# Reading for Understanding

## ▶ Key Ideas

### BEFORE, YOU LEARNED

India has a diverse history to which many different peoples have contributed over thousands of years.

### NOW YOU WILL LEARN

The culture of India is a blend of all of the many influences that have shaped its history.

## ▶ Vocabulary

### TERMS & NAMES

**Bhagavad-Gita** one of the sacred writings of Hinduism

**reincarnation** the rebirth of a soul in another body

**karma** in Hinduism, the consequences of a person's actions in this life, which determines his or her fate in the next life

**nirvana** in Buddhism, a state of wisdom that breaks the cycle of reincarnation

### REVIEW

**Hinduism** the modern name for the major religion of India, which developed from Brahmanism

**Buddhism** a major world religion based on the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama

**Buddha** a name, meaning the "enlightened one," used for Siddhartha Gautama

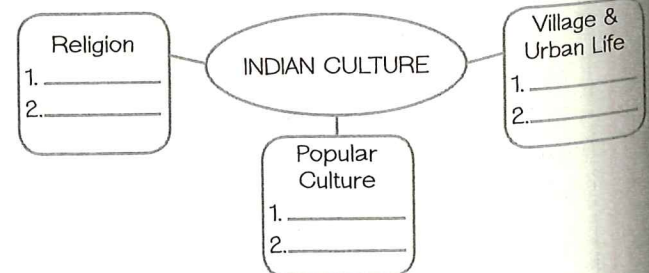**Visual Vocabulary** Buddha statue from 10th-century Kashmir

## ▶ Reading Strategy

Re-create the web diagram shown at right. As you read and respond to the **KEY QUESTIONS**, use the diagram to organize important details about the culture of India.

Skillbuilder Handbook, page R7

**CATEGORIZE**

Religion
1. _____
2. _____

INDIAN CULTURE

Village & Urban Life
1. _____
2. _____

Popular Culture
1. _____
2. _____

**GRAPHIC ORGANIZERS**
Go to Interactive Review @ ClassZone.com

# A Rich and Ancient Legacy

## Connecting to Your World

How many languages are spoken in your town or city? How many different ethnic groups live there? Because of the many groups that have migrated to India throughout its history, it has a larger diversity of languages than any other country in the world. More than 1,000 languages are spoken there. Many ethnic groups live in India. These groups have enriched Indian culture and have given it great variety. But even with all their differences, most Indians are linked by the strong ties of religion and daily life.

**Shiva** Shiva the destroyer is an important Hindu deity.

## Birthplace of Many Religions

🔻 **KEY QUESTION** Which religions originated in India?

The religions of Hinduism and Buddhism, which you first read about in Section 1, both originated in India. Today, about 80 percent of all Indians practice Hinduism. Buddhism has practically disappeared from the land of its birth, but it is widely practiced in other parts of Asia. Other religions, including Sikhism and Jainism, have also played an important role in the history and culture of India.

**Ganges** Bathers descend steps called ghats to reach the Ganges River at Varanasi. To Hindus, it is the holiest river in India.
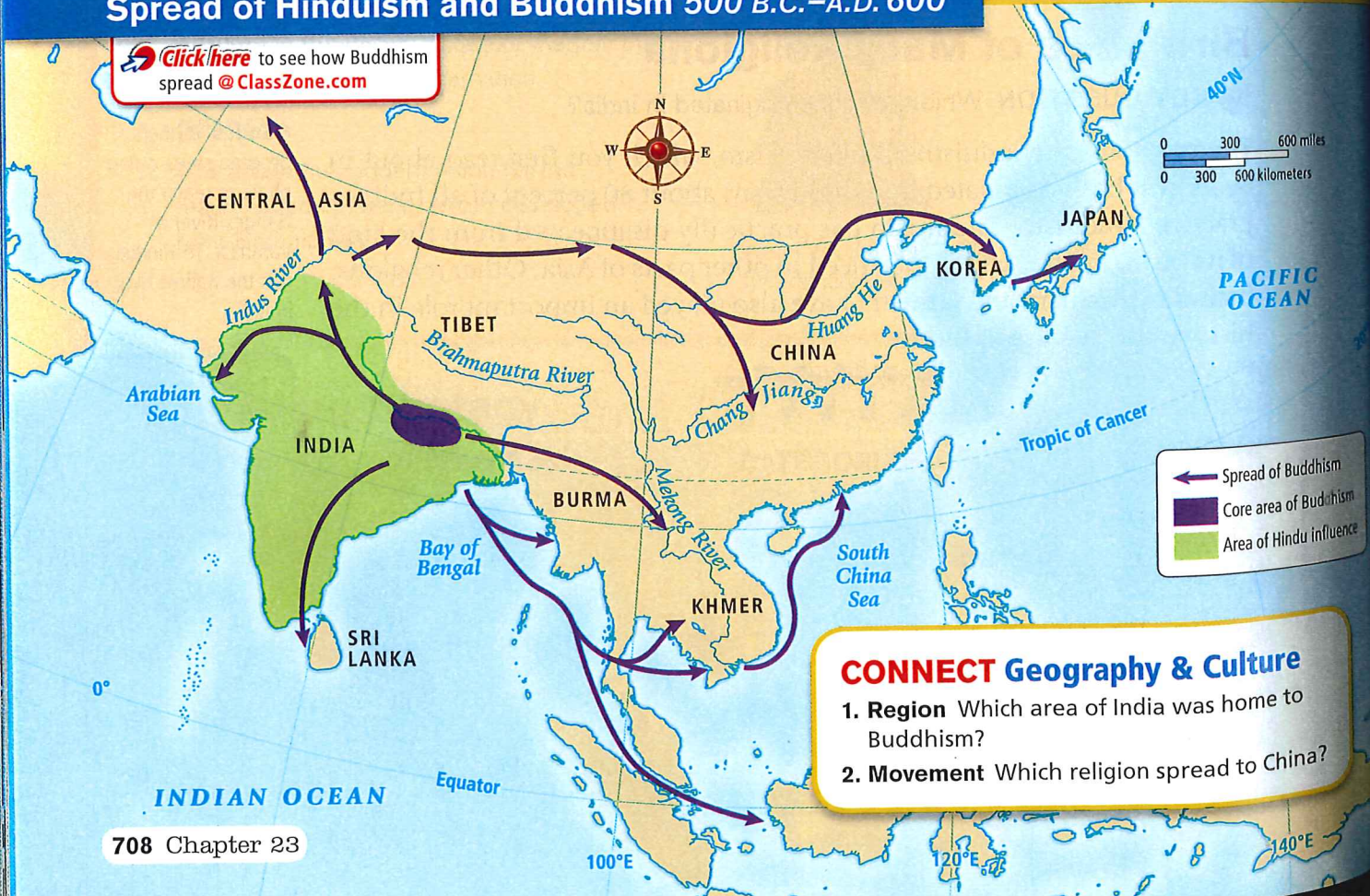
Varanasi

Ganges River

**Hinduism** As you learned, **Hinduism** developed from Brahmanism. The Vedas are the oldest of Hinduism's holy writings, but Hindus also have other sacred texts, including the **Bhagavad-Gita**, which discusses duty, the meaning of life, and devotion to God. Hindus believe that one supreme spirit is the only reality in the universe. All living things have a soul, which comes from that one spirit. Hinduism does not focus on physical life, but teaches that souls should seek union with God. Most Hindus believe in **reincarnation**, the idea that the soul is reborn into a new body. **Karma**, the consequences of a person's actions in this life, decides what will happen to the soul in the next life.

**Buddhism** The religion of **Buddhism** is based on the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, who gave up being a prince to seek the meaning of life. He taught the Four Noble Truths. First, life is filled with suffering. Second, people suffer because they want worldly things. Third, people can stop suffering if they stop wanting. And fourth, they can stop wanting by following the Eightfold Path, which teaches right living. When people give up desire, they achieve **nirvana**, a state of wisdom that breaks the cycle of reincarnation. Many people adopted the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, whom they called the **Buddha**, or "enlightened one." Buddhism spread throughout Asia, in part because of missionaries whom the Mauryan ruler Asoka sent out.

**Animated GEOGRAPHY**

**Spread of Hinduism and Buddhism 500 B.C.–A.D. 600**

*Click here to see how Buddhism spread @ ClassZone.com*



CENTRAL ASIA

Indus River

TIBET

Brahmaputra River

Arabian Sea

INDIA

Huang He

CHINA

JAPAN

KOREA

PACIFIC OCEAN

Tropic of Cancer

Chang Jiang

BURMA

Mekong River

Bay of Bengal

KHMER

South China Sea

SRI LANKA

0°

INDIAN OCEAN

Equator

100°E

120°E

140°E

40°N

0    300    600 miles
0    300    600 kilometers

← Spread of Buddhism
■ Core area of Buddhism
■ Area of Hindu influence

**CONNECT** Geography & Culture
1. **Region** Which area of India was home to Buddhism?
2. **Movement** Which religion spread to China?

**Sikhism and Other Religions** As you know, Islam arrived in India during the 700s. Today, about 13 percent of Indians are Muslims, and about 2 percent are Christians. Another 2 percent practice Sikhism, which originated in northern India. Sikhs believe in one god, in reincarnation, and in leading good, simple lives. Another religion that began in India is Jainism, which emphasizes the importance of doing no harm to other living beings.

▲ **CATEGORIZE** Describe which religions originated in India.

# Village and Urban Life

▼ **KEY QUESTION** How are city life and village life different?

With more than one billion people, India is the second most populous country in the world after China. Six of the world's 100 largest cities are in India. Even so, more than 70 percent of Indians live in rural areas where life is largely unchanged.

**Family Life** Most Indians live in extended families, which include several generations together. When a woman marries, she moves in with her husband's family—his parents, his brothers and their wives, and any unmarried sisters. Even today, parents often choose their children's spouses, because marriage is viewed as a union of two families.

**Village Life** Village life varies a great deal across India. In some regions, people live in small one-story structures made of mud. In more prosperous villages, the houses might be made of brick. In rice-growing regions, houses are built on bamboo stilts above the flooded paddies. Many villages across India still have no electricity or running water.

The tradition of sons who learn their fathers' occupations remains strong in many villages. This keeps villages stable by making sure that all the necessary jobs continue to be done. But in recent decades, many young villagers have decided to move to cities, where they can earn more money and choose different ways of life.

## Traditional Clothing: The Sari

The sari is a traditional Indian garment that is still commonly worn today.

**Folding** A sari is a single six- to nine-yard piece of cloth. A young Indian woman must learn to wrap, pleat, and drape the sari.

**Fabric** Saris are made from a variety of fabrics, including natural fibers such as cotton and silk, as well as synthetic fibers. Brides traditionally wear a red silk sari.

**Use** The sari can be used to cradle babies, lift hot cooking utensils, protect from the sun, preserve modesty, hold shopping purchases, wipe sweat, dust a table, and protect from smog.

*India* **709**

**Urban Life** Because of that migration, India's cities have grown. With 18 million residents, Mumbai (Bombay) is the world's third largest city. Kolkata (Calcutta) has more than 14 million residents. In addition, Hyderabad, Chennai (Madras), and Bangalore all have more than five million people.

Rapid urban growth causes shortages of housing, transportation, and services. In addition, because there are not enough jobs for everyone in the growing cities, there is a high rate of poverty. Many new arrivals can find no place to live except slums, where people construct shacks of flimsy materials. Slums have no electricity or running water, and sewage runs in the open, spreading disease.

However, the government is dealing with population growth. (See Section 3.) Despite their problems, the cities are also centers of creativity and technological innovation. That is one of the reasons that young people in particular have been drawn to the cities.

▲ **COMPARE AND CONTRAST** Describe how city and village life differ.

## COMPARING Rural and Urban India
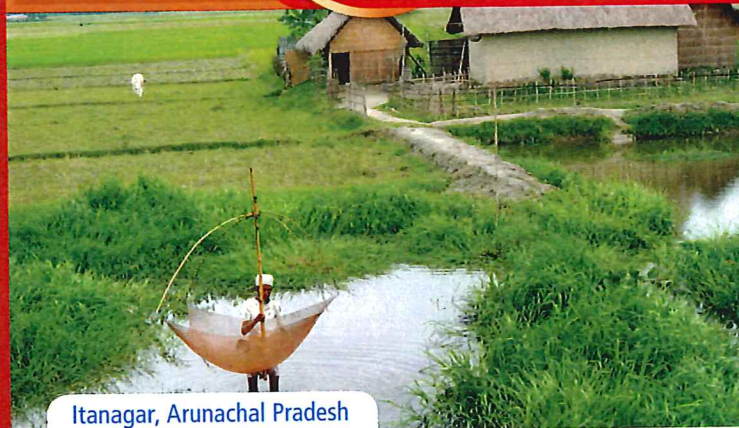


Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh
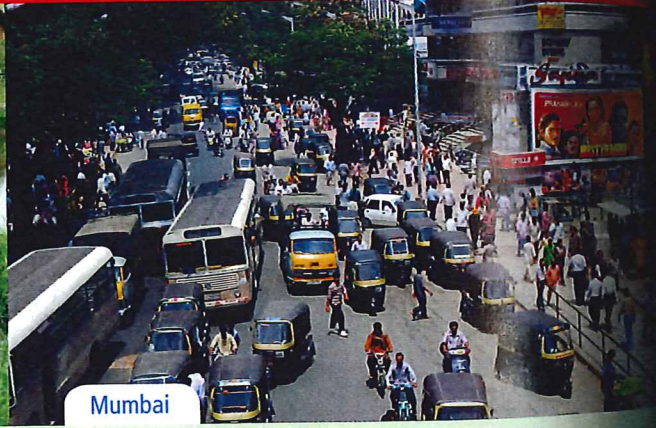
Mumbai

| | VILLAGES | CITIES |
|---|---|---|
| **Population** | 5,000 or less | up to 18 million |
| **Housing** | mostly small houses | houses, apartments, shacks |
| **Shopping** | street markets and shops | street markets, shops, and stores |
| **Jobs** | mostly farming | manufacturing, services, high-tech |
| **Production** | hand tools, oxen-pulled plows | machines and technology, some hand tools |

### CRITICAL THINKING

1. **Compare** What aspect of life is most different in villages and cities?
2. **Draw Conclusions** Why do you think it is more common to have electricity in a city than in a village?

# Popular Culture

▼ **KEY QUESTION** What are the major religious festivals of India?

Many groups have shaped India's culture, including the Dravidians and Aryans, the invading Muslims, and the British colonists. As a result, some of India's culture is very old and some is modern. For example, the *Bhagavad-Gita* and the epic poem the *Ramayana* were originally written in the ancient language of Sanskrit. Millions of people still read those poems today, but in modern translations.

**Bollywood** Movies are a very popular form of entertainment in India, which has the largest motion picture industry in the world. India's movie industry is often called Bollywood, a word that combines the names *Hollywood* and *Bombay* (the former name of Mumbai). About 5 million people work in Indian movies. India's cultural diversity is reflected in its films, which are produced in 52 different languages. Indian movies are often based on ancient myths and folk tales. Frequently, they feature love stories, crime dramas, and stories about social issues. One thing that sets Indian movies apart is that many films feature song-and-dance numbers.

**Sports** One positive way that British rule influenced Indian culture is in sports, especially cricket. The sport of cricket is played by teams of 11 on a field with wickets, which are made of three upright sticks and two horizontal ones. The game involves defending the wickets by batting away balls that are pitched at them. Players score runs by running between two wickets while the opponent chases down a batted ball. Cricket is the most popular sport in India. Athletes become celebrities, and people follow the matches. Other popular sports include soccer and field hockey.



**Fun Facts!**

**BOLLYWOOD VS. HOLLYWOOD**

The Indian film industry is the largest in the world.

**Films Released in 2004:**

| | Number of Movies |
|---|---|
| India (946) | |
| United States (611) | |
| Japan | |
| China | |
| France | |
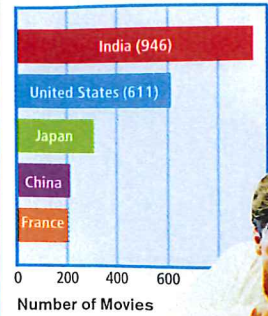
Source: *Screen Digest*, June 2005

**Film Stars** Shahrukh Khan and Aishwarya Rai star in the Indian film *Devdas*.

**Cricket** Indian boys play cricket in the southern Indian city of Nagapattinam.

To learn more about Savita and her world, go to the **Activity Center** @ **ClassZone.com**

In Hindi, Savita's name looks like this:

सविता

**Hi! My name is Savita.** I am 12 years old, and I live in the town of Panna in north-central India. I have an 18-year-old sister and a 13-year-old brother. Let me tell you about my day.
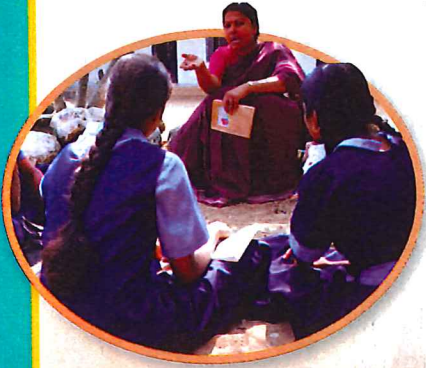
**9:30 A.M.** I have a math test today, and I'm worried that I didn't study enough last night. My other classes are Hindi, English, science, geography, history, and art.

**12:30 P.M.** I go home for lunch. My mother cooks a vegetarian biryani, which is a rice dish. After I eat, I carry lunch to my father, who owns a snack shop near the bus station.

**3:30 P.M.** After school, my brother goes to the shop to give my father a break. I hurry home to see my older sister, who is bringing her baby for a visit. Then I go out to play soccer.

**6:00 P.M.** After my sister leaves, I do my homework. When I finish, I do household chores such as washing dishes and helping my mother cook. We eat dinner when my father comes home.

## CONNECT to Your Life

**Journal Entry** What appeals to you about Savita's life? In your journal, describe those activities and ways of life.

**Celebrations** Many of the celebrations that take place throughout the year are religious festivals. Some of the most popular include:

- Dussehra, which celebrates the triumph of good over evil, is celebrated in different ways across India. In the north, people create likenesses of the evil king Ravana, stuff them with firecrackers, and explode them. In the east, the festival is called Durga Puja and involves worship of a deity named Durga.

- Diwali occurs only 20 days after Dussehra. Known as a festival of lights, it is celebrated by lighting oil lamps and setting off fireworks. During the festival, people worship Lakshmi, the deity of wealth. Because of its association with prosperity, the festival is very important to business people.

- Holi, which celebrates the end of winter, is a joyful festival. To express that joy, people throw colored water and powder on each other. They also exchange sweets. Originally a harvest festival, Holi also celebrates the triumph of good over evil.

**Holi** Hindus in India celebrate the joyous festival of Holi. People dance in the streets and shower each other with colored powder and dyed water.

▲ **CATEGORIZE** Describe the major religious festivals of India.

## Section 2 Assessment
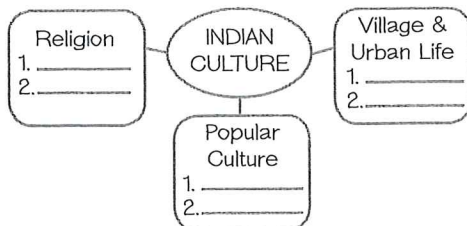
### TERMS & NAMES

**1. Explain the importance of**
- *Bhagavad-Gita*
- reincarnation
- karma
- nirvana

### USE YOUR READING NOTES

**2. Categorize** Use your completed chart to answer the following question:

How do Indian films blend both ancient and modern culture?

Religion
1. _____
2. _____

INDIAN CULTURE

Village & Urban Life
1. _____
2. _____

Popular Culture
1. _____
2. _____

### KEY IDEAS

**3.** Which religion was introduced to India from another region?

**4.** Why do many young villagers move to cities?

**5.** What does the festival of Dussehra celebrate?

### CRITICAL THINKING

**6. Draw Conclusions** Which of Buddhism's teachings might have most appealed to people and helped the religion to spread throughout Asia?

**7. Make Inferences** Why do you think that Indian society regards marriage as the union of two families rather than two individuals?

**8. CONNECT to Today** If you were a government official in an Indian city, what would be the first service you would try to provide to the slum areas—electricity, running water, sewers, or something else? Explain.

**9. TECHNOLOGY Plan a Web Site** With a partner, learn more about Bollywood films. Design a Web site that would appeal to fans of those movies.

India is one of the oldest cultures in the world. It continues to observe many of its traditions in terms of beliefs, clothing, diet, and work. At the same time, it is rushing in the 21st century to embrace the modern world and improve the standard of living of its people.

## Traditional India

Traditional India is a land of the Taj Mahal, Hindu temples, beautiful saris, and rickshaws careening down narrow village streets. Although much of the developing middle class is modernizing, millions continue to follow the traditional ways in clothing, food, work, and daily life.

*The village of Gulmarg, a former hill station to which the British retreated to escape the heat of the plains, sits on a hillside beneath the Himalayas.* ▼

**Architecture**
Carvings cover this Hindu temple in Chennai.

**Transportation**
Even in cities, tradition still plays a part, as shown by bicycle rickshaws in Varanasi.

**Jobs**
A potter throws pots on wheel in the village of Gunupur.

# Modern India

Modern India is racing to become a center of high-tech jobs and widespread prosperity. India's growing middle class is increasingly willing to abandon the sari for jeans, the railway for jet flights across the country, and the farming village for high-tech centers such as Bangalore.

**Architecture**

The Mumbai Stock Exchange is an example of contemporary architecture in the city of Mumbai.
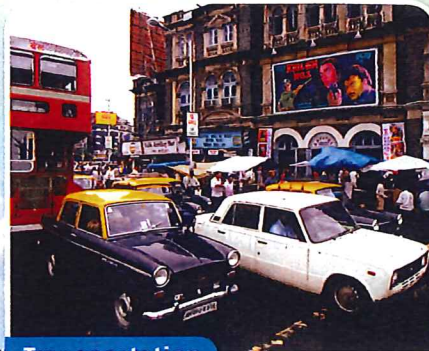
**Transportation**

Traffic jams the street in front of the Capitol movie theater in Mumbai.

**Jobs**

Call-center workers in Bangalore serve customers in the United States and Britain.

▲ Aerial view of Mumbai, India

## CRITICAL THINKING

1. **Compare and Contrast** What differences can be seen in the kinds of jobs that are available in the city and in the village?

2. **Make Inferences** How would a person's life change in moving from village to city?