

## Explore More—The Aryan Invasions

**Directions:** Listen to your teacher talk about the significance of the Aryan invasions. Refer to the maps in your Explore Geography Picture Dictionary to locate the places your teacher mentions. Circle any words you don't understand. Underline or highlight important ideas in the text. Write notes in the margins to help you understand key points. Then answer the questions in your own words.

### The Aryan Invasions

In 1900 B.C., civilizations in the Indus Valley cities of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro began to decline. By around 1500 B.C., the Aryans dominated the Indus Valley.

*Point to these dates on your class time line.*

The Aryans were warriors who came from the steppe region of Eurasia. Their lives in that region were very difficult. Over time, the Aryans spread over Persia and then across the northern plains of India.

*Point out these areas on your world map.*

When they first arrived on the Indian subcontinent, the Aryans settled in the Indus Valley. At the time, this area was covered with forests and had an abundant supply of water. This must have seemed like a paradise to the Aryans who had come from an environment with few trees and where finding food was difficult.

### Aryan Culture

The Aryans lived in family groups that were organized into tribes. At first, the Aryans had two main classes of people—the nobles and the commoners. Over time, they added other classes including priests, warriors and nobles, artisans and merchants, and servants. Music, dance, and song were an important part of Aryan life. The Aryans probably enjoyed gambling and chariot racing. The Aryans, at least at first, did not have a writing system. They did not build cities, nor did they appear to be interested in creating artwork or pottery. The Aryans worshiped nature gods, representing such things as rain, the ocean, and the sun.

***Continued on next page***

## **The Significance of the Aryan Invasions**

As the Aryans spread over the Indian subcontinent, they had a significant effect on the people already living in the Indus Valley. The Aryans' ideas and culture brought changes to society and religion on the Indian subcontinent. For example, the Aryans introduced stricter rules for social classes. They also emphasized the importance of conducting rituals correctly in order to keep the gods happy. Their religious ideas blended with those existing in the Indus Valley, creating a set of beliefs known as Hinduism. Over time, the Aryans' ideas and culture mixed with the ideas and culture of the people already living in the region. This cultural blending formed what today we call "Indian culture." ❖

## YOUR TURN!

Write your answers to the following questions.

1. Who were the Aryans? Why did they invade India?

---

---

---

---

2. What was the significance of the Aryan invasions? How did the Aryans change India?

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Questions for further discussion:

- What would you like to know more about in terms of the Aryans and the Aryan invasions? Frame questions that you can answer by historical study and research. Conduct this research and discuss your findings.
- How does the combination of ideas and events related to the Aryan invasion explain the emergence of new patterns?
- Think about the different historical points of view on the Aryan invasions. How might you have felt if you lived in the Indus Valley during the time of the Aryan invasions? What would your perspective be as an Aryan?