3.1

Early Civilizations in South Asia



As a Young Historian, I will be able to...

- Describe the Indian subcontinent's geography.
- Understand the clues archaeology has provided about the rise and fall of the Indus civilization.
- Analyze the main characteristics of the Aryan civilization & the Vedic Age.
- Explain what ancient Indian epics reveal about Aryan life.

Geography of Indian Subcontinent

Subcontinent- Large landmass that juts out from a continent.



Indus valley includes 10 of the most populus countries in the world



Three zones- The Northern Plain, The Deccan Plateau, & the Coastal Plains

Three major rivers: The Indus, the Ganges, & the Brahmaputra





Land & Cultural Diversity

Plateau- raised area of level land, such as the area of India that juts into the Indian Ocean

Monsoon- Seasonal wind that is part of global wind pattern. Brings in heat or moisture to area

Due to India's great size, many different cultures & languages developed & customs survived mass Empires



Forgotten Indus Civilization



Little is known about the civilizations of the Indus valley before the rise of Persia



The cities of Harappa & Mohenjo-Daro show complex planning & water systems



This suggests a complex government system & mathematics were needed.



People grew wheat, barley, melons, dates, & may be the first people to grow cotton



Religion & Decline

Evidence of a mother goddess has been discovered & people believed to by polytheistic

Veneration- Special regard, such as cattle for the Hindu religion

The population eventually decline due to possible environmental factors, region is a desert today



Aryan Civilization & the Vedas

The Aryan civilization began acculturation- the blending of two or more cultures

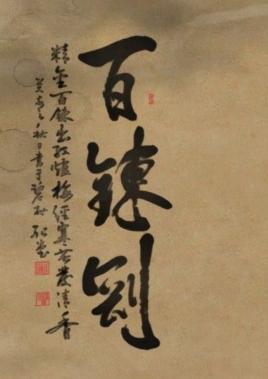
We only know about these people from the Vedas- a collection of hymns, chants, ritual instructions & other religious teachings





People were seen as warriors who fought in chariots with bows & arrows

People valued cattle & measured wealth with cows & bulls



Nomads to Society

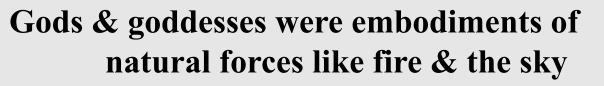
Aryans settled down to raise crops & began to develop tools out of iron

Aryan leaders, known as Rajahs, lead tribes & were elected to positions by warriors

The Aryans began to class people into four classes to make society function "properly"

Society was later divided up by occupational groups, then into a more rigid caste system

Aryan Religion









Mystics- People who seek direct communion with the divine





The Great Vedic Epics

Mahabharata- Story of the Pandava brothers losing their kingdom to their cousins. Fight war to regain it. Described war & relgion

Ramayana- Story of the hero Rama & the rescue his bride. Taught values to the reader

