

Lesson 2: India and Persia

Directions: Read the summary to reveal how the Indian civilization developed with influences from the Aryans and Persians. As you read, underline important details in each section that relate to that section's title. Think about what you already know, what you want to know, and what you have learned after reading the summary.

Vocabulary

brahmin a priest or a teacher; the highest position in Aryan society

sudra a serf; the lowest position in Aryan society

Indus River Valley Civilization (p.129)

Civilization in the Indus River Valley began about 2500 B.C. Two ancient cities were Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. The people had a system of writing. People farmed and stored grain, worked with metal and pottery, wove cotton, and traded and sold goods. By 2500 B.C., the Harappan civilization was strong. In Mohenjo-Daro, the people constructed buildings and roads. About 1700 B.C., the Harappan civilization vanished suddenly. Many archaeologists think that this was because of a monsoon, a flood, or an earthquake.

The Aryans Arrive (p. 130)

About 1500 B.C., the Aryans invaded the Indus River Valley. They came over the Hindu Kush mountains in the north. This is called the Aryan migration. The Aryans spoke a language called Sanskrit. They were nomads who herded cattle, sheep, and goats. The Aryans built villages and towns where they farmed and traded. The Vedas, or "Books of Knowledge," contain their stories, songs, and history. The Vedas describe wars between groups of Aryans as well as contests between gods and humans. The Aryans also wrote hymns.

Aryan Culture Spreads (p. 130-131)

Aryan groups were led by a rajah, or priest leader. The groups traded with each other. They fought one another. The highest positions in Aryan society were held by priests and teachers, or **brahmins**. Warriors and kings were the second highest group. Artisans, traders, and merchants were in the third group. The **sudras**, or the serfs who farmed and served others, were at the lowest level. The Persians heard about Aryan riches. Persian armies moved into the Indus River Valley.

The Persian Empire (p.132)

From about 550 to 320 B.C., the Persian Empire reached from the Mediterranean Sea to the Indus River Valley. King Darius I made India part of the Persian Empire. The Persians built roads to India and developed trade. This connected India to lands in Central Asia. Zoroastrianism is a religion founded by the Persian prophet Zoroaster. Zoroastrianism recognized one god. Today's followers of Zoroastrianism are known as Parsis. Many live in South Asia today. Their ancestors came from Persia.

The First Indian Empire (p. 133)

Chandragupta Maurya took over India in about 320 B.C. He began the first Indian Empire, the Mauryan Empire. He extended the empire to the Persian border. Ashoka, Chandragupta's grandson, became the ruler of India in about 270 B.C. By that time, the Mauryan Empire included the Deccan Plateau. Ashoka organized the empire's government. It controlled many parts of life, such as how artisans worked and how doctors treated their patients. India had a strong group of civil service workers, a powerful army, and even had spies to watch over the empire. The Mauryan Empire ended about 185 B.C. India broke up into regions until A.D. 320, when the Guptas took over.

Arts and Sciences (p.134)

The Gupta Empire lasted about 200 years. Achievements were made in astronomy, mathematics, literature, poetry, art, and architecture. Economy and trade improved. The Huns, people from the north, arrived in the fifth century. They took control of much of India by the mid-sixth century.

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Directions: Read each of the following descriptions and decide if it is related to the Aryan Empire (A), Persian Empire (P), Mauryan Empire (M), or Gupta Empire (G). Write the appropriate letter on the line at the end of each description. You will use your textbook and provide the page number where you found your answer.

- p. 134 1. Developed the number system we use today G
- p. _____ 2. Founded the religion of Zoroastrianism _____
- p. _____ 3. Developed roads and trade in India _____
- p. _____ 4. Lasted from about 320 B.C. to about 185 B.C. _____
- p. _____ 5. Designed stone temples _____
- p. _____ 6. Lasted from about 1500 B.C. to about 550 B.C. _____
- p. _____ 7. First Indian empire _____
- p. _____ 8. Lasted from about 550 B.C. to about 320 B.C. _____
- p. _____ 9. Had civil service workers, a powerful army, and an army of spies _____
- p. _____ 10. Nomads who crossed the Hindu Kush _____
- p. _____ 11. Used stone columns to mark territory and to make announcements _____
- p. _____ 12. Lasted from about A.D. 320 to about A.D. 520 _____
- p. _____ 13. Sanskrit became the language of the wealthy _____
- p. _____ 14. Recorded their stories and songs in the Vedas, or “Books of Knowledge” _____
- p. _____ 15. Groups were headed by a rajah _____
- p. _____ 16. Founder was Cyrus II _____