

People and Ideas on the Move**Section 1**

The Indo-Europeans

Terms and Names

Indo-Europeans Group of Asian peoples who migrated to many different places

steppes Dry grasslands

migration Movement of people from one place to another

Hittites Group of Indo-European peoples who occupied Anatolia

Anatolia Large peninsula in modern-day Turkey

Aryans Group of Indo-Europeans

Vedas Sacred literature of the Aryans

Brahmin Priest

caste Class

Mahabharata Poem that tells the story of a great war

Before You Read

In the last chapter, you read about peoples who built civilizations in the great river valleys.

In this section, you will learn about the movements of two groups of people who lived on the grasslands of Asia.

As You Read

Use a web diagram to record some of the languages that stem from Indo-European.

INDO-EUROPEANS MIGRATE

(Pages 61–62)

Who were the Indo-Europeans?

The Indo-Europeans were a group of peoples who came from the **steppes**—the dry grasslands of western Asia. The Indo-Europeans rode horses and tended cattle, sheep, and goats. They spoke many different languages, but all of them came from the same original language.

For some reason, starting about 1700 B.C., the Indo-Europeans began to leave their homeland. They moved into some of the settled areas and began to conquer them. These **migrations**,

movements of people from one region to another, took place over a long period of time.

1. What happened to the Indo-Europeans?

THE HITTITE EMPIRE (Pages 62–63)**Who were the Hittites?**

The **Hittites** were Indo-European peoples. They rode two-wheeled chariots and used iron weapons to conquer **Anatolia**.

Section 1, *continued*

Anatolia is also called Asia Minor. It is a huge peninsula in modern-day Turkey. The Hittites moved farther and took the ancient lands of Mesopotamia. When they moved to the south, they ran into the Egyptians. Neither side was able to defeat the other. So, they decided to make peace.

The Hittites adopted many features of the culture that had grown in Mesopotamia before they arrived. They changed others to suit their own ideas. Their laws, for instance, were less harsh than the code of Hammurabi. The Hittites ruled their Southwest Asian empire from about 2000 to 1190 B.C. Then they fell to a new wave of invaders.

2. How did the Hittites react to the culture they found in Mesopotamia?

ARYANS TRANSFORM INDIA

(Pages 63–65)

Who were the Aryans?

The **Aryans** were another group of Indo-European people. They moved into what is now India and transformed it. They first captured the land of the people of the Indus Valley. Archaeology tells almost nothing about the Aryans. But their

sacred literature, the **Vedas**, tells a lot about them.

The Aryans were divided into three classes of people. There were priests (**Brahmins**), warriors, and peasants or traders. They viewed the non-Aryans living in the area as a fourth class. Over time, they made many rules for how people in these classes, or **castes**, could interact with one another. People were born into their caste for life. Some “impure” people lived in a group outside this class system. They were butchers, grave diggers, and trash collectors. Because they did work that was thought unclean, they were called “untouchables.”

Over many centuries, the Aryans took more and more of what is now India. Eventually many powerful people tried to create their own kingdoms. They fought each other until one kingdom, Magadha, won control over almost all of India. Around this time, an epic poem, the **Mahabharata**, was written. It tells of the blending of cultures at the time. It also sets down ideals that were to become important in Hindu life.

3. What is the caste system?

Section 1, *continued*

As you read about the migration of Indo-European peoples, fill in the blanks in the following summary.

From about 1700 to 1200 B.C., waves of Indo-European nomads migrated from their homelands in the (1) _____, the dry grasslands north of the Caucasus Mountains. One group, the Hittites, settled in (2) _____, a rugged peninsula in a region today called Turkey. They conquered (3) _____, the chief city in the Tigris-Euphrates valley, signed a peace treaty with Egypt, and blended many of their traditions with the more advanced Mesopotamian culture. With their superior two-wheeled (4) _____ and their war weapons made of (5) _____, the Hittites created an empire that dominated Southwest Asia for over 450 years.

About 1500 B.C., another Indo-European group, the (6) _____, entered India through the mountain passes of the Hindu Kush. Unlike the people they conquered, they were light skinned and had not developed a writing system. The invaders were divided into social classes, later called (7) _____. Over time four major social classes developed, the highest being the (8) _____, or priests, and the lowest, the (9) _____, or laborers. Beginning around 1000 B.C., chiefs began to set up kingdoms in the Indian subcontinent; the most important of these kingdoms was (10) _____.

Many modern languages trace their origins to languages spoken by the Indo-Europeans. Among the Indo-European family of languages spoken in Europe and Asia today are (11) _____ and (12) _____.