Section Summary

**INDIAN SOCIETY DIVIDES**

Aryan society was divided into social classes. There were four main groups, called *varnas*. The Brahmins (BRAH-muhns) were priests and were the highest ranking varna. The Kshatriyas (KSHA-tree-uhs) were rulers or warriors. The Vaisyas (VYSH-yuhs) were commoners, including farmers, craftspeople, and traders. The Sudras (SOO-drahs) were laborers and servants.

This *caste system* became more complex, dividing Indian society into groups based on rank, wealth or occupation. A person was born into a caste, but it was sometimes possible to change caste during one's lifetime. Life for the lower castes was difficult. Some people called untouchables, did not belong to any caste.

**MAIN IDEAS**

1. Indian society divided into distinct groups under the Aryans.
2. The Aryans practiced a religion known as Brahmanism.
3. Hinduism developed out of Brahmanism and influences from other cultures.
4. A few groups reacted to Hinduism by breaking away to form their own religions.

**Key Terms and People**

- **caste system**: a division of Indian society into groups based on a person’s birth, wealth, or occupation
- **Hinduism**: the most widespread religion in India today
- **reincarnation**: the belief that the soul, once a person dies, is reborn in another person
- **karma**: the effects that good or bad actions have on a person’s soul
- **Jainism**: a nonviolent religion based on the teachings of Mahavira
- **nonviolence**: the avoidance of violent actions
- **Sikhism**: monotheistic religion founded in India in the 1400s

**Number the Aryan varnas in order of their social rank, with one (1) being highest and four (4) being the lowest:**

- Brahmins
- Sudras
- Kshatriyas
- Vaisyas

In ancient India, how was a person's caste determined?

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BRAHMANISM
The religion practiced by the Brahmins became known as Brahmanism. The religion was based on the four Vedas, writings that contained ancient sacred hymns and poems. Over time, Aryan Brahmins and scholars wrote their thoughts about the Vedas. These thoughts were compiled into Vedic texts. The texts described rituals, explained how to perform sacrifices, and offered reflections from religious scholars.

HINDUISM DEVELOPS
Hinduism is India’s largest religion today. It developed from Brahmanism and other influences. Hindus believe that there are many gods, but all gods are part of a universal spirit called Brahman. Hindus believe everyone has a soul, or atman, and the soul longs to join with Brahman. This happens when the soul recognizes that the world we live in is an illusion. Hindus believe this understanding takes several lifetimes, so reincarnation, or rebirth, is necessary. How you are reborn depends upon your karma, or your actions in life. Those who have good karma are born to higher castes. Those with bad karma are born into lower castes.

GROUPS REACT TO HINDUISM
The religions of Jainism and Sikhism developed in reaction to Hinduism. Jainism is based upon the principle of nonviolence, or ahimsa. Sikhism is a monotheistic religion that blends elements of Hinduism and other religions, such as Islam.

CHALLENGE ACTIVITY
Critical Thinking: Drawing Inferences The idea of ahimsa has proved popular with reformers through the centuries. Write a one-page essay explaining why this might be so.
DIRECTIONS On the line provided before each statement, write T if a statement is true and F if a statement is false. If the statement is false, write the correct term on the line after each sentence that makes the sentence a true statement.

_____  1. The force created by a person’s actions is called karma.  
___________________________________________________________

_____  2. The Jainism divided Indian society into groups based on rank, wealth, and occupation.  
___________________________________________________________

_____  3. Hinduism is based on four major principles: Injure no life, tell the truth, do not steal, and own no property.  
___________________________________________________________

_____  4. Brahma the Creator, Siva the Destroyer, and Vishnu the Preserver are three gods of Hinduism, the largest religion in India.  
___________________________________________________________

_____  5. Nonviolence is the avoidance of violent actions, which was practiced by the Jains.  
___________________________________________________________

_____  6. Hindus believe that souls are born and reborn many times, each time into a new body, which is a process called reincarnation.  
___________________________________________________________

_____  7. According to Hindu teachings, everyone has a soul, or atman, inside them.  
___________________________________________________________

_____  8. Hinduism is based on the teachings of a man named Guru Nanak.  
___________________________________________________________

_____  9. Hindus believe that a person’s ultimate goal should be to reunite their soul with karma, the universal spirit.  
___________________________________________________________
Ancient India

SECTION 1
Summary
(First Page) Students should circle Himalayas; the monsoons cause wet and dry seasons.
(Second Page) Possible answer—Guards could detect invaders or trouble in the streets; we cannot read their writings; their works were passed down by word of mouth.

Challenge Activity
Answers will vary. Student essays should support the theories presented about the decline of Harappan civilization.

Words or Phrases
Answers will vary. Sample answers:
1. seasonal wind patterns
2. ancient Indian language
3. large landmass that is smaller than a continent

Fill in the Blank
4. Harappan
5. Vedas
6. Himalayas
7. raja
8. Aryans
9. Sanskrit; Aryans
10. subcontinent
11. monsoon

SECTION 2
Summary
(First Page) (1) Brahmins, (2) Kshatriyas, (3) Vaisyas, (4) Sudras; his or her birth
(Second Page) rituals, sacrifices, and thoughts of religious scholars; atman; a person’s actions in life

Challenge Activity
Answers will vary. Student essays should note that nonviolent protests have proved popular in part because they do not provoke anger or retaliation from those in power.

True/False
1. T
2. F; The caste system divided Indian society into groups based on rank, wealth, and occupation.
3. F; Jainism is based on four major principles: Injure no life, tell the truth, do not steal, and own no property.
4. T
5. T
6. T
7. T
8. F; Sikhism is based on the teachings of a man named Guru Nanak.
9. F; Hindus believe that a person’s ultimate goal should be to reunite their soul with Brahman, the universal spirit.

SECTION 3
Summary
(First Page) He traveled India to find the cause of pain and suffering; wanting what one does not have, wanting to keep what one has, not wanting what one has but dislikes
(Second Page) Four Noble Truths; possible answers—Buddhism does not involve animal sacrifice, Buddhism challenges the authority of Brahmins, Buddhism teaches that individuals can reach salvation alone, Buddhism opposes the caste system; possible answers—Nepal, Sri Lanka, China, Japan, Korea

Challenge Activity
Answers will vary. Student essays should reflect an understanding of the motivations and teachings of the Buddha.

Sentences
Answers will vary. Sample answers:
1. If people can overcome their desire and ignorance, they can reach nirvana.
2. Siddhartha used fasting and meditation to free his mind from daily concerns.
3. The king sent Buddhist missionaries to spread their religious beliefs.
4. Buddha is the term that means “Enlightened One.”