Geography of India

- India is considered a “subcontinent” because of its size. It is actually a part of Asia.
- In the north are high mountains, the Himalayas and Hindu Kush. In the center is the Deccan Plateau.
- Wall of mountains guard top of India
- Two major rivers (Indus, Ganges)
Impact of Geography

- Like other early river civilizations, India settled along the valley of 2 important rivers in India
  - Rivers: Indus River and Ganges River
  - This happened around 3000 B.C.
- Water from the river fertilized and irrigated crops.
- Natural borders (border made of land or water) prevented invasion and disease.
  - Mountains
  - Arabian Sea
Turn and Talk

We have now studied various civilizations with many different geographic features. (Hint: Mountains, plateaus, deserts, seas, rivers...)

Discuss the following questions with people in your group:

- How did the river affect them? (These can be both good and bad)
- How did the mountains affect them?
- How did the desert affect them?
Environmental Challenges

- Indus river floods unpredictable
  - too much: wash away villages
  - too little: drought

The life of ancient India was probably greatly affected by the weather. India tends to be a very hot and dry country. But, in May, the monsoon season hits. Monsoons are times of very heavy rainfall. The rain in India can last for several weeks or a month, and can cause heavy flooding. The rain is a good thing, though, as it waters the fields that have been dry for so long. In years when the monsoons do not come, India suffers from drought.

- Silt: Good for farming
- Mountains provide natural barrier
Agriculture

The development of widespread irrigation systems provided food. They used the Indus and Ganges rivers to provide water for irrigation and for transportation to TRADE with other places.

- Wheat and barley were primary crops, however rye, peas, cotton, and rice were also grown.
- Domestication of animals also served as an important tool for cultivation and as a source of food.
Indus Valley

- The Indus River is located in Pakistan.
- It was along this river that a civilization developed around 3,000 BCE. It is called the Indus Valley Civilization.
- Two major cities of this civilization were Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. They developed around 2500 BCE.
INDIA’S FIRST CITIES

- Mohenjo-Daro
- Harappa

- Both had large public buildings
- Huge warehouses to store grain
- Carefully planned and laid out like city blocks (grid pattern), so they were known for their impressive layout
Here is a reconstruction of what the entrance to Mohenjo-Daro might have looked like.

Turn & Talk... What can you tell about their civilization from this picture?
This is a photograph of “The Great Bath” at Mohenjo-Daro. This is one of the earliest examples of a **public bath/pool** or **water storage system** found in the world. The Indus Valley people were **great architects and city planners**.

We aren’t exactly sure the purpose. Bathing? Religious Ceremonies? Swimming? Social Time?
Citadel Of Mohenjo-Daro
Each house had running water with a fountain for drinking and bathing.

Homes also had a bathroom with pipes running to a sewer under the street.

The running water from the fountain ran off under the bathroom carrying off waste.

This was an EXTREMELY novel idea for an ancient civilization.

The also had wells which allowed homes to have access to water immediately.
Mysteries

As we have said, people started settling in Ancient India around 3000 BCE. From this very early time, there are mysteries or things we do not know about them. Such as:

- Do not know names of rulers
- Do not know how the government worked
- Do not know what weapons/tools were used
- Do not know how wars were fought
- Mysteries of their language exist

However, around 1500 BCE, a group of people migrated to the Indus River Valley. They were the Aryans. They brought a lot of culture with them such as religion, writing, and ideas for social classes.
Aryan Invasion

Around 1500 BCE, a group of nomadic warriors invaded the Indus Valley culture.

These people, the Aryans, came from Eastern Europe probably looking for pastures for their animals.

They gave up their nomadic ways and settled here in India’s fertile river valleys, raising cattle and horses they brought with them.
Two Cultures Combine...

The Aryans brought with them their own language, called **Sanskrit and religious and cultural beliefs**. The Indus Valley people eventually became intermixed with the Aryan people and the two cultures together make up what is now much of the culture of modern India. **Hinduism**, the major religion of India, was a mixture of Aryan and Indus Valley beliefs. This is an example of cultural diffusion. **The caste system**, which keeps people in strict social classes, was brought to India by the Aryans.
The most important language of Ancient India
Indus Valley Script

- Here are several examples of Sanskrit. It is believed that the Indus Valley people may have also written on palm leaves or cloth but no evidence of this has survived.
Social Classes- “The Caste System”

- As mentioned before, the Aryans brought with them, ideas for a social system or hierarchy. Every person had a role to play in India’s society.

- Different groups had their own jobs and responsibilities

- A person was BORN into a group and was NOT allowed to change at any point in their life!!!

- People in one group were not allowed to marry people in another.

- All parts of the social pyramid came from the Vedas (one of the Holy books from the religion of Hinduism)
Day 2- Ancient India Continued...

- Beliefs and Religion
- More in depth Caste System
- Contributions
Hinduism

The largest religion in India today. 1st religion in India. Focus on 4 Noble Truths, Karma, and Reincarnation.

- Polytheistic
Hinduism differs from other religions like Christianity, Judaism and Islam in that there is no one single founder or one set of beliefs that must be followed. There are thousands of Hindu gods and goddesses in Hinduism. Most of the beliefs of Hinduism came from the oral traditions of the Aryans which became the Vedas—or holy writings—of the Hindus.

1. Life is suffering - dukkha
   - Birth trauma
   - Illness
   - Old age
   - Fear of approaching death
   - Separation from what one loves
   - Stuck with what one hates

2. The cause of suffering is desire - tanha

3. The cure for suffering is to remove desire

4. To remove desire, follow the Eightfold path
Central to Hinduism is the belief in *reincarnation*. Hindus believe that after a person dies, they will be reborn as some other creature or thing. What you are reborn as depends on your “Karma” or the deeds you did in your previous life. If you did good deeds, you will be reborn into a higher, better life. If you had bad Karma, you may be reborn as an insect or even a tree.
Buddhism

A religion based on the teaching of Buddha. Centered on the ideas of the 8 Fold Path.
Around 566 BC, Siddharta Guatama was born into the warrior or Kshatriya caste. He was a prince who was kept isolated inside a beautiful palace and not allowed to see the real world. One day he left the walls of his palace and saw the pain and misery of life. He decided from then on that he needed to find a way of living that would allow people to find peace in life. He spent many years trying different ways of life, following different philosophies. Finally he came up with his own way, which is now called Buddhism. Gautama became known as Buddha, which means “enlightened one.” He developed the Four Noble Truths and The Eightfold Path. These are rules to live by that help people live morally and find the “middle path,” without too much pain, or too much pleasure.
Caste System

Divided Indian society into groups based on a person’s birth, wealth, or occupation.

- **Brahmans** belong to the highest caste. They are priests and scholars.
- **Kshatryas** are soldiers and warriors.
- **Vaisyas** are merchants and professionals.
- **Sudras** are the lowest caste. They are labourers and servants.
Caste System

- India’s caste system is divided into many different classes, each with its own job. The highest class is the Brahmans, or priests. They have great authority and respect.
The next level are the **warriors, or land-owners**. They are often in the wealthy, ruling class. In early times, they were the armies for the many princes of India. They are called Kshatriya.
Caste System

- The Vaishya are the merchants and artisans. They are the people who sell products. They, like all members of each caste, cannot ever change their caste.
Caste System

- The lowest level are the artisans and farmers. They are called **Shudra**. They are very important because they provide food and goods for society. Like members of every caste, they must marry within their own caste.
The lowest group in India are the Harijan. They are also called the "untouchables" or "outcasts" because they are not even considered part of the caste system. Their job is to do all the worst jobs in the community such as cleaning latrines and sewers and sweeping the streets. *Members of the caste system were not even supposed to have the shadow of an untouchable touch them.* These people believed that the only way to get out of their lot in life was to perform their jobs without complaint so they could be born into a higher caste in the next life.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j31veR74gSo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j31veR74gSo)
Contributions

Many advances in science, medicine, astronomy, and mathematics came out of India. This is a depiction of an ancient Indian book that predicts eclipses of the sun and moon.
India had many advances in medicine. One doctor from Ancient India wrote a book on how he rebuilt noses through plastic surgery. He no doubt needed to do this often since having one’s nose cut off was one of the punishments for committing a crime.
Contributions

This is a sample of elaborate mathematical calculations taken from an Indian text around 600 BC. An Indian named Brahmagupta is credited with inventing the idea of “0” (zero). This changed greatly how mathematics could be used.
Ancient India is also credited with inventing the magnetic compass. Indians sailed the Indian Ocean in boats the were guided by a metal “fish” floating in oil. The fish pointed north, acting as a compass for the boats.
The Indus Valley Culture

- The people of the Indus Valley were mostly peaceful farmers.
- They built large cities with ordered streets and bricks made all the same size.
- This indicates they had a strong central government.
- This statue is probably a priest or king.
The Indus Valley people had an advanced civilization with large cities, running water and sewer systems. They built walls around their cities which indicated that they might have had to defend themselves against other people. We do not know a lot about them because we cannot yet read their writing.

The picture at the right shows an example of Indus Valley writing. Linguists are still trying to decipher the language. We know they traded with the people of Mesopotamia and Egypt so perhaps those people knew how to read and speak this language!
Ancient India brought inventions, ideas, philosophies and social and cultural traditions that have spread throughout many of the world’s cultures. This huge subcontinent with its rich and varied history was certainly one of the greatest early civilizations in the world.