

# Chapter

# 6

# Early India

David Cumming/CORBIS

The Hindu temple of Devi Jagadambika in Khajuraho, India ▼



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

## When & Where?



2500 B.C.

c. 3000 B.C.  
India's early civilization begins

1500 B.C.

c. 1500 B.C.  
The Aryans arrive in India

500 B.C.

563 B.C.  
The Buddha is born

A.D. 500

A.D. 320  
The Gupta empire begins

# Chapter Preview

Like ancient Greece, early India was a land of warriors, thinkers, and scientists. Read this chapter to find out how ideas from India affect how you do math today.



View the Chapter 6 video in the *World History: Journey Across Time* Video Program.

## Section 1

### India's Early Civilizations

The earliest Indian civilization developed on the Indus River. Later, the Aryans arrived in northern India. A social system that determined how people lived evolved.

## Section 2

### Hinduism and Buddhism

Early India's two main religions were Hinduism and Buddhism. These two religions affected every aspect of people's lives.

## Section 3

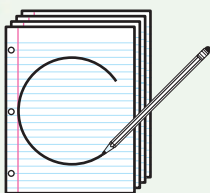
### India's First Empires

Early India had two great empires: the Maurya and the Gupta. Both empires made advances in the arts, sciences, and math.

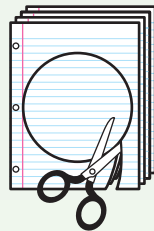
## FOLDABLES™ Study Organizer

**Identifying** Make this foldable to help you identify and learn key terms.

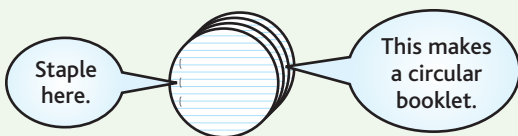
**Step 1** Stack four sheets of paper, one on top of the other. On the top sheet of paper, draw a large circle.



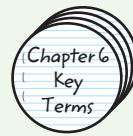
**Step 2** With the papers still stacked, cut out all four circles at the same time.



**Step 3** Staple the paper circles together at one point around the edge.



**Step 4** Label the front circle as shown and take notes on the pages that open to the right.



**Reading and Writing**  
As you read the chapter, write the terms from Building Your Vocabulary in your foldable. Write a definition for each term. Then turn your foldable over (upside down) to write a short sentence using each term.

# Reading Social Studies

Reading  
Skill

Vocabulary

## 1 Learn It!

### Building Your Vocabulary

What do you do when you are reading and come to a word you do not know? Here are some hints:

1. Use clues in the sentence (called context clues) to help you define it.
2. Look for prefixes, suffixes, or root words that you already know.
3. Look it up in the glossary or a dictionary.
4. Write it down and ask for help with the meaning.
5. Guess at its meaning.

Look at the word *Untouchables* in the following paragraph.

**Context** The “Untouchables” were a “group.”

There was one group that did not belong to any *varna*. Its members were called **Untouchables**. They performed dirty work considered polluting such as collecting trash, skinning animals, or handling dead bodies.

—from page 200

**Context** If you know what a *varna* is, it will help you figure out the meaning of *Untouchables*.

### Reading Tip

Read the paragraphs that appear before and after the word to help you understand its meaning.

#### Prefixes and Suffixes

You might know that the prefix **un-** means “not” and the suffix **-able** means “to be able to.” You might guess that the meaning of *Untouchable* is an Indian who was not to be touched by others.

**Context** The fact that they performed the “dirty” work indicates how they were viewed by others in Indian society.

## 2 Practice It!

### Defining Words

What are three things you could do to help you understand the meaning of the word *subcontinent* in this paragraph?

Look at the map below. India looks like a diamond hanging from the bottom of Asia. India is a **subcontinent** (SUHB • KAHN • tuhn • uhnt) because even though it is part of Asia, huge mountains separate it from the rest of Asia. These mountains are the **Himalaya** (HIH • muh • LAY • uh), the highest mountains in the world.

—from page 195

### Read to Write

Take one word from the vocabulary bookmark that you make in the **Apply It!** activity. Find its definition. Then create a cartoon strip. Have one of the characters in your cartoon strip use the word correctly.



## 3 Apply It!

Make a vocabulary bookmark using a 2-inch-wide strip of paper. As you read the chapter, write down words you do not know or want to find out more about.

# India's Early Civilizations

## Get Ready to Read!

### What's the Connection?

In India, just as in Egypt and Mesopotamia, the first civilizations developed in fertile river valleys.

### Focusing on the **Main Ideas**

- Climate and geography influenced the rise of India's first civilization. (page 195)
- New ideas and technology influenced the development of India. (page 198)
- The Aryans created a caste system that separated Indians into groups. (page 199)

### Locating Places

**Himalaya** (HIH•muh•LAY•uh)

**Ganges River** (GAN•JEEZ)

**Indus River** (IHN•duhs)

**Harappa** (huh•RA•puh)

**Mohenjo-Daro**

(moh•HEHN•joh DAHR•oh)

### Meeting People

**Aryans** (AR•ee•uhnz)

**Brahmins** (BRAH•muhns)

### Building Your Vocabulary

**subcontinent**  
(SUHB•KAHN•tuhn•uhnt)

**monsoon** (mahn•SOON)

**Sanskrit** (SAN•SKRIHT)

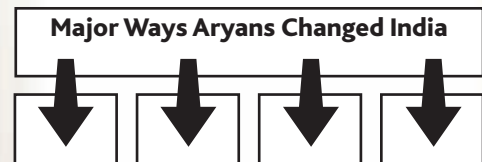
**raja** (RAH•juh)

**caste** (KAST)

**guru** (GUR•oo)

### Reading Strategy

**Organizing Information** Complete a diagram like the one below showing how the Aryans changed India.



## When & Where?



3000 B.C.

- **c. 3000 B.C.**  
India's early civilization begins

2000 B.C.

- **c. 1500 B.C.**  
Aryans arrive in India

1000 B.C.

- **c. 1000 B.C.**  
Aryans control northern India

# The Land of India

**Main Idea** Climate and geography influenced the rise of India's first civilization.

**Reading Focus** Do you have tornadoes or hurricanes where you live? Read to find out how geography and weather affected India's first civilization.

Look at the map below. India looks like a diamond hanging from the bottom of Asia. India is a **subcontinent** (SUHB•KAHN•tuhn•uhnt) because even though it is part of Asia, huge mountains separate it from the rest of Asia. These mountains are the **Himalaya** (HIH•muh•LAY•uh), the highest mountains in the world.

Today, there are five nations that make up the Indian subcontinent: India; Pakistan in the northwest; Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh in the northeast.

India has two very fertile river valleys. Both are fed by the mountains in the north. When the snow in the Himalaya melts, water flows into the **Ganges River** (GAN•JEEZ) and the **Indus River** (IHN•duhs). If the water is controlled, the land near these rivers can be used for farming.

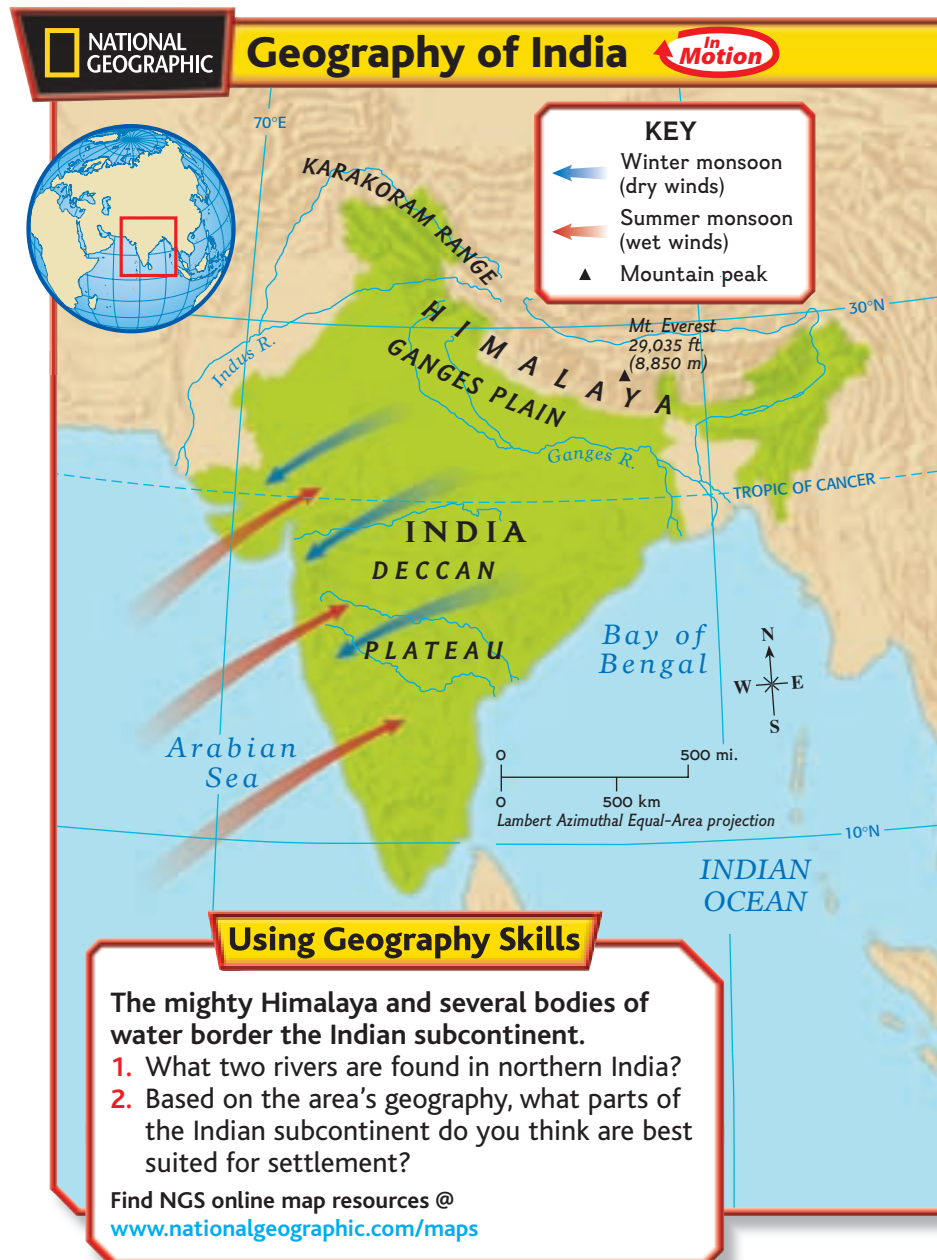
The Ganges River runs south of the Himalaya and flows into the Indian Ocean. The Indus River empties into the Arabian Sea. The area around the Indus is called the Indus River valley.

South of the river valleys is the dry and hilly Deccan Plateau. The eastern and western coasts of India are lush, fertile plains.

**Monsoons** (mahn•SOONZ) are an important part of the

Indian climate. A monsoon is a strong wind that blows one direction in winter and the opposite direction in summer. The winter monsoon brings the cold, dry air of the mountains. The summer monsoon brings warm, wet air from the Arabian Sea, which produces drenching rains.

When the monsoon rains begin, many farmers celebrate. If the rains come on time and the rainy season lasts long enough, the crop will be good. If the rains are delayed, a drought will occur. This extended period



without rain can be disastrous for farmers. Few crops will be harvested and many people will starve.

**India's Early Civilization** In earlier chapters, you learned about civilizations that began in river valleys. The first urban civilization in India also began in a river valley.

India's early civilization grew up near the Indus River. When the summer monsoon began, the river rose higher and higher. When the river flooded nearby land, it left behind rich, fertile soil.

Farmers used the rich soil to grow crops to feed their families. Because people had a plentiful supply of food, they could spend time doing other things, such as making tools or building houses. As people began to trade their extra food and goods with other people, their wealth grew. This allowed them to build larger and larger cities.

India's early civilization in the Indus River valley began about 3000 B.C. and lasted until 1500 B.C. More than a thousand villages and towns were part of this civilization, which stretched from the Himalaya to the Arabian Sea. We know something about the way these people lived from studying the ruins of two major cities, **Harappa** (huh•RA•puh) and **Mohenjo-Daro** (moh•HEHN•joh DAHR•oh). The civilization of this time is called the Harappan or Indus civilization.

**Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro** Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro were large cities for their time. The well-planned cities had as many as 35,000 people. A fortress was built on a brick platform probably to keep guard over the residents. There were wide main streets and smaller side streets. A wall surrounded each neighborhood, and narrow lanes separated the houses.

## Early Indian Civilization

The ruins of Mohenjo-Daro (below) show a carefully planned city. The picture to the right shows a typical house in the city. **From what material were most of the houses in Mohenjo-Daro made?**



▲ Harappan priest-king

▶ Necklace from Mohenjo-Daro



▶ Model of oxcart from Mohenjo-Daro



Most houses had flat roofs and were built with mud bricks that were baked in ovens. Some houses were larger than others, but they all had a similar layout. There was a courtyard in the middle and smaller rooms around it.

These ancient city dwellers had some surprising conveniences. Wells supplied water, and residents even had indoor bathrooms. Wastewater flowed to drains under the streets, running through pipes to pits outside the city walls. Houses also had garbage chutes connected to a bin in the street. In addition, residents built large granaries to store food for the entire city's population.

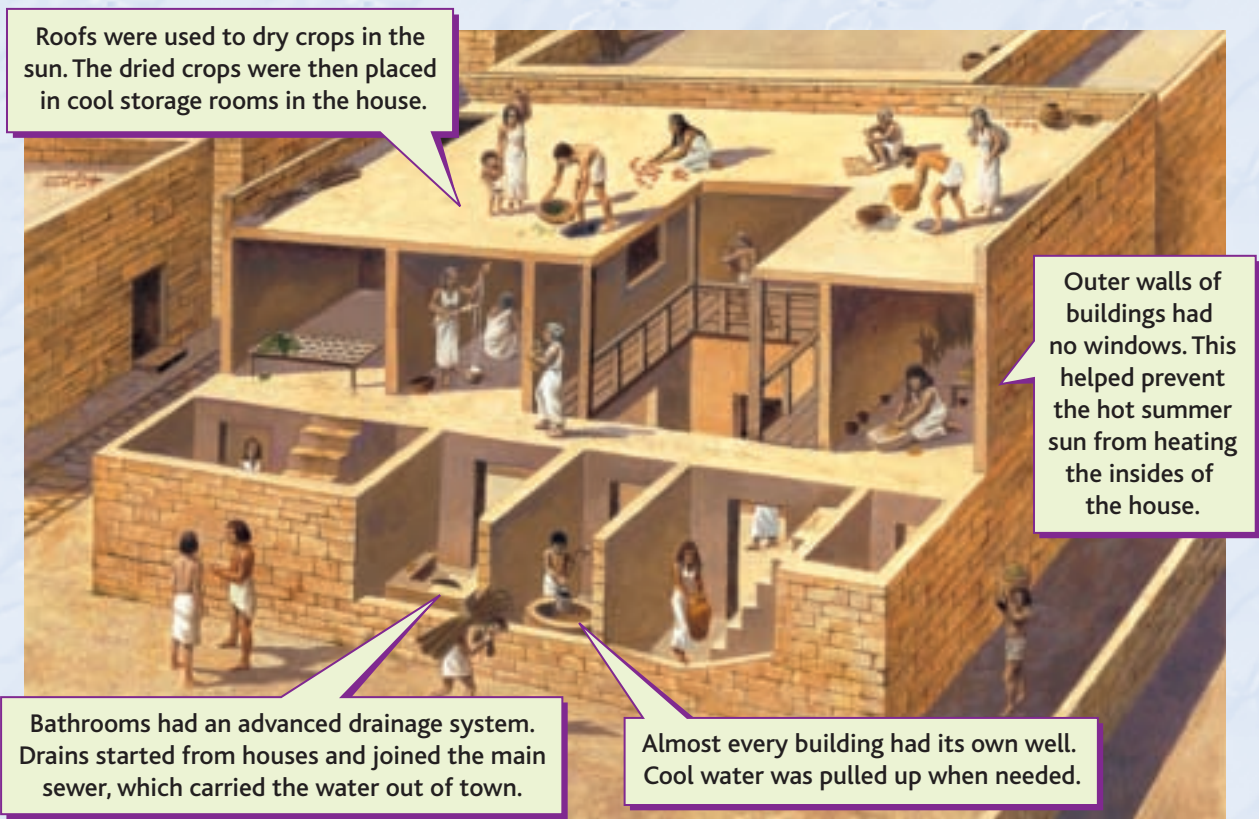
**Harappan Society** The Harappans used a special script to write on seals and stamps. However, historians have not agreed on how to decipher these markings. Because the Harappans did not leave other histori-

cal records, we do not know much about their society or government. From the ruins, though, we can guess that the royal palace and the temple may have been both enclosed in a fortress. This reveals that religion and politics were closely connected.

Most Harappans were farmers. They grew rice, wheat, barley, peas, and cotton. City dwellers made copper and bronze tools, clay pottery, and cotton cloth, as well as jewelry from gold, shells, and ivory. Archaeologists have also found many toys among the ruins, such as small monkeys that could be made to climb up a string.

It is likely that the Harappans began trading with the Mesopotamians about 2300 B.C. Some Harappan sailors followed the coastline and crossed the Arabian Sea, and others traveled over land.

**Reading Check Explain** How is India separated from the rest of Asia?





# The Aryans

**Main Idea** New ideas and technology influenced the development of India.

**Reading Focus** What would your life be like without cars or computers? Read to find out how new ideas and technology affected the Indians.

The Harappan civilization collapsed about 1500 B.C. Historians think that several earthquakes and floods damaged the cities. Then the Indus River changed its course, killing many people and forcing others to flee the area. In the years that followed, a group of people called the **Aryans** (AR•ee•uhnz) began settling in the region. Soon a new civilization emerged.

**Who Were the Aryans?** The Aryans lived in central Asia where they raised and herded animals. The Aryans were not a race or ethnic group. Some historians believe that the Aryans were part of a larger group they refer to as Indo-Europeans. The Indo-Europeans all spoke similar languages. Some migrated south to India and Iran. Others went west to Europe.

Cattle were a prized possession because they provided meat, milk, and butter. Cattle were so important that the Aryans even used them as money. Individual wealth was measured by the number of cattle a person owned.

The Aryans were good warriors. They were expert horse riders and hunters. They had metal-tipped spears and wooden chariots, which they sometimes used to invade nearby villages for food.

After 2000 B.C., the Aryans began leaving their home territory. They moved in waves, and some groups crossed through the mountain passes in the Himalaya. They entered the Indus River valley around 1500 B.C.

Around 1000 B.C., the Aryans began expanding across the Punjab and Ganges Plains and south into the Deccan Plateau. Features of their civilization mixed with those of local cultures.



### Using Geography Skills

The Aryans were nomadic herders who eventually controlled much of India.

1. After crossing the mountains, what physical feature did the Aryans follow into India?
2. Into what area of southern India did the Aryans travel?

**The Aryans Bring Change** When the Aryans arrived in India, they no longer lived as nomads. They became farmers but continued to raise cattle. Eventually, the Aryans would declare that cattle were sacred and forbid them to be used as food.

Aryan technology improved farming in India. They invented an iron plow to help clear India's many jungles and built canals to irrigate. They slowly turned the Ganges River valley into good farmland.

India's varied climate supported many types of crops. In the north, farmers grew grains such as wheat, barley, and millet. Rice was grown in the river valleys. In the south, there was a mix of crops, including spices such as pepper, ginger, and cinnamon.

The Aryans also brought a new language to India. As nomads, they had no written language, but in India they developed a written language later called **Sanskrit** (SAN•SKRIHT). Over time, the sacred songs, poems, and prayers that Aryans had known for many centuries were written down.

The Aryans were organized into tribes. Each tribe was led by a **raja** (RAH•juh), or prince. The rajas ran their own small kingdoms, which often fought among themselves. Rajas fought over cattle and treasure and over women kidnapped from other states. These small rival kingdoms existed in India for about a thousand years, from 1500 B.C. to 400 B.C.

**Reading Check Analyze** Why do you think nomads like the Aryans were great warriors?

**History online**  
**Web Activity** Visit [jat.glencoe.com](http://jat.glencoe.com) and click on *Chapter 6—Student Web Activity* to learn more about India.

## Society in Ancient India

**Main Idea** The Aryans created a caste system that separated Indians into groups.

**Reading Focus** Why are some people treated differently than others? Read why this idea was accepted in India.

One of the results of the Aryan arrival in India was the development of a caste system. A **caste** (KAST) is a social group that someone is born into and cannot change.

**NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC**

**HISTORY MAKERS**

**Development of Sanskrit** c. 1500 B.C.

Sanskrit became the most important language for public affairs in much of ancient India. Hindi, the national language of India today, and other regional languages evolved out of Sanskrit. The earliest example of orally transmitted, ancient Sanskrit is the four Vedas—sacred writings. Sanskrit was in common usage until about A.D. 1100 and was used in some official communications until A.D. 1830.

Sanskrit Influences on English Words			
Sanskrit	Definition	English	Definition
Nava	Ship	Naval or navy	A fleet of ships
Dua	Two	Dual	Consisting of two parts
Deva	God	Divine	relating to God

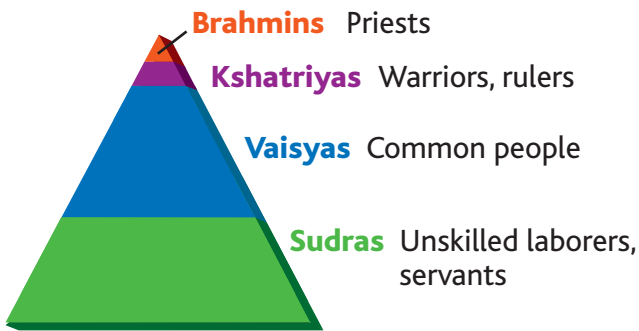


A Brahmin ▶



Today, Untouchables refer to themselves as *Dalit*, which means "oppressed." **Why did the Aryans create the caste system?** ▶

### Early India's Social System



A caste dictates what job you will have, whom you can marry, and with whom you can eat or drink. In India, no one uses the word *caste*, which is the word Portuguese merchants used to describe India's social groups. Indians call these groups *jati*. Thousands of *jati* exist in India.

Why was this system created? No one is sure, but ideas about skin color were probably part of it. The Aryans were a light-skinned people. They thought they were better than the dark-skinned people they encountered in India.

The Aryans might have created the caste system because the people they encountered in India greatly outnumbered them. The caste system kept groups separate and

set the rules for everyone's behavior. This helped the Aryans stay in control.

**Social Levels of the Caste System** The thousands of different *jati* in Indian society were grouped together into four classes called *varnas*. The top two *varnas* were **Brahmins** (BRAH•mihns) and Kshatriyas (KSHA•tree•uhs). Brahmins included the priests—the only people who could perform religious ceremonies. The Kshatriyas were warriors who ran the government and army.

Next were the Vaisyas (VYSH•yuhs), or commoners. Vaisyas were usually farmers and merchants. Below the Vaisyas came the Sudras (SOO•druhs). Sudras were manual laborers and servants and had few rights. Most Indians belonged to the Sudra *varna*.

There was one group that did not belong to any *varna*. Its members were called Untouchables. They performed dirty work considered polluting such as collecting trash, skinning animals, or handling dead bodies.

Life for an Untouchable was very hard. Most Indians believed that being near an Untouchable was polluting, so they forced them to live apart from others. When

Untouchables traveled, they had to tap two sticks together so that everyone would hear them coming and have time to move away.

**The Role of Men and Women** In ancient India, the family was the center of life. Grandparents, parents, and children all lived together in an extended family. The oldest man in the family was in charge.

Men had many more rights than women. Typically, only sons could inherit property, and only men could go to school or become priests. Women received their education at home.

In families at the top of Indian society, a boy had a **guru** (GUR•oo), or teacher, until he went to the city for more education. Young men from these families could marry only after finishing 12 years of schooling.

In India, parents arranged marriages for their children. Even today, parents

arrange 90 percent of marriages in India. Boys and girls often married in their teens, but ideally not until after completing their education. Divorce was not allowed, but if a couple could not have children, the husband could marry a second wife.

One custom shows how the lives of Indian men were considered more important than the lives of Indian women. In India, people were cremated, or burned in a funeral fire, when they died. Sometimes when a man from a prominent family died, his wife was expected to leap into the funeral flames. This practice was called suttee (suh•TEE). If the wife resisted and did not kill herself, it was a great shame. Everyone would avoid the woman from then on.

 **Reading Check Identify** What were the five major groups in Indian society?

## Section 1 Review

**History**  **online**


**Study Central™** Need help with the material in this section? Visit [jag.glencoe.com](http://jag.glencoe.com)

### Reading Summary

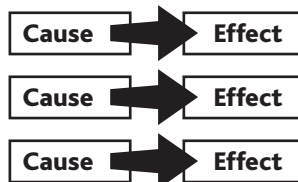
#### Review the **Main Ideas**

- India's early civilization, including the cities of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, developed in the fertile Indus River valley.
- The Aryans, a group of nomadic herders, migrated into the northern part of India by about 1000 B.C. They brought the iron plow and the language later called Sanskrit to India.
- India's caste system divided people into specific social and economic classes. Ancient Indian society favored men over women.

### What Did You Learn?

1. Describe the cities of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro.
2. Why are monsoons important to Indian farmers?
3. **Cause and Effect** What caused the collapse of Harappan civilization?
4. **Cause and Effect** Draw a diagram to show how the Aryans changed the lifestyle of the Indians.
5. **Contrast** How did the Aryan and Harappan lifestyles differ?
6. **Explain** How did India's social classes, or *varnas*, shape India's society?
7. **Descriptive Writing** Write a description of the city of Harappa or Mohenjo-Daro that could have been used to attract residents to that city in ancient India.
8.  **Reading Vocabulary**

Explain how the suffix in the word *plentiful* can help you determine its meaning.



# Hinduism and Buddhism

## Get Ready to Read!

### What's the Connection?

Much of Indian civilization is based on Aryan ideas and culture, which you learned about in the last section. One of the most important and long-lasting contributions of the Aryans is the main religion of India, Hinduism.

### Focusing on the **Main Ideas**

- Hinduism grew out of the ancient beliefs of the Aryans. (page 203)
- A new religion, Buddhism, appealed to many people in India and other parts of Asia. (page 205)

### Locating Places

**Nepal** (nuh•PAWL)

**Tibet** (tuh•BEHT)

### Meeting People

**Siddhartha Gautama** (sih•DAHR•tuh GOW•tuh•muh)

**Dalai Lama** (DAH•LY LAH•muh)

### Building Your Vocabulary

**Hinduism** (HIHN•doo•IH•zuhm)

**Brahman** (BRAH•muhn)

**reincarnation**

(REE•ihn•kahr•NAY•shuhn)

**dharma** (DAHR•muh)

**karma** (KAHR•muh)

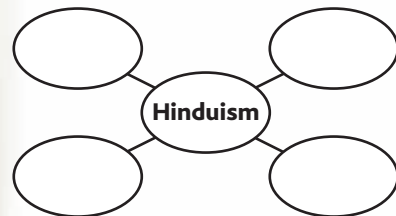
**Buddhism** (BOO•DIH•zuhm)

**nirvana** (nihr•VAH•nuh)

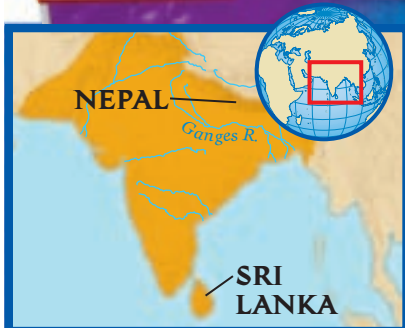
**theocracy** (thee•AH•kruh•see)

### Reading Strategy

**Summarizing Information** Create a web diagram like the one below. In the ovals, identify major beliefs of Hinduism.



## When & Where?



1500 B.C.

c. 1500 B.C.

Aryans bring early Hindu ideas to India

800 B.C.

c. 563 B.C.

The Buddha is born in Nepal

100 B.C.

c. 200 B.C.

Theravada Buddhism spreads to Sri Lanka

# Hinduism

**Main Idea** Hinduism grew out of the ancient beliefs of the Aryans.

**Reading Focus** Have you ever wondered why most people try to behave properly or do good deeds? As you read this section, find out how a Hindu would answer this question.

**Hinduism** (HIHN•doo•IH•zuhm) is one of the oldest religions in the world, and today it is the third largest. The basic principles of what is known today as Hinduism were already formulated by 1500 B.C. They are found in the four Vedas—sacred writings. The Aryans believed in many deities who controlled the forces of nature. We know about Aryan religion from their sacred hymns and poetry, especially their epics, or long poems.

For centuries, the priests, or Brahmins, recited these works, and much later they were written down in Sanskrit. Over the cen-

turies, Aryan religion changed. It borrowed some religious ideas from the people the Aryans encountered in India. This mix of beliefs eventually became Hinduism.

**Early Hinduism** Hinduism grew out of the religious customs of many people over thousands of years. This might explain why Hinduism has thousands of deities. Hindus tend to think of all deities as different parts of one universal spirit. This universal spirit is called **Brahman** (BRAH•muhn).

The search for a universal spirit is described in the ancient sacred texts known as the Upanishads (oo•PAH•nih•SHADZ). Those writings say that every living being has a soul that wants to be reunited with Brahman and that this happens when a person dies.

The Upanishads describe how a person unites with Brahman: A soul that becomes one with Brahman is like a lump of salt thrown into water. The lump of salt is gone, but the water tastes salty. The salt has become part of the water.



▲ Fire sacrifice accompanied by reading from the Veda. **What ancient scriptures describe a universal spirit?**



## Major Hindu Deities

Name	Realm
Brahma	creator of the world
Vishnu	preserver of the world
Siva	destroyer of the world
Ganesha	lord of existing beings; remover of obstacles
Krishna	teacher of the world
Lakshmi	deity of light, beauty, good fortune, and wealth
Surya	deity of the sun
Saraswati	deity of knowledge, music, and creative arts
Parvati	universal mother

Ganesha ▶



◀ Siva



### Understanding Charts

Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva are considered the three main Hindu deities.

1. Which deity is known as the "teacher of the world"?
2. **Conclude** Why does Hinduism have so many deities?

**What Is Karma?** Hindus believe that a soul is not joined to the Brahman immediately after a person dies. Instead, a person must pass through many lives to be united with Brahman. On its journey, a soul might be reborn into a higher caste. If a person lived a bad life, he or she might be reborn into a lower caste or life-form.

This idea of passing through many lives to reach the Brahman is called **reincarnation** (REE • ihn • kahr • NAY • shuhn). It is very important in Hinduism and it influences how Hindus live their daily lives. It even affects how they treat animals because they consider all life sacred.

To earn the reward of a better life in their next life, Hindus believe they must perform their duty. **Dharma** (DAHR • muh) is the divine law. It requires people to perform the duties of their caste. A farmer has different duties than a priest and men have different duties than women.

The consequences of how a person lives are known as **karma** (KAHR • muh). If Hindus do their duty and live a good life, they will have good karma. This will move them closer to the Brahman in their next life.

How did the belief in reincarnation affect Indians? For one thing, it made many of them more accepting of the caste system. People believed they had to be happy with their role in life.

A dedicated Hindu believes that the people in a higher *varna* are superior and that they are supposed to be on top. The belief in reincarnation gave hope to many people, even servants. If servants did their duty, they might be reborn into a higher caste in their next life.

**Reading Check Explain** How is karma related to reincarnation?