

# Geographic setting of india history essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The Indian subcontinent is a large peninsula. It is surrounded on three sides by : the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Bay of Bengal. In the north, the Himalayan Mountain separate India from the rest of Asia. The towering Himalayas form a nearly impassable barrier that is 1, 500 miles long. The rugged Hindu Kush Mountains on the Northwest also present barriers to travel.

These geographic barriers allowed the first Indian civilization to develop mostly on its own. Yet India was not totally isolated. Determined invaders pushed their way through steep passes, such as the Khyber Pass in the Hindu Kush Mountains. Indian traders carried goods through the mountain passes to the Middle East and China. Furthermore, the surrounding seas served as highway for commercial and cultural contact.

The vast Indian subcontinent has many diverse geographic features. The three major regions are: the Northern Plain, the Deccan Plateau, and the Coastal Plain.

The three great rivers -the Indus, Ganges, and Brahmaputra - flows through the Northern Plain. These broad and slow rivers flow from the snow-covered Himalayas. Together with their tributaries, they supply water for farming and for transportation across the Northern Plain. The fertile soil of the river valleys supports extensive farming. For these reasons the Northern Plain became the home of the first Indian civilization . Later , invaders set up powerful empires in the Northern Plain. As a result , the area has played a dominant role in Indian history.

The Deccan Plateau is the triangular shaped area, south of the subcontinent. The Vindhya Mountains separate the plateau from the Northern Plain. The Deccan Plateau is bordered on the west and east by long mountain ranges called the Western and Eastern Ghats. Because it lacks the snow-fed rivers found in the north, the Deccan Plateau suffer from droughts , which make farming difficult.

Along the eastern and western coasts of India lie narrow coastal plains, which supports both agriculture and fishing . Although India has few good harbors , many coastal people of India were seafarers who traded with people in other parts of Asia , Africa and the Middle East.

The chief feature of the Indian climate is the monsoon, a seasonal wind system from June until September , the summer monsoon blows from the Southwest. It picks up moisture over the Indian Ocean and drops torrential rains on the coast and on the Northern Plain. From October to May, the winter monsoon blows from lands to the northeast. India's hot and dry season reaches its peak during May and are commonly felt in the Northern Plains.

### Ruins of Harappan Civilization

Every year , the people of India wait anxiously for the summer monsoon to bring desperately needed moisture to the parched farmland. When the rain comes, temperature drops , and crops spring to life. If the monsoon is late , crops fail , and food shortages result. The heavy rains can cause destructive floods especially in the lower Ganges Valley. Archeologist discovered traces of ancient civilization in the Indus River Valley . Excavations have revealed

that this civilization developed about the same time as the early Egyptian and Sumerian Civilizations. The Indus Valley covered an area larger than the Old Kingdom of Egypt (1, 500 km.). Two of its cities , Harappa and Mohenjo-daro lie close to rivers and digging can cause flooding. Despite these handicaps , archeologists have uncovered some valuable information.

**The Two Cities** The ruins of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro reveal that they are products of careful planning. Wide straight streets divide residential areas into square blocks. Excavated were houses , granaries and public halls. There was a sign of a sewer system. Walled fortresses in the towns provided protection.

With well-planned cities as Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, the people might have had a knowledge in surveying and geometry. In addition to this, it could have a strong central government who could have supervised such careful planning and construction.

## **Government and Religion**

Scholars assume that a priest-king headed the government, and the rulers must have a considerable power because the government exercised strict control. They must have controlled the construction of new buildings and established standards of weights and measures.

Like the Egyptians and Sumerians, the people of two cities were polytheist. Statues and masks show that they worshiped a mother-goddess. They also revered sacred animals such as the bull and certain sacred trees.

## **Think and Explain**

### **What environmental challenges did the farmers of the Indus Valley face?**

#### **Economic Life**

Agricultural economy thrived in the Indus valley civilization. On lands surrounding the cities farmers constructed dams and levees to channel water from the rivers to crops of wheat and barley. Food surpluses supported the large population and prompted the growth of trade. A merchant class acquired wealth from trade and commerce in the cities. Merchants exported cotton cloth to places as far as Mesopotamia, gold jewelry stone carvings of animals.

#### **End of Indus Valley Civilization**

Indus Valley civilization began to decline many years before it finally ended about 1500 C. E. Most authorities believe that about 1500 C. E. the Aryans invaded the Indus valley. When the Indus Valley fell, the people fled to other parts of India. About 1500 C. E the civilization was almost forgotten.

Like many nomadic people , the Aryans swept into India through the passes of the Hindu Kush Mountains. Their fierce nomadic herds had come originally from the region between the Black and Caspian Seas north of the Caucasus Mountains. The newcomers already knew the use of iron and the use of horses that gave them superiority in warfare. They came in contact with the Dravidians . These Dravidians were probably the survivors of the Indus Valley civilization.

Their civilization, as revealed from the remains of the town, show a static society. In time, the fusion of Aryans and the Dravidians led to the rise of a new pattern of Indian life. The Aryans introduced the caste system in India. Aside from Aryan invasion, flooding was also cited as the cause of decay of the Indus Valley civilization. Recent studies also show that complex ecological change /climate change which led to famines forced inhabitants to leave their well planned cities.

### **Think and Respond**

How could natural disasters have contributed to the decline of Indus valley civilization? What ecological problems does the world face today?

### **Ensure**

Ancient India

Geography

Indus Valley

Civilization

### **Expand**

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### **Excel**

Identify the correct answer.

The chief feature of Indian climate is \_\_\_\_\_.

The first civilization in India was developed in \_\_\_\_\_.

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The mountain separating India from the rest of Asia is \_\_\_\_\_.

The natural phenomenon that makes farming difficult in the Deccan Plateau was \_\_\_\_\_.

Mountain separating Deccan Plateau from the Northern Plain is \_\_\_\_\_.

Prove:

“ A country can be isolated from other parts of the world by its geographic barriers.” Give example.

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### **Respond to Essential Question**

The earliest recorded civilization in India began in the near fresh water source -the Indus River.

### **Make Connections**

Imagine that you are an archeologist digging in the Indus region. Write a “ wish list” of the three items you would like to uncover to learn more about the Indus Valley civilization