UNIT SUMMARY
The Framework for Indian History: Geography and a Formative Period. Important reasons for India’s distinctive path lie in geography and early historical experience. India’s topography shaped a number of vital features of its civilization. The vast Indian subcontinent is partially separated from the rest of Asia (and particularly from east Asia) by northern mountain ranges. Mountain passes linked India to civilizations in the Middle East. Though it was not as isolated as China, the subcontinent was nevertheless set apart within Asia. The most important agricultural regions are along the two great rivers, the Ganges and the Indus. During its formative period, called the Vedic and Epic ages, the Aryans (Indo-Europeans), originally from central Asia, impressed their own stamp on Indian culture. During these ages, the caste system, Sanskrit, and various belief systems were introduced.

- Using the maps on page 53, draw the boundaries of the Mauryan and Gupta Empires and label each accordingly.
- Label:
  - Indus River
  - Ganges River
  - Sri Lanka (a.k.a. “Celon” in the past)
  - Himalaya Mts
1. Look back at the map of China’s three classical empires on p. 37. Keeping in mind that the Mauryan Empire (p. 53) came before the Gupta Empire (p. 53), what do you notice about differences in the growth of empires over time between India and China?

**INTRODUCTION (P. 49)**

2. Use the double bubble map below to diagram similarities and differences between India and China during the classical period.

![Double Bubble Map](image)

**THE FRAMEWORK FOR INDIAN HISTORY: GEOGRAPHY AND A FORMATIVE PERIOD (P. 50)**

3. Why was China able to avoid influences from the Middle East and Mediterranean region when India was not?

4. What famous conqueror invaded India from the Mediterranean world and what culture did he spread?

5. What problem(s) does India’s diverse separate regions and topography cause for India’s unity?

6. How does this compare/contrast with China?

7. Discuss “monsoons” and identify their positive and negative benefits to Indian agriculture.
8. Where are “Aryans” from and what is another name for them? (FYI – the modern day country of IRAN – say “Iranians” and then say “Aryans” – gets its name from the Aryans.)

9. Why were Aryans more productive farmers than the original inhabitants of northern India, esp. when the Aryans were originally nomadic herders?

10. Who originally developed the Vedas?

11. In what language were the Vedas eventually recorded?

12. What was the basic topic of the Vedas?

13. The Aryan’s also developed and imposed social classes, or varnas, on India’s population. What was this social system called? (HINT: it sounds a little like “class”).

14. There were five basic varnas (social classes). Use the social class pyramid below to diagram and rank each of the varnas DURING THE EPIC AGE and after. You MUST include the Indian name of each varna along with its meaning. (ex. Sudras = ordinary laborers, Vaisyas = traders and farmers, etc.)

15. What determined which caste you belonged to?

16. Was it possible to move between castes? Why or why not?

17. Were the Aryans monotheistic or polytheistic?

18. Why do Greeks, the Scandinavians (e.g. the Vikings), and the Aryans have such similar gods? (Ex. All three have a god of thunder: Zeus, Thor, & Indra respectively)

19. The religious beliefs of the Aryans developed into what dominate religion in India to this day?
PATTERNS IN CLASSICAL INDIA (P. 52)

20. What famous southeastern European invaded India in 327 BCE and what state did he establish there?

21. What Indian dynasty was founded following the invasion mentioned above?

22. What similarity with China, particularly Han China, did this dynasty share?

23. Read the short passage on p. 52 from the Greek ambassador and assess the validity of this statement citing evidence from the passage to support your conclusion: “The king of the Mauryan Empire was miserable on a daily basis.” [HINT: for a complete answer begin with ‘The king was/was not (your choice) miserable on a daily basis AS SHOWN BY __________, HOWEVER, he was also __________ BECAUSE ________.’]

24. Ashoka and Kanishaka, both Indian rulers, converted to Buddhism yet one helped spread Buddhism in and beyond India while the other diminished Buddhism inside India. Identify and explain each ruler’s impact on the Buddhist faith.

25. Your text states that the Guptas “had perhaps greater impact” than the Mauryan rulers. How do you think the authors came to that conclusion? (HINT: time could be a factor, 90 years of Mauryan rule compared to 185 years of Gupta rule but there is another reason that might help explain why the Gupta’s ruled longer.)

26. What follows the end of both the Mauryan and Gupta Empires in India and what similarity exists in the origins of these events?

POLITICAL INSTITUTIONS (P. 54)

27. Despite the fact that we have yet to cover Greece and Rome (we’ll speak of them together as “the Mediterranean Civilization” later), you should be able to rank India, Greece & Rome, and China in terms of political institutions and control. Write them in order from most to least powerful below.

28. List the methods of political control used by the Gupta’s. Include the one mentioned at the bottom right column on p. 53 in the previous subsection.
29. What was the impact of so many differing regional languages on any Indian political structure?

30. Look back to page 36 and locate the section (last paragraph) that discusses the Zhou’s efforts at promoting cultural unity. Why might the Zhou have been more successful at creating a unified Chinese culture than the Gupta’s were able to?

31. What was the most important and effective system that organized and governed the people of India’s daily lives?

32. List several limitations imposed by this system on various groups.

33. What evidence can you see that merchants in India enjoyed a greater social status than merchants in China? (Remember Confucianism: despite their possible wealth, Chinese merchants were seen something like parasites as they focused on selfish moneymaking and not on learning or political service which helps Chinese society as a whole.)

RELIGION AND CULTURE (P. 55)

34. What two major world religions developed in India?

35. Which of those two dominates India today?

36. Describe the relationship of those two religions toward other religions. Is this common?

37. How is Hinduism different from all other world religions?

38. What do Hindus refer to their own religion as?

39. Define “guru” –

40. Define “reincarnation” and then give one reason why most Hindus do not eat meat. (another reason is that killing an animal is violent, something religious Hindus do not agree with)

41. Identify the basic obligations of life according to dharma.

42. How does Hinduism provide hope to people in the lowest castes? (HINT: this connects to reincarnation.)

43. How is Siddhartha Gautama like Jesus Christ or Muhammad and what is he better known as today?

44. How is Buddhism similar to Christianity in its origins? (HINT: Judaism is to Christianity as …..?)

45. What key aspect of Hinduism did Buddha reject and why might Buddhism appeal more to those in the lowest levels of Indian society and less so those in the highest?
46. Why are priests not very important to Buddhists? (HINT: how do you achieve nirvana?)

47. Despite its origins in India, Buddhism enjoys a small following there today. However it does dominate in other regions to the east of India. Identify those areas and explain WHY Buddhism spread outside India.

48. What is the Kamasutra?

49. How has Indian literature influenced Western literature?

50. What connection exists between University of Texas, Harvard, Rice University, etc. to Nalanda?

51. Identify classical Indian achievements in science.

52. Great Britain’s Edward Jenner is credited with developing the world’s first effective vaccination against smallpox in 1796. In the mid-1800’s Great Britain made smallpox vaccinations mandatory for all British citizens. By 1977 smallpox as a human killing disease had been wiped out. Prior to this, huge numbers of people around the world suffered agonizing deaths each year. However, smallpox inoculations existed in India as early as 550 CE and perhaps as early as 1500 BCE. Why do you think this knowledge didn’t spread? Keep in mind that smallpox still existed in India too even after inoculations were discovered there. (HINT: government and communication tech)

53. Why do we refer to our numbering system in the West as the “Arabic” system if it was created in India?

54. What connections do the following have with classical India? Explain the connection for each separately with a brief annotation.

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ECONOMY AND SOCIETY (P. 59)

55. How did castes impact economic life?

56. How did castes impact social life?

57. How were Indian families similar to Chinese families?

58. Define “dowry” –

59. What was the purpose behind arranged marriages?
60. Why might a poor or selfish family abort or kill a female baby after birth? (HINT: the last 2 questions are connected. This still goes on today, esp. in China and India. [http://www.gendercide.org/case_infanticide.html])

61. How was the patriarchal family slightly different in India than in China?

62. What key technology were the Indians the best at?

63. What material was first manufactured in India that much later became a key staple of the American South?

64. Rank the social status of Indian merchants compared to Chinese and Mediterranean merchants. Write them in order from highest to lowest below.

65. What did Tamil traders get from the Middle East and the Roman Empire?

**IN DEPTH: INEQUALITY AS THE SOCIAL NORM (60-61)**

66. “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” ~ Declaration of Independence, 1776. Evaluate the likelihood that statement would be accepted by those who adhere to India’s caste system today.

67. How do most modern Westerners believe a person’s place in society should be determined?

68. How were Europeans of the medieval period (roughly 500 CE to 1450 CE) more like classical Indians (and rural Indians today) than modern Europeans and other Westerners? (HINT: Lord, Baron, Earl, Duke, peasants, serfs)

69. Where could you find people in the classical period more like modern Westerners in their views of equality? (But modern females wouldn’t like it.)

70. What usually backed up views of inequality in classical societies?

**VISUALIZING THE PAST: THE PATTERN OF TRADE IN THE ANCIENT EURASIAN WORLD (P.62)**

71. What Chinese products were in demand by the elite of Rome?

72. Using the map, identify the most common product shipped from any port in India.

73. What products were shipped from East Africa?

74. What is the first product you see listed as shipping from the islands of Southeast Asia?

75. What product do you see shipping from Japan?

76. How many “zones” is the map divided into?

What do you think it means when the map says “Arab Zone” or “Indian Zone”?
NOTE: All of the above products and their origins are important for the course. Get familiar with them. They’ll pop up later.

INDIAN INFLUENCE (P. 63)
77. What body of water was key to Indian trade?
78. Who else besides Indian merchants used that body of water?
79. What other body of water was a key trading linkage during this period?
80. How did India influence Southeast Asia?
81. How did India influence China?
82. What connection lies between Buddhism and Christianity? (NOTE: Buddhists believe that negative emotions like lust, envy, anger, etc. must be resisted or they lead to negative behavior.)

CHINA AND INDIA (P. 64)
83. How were China and India different? (NOTE: if you failed to completely fill in your double bubble earlier this is a good place to find missing info. 2nd NOTE: “Otherworldly” means “supernatural”, “imaginative”, “magical”, “paranormal” or “spiritual”)
84. How were China and India similar?

TIMELINE
Insert the following events into the timeline. Pick up on the dates as you read them in the text. The timeline at the front of the chapter will also be invaluable to you.
A. **Aryan’s invade India**
B. **Ashoka born**
C. **Veda’s written**
D. **Huns overthrow Gupta Empire**
E. **Alexander the Great invades**
F. **Gupta Empire begins**
G. **Buddha is born**

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