

Section 1

The Indus and Ganges River Valleys

Chapter 4
Ancient India

The background features several sets of concentric circles in a lighter shade of blue, resembling ripples in water. These circles are positioned in the lower half of the slide, with one set on the left, one in the center, and a larger one on the right.

Objectives

- Learn about India's geographic setting.
- Find out about life in an ancient city of the Indus River valley.
- Learn about the rise of a new culture in the Indus and Ganges river valleys.



Vocabulary

subcontinent - a large landmass that juts out from a continent.

monsoons - strong winds that blow across the region at certain times of the year.

citadel - the fortress in a city.

migrate - to relocate; to move from one place and settle in another.

caste - a social class of people.

Map of India





Himalayas
1,500 miles long & 5 miles high

India's Geographic Setting

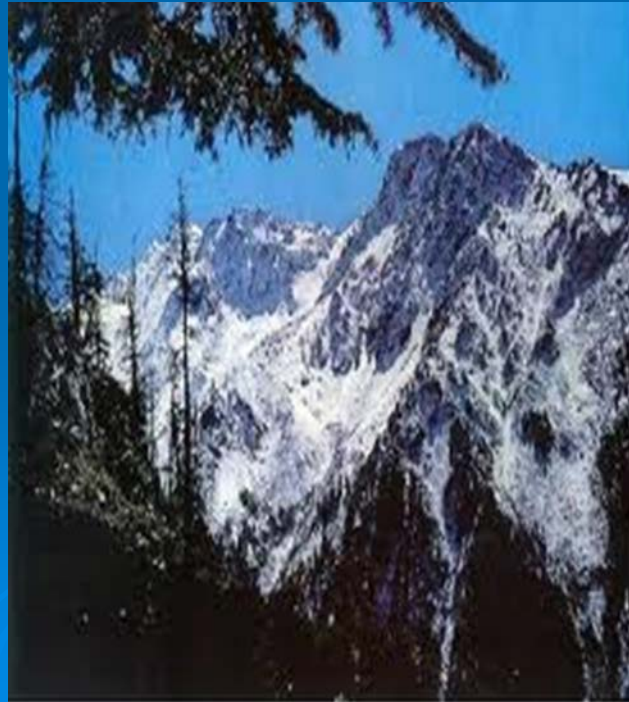


Geographers refer to India as a subcontinent, a large landmass that juts out from a continent.

Hindu Kush and Himalayan Mountain Ranges

Two mountain ranges (Hindu Kush & Himalayas) cut India off from Asia.

These ranges, along with various water sources, have helped shape India's history.

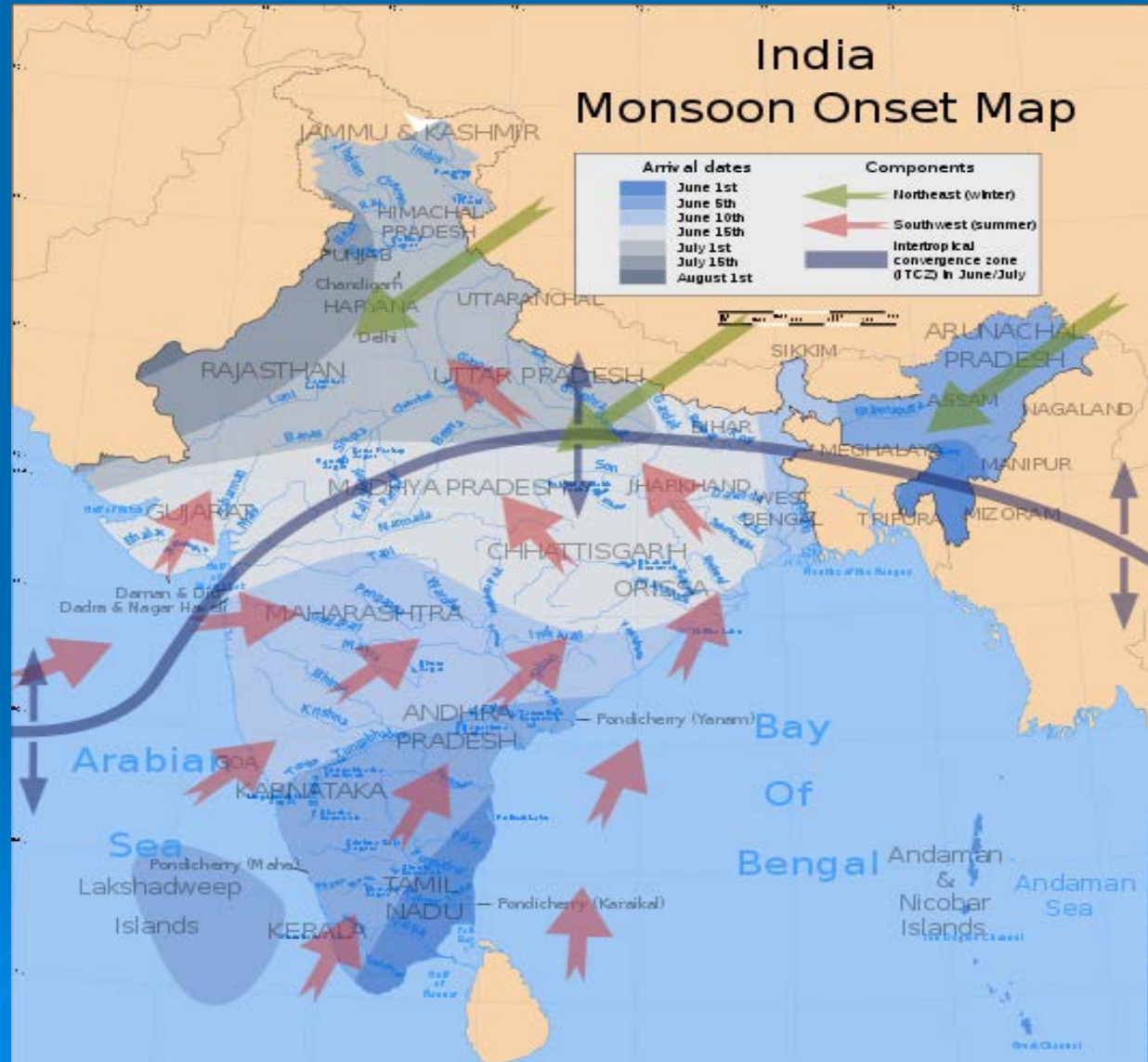


Climate of Monsoons

- India's climate is dominated by the monsoons, strong winds that blow across the region at certain times of the year.
- From October to May, the winter monsoon blows dry air across the country.
- In June, the wind blows off the Indian Ocean, creating moisture that drenches the plains.

Monsoon Map

The rains help the crops to grow, giving food to the people.




Barriers and Pathways

- Even though mountain ranges cut India off from Asia, gaps in the ranges have been the source of both migration and invasion.
- The Indus and Ganges rivers begin in the mountain ranges and empty into the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea.

Reading Check

How do winter monsoons differ from summer monsoon?

Winter monsoons bring dry air from the northeast to India, while summer monsoons from the ocean bring rain.



Life in the Indus River Valley

- In the Indus River Valley, the rich soil caused a surplus of food, allowing populations to grow.
- Two cities flourished, Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro.



Ancient City Planners

- The ruins of Mohenjo-Daro show how carefully the city was planned.
- It was built above ground level which protected it from floods.
- Homes were built on one side of the city, public buildings on the other.
- The citadel, a fortress, stood on the highest point.
- The citadel held the most important buildings in the city.

- Unlike most ancient cities of the time, Mohenjo-Daro had a drainage system. Clay pipes carried waste away from homes and buildings.
- There was also a canal system which distributed water from the Indus River to where it was needed.



Mohenjo-Daro Ruins



Life in Mohenjo-Daro

- In the city, merchants sold their goods from shops that lined the streets.
- Traders came from all over to buy and sell goods.
- The citizens lived in homes with open courtyards.
- The language of the people is still a mystery, but their writings (symbols) appear on square seals.
- They were a polytheistic religion.

Square Seal – Mohenjo-Daro



Mysterious Decline

- Around 2000 BC, Indus valley farmers began to abandon their land.
- Historians are unsure why the early people of the valley declined.
- Some speculate a massive earthquake or barren farm land.

Reading Check

When did the Indus valley civilization begin to decline?

The Indus valley civilization began to decline around 2000 B.C.



A New Culture Arises

- The newcomers to India called themselves Aryans, which meant “noble.”
- They migrated, or moved to India, following their flocks.
- Over time, people adopted the culture of the Aryans and mixed them with Indian cultures.

Aryan Culture Spreads

- The new culture began in the Indus river valley.
- It spread to the Ganges valley, where people adopted the language.
- People learned how to make iron tools, clearing forests for farmlands.

Aryan Life

- Most of what historians know about the Aryans comes from religious books known as the Vedas, which means “knowledge.”
- Aryans organized themselves into 4 social classes.
 - 1) Priests or Brahmins
 - 2) warriors and nobles
 - 3) artisans and merchants
 - 4) farm workers and servants

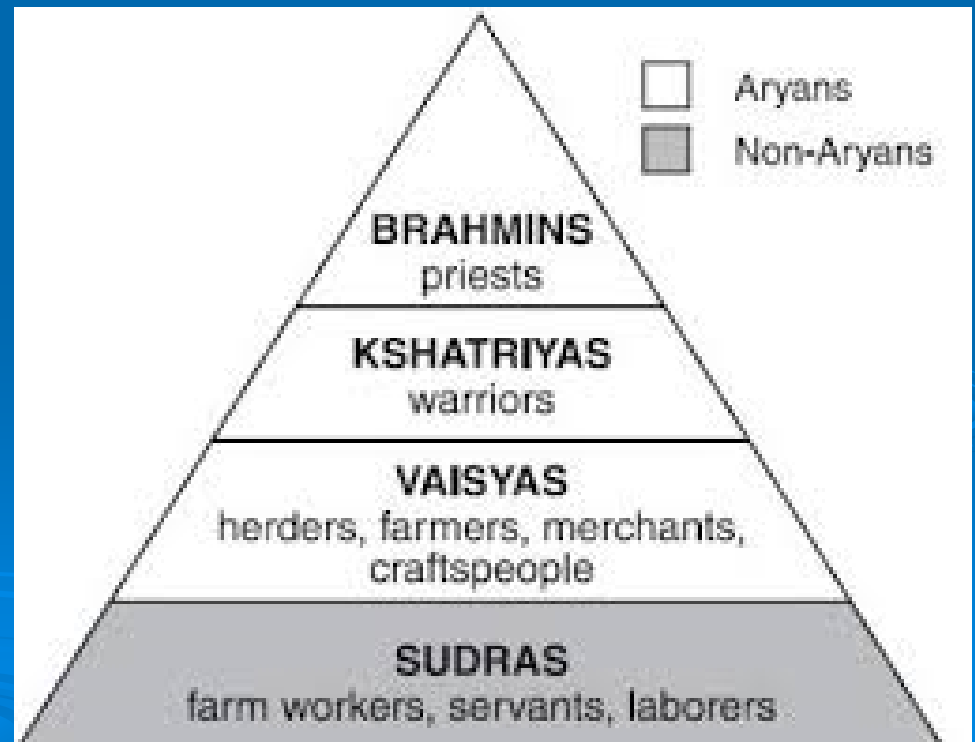
Social Order

- By 500 BC, there was a distinct division of classes.
- It was known as the caste, or class system.
- People belonged to the caste of their parents.
- People inside a caste did the same type of work.
- The caste system is still in place in India today.

Reading Check

How was Aryan society organized?

Aryans introduced the caste system to India.

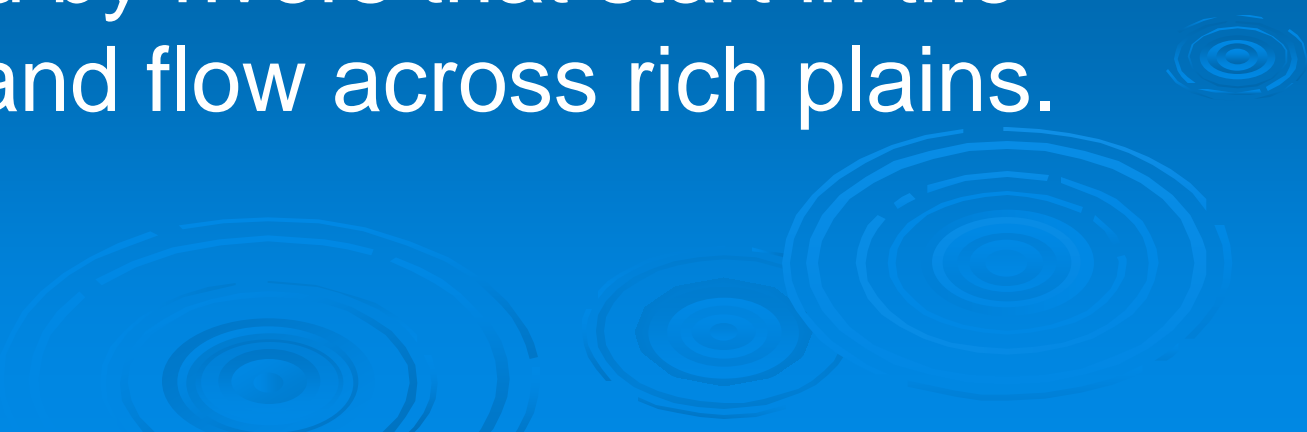


Section 1, Assessment

1. (a) Recall

Describe the geography of the Indus and Ganges river valleys.

The Indus and Ganges river valleys were both created by rivers that start in the Himalayas and flow across rich plains.

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1. (b) Identify Effects

How do the monsoons affect India and its climate?

Summer monsoons produce wet summers and bring water to crops.

They can also cause flooding.

Winter monsoons produce dry winters.



2. (a) Explain

How did geography influence the building of Mohenjo-Daro?

The city had to be built on high ground in order to avoid flooding from the Indus River.



2. (b) Draw Conclusions

How was Mohenjo-Daro similar to modern cities?

Like Mohenjo-Daro, modern cities have waste drainage systems, shops, and busy streets.



3. (a) Identify

Who were the Aryans?

The Aryans were people who migrated from central Asia to the Indus valley between about 2000 and 1500 B.C.



3. (b) Analyze Information

How was it possible for the Aryans to spread their influence over the Indus and Ganges river valleys so successfully?

The Aryans' horse-drawn chariots scared the local people and helped Aryans gain power.

