

Name _____

CHAPTER 5: Life in Ancient India

Think About As You Read

- 1 Why was the Indus River important in ancient India?
- 2 How did the Aryans change India?
- 3 What kinds of ideas from the ancient Indians do we still use in the world today?

Vocabulary and People

Irrigation	Buddhism	Aryans
Hinduism	Monks	Hindus
Caste system	Himalayas	Buddha
Outcastes	Indus River	Buddhists
Reborn	Pakistan	Flood

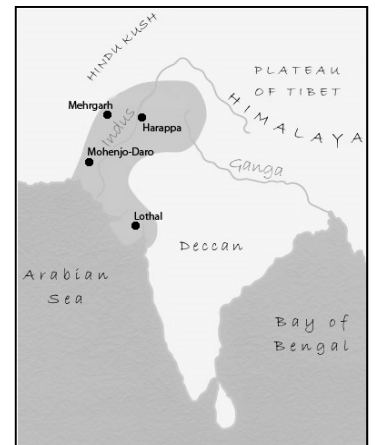
We use numbers every day. Numbers are on money and on pages of books. Long ago the people of ancient India began to use numbers. We use the same kind of numbers today that the ancient Indians used. Our numbers are more than 1,500 years old.

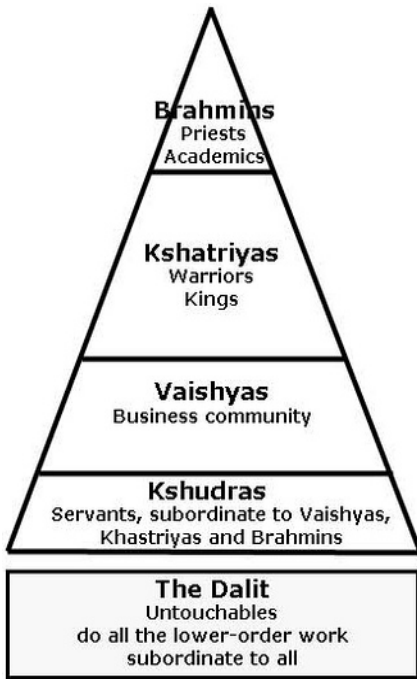
India is a large country in southern Asia. India is separated from the rest of Asia by the Himalayas. The Himalayas are very tall mountains.

The Indus River was an important river in ancient India. The land around the river has very fertile soil. Today the land around the Indus River is part of the country called Pakistan. Pakistan was once part of India.

Civilizations in ancient India began near the Indus River. They began around the year 2500 B.C. Do you remember how the Egyptians and the Sumerians used water and fertile soil from their rivers to grow food? The ancient Indian farmers also did this. They used water from the Indus River for **irrigation**.

The ancient Indians built cities near the Indus River. These were large cities with straight streets and brick houses. The ancient Indians made metal tools. They created a writing system. They did not have an alphabet. Their writing was made of many tiny pictures and numbers. About 1500 B.C. people from a far-off land conquered the land around the Indus River. These people were called Aryans. We are not sure from where the Aryans came. Many people believe that Aryans may have come from the Middle East. The Aryans were good fighters. They conquered all of the land around the Indus River. They conquered much





of India. The Aryans became farmers. They also raised cows and sheep. They made many Indians work as their slaves.

The Aryans changed India in many ways. These changes are an important part of Indian life today. One change was that family¹ life in India became very important. Another change was that a family's wealth was based on the number of cows the family had. A third change was that the Aryans made **Hinduism**, or the Hindu religion, important. Millions of Indians believe in Hinduism today. These people are called Hindus. Hinduism is the main religion in India today. A fourth change was the growth of the **caste system**. Farmers in India were in the third caste.

Under the caste system, all people belonged to different groups. These groups became known as **castes**. Castes became part of the Hindu religion. There were four main castes. The priests and their families were in the highest caste. Priests worked in the temples for the gods. Rulers and fighters were in the next caste. Farmers and workers were in the third caste. Servants and slaves were in the lowest caste. A large group of people were not in any caste at all. These people were called **outcastes**. Indians in the four castes tried to stay away from the outcastes. The outcastes were forced to do the worst jobs.



People were born into the caste of their parents. People could not change castes. A farmer could not become a priest. People could only marry those from their own caste. The Aryans believed that all people were **reborn** after they died. They believed that good people were reborn into a better caste. A good person might be reborn as a priest. A bad person might be reborn as a slave or an outcaste. The Aryans also believed there were many gods. These ideas became part of the Hindu religion.

Buddhism, or the Buddhist religion, also began in ancient India. It began about the year 500 B.C. Buddhism began with a man in India who became known, as the Buddha. The Buddha did not believe in the Hindu gods. The Buddha taught that people should not be put into castes. He taught that people must be good and kind to each other. The Buddha said that people would be happy when they did not care about owning money, jewelry, or other items.

Many Indians liked what the Buddha said. People who believed in what the Buddha said were called Buddhists. This religion was spread from India to most of Asia by Buddhist **monks**. They started Buddhist schools in many parts of Asia. Buddhism became one of the major religions of the world. However, more Indians today follow Hinduism than follow Buddhism.

The Aryans ruled much of northern India for about 1,000 years. Then the Persians from the Middle East conquered the Aryans. The Persians ruled northern India for about 200 years. They, too, were conquered by other people. India was conquered many times during its long history.

The ancient Indians gave the world many important ideas. Hinduism and Buddhism came from India. Our numbers were first made by the people of ancient India. Ancient Indians were also known for their work in science.

USING WHAT YOU LEARNED Using Vocabulary

Finish the Paragraph Use the words in dark print to finish the paragraph below. Write on the correct blank lines the words you choose.

Outcastes Buddhism castes reborn Hinduism

The Aryans made _____ an important religion. This religion divided people into four groups called _____. People who did not belong to one of the four groups were _____. The Aryans believed that after people died they were _____ as another living thing. About 500 B.C. in India, the Buddha started a new religion called _____. This religion said that people would be happy when they not care about owning things.

Read and Remember

Finish the Sentence Draw a circle around the word or words that best complete each sentence.

1. The ancient Indians used water from the _____ for irrigation.

Mediterranean Sea

Nile River

Indus River

2. The _____ we use today were created by the ancient Indians.

Numbers

ships

alphabets

3. The _____ made family life in India important.

Egyptians

Aryans

Persians

4. The _____ did not believe in the Hindu gods.

Aryans

Buddha

Indians

5. _____ believed that people should not be divided into groups.

Aryans

Buddhists

Hindus