The city-states of Sumer traded across the Arabian Sea with people who lived by another great river – the River Indus, which flows through Pakistan. Here, one of the world’s first great civilizations had begun, like Sumer, with farms, villages, and small towns.

The Indus Valley

Around 2500 BC, cities were planned and built. These cities remained unknown until archaeologists began excavating them in the AD 1920s. There were two main cities – Harappa in the north of the Indus Valley and Mohenjo Daro in the south. The people who lived here were farmers, tending fields and watering crops with silt-laden waters washed down when the snows melted in the mountains to the north.

Well-planned cities
Harappa and Mohenjo Daro were carefully planned and laid out on a grid system. They were large cities, over 3 miles around their outer boundary. The cities had wide roads and brick houses, most of which

The city of Harappa. Many houses were built on mud-brick platforms to save them from seasonal floods. Most had baths, with water from a public well or a well in the courtyard.
Priest kings

Rulers known as priest kings were found in all the great ancient civilizations. This ruler was the link between people and god, on whose will their fate depended. Both Harappa and Mohenjo Daro were probably ruled by a priest king and by a priestly elite.

△ Archaeologists have found hundreds of artifacts during the excavation of Mohenjo Daro. Many, such as this bronze figurine of a dancing girl, have been well preserved in the sand and mud around the settlement.

△ The farmers of the Indus Valley used wooden carts pulled by a pair of oxen. Deep grooves made by heavily laden carts have been found in the excavated streets of Mohenjo Daro.

had at least two floors. The standards of hygiene and sanitation were high. Many houses had private bathrooms, with pipes leading to main drains under the streets. People also used public wells and baths. Bathing may have been part of certain religious rituals, for which the Great Bath found at Mohenjo Daro probably had a religious function.

Traders used a standard system of weights and measures, and each city had a large granary stocked with grain. Farmers grew wheat, barley, peas, mustard, sesame seeds, dates, and cotton. Domesticated animals included dogs, cats, cattle, chickens and possibly pigs, camels, buffalo, and elephants. Over 100 other towns and villages have been found in the Indus Valley.

Rich from trade

All this suggests a high level of organization. Temples were smaller and less impressive than those of Mesopotamia, but the people of the Indus Valley enjoyed clean and well-run cities. Food was their main export, and trade was carried on by ship with copper producers in the Persian Gulf. Caravans from the north brought silver from Afghanistan and lead from Rajasthan. There was also trade with Sumer, and similarities in art found suggest the two cultures copied each other's fashions.

"No thing existed, nor did nothing exist:/ there was no air-filled space, no sky beyond./ What held it all? And where? And who secured it?"

from THE RIG VEDA, c. 1,500 BC

The Rig Veda is a religious song about the ancient gods of fire, earth, air, and water.
Planned Cities on the Indus

BEFORE YOU READ
In the last section, you read about the development of culture along the Nile.
In this section, you will learn about the first civilization in India.

AS YOU READ
Use the chart below to take notes on the civilization of the Indus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INDUS CIVILIZATION</th>
<th>NOTES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>geography</td>
<td>• subcontinent separate from other areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• rich soil from flooding of rivers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• problems: unpredictable river, winds</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Geography of the Indian Subcontinent (pages 44–45)

What is a subcontinent?
South Asia—modern India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh—is a subcontinent. It is separated from the rest of Asia by tall mountains. Just below the mountains are two large plains that hold the Ganges and Indus rivers. The high mountains gave the people safety from invaders. Because they lived close to the sea, the people could travel over the water to trade with other peoples.

The people along the Indus River faced many of the same challenges that the people in Mesopotamia did. Their river flooded each year and left soil good for farming. But the floods did not occur at the same time each year. Also, the river sometimes changed course. The region's weather caused problems, too. Each winter, strong winds blew dry air across the area. Each spring, the winds brought heavy rains. These seasonal winds are called monsoons.

1. What challenges did the people along the Indus River face?
Civilization Emerges on the Indus; Harappan Culture  
(pages 46–48)

What were cities like on the Indus?

Historians cannot understand the writings of the people who settled in the Indus Valley. So, they have not learned much about these people. They do know that they were farming along the river by about 3200 B.C. The culture is called Harappan civilization because many discoveries were made near the city of Harappa. They also know that the culture of these people covered an area larger than either Mesopotamia or Egypt.

About 2500 B.C., these people began building their first cities. In Mesopotamia, cities were a jumble of winding streets. In the Indus Valley, however, the builders carefully planned their cities. They made a grid of streets. They built an area called a citadel that was easy to defend. All the important buildings were here. They also had systems for carrying water and sewage.

Because the houses were mostly alike, scholars think that the Indus culture did not have big differences between social classes.

These early people left an important mark on the region. Some religious objects include symbols that became part of later Indian culture. Historians also think that the people of the area had extensive trade with people in the region and with the people of Mesopotamia.

2. Name two conclusions that have been drawn about Harappan civilization.

Mysterious End to Indus Valley Culture  
(page 49)

How did Indus Valley culture end?

Around 1750 B.C., the cities began to show signs of decline. The Indus Valley civilization collapsed around 1500 B.C. Satellite images suggest a shift in the earth's crust that caused earthquakes. Because of the quakes the Indus River may have changed its course. This would stop the good effects of the yearly floods. The people may have overworked the land. This would have left the soil too poor to produce crops.

3. Name two reasons why Indus Valley civilization may have ended.

Skillbuilder

Use the illustration to answer the questions.

1. Drawing Conclusions What advance in technology is shown in this illustration?

In their private baths, people took showers by pouring pitchers of water over their head.

Wastes drained through clay pipes into brick sewers running below the streets.

2. Clarifying What happened to the wastewater?
A. Determining Main Ideas  As you read this section, list the key characteristics of the first Indian civilization in the web diagram below.

- Geography
- Settlements/Buildings
- Ancient Indian Civilization
- Religious Beliefs
- Economic Life

B. Drawing Conclusions  Explain how the monsoons affect the climate and in turn the people of the Indus Valley.