

Ancient India

The Indus River flows all the way from the foot of the Himalayas to the sea. Further east along the Himalayas is the Ganges River. One of the world's oldest civilisations was founded here, in the Indus Valley. Here, the Indus Valley civilisation, also called the Harappan civilisation, was building well-planned cities while Europeans still lived in primitive huts. A great empire grew, and inscriptions left by its kings have given historians a unique insight into this ancient world. From ancient India, two of the world's major religions – Hinduism and Buddhism – came into being. The people of ancient India are also believed to have begun the development of modern mathematics, and were the first to use the concept of the number zero.



chapter 11

Source 1 The Great Stupa of Sanchi, a Buddhist shrine, was commissioned by the Mauryan king Ashoka.

11A

How did geographical features influence human settlement in ancient India?

- 1 India is surrounded by mountains, deserts, river valleys and a coastline. How might these features have influenced the development of ancient India?

11B

What shaped the roles of key groups in ancient India?

- 1 Three major religions originated in India – Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism. How do you think religion might have shaped social structure?

11C

How did beliefs, values and practices influence ancient Indian lifestyles?

- 1 Walking around ancient India one would see a Hindu temple, a Buddhist stupa (shrine) and a pavilion containing a ritual fire and a sacred tree. What does this tell us about the lifestyles of ancient Indians?

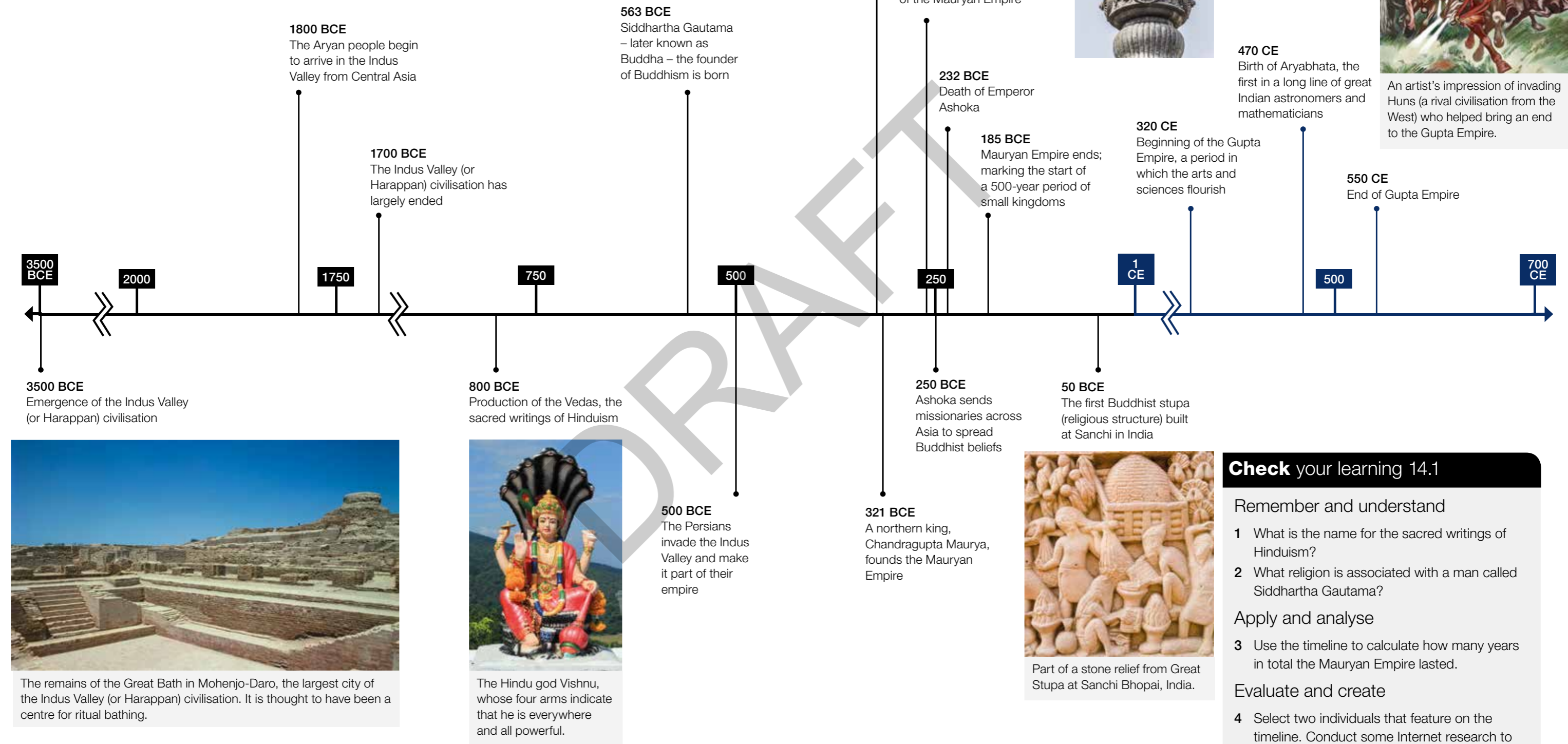
11D

How did contacts and conflicts change ancient India?

- 1 King Ashoka, third ruler of the Mauryan Empire, wanted the teachings of Buddhism to be spread beyond their birthplace. How might this have changed ancient India?

14.1 Ancient India: a timeline

Source 1 A timeline of the key events in Ancient India



14A How did geographical features influence human settlement in ancient India?

Check your learning 14.1

Remember and understand

- 1 What is the name for the sacred writings of Hinduism?
- 2 What religion is associated with a man called Siddhartha Gautama?

Apply and analyse

- 3 Use the timeline to calculate how many years in total the Mauryan Empire lasted.

Evaluate and create

- 4 Select two individuals that feature on the timeline. Conduct some Internet research to find out the significance of these individuals to ancient India.

14.2 Landscape and climate

India's location and geographical features have helped to shape its history. Like most major civilisations across the ancient world, the earliest settlements in India developed in river valleys. The Indus Valley, a vast flood plain, became the location of many of ancient India's earliest and largest communities. The Indus River lies in the north-west of the subcontinent, in modern-day Pakistan. It begins high in the Himalayas and flows south 3180 kilometres to the Arabian Sea. The Thar Desert lies to the south-east of the Indus River, providing a natural barrier and protecting settlements from invaders. Further south, a large **plateau** (a large section of flat land) called the Deccan Plateau makes up the majority of India's southern region. The flat land of the Deccan Plateau is good for farming and

Source 1 Part of the Himalayas poking through the clouds. The mountain range, which separates India from China to the north, contains 90 of the 100 highest peaks on Earth.

animal grazing. The Deccan Plateau slopes down to the Indian Ocean in the west and the Bay of Bengal in the east. This extensive coastline was ideal for sea trade (see Source 2).

India is a warm to very hot place year round. Temperatures as high as 49°C have been recorded in some places, especially between March and June. The heavy monsoon rains typically arrive in June, with rain then falling most of the time until September. Most of the year's rainfall is during these few months, and India's agriculture relies on monsoon rains arriving before its fields and crops dry up in the hot, dry months leading up to the monsoon. During the monsoon months, farmers store water supplies so they can irrigate crops during the rest of the year.



Source 2 The geographical features of the Indian subcontinent, and the borders of modern-day nations

Check your learning 14.2

Remember and understand

- 1 What four important physical features shaped the history of the Indian subcontinent?

Apply and analyse

- 2 For each feature, state how it may have influenced decisions about early human settlements and lifestyles.
- 3 What problems would a severe monsoon have caused for an ancient settlement?

Evaluate and create

- 4 Ancient India was located about halfway between the ancient societies of the Mediterranean and Asian worlds, which was particularly significant once the Silk Road became a major trade route between East and West. Find out through internet research what the 'Silk Road' was and create a map showing this route.

14.3 Ancient India's early civilisation

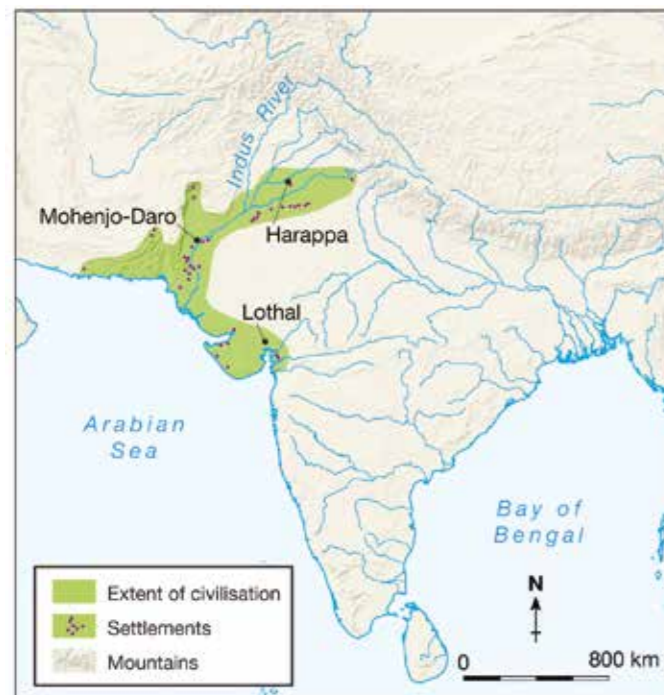
India's ancient society is often referred to as the Indus Valley civilisation, named for the Indus River around which that civilisation developed. Knowledge of this civilisation came to light with the discovery of its second largest city, Harappa, so some historians also refer to it as the Harappan civilisation. The Indus Valley (Harappan) civilisation developed from early farming communities that depended on the river waters for irrigation. Wheat and barley were their staple crops and rice was also grown. It lasted from about 3500 BCE to 1700 BCE, but was at its high point from about 2600 BCE to 1900 BCE.

The discoveries of Harappa and Mohenjo-Doro

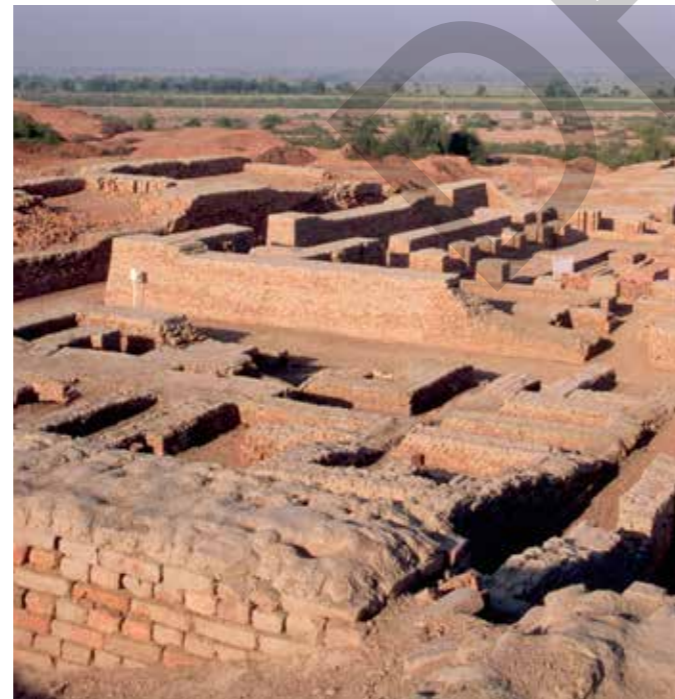
Countries in the West first came to know of an early Indian civilisation through the writings of a British army deserter named James Lewis. He had come upon the ruins of Harappa in 1826 while

travelling through the marshy woodlands of what is now the Punjab region of Pakistan. By the time the archaeologist Sir Alexander Cunningham visited the site in 1873, many of the walls and buildings of Harappa had disappeared. British engineers had taken the bricks from the ancient ruins to use for the building of a railway line.

For many years, there was little archaeological interest in the site. This changed in 1919 when Indian archaeologist R.D. Banerji investigated an ancient Buddhist **stupa** about 500 kilometres south of Harappa. Banerji noticed that the stupa was surrounded by mounds of crumbling bricks. He began digging and found, among other things, three soapstone **seals**. These seals were similar to one that had previously been found at Harappa, and were engraved with the same unknown writing that could not be decoded. Banerji had stumbled across the remains of the other great city from the Indus Valley civilisation – Mohenjo-Daro.



Source 1 The extent of the Indus Valley civilisation



Source 2 The ruins of Mohenjo-Daro



Source 3 Ancient ruins overlooking part of the fertile Indus Valley



Source 4 Artist's impression of Indus Valley merchants. A local trader weighs beads in the foreground. Bead and jewellery making – using gold, ivory, copper, shell and semi-precious stones – was a key industry.

Extent of the civilisation

Since the 1920s, archaeologists have located more than 1050 Indus Valley sites, which have been confirmed by their distinctive architecture and stone seals. Dockyards, grain storehouses, warehouses, brick platforms and protective walls have been found in almost all these settlements. Most are beside rivers, though some were found on the ancient seacoast and adjacent islands. These discoveries confirm the importance of rivers and coastlines in the choice of early human settlements in this region.

Trade

The Indus Valley settlements were well located for what seems to have been the people's main occupation: trade. Rivers provided transport routes to the coast, from where goods could be shipped to other lands.

Beads made from **carnelian** have been found in the Mesopotamian city of Ur and in Oman (in the Arabian Peninsula), where pottery and bronze weapons of Indus design have also been found. At Lothal, near the mouth of the Indus River, archaeologists have found a huge dredged canal and dock, indicating that it was an important port.

Indus Valley merchants also had links by sea to the Tigris–Euphrates delta (in today's Iraq), and by land with parts of today's Afghanistan and Iran and other parts of India. About a dozen Indus Valley seals

have been found at sites in Iraq and Iran. Weights (for measuring purposes) are among the artefacts that have been excavated in Indus Valley settlements. (The Indus Valley people are believed to be among the first to develop a system of uniform weights and measures.) These finds add to the evidence that the civilisation had a strong and widespread trade.

Check your learning 14.3

Remember and understand

- 1 How were the ruins of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro discovered?
- 2 In which modern-day countries was the Indus Valley (Harappan) civilisation located?

Apply and analyse

- 3 Select three sources from the text or from your own research and indicate the evidence that they provide about the achievements of the Indus Valley (Harappan) civilisation.

Evaluate and create

- 4 Use Google Earth to closely study the different land types in and around the areas where the Indus Valley (Harappan) civilisation developed. Use the sources from the text and your own research to present a photo-montage of geographical features of India, including captions.

14A Rich task

Understanding daily life in the Indus Valley

The most common, and in some ways most puzzling, archaeological finds from the Indus Valley civilisation are numerous seals made from soapstone. These seals may have been used to stamp trade goods or other property to show ownership. To this day, the inscriptions on these seals remain undeciphered. The animal most commonly found on the seals is thought to be a unicorn (others say it is a rhinoceros). About a dozen Indus Valley seals have been excavated from sites as far away as Iraq and Iran. Studying these seals closely in order to gather valuable historical evidence uses an important skill for all historians.

The most distinctive single object found at Mohenjo-Daro is a stone sculpture known as the 'Priest-King', despite the fact there is no supporting evidence that the figure represents either a priest or king. The sculpture, found in 1927, is only 18 centimetres tall. The figure wears a headband, and has a similar band on his right arm. His upper lip is shaved and his beard is combed. His eyes are deeply cut into the stone, and some archaeologists think there may have been carved shell set into them. He is wearing a cloak decorated with a three-leafed design called a trefoil. The trefoils were once coloured red.



Source 1 The 'Priest-King' of Mohenjo-Daro

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Analysing historical representations

Analysing historical photographs is an important skill to develop. When analysing a photograph, painting, artwork or stone carving, it is useful to look at the following features:

- **Check the composition of the work:** What is shown in the scene and why? How do we know what is happening? Is the entire scene or work shown, or just a section of it?
- **Identify any important figures:** Who is shown in the scene and why? How many figures are there? Are they depicted as individuals or are they all the same? Are any figures larger than others and why might they be shown this way?
- **Look closely at the background:** Does the background provide information about where the action is happening? Is the setting clearly shown? Are there any other decorations?
- **Look for small details:** Are there any small details hidden in the scene? Examine clothing, tools, weapons, animals, buildings and other objects.

- **Look for anything unusual:** Are there any elements in the scene that are confusing, either because they're new to you or because they don't fit your understanding of the period? Make a note of these and research them further using other primary or secondary sources.
- **Try to identify attitudes, personal points of view or bias:** When analysing a scene or work of art, keep in mind that it may not necessarily be an accurate representation of what actually happened. Remember that while a particular artwork or representation might show common people, it was almost certainly commissioned (ordered and paid for) by someone with money (such as a king or nobleman) who may have been interested in making things look a certain way for their own interests.

Apply the skill

- 1 Source 2 is a picture of one of the seals found among the ruins of Mohenjo-Daro. Your task is to analyse the source, taking into account the features described above and the questions you should be asking yourself.



Source 2 A seal from the ruins of Mohenjo-Daro which is thought to feature a unicorn.

Extend your understanding

- 1 Imagine you were commissioned to make a mural of everyday life at home, which was to be displayed next to the front door. What would you include in your mural and what would you not include in the mural?
- 2 Draw a design for the mural, and annotate it to explain the composition, choice of figures, background and details.
- 3 Conduct research on the swastika symbol (see Source 3) to discover its different uses and meanings over time. For example, swastikas have been found in religious buildings and temples; two Canadian ice-hockey teams in the early 20th century used swastikas on their uniforms; and Adolf Hitler's Nazi party adopted the symbol in the 1930s. Write a 250-word report, with pictures, to summarise your findings. Also explain why the swastika is now regarded as inappropriate and offensive by many people.



Source 3 Some of the seals have a symbol called a swastika engraved on them, such as this example from Mohenjo-Daro.

14.4 The social structure of ancient India

Indo-Europeans (commonly known as Aryans, or Vedic people) moved into northern India from about 1800 BCE. They produced four religious manuscripts called the Vedas, which became the holy books of Hinduism. The concept of a caste system developed within Hinduism, dividing society into groups.

The caste system in India enforced rigid limits on a person's life, dictating their responsibilities and privileges within society. The caste you were born into determined the sort of life you would lead, including the job you did, the person you married, and the people you socialised and ate with. People could not change their caste. There was no 'social mobility' such as we have now, where you may be born poor but still become rich and famous.

There were four main castes or varnas (and many sub-castes within each). Each caste was seen as an essential part of society. All were important, with each serving a needed role. The first three – Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas – were the so-called 'twice born'. This was because children took part in a 'rebirth' ceremony around the age of

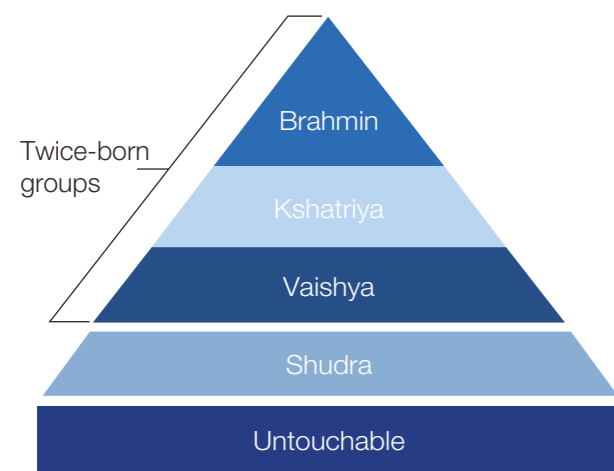
12, when they came of age. The fourth caste, the Shudras, did not have these spiritual privileges. Below these castes were the Untouchables – the lowest of the low with no rights or privileges.

Brahmins

The Brahmins were the most privileged caste. They were the priests, teachers and performers of the religious rituals. They alone memorised and passed on teachings from the Vedas. They even exerted authority over the powerful tribal chiefs. Brahmins were expected to lead a religious, intellectual and saintly life, and develop all ideal qualities, especially honesty, integrity, cleanliness, purity, austerity, knowledge and wisdom. They were not expected to accept paid employment but could receive gifts. Although Brahmins were meant to live simply, relying on donations from others, they sometimes came to possess large estates and large sums of money. Legally, Brahmins could not be sentenced to death, nor receive torture or physical punishment. They also did not have to pay taxes.



Source 2 A Brahmin performing religious rituals in a Hindu temple.



Source 1 The caste system in ancient India



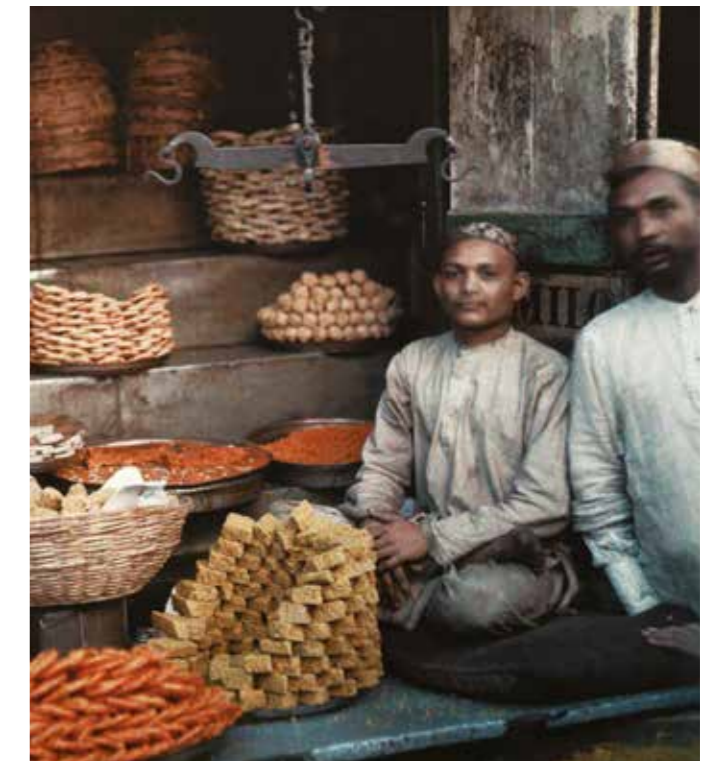
Source 3 Indian soldiers on parade

Kshatriyas

Kshatriyas were the noble caste. They were the leaders and protectors of society. They served as kings, warriors and tribal chiefs. Their responsibilities included the protection of citizens from harm, especially women, children, Brahmins and the elderly. They also had an obligation to protect cows.

In times of war, they were expected to be the first into battle and never to flee the battlefield. As leaders, they were to ensure that the citizens performed their duties, enforce law and order, and collect taxes from the main tax-paying caste, the Vaishyas. Spiritually, they were to advance their own spiritual awareness by knowing the scriptures and by taking counsel from the Brahmins.

Traditionally, only men from the Kshatriya class undertook military training. Reforms in modern India have allowed other castes to join the military. However, the majority of the Indian army is still made up of soldiers from the Kshatriya caste.



Source 4 Merchants such as these are members of the Vaishya caste.

Vaishyas

Vaishyas were the farmers and merchants. Economically they were the most productive of all the castes. As time passed they became the business class and could become very wealthy. Their original function was to work and earn money to support the Brahmin and Kshatriya castes above them. As a result, they paid heavy taxes. Though lower than the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas in the social order, they retained certain spiritual privileges and could perform some rituals and rites of passage.

Check your learning 14.4A

Remember and understand

- 1 List the chief responsibilities of the Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaishya castes. 2 What does 'twice born' mean?

Apply and analyse

- 3 How do you think the caste system would influence the design of towns and cities in ancient India?



Source 5 These Shudra caste men are employed to work in a factory belonging to a merchant from the Vaishya caste.

Shudras

The Shudras were the workers, and it was their duty to serve the other three castes. They were the only section of society allowed to accept employment from members of the other castes. The Shudras paid taxes, though these were not as heavy as those paid by the Vaishyas. Although theirs was a life of labouring for others, it was not necessarily an unbearable existence. Employers from the Vaishya caste were obliged to supply a worker with tools, and workers for wealthy landlords were paid a regular wage.

Untouchables

At the very bottom of society were the group of people who came to be known as the 'Untouchables'. In modern India the name Dalit is used for this group. Untouchables included all those who did not fit into the four castes already described. These might include nomadic people, foreigners, non-Hindus and so on. It also included most of the poor. These were the people who did the work that the other castes regarded as polluting. Hence, they could not be 'touched'. Today, there are more than 160 million Dalits in India.

Untouchables had no rights or privileges. Neither, generally, were they shown compassion, even in the face of great suffering and injustice. A Dalit writer, Omprakash Valmiki, recently reported that, in the past, Untouchables found to be memorising Hindu sacred texts might have hot melted lead poured into their ears.

Jobs for Untouchables

Other castes saw Untouchables as being too 'impure' to touch. They did the jobs that were despised or considered spiritually unclean. They cleaned toilets and scrubbed out sewers, swept roads, scavenged through rubbish, removed dead animals from public places, carried out the most menial farm work and handled corpses. They could not live normal lives in a village or share public facilities such as wells, ponds and temples.

Daily life for Untouchables

Untouchables lived (as Dalits generally still do) in housing separated from the housing of the other castes. They typically dressed in clothes taken from people who had died, ate only from cracked bowls and dishes and, for jewellery, used only objects made of iron. They could not wear shoes or remain seated in the presence of someone from a higher caste. The penalty for a Brahmin who killed an Untouchable was the same as for killing a dog.

Hardships

Even today, Dalits can be tortured, killed or humiliated for something that they did not do. (It might be something a family member did.) Complaints by Dalits against such treatments are rarely investigated; a 2001 Amnesty International study found that 30 per cent of rape cases reported by Dalit women were dismissed as 'false'.

Many Untouchable girls in the past were forced, at a young age, to become devadasis (or so-called 'servants of god'). They were never allowed to marry.

Untouchables had to avoid 'polluting' members of other castes. They had to go out of their way to avoid any kind of physical contact (in extreme cases, even with someone's shadow), or being seen by a caste member. For instance, if an upper-caste member accidentally looked at an Untouchable he or she became defiled and had to carry out purification rites. This involved bathing his or her eyes with perfumed water and not having food or drink for the rest of the day. It may also have included washing places where an Untouchable had stood or walked. Sometimes it involved religious ceremonies.



Source 6 Dalit women working as corn threshers on a farm in northern India

Check your learning 14.4B

Remember and understand

- 1 List the chief responsibilities of the Shudras and Untouchables.
- 2 What are the Untouchables now called?

Apply and analyse

- 3 With a partner, write two short accounts of a chance meeting in the street of an ancient Indian city between a Brahmin and an Untouchable. Each account will be written from the perspective of the person concerned.
- 4 Australia does not have a formal caste system as ancient India did. But do you think we have similar divisions in our society, even if they are not formalised? Write down your thoughts or discuss in small groups, giving examples to back your views.

Evaluate and create

- 5 Using the internet, research in what ways the social system is starting to change for the Dalits, especially since India's independence. Use this information to write a short magazine article that also expresses your feelings about Dalits in modern India.

14.5 Other key groups in Indian society

Slaves

Written sources, such as the Sanskrit Laws of Manu (1st century BCE), confirm that there was slavery in ancient India, and there were certainly slaves during the Mauryan Empire. Slavery in ancient India did not operate in the same way as it did in ancient Greece and Rome. Most slaves in India appear to have been acquired by other means than as prisoners of war. Many were brought to India by traders.

Slavery was also a punishment for certain crimes. Some people even chose to become slaves to pay off a debt. Unlike in many other cultures, if a man chose to be a slave his family could still remain free.

Being a slave in India seems to have rarely been a life sentence. Some slaves worked in mines. Most

appear to have worked as domestic servants, probably having a better life than the Untouchables. This was because slavery was governed (at least officially) by laws.

Women

Most historians think that women enjoyed much the same status as men in ancient India. It is thought they played an active role in society, especially during the Vedic period. It seems they were educated, and respected by men for their spiritual and intellectual abilities. They could marry anyone they chose (as women, not young girls) and have a say in what happened in the family.

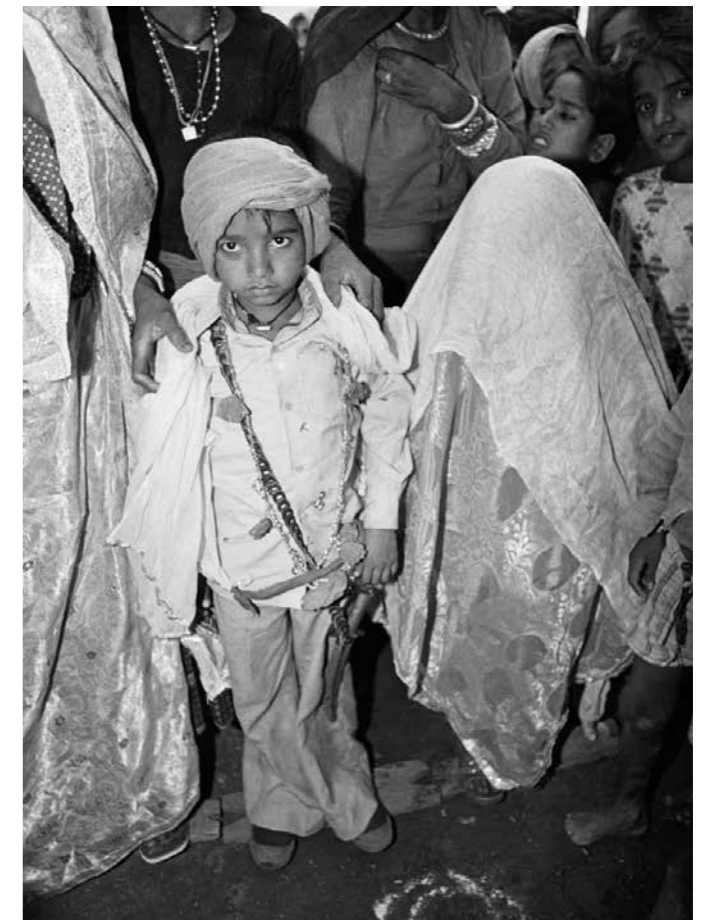
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Source 2 Shrine to Shakti, surrounded by offerings

Source 1 Some of the rights thought to have belonged to slaves in ancient India

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Source 4 Though such practices have been forbidden by law for half a century, child marriages still take place in India. Here, a girl aged 7, her head covered with a veil, is going through the ceremony of an arranged marriage to a 6-year-old boy.

Source 3 Some of the restrictions placed on Indian women

This position was probably supported by aspects of religious belief. Women were seen by Hindus as the human form of the goddess Shakti, the 'Great Divine Mother'. The creative power of Shakti was seen to be most evident when women produced children.

Changes in women's status

The status of women described here seems to have been common during India's ancient period. It changed with the arrival of both Islam and Christianity. Women began to lose their earlier independence and become more socially repressed by men. Their former social status began to decrease.

Check your learning 14.5

Remember and understand

- 1 Name two rights that ancient Indian slaves are thought to have had.
- 2 Name two restrictions placed on Indian women.

Apply and analyse

- 3 Why would you say it was better to be a slave than an Untouchable in ancient India?
- 4 Identify some ways in which religion (of any type) influenced the role and status of women in Indian society.

Evaluate and create

- 5 Write a letter arguing why women's social status in India should be addressed.

14B Rich task

The status of Untouchables

Being born as an Untouchable meant having a harsh life. It meant being seen by the castes as less than a worthwhile human being. This continues, unofficially, in many parts of India today. This is despite the fact that the status of 'Untouchable' was banned in 1950. The constitution of the newly formed republic of India declared that all its citizens had equal status.

Source 1

The sins of Girdharilal Maurya are many, his attackers insisted. He has bad karma. Why else would he, like his ancestors, be born an Untouchable, if not to pay for his past lives? Look, he is a leatherworker, and Hindu law says that working with animal skins makes him unclean, someone to avoid and revile. And his unseemly prosperity is a sin. Who does this Untouchable think he is, buying a small plot of land outside the village? Then he dared speak up, to the police and other authorities, demanding to use the new village well. He got what Untouchables deserve. One night, while Maurya was away in a nearby city, eight men from the higher Rajput caste came to his farm. They broke his fences, stole his tractor, beat his wife and daughter, and burned down his house. The message was clear: Stay at the bottom where you belong.

The punishment of Girdharilal Maurya (c. 2003) from National Geographic online news

Source 2

Recently, an organisation called Video Volunteers, which runs a network of community correspondents throughout India, launched a campaign called Article 17, named after the constitutional provision that banned untouchability.

They are now preparing to file a lawsuit in the Supreme Court and ask the government to take steps to stop untouchability practices.

The campaign and the lawsuit are based on video evidence gathered by Dalits themselves.

The short clips that come from all over India include a man who complains that a local barber refuses to cut his hair, a group of children who are forced to eat lunch separately from their classmates and women who walk for hours to fetch water because they are not allowed to use the public tap in their village.

None of the footage on its own is particularly dramatic, but the persistent, systematic discrimination that it documents is deeply disturbing.

India's Dalits still fighting untouchability (c. 2012) from BBC News online

More legal and political changes

Another law was passed in 1989: the Prevention of Atrocities Act. This made it illegal to force people to parade naked in public or do other degrading things. But abuses continued, particularly in rural areas. (Most urban areas have responded more positively to the changed laws.) In 2002, a resolution against discrimination based on caste was approved by the United Nations Committee for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. Even that is having only limited success in country areas.

These changes build on efforts started by many others, stretching as far back as the 5th century BCE. Both Siddhartha Gautama (who became the Buddha) and Mahavira (who founded the religion Jainism) were

concerned about the way Untouchables were treated. So was the political activist Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948).

More recently, Dalits themselves have been speaking out and demanding their rights. Dalit writers, such as Valmiki, are raising international awareness of what Untouchables endure. In 1997, a man named K.R. Narayanan was elected as President of India. Ten years later, K.G. Balakrishnan was sworn in as India's Chief Justice. Both men are Dalits, and the first of their social class to hold such offices in India.

Source 3 A protest march by Dalits in Mumbai



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Identifying and analysing the perspectives of people from the past

Primary and secondary sources reflect and represent many different perspectives, points of view, attitudes and values. People who create sources are influenced by their gender, age, family and cultural background, education, religion, values and political beliefs; by their life experiences and the time in which they live. It is the historian's job to make sure that they consider a range of perspectives in their investigations, allowing more voices to be heard and a more complete picture to be formed. Identifying and analysing the perspectives of different people is a very important historical skill. To do this, you need to understand the social, cultural and emotional contexts and factors that shaped people's lives and actions in the past.

Follow these steps when applying this skill:

- Step 1** Identify the historical issue around which there may be different opinions or interpretations.
- Step 2** List the various groups and people who may have been involved in or affected by this issue.
- Step 3** Identify their role or position in society.
- Step 4** Locate some primary sources that provide evidence about their point of view or opinion on the issue.
- Step 5** Analyse each source, using the following questions as a guide:

- Why was the source written or produced?
- Who was the intended audience of the source? Was it meant for one person's eyes or for the public? How does that affect the source?
- What was the author's message or argument? What was he/she trying to convey? Is the message explicit, or are there implicit messages as well? What can the author's choice of words tell you? What does the author choose not to talk about?
- How does the author try to get the message across? Do they give a detached, balanced account, or is it biased for or against the issue?
- Compared to what we face today, what relevant circumstances and experiences were different for the author of the source in the past? Some examples might include religion, economy, family life, technology. How do you think these factors and experiences influenced their thoughts and actions?

Apply the skill

- 1 Consider Sources 1 and 2. Identify and analyse the perspectives portrayed, using the steps.

Extend your understanding

- 1 Conduct some research to locate some primary source documents illustrating the perspectives of groups or individuals when K.R. Narayanan, a Dalit, was elected as President of India in 1997.

14.6 Religious beliefs and practices

Three major religions originated in India – Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism. Over centuries, Hinduism and Buddhism developed into major world religions, while across the Indian subcontinent Hinduism and Jainism have established themselves as the most significant religions. Buddhism has declined in popularity in India but has flourished elsewhere in South-East Asia.

Hinduism

Hinduism is the oldest major religion in the world. According to religious scholars, Hinduism originated 5000 or more years ago, before the arrival of the Aryans (Indo-Europeans). The Aryans both influenced, and were influenced by, the religious practices of the original Indus Valley peoples who were known as the 'Hindus'. As well as developing the Sanskrit language, the Indo-Aryans created a body of literature called the Vedas based on hymns and other sacred poems from their gods. Over time, the Vedas became the most sacred texts in Hinduism and now form the basis of the Hindu faith.

Source 1 Hindu pilgrims bathing in the Ganges



Hindus believe in an original being, Brahman, who takes the form of many other deities (gods). The three most important are Brahma (the creator of life), Vishnu (the preserver) and Shiva (the destroyer). The elephant-headed Ganesa, protector of the home and family, is another important deity.

Hindus also believe in **reincarnation** (living again after death, in the form of another human, animal or plant). Each relived life 'pays the price' for wrongdoings in the previous life, but also improves on the one before. Eventually, the person becomes one with the Brahman.

Hindu beliefs require believers to:

- live according to the 'rules' of the caste system (a division of people into a class or group)
- worship their deities (with offerings made to gods in temples and holy places)
- cremate (burn) rather than bury their dead
- make pilgrimages to holy places such as the Ganges River (see Source 1).

Buddhism

Buddhism stemmed from the life and teachings of Siddhartha Gautama. He was born to a noble family around 563 bc in modern-day Nepal. Over time, he grew disillusioned with his privileged life and left to pursue a simple life in the search for truth. After various experiences, including nearly starving to death, he sat under a tree, vowing to stay there until he had found the truth about life. After 49 days of meditation he is said to have reached a state of enlightenment or Nirvana. Believers say he was the first to break out of the cycle of reincarnation, and to be freed from the suffering that goes with it.

Buddhists do not worship deities. Instead they strive for a deeper insight into the true nature of life, with a focus on personal spiritual development. Buddhism teaches that greed, bloodshed and violence can never make people happy. The way to find peace of mind is through honest work, truthfulness, kindness and respect for the lives of all creatures, human and animal.



Source 2 A Buddhist Tibetan pilgrim meditating where Buddha was said to have given his first public address.

Jainism

Jainism developed as an offshoot to Hinduism and teaches that one should do no harm to any living thing. Jains, like Hindus, believe in karma, which teaches that the effects of a person's actions determine his or her destiny in the next life – that no repentance can save someone and no god can forgive or forget past actions.

Check your learning 14.6

Remember and understand

- 1 Name one belief that Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism have in common.

Apply and analyse

- 2 How do you think this belief would have affected the lifestyles of ancient Indians?

Evaluate and create

- 3 Create a new deity for ancient India. Sketch his or her appearance (use labels and stick figures if you cannot draw). Describe this deity's role. List the different ways in which your deity would have affected the lives of ancient Indians.

14.7 Everyday life

Daily experiences of people in ancient India would depend on their position in the caste system, whether they were male or female, and where they lived.

Housing

The cities of the Indus Valley civilisation were enclosed within high brick walls. This provided populations with some protection against attack from outsiders. Houses and streets were well planned in an ordered grid pattern.

Homes of the rich

The houses of the rich in ancient India were typically several storeys high with whitewashed walls. There would also be a private garden. Often a small stream ran through it, allowing families to carry out the daily ritual washings (for religious reasons). The private life of the family centred around this garden. Herbs were grown there to help treat any illnesses.

Rooms were separated by hanging mats or tapestries. Floors were laid with polished tiles. Each day, rooms were perfumed by incense and fragrant flowers. Furniture was typically elegant and varied. In the master bedroom, there might be a soft bed with a white bedspread and a decorated canopy above, as well as tables, chairs and baskets of flower garlands to wear.

Homes of the poor

Living conditions were much more basic for poor people, especially those living in outlying towns and villages. Their houses were usually single-storey, with walls covered with a mix of lime, dirt and cow manure. Floors were beaten dirt, and there might be only one window. Furniture was non-existent or extremely sparse. There were no chairs; people sat or squatted on the ground. There may have been a bed with a wooden or bamboo frame (as shown in Source 1). Domestic utensils were restricted to pots of various sizes.



Source 1 Inside a home in India. This style of housing is typical for a poor family in India.

Marriage

Men in India's Vedic period typically had one wife and there were no child brides. Young people seem to have been free then to marry any person they chose, as long as they had parental agreement.

With time, marriages became more structured; with more restrictions placed, especially on the females. Brides got younger. Some religious texts permitted the marriage of girls as young as eight, while others preferred the girl to be at least 12 years old.

Marriage evolved to become a matter that was planned over a long period. Sometimes the families arranged things directly; other times, the services of matchmakers (ghataka) were used. **Astrologers** were consulted to find the best time for the wedding. The father of the bride was obliged to supply a dowry or wedding gift to the family of the groom.



Households

After marriage, the new bride cut all ties with her birth family and became part of her husband's household and gotra (family line). The household into which she moved was an extended family, with grandparents, uncles, aunts and other relatives living together under the authority of the head of the household. The numbers were increased by the developing practice of **polygamy**, where men would have more than one wife.

Polygamy was permitted for all castes but was practised mainly by the Kshatriyas (nobles). Its main purpose was to ensure that a son would be produced who would preserve the gotra. Custom required that a man should wait eight to 12 years before taking a second wife. This was seen to be a sufficient time to wait for his first wife to bear him a son.

Source 2 A wedding in an Indian village today continues old traditions. The bride is washed in front of a sacred Mahuva tree, known as the 'tree of life'. The tree provides edible fruit, wood, oil (pressed from seeds), flowers, fertiliser (seed husks) and alcohol (made from fermented flowers).

Check your learning 14.7A

Remember and understand

- 1 Which caste (type of group or class) most commonly practised polygamy? Suggest a possible reason.

Apply and analyse

- 2 What do you consider to be some of the most important differences between marriage and family life in ancient India compared to today in your culture?

Evaluate and create

- 3 Based on information in the text, draw a sketch of what you think an inside room of the home of a wealthy person in ancient India might have looked like. Compare and contrast your completed sketch with what you see in Source 1.

Food and diet

In ancient times, Indus Valley populations would have eaten the grain crops they grew (e.g. rice, lentils and wheat) and the meat of the animals they herded (e.g. sheep, pigs, cattle and goats). Diets changed over time, often for religious reasons. For example, not eating meat became more common during the Mauryan Empire. This was because animal sacrifice had become less common under Emperor Ashoka, who had converted to Buddhism. By the time of the Gupta Empire, the cow had become sacred and Hindus did not eat beef at all. Much later, with the arrival of Islam, pork also became a forbidden food for many.



Source 1 A single piece of cloth is wound in different ways to form a dhoti, worn by men, and a sari, worn by women.

Clothing and jewellery

Cotton was grown in ancient India by Indus Valley farmers. Fabric made from cotton was cool to wear in India's climate. It was used to make the saris (the Sanskrit word for 'cloth') worn by women, and the dhoti worn by men. Both these garments were a single piece of cloth wound in different ways around the body. Men wound the dhoti between their legs to form loose pants. Some men also wrapped a length of fabric around their head to form turbans. A

Saris later became vibrantly coloured garments, especially for young women; for wealthy women, they were often made from richly decorated silk. Typically, lots of jewellery was worn by those who could afford it.



Source 2 A young Indian woman dressed in a traditional sari

Education

During the Indus Valley (Harappan) civilisation, formal education was limited to the upper castes. Education focused on the Sanskrit language and religious training, such as learning the Vedas and ritual practices. Traditionally, students lived and studied with their teacher, or guru, in a forest location away from towns, called an ashram. Education started as young as eight years, depending on a child's intellectual abilities. Upper-caste women were educated during the Indus Valley (Harappan) civilisation, and ancient Hindu scriptures provide evidence of women scholars who were teachers and took part in philosophical debates.

The sons of traders and merchants would be taught reading, writing and basic arithmetic in village schools, using their local dialect. Other boys and girls from the lower caste, the workers and farmers, would not have received any formal schooling.



Source 3 A student recites from the Vedas.

Check your learning 14.7B

Remember and understand

- 1 Why did the diets of ancient Indians change over time?
- 2 Who did not receive an education? Suggest a reason why.

Apply and analyse

- 3 Conduct research on the internet to find out why cows are sacred to Hindus and followers of other religions.

Evaluate and create

- 4 Through internet research, find out more about what the sari and dhoti look like (length, colours, decorative edges, how it is wrapped, etc.). Draw labelled sketches of each to show what you found out.

14.8 Warfare

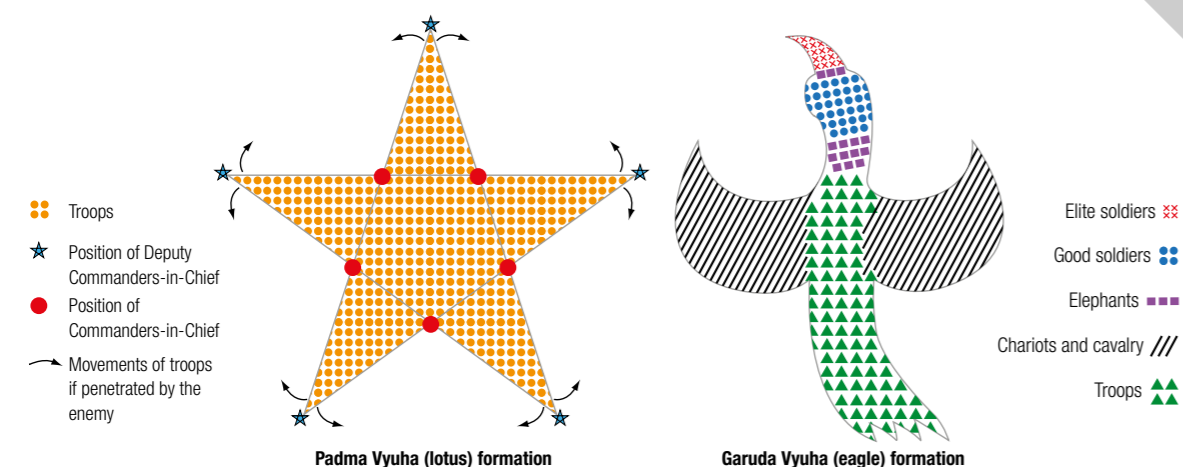
India's two epic stories, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata (created about 2300 years ago), both mention warfare. In these texts, war is viewed as an ethical 'fight for what is right', planned and executed with great skill. A carefully balanced mix of foot soldiers, cavalry, chariot troops and elephant troops helped to ensure this. This four-part mix was called the Caturangabala, very similar to the name of the Indian game of chess: Caturanga.

Throughout its history, India has fought many invaders. There has also been much internal conflict between warring kingdoms. Hence, there was a recognised need for a king to have a strong, stable army. This is where the warrior caste, Ksatriyas, fulfilled their role. It was not until the Mauryan Empire, though, that there was an army strong enough in India to unite much of the country.

Armies and strategies

The armies of India were among the first in the ancient world to fight using battle plans. They did not charge at the enemy in a random fashion, weapons drawn. Rather, they were arranged on the battlefield in quite elaborate ways. There were many battle formations used; two are shown in Source 1.

Source 1 Two army formations used in ancient India



Designer Note: Insert Art-work: N1435_07325

Source 2 Some battle units of the army in ancient India

Army formations

The Mauryan army was one of the biggest in the ancient world at that time. Each of its 10 large units, called ani kini, were made up of increasingly smaller fighting units, as seen in Source 2.

A typical battle

An Indian king was a member of the Kshatriya caste and, by definition, a warrior. The aim of a king in ancient India was not only to keep his territory intact but also to increase it through conquest. When an army marched off to battle, it was followed by a long train of supply wagons, drawn by oxen.

The battle was fought in accordance with established customs and rules. The day chosen for the battle was usually preceded by a week of prayers in which the king participated. Fighting began only when the omens were favourable. The enemy was warned that a battle was about to start.



Source 3 An artist's impression of Alexander the Great defeating the Indian army of King Poros (and his elephant troops) at the battle of Hydaspes River in 326 BCE

The battle typically began at daybreak, with the elephants plodding forward close together, providing cover for the infantry behind them. The king typically rode in the centre of the rearguard and the charge was sounded by conch shells, gongs and war drums. If particular fighting formations had been prearranged (see Source 1), these were put in place.

By common consent, fighting stopped at nightfall and was resumed at daybreak. These events were marked by the call of instruments. After the battle, the corpses from the day's fighting were heaped on a series of funeral pyres, one for each caste among the slain.

After a victory, a king would typically:

- recite, before anything else, a hymn of thanksgiving to the gods, and distribute offerings to the Brahmins
- supervise the distribution of all the goods taken in the war, which included the enemy's women
- restore the defeated king to his throne, provided that he promised loyalty and support in return for mercy
- negotiate what was to be done with prisoners. Usually, they were made slaves for one year in the service of the conquering king.

Check your learning 14.8

Remember and understand

- 1 What was the four-part mix?

Apply and analyse

- 2 Why did some soldiers in the Indian army not wear metal armour? What would be the advantages and the disadvantages of this on the battlefield?
- 3 For an enemy force, what do you think would be the most terrifying part of facing an advancing Indian army? Discuss with a partner, giving reasons for your views.

Evaluate and create

- 4 Study the two army formations illustrated in Source 1. Remembering the four components of the ancient army of India, draw a labelled sketch to show how you think one of the following other army formations was arranged: Mala vyuh (garland formation), Makara vyuh (fish formation), Kurma vyuh (turtle formation) or Vajra vyuh (thunderbolt formation). Explain to a partner why you think your formation will work as a battle tactic.

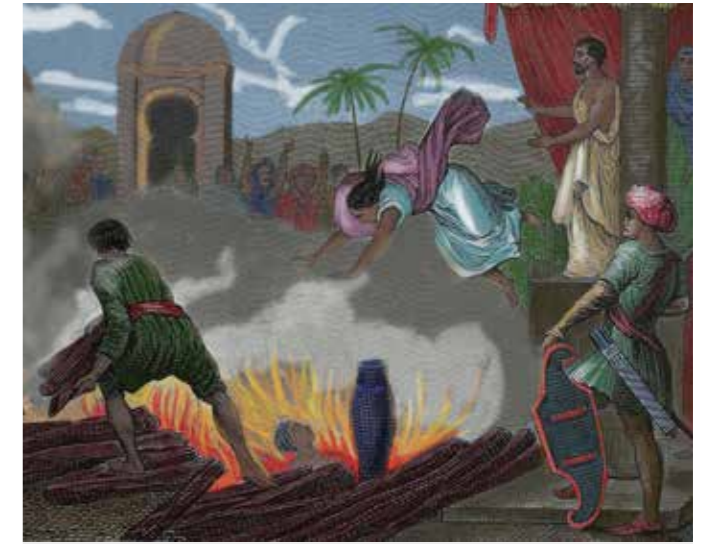
14.9 Death and funeral customs

Customs related to death and funerals in ancient India were influenced by people's beliefs and traditions. Source 1 details what typically occurred when a Hindu man died.

Source 1 Typical procedures for the funeral of a Hindu man in ancient India



Source 2 A Hindu funeral in progress



Source 3 A 19th-century artist's impression of a wife burning with her dead husband on his funeral pyre – a practice known as sati

A period of mourning followed the funeral. For 10 days, after having a purifying bath, the relatives of the dead person did not work, nor permit anyone to work on their behalf. They did not have sex during this period (as they were 'polluted'). On the eleventh day after the funeral, the dead man's bones were collected from the ashes of the fireplace (now all picked clean by birds). They were placed in an urn, which was then buried in a cemetery or immersed in a holy river.

A ceremonial meal usually followed, after which the family gave gifts to the poor. Offerings were also made to the dead man (where his remains had been buried or placed in the river) so his soul would not linger in the world of the living as a ghost.

Around 400 CE, the practice of sati began to spread. The widow chose, or was forced, to be burned alive with her dead husband. By doing this, she was greatly respected as a pure woman and declared a 'true wife'. Her agonising death ensured that her husband, seven generations of her family and she, herself, would all go straight to heaven.

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Check your learning 14.9

Remember and understand

- 1 a What tasks did undertakers perform?
b What tasks did professional mourners perform?
- 2 What would a priest observe if he declared that a dead man's family would experience supremely good fortune?

Apply and analyse

- 3 Why do you think Hindus cremate (burn) rather than bury their dead?
- 4 The practice of sati has been outlawed in India since 1829. Yet some Indian women, especially in rural parts, still choose to sacrifice their lives in this way. Record your thoughts about this situation.

Evaluate and create

- 5 You are visiting the family of an Indian friend from school on your holidays. While you are there, your friend's Hindu grandfather dies. Compose a letter home to your own family that describes what you see and hear about what happens at his funeral.

14C Rich task

The world's major religions

India is a land influenced by many religious beliefs. Within a short distance, in a populated area of ancient India, one might see a Hindu temple, a Buddhist stupa and a pavilion containing a ritual fire and a sacred tree. Later in India's history, religions such as Islam and Christianity would also have a significant impact.

The entire lives of people in ancient India were ruled by religious beliefs and superstitions. For higher caste Hindus, for example, there were the monthly rituals of honouring one's ancestors. Food offerings for them were placed on the ground on a bed of rushes by Hindus very proud of their unbroken male line of ancestry.



Source 1 Hindu men perform ritual offerings.

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Generating historical inquiry questions

One of the first and most important steps in conducting a historical inquiry is to generate key questions. The questions that you generate will direct the research that you undertake.

Usually historians generate one broad, overarching question for their inquiry – for example: 'How did Hinduism impact on the lives of people in ancient India?' After that, they generate more specific questions that are related to their overall inquiry question. You will need to generate a mixture of:

- closed or simple questions (e.g. 'When did event X take place?')
- open or probing questions (e.g. 'Why did event X take place?')
- questions that relate to the process of historical inquiry (e.g. 'What evidence is there?', 'What other sources might be needed?').

The first step in generating questions is to think about what you already know about the topic. Use this knowledge as a springboard for questions that will help you understand the topic in more depth. Use a table like the one below to brainstorm all the things you know (in short statements) in one column. In the second column, generate a related question that will help to deepen or build your understanding. Remember to include a mix of the three question types described above.

Overarching inquiry question:

What I already know	Questions to help me deepen or build my understanding
Point 1	Question/s related to point 1
Point 2	Question/s related to point 2

Apply the skill

- 1 Use the process described here to generate a range of questions related to the overarching historical inquiry question: 'How did Hinduism impact on the lives of people in ancient India?' Copy the following table into your notebook. First, identify what you already know as a result of reading the passage about Hinduism. List these ideas in the first column. Then, in the second column, generate related questions that will help to deepen or build your understanding. The first one has been done for you.

Overarching inquiry question: 'How did Hinduism impact on the lives of people in ancient India?'

What I already know	Questions to help me deepen or build my understanding
For higher caste Hindus, there were the monthly rituals of honouring one's ancestors.	Who are the higher caste Hindus? (Closed or simple questions) What did Hindus believe would happen if the rituals were not performed? (Open or probing question)

Extend your understanding

- 1 Conduct some further internet research into Hinduism. See if you can answer each of the questions you generated in the task above.
- 2 Complete some further research to answer: Are Hinduism beliefs still followed as fervently today? If there are differences, what has caused the change?

14.10 Change through conflict

The Aryans established control across much of India's north about 3500 years ago, before extending their influence into the Ganges River Valley. Among their many achievements, these Indo-Aryans produced the language and script of Sanskrit, from which comes Hindi, one of the official languages of modern India. They also created a literature based on the hymns and other sacred poems to their gods. Over time these were written down in Sanskrit and were called the Vedas.

The fertile Indus Valley was also attractive territory to other civilisations. The Persians made it part of their empire around 500 BCE, but did not hold it for long. Later, the Indus Valley and surrounding regions became part of the Hellenistic Empire under Alexander the Great in 326 BCE following the defeat of the Indian King Porus.

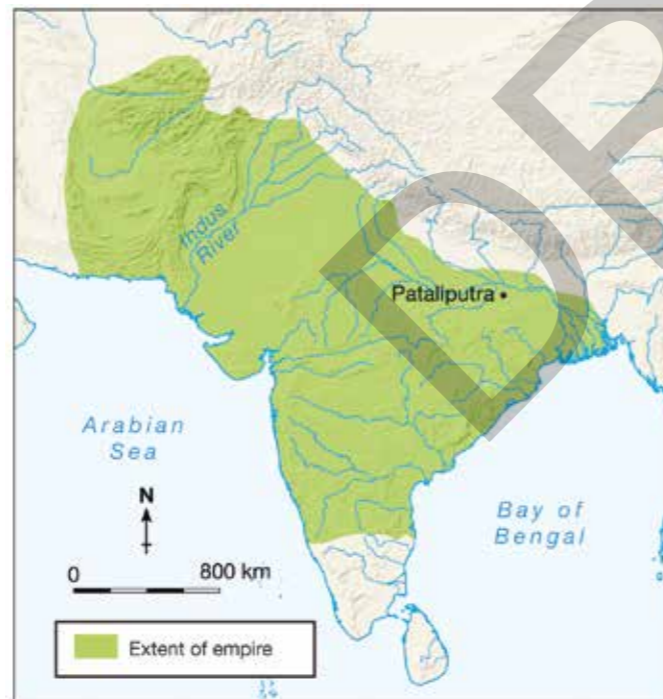
Two great Indian empires then emerged during ancient times. India's first empire – the Mauryan Empire – was established in 321 BCE by its conquering king Chandragupta Maurya. A later king, Ashoka (Chandragupta's grandson), changed the face of India, first through war, and then by peaceful means.

Mauryan Empire

By the time Ashoka came to power in 269 BCE, a large part of the Indian subcontinent was under Mauryan control. The exception was Kalinga (now the Indian state of Odisha) on the east coast. In 261 BCE, Ashoka led a lengthy campaign against the people of Kalinga, which ended in a victory for the Mauryan Empire. However, he was horrified at the devastation he had caused. He recorded how 150 000 Kalingan people had been carried away as prisoners, 100 000 had been killed, and many times that number had died as a result of the war. He vowed never to wage war again and turned to the newer religion of Buddhism for his inspiration and guidance. As a result, Buddhism became the empire's official religion in 260 BCE.



Source 1 An artist's impression of Ashoka, third ruler of the Mauryan Empire



Source 2 The Mauryan Empire at its greatest extent



Source 3 A huge rock carving of a reclining Buddha in Polonnaruwa, Sri Lanka

Ashoka and the spread of Buddhism

Ashoka wanted the teachings of Buddhism to be spread beyond their birthplace in northern India. He sent Buddhist missionaries to various parts of the subcontinent and beyond to carry the teachings of Buddhism and win people over to this new faith. Missionary expeditions were sent to Tibet, southern India, Burma and Sri Lanka. The mission to Sri Lanka was led by Prince Mahinda, Ashoka's son, and was the most successful of all. Prince Mahinda and the king of Sri Lanka, King Tissa, converted almost all of the inhabitants to Buddhism and built spectacular monuments. Altogether, Ashoka built 84 000 stupas across the Mauryan Empire.

Although Buddhism later declined in popularity in India, the descendants of missionaries sent to Sri Lanka by Ashoka carried Buddhism to Burma and Thailand. From there, it spread to the islands of modern-day Indonesia, Cambodia and Vietnam and travelled overland through central Asia to China, Korea and, finally, Japan. There are thought to now be close to 400 million Buddhists in the world, mostly in South-East Asia. That is a significant consequence of Ashoka's conversion.

Ashoka's dhamma

Perhaps the most significant aspect of Ashoka's reign was his effort to convey to his people his ideas about how life should be lived. These ideas were known as his dhamma. The word came from the Sanskrit word dharma, which means the universal law, or righteousness. In Buddhism, it was used for the teachings of the Buddha, but Ashoka gave the word



Source 4 The remains of a pillar built by Ashoka showing engraved edicts

a wider meaning beyond religious matters to include questions of ethics and social behaviour.

Ashoka asked people to be tolerant of each other. This meant that people should be considerate to slaves and servants, respect teachers, obey parents, be generous towards friends and relatives, show concern for all living beings, and refrain from killing or behaving violently. For leaders such as himself, this meant renouncing war and conquest. This teaching of non-violence also extended to the treatment of animals. Ashoka's edicts tell us that he set up hospitals for animals as well as for people. To convey his ideas to his people, Ashoka had edicts (similar to instructions or laws) inscribed in stone throughout the empire.

End of the Mauryan Empire

Ashoka ruled for 37 years and died in 232 BCE. His policy of dhamma was not completely successful, as social and religious tensions throughout the empire continued. Decline set in and the empire broke down when the last of the Mauryan kings, Brihadratha, was assassinated in 185 BCE.

Check your learning 14.10

Remember and understand

- 1 How and why did the Kalinga campaign change Ashoka?

Evaluate and create

- 2 Create a poster or PowerPoint presentation that shows Ashoka's contribution to ancient India.

14.11 Change through trade

The Gupta Empire

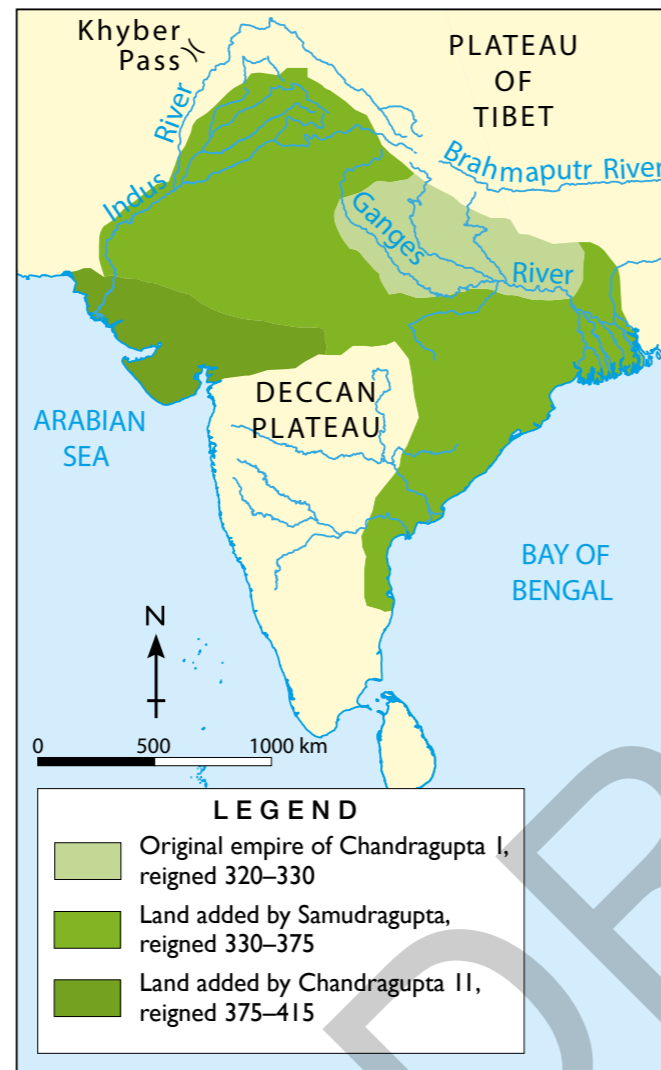
Over 100 years after the end of the Mauryan Empire, ancient Indian civilisation was to reach new heights – this time under the rule of the Gupta Empire (c. 320–480). The Gupta Empire was founded by Chandragupta I, and although the reigns of the five Gupta emperors lasted only about 150 years, they oversaw great changes and advances in many fields. This was a period when Indian arts and sciences flourished. Great Indian writings took on their final form at this time, including the Sanskrit epic tales that are still central to Indian literature, culture and society today.

Trade also flourished, with close contacts formed not only with Asian neighbours but also with the Roman Empire in the west. Ancient India's geographical location – roughly midway along the Silk Road between China and the Mediterranean societies of Rome, Greece and Egypt – also helped to develop exchanges of goods, ideas and religions.

During the Gupta Empire, Buddhism was replaced by Hinduism as the official state religion. Despite this change, followers of Buddhism, Hinduism and Jainism coexisted peacefully and exchanged ideas. The Gupta rulers were followers of the Hindu god Vishnu, but they were generous towards Buddhist monasteries and universities. They encouraged the works of Buddhists and Jains. Today, Buddhist sculptures carved into rock faces and paintings on temple caves from this time are evidence of this.

Ancient Indian society during the Gupta Empire

A Chinese Buddhist monk named Fa Hsien provided evidence of Indian society during the Gupta Empire. Fa Hsien toured the Gupta Empire to collect copies of Buddhist scriptures and his writings (394–414 CE) were first translated by French scholars in the 19th century.



Source 1 The extent of the Gupta Empire



Source 2 This rock art, from Cave 1 at Ajanta, was painted during the Gupta Empire. It is considered to be a high point of Buddhist art.

Source 3

[In this land] ... the people are numerous and happy; they have not to register their households, or attend to any magistrates and their rules; only those who cultivate the royal land have to pay [a portion of] the gain from it. If they want to go, they go; if they want to stay on, they stay. The king governs without decapitation or [other] corporal punishments. Criminals are simply fined, lightly or heavily, according to the circumstances [of each case]. Even in the cases or repeated attempts at wicked rebellion, they only have their right hands cut off ... Throughout the whole country the people do not kill any living creature, nor drink intoxicating liquor, nor eat onions or garlic ... they do not keep pigs and fowls, and do not sell live cattle; in the markets there are no butchers' shops and no dealers in intoxicating drink.

The Heads of the Vaishya families ... establish in the cities houses for dispensing charity and medicines. All the poor and destitute in the country, orphans, widowers, and childless men, maimed people and cripples, and all who are diseased, go to those houses, and are provided with every kind of help, and doctors examine their diseases. They get the food and medicines which their cases require, and are made to feel at ease.

From A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms, by Fa-hsien, trans. James Legge, 1886

Tensions and divisions in Indian society appeared under the rule of the last Gupta ruler, Kumara Gupta, and the invading Huns ultimately ended what remained of the empire's unity. By the mid-6th century CE, India was again ruled as a number of small kingdoms.

Check your learning 14.11

Remember and understand

- 1 How many years in total did the Gupta Empire last?

Apply and analyse

- 2 What were the Gupta kings' attitude to people with religious beliefs different from their own, and what evidence shows this?

- 3 Using Source 3, what comments can be made about the legal system and health system available for Indians living under Gupta rule?

14D Rich task

Legacy of ancient India

Ancient India has left many legacies for our world. As we have already seen, it was where Hinduism and Buddhism began. It is from where we have inherited unique forms of architecture, art, music and dance – and a distinctive cuisine. Perhaps less widely realised are the astonishing advances India’s ancient people made in the fields of science and mathematics.



Source 3 Ancient followers of Buddhism and Hinduism gave the world magnificent examples of religious architecture such as the temple at Ellora, built during the Gupta Empire.



Source 1 A statue of the Indian astronomer and mathematician Aryabhata. He described the Earth as a sphere, rotating on its own axis and revolving around the Sun, so explaining day and night and the seasons of the year.



Source 2 Our system of Arabic numerals is founded on a numeral system developed in India.

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Creating and delivering an audiovisual presentation

You have probably created several PowerPoint presentations already. You may have also tried out some other audiovisual presentation software, such as Prezi, which is freely available on the internet. Whichever program you choose, it is important to use it effectively and avoid some common problems of these types of presentations. Use the following steps to help you avoid these mistakes.

Step 1 Design your presentation

- Plan your presentation carefully so it has a clear beginning, middle and end.
- Make sure you present the content in a clear, concise dot-point form not as large slabs of text.
- Don't fill up your PowerPoint with lots of random pictures that are not related to the content. Make sure each visual is accompanied by a caption that explains why it is relevant to the presentation.
- A common mistake is to have objects and text moving on the screen in a way that just distracts the audience. Use graphics, sounds, video,

animations and transitions only if they add value to the point being made, not just because you think they will look or sound good.

- Use a design that ensures your audience can clearly see and read the slides. Make sure there is enough contrast between the text colour and the background colour on the slide, and make sure your font size is large enough.

Step 2 Deliver your presentation

- When delivering a PowerPoint presentation to an audience, you should do more than just stand up and read out the text on each slide. Instead, talk in a way that develops and expands on the points on each slide. Carefully plan in advance what you are going to say during each slide. Record this plan on cue cards, and refer to these cards during your speech to remind you of what to say.
- One thing at a time! At any moment, what is on the screen should be the thing you are talking about. Your audience will quickly read every slide as soon as it's displayed. If there are four points on the slide, they'll have read all four points while you are still talking about the first point. Plan your presentation so just one new point is displayed at any given moment. Navigate to the next point only when you are ready to talk about the next point.
- Speak clearly – not too fast, not too slow. Vary your tone and pitch to make your presentation more interesting.
- Make eye contact with different members of your audience. Do not just look down at your cue cards.

Apply the skill

- 1 Research, prepare and present an audiovisual presentation about a legacy from ancient India. Use the following questions to structure your presentation:
 - a Who invented it?
 - b When was it invented?
 - c How did it work?
 - d Why was it significant?
- 2 Your presentation should be well researched and based on relevant and reliable sources.

Extend your understanding

As you listen to the presentations of your classmates, complete the peer assessment proforma below. Ask your teacher to photocopy several copies so that you can complete one for each presentation you listen to.

Name of presenter:		Name of person completing peer assessment:	
Component of presentation:	What did the presenter do well in this regard:	What could the presenter improve upon in this regard?	
PowerPoint design:			
Oral presentation:			

Give each classmate your completed peer assessment. Collect the peer assessments that your classmates completed as they listened to your presentation. Read their feedback and then complete a short self-assessment by responding to the following questions:

- What did I do well in terms of my PowerPoint design?
- What could I improve in terms of my PowerPoint design?
- What did I do well in terms of my oral presentation?
- What could I improve in terms of my oral presentation?