

CHAPTER 12

Correlates with 6.26, 6.27, 6.28, 6.29, 6.30
Develops SSP.01, .02, .03, .04, .05, .06

GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF ANCIENT INDIA

Indian culture developed over 4,000 years ago on the Indian subcontinent of South Asia. Although the ancient Indian civilizations are long gone, their cultures and ideas have had a lasting impact on people living in the region today.

The Harappan Civilization

In 1922, archaeologists made an incredible discovery in the Indus River Valley of Pakistan. Hidden underneath layers of soil, they discovered the remains of houses and buildings and temples built thousands of years ago! Archaeologists carefully excavated the area. They had found an ancient city! In this city, they found:

- architecture built with bricks
- roads arranged as a series of grid-systems
- sanitation and sewer systems



The Indian subcontinent includes the countries of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.

Archaeologists named the ancient city Harappa and referred to it as the **Harappan civilization**.

Shortly after discovering Harappa, archaeologists uncovered another ancient city in the Indus River Valley! They called the second city **Mohenjo-Daro**, or “hill of the dead.” Since then, archaeologists have found more than 1,000 cities and villages throughout the Indus River Valley! Based on these discoveries, we know that a complex ancient Indian civilization existed more than 4,000 years ago in the region now occupied by Pakistan, India, and Afghanistan.



The uncovered ruins of Mohenjo-Daro show that the city was expertly planned. Much like a modern city, it boasted straight roads and city blocks. In the foreground, you can see the Great Bath, a large pool at the city's center. Archaeologists do not know what this pool was used for, perhaps bathing, swimming, or even religious rituals.




Quick Review

Answer the questions.

1. What two ancient cities did archaeologists discover in 1922?

2. In what major river valley did these cities develop? _____
3. How were roads arranged and buildings built in these cities? _____
4. In which geographical region of the world was this discovery made? _____



Key Concept Check-Point

Describe how each of the following geographical characteristics were favorable to the development of the Harappan civilization.


Indus River

Seasonal Monsoons

Surrounding Landforms

Fertile Soil

Growth of Harappan Civilization



Order of Events

Number the events 1–5 in chronological order.


_____ Harappan civilization disappears.

_____ Harappan civilization is at its height.

_____ First settlers begin farming in the Indus River Valley.

_____ Settlers begin living together in small villages.

_____ First true cities are built using advanced engineering techniques.



Critical Thinking

Read the text and answer the question.

The Harappan civilization only developed after hunter-gatherers gave up their nomadic lifestyle to settle in one location. Why was this decision to live in one permanent location essential to the development of the first ancient civilization in India? Support your response with evidence and examples from the text.

Harappan Civilization: What Do We Know?

The Harappan civilization survived about 1000 years. Then it mysteriously disappeared between 2000 and 1500 BCE.

Here are things we know, and don't know, about the Harappan civilization and its people:

Economy

We know Harappan cities became wealthy through trade. Artisans such as weavers, potters, and metalworkers produced many useful and decorative items, such as cotton clothing, clay dishes, and gold jewelry.

Traders from the Indus River Valley exchanged goods with ancient people across Asia and the Middle East—including with ancient Mesopotamia.

Government

While we do not know exactly what form of government the Harappans had, we know that city governments were responsible for deciding issues of agriculture, trade, and for constructing roads, temples, and other public works. The central government organized a city using straight roads to make a grid of city blocks. Large cities had citadels, or fortress-like structures, at the center of the city. The citadel's walls protected key government and religious buildings, palaces, and grain storages.

Religion

We know the Harappans worshiped gods that often took animal or human forms. We do not know what role priests and religion played in their society.

Language

We know that most Harappan villages spoke the same language. However, we do not know what the language sounded like or where it came from.

Technology

The Indus River Valley civilization was remarkably advanced. The Harappans knew how to mix copper and tin to make bronze tools for agriculture. Cities established standard measurements of weight and length to make the construction of roads and buildings uniform. That allowed the Harappans to build straight roads in grid systems. Houses were built using clay **bricks** and many were two or three stories tall. Houses had bathrooms with drains. Clay pipes were built underneath cities to remove wastewater and improve **sanitation**—just like **sewer systems** today! People in cities enjoyed fresh drinking water from a city well.

Writing

We know Harappans had a system of writing. They wrote in picture-like symbols similar to the Mesopotamians and ancient Egyptians. Many of their symbols depict animals or nature. They used carved stamps, or seals, to press images into soft clay. In fact, some Harappan writing

has been found all the way in Mesopotamia. However, we do not know how to read their writing!

Did You Know?

The Harappans used the Indus River Valley's geography to their advantage. As a result, their civilization thrived, and it is believed to be one of the largest ancient civilizations that we know of today!



Quick Review

Answer the questions.

1. What was the purpose of government in the Harappan civilization?

2. What was the function of the citadel? _____
3. How is the Harappan writing system similar to Mesopotamian cuneiform?

4. How is the Harappan writing system different from the Mesopotamian cuneiform?

5. Based on what you know about other ancient civilizations, explain why the Harappans might have worshiped gods with human and animal forms.



Gather Information

Gather evidence from the text to support each statement about the Harappan civilization and the its people.

1. Cities of the Harappan civilization were well organized.

2. The Harappan civilization made innovations similar to modern conveniences we enjoy today.

3. It is possible that the Harappan civilization borrowed much of its advanced technology from the ancient Mesopotamian civilization.

Arrival of the Ancient Aryans

The Aryan people were originally nomadic herders who counted their wealth in cattle. They discovered how to domesticate horses, which allowed them to travel across vast areas of land quickly.

The ancient Aryans migrated into India and settled in northern India between 2000 BCE and 1400 BCE. They settled in the Indus River Valley, where the Harappan people once lived.

By 900 BCE, the Aryan people had expanded into the Ganges River Valley. The **Ganges River** travels more than 1,500 miles across northern India to the Bay of Bengal in Bangladesh. Like the Indus River Valley, the plains surrounding the Ganges River provided favorable geographic characteristics that promoted the growth of civilization.



Map Skill-Builder

Look at the map of the Indo-Aryan Migration, and answer the questions.

1. Over which geographic feature did the Aryan people travel to reach India?

2. In which two regions did the Aryan people settle? _____
3. Why did the Aryans settle in those regions? _____

4. What geographic feature separates the Indian subcontinent from China? _____
5. How did that geographic feature benefit the Aryan people? _____



Critical Thinking

Read the theories about what happened to the Harappan civilization. Indicate whether each piece of evidence below best supports Theory 1 or Theory 2.

Theory 1: Several waves of Aryan invaders destroyed the Harappan people and their entire civilization.

Theory 2: Climate change, flooding, or a shift in the path of the Indus River caused a loss of crops. Many Harappans starved and others left the Indus River Valley to build new settlements in other locations.

- | | |
|---|--|
| _____ 1. Skeletons at Harappa show evidence of violent deaths from warfare. | _____ 4. The Indus River Valley civilization disappeared around the same time the Aryans arrived. |
| _____ 2. Archaeologists have found remains of Harappan villages along dry riverbeds where the Indus River used to flow. | _____ 5. Many skeletons unearthed from Harappan cities show signs of sickness and extreme lack of nourishment. |
| _____ 3. Archaeologists have found traces of Harappan settlements in the Ganges River Valley. | |

Aryan Civilization and Culture

The Aryans had a unique and distinct civilization. In fact, many cultural practices and products of India today can be traced back to the ancient Aryan civilization and their traditions.

Language

When the ancient Aryans migrated into South Asia, they brought their language, called **Sanskrit**, to India. Sanskrit was used widely in India for over 2,000 years. Today, Sanskrit is a “dead language,” meaning it is not common for people to speak or write in Sanskrit. However, most Indian languages evolved from Sanskrit. Many words in Hindi—the most widely spoken language in India—come directly from the ancient language of Sanskrit!

Literature’s Legacy

The ancient Indians used Sanskrit for writing. Many ancient Indian texts are still important to Indian culture today. The ancient Aryans recorded their beliefs and ideas in a collection of sacred texts called **The Vedas**. The word *veda* means “knowledge.” The *Vedas* taught religious principles and described how people should behave in society. Today, the *Vedas* are the foundational religious texts of **Hinduism**—the most practiced religion in India.

The *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* are two epic poems originally written in Sanskrit. These poems tell the stories of ancient Indian kings and ancient Indian gods. They also teach lessons about morality and religious beliefs.



An actor performing a traditional role in a play based on the *Ramayana*

Although written thousands of years ago, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* continue to be influential in modern Indian culture. Even today, these epic poems are considered sacred documents of the Hindu religion. Rama, the hero of the *Ramayana*, is one of the most celebrated deities in India and Southeast Asia. The characters and situations described in this ancient literature are referenced in many Indian movies, plays, paintings, and songs.



Reading for Information

Answer the questions.

1. Sanskrit was the language of which Indian culture? _____
2. Why is Sanskrit considered a “dead language” today?

3. How has Sanskrit influenced modern Indian languages?

4. What is the relationship between ancient Indian literature and Hinduism?

5. How has ancient Indian literature influenced Indian culture today?

India's Caste System

Like other ancient civilizations, ancient Aryan society was divided into social classes. A person's occupation determined his or her social class. From Aryan society, social classes developed in Ancient India. These four social classes were called **castes**—Brahmin (priests), Kshatriyas (rulers), Vaisyas (merchants), and Sudras (laborers).

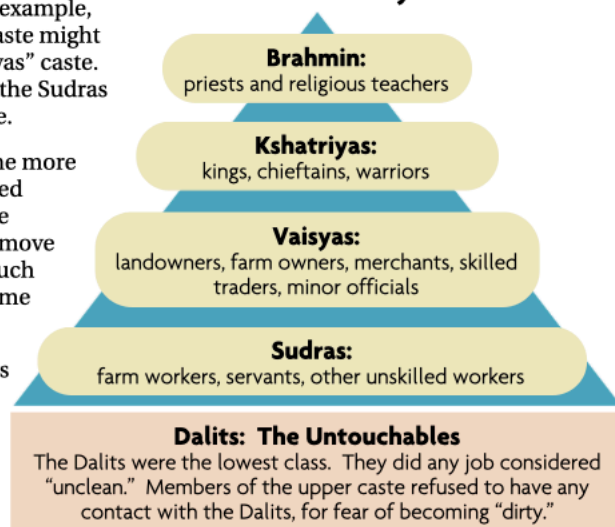
Each person was born into the same caste as his or her parents. For example, the daughter of a servant was born into the "Sudras" laboring caste. People learned the same job as their parents and usually remained in the same caste for life.

In very rare circumstances, a person rose to become a member of a higher caste. For example, the son of a landowner of the "Vaisyas" caste might train to become a warrior in the "Kshatriyas" caste. However, members of the lowest classes, the Sudras and Dalits, could never change their caste.

Over time, the Hindu caste system became more and more complex. Each caste was divided into hundreds of "sub castes" and became increasingly inflexible. People could not move from one caste to another! As a result, much of their lives were determined from the time they were born.

The Hindu caste system still partially exists in India today. The caste system is more flexible than in the past. Today, people can change their social class through education. However, old ways are hard to change, and many people still believe in following the old caste system.

The Hindu Caste System



Quick Review

Fill in each blank with the correct word.

The caste system of ancient India described how people were divided into _____. Within the caste system, a person's caste is defined by his or her _____. People belonged to the same caste as their _____. That meant that Indian people did not have much _____ in what job they did.

The Hindu caste system in India today developed from the _____ society of ancient India. Over time, the caste system became more and more _____, meaning people could not change their social class. However, times are changing in India.

Today, the Hindu caste system is more _____ than it was in the past.

Word Bank

choice
flexible
social classes
parents
job
Aryan
inflexible



Classify Information

Complete the graphic organizer to explain the social structure of the caste system (highest class on top). On the lines, describe each class and summarize its role in Indian society.

	Description: _____
	Role: _____
	Description: _____
	Role: _____
	Description: _____
	Role: _____
	Description: _____
	Role: _____
	Description: _____
	Role: _____



Inference

Read the article and provide a detailed response to each question. Explain your responses and support them with evidence from the article.

The glass flew across the room and straight into the wall. Dr. Vinod Sonkar threw money on the counter—enough for the tea he drank and the glass he had smashed—and walked out.

For years, Dr. Sonkar has worked hard to leave behind his childhood of poverty, abuse at school, and teasing at university. By the time he had walked into the Rajasthan teashop, Dr. Sonkar had turned his life into a success story. He had a PhD in law and a teaching position at a Delhi university.

Yet as the shop owner handed Dr. Sonkar his tea, the shop owner asked him what caste he belonged to.

"I am a Dalit," Dr. Sonkar said.

"In that case," the shop owner said, "wash your glass when you are done."

"The shop owner didn't want to touch whatever I had touched," says Dr. Sonkar. "In his mind, I made it impure."

Paraphrased from BBC's article: "India's Dalits still fighting untouchability"

1. Why did the shop owner tell Dr. Sonkar to wash his own glass? _____

2. Why did Dr. Sonkar smash his glass against the wall? _____

3. Combining this article and what you've read in this book, what can you conclude about the caste system in India today? _____



Express Your Opinion

Did Dr. Sonkar succeed in overcoming being born into the "Dalit" caste? Defend your position with evidence and logical reasoning on a separate sheet of paper.