

Hello, fellow teacher!

Below is your reading passage; I hope it serves you well.

Print it out and it's ready to use. Or, if you want to differentiate for struggling students, use the highlight feature on the PDF to annotate what you want the kiddos to focus on.

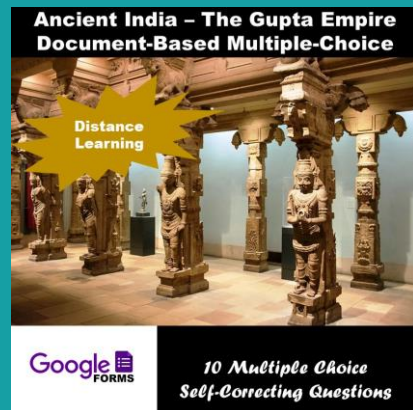
Click [here](#) to get a digital copy.

Don't forget to check back to the site regularly and see what has been added!

Warmest Wishes,

Joan

If you're interested in a self-correcting Google lesson check out my Lesson on Ancient India [here](#)



If you're interested in more reading passages like the one below, as well as word puzzles, there are dozens covering every topic in world history on my [website](#).

Ancient India



India is a large Asian country that is south of China. India takes its name from a large Asian river, the Indus, which might mean "large body of water." India is a subcontinent, a large land mass that is smaller than a continent.

Indus Valley

There are signs of civilization as far back as about 5000 BCE in fertile land around the Indus River in the northwest portion (Punjab region) of modern-day India.

As farming thrived, larger communities grew, and cities began to form. The high point of the Indus Valley Civilization was 2500 to 2000 BCE, with many major cities, and trade with Mesopotamia. It is believed a catastrophic event, such as a flood or drying up of a major source for farming helped the culture to decline. The Indus Valley civilization ended around 1500 BCE.

Aryans

Over time, a large group of nomadic cattle-herders, the Aryans, migrated into India from central Asia. They took up agriculture and developed a caste system. A caste system is a division of people into different classes, who each have different roles. The four basic castes that developed included priests (Brahmin), rulers, farmers/merchants and laborers. In time, an "untouchable" class developed that handled jobs seen as impure and not fit for others. They did hold an important role in society because only the untouchables handled the dead bodies and were charged with keep the funeral fire burning. The only way a person could rise to a higher caste was to be reincarnated into it as a reward for a good life.

This also was the beginning of the Vedic Period, named after *The Vedas* ("knowledge"), a large body of religious texts. It is written in the Sanskrit language. The religion is now known as Hinduism, which got its name from an ancient name of the Indus River, where worshipers gathered. Other areas, including the Ganges River, also were important worship locations. It believes there is an order and purpose to the universe; happiness is obtained by accepting this and living by its dictates. This is the concept of "dharma," rightful living.



In the sixth century BCE, new religions developed, Buddhism and Jainism, which shared some beliefs. The goal in both is nirvana, a freedom from suffering. Also, one's actions have consequences, the idea of karma. Jainism focused on non-violence (ahimsa). Buddhism grew out of the teaching of Buddha and the basic beliefs are the "four noble truths." It includes the belief of reincarnation, the belief that the spirit starts a new life in a new body after death.

Later History

Religious developments were a part of wider social and cultural change, including formation of city-states and the rise of powerful kingdoms. This also left them open to foreign attack, the Persian Empire invading in 530 BCE. Later, Alexander the Great invaded and Greek cultural influences were added to the Persian ones.

Chandragupta Maurya then started the Mauryan Empire (322-185 BCE), which eventually extended throughout most of the Indian subcontinent. Asoka the Great reigned at the dynasty's height and his conversion to Buddhism helped the spread of that religion throughout the land. The dynasty declined after his death and the country split up into various kingdoms.

The next great empire, seen as the golden age of Ancient India, was the Gupta Empire (320-550 CE). A time of peace and prosperity, many major advancements of science and arts took place. In time, this too declined, and India was open to invasion from such forces as the Huns and in time the growing power of Muslims.





Name _____ Date _____

Ancient India



caste

Vedic

dharma

nirvana

reincarnation

Golden age

Caste System



Why do you think the priests were in a higher caste than the king?

How did even the untouchables have an important role in society?

How could an untouchable rise to a higher caste?

Think of a time you were unhappy. What caused you to feel that way?

What did you want that you didn't get?

If you no longer wanted what made you unhappy you would not have suffered. This is the main idea of Buddhism. What is your opinion about this philosophy?

The 4 Noble Truths of Buddhism

- 1. Life is made up of suffering**
- 2. The cause of suffering is desire**
- 3. If you give up desires, you will reach nirvana (peace)**
- 4. The way to reach nirvana is through the Eightfold Path**

The Noble Eightfold Path



Terms of Use

By downloading this resource, you are agreeing that the contents are licensed to you only for classroom/personal use as a single user. I retain the copyright and reserve all rights to this product.

YOU MAY:

Use items (free and purchased) for your own classroom students, or your own personal use. Reference this product in blog posts, at seminars, professional development workshops, or other such venues PROVIDED there is both credit given to myself as the author and a link back to my TPT store is included in your post/presentation.

YOU MAY NOT:

Claim this work as your own, alter the files in any way, or remove/attempt to remove the copyright/watermarks.

Sell the files or combine them into another unit for sale/free,
or post this document for sale/free elsewhere on the internet (this includes Google Doc links on blogs).

Make copies of purchased items to share with others is strictly forbidden and is a violation of the Terms of Use as well as copyright law.