

Name _____ Date _____ Class _____ Period _____

Questio: _____

post-indus vedic india

The Aryan Migration into India

- Around 1500 BCE _____ nomads from Central Asia _____ into Iran, Asia Minor, and _____
- _____ Valley Civilization went into decline around the same time, so historians once believed that the Aryans _____ and conquered India
- The evidence now points to a slow migration and process of _____, or combining of cultures

The Vedas: Our Best Source

- The _____ are four religious texts of the Indo-Aryans, written in _____
- They are our best source of information for this period so it is called the _____ Period
- They began as _____ traditions that were added to over centuries and eventually _____ down
- The earliest, the _____, was composed during the centuries that the Aryans _____ to India
- It describes a semi-_____ culture that mainly raised _____, and also mentions horse-drawn _____ and _____ weapons
- Compared to the great Indus Civilization that preceded it, Aryan India was much _____

Acculturation

- The original inhabitants of the Indian Subcontinent were _____, a darker skinned people who spoke languages like those of _____ India today
- The Aryans slowly adopted the settled _____ lifestyle of the Dravidians and _____
- Aryan culture became dominant, with warrior tribal chiefs, or _____, ruling populations
- Once _____ arrived in India, the Aryans were able to clear more _____ for farming, and spread East across the plain surrounding the _____ River
- Aryans divided society into four castes, or levels, and included the non-Aryans in the lowest caste

Religious Beliefs

- Rig Veda describes the many gods of the Aryans, imported from Indo-European tradition
 - _____ was the main god, the god of war and of thunder
 - _____ was the god of fire and the messenger between humans and gods
 - _____ was a god found in many Indo-European cultures from Persia to Rome
- The Rig Veda also taught that all the many gods were actually _____, or versions, of the One Ultimate God, called _____
- Dravidian gods, like those of the Indus Civilization, more commonly included _____ figures, as well as _____ gods, which were included among the Aryan gods but given a _____ position


The Caste System “From the Vedas, we learn that the Aryans divided their society into ranked groups based on occupation. The highest group was made up of the Brahmins, or priests. Next came the Kshatriyas (kuh SHAT ree yuhz), or warriors. The third group, the Vaisyas (VYS yuz), included herders, farmers, artisans, and merchants. The Aryans separated people who had little or no Aryan heritage into a fourth group, the Sudras (SOO druz). This group included farmworkers, servants, and other laborers. The lowest social group, the dalits (DAH lits), was considered outside of the caste system. These people did work that others wouldn’t, such as making leather from animal skins.”

Source: World History, Ellis and Esler, Prentice Hall

> Analyzing Art

The Aryan Caste System

According to Indian tradition, the four major castes emerged from the mouth, arms, legs, and feet of Purusha (the first human being). Purusha (at right) is identified with the creator god Brahma. The body part indicated the dignity and role of the caste that emerged from it.



MOUTH
Brahmins
(priests)

ARMS
Kshatriyas
(rulers and warriors)

LEGS
Vaishyas
(peasants and traders)

FEET
Shudras
(laborers)

SKILLBUILDER:
Interpreting Visual Sources
Making Inferences *Why might the caste of Brahmins (priests) have been associated with the mouth?*

1. What was the difference between the different levels in the Caste System?
2. A religious explanation was given for the castes. What did the body part associated with the caste say about that caste?
3. Do you think the Caste System was originally created for religious or social reasons? Explain.