry, also known as Pondicherry, is a little pocket distinct from the landscape it inhabits - for it is shaped by a blend of local Tamil traditions, French cultural influence, and the enduring presence of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Best known for its compact heritage town, the city carries visible traces of nearly two centuries of French colonisation, seen in its coloured houses, gridiron streets, and seaside promenade.

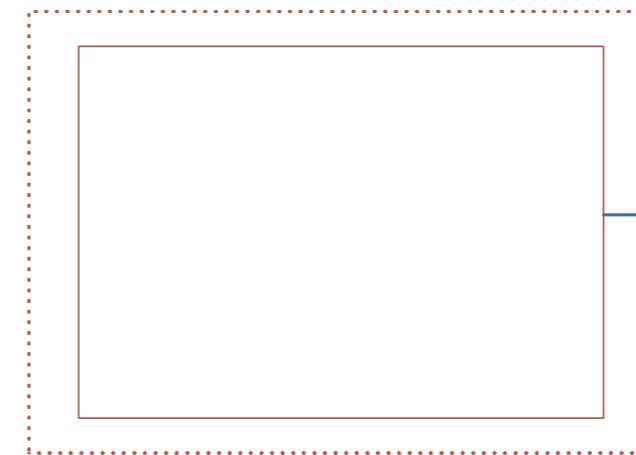
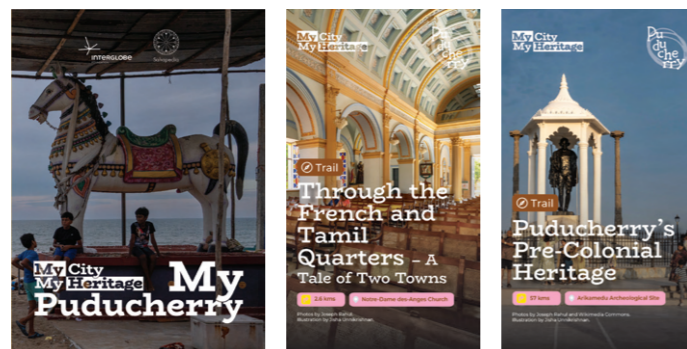
Yet there is much more to Puducherry. Ancient temples, research institutions, wetlands and mangroves, bustling markets, and fishing settlements come together to form this unique coastal city.

This activity book invites you to explore Puducherry through quizzes, puzzles, and illustrations, inviting you to hear stories about its landscapes and everyday life. Think of it not as a test of what you know, but as a journey through the city from afar — one that has something to offer whether you are curious about history, architecture, nature, or culture!



Discover More:

Learn about Puducherry with curated articles and numerous recommendations with the MCMH My Puducherry Booklet and 2 heritage trails on <http://www.sahapedia.org/my-city-my-heritage/celebrating-puducherry>



Size:

A3 (29.7 cm x 24 cm)

This document (25cm x 35.3 cm)

Title:
My City My Heritage My Puducherry:
Explorers' Book

Design and Illustrations:
Kaustav Purkayastha and
Jisha Unnikrishnan

Publisher:
Sahapedia

We welcome suggestions and corrections for future editions.

Supported by:
InterGlobe Foundation

Contact:
Sahapedia

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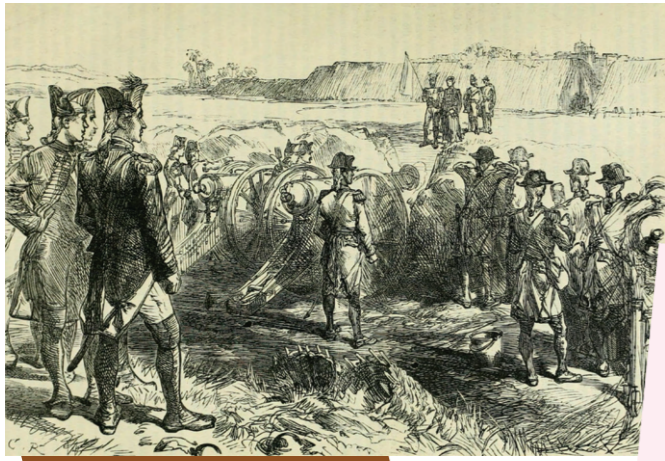
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Wikimedia Commons

Puducherry Through Time

Puducherry has had quite a topsy-turvy past, with many kingdoms fighting over the town. So, here is an exercise for the history buffs! Listed here are some important events in its history, but the years are all wrong. Your task is to match the event to the correct year, forming an accurate timeline. Let's see if you can look beyond your years!





The British captured Pondicherry during wars with the French, but gave it back to France in 1814.



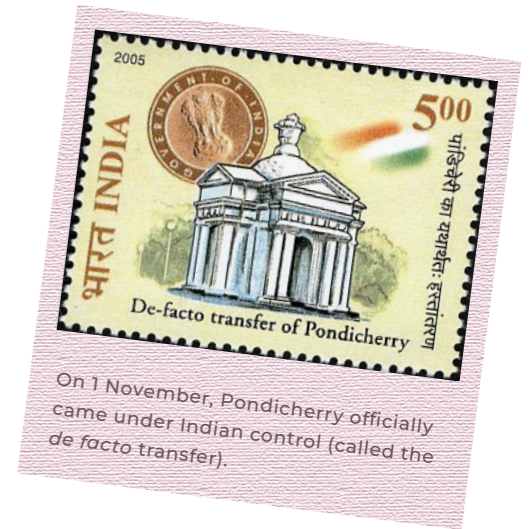
On 16 August, France formally approved the transfer, and Puducherry fully became part of India.



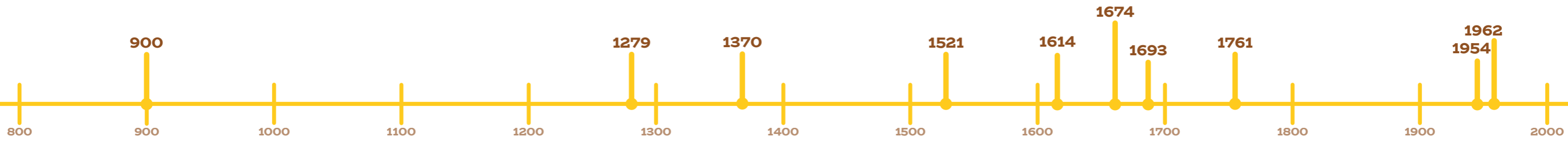
The Cholas ruled the land where Puducherry is today, building temples and shaping early Tamil culture.



The Portuguese arrived by sea, visiting Puducherry to trade goods like spices and textiles.



On 1 November, Pondicherry officially came under Indian control (called the de facto transfer).

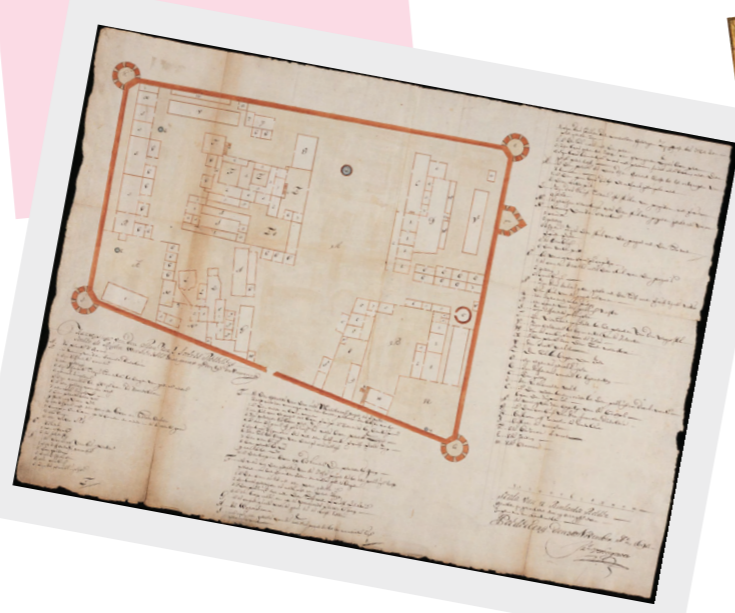


(The following years and events are mismatched)

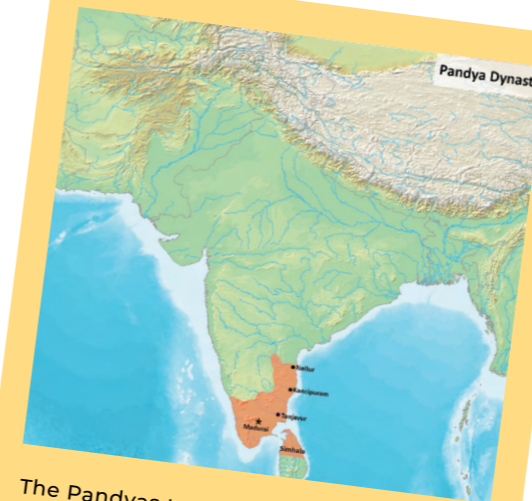
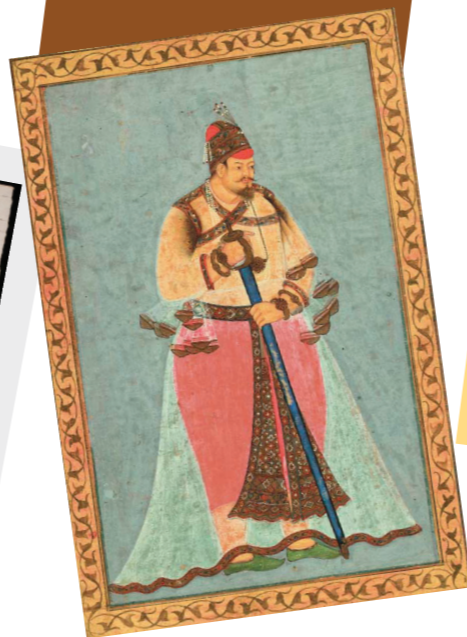
The powerful Vijayanagara Empire took over, connecting the area to a vast South Indian kingdom.



The Dutch attacked and captured Pondicherry after two weeks of bombing the territory, but returned it to France in 1699.



The Sultan of Bijapur gained control of the region.



The Pandyas took control from the Cholas and ruled the region for a time.

François Martin established the first French settlement, marking the start of French Pondicherry.



Trivia

Puducherry's history, from the days of the Pandyas and Cholas, down to more recent French rule, has shaped its present. It's a city rich with buildings, foods, crafts and stories. Here's a quiz that gives you a glimpse of much that Puducherry has to offer.

The questions range from easy to somewhat tricky. But don't sweat it even if you don't get something right! The point is to showcase and imbibe as much information as you can.



Heritage Quiz

Easy

1. In which year did the French establish their first permanent settlement in Puducherry?
 - a. 1674
 - b. 1605
 - c. 1498
 - d. 1757
2. What were the main water channels built during the French period in Puducherry called?
 - a. Buckingham and Adyar canals
 - b. Grand Canal and Petit Canal
 - c. Eastern and Western canals
 - d. Veeranam and Kollidam canals
3. Where were the columns around the Gandhi Thidal brought from?
 - a. Vellore Fort
 - b. Thanjavur
 - c. Arcot
 - d. Gingee Fort
4. Which distinctive flower growing directly from the trunk of the tree is the state flower of Puducherry?
 - a. Indian cork tree flower
 - b. Frangipani flower
 - c. Cannonball tree flower
 - d. Jasmine flower
5. Which sacred tree is commonly found in temple complexes around Puducherry is the state tree?
 - a. Bel tree
 - b. Neem tree
 - c. Banyan tree
 - d. Peepal tree
6. What archaeological finds at Arikamedu show its trade links with the Roman world?
 - a. Gold coins and silk
 - b. Shell bangles and pottery lamps
 - c. Stone tools and inscriptions
 - d. Glass beads and amphorae
7. What traditional floor mats are woven from reeds in villages around Puducherry?
 - a. Coir mats
 - b. Bamboo mats
 - c. Kora mats
 - d. Palm mats

8. Which establishment in Puducherry was the first to introduce glazed and stoneware pottery to the region?
 - a. Golden Bridge Pottery
 - b. Karaikal clay work
 - c. Auroville
 - d. Villianur tile work



Intermediate

9. What is the main raw material used to make paper at the Puducherry paper factory?
 - a. Cotton rags
 - b. Bamboo pulp
 - c. Wood fibre
 - d. Coconut husk

10. What is a *Drishti bommai* mask, commonly seen on houses in Pondicherry used for?
 - a. Children's toy
 - b. Festival decoration
 - c. Warding off the evil eye
 - d. Temple offering
11. Which south-Asian country shares a historical connection with Puducherry through colonial trade and culture?
 - a. Thailand
 - b. Malaysia
 - c. Indonesia
 - d. Vietnam
12. What is a Kepi?
 - a. Traditional fishing net
 - b. Clay water pot used by fisher women
 - c. Cap worn by policemen in Puducherry
 - d. Temple bell
13. What is Theemati?
 - a. Fire-walking ritual
 - b. Folk dance
 - c. Harvest festival
 - d. Temple procession
14. Which animal is the state animal of Puducherry?
 - a. Palm civet
 - b. Indian palm squirrel
 - c. Grey mongoose
 - d. Fruit bat
15. Which bird is the state bird of Puducherry?
 - a. Mynah
 - b. Bulbul
 - c. Kingfisher
 - d. Koel

16. What is a street verandah outside Tamil houses that is made of a lean-to roof called?
 - a. Thalvaram
 - b. Porch
 - c. Thinnai
 - d. Patio

Heritage Quiz

Difficult

17. Which archaeologist carried out major excavations at Arikamedu near Puducherry?
- Alexander Cunningham
 - Mortimer Wheeler
 - H. D. Sankalia
 - R. Nagaswamy
18. What mainly caused the severe coastal erosion of Puducherry's beaches?
- Tsunamis
 - Rising sea levels
 - Harbour construction
 - Groynes
19. What are *Siddhas* traditionally associated with in Tamil culture?
- Temple builders
 - Medicine, spirituality, and alchemy
 - Poets and musicians
 - Kings and warriors
20. Why was the Sri Aurobindo Ashram dormitory named *Golconde*?
- It was built using stones from Golconda
 - It stored diamonds
 - It was named after the Golconda fort, symbolising wealth and prestige
 - It was built from funds donated by the Prime Minister of Hyderabad
21. Which is the Ramsar Wetland site near Puducherry?
- Kazhuveli Bird Sanctuary
 - Pichavaram Mangrove forest
 - Pulicat Lake
 - Bahour Tank
22. When does Puducherry celebrate its Independence Day?
- 15 August
 - 26 January
 - 16 August
 - 2 October
23. Which of the following are official languages of Puducherry?
- Tamil and English
 - Tamil, English, and French
 - Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam
 - Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, English, and French

24. Who was Ananda Rangapillai?

- A dubash and diarist during French rule
- A temple priest in the old town
- A freedom fighter against the French
- A French governor

25. Who were the Bayadères?

- Women trained in classical dance and music who performed in temples as part of religious rituals
- Queens of South Indian kingdoms
- European women living in French colonies
- Women who only danced for royal courts



Capturing

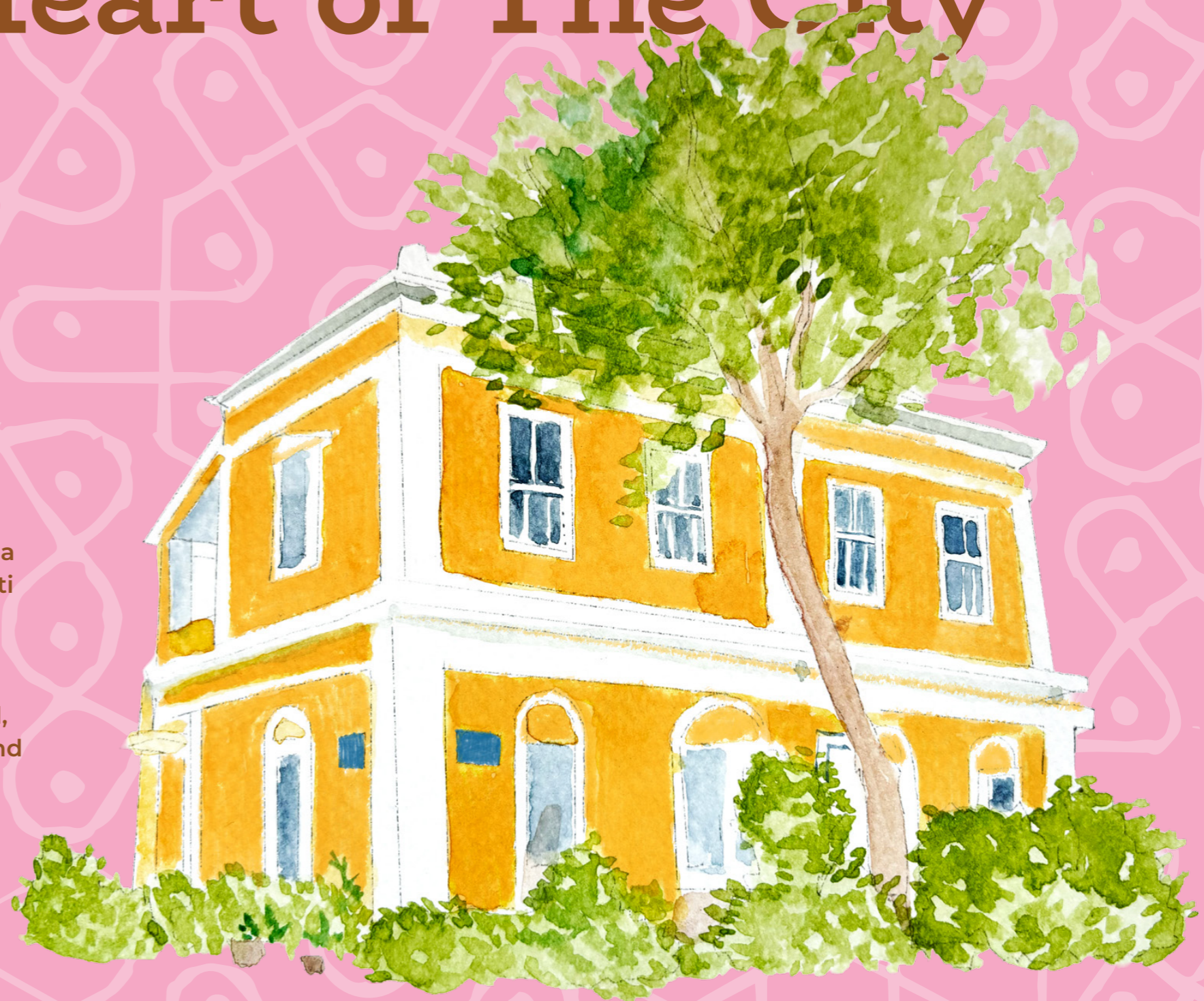
The Green Heart of The City

Create Your Own Postcard!

Located in the middle of the heritage town, the lush Bharati Park is a green space for all citizens of the city. In the middle of the park is a monument dedicated to Aayi, a courtesan who is said to have demolished her house to build a water reservoir for the city in its place.

Your Task:

1. **Draw Your Scene:** On the blank side of the postcard, create a vivid illustration of your favourite view or moment at Bharati Park. Look at the white monument, the magnificent trees, the many people relaxing in their shade — what catches your eye?
2. **Describe Your Experience:** On the lined side of the postcard, write a short message about your visit. What did you see and hear? How did it feel to lie on the grass in a space where people come to take a break from the city?



Hints for Your Postcard:

The Park and Aayi Mandapam:

- Draw the leafy trees and the winding paths.
- Show how the monument is located in its centre with arches and pediments on all faces.
- Draw the people slumbering on the benches, the birds flitting tree to tree, or the children playing on the grass.

The view outside:

- Look around the park. On one side is the stately Raj Niwas with an imposing gate that you can draw.
- In front of the park is the tall statue of Gandhiji and beyond it the sea. Draw the towering columns around the Gandhi statue and the people milling under them.
- Draw the yellow building of the Chambre de Commerce and the little shrine across the road from the park.

Magical Moments:

- Imagine the park in the heavy monsoon of the coast. Can you see people walking around with umbrellas? How would you draw them?
- Think about how large the waves would be in the sea in front of the park. What about the streaks of lightning over the water ! Would you be able to see them from where you're sitting? How would they look on paper?



Blank postcard template with a vertical line separating the address area (left) from the message area (right). The message area includes a small rectangular box for a stamp in the top right corner.

Blank postcard template with a vertical line separating the address area (left) from the message area (right). The message area includes a small rectangular box for a stamp in the top right corner.

Location: Where is it? (Example: Bharathi Park, Heritage town, Puducherry)

Message (Why do you love this place? What makes it special? Describe what you see, hear, or feel.)

Dear _____ ,

I am in _____ (name of place), and it is so green! The best part about this place is _____

I saw _____

(a bird, tree, river, or other natural feature), and it made me feel _____

I wish you were here to see it with me!

See you soon!

Yours _____

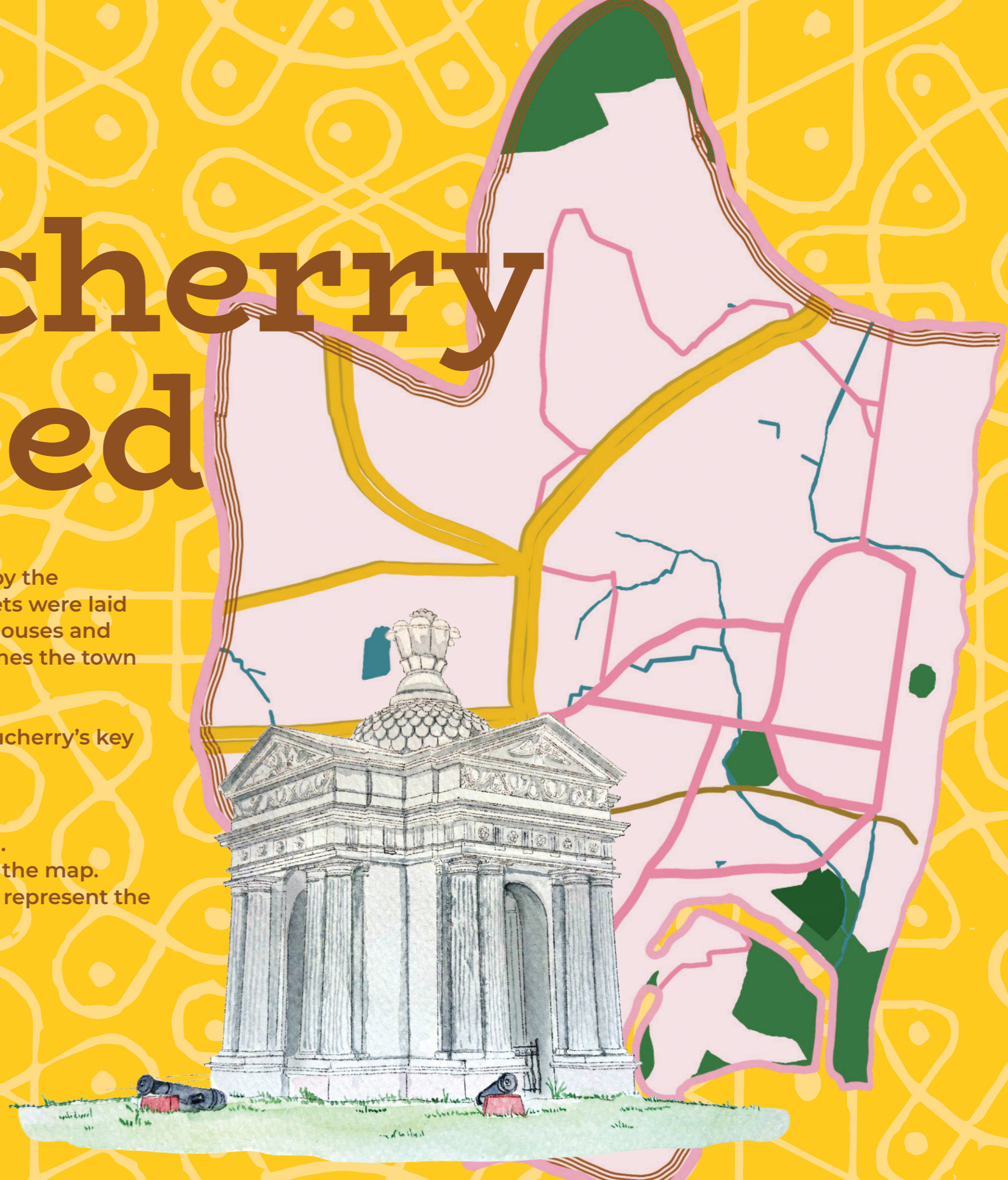
Puducherry Mapped

The old town of Puducherry was demarcated by the Boulevard all around it. Within the space, streets were laid out in a grid pattern. Even today many of the houses and buildings in the heritage town are from the times the town has been built and rebuilt.

In this activity, we will use a map to trace Puducherry's key heritage sites.

Instructions

- Look at the list of historic locations provided.
- Match each location with its correct spot on the map.
- Draw a circle in the colour of the building to represent the landmark.





Locations to be Marked

- Ananda Rangapillai Mansion:** Built in 1735, is one of the oldest homes in Puducherry and still stands on the street named after him. This beautiful house shows a mix of two worlds. On the ground floor, there is a traditional Tamil courtyard surrounded by finely carved wooden pillars, just like homes in South India. Upstairs, the open terrace is held up by stone columns designed in a European style.
- Clocktower in Goubert Market:** It was built in 1851 by Dayrianadin in memory of his uncle Diagou Mudaliar, which is why it is also known as the Diagou Mudaliar Clock Tower. Standing in the middle of the busy market streets, it is a symbol of the lively, everyday life of Puducherry.
- Le Café:** Located by the Puducherry seafront, the building has a long and interesting history. Built in the 17th century, it once served as the harbour office for the old port and stood close to a pier that stretched into the sea. Long ago, trains ran nearby to carry goods from the port. After the pier was destroyed in a cyclone in 1952, the building changed uses several times before becoming a café in the 1950s.
- Kosakadai Street:** It is one of the oldest streets in Puducherry, known for its roadside pottery shops. For many generations, potters worked here, selling terracotta pots, lamps, and everyday clay items. Most of these potters come from an area called Kuyavarpalayam—the word kuyavar in Tamil means potter.
- Sri Aurobindo Ashram:** Located in the heart of Puducherry, a large colonial-era house was transformed in 1926 when Sri Aurobindo and the Mother established the ashram. Over time, nearby houses were added, creating a quiet group of buildings around a central courtyard. The architecture is simple and inward-looking, designed not to impress but to support a life of concentration, work, and reflection.
- The Botanical Garden:** The garden we see today was created in 1826. It was divided into two parts: the “King’s Garden” and a special garden where new plants from different places were grown and studied. Today it serves as the headquarters of the Department of Agriculture.
- Petit Bazar Clock Tower:** In 1892, the clock tower—fondly known as the Chinna Mani Kundu—was gifted to the market by Cou Latchoumanasamy Chettiar. The tower is an eight-sided, three-storey structure built with bricks set in lime mortar and rises to about 25 feet, designed with two entrances, one opening to the street and the other into the market.
- Anglo French Textile Mills:** Established in 1898 to export cotton fabrics, the mill was originally set up by a British firm and was known as Rodier Mill. In 1955, it was renamed Anglo-French Textiles and went on to enjoy a long and successful period of operation but is defunct today.
- Grand and Petit Canals:** They were created in 1709 by channeling the waters of a small rivulet called the Uppar, which once flowed west of the town toward Uppalam. By the early 20th century, their conditions had deteriorated. Both canals were finally covered with a concrete surface in 1937.
- Kamatchi Amman Kovil:** Located on the street that shares its name, it is easily recognised by its striking red gopuram. Traditionally associated with the Kammalar community, the temple was once mockingly referred to as “the temple of the coppersmiths,”

Voices of Pondicherry:

Character Sketches From the Past

As an important port on the Coromandel Coast, Puducherry has long been a place of exchange - of cultures, ideas, people and stories. Its shaded boulevards and waterfront carry traces of many lives and languages. Step into the past and give voice to one of these characters through your imagination.

Your Task:

1. **Choose a Character:** Pick one from the list below or invent your own.
2. **Describe Them:** Who are they? What do they do? What period do they live in?
3. **Write in First-Person:** Let the character speak in their own voice.
4. **Draw or Imagine Their World:** What surrounds them? What do they see, wear, or dream of?



Character Sketch Examples

Ananda Rangapillai (18th Century)

“I am Ananda Rangapillai, a dubash in the service of the French Company. I speak many tongues, for my work lies between worlds. I translate words, but also customs, laws, and intentions, helping Indian and European merchants understand one another.

During the time of Governor Dupleix, I welcomed visiting dignitaries, merchants, and officers, and ensured that trade and revenue flowed smoothly. I carried messages to the Governor, handled official papers, and ensured proper functioning of the town. At times, I was even asked to settle disputes and judge criminal cases.

Each day, I write carefully in my diary, recording what I see and hear. Through my words, the life of Pondicherry—its politics, people, and tensions—will not be forgotten.”

Weaver in the town (18th Century)

“I am a weaver from a nearby village, and I came to Pondicherry when Governor Dupleix invited weaving communities to settle here. People like us—Kaikkolars, Sedars, and Seniyars—were given land south of Villianur, close to the river and mango groves. Each family received some money to build a house and set up a loom to begin anew.

I work at my loom every day, weaving cloth for the Company. The merchants give us yarn and cotton, and in return we are paid wages for our labour. The cloth we weave does not belong to us—it belongs to those who own the looms and provide the money. Some weavers with skill and savings become master weavers, but most of us depend on advances given to our families, which we slowly repay over many years.

The sound of looms fills our streets, and cloth from our hands travels far across the seas. Even if our names are not remembered, our work shapes the life of this town..”

A French woman resident in the Boulevard town (18th -19th Century)

“I live in Pondicherry, far from France, in what feels like a quiet outpost of the empire. Life here moves slowly. This is not Paris—there are no grand salons or busy streets. The days are long, and the town often feels sleepy, softened by heat and sea air.

News from Europe arrives late, and so do fashions. Dresses are worn long past their season, mended and altered to suit the climate. Silk and lace are precious, brought by ship, and we adapt our clothing to the sun, the dust, and the monsoon winds.

There is little amusement beyond walks along the sea, visits to familiar houses, and evenings spent talking or reading by lamplight. Yet the town has its own rhythms—the calls of vendors, temple bells, and the slow passing of boats. In this distant colony, life is quiet, but never entirely still.”

A Bayadère in Pondicherry (19th century)

“I came to Pondicherry for the grand wedding of the Talaipāri. I wear many ornaments in my hair, ears, and nose, but the most important is the tāli around my neck. It marks my bond with the deity to whom I have dedicated my life. Like other women of means, I protect my skin from the harsh sun with saffron and oils, preparing myself for long hours of performance.

Many dancers arrived for the ceremony, but I am known for my grace. When I dance, I feel only the music, and the presence of the divine.”

A village potter (18th -19th Century)

“I am a potter of the Coromandel Coast. From the earth beneath my feet I make all that the village needs—jars for milk, pots to cool water, tiles for roofs, and figures of gods that are worshipped and then returned to water.

My wheel is wooden and old, turning fast beneath my hands as I shape clay into vessels both large and light. When the pots are ready, the women of my house carry them to the bazaar, balanced high on their heads. We are paid in grain after the harvest, and from our craft the village lives. The knowledge I hold—of clay, of the right earth to use—comes from those before me, and I will pass it on, as surely as the wheel keeps turning.”



Your Turn!

If you could step into the past, **who would you be?**
Would you be a craftsperson? An administrator? A traveler?

Name:

Time Period:

Description:

Story:



"Dancing girls of Pondicherry," by Heinrich Rudolf Schinz, 1836-45. Source: Wikimedia Commons

Draw Their World:



Answers

PUDUCHERRY THROUGH TIME

Matched

- 900 CE – The Cholas ruled the land where Puducherry is today, building temples and shaping early Tamil culture.
- 1279 CE – The Pandyas took control from the Cholas and ruled the region for a time.
- 1370 CE – The powerful Vijayanagara Empire took over, connecting the area to a vast South Indian kingdom.
- 1521 CE – The Portuguese arrived by sea, visiting Puducherry to trade goods like spices and textiles.
- 1614 CE – The Sultan of Bijapur gained control of the region.
- 1674 CE – François Martin established the first French settlement, marking the start of French Pondicherry.
- 1693 CE – The Dutch attacked and captured Pondicherry after two weeks of bombing the territory, but returned it to France in 1699.
- 1761 CE – The British captured Pondicherry during wars with the French, but gave it back to France in 1814.
- 1954 CE – On 1 November, Pondicherry officially came under Indian control (called the de facto transfer).
- 1962 CE – On 16 August, France formally approved the transfer, and Puducherry fully became part of India.

HERITAGE QUIZ

- A
- B
- D
- C
- A
- D
- C
- A
- D
- C
- D
- C
- A
- B
- D
- A
- B
- C
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- A
- C
- D
- A
- A



Stickers

