

# Reading Essentials and Study Guide



## Chapter 3, Section 1

For use with textbook pages 71–79

### EARLY CIVILIZATION IN INDIA

#### KEY TERMS

**monsoon** a seasonal wind pattern in southern Asia (page 72)

**Sanskrit** a writing system developed by the Aryans (page 74)

**raja** an Aryan prince or leader (page 74)

**caste system** a set of rigid social categories or classes that determines a person's occupation, economic potential, and position in society (page 75)

**caste** the English term for an Indian social class (page 75)

**Hinduism** the religion of the majority of the Indian people that originated in the religious beliefs of the Aryans (page 77)

**reincarnation** the belief that the individual soul is reborn in a different form after death (page 77)

**karma** the force generated by a person's actions that determines how the person will be reborn in the next life (page 77)

**dharmā** the divine law in Hinduism that requires all people to do their duty (page 77)

**yoga** ("union") a method of training designed to lead to union with Brahman (page 77)

**ascetics** people who practiced self-denial to achieve an understanding of ultimate reality (page 78)

**nirvana** ultimate reality in Buddhism (the end of the self and a reunion with the Great World Soul) (page 78)

**Buddhism** a religion founded in India in the sixth century B.C. by Siddhartha Gautama, known as the Buddha (page 78)

#### DRAWING FROM EXPERIENCE

What kind of climate do you live in? How does the climate affect the way you live?

In this section, you will learn about the early civilizations in India and how the climate of India influenced those civilizations.

# Reading Essentials and Study Guide



## Chapter 3, Section 1 (continued)

### ORGANIZING YOUR THOUGHTS

Use the diagram below to help you take notes. The caste system in India had five major divisions. List the five divisions, starting from the top of the social scale.

<b>The Caste System of India</b>
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

### READ TO LEARN

- **The Land of India** (page 71)

The Indian subcontinent is shaped like a triangle and “hangs” from the southern ridge of Asia. The geography of India is diverse. In the far north are the Himalaya, the highest mountains in the world. South of the Himalaya region is the rich valley of the Ganges River. This was one of the chief regions of Indian culture. To the west is the Indus River valley. Today it is a dry plateau, but in ancient times, it had a more moderate climate and was the cradle of Indian civilization. South of these two river valleys is the Deccan. It is a plateau that extends from the Ganges Valley to the southern tip of India. The interior of the plateau is hilly and dry. India’s western and eastern coasts are lush plains. They have historically been some of the most densely populated regions of India.

The most important feature of India’s climate is the monsoon. A **monsoon** is a seasonal wind pattern in southern Asia. The summer monsoon blows warm, moist air from the southwest. The winter monsoon blows cold, dry air from the northeast. The summer monsoon brings heavy rains. Indian farmers depend on these rains to grow their crops. If the rains come early or late, or if there is too much or too little rain, crops are ruined and many people starve.

6. How do monsoons affect life in India?

---



---



---



---

# Reading Essentials and Study Guide



## Chapter 3, Section 1 (continued)

### • India's First Civilization (page 72)

Early civilization in India began in river valleys. Between 3000 B.C. and 1500 B.C., the valleys of the Indus River had a flourishing civilization. Archaeologists have found the remains of more than a thousand settlements in this region. There were two major cities, Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. The civilization in these cities lasted for hundreds of years. Historians call it Harappan or Indus civilization.

At its height, Harappa had 35,000 people. Mohenjo-Daro probably had around 35,000 to 40,000 people. Both cities were carefully planned. The main streets ran in a north-south direction and were crossed by smaller east-west streets. The cities were divided into large walled neighborhoods. Most buildings were made of mud bricks. Public wells provided the people with a regular supply of water. Houses had drains that were connected to a sewer system under the streets. A system of chutes took trash from houses to garbage bins.

It took a well-organized government to maintain these cities. Harappan rulers based their power on a belief in divine assistance. Religion and politics were closely linked. The palace and the temple were located in the same citadel, or fortress, at Harappa.

The Harappan economy was based on farming. The Indus River flooded each year and provided rich soil for growing crops. The chief crops were wheat, barley, and peas. The Harappans traded with city-states in Mesopotamia. Much of this trade was carried by ship through the Persian Gulf.

7. In what ways were the cities of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro well planned?

---

---

---

---

---

### • The Arrival of the Aryans (page 74)

Around 1500 B.C., a group of Indo-European nomads moved from central Asia into northern India. These people were known as the Aryans. They conquered the Harappans and created a new Indian society based on their own culture. They were experts in warfare. They eventually gained control of most of India.

# Reading Essentials and Study Guide



## Chapter 3, Section 1 (continued)

After settling in India, the Aryans stopped being pastoral nomads and became farmers. The creation of the iron plow and the use of irrigation made it possible for them to turn the jungle along the Ganges River into farmland. The basic crops in the north were wheat, barley, and millet. Rice was grown in the river valleys. Grain and vegetables were grown in the south. Cotton and spices, such as pepper, ginger, and cinnamon, were also grown.

By 1000 B.C., the Aryans had developed a system of writing. This writing system is called Sanskrit. They used Sanskrit to write down the legends and religious rituals that had been passed down from generation to generation. The early writings of the Aryans show that the Aryans were often at war. Aryan leaders, known as **rajās** (princes), attacked each other's fortresses and seized women, cattle, and other treasures.

8. How did the Aryans change after they settled in India?

---

---

---

---

---

### • Society in Ancient India (page 75)

During the time of the Aryans, a system of social classes developed in India. This system has lasted, with only minor changes, to the present day. The **caste system** was a set of rigid social categories that determined a person's occupation, economic potential, and position in society. It was based in part on skin color. There were five major divisions of Indian classes, or **castes**, in ancient times. At the top was the priestly class, whose members were known as Brahmins. The second caste was the Kshatriyas, or warriors. The third-ranked caste was the Vaisyas, or commoners. Most Vaisyas were merchants or farmers. The fourth caste was the Sudras. This was the largest group of Indian people. The Sudras were dark-skinned native people, not Aryans. Most of them were peasants or people who did other forms of manual labor. They had only limited rights in society. At the lowest level were the Untouchables. They were given degrading jobs that other Indians would not do, like collecting trash and handling dead bodies. They were not considered human. No Indian would touch or eat food handled by an Untouchable.

Life in ancient India centered on the family. The family was the basic unit in society. The ideal was an extended family, with three generations (grandparents, parents, and children) living under one roof. Indian society was patriarchal. Only men could inherit property. Women were not allowed to serve as priests, and generally, only men were educated. Upper-class young

# Reading Essentials and Study Guide



## Chapter 3, Section 1 (continued)

men were not supposed to marry until they completed 12 years of study. Divorce was usually not allowed. Husbands could take a second wife if the first wife could not bear children. Children were important because they were expected to take care of their parents as they grew older. When a man died, his wife was expected to follow the ritual of *suttee*. In ancient India, the dead were placed on heaps of material called pyres, which were then set on fire. Suttee required a wife to throw herself on the fire with her dead husband's body.

9. How were women treated in ancient India?

---



---



---



---



---

- **Hinduism** (page 77)

**Hinduism** is the religion of the majority of the Indian people. It had its origins in the religious beliefs of the Aryans. Most of our information about their religion comes from the Vedas. The Vedas were collections of hymns and other religious rituals. Early Hindus believed in the existence of a single force in the universe called *Brahman*. It was the duty of the individual self, or *atman*, to seek to know Brahman.

Hinduism contains the idea of reincarnation. **Reincarnation** is the belief that the individual soul is reborn in a different form after death. After being reincarnated a number of times, the soul reaches its final goal, which is union with Brahman. Important to this process is the idea of karma. **Karma** is the force generated by a person's actions that determines how a person will be reborn in the next life. The concept of karma is ruled by the **dharm**, or the divine law. The law requires all people to do their duty. Duties vary depending on a person's status in society. Reincarnation provided a religious basis for the caste system. It justified the privileges of the people in the higher castes. They believed that they deserved their privileges because of what they had done in earlier lives.

Hindus developed the practice of yoga. **Yoga** is a method of training designed to lead to union with Brahman. In fact, yoga means "union." Over time, the Hindu religion came to have hundreds of gods and goddesses. The three chief ones were Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver, and Siva the Destroyer. Many Hindus regard the gods as different expressions of Brahman. Through devotion at temples, Hindus seek not only salvation but also a way to gain the ordinary things they need in life.

# Reading Essentials and Study Guide



## Chapter 3, Section 1 (continued)

10. What is reincarnation, and how does it help to justify the caste system?

---

---

---

---

### • Buddhism (page 78)

In the sixth century B.C., a new religious doctrine appeared in northern India. It is called **Buddhism** because it was founded by Siddhartha Gautama, also known as the Buddha or “Enlightened One.” Siddhartha was born around 563 B.C. in the foothills of the Himalaya. He was the son of a ruling family and appeared to have everything. But in his late twenties, he decided to spend his life seeking the cure for human suffering. At first, he followed the example of the ascetics. **Ascetics** are people who practice self-denial to achieve an understanding of ultimate reality. He later turned instead to an intense period of meditation. While meditating, Siddhartha believed that he finally reached enlightenment as to the meaning of life. He spent the rest of his life preaching what he had discovered. His teachings became the basic principles of Buddhism.

Siddhartha believed that the physical world was an illusion. Once people let go of the things of this world, pain and sorrow could be forgotten. Then comes *bodhi*, or wisdom. Achieving wisdom is a key step to achieving nirvana. **Nirvana** is the ultimate reality—the end of the self and a reunion with the Great World Soul. The core of Siddhartha’s message is contained in the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. He accepted the idea of reincarnation but rejected the Hindu caste system. He taught that all human beings could reach nirvana. This made Buddhism appealing to the people at the lower end of the social scale. Siddhartha also rejected the multitude of gods in Hinduism. He forbade his followers to worship him or his image. After he died in 480 B.C., his followers spread his message throughout India. Buddhist monasteries were established to promote his teaching.

11. What parts of Hinduism did Siddhartha accept, and what parts did he reject?

---

---

---

---

---

# Reading Essentials and Study Guide



## Chapter 3, Section 2

For use with textbook pages 81–86

### NEW EMPIRES IN INDIA

#### KEY TERMS

**Silk Road** one of the main trade routes in the ancient world that was used to transport goods, such as silk, from China across central Asia to Mesopotamia (page 81)

**pilgrim** people who travel to religious places (page 85)

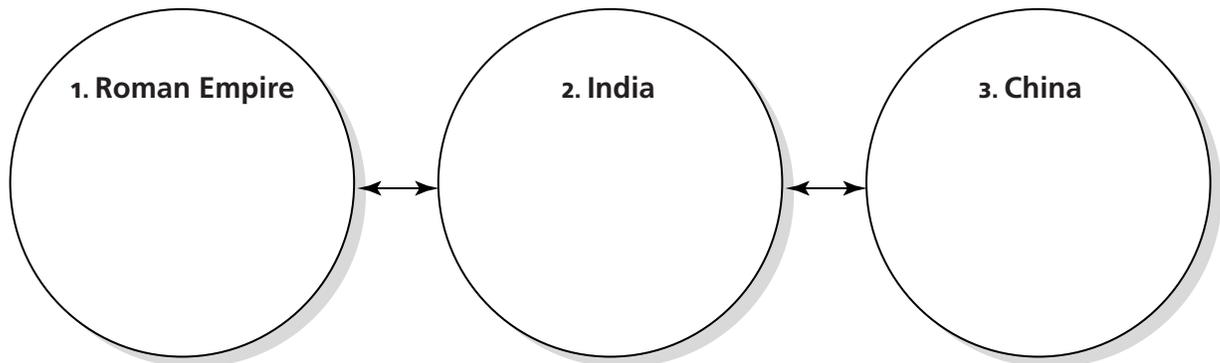
#### DRAWING FROM EXPERIENCE

Have you ever thought about the way we count? Why do we count in tens? Where did the decimal system come from?

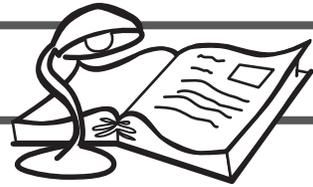
In the last section, you learned about the early civilizations in India. In this section, you will learn about two empires that arose in India, the Mauryan and Gupta Empires. The decimal system of counting in tens was developed during the Gupta Empire.

#### ORGANIZING YOUR THOUGHTS

Use the diagram below to help you take notes. Trade developed between the Roman Empire, India, and China. List the items that were exported from each of these areas.



# Reading Essentials and Study Guide



## Chapter 3, Section 2 (continued)

### READ TO LEARN

- **The Mauryan Dynasty** (page 82)

The Aryans did little to bring peace and unity to India. Between 1500 and 400 B.C., there were many wars between the Aryan rajahs. After 400 B.C., India was attacked from the outside. First came Persia, which extended its empire into western India. Then came the Greeks and Macedonians. Alexander the Great had heard about the riches of India, and he invaded India in 327 B.C. But his soldiers refused to continue fighting, and they left almost as quickly as they came. This invasion, however, led to the first dynasty to control India.

Chandragupta Maurya, who ruled from 324 to 301 B.C., founded the new dynasty. He drove out the foreign forces and set up his capital at Pataliputra in northern India. He divided his empire into provinces that were ruled by governors. He had a large army and a secret police that followed his orders.

Asoka was the grandson of Chandragupta Maurya. The Mauryan Empire flourished under his rule, and he is considered to be the greatest ruler in the history of India. He converted to Buddhism and used Buddhist ideals to guide his rule. He set up hospitals for both people and animals. He had trees planted and shelters built along the roads to provide shade and rest for travelers. During the time of Asoka, India's role in trade began to expand. India became a crossroads in a trade network that extended from the Pacific to Southwest Asia and the Mediterranean Sea. After Asoka's death in 232 B.C., the Mauryan Empire began to decline. In 183 B.C., the last Mauryan ruler was killed by one of his military commanders.

4. Why is Asoka considered to be the greatest ruler in Indian history?

---

---

---

---

---

- **The Kushan Kingdom and the Silk Road** (page 83)

After the collapse of the Mauryan Empire, new kingdoms arose along the edges of India, in what is now Afghanistan. In the first century A.D., nomadic warriors seized power and established the Kushan kingdom. For the next two centuries, the Kushans spread over northern India. In the rest of India, other kingdoms fought for control.

# Reading Essentials and Study Guide



## Chapter 3, Section 2 (continued)

The Kushans prospered because of the trade that passed through their land. Most of the trade was between the Roman Empire and China. It was shipped along a route called the **Silk Road**. The Silk Road was about 4000 miles long and reached from the city of Changan in China across central Asia to Mesopotamia. One section of the Silk Road passed through the mountains northwest of India. The route ended at Antioch in Syria on the Mediterranean Sea. Goods were shipped from Antioch across the Mediterranean to Greece and Rome. Only luxury goods were carried on the Silk Road, because camel caravans were difficult, dangerous, and thus expensive.

Chinese merchants traded silk, spices, teas, and porcelain. Indian merchants sent ivory, textiles, precious stones, and pepper. The Romans traded woolen and linen clothes, glass, and precious stones. Silk was China's most valuable product and what the Romans particularly wanted. That is why the trade route was called the Silk Road.

- How did the Silk Road make the Kushans prosperous?

---



---



---



---



---

- **The Kingdom of the Guptas** (page 84)

The Kushan kingdom came to an end in the third century A.D., when invaders from Persia overran it. In 320, a prince named Chandragupta created a new kingdom in the central Ganges Valley. He was not related to the earlier Chandragupta Maurya. His son Samudragupta expanded the empire into surrounding areas. The new kingdom of the Guptas became the dominant power in northern India. It also had loose control over central India. This made it the greatest state since the Mauryan Empire. The Gupta Empire had a series of good kings and created a new age of Indian civilization. Visitors from other lands admired the culture. One of these visitors was Faxian, a Buddhist monk from China who traveled to India in the fifth century. He admired the rulers, their tolerance of Buddhism, and the prosperity of the country. The Gupta Empire traded with China, Southeast Asia, and the Mediterranean. Cities were built along the main trade routes throughout India. These cities became wealthy from trade and from the pilgrims who traveled across India to visit the major religious centers. **Pilgrims** are people who travel to religious places.

# Reading Essentials and Study Guide



## Chapter 3, Section 2 (continued)

The Gupta Empire did not last, however. Invasions by the Huns in the late fifth century A.D. reduced the power of the empire. A military leader in the seventh century revived the empire for a while, but the empire fell apart after his death. Northern India would not be reunited for hundreds of years.

6. Why were the cities in the Gupta Empire wealthy?

---



---



---



---



---

### • The World of Indian Culture (page 85)

The Indian culture has produced great works in literature, architecture and science. The Vedas are the earliest known works of Indian literature. These were originally passed down orally from generation to generation. After the development of Sanskrit writing, the Vedas were written down. India's great historical epics, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, were also written down. The *Mahabharata* is the longest poem in any written language. It describes a war between cousins in Aryan society. The most famous section is the Bhagavid Gita. It is a sermon by the god Krishna before a major battle. The *Ramayana* is much shorter than the *Mahabharata*. It is the story of the fictional ruler Rama. Both the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* contain religious and moral lessons. To this day, they continue to inspire the people of India. One of ancient India's most famous authors was Kalidasa, who lived during the Gupta Dynasty. One of his poems, *The Cloud Messenger*, remains one of the most popular Sanskrit poems.

India also made major achievements in architecture. Three types of structures were developed to foster the spread of Buddhism: pillars, stupas, and rock chambers. Many stone pillars were built to mark sites related to events in Buddha's life. The stupas were originally intended to hold relics of Buddha, such as a lock of hair. They were built in the form of burial mounds and became places for devotion. Rock chambers were developed to house monks and to serve as halls for religious ceremonies. The rooms were carved out of rock cliffs on the sides of mountains.

Ancient Indians also made advances in astronomy and mathematics. They charted the movements of the heavenly bodies. They knew that the Earth was round and that it rotated on its axis and revolved around the sun. Indian mathematicians introduced the concept of zero and used a symbol (0) for it. Aryabhata, the most famous Indian mathematician of the Gupta Empire, was one of the first mathematicians known to have used algebra. After Arabs

# Reading Essentials and Study Guide



## Chapter 3, Section 2 (continued)

conquered parts of India, Arab scholars adopted the Indian number system. European traders borrowed it from the Arabs, and it spread through Europe in the 1200s. It is the system that we use today and is called the Indian-Arabic numeral system.

7. Who was one of the first mathematicians to use algebra?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---