

Ancient India

Can you find India on a world map? What do you already know about India's culture? Did you know that the ancient Indus Valley culture is as old as the Egyptian and Mesopotamian cultures? Did you know the Indians performed early dentistry thousands of years ago? Or that they had the first indoor plumbing, including toilets and showers?

Chandragupta Maurya started the Maurya Empire in about 321 B.C. It was the first time one ruler brought together almost all of India. The Maurya built roads, bridges and even a postal system. Its most famous leader was Emperor Asoka (see inside). When Asoka died, the Maurya Empire lasted about 50 more years. Around 500 years later, the Gupta Empire began.

When you hear the term Golden Age, you may remember the ancient Greeks. This term refers to the best of times for any civilization. The Gupta Empire was India's Golden Age. This empire lasted from A.D. 320 to about 500. During that time, music, art, math and science were very important. The Indian government paid writers, artists and teachers. During the Gupta Empire, mathematicians developed the number system 1-9, which we now call Arabic numerals. (Zero came a little later.) New medicines were developed, and doctors began performing surgery. The Gupta culture was

also very tolerant of religious differences. People were free to practice their religion without persecution, even if they did not worship the same way as the emperors. Invasions by the Huna people brought the Gupta Empire to an end.



The people of India gave the world many things we still use today. For example, yoga originated in India about 5,000 years ago. Yoga is a part of the Hindu religion. It is a way to exercise your mind, soul and body. Some scientists believe the first vaccinations were given in ancient India as well. After numerals were developed, Indian mathematicians were the first to introduce the concept of zero. They used dots to represent the concept of nothingness and to represent place value. If you like to play chess, you might be interested to know Indian people played an early version of the game about 3,000 years ago. (Or should that be 3... years ago?) The many languages in India gave us several English words: cheetah, shampoo, pajamas, dungarees, cashmere and bungalow. Spices like cinnamon, pepper, nutmeg, paprika and cloves originated in India.

Now that you've read a little bit about the contributions the people of ancient India made to the world, let's talk about the people who came up with all those great ideas. Who were they? What was life like for them hundreds of years ago? What did they believe? Believe it or not, all you have to do is turn the page to find out!

Connections

The Questions of Climate Change

In January 2012 the Wall Street Journal newspaper printed an article signed by 16 scientists and engineers. The article said there was no need to panic about climate change. They believe the scientists who say human-made carbon dioxide causes global warming are wrong. Carbon dioxide is used by plants and is found in lower amounts today than when plants grew millions of years ago. They also say the Earth has not warmed significantly over the last 10 years. They are concerned that scientists who are doubtful about global warming are being fired from their jobs.

255 scientists from the National Academy of Sciences do not agree with this view. They

point out that most of the 16 people who signed the Wall Street Journal article are not experts in climatology. One is a medical doctor, another an airplane designer and still another an electrical engineer. This larger group of scientists says that there is plenty of proof that the Earth is heating up because of our use of fossil fuel.

Both groups believe the other side just wants money. The 16 scientists and engineers say climate scientists want government money for their research. The 255 National Academy of Sciences scientists say many people arguing against climate change are being paid in one way or another by the fossil fuel industry. Some of the 16 scientists and engineers who wrote



the Wall Street Journal article have worked for oil companies. What do you think? Is our Earth warming?



People of Ancient India

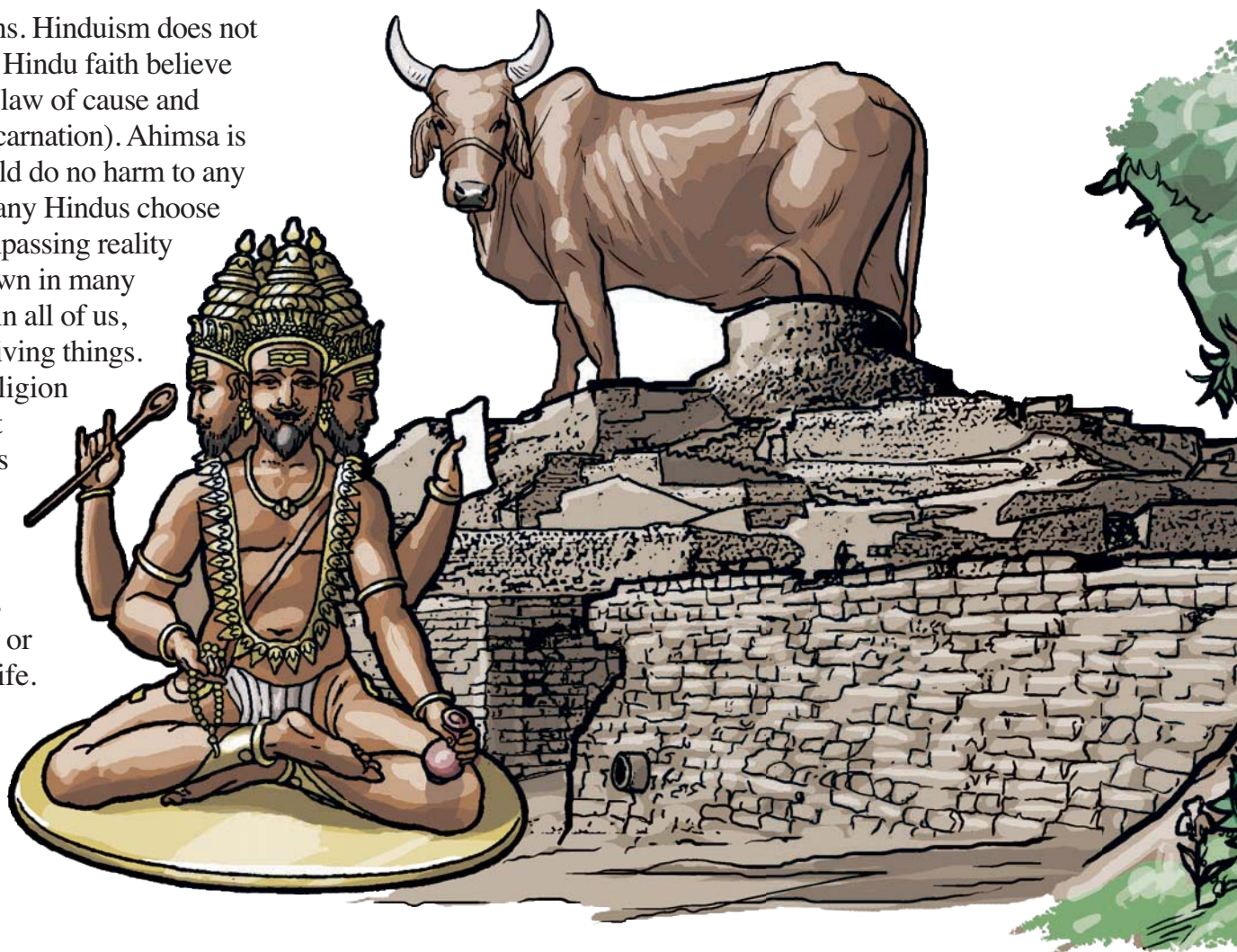
The Arya

The Arya were in India around 1500 B.C. Much of what we know about these people comes from the thousands of religious hymns they left behind. These hymns are known as the Vedas. The songs were first sung and later told as stories. These ancient hymns and stories were composed and recited in the Sanskrit language, even before Sanskrit had a script. The Vedas are very important to the Hindu religion. The Arya also developed a system of dividing people into classes of society according to their occupation. This system was called the caste system. Historians disagree about whether the Arya were invaders who conquered India, immigrants whose culture mixed with the Indus Valley culture or indigenous people of India. (Indigenous means original or native.)

Hinduism

Hinduism is one of the world's oldest religions. Hinduism does not have a leader or founder. People who follow the Hindu faith believe in dharma (righteous action), karma (the eternal law of cause and effect) and samsara (life cycles that include reincarnation). Ahimsa is the belief that all life is sacred and that you should do no harm to any living thing. Because of this belief in ahimsa, many Hindus choose to be vegetarian. Hindus believe in an all-encompassing reality or divine known as Brahman. This divine is shown in many forms. Hindus believe a part of Brahman exists in all of us, which is another reason to do no harm to other living things.

Another very important part of the Hindu religion is reincarnation. Reincarnation is the belief that after you die, you return to Earth again either as a human or an animal. To free your soul from returning to Earth over and over, you must free yourself completely from desires. The Hindu religion says that it takes many lifetimes to achieve this. In Hinduism, your past actions, or karma, determine what happens to you in this life. Your current actions determine what happens in your next life. Reincarnation and karma are important beliefs in Hinduism and Buddhism, as well as Sikhism and Jainism, two other religions that started on the Indian subcontinent.



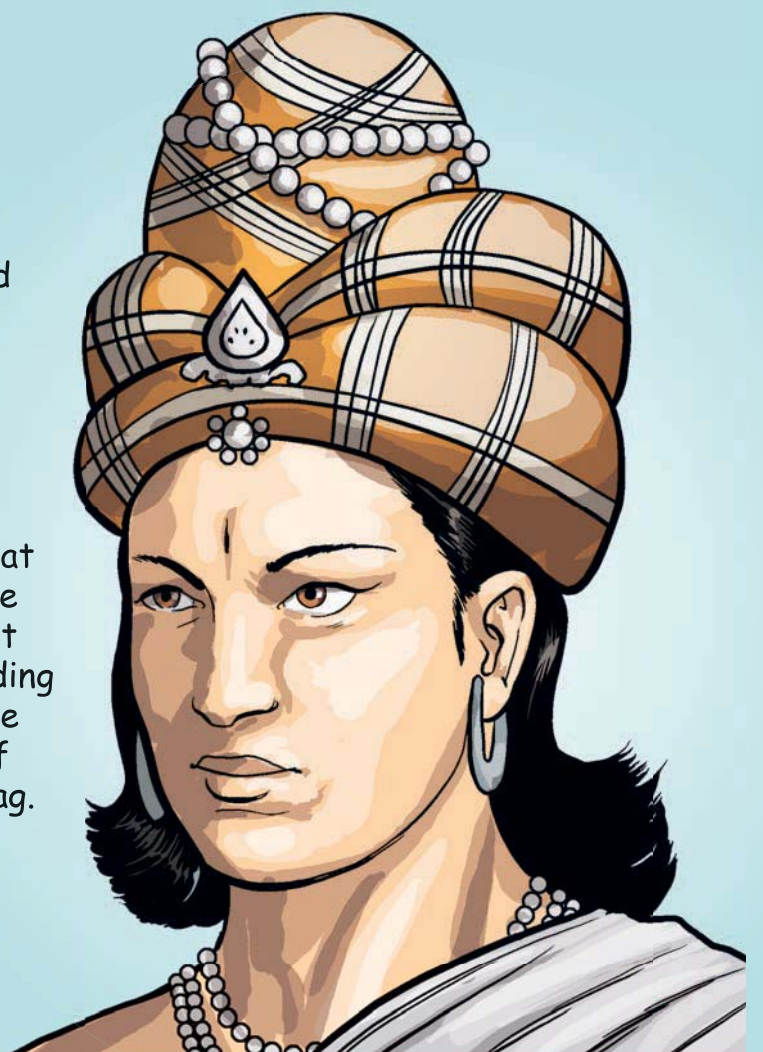
World Biography Asoka

Asoka was born in 301 B.C. He was the third king of the Maurya Empire and ruled for about 37 years. After one very bloody battle, Asoka made a tremendous change. He decided he would no longer fight or kill. Asoka dedicated his life to peace. He converted (changed) to a new religion at that time—Buddhism. Asoka spread the Buddhist religion to millions of other people throughout India and central Asia.

Asoka went on to stop the killing of all animals. There would be no sports or sacrifices with animals harmed. People say he built hospitals for sick animals as well as hospitals for the people of his kingdom. Asoka banned slavery and ended the death penalty in his

kingdom. He dug wells, planted trees, constructed roads, built thousands of Buddhist structures called stupas and made the lives of those living in distant villages better. We know about Asoka from the many inscriptions on pillars that were erected in his honor. One such pillar (at Sanath) is about 50 feet tall. It has four standing lions on the top. This sculpture became the national symbol of India and is seen on India's flag.

Today people remember Asoka, whose name means "without sorrow," as one of India's most successful and important leaders.



by our mind—we become what we think.” He said the goal was to reach Nirvana, a state of wisdom. Gautama earned the name Buddha, the enlightened one. His followers are called Buddhists.

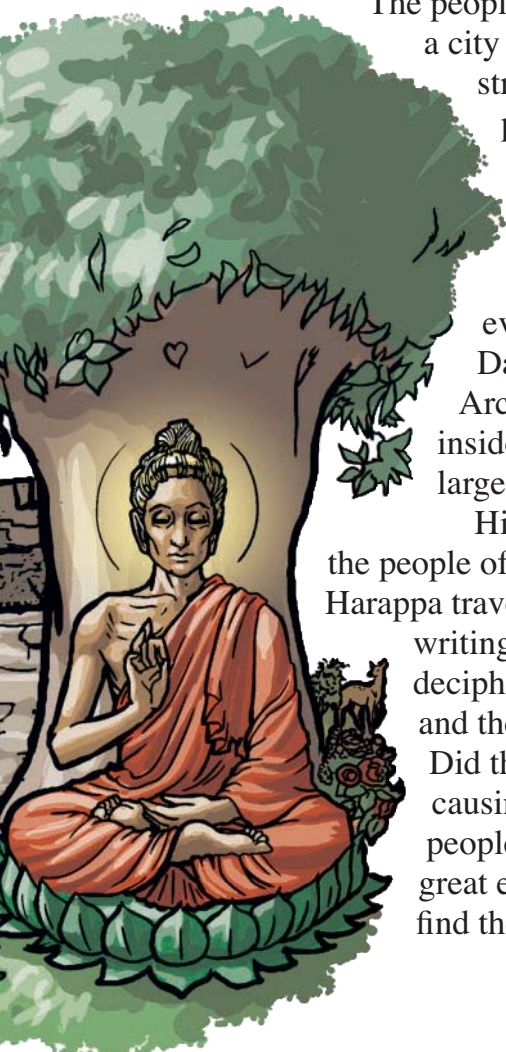
Mohenjo Daro and Harappa

While workers were constructing a railroad through the lands in India during the 1800s, they found many red bricks. They also found ornaments and figurines. The workers used some of the bricks for building the railroad. Eventually, archaeologists heard of the red bricks and came to learn more about the discovery. In 1922, they unearthed the brick walls of a city built around 2500 B.C. Archaeologists also found remains of hundreds of villages and towns stretching from the Arabian Sea to the Himalayas. They named the largest city Mohenjo Daro, which means “mound of the dead.” They called the second largest city Harappa.

The cities date back to between 2500 and 1500 B.C., around the same time as the ancient civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia. Artifacts give many clues to what it was like to live in these cities.

The people who lived in this area planned a city that seems almost modern. The streets are laid out in patterns. Ancient people installed indoor plumbing in buildings, which enabled citizens to use toilets and showers. An extensive sewer system carried the old water out of the city. Buildings even had garbage chutes! In Mohenjo Daro, there was a large fort, or citadel. Archaeologists have unearthed remains inside the citadel of what they think was a large swimming pool.

Historians say the cities traded with the people of Mesopotamia and that sailors from Harappa traveled the Arabian Sea. Although a writing system existed, no one has yet deciphered it. What became of these cities and the people? Archaeologists aren’t sure. Did the Indus River change its course, causing terrible flooding? Did invading people destroy the cities? Was there a great earthquake? Maybe one day you will find the answer to these mysteries.



History

Caste System

The caste system in India has a long and complicated history. Originally based on a person's temperament, over time it became accepted as based upon a person's birth. Your caste, or position in society, determined what you could do in life. Hard work and effort could not improve your caste position. Only by dying and being reborn could you improve your position. The Arya originally established this system, but the people of India kept it going even after the Arya were no longer in control.

There were four basic caste groups. The Brahmin was the highest caste. Teachers and priests were among this group. The next level in the caste system was the Kshatriya. This was the warrior caste. Craftspeople, or Vaishya, were next, and the Sudras were the last and largest caste, the workers. Eventually, there were hundreds of other castes to further divide people.

Each caste had its own set of rules that every member had to obey, and different castes did not associate with members of other castes. Think for a minute. Did you select your parents? Did you have any choice in being born in the United States instead of Canada or Namibia? What if you wanted to be a teacher but could not because you were not from the right family?

Many Hindus believed if you followed the rules of your caste willingly, you were rewarded in the next life. Those who did not follow the rules were kicked out of their caste. (This is where we got the word “outcast.”) The Hindus also called them untouchables. Untouchables did all the jobs that none of the other castes wished to do, like clearing garbage, removing dead animals from the streets, etc. For many years, these people and their children had few rights and were treated very badly. At one time the untouchables did not even have the right to educate themselves.

Today, the Constitution of India says it is illegal to discriminate against anyone because of his or her caste. Despite the law, many Indian people are still identified by their family's caste and treated differently because of it.



India

Did you know India is the second most populated country in the world after China? There are more than 1 billion people living there. India is the seventh largest country in the world and is located on the continent of Asia. It is a peninsula, which means water touches three of its sides. These water bodies are the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean and the Bay of Bengal. Because of India's size, it is called a “subcontinent.” A subcontinent is a large landmass that is smaller than a continent.

There are many different geographic features in India. There are jungles, forests, the Deccan Plateau and the Thar Desert. The main river in India is the Ganges. Monsoons, or strong winds, affect

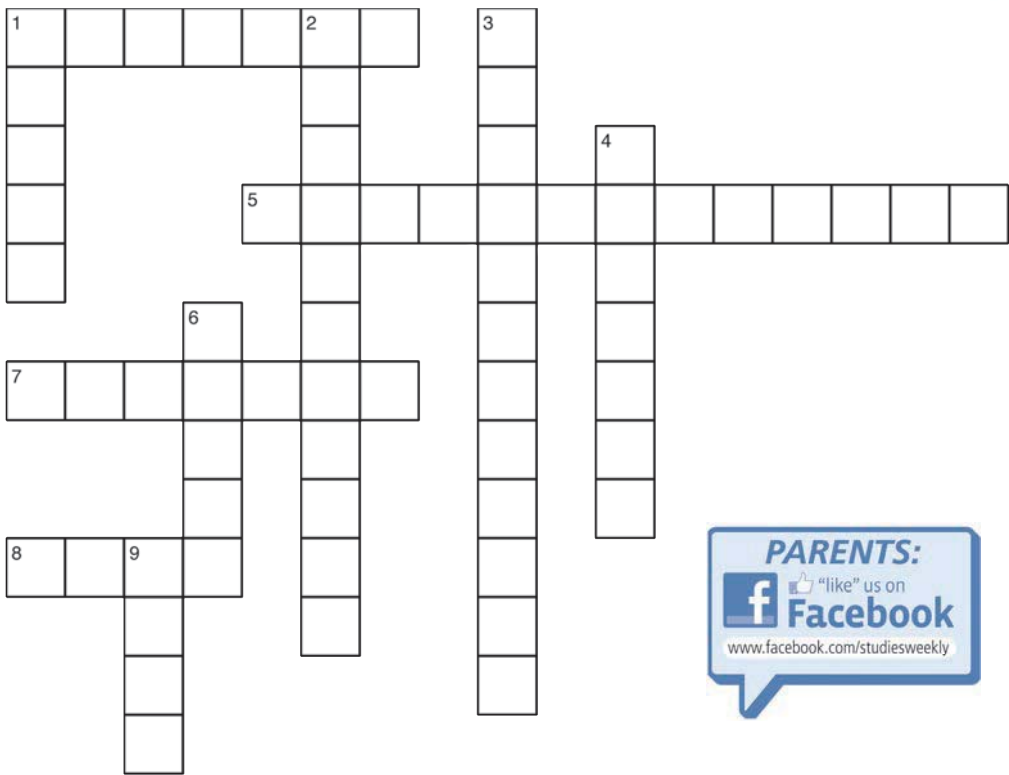
the climate of India. In the winter, monsoons bring in cold, dry air. In the summer, monsoons bring warmer and wetter weather to the country. If you travel north, you will see the Himalayas, the highest mountain range in the world.

The country is divided into 29 states, and New Delhi is the nation's capital. Twenty-two languages are spoken in India, but Hindi and English are the most common and are the official languages of India. India's official national sport is field hockey, but cricket is probably its most popular game. The Bengal tiger is the national animal, and the peacock is the national bird. India is also home to leopards, snow leopards, Indian elephants and poisonous cobra snakes.

World Regions



Name _____



- ACROSS
1. man who earned the name Buddha

5. belief that the soul is reborn many times

7. strong wind

8. people who developed the caste system
- DOWN
1. empire of India's Golden Age

2. ancient city whose name means "mound of the dead"

3. landmass that is smaller than a continent

4. the highest caste

6. king whose name means "without sorrow"

9. exercise to relax your mind, soul and body



As you read this week's lesson, circle or highlight all proper nouns with any color pen or highlighter. This will help you find some of the crossword answers and get ready for this week's test.

Be an Archaeologist

Activity

Imagine you are an archaeologist who has just found the following artifacts at Mohenjo Daro. Archaeologists often don't know for certain what happened or how people lived in a certain place. They have to infer, or make educated guesses, based on the artifacts they find. What can you infer about this ancient culture from the artifacts you have found?

1. gold nose ornaments, ankle bracelets and hairpins

2. many female statues and figurines

3. bronze razors, copper pans and weapons

4. paw prints in the pavement

5. dice, marbles, rattles and this terra cotta bull (pictured below)



What made
Gandhi
Gandhi.

SOUL
Pass It On:
VALUES.COM THE FOUNDATION FOR A BETTER LIFE



HEY KIDS!

Scan this with a smartphone, or go to **StudiesWeekly.com** to earn points as you learn! Help me upgrade my home and garage!

