Geography and Early India

The Big Idea

Indian civilization first developed in the Indus River.

Main Ideas

- The geography of India includes high mountains, great rivers, and heavy seasonal rain.
- Harappan civilization developed along the Indus River.
- The Aryan invasion of India changed the region’s civilization.
Indian Geography

Mountains
- North: The Himalayas are the highest mountains in the world.
- West: The Hindu Kush provide protection from enemies.

Plains and Plateaus
- Rivers and melting snow kept the plains fertile.
- Both sides of the river thrived.

Water
- Monsoons
- Heavy rainfall
- Civilizations arose around seasonal rainfall.
Harappan Civilization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>People</th>
<th>Cities</th>
<th>Achievements</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| • Population grew in the Indus River Valley.  
• Growth came as irrigation and farming techniques improved.  
• Cities were built as surplus food was produced. | • Harrapa  
• Mohenjo Daro  
• Fortresses for defense against enemies  
• Well-planned public areas | • Wells and indoor plumbing  
• Pottery, cotton clothing, jewelry  
• India’s first writing system |
## Aryan Invasion

### Invaders from the West

When the Harappan civilization dissipated in 1700 BC, Central Asians called Aryans began taking over territory.

### Religion

The Aryans left behind vast collections of poems, hymns, myths, and rituals. They also had religious writings known as Vedas.

### Governments

No central government: small communities ruled by rajas

### Language

Sanskrit is the root of many modern South Asian languages.
**Summary**

**Harappan Civilization**
- Two major cities: Harappa, Mohenjo Daro
- Advanced civilization that thrived between 2300 and 1700 BC
- Culture, artistry, city planning

**Aryan Invasion**
- South Asian warriors pushed through the Hindu Kush mountains and settled in the Indus Valley
- Oral tradition in religion and mythology resulted in the most important language of ancient India: Sanskrit.
Origins of Hinduism

The Big Idea
Hinduism, the largest religion in India today, developed out of ancient Indian beliefs and practices.

Main Ideas
- Indian society divided into distinct groups under the Aryans.
- The Aryans practiced a religion known as Brahmanism.
- Hinduism developed out of Brahmanism and influences from other cultures.
- The Jains reacted to Hinduism by breaking away to form their own religion.
## Indian Society Divides

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Varnas</th>
<th>Social divisions in Aryan society</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brahmins</td>
<td>Priests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kshatriyas</td>
<td>Rulers and warriors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vaisyas</td>
<td>Farmers, craftspeople, and traders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudras</td>
<td>Laborers and non-Aryans</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Caste System

**Individuals**
- Place in society based on birth, wealth, or occupation
- 3,000 castes once existed in India.
- Individuals could rarely change castes.

**Caste Rules**
- Sutras (guides) listed all the rules for the caste system.
- Breaking rules resulted in a transfer to a lower class.
### Brahmanism develops into Hinduism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Brahmanism</strong></th>
<th><strong>Evolving Beliefs</strong></th>
<th><strong>Hinduism</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| • Aryan priests were called Brahmins.  
• Wrote Vedic texts, which were their thoughts about the Vedas | The Vedas, Upanishads, and other Vedic texts began blending with beliefs from different cultures, creating Hinduism. | • Many gods  
• Reincarnation: could be reborn into new forms and castes  
• Men and women could both gain salvation, but women were inferior. |
Jains React to Hinduism

Origins of Jainism
- 599 BC, established as an alternative to Hindu ritualism
- Based on the teachings of Mahavira, who abandoned his life of luxury to become a monk

Four Principles of Jainism
- Injure no life.
- Tell the truth.
- Do not steal.
- Own no property.
Origins of Buddhism

The Big Idea
Buddhism began in India and became a major religion.

Main Ideas
- Siddhartha Gautama searched for wisdom in many ways.
- The teachings of Buddhism deal with finding peace.
- Buddhism spread far from where it began in India.
Siddhartha

**Quest for Answers**
- Siddhartha was born a prince, but he questioned the meaning of life.
- Determined to find answers using:
  - Meditation
  - Fasting
  - Learning from different teachers

**Enlightenment**
- Found it under the Tree of Wisdom while meditating
- Called the Buddha (Enlightened One)
- Spent the rest of his life traveling and teaching his ideas
Teachings of Buddhism

Four Noble Truths

1. Suffering and unhappiness are a part of human life. No one can escape sorrow.

2. Suffering comes from our desires for pleasure and material goods.

3. People can overcome desire and ignorance and reach nirvana, a state of perfect peace.

4. People can overcome ignorance and desire by following an eightfold path that leads to wisdom, enlightenment, and salvation.
Teachings of Buddhism

Eightfold Path

1. **Right understanding**: Understanding that the Four Noble Truths are noble and true.
2. **Right thought**: Determining and resolving to practice Buddhist faith.
3. **Right speech**: Avoiding slander, gossip, lying, and all forms of untrue and abusive speech.
4. **Right conduct**: Adhering to the idea of nonviolence (ahimsa), as well as refraining from any form of stealing or sexual impropriety.
5. **Right means of making a living**: Not slaughtering animals or working at jobs that force you to violate others.
6. **Right mental attitude or effort**: Avoiding negative thoughts and emotions, such as anger and jealousy.
7. **Right mindfulness**: Having a clear sense of one’s mental state and bodily health and feelings.
8. **Right concentration**: Using meditation to reach the highest level of enlightenment.
Challenging Hindu Ideas

**Ancient Ways**
- The Buddha taught that following the Vedic texts was unnecessary.
- Challenged the authority of Hindu priests

**Changing Society**
- A more individualistic approach to enlightenment
- Rebirth as a means to evolve

**Caste System**
- Opposed caste system
- The Eightfold Path could lead any individual to nirvana.
- The Buddha’s teachings reached all classes.
Buddhism began in India and then became a major religion.

**Buddhism branches out**
- Asoka, one of the most powerful kings in India, became a Buddhist and spread Buddhism in India and foreign lands.
- Buddhist missionaries traveled the world to teach enlightenment.

**Buddhism splits**
- Buddhism split into two main sects: Theravada and Mahayana.
- Members of the Theravada followed the Buddha’s teachings exactly.
- Members of the Mahayana believed that individual interpretation was important.
Indian Empires

The Big Idea

The Mauryas and the Guptas built great empires in India.

Main Ideas

• The Mauryan Empire unified most of India.
• Gupta rulers promoted Hinduism in their empire.
Mauryan Rule

Candragupta Maurya

- Candragupta seized control of northern India and created a society dominated by war.
- Candragupta became a Jainist monk and gave up his throne.

Asoka

- The grandson of Candragupta extended Mauryan rule over most of India.
- Asoka converted to Buddhism and stopped waging war, choosing instead to rebuild cities and spread Buddhist teachings.
Gupta Empire

- After the decline of the Mauryan Empire, India remained primarily Buddhist for 500 years.
- Under the rule of Candra Gupta I, India became unified and prosperous again.
- Gupta rulers spread Hinduism in their empire through the building of temples and the promotion of Hindu writings and rituals.
- Widespread religious tolerance was encouraged for Buddhists and Jainists.
## Candra Gupta II

### Growth
Under Candra Gupta II, the Gupta Empire reached the height of its power. It spread across northern India and prospered.

### Economy and Culture
The economy boomed, allowing citizens the time and money to create great works of art and literature.

### The Caste System
It was believed that keeping citizens under strict caste rule would stabilize the empire.

### Social Ramifications
Women in the caste system were not seen as equals and had few basic rights.
Time Line

- **320 BC** Candragupta Maurya becomes the first Mauryan emperor.
- **301 BC** Candragupta Maurya relinquishes the throne to become a Jainist monk.
- **270 BC** Asoka becomes the second Mauryan emperor.
- **261 BC** Asoka’s empire gains great power, and he leaves to become a Buddhist.
- **AD 375** Candra Gupta I invades and conquers northern India and brings Hinduism, prosperity, and a strict caste system back into popular culture.
Indian Achievements

The Big Idea

The people of ancient India made great contributions to the arts and sciences.

Main Ideas

• Indian artists created great works of religious art.
• Sanskrit literature flourished during the Gupta period.
• The Indians made scientific advances in metalworking, medicine, and other sciences.
Religious Art: Temples

- Both Hindu and Buddhist temples began flourishing under Gupta rule.
- Once simply constructed meeting places, Hindu temples became complex towers covered with intricate carvings.
- Buddhist temples were large and impressive, some carved out of mountainsides.
- Buddhist stupas were built to house sacred objects from the life of the Buddha. They were covered with detailed carvings.
Religious Art: Paintings and Sculptures

- Great artists were commissioned by rich and powerful members of society.
- Paintings offered a perspective on the daily life and religious belief of the ancient Indians; many of these paintings could be found on the walls of temples.
- Indian sculptors carved columns, statues, and entire temples in the likenesses of the Buddha and Hindu gods.
Sanskrit Literature

**Mahabharata**
- One of the world’s longest literary works
- The story of two Indian families struggling for control of a kingdom
- Many long passages of Hindu beliefs and practices

**Ramayana**
- The story of a god, Vishnu, who has taken human form
- Written long after the *Mahabharata*; contains models for the ideal ruler (Rama) and the ideal mate (Sita)
Sanskrit Literature

Other Works

- Chadra Gupta II hired a famous writer named Kalidasa to write plays for the royal court.

- The *Panchatantra*, a book of stories intended to teach moral lessons and quick thinking, was translated into many languages.
## Scientific Advances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Metalworking</strong></td>
<td>Pioneers of metallurgy, the Indians created tools and weapons by mixing iron and other metals together.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mathematics</strong></td>
<td>The Indians invented the concept of zero and developed a sophisticated number system, the Hindu-Arabic numerals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Medicine</strong></td>
<td>Using plants and minerals, Indian doctors made advances in medicinal science. They were among the first to practice inoculation and perform surgery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Astronomy</strong></td>
<td>Indian astronomers knew of seven about the nine planets in the solar system and could predict eclipses of the sun and moon.</td>
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</table>
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