

Lesson

1

MAIN IDEAS


- 1 Geography** In India, mountains and seasonal winds shape the climate and affect agriculture.
- 2 Government** The earliest Indian civilization built well-organized cities near the Indus River.
- 3 Culture** Harappan civilization produced writing, a prosperous way of life, and a widely shared culture.

TAKING NOTES

Reading Skill: Making Generalizations

A generalization is a broad judgment based on information. As you read Lesson 1, record information on a chart like the one below. Later, you will be asked to make a generalization.

Geography and Indian Life	
Physical geography of India	
Cities in the Indus Valley	
Harappan culture	

 Skillbuilder Handbook, page R8



▲ **Priest-King** Scholars believe this seven-inch-tall sculpture is of a priest or king from the ancient city of Mohenjo-Daro.

Words to Know

Understanding the following words will help you read this lesson:

range a group of things in a line or row, such as mountains (page 220)

Of all of the mountain ranges on Earth, the Himalayas are the highest.

deposit to put or lay down (page 220)

The river deposited soil and debris that it had swept up a great distance upstream.

mysterious difficult to understand (page 221)

Experts have not figured out the meaning of the mysterious writing that appears on the objects.

site a location or position (page 223)

Though expecting to find the site of religious buildings at the ruined city, archaeologists found none.

Geography and Indian Life

TERMS & NAMES

subcontinent

Hindu Kush

Himalayas

monsoon

Harappan
civilization

planned city

Build on What You Know Have you ever visited a part of the United States with a different climate? Some regions of the country receive much more rainfall than other regions do. As you are about to learn, India has two distinct seasons: a rainy season and a dry season.

Physical Geography of India

- 1 ESSENTIAL QUESTION** How do mountains and seasonal winds shape the climate of India?

India is a **subcontinent**, which is a large landmass that is like a continent, only smaller. The subcontinent includes present-day Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, and most of Pakistan. It is often referred to as South Asia. Geographers think the kite-shaped Indian subcontinent used to be a separate land. It inched north until it hit Asia. The collision pushed up mountains where the two lands met.

Ganges River The Ganges is one of the major rivers of India. Most Indians consider it holy. As the photograph shows, the banks of the Ganges today are heavily populated. ▼



Mountains and Waterways Those high mountains tower over the northern borders of India. They form several mountain ranges, including the **Hindu Kush** (HIHN•doo kush) and the **Himalayas** (HIHM•uh•LAY•uhs).

In addition to tall mountains, the subcontinent has several great rivers. These include the Ganges (GAN•JEEZ) and the Indus. Like other rivers you have studied, these two rivers carry water for irrigation. The silt they deposit makes the land fertile. The Indus River valley was the home of the first Indian civilization. In ancient times, another river called the Saraswati (suh•RUHS•wuh•tee) ran parallel to the Indus. The Saraswati area was also home to great cities. However, it dried up, perhaps because of an earthquake. (See Starting with a Story on pages 216–217.)

The Arabian Sea, Indian Ocean, and Bay of Bengal surround India. Ancient Indians sailed these waters to other ancient lands, such as Mesopotamia. This travel helped encourage trade.

Climate The tall mountains help block cold north winds from reaching much of India. As a result, temperatures are generally warm there. In addition, seasonal winds called **monsoons** shape India's climate. Because of the monsoon, India has a dry season in the winter and a rainy season

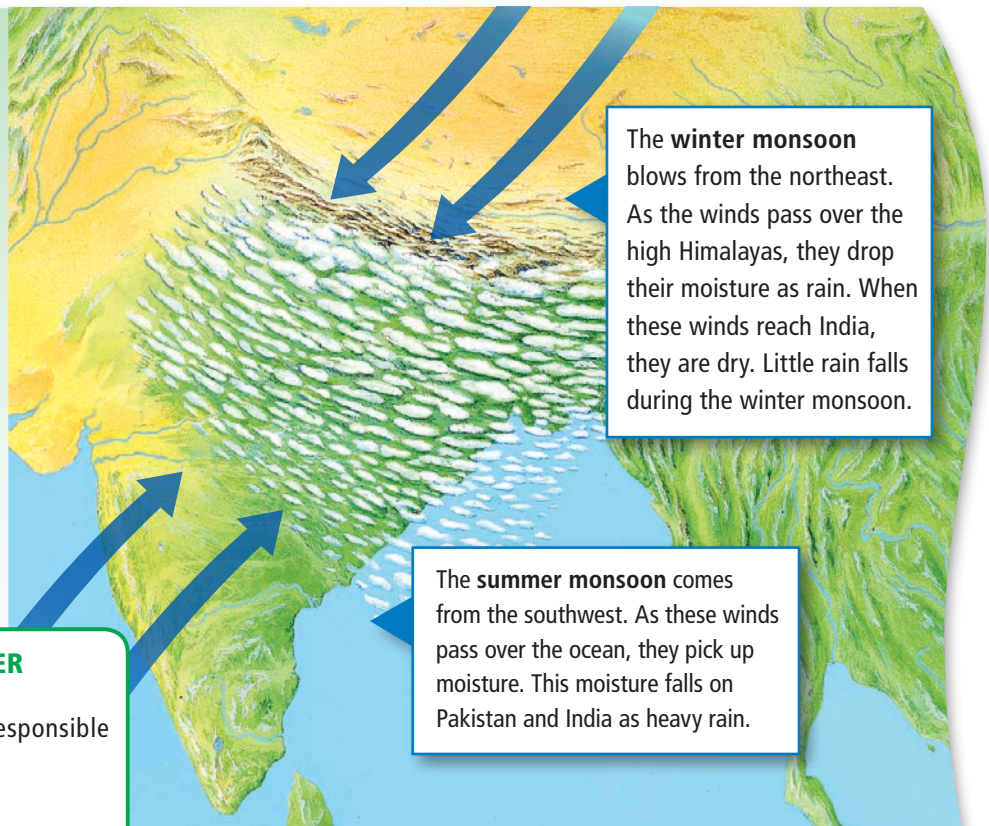
Vocabulary Strategy

The word *monsoon* is also sometimes used as a **synonym** for the summer rainy season.

Geography

Monsoons

A monsoon is a seasonal wind. India and Pakistan have two main monsoons: a summer monsoon and a winter monsoon.



The **winter monsoon** blows from the northeast. As the winds pass over the high Himalayas, they drop their moisture as rain. When these winds reach India, they are dry. Little rain falls during the winter monsoon.

The **summer monsoon** comes from the southwest. As these winds pass over the ocean, they pick up moisture. This moisture falls on Pakistan and India as heavy rain.

GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER INTERPRETING VISUALS

Region Which monsoon is responsible for causing a rainy season?

in the summer. The summer monsoon provides rain for India's crops. But these rains can also cause severe floods.

REVIEW How do India's rivers and climate affect agriculture?

Cities in the Indus Valley

2 ESSENTIAL QUESTION Why was the earliest Indian civilization located near the Indus River?

Huge earth mounds dot the Indus Valley. Near them, people found burnt bricks and tiny stone seals covered with a mysterious writing. These finds caused further exploration of the mounds. Archaeologists uncovered the ruins of an ancient civilization.

Early Inhabitants History in the Indus River valley followed the same pattern as in Sumer and Egypt. As in other regions, civilization along the Indus River began with agriculture. The earliest farmers raised wheat and barley. By 3000 B.C., they were growing cotton and making it into fabric—the first people in Asia to do so. They domesticated cattle, sheep, goats, and chickens. They also learned how to make copper and bronze tools, which were more effective than stone tools.

People in the villages traded with one another. Over time, the Indus Valley people began to trade with people from farther away. The wealth they gained from trade helped them to develop a more complex culture.

Great Cities By 2500 B.C., some villages had grown to be great cities. The Indus and Saraswati valleys contained hundreds of cities. At least 35,000 people may have lived in the largest and best-known cities, Mohenjo-Daro (moh•HEHN•joh•DAHR•oh) and Harappa (huh•RAP•uh). Harappa gave its name to the entire Indus River culture. Today that ancient culture is called **Harappan civilization**.

This civilization featured **planned cities**, which were cities that were built according to a design. Architects surrounded these cities with heavy brick protective walls. City streets crossed each other in a neat grid with square corners. Along the streets were homes, shops, and factories. The cities also had large public buildings that may have been used for religious or government functions.



▲ **Indus Valley Seal**
This seal clearly shows an elephant, but scholars don't know why. No one has figured out how to read the pictographs above the animal.

Dealing with Problems People in large cities always have to deal with the problem of removing human waste. Harappan cities were very advanced in that area. Almost every house contained a bathroom and a toilet. Underground sewers carried away the waste.

People need to use much planning and organization to build such complex cities. Because of that, historians believe the ancient Harappans must have had powerful leaders. We do not know if priests or kings or a combination of both ruled the Harappans, but their government must have been strong.

REVIEW How was Harappan civilization similar to other ancient civilizations?

Harappan Culture

3 ESSENTIAL QUESTION What were the cultural features of Harappan civilization?

A mysterious form of writing covered the stone seals that people found in the ruined cities. Some of those seals may have indicated types of trade goods.

Some scholars think that the 500 pictographs, or picture signs, of Harappan writing may stand for words, sounds, or both. But they don't really know. No one has figured out how to read the writing of Harappan civilization. Until someone learns to read it, the only way we can learn about the civilization is by studying artifacts.



Harappan Religion Archaeologists have not identified the site of any temples for specific gods. But they have found evidence of religion. Mohenjo-Daro had a huge public bath that may have been used for religious rituals. (Many religions have rituals linked to cleansing. For example, Christian baptism stands for the act of washing away sin.) Archaeologists have found figures of animals, such as bulls, that Indians still regard as holy. They also found clay figurines that may be goddesses or simply dolls.

A Widespread and Prosperous Culture People across a wide region shared Harappan culture. Harappan cities spread across an area that was about 500,000 square miles in size. That region was nearly twice as big as Texas is today. Even so, these cities shared a common design. Those shared designs show how widely the culture had spread.

Harappan people used standard weights and measures. Across the region, they made similar bronze statues and clay toys. These artifacts show that the Harappans could afford to have more than just basic necessities. This was because they gained wealth from agriculture and trade. Archaeologists have found seals from the Indus Valley as far away as Mesopotamia. Indians traded timber, ivory, and beads. Mesopotamians sold the Indians silver, tin, and woolen cloth.

Mohenjo-Daro The ruins of the ancient city show how carefully planned it was. The streets were at right angles, and the walls were well built. The smaller photograph is the Great Bath, which was probably a public bathhouse. ▼



▲ Pot This pot was found in the cemetery in the city of Harappa.

Challenges to Harappan Life Around 2000 to 1500 B.C., earthquakes shook the region. These quakes probably caused the Saraswati River to dry up. The same natural disaster may have caused the Indus River to flood. The problems forced people to leave their cities. Harappan civilization went into decline. As you will read in Lesson 2, another group of people soon took the place of Harappan civilization.

REVIEW How is the Harappan writing similar to hieroglyphs?

Lesson Summary

- The rivers of India and the seasonal monsoons helped make agriculture possible.
- Agricultural wealth led to the rise of a complex civilization in the Indus Valley.
- The prosperous Harappan culture lasted for about 800 years.



▲ **Copper Tools**
Farmers used these tools for tasks such as weeding and leveling soil.

Why It Matters Now . . .

Ancient Indians developed products that are still important today. They were the first people to domesticate chickens and the first Asians to produce cotton cloth.

1 Lesson Review

Terms & Names

1. Explain the importance of
subcontinent Himalayas Harappan civilization
Hindu Kush monsoon planned city

Using Your Notes

Making Generalizations Use your completed chart to answer the following question:

2. What are advantages and disadvantages of having monsoons?

Geography and Indian Life	
Physical geography of India	
Cities in the Indus Valley	
Harappan culture	



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Main Ideas

3. What evidence showed archaeologists that an ancient civilization had existed in the Indus Valley?
4. What economic activities allowed Harappan civilization to begin along the Indus and Saraswati rivers?
5. What evidence suggested that Harappan civilization was prosperous?

Critical Thinking

6. **Framing Historical Questions** What questions do you still have about Harappan culture?
7. **Understanding Cause and Effect** What are two positive and two negative effects of India's great rivers?

Activity

Doing a Dig Find a toy, tool, or object in your house or classroom. Study it and describe it as if you were an archaeologist. List five things that it tells you about its owner.