

Ancient India

Lesson 1 Early Civilizations

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How does geography influence the way people live?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. *How did physical geography and climate influence the development of civilization in India?*
2. *How did the people of the Indus River valley build cities?*
3. *How did the Aryans influence early India?*
4. *How was society in ancient India organized?*

Terms to Know

subcontinent a large landmass that is smaller than a continent

monsoon seasonal wind, especially in the Indian Ocean and southern Asia

language family a group of similar languages

Sanskrit the first written language of India

Vedas ancient sacred writings of India

raja an Indian prince

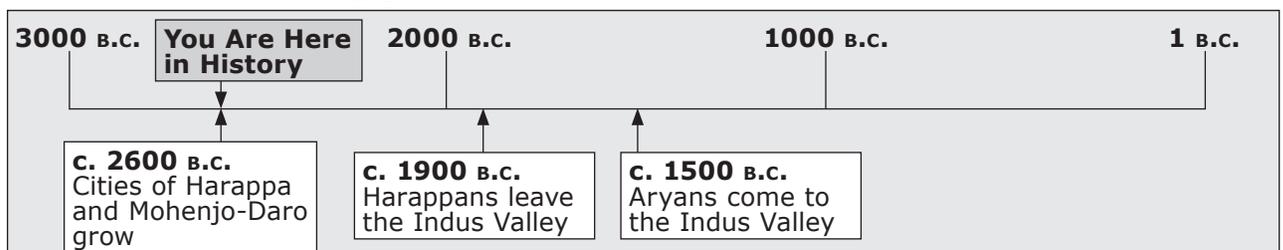
caste an Indian social class whose members are restricted in the jobs they may take and in their association with members of other castes

guru a teacher

Where in the world?



When did it happen?



Ancient India

Lesson 1 Early Civilizations, *Continued*

The Geography of India

India's northern border starts on the southern edge of the continent of Asia. The Himalaya is a mountain system which blocks off India from the rest of Asia. This makes India a **subcontinent**.

The Ganges and Indus Rivers are in northern India. The Ganges runs southeast into the Indian Ocean. The Indus flows southwest into the Arabian Sea. Their water comes from melting snow in the Himalaya. The Deccan Plateau is south of the river valleys. It is dry and hilly. The coastal areas have plains, or flat land, that is good for farming.

India's climate, or usual weather, has **monsoons**, or strong winds. The winter monsoon blows in cold, dry air from the mountains. The summer monsoon brings warm, wet air from the Arabian Sea. Summer monsoons bring the rainy season. If the rain comes in time, the crops will be good. If the rains are late, then there may be a drought, or a long dry period that can ruin crops.

The Indus Valley Civilization

India's first civilization began in the Indus River valley where crops grew in the rich soil. The Indus civilization lasted from about 2600 B.C. until 1900 B.C. Cities and towns were spread over western India and Pakistan.

Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro were large cities with populations of about 35,000 people each. The cities had large streets paved with bricks and smaller, unpaved side streets. A fortress was built to protect the people. Houses were built with oven-baked bricks made of mud. The houses had flat roofs, enclosed courtyards, wells, and indoor bathrooms. Pipes took wastewater to pits outside the city walls. Houses also had garbage chutes that led to bins in the streets.

The Indus Valley people left no written records. Experts have studied what is left of the cities to learn what life was like there. The royal palace and the temple may have been built together inside a fortress.

Farmers Grew	City Dwellers Made
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rice • barley • wheat • peas • cotton 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clay pots • cotton cloth • metal tools • jewelry from shells, ivory, and gold • toys



Marking the Text

1. In the text, circle the landform that separates India from the rest of Asia.



Reading Check

2. How do monsoon winds affect life in India?



Listing

3. List five features of houses in Indus Valley cities.

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____



Reading Check

4. How did most Indus Valley people earn a living?

Ancient India

Lesson 1 Early Civilizations, *Continued*



Identifying

5. The Aryans were different groups of people. In what way were they alike?



Listing

6. What two activities did the Aryans stop after moving into the Indus River valley?



Drawing Conclusions

7. Why did the Aryans develop written language?



Reading Check

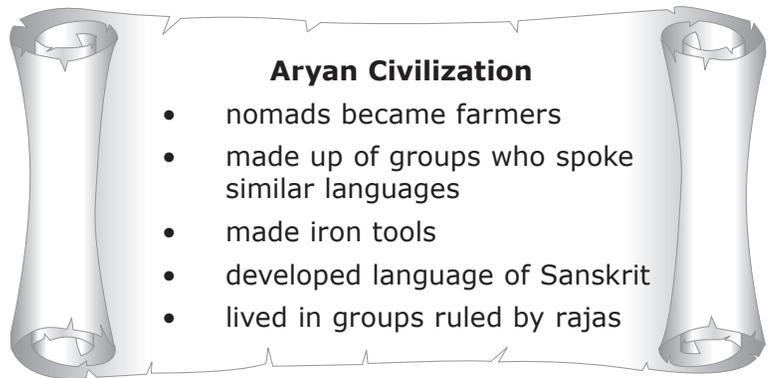
8. How did the Aryans change their way of life after they settled in India?

Most people were farmers. City dwellers made goods that could be traded. Indus Valley merchants traded with the Mesopotamians. Some traders sailed across the Arabian Sea. Others made the difficult trip through the mountains.

Aryan Migrations and Settlements

Around 1900 B.C., the people of the Indus Valley began to leave their cities. Soon, people called the Aryans began settling the river valley.

The Aryans came from central Asia. They were nomads, so they traveled around to find food for their herds of cattle. The Aryans were not a single race or a tribe. They were a group of people who spoke similar languages. This **language family** was called Indo-European. The Aryans were good warriors, and expert horse riders and hunters.



Aryan Civilization

- nomads became farmers
- made up of groups who spoke similar languages
- made iron tools
- developed language of Sanskrit
- lived in groups ruled by rajas

After awhile, the Aryans stopped living as nomads and became farmers. Over time, they decided that cattle were sacred, so people in India stopped eating meat from cattle. The Aryans began to make iron tools. With these, they cleared India's forests and dug canals to bring water from the river to the fields. This made the Ganges River valley good for growing crops. Farmers in north India grew wheat, barley, and other grains. In the river valleys, farmers grew rice. In the south, they grew spices like pepper, ginger, and cinnamon.

The early Aryans did not write things down when they were nomads. When they became farmers, they developed a written language called **Sanskrit**. Using Sanskrit, they wrote down sales and trade information. They also wrote down songs, stories, poems, and prayers in sacred books called the **Vedas**.

Ancient India

Lesson 1 Early Civilizations, *Continued*

The Aryans lived in groups, each ruled by a **raja**, or prince. Rajas often fought with each other over treasure and cattle.

Ancient India Society

In the Aryan society, social groups developed. They became the **caste** system. A person was born into one caste and could never change to any other. The caste system had rules for almost every part of life, including marriage, work, and friendships.

The many different castes in Indian society were grouped into four classes called *varnas*. The top *varna* was the Brahmins, who were priests. The next *varna* was the Kshatriyas, the warriors. They ran the government and the army. After the Kshatriyas came the Vaisyas, or “common” people.” They were farmers, craftspeople, and merchants. Then came the Sudras. They were lower-class workers and servants who had few rights. Most Indians were Sudras.

One group was too low to be part of the caste system—the Untouchables. Untouchables did work considered too dirty for caste members, such as collecting trash. Most Indians thought Untouchables were unclean. As a result, Untouchables were made to live apart from everyone else.

Grandparents, parents, and children all lived together with the oldest man in charge. This is called an extended, or enlarged, family.

Men had many more rights than women. Only men went to school or could become priests. When they were young, some boys studied with a **guru**, or teacher. Older boys went to schools in the cities. Parents chose marriage partners for their children. Divorce was not allowed.

Check for Understanding

Write whether each feature was from the Indus Valley civilization, Aryan civilization, or both.

- _____ 1. developed the caste system
- _____ 2. used mud bricks to make buildings
- _____ 3. grew rice, wheat, and barley
- _____ 4. used the Sanskrit language
- _____ 5. built large cities with paved streets



Marking the Text

9. In the text, circle the names of the four castes and the group that was not part of the caste system. Underline the types of people who belonged to each.



Reading Check

10. What was family life like in ancient India?



11. Place a three-tab Venn diagram to cover the Check for Understanding. Label the top tab *Indus Valley Civilization* and the bottom tab *Aryan Civilization*. Label the center tab *Both*.

List what you remember about each civilization. On the center tab, list similarities between the two civilizations.

Ancient India

Lesson 2 Religions of Ancient India

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How do religions develop?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. *What are the basic beliefs of Hinduism? How did Hinduism develop?*
2. *Why did Buddhism appeal to many people in various parts of Asia?*
3. *What are the teachings of Jainism?*

Terms to Know

Hinduism major religion that developed in ancient India; main belief: all souls are part of one universal spirit

Brahman the universal spirit worshiped by Hindus

reincarnation the idea that the soul is reborn into many different lives

dharma a person's personal duty, based on the individual's place in society

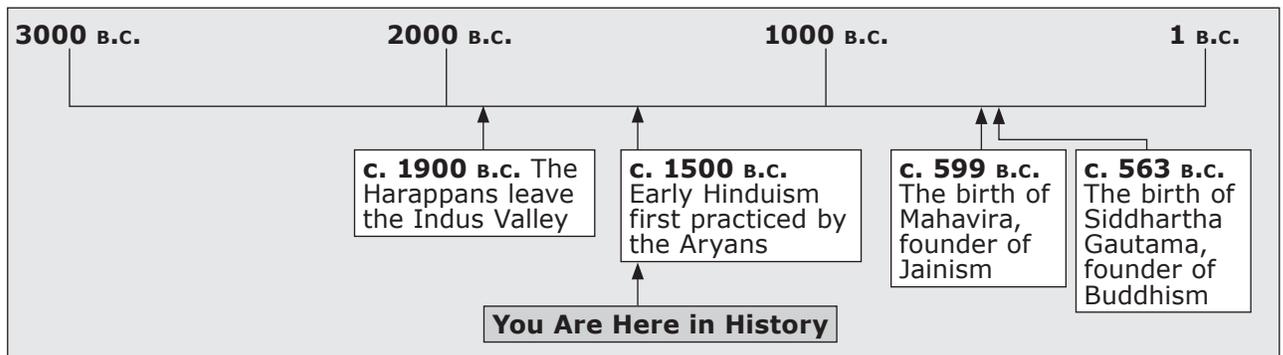
karma a good or bad force created by a person's actions; it determines whether a person's soul will be reborn into a higher or lower form of life

Buddhism religion founded by Siddhartha Gautama; main belief: inner peace comes from ending desire

nirvana a state of perfect happiness that is achieved after giving up all desires

Jainism religion that does not believe in a supreme being; it emphasizes nonviolence and respect for all living things

When did it happen?



What do you know?

Put a check mark (✓) next to each term that you know. For every word that you check, write a short description or definition.

- _____ Sanskrit _____
- _____ the Vedas _____
- _____ varnas _____
- _____ guru _____
- _____ Untouchables _____

Ancient India

Lesson 2 Religions of Ancient India, *Continued*

Origins of Hinduism

Hinduism is one of the oldest religions in the world. It grew from the faith of the Aryans. Hinduism was formed when the Aryan religion combined with ideas from other Indian people.

Hindus believe in one great spirit called **Brahman**. They also believe that all living things and even some gods are part of Brahman.

Hindus believe that a person’s soul will eventually join Brahman. Before that can happen, however, a soul must live many lives—even some as an animal. The idea of living many lives in different forms, one after another, is called **reincarnation**. According to Hinduism, if people do the duties of their caste, they will get a better next life. They must follow **dharma**, or their personal duty. If a person follows dharma, then they have good karma.



Karma is the result of how a person lives. If you live a good life and do your duty, you have good karma and eventually, you will reach Brahman. If you have bad karma, you will be reborn into a lower caste or as an animal and will remain in the cycle of reincarnation.

This belief in dharma and karma mean that people have to obey the rules of their caste because that is where they have to stay until their next lifetime. The idea of reincarnation gives them their only hope.

Rise of Buddhism

Prince Siddhartha Gautama was born about 563 B.C. Siddhartha was wealthy, married, and had a son. One day he left the palace and was shocked to see that most people were poor. He asked himself why people suffered.



Sequencing

1. Fill in the blanks with words from this section.

Hindus believe that the soul goes through _____. A person is born into a _____. If they follow the _____ of their caste, they make good _____ and the cycle starts again.



Describing

2. How do Hindus believe their souls will eventually join Brahman?



Reading Check

3. How did Hinduism affect the way ancient Indians lived day to day?

Ancient India

Lesson 2 Religions of Ancient India, *Continued*

 **Identifying**

4. Who was the founder of Buddhism?

 **Explaining**

5. How does a Buddhist get to nirvana?

 **Defining**

6. What is the Eightfold Path?

 **Contrasting**

7. What is the difference between Theravada Buddhism and Mahayana Buddhism?

To search for answers, he left his family and lived alone. Legend says that Siddhartha meditated under a tree. Finally, he came to understand the meaning of life. This is called "enlightenment."

Siddhartha spent the rest of his life teaching people about his discovery. People called him the Buddha, which means "Enlightened One." His lessons about life and suffering are called **Buddhism**.

The Buddha taught that everyone should stop wanting fame, money, and worldly things. Then they would reach **nirvana**, a feeling of perfect peace and happiness. The Buddha said that the only way to stop desiring things was to follow the Eightfold Path—the Buddhist rules for right living.

The Buddha did not agree with the caste system. He taught that all people could reach nirvana. This made Buddhism very popular among the lower castes and the Untouchables.

The Eightfold Path

1. Know and understand the Four Noble Truths.
2. Give up worldly things and do not harm others.
3. Tell the truth, do not gossip, and do not speak badly of others.
4. Do not **commit** evil acts, such as killing, stealing, or living an unclean life.
5. Do rewarding work.
6. Work for good and oppose evil.
7. Make sure your mind keeps your senses under control.
8. Practice meditation to see the world in a new way.

The Buddha taught his ideas for more than 40 years. When he died, his disciples could not agree about what his message really meant. They split into two groups. One was Theravada Buddhism. *Theravada* means "teachings of the wise men." It says that the Buddha was a great teacher, but not a god. Theravada Buddhism spread south and east. It also became popular in Indochina.

The other kind of Buddhism is Mahayana Buddhism. It says that the Buddha is a god. Mahayana Buddhists also honor *bodhisattvas*. Bodhisattvas are enlightened people who choose not to go to heaven even though they could. Instead, they stay on Earth to help others reach nirvana.

Ancient India

Lesson 2 Religions of Ancient India, *Continued*

In Tibet, Mahayana Buddhism mixed with Hinduism and Tibet's own religions. Buddhist leaders called *lamas* led the government. Tibetans believed lamas were reincarnations of the Buddha.

Today, very few Buddhists live in India. Buddhism is widely practiced in Southeast Asia and East Asia. There are about 376 million Buddhists in the world today.

BUDDHISM	
Theravada Buddhism	Mahayana Buddhism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buddha was a great teacher. • Buddha was not a god. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buddha was a god. • People who worship Buddha can go to heaven.

Jainism

Another religion also came to India at this time. It is called **Jainism**. Its main teacher was Mahavira. Mahavira's title was "the Jina," or "the Conqueror." His followers are called Jains. Much of Jainism is like Buddhism. Both taught that people should stop wanting worldly things. Their goal was to stop the process of being reborn and reach nirvana.

Jainism has one main teaching: Never harm any living creature. The name of this teaching is *ahimsa*. *Ahimsa* means that a person should not kill even insects or worms.

Centuries later, in the early 1900s, an Indian man named Mohandas Gandhi led a movement to free his nation from the rule of the British. Instead of using weapons, Gandhi followed the example of *ahimsa*. He and his followers used nonviolent ways of protesting. Through peaceful ways, the nation of India gained its independence.

Check for Understanding

List one important belief or practice of each religion.

1. Hinduism _____
2. Buddhism _____
3. Jainism _____

✓ Reading Check

8. Where is Buddhism practiced today and in what forms?

✓ Reading Check

9. What is the belief of *ahimsa*?

FOLDABLES®

10. Place a three-tab Foldable along the dotted line to cover the Check for Understanding. Label the anchor tab *How did they develop?* Label the three tabs *Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism*. On the back of the tabs, write a sentence about each religion based upon what you remember.

Ancient India

Lesson 3 The Mauryan Empire

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

What makes a culture unique?

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. *How did religion affect the development of the Mauryan Empire?*
2. *Why did the Gupta Empire become powerful?*
3. *What were the cultural contributions of the Mauryan and Gupta Empires?*

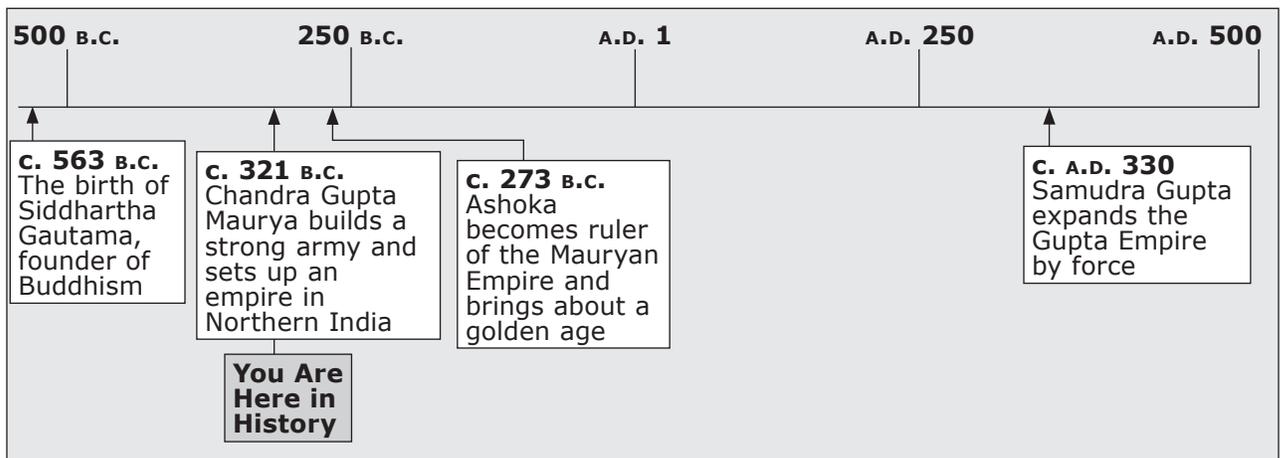
Terms to Know

stupa a special, dome-shaped building meant to honor the Buddha

pilgrim a person who travels to places of religious importance

Bhagavad Gita part of a famous long poem; it is about the Hindu god Krishna

When did it happen?



What do you know?

Write a short definition of each term using your own words.

empire _____

Sanskrit _____

Hinduism _____

Buddhism _____

Ancient India

Lesson 3 The Mauryan Empire, *Continued*

Origin of an Empire

India had many small kingdoms by the 500s B.C. Around 325 B.C., an Indian military leader named Chandra Gupta Maurya built a strong army. He took over almost all of northern India.

In 321 B.C., the Mauryan dynasty began. A dynasty is a group of rulers from the same family. Chandra Gupta set up a well-organized government in the capital city of Pataliputra. To keep control, Chandra Gupta also set up a strong army and a spy system to make sure his subjects were loyal.

Many historians think that the greatest king of the Mauryan Empire was Chandra Gupta's grandson, Ashoka. Ashoka ruled from about 273 B.C. to 232 B.C. He was a strong military leader who grew to hate war. After one bloody fight, he decided to follow the teachings of Buddha and spend his life making peace.

Mauryan Kings

Chandra Gupta	Ashoka
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Took over almost all of northern India • Set up a well-organized government in the capital city of Pataliputra • Used army and spies to make sure people stayed loyal • Created a postal system to have fast communications throughout the empire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong military leader who chose to follow the teachings of Buddha and spend his life making peace • Built hospitals for people and for animals • Built new roads with rest houses and shade trees for travelers • Sent teachers to spread Buddhism throughout India and Asia • Tolerant of other religions such as Hinduism

Ashoka sent teachers to spread Buddhism throughout India and Asia. He had workers carve the Buddha's teachings on pillars, or large, tall stones. He also had workers build thousands of **stupas**, or Buddhist shrines. Unlike most rulers of the time, Ashoka was tolerant of other religions such as Hinduism.

When there is a good road system and a strong ruler, trade is good. Trade was very good under Ashoka. India became the center of a huge trade network. It stretched all the way to the Mediterranean Sea.



Identifying

- Fill in the blanks. Write three things that Ashoka did for his people after he became a Buddhist.
 - A. _____
 - B. _____
 - C. _____



Comparing

- Which leader did more to help his people, Chandra Gupta or Ashoka?



Comparing

- What did both Chandra Gupta and Ashoka do to increase communication in the empire?

Ancient India

Lesson 3 The Mauryan Empire, *Continued*

Reading Check

4. What caused Ashoka to denounce violence? What was the result?

Reading Check

5. How did the Gupta Empire profit from trade routes?

Identifying

6. In what language were Indian epic poems written?

Ashoka died in 232 B.C. The kings who followed him were not good leaders. They forced merchants to pay heavy taxes. They took the peasants' crops without paying them. The empire grew weak. The people turned against these rulers. In 183 B.C., the last Mauryan king was killed by one of his own generals. After that, the Mauryan Empire split into small warring kingdoms.

The Gupta Empire

For the next 500 years, the small kingdoms fought each other. Then, a prince from the Ganges River valley rose to power. His name was Chandra Gupta, just like the founder of the Mauryan Empire. This Chandra Gupta founded the Gupta dynasty in A.D. 320. He ruled from the old capital city, Pataliputra, for ten years. Then, his son Samudra Gupta took over. Samudra Gupta gained new lands for the empire. He became a patron, or gave money, for people to make art and literature. India began a golden age.

Merchants used a network of trade routes to buy and sell. They gained wealth for themselves and the empire. Cities grew along the trade routes and made travel easier.

The Guptas practiced and supported Hinduism. They built fine temples and created beautiful works of art to honor the Hindu gods. **Pilgrims**—people who travel to holy places—used the trade routes to get to these popular places. These travelers made the cities rich.

Culture in Ancient India

Artists, builders, scientists, and writers were busy under the Mauryan and Gupta empires. After Sanskrit developed under the Aryans, the Hindu Vedas were written down. Another kind of popular text was the epic. These were long poems that taught important lessons about right and wrong. The most famous epic poems are the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*.

Epic Poem: The *Mahabharata*

- the longest poem in any written language
- contains about 90,000 verses
- best-known section is the *Bhagavad Gita*
- hero learns that he should do his duty and follow his dharma

Ancient India

Lesson 3 The Mauryan Empire, *Continued*

The best-known section of the poem *Mahabharata* is the ***Bhagavad Gita***. The name means "Song of the Lord." The hero in the poem learns that he should do his duty and follow his dharma, no matter how difficult it is.

Music was important in the religious and social lives of the ancient Indians. Religious poems, such as the *Bhagavad Gita*, were probably sung in group settings.

Early art that has survived is mostly religious art carved in stone. Many sculptures are of the Buddha, some carved as early as the A.D. 100s. The most important buildings in early India were those used for religious worship.

Mathematicians invented a way to show nothing by using the number zero. The Indian number symbols for 0 through 9 are the same ones we use today. Arab traders adopted these "Arabic numerals" and Europeans later borrowed them. By about the A.D. 1200s, these numerals had replaced Roman numerals.

Indian scientists mapped the movements of the planets and stars. They knew that the Earth was round and that it moved around the sun. Metal workers used steel and iron to make tools and weapons.

Gupta doctors set broken bones and performed operations. They invented medical tools, such as scalpels, and used herbs to treat illnesses. A doctor named Shushruta even performed an early type of plastic surgery.

Mathematics	Science	Medicine

Check for Understanding

List one accomplishment of each Indian leader.

1. Chandra Gupta Maurya _____
2. Ashoka _____
3. Samudra Gupta _____



Listing

7. In the graphic organizer, list some of the advances in mathematics, science, and medicine.



Reading Check

8. What lasting achievement did Indian mathematicians make?



9. Place a 3-tab Venn diagram Foldable along the dotted line to cover the Check for Understanding. Label the top tab *Mauryan Empire* and the bottom tab *Gupta Empire*. Label the center tab *Both*. On the top and bottom tabs, list words or phrases that describe each empire. On the middle tab, write what they had in common.