

WORLD HISTORY

# Ancient India

# COMMON CORE

A S S E S S M E N T S

MindSparks  
CHALLENGING STUDENTS TO THINK HISTORICALLY



# Ancient India

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# Teacher Introduction

These Common Core History Assessments are designed to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they learn about India. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

Similar sets of assessments are available (or planned) for each unit in a typical world history class.

## ★ *Historical Thinking and the Challenge of the Common Core*

This set includes nine assessments aligned with the first nine Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standards. We have left out the tenth Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard, which does not lend itself to assessments of the sort provided here. The set also includes two writing tasks aligned with two key Common Core History/Social Studies Writing Standards.

These Common Core standards challenge history teachers to develop in students the complex literacy skills they need in today's world and the ability to master the unique demands of working with historical primary and secondary source texts. The Common Core standards are supportive of the best practices in teaching historical thinking. Such practices include close reading, attending to a source's point of view and purpose, corroborating sources, and placing sources in their historical context. These are the skills needed to make history less about rote learning and more about an active effort to investigate and interpret the past.

These assessments are also useful in many ways for ELA teachers. They assess many of the skills specified in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards, which put a good deal of emphasis on the reading of informational texts. The Anchor Standards form the basis for all of the various Common Core standards for English Language Arts.

## ★ *What Are These Assessments Like?*

- **A group of nine reading skills assessments and two writing tasks for each major era of world history**

Each reading skills assessment is based on one of the key Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standards—Assessment 1 addresses Common Core Reading Standard 1, Assessment 2 addresses Common Core Reading Standard 2, and so on. Two writing tasks are based on the first two College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Writing, which are the basis for the Common Core History/Social Studies Writing Standards. The two writing standards focus on writing arguments to support claims and writing informative/explanatory texts.

- **Based on primary or secondary sources**

In most cases, one primary source is used. In some cases, an assessment is based on more than one primary source or on a primary and a secondary source. The sources are brief. In most cases, texts have been slightly altered to improve readability, but without changing meaning or tone. Links to online versions of print media are available in the Bibliography. Please note that these links were valid at the time of production, but the websites may have since been discontinued.

## Teacher Introduction

- **Brief tasks promoting historical literacy**

For each assessment, students write brief answers to one or two questions. The questions are not tests of simple factual recall. They assess the students' mastery of the skills addressed by that assessment's Common Core History/Social Studies Standard.

- **Two versions of each of the nine reading standards assessments**

A *basic* and an *advanced* version of each assessment are provided. The *basic* assessment addresses the Common Core Standard for grades 6–8. The *advanced* assessment is based on the Common Core Standard for grades 9–10 and grades 11–12 combined. Each version uses the same source or sources. In some cases, sources have been somewhat shortened for the *basic* version.

- **Easy to use as both learning and assessment tools**

These assessments do not take valuable time away from instruction. The primary sources and background information on each source make them useful mini-lessons as well as tools to assess students' historical thinking skills. The sources all deal with themes and trends normally covered when teaching the relevant historical era.

- **Evaluating student responses**

Brief but specific suggestions are provided, defining acceptable and best responses to each question asked in the assessment. The suggestions are meant to aid in evaluating students, but even more importantly, they are a way for teachers to help students better understand and master the skills on which the assessment is focused.

Assessment 1 *Basic Level*

# The Bhagavad Gita

## ★ Key Ideas and Details

1. (6–8) Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

## ★ Using This Assessment

These Common Core History Assessments are intended to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they study and master the content covered in their ancient history coursework. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

*Assessment 1* is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 1 for grades 6–8. It asks students to cite specific textual evidence from two documents. It also challenges students to adapt that reading skill to the unique demands of thinking historically as they carefully interpret textual evidence in a primary source from a time in the past and a secondary source account of that same time in the past.

## ★ Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment

Acceptable responses to the first assessment question should see that Arjuna does not want to fight because he might be fighting nobles whom he actually admires. Krishna answers by telling him that because the "soul acquires another body after death," he should not mourn those he might kill in battle. Death is certain, he says, but also "birth is certain for the one who dies." Krishna's other reason for Arjuna to fight is that it is his duty as a warrior, and doing one's duty is the most important of all values. Moreover, Krishna insists he should do his duty and fight without concern for the outcome or consequences. Given the idea of rebirth, no matter what happens, he will have fulfilled his destiny as a warrior. Acceptable responses to the second assessment question should be able to see that this episode dramatically applies concepts central to Hinduism. One concept is *samsara*, the cycle of births and deaths. In this process, the soul must overcome the *karma*, or debt of sin, it builds up. The way to do this is to fulfill one's duties as a member of a caste, in this case Arjuna's warrior, or Kshatriya caste.

## The Bhagavad Gita

**Directions:** This exercise asks you to read one primary source document and one secondary source document carefully and answer questions about specific details in the documents. In order to better understand the documents, read and make use of the source information located just below each document. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the two assessment questions that follow.

**CCS Standard 1:** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.

### Document 1: A Primary Source

Arjuna said: How shall I strike [these nobles], who are worthy of my worship, with arrows in battle, O Krishna? It would be better, indeed, to live on alms in this world than to slay these noble gurus, because, by killing them I would enjoy wealth and pleasures stained with [their] blood. (2.04–05)

The Supreme Lord [Krishna] said: You grieve for those who are not worthy of grief, and yet [you] speak words of wisdom. The wise grieve neither for the living nor for the dead. There was never a time when I, you, or these kings did not exist; nor shall we ever cease to exist in the future. Just as the Atman [soul] acquires a childhood body, a youth body, and an old age body during this life, similarly [it] acquires another body after death. The wise are not deluded by this. (2.11–13)

If you think that this body takes birth and dies perpetually, even then, O Arjuna, you should not grieve like this. Because, death is certain for the one who is born, and birth is certain for the one who dies. Therefore, you should not lament over the inevitable. (2.26–27)

Considering also your duty as a warrior you should not waver. Because there is nothing [better] for a warrior than a righteous war. Only the fortunate warriors, O Arjuna, get such an opportunity for an unsought war that is like an open door to heaven. If you will not fight this righteous war, then you will fail in your duty, lose your reputation, and incur sin. (2.31–33)

You will go to heaven if killed, or you will enjoy the earth if victorious. Therefore, get up with a determination to fight, O Arjuna. Treating pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat alike, engage yourself in your duty. By doing your duty this way you will not incur sin. (2.37–38)

**Source Information:** These passages are adapted from Ramanand Prasad's translation of the Hindu scripture the Bhagavad Gita. The numbers in parentheses are the chapter numbers and verse numbers, respectively. This translation of the Bhagavad Gita is available online at the University of Evansville's Exploring Ancient World Cultures.

## Document 2: A Secondary Source

Among Hindus in India, the Bhagavad Gita is one of the most beloved of all Hindu scriptures. It is a 700-verse narrative that is part of a much larger Hindu epic known as the Mahabharata. It is thought to have been composed between the fifth and second centuries BCE.

At the start of the Bhagavad Gita, a war is about to begin. Arjuna is a prince and a warrior who is in despair. He has doubts about fighting because he knows his opponents in battle include his friends and relatives. In his desperation, he asks his charioteer Krishna for advice. Krishna the charioteer is actually a version or incarnation of the Hindu god Vishnu in disguise. He urges Arjuna to ignore his doubts and do his duty as a Kshatriya, a member of the warrior caste.

Within this dialogue key concepts are explored, concepts that are central to ancient Indian religious and philosophical thought. One such concept is the immortality of the soul and the idea of reincarnation. When the body dies, the soul is reincarnated—that is, it is reborn in another body. It repeats this cycle over and over, one lifetime after another. This cycle of birth and death is known as *samsara*. During the cycle, the soul builds up *karma*—a spiritual debt acquired for sinful actions accumulated over many lifetimes. The way to relieve oneself of this debt is through disciplined fulfillment of duty, regardless of the consequences. In other words, dutiful action without concern for the outcome—the success or failure of the action.

**Source Information:** This passage is a secondary source document about the classic Hindu religious text the Bhagavad Gita. A secondary source is an account of past events written later by someone who did not experience or take part in those events. This particular historical account was written in 2014 specifically for use as part of this activity.

### Assessment Questions

1. Using Document 1 alone, explain why Arjuna does not want to fight, and summarize the two reasons Krishna offers for why he should fight.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. How does Document 2 help you to understand why this episode was so important and meant so much to people in India over the centuries? Cite details from the document to support your answer.

## Assessment 1 *Advanced Level*

# The Bhagavad Gita

### ★ Key Ideas and Details

- 1. (9–10)** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
- 1. (11–12)** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

### ★ Using This Assessment

These Common Core History Assessments are intended to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they study and master the content covered in their ancient history coursework. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

*Assessment 1* is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 1 for grades 9–10 and 11–12 combined. It asks students to cite specific textual evidence from two documents. It also challenges students to adapt that reading skill to the unique demands of thinking historically as they carefully interpret textual evidence in a primary source from a time in the past and a secondary source account of that same time in the past. As called for by the Common Core standard for grades 11–12, it also prompts students to relate the textual details to “an understanding of the text as a whole.”

### ★ Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment

Acceptable responses to the first assessment question should be able to see that in this episode, Krishna dramatically applies these two concepts to Arjuna's doubts about fighting. He first insists that Krishna need not fear death himself nor grieve for the nobles he knows and admires but may have to kill. Because of *samsara*, the cycle of births and deaths, Krishna tells him, the “soul acquires another body after death.” Death is certain, he says, but also “birth is certain for the one who dies.” The other concept, *karma*, refers to the debt of sin a soul builds up over many lifetimes. Only doing one's duty can reduce this debt burden. And duty is connected most of all to the obligations of one's caste—in this case, Arjuna's warrior, or *Kshatriya* caste. Hence, Krishna's advice to fight without concern for the consequences, since all will be best for him in any case. Acceptable responses to the second assessment question will vary. Some may agree that Krishna is demanding “blind” obedience. Others will feel that he wants Arjuna to understand fully why he should do his duty. Krishna does downplay the relevance of who wins or loses the battle, or whether it is fought for moral ends. How we assess this aspect may depend on how we understand the full meaning of the concept of *karma*, which is hard to grasp. For this reason, this question should be discussed thoroughly.

## The Bhagavad Gita

**Directions:** This exercise asks you to read one primary source document and one secondary source document carefully and answer questions about specific details in the documents. In order to better understand the documents, read and make use of the source information located just below each document. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the two assessment questions that follow.

**CCS Standard 1: (9–10)** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information. **(11–12)** Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

### Document 1: A Primary Source

Arjuna said: How shall I strike [these nobles], who are worthy of my worship, with arrows in battle, O Krishna? It would be better, indeed, to live on alms in this world than to slay these noble gurus, because, by killing them I would enjoy wealth and pleasures stained with [their] blood. (2.04–05)

The Supreme Lord [Krishna] said: You grieve for those who are not worthy of grief, and yet [you] speak words of wisdom. The wise grieve neither for the living nor for the dead. There was never a time when I, you, or these kings did not exist; nor shall we ever cease to exist in the future. Just as the Atman [soul] acquires a childhood body, a youth body, and an old age body during this life, similarly [it] acquires another body after death. The wise are not deluded by this. (2.11–13)

If you think that this body takes birth and dies perpetually, even then, O Arjuna, you should not grieve like this. Because, death is certain for the one who is born, and birth is certain for the one who dies. Therefore, you should not lament over the inevitable. (2.26–27)

Considering also your duty as a warrior you should not waver. Because there is nothing [better] for a warrior than a righteous war. Only the fortunate warriors, O Arjuna, get such an opportunity for an unsought war that is like an open door to heaven. If you will not fight this righteous war, then you will fail in your duty, lose your reputation, and incur sin. (2.31–33)

You will go to heaven if killed, or you will enjoy the earth if victorious. Therefore, get up with a determination to fight, O Arjuna. Treating pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat alike, engage yourself in your duty. By doing your duty this way you will not incur sin. (2.37–38)

**Source Information:** These passages are adapted from Ramanand Prasad's translation of the Hindu scripture the Bhagavad Gita. The numbers in parentheses are the chapter numbers and verse numbers, respectively. This translation of the Bhagavad Gita is available online at the University of Evansville's Exploring Ancient World Cultures.

## Document 2: A Secondary Source

Among Hindus in India, the Bhagavad Gita is one of the most beloved of all Hindu scriptures. It is a 700-verse narrative that is part of a much larger Hindu epic known as the Mahabharata. It is thought to have been composed between the fifth and second centuries BCE.

At the start of the Bhagavad Gita, a war is about to begin. Arjuna is a prince and a warrior who is in despair. He has doubts about fighting because he knows his opponents in battle include his friends and relatives. In his desperation, he asks his charioteer Krishna for advice. Krishna the charioteer is actually a version or incarnation of the Hindu god Vishnu in disguise. He urges Arjuna to ignore his doubts and do his duty as a Kshatriya, a member of the warrior caste.

Within this dialogue key concepts are explored, concepts that are central to ancient Indian religious and philosophical thought. One such concept is the immortality of the soul and the idea of reincarnation. When the body dies, the soul is reincarnated—that is, it is reborn in another body. It repeats this cycle over and over, one lifetime after another. This cycle of birth and death is known as *samsara*. During the cycle, the soul builds up *karma*—a spiritual debt acquired for sinful actions accumulated over many lifetimes. The way to relieve oneself of this debt is through disciplined fulfillment of duty, regardless of the consequences. In other words, dutiful action without concern for the outcome—the success or failure of the action.

**Source Information:** This passage is a secondary source document about the classic Hindu religious text the Bhagavad Gita. A secondary source is an account of past events written later by someone who did not experience or take part in those events. This particular historical account was written in 2014 specifically for use as part of this activity.

### Assessment Questions

1. Using both documents, explain why the Hindu concepts of *samsara* and *karma* are central to understanding the advice Krishna gives Arjuna in Document 1. Choose two or three key statements Krishna makes that best illustrate his use of these concepts.
2. Consider this statement: “Krishna’s advice sounds moral and deeply spiritual, but all he really advocates is blind obedience regardless of the consequences.” Cite details from Document 2 to explain why you do or do not agree with this statement.

## Assessment 2 *Basic Level*

# A Hymn to Indra

### ★ Key Ideas and Details

- 2. (6–8)** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

### ★ Using This Assessment

These Common Core History Assessments are intended to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they study and master the content covered in their ancient history coursework. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

*Assessment 2* is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 2 for grades 6–8. It asks students to summarize the central ideas in a source from the text itself without imposing ideas or attitudes external to the text. This is not easy to do. This activity assesses the ability to read closely in order to build an overall understanding of the source out of the text itself.

### ★ Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment

Acceptable responses to the first assessment question should see that Indra is praised mainly for his power. He is a “Lord of Strength” and a “hero.” Words stressing his aggressiveness also dominate the description—he “lulls” his enemies, and he can “destroy” and “slay” those he opposes. He has the power to control outcomes—bestow wealth, make “hostile spirits sleep,” etc. Acceptable responses to the second assessment question should see that worshippers see Indra as a “wealthy” god who, if properly pleased (as with soma) can grant them favors, especially horses and cattle, which appear to be the most important forms of wealth. In other words, those taking part in this ritual seem to see it as a way to keep an especially dangerous deity content and willing to favor his worshippers in specific material ways.

## A Hymn to Indra

**Directions:** This exercise asks you to study one primary source document carefully and answer two questions about specific details in the document. In order to better understand the document as a historical primary source, read and make use of the source information located just below the document itself. When you have studied the document and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

**CCS Standard 2:** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of the source distinct from prior knowledge or opinions.

### A Primary Source Document

O SOMA DRINKER, ever true, utterly hopeless though we be,  
Do thou, O Indra, give us hope of beauteous horses and of [cattle],  
In thousands, O most wealthy One.

O Lord of Strength, whose jaws are strong, great deeds are thine, the powerful:  
Do thou, O Indra, give us hope of beauteous horses and of [cattle],  
In thousands, O most wealthy One.

Lull thou asleep, to wake no more, the pair who on each other look  
Do thou, O Indra, give us hope of beauteous horses and of [cattle],  
In thousands, O most wealthy One.

Hero, let hostile spirits sleep, and every gentler genius wake:  
Do thou, O Indra, give us hope of beauteous horses and of [cattle],  
In thousands, O most wealthy One.

Destroy this ass, O Indra, who in tones discordant brays to thee:  
Do thou, O Indra, give us hope of beauteous horses and of [cattle],  
In thousands, O most wealthy One.

Far distant on the forest fall the tempest in a circling course!  
Do thou, O Indra, give us hope of beauteous horses and of [cattle],  
In thousands, O most wealthy One.

Slay each reviler, and destroy him who in secret injures us:  
Do thou, O Indra, give us hope of beauteous horses and of cattle  
In thousands, O most wealthy One.



## Assessment 2 *Advanced Level*

# A Hymn to Indra

### ★ Key Ideas and Details

- 2. (9–10)** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
- 2. (11–12)** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

### ★ Using This Assessment

These Common Core History Assessments are intended to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they study and master the content covered in their ancient history coursework. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

*Assessment 2* is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 2 for grades 9–10 and 11–12 combined. It asks students to summarize the central ideas in a source from the text itself without imposing ideas or attitudes external to the text. This is not easy to do. Moreover, when it comes to the unique demands of thinking historically we do also want students to use knowledge of historical context to help them interpret sources. But that sort of contextualizing also demands that students suspend their own present-day ideas while studying a source. This activity assesses the ability to read closely in order to build an overall understanding of the source out of the text itself.

### ★ Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment

Acceptable responses to the first assessment question should see that Indra is praised mainly for his power. He is a “Lord of Strength” and a “hero.” Words stressing his aggressiveness also dominate the description—he “lulls” his enemies, his “jaws are strong,” he can “destroy” and “slay” those he opposes. He has the power to control outcomes—bestow wealth, make “hostile spirits sleep,” etc. Indra’s relationship with his worshippers is a reciprocal one. He protects them against their enemies in battle and ensures their material prosperity. However, he is a dangerous and easily aroused god, one who will bestow his favors only as long as his worshippers do what is required to please him. Acceptable responses to the second assessment question should see that the hymn depicts activities and wealth consistent mostly with a nomadic society of herders and warriors. Horses and cattle appear to be the most valuable material goods a god can give out. The hymn focuses repeatedly on Indra’s power to slay or neutralize enemies, suggesting a society surrounded by potentially hostile rivals with whom it must always be ready to go to war.

## A Hymn to Indra

**Directions:** This exercise asks you to study one primary source document carefully and answer two questions about specific details in the document. In order to better understand the document as a historical primary source, read and make use of the source information located just below the document itself. When you have studied the document and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

**CCS Standard 2: (9–10)** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text. **(11–12)** Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

### A Primary Source Document

O SOMA DRINKER, ever true, utterly hopeless though we be,  
Do thou, O Indra, give us hope of beauteous horses and of [cattle],  
In thousands, O most wealthy One.

O Lord of Strength, whose jaws are strong, great deeds are thine, the powerful:  
Do thou, O Indra, give us hope of beauteous horses and of [cattle],  
In thousands, O most wealthy One.

Lull thou asleep, to wake no more, the pair who on each other look  
Do thou, O Indra, give us hope of beauteous horses and of [cattle],  
In thousands, O most wealthy One.

Hero, let hostile spirits sleep, and every gentler genius wake:  
Do thou, O Indra, give us hope of beauteous horses and of [cattle],  
In thousands, O most wealthy One.

Destroy this ass, O Indra, who in tones discordant brays to thee:  
Do thou, O Indra, give us hope of beauteous horses and of [cattle],  
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Far distant on the forest fall the tempest in a circling course!  
Do thou, O Indra, give us hope of beauteous horses and of [cattle],  
In thousands, O most wealthy One.

Slay each reviler, and destroy him who in secret injures us:  
Do thou, O Indra, give us hope of beauteous horses and of cattle  
In thousands, O most wealthy One.



### Assessment 3 *Basic Level*

# The Caste System and the Rise of Buddhism

## ★ Key Ideas and Details

- 3. (6–8)** Identify key steps in a text’s description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).

## ★ Using This Assessment

These Common Core History Assessments are intended to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they study and master the content covered in their ancient history coursework. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

*Assessment 3* is designed to measure students’ ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 3 for grades 6–8. It asks students to follow the way a set of ideas or sequence of events in a text interact together to describe a process or develop a central idea. This activity assesses the students’ ability to read closely in order to understand various connections between each detail and the next in a text.

## ★ Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment

Answers to the assessment question should be able to see that the first paragraph focuses on the Brahman priestly elite as the top of the caste system. That system limited each individual by birth to a fixed social status, or caste. The concept of samsara made that rigid caste system bearable because it promised people a chance to move up to higher castes, but only in later rebirths. The second paragraph develops this theme by suggesting that Buddhism’s popularity resulted partly from its opposition to this rigid caste system. The key point stressed is Siddhartha Gautama’s belief that such enlightenment is available to all, in this life, not just to those in the higher castes or to others in later lifetimes. The central idea of the passage, then, is that while Buddhism accepted many Hindu beliefs, including reincarnation, it rejected the use of reincarnation to justify the caste system.

## The Caste System and the Rise of Buddhism

**Directions:** This exercise asks you to read one secondary source document carefully and answer one question about specific details in it. In order to better understand the document as a historical source, read and make use of the source information just below the document itself. When you have studied the document and the source information, answer the assessment question that follows.

**CCS Standard 3:** Identify key steps in a text’s description of a process related to history/social studies (e.g., how a bill becomes law, how interest rates are raised or lowered).

### A Secondary Source Document

Ancient Hinduism and the beliefs associated with it became a central feature of Indian civilization starting more than 2,000 years ago. Hinduism was based on a powerful priesthood, the Brahmins. Brahmins stood at the top of India’s rigid caste system, in which people were limited by birth to a fixed social status. What made the caste system bearable to many was the Hindu concept of *samsara*, the idea that every person’s undying soul passes from life to life. One’s deeds, or *karma*, in this life and past lives directly affect one’s future life. By this logic, one could enter a higher caste in the next life if one lived a virtuous life in the present.

Dissatisfaction with the caste system and the Hindu priesthood may have aided the rise of Buddhism. The Buddha was Siddhartha Gautama. He was born a prince, perhaps in the sixth or fifth century BCE. The gods supposedly came to him in a dream as he slept under a rose-apple tree. They showed him four sights his wealthy father had kept from him—a frail old man, a sick person, a dead person, and a monk seeking enlightenment. From this, Siddhartha concluded that only through spiritual enlightenment could humans escape suffering. Buddhism was to show the way to that enlightenment. Siddhartha accepted Hindu views about reincarnation, but he did not accept that caste limited one’s ability to achieve that enlightenment. That is, one did not have to rise caste by caste through many lifetimes before attaining this spiritual release.

**Source Information:** This document is a secondary source about certain Hindu beliefs and practices, and the rise of Buddhism in India. This secondary source is based on introductory material for Lesson 1 of Jonathan Burack’s *India: The Mauryas to the Mughal Empire* (Culver City, CA: MindSparks, 2009).

### Assessment Question

1. The first paragraph of this document deals with Hinduism and the caste system. The second paragraph deals with Siddhartha Gautama’s life and his ideas about spiritual enlightenment. Explain how the document links the two paragraphs to develop one central idea.

### Assessment 3 *Advanced Level*

# The Caste System and the Rise of Buddhism

## ★ Key Ideas and Details

- 3. (9–10)** Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.
- 3. (11–12)** Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

## ★ Using This Assessment

These Common Core History Assessments are intended to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they study and master the content covered in their ancient history coursework. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

*Assessment 3* is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 3 for grades 9–10 and 11–12 combined. It asks students to follow the way a set of ideas or sequence of events in a text interact together to describe a process or develop a central idea. The activity assesses the students' ability to read closely in order to understand various connections between each detail and the next in a complex text. It also asks them to evaluate the explanation offered in the passage and consider how adequate it is.

## ★ Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment

Answers to the assessment question should see that the document's overall claim is that Buddhism spread in part because of dissatisfaction with Hindu ideas about reincarnation and the caste system. The first paragraph focuses on the Brahman priestly elite as the highest status in a system that limited each individual by birth to a fixed caste. The concept of *samsara* made that bearable by promising people a chance to move up in the caste system in a future rebirth, after living a virtuous life in the present. The second paragraph focuses on Siddhartha Gautama's ideas about spiritual enlightenment as a way to escape suffering. It acknowledges that Gautama accepted the idea of reincarnation. But he also insisted that such enlightenment is available to each person now, in this life, no matter what his or her caste. Buddhism accepted many Hindu beliefs, in other words, but it rejected the use of reincarnation to justify the caste system.

## The Caste System and the Rise of Buddhism

**Directions:** This exercise asks you to read one secondary source document carefully and answer one question about specific details in it. In order to better understand the document as a historical source, read and make use of the source information just below the document itself. When you have studied the document and the source information, answer the assessment question that follows.

**CCS Standard 3: (9–10)** Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them. **(11–12)** Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

### A Secondary Source Document

Ancient Hinduism and the beliefs associated with it became a central feature of Indian civilization starting more than 2,000 years ago. Hinduism was based on a powerful priesthood, the Brahmins. Brahmins stood at the top of India's rigid caste system, in which people were limited by birth to a fixed social status. What made the caste system bearable to many was the Hindu concept of *samsara*, the idea that every person's undying soul passes from life to life. One's deeds, or *karma*, in this life and past lives directly affect one's future life. By this logic, one could enter a higher caste in the next life if one lived a virtuous life in the present.

Dissatisfaction with the caste system and the Hindu priesthood may have aided the rise of Buddhism. The Buddha was Siddhartha Gautama. He was born a prince, perhaps in the sixth or fifth century BCE. The gods supposedly came to him in a dream as he slept under a rose-apple tree. They showed him four sights his wealthy father had kept from him—a frail old man, a sick person, a dead person, and a monk seeking enlightenment. From this, Siddhartha concluded that only through spiritual enlightenment could humans escape suffering. Buddhism was to show the way to that enlightenment. Siddhartha accepted Hindu views about reincarnation, but he did not accept that caste limited one's ability to achieve that enlightenment. That is, one did not have to rise caste by caste through many lifetimes before attaining this spiritual release.

**Source Information:** This document is a secondary source about certain Hindu beliefs and practices, and the rise of Buddhism in India. This secondary source is based on introductory material for Lesson 1 of Jonathan Burack's *India: The Mauryas to the Mughal Empire* (Culver City, CA: MindSparks, 2009).

### Assessment Question

1. Explain how the two paragraphs in this document are linked together so as to develop its central point. Cite at least two details in each paragraph that are important to fully understanding the document's overall claim.

**Assessment 4** *Basic Level*

# The Hindu Concept of Brahman

## ★ *Craft and Structure*

- 4. (6–8)** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

## ★ *Using This Assessment*

These Common Core History Assessments are intended to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they study and master the content covered in their ancient history coursework. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

*Assessment 4* is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 4 for grades 6–8. It asks students to recognize that words and phrases must be understood in relation to the meaning of the text as a whole. In seeking to understand historical sources, this is an especially important challenge. Words and phrases need to be understood as they were used within their historical context. This activity assesses the students' ability to read closely in order to understand terms in these ways.

## ★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Answers to the first assessment question may vary. Responses should express in some way the idea that Brahman (referred to as “the Imperishable” in the text) is a kind of ultimate reality and origin of all actual things in the universe. The passage suggests that material objects, human traits, consciousness, and every individual aspect of reality all depend on and arise from Brahman in some way. Hence, “from Brahman is born breath, mind, and all organs of sense, ether, air, light, water, and the earth, the support of all.” Answers should express some sense of this idea of a single, universal reality underlying or sustaining all phenomena. Answers to the second assessment question should see that Brahman is not something that can be observed directly. The passage never directly defines it. It suggests what it is using metaphors—a fire giving off sparks, a body in which the sun and moon are its eyes and the wind its breath, etc. Or the passage simply defines Brahman by describing what it is not—“not produced,” “without mind,” etc. Best answers may sense that Hindu thinkers did not want people to think they could grasp this concept with normal ways of thinking.

## The Hindu Concept of Brahman

**Directions:** This exercise asks you to study one primary source document carefully and answer two questions about specific details in the document. In order to better understand the document as a historical source, read and make use of the source information just below the document. When you have studied the document and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

**CCS Standard 4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

### A Primary Source Document

1. This is the truth. As from a blazing fire sparks, being like unto fire, fly forth a thousand fold, thus are various beings brought forth from “the Imperishable” [Brahman], my friend, and return there also.
2. That heavenly Person is without body, he is both without and within, not produced, without breath and without mind, pure, higher than “the high Imperishable” [Brahman as a creative force].
3. From [Brahman] (when entering on creation) is born breath, mind, and all organs of sense, ether, air, light, water, and the earth, the support of all.
4. Fire (the sky) is his head, his eyes the sun and the moon, the quarters his ears, his speech the Vedas disclosed, the wind his breath, his heart the universe; from his feet came the earth; he is indeed the inner Self of all things.

**Source Information:** This passage is from the Upanishads. The Upanishads are Hindu scriptures, written sometime after 800 BCE as commentaries on the Vedas. However, the Upanishads go far beyond the focus on ritual in the Vedas. They present ideas that have been central to Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, India’s main philosophical traditions. This passage seeks to define the idea of Brahman. This ultimate reality, Brahman, is referred to in the passage in two forms—as “the Imperishable” and “the high Imperishable.” The passage is adapted from one in the Second Mundaka of the *Mundaka Upanishad* as translated by F. Max Müller in 1879.



## Assessment 4 *Advanced Level*

# The Hindu Concept of Brahman

### ★ *Craft and Structure*

- 4. (9–10)** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.
- 4. (11–12)** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines *faction* in *Federalist* No. 10).

### ★ *Using This Assessment*

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*Assessment 4* is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 4 for grades 9–10 and 11–12 combined. It asks students to recognize that words and phrases must be understood in relation to the meaning of the text as a whole. In seeking to understand historical sources, this is an especially important challenge. Words and phrases need to be understood as they were used within their historical context. This activity assesses the students' ability to read closely in order to understand terms in these ways.

### ★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Answers to the first assessment question may vary. Responses should express in some way the idea that Brahman (referred to as “the Imperishable” in the text) is a kind of ultimate reality underlying and sustaining all phenomena. The passage offers a number of metaphors to help convey the meaning of Brahman—a fire giving off sparks, a body in which the sun and moon are its eyes and the wind its breath, an entity from which “is born breath, mind, and all organs of sense, ether, air, light, water, and the earth, the support of all,” etc. Whatever details or images are used, answers should relate these to an overall idea about Brahman as the ultimate reality and source of all things. Answers to the second assessment question should see that much of the detail in the description is meant figuratively or metaphorically, not literally. The passage suggests that material objects, human traits, consciousness, every individual aspect of reality all depend on and arise from Brahman in some way. But Brahman itself is not directly observable. It is and has to remain unseen. Best answers will see that Hindu thinkers probably did not believe this concept could be grasped in normal, ordinary ways. Hence they worked hard to prevent anyone from thinking they could do so.

## The Hindu Concept of Brahman

**Directions:** This exercise asks you to study one primary source document carefully and answer two questions about specific details in the document. In order to better understand the document as a historical source, read and make use of the source information just below the document. When you have studied the document and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

**CCS Standard 4: (9–10)** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science. **(11–12)** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including analyzing how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term over the course of a text (e.g., how Madison defines *faction* in *Federalist* No. 10).

### A Primary Source Document

1. This is the truth. As from a blazing fire sparks, being like unto fire, fly forth a thousand fold, thus are various beings brought forth from “the Imperishable” [Brahman], my friend, and return there also.
2. That heavenly Person is without body, he is both without and within, not produced, without breath and without mind, pure, higher than “the high Imperishable” [Brahman as a creative force].
3. From [Brahman] (when entering on creation) is born breath, mind, and all organs of sense, ether, air, light, water, and the earth, the support of all.
4. Fire (the sky) is his head, his eyes the sun and the moon, the quarters his ears, his speech the Vedas disclosed, the wind his breath, his heart the universe; from his feet came the earth; he is indeed the inner Self of all things.

**Source Information:** This passage is from the Upanishads. The Upanishads are Hindu scriptures, written sometime after 800 BCE as commentaries on the Vedas. However, the Upanishads go far beyond the focus on ritual in the Vedas. They present ideas that have been central to Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, India’s main philosophical traditions. This passage seeks to define the idea of Brahman. This ultimate reality, Brahman, is referred to in the passage in two forms—as “the Imperishable” and “the high Imperishable.” The passage is adapted from one in the Second Mundaka of the *Mundaka Upanishad* as translated by F. Max Müller in 1879.



Assessment 5 *Basic Level*

# Buddhism's Four Noble Truths

## ★ *Craft and Structure*

5. (6–8) Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).

## ★ *Using This Assessment*

These Common Core History Assessments are intended to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they study and master the content covered in their ancient history coursework. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

*Assessment 5* is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 5 for grades 6–8. It asks students to pay attention to a text's "structure"—that is, to the overall pattern or organizational arrangement of its headings, sentences, paragraphs, stanzas, and chapters, as well as its various stylistic features. These formal elements can contribute to a text's meanings in many ways. This activity assesses the students' ability to read closely in order to understand the impact of the way one historical primary source is structured to present its information.

## ★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Acceptable responses to the assessment question should see that this passage most clearly fits into the "cause and effect" pattern. First, it announces that the cause of all sorrow is ignorance. It then proceeds to describe a chain of cause-and-effect actions that, together, will bring about an end to sorrow at last—once the "selfishness of selfhood" is destroyed. However, some could reasonably argue that the passage also employs a "sequence structure," in that it does spell out a series of steps that lead to the preferred result in the end. It is less clear that "order of importance" applies because it is not clear that any one step is more basic to the process than any of the others. However, this fact could be a basis for further discussion of the meaning of the entire passage.

## Buddhism's Four Noble Truths

**Directions:** This exercise asks you to read one primary source document and answer one question about specific details in the document. In order to better understand the document as a historical primary source, read and make use of the source information located just below the document itself. When you have studied the document and the source information, answer the assessment question that follows.

**CCS Standard 5:** Describe how a text presents information (e.g., sequentially, comparatively, causally).

### A Primary Source Document

The cause of all sorrow lies at the very beginning; it is hidden in the ignorance from which life grows. Remove ignorance and you will destroy the wrong [longings or desires] that rise from ignorance. Destroy these [longings] and you will wipe out the wrong perception that rises from them. Destroy wrong perception and there is an end of errors in individualized beings. Destroy the error in individualized beings and illusions . . . will disappear. Destroy illusions and the contact with things will cease to beget misconception. Destroy misconception and you do away with thirst. Destroy thirst and you will be free of all morbid cleaving. Remove the cleaving and you destroy the selfishness of selfhood. If the selfishness of selfhood is destroyed you will be above birth, old age, disease, and death, and you will escape all suffering.

The enlightened One saw the four noble truths which point out the path that leads to Nirvana or the extinction of self:

The first noble truth is the existence of sorrow.

The second noble truth is the cause of suffering.

The third noble truth is cessation of sorrow.

The fourth noble truth is the eightfold path that leads to the cessation of sorrow.

**Source Information:** The key insight of Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha, was that all suffering was due to attachments and desires. Buddha's Four Noble Truths are meant to clarify this reality and offer a way out of it. Siddhartha Gautama never left a written account of his ideas. To grasp them, we must rely on later Buddhist writings, such as this passage. The last of the Four Noble Truths listed here refers to an "eightfold path," which is not actually described in this passage. The steps of this Noble Eightfold Path are usually identified as "right view, right aspiration, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration." This passage is adapted from one based on various Buddhist records compiled in "Enlightenment," Chapter 12 of Paul Carus's *The Gospel of Buddha* (Chicago: Open Court Publishing, 1894).

## Assessment Question

1. “Text structure” refers to the way paragraphs and longer texts are organized, with different structures serving different purposes. Here are three types of text structure:

- **Sequence Structure:** Steps or phases of a process are described, as in a recipe or procedure.
- **Cause and Effect:** A pattern showing what factors caused an effect or set of effects.
- **Order of Importance:** A sequence of ideas is presented, from first in importance to last in importance.

Of these text structures, choose the one you think most accurately describes the text structure of this document. Explain your choice.

## Assessment 5 *Advanced Level*

# Buddhism's Four Noble Truths

### ★ Craft and Structure

- 5. (9–10) Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis.
- 5. (11–12) Analyze in detail how a complex primary source is structured, including how key sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text contribute to the whole.

### ★ Using This Assessment

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*Assessment 5* is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 5 for grades 9–10 and 11–12 combined. It asks students to pay attention to a text's "structure"—that is, to the overall pattern or organizational arrangement of its headings, sentences, paragraphs, stanzas, and chapters, as well as its various stylistic features. Students should see how structure is deliberately used to enable the text to achieve certain goals. Such formal elements can contribute to a text's meanings in many ways. This activity assesses the students' ability to read closely in order to understand the impact of the way one historical primary source is structured to present its information.

### ★ Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment

Acceptable responses to the first assessment question should see that this passage fits both patterns. It fits the "cause and effect" pattern by first announcing that the cause of all sorrow is ignorance. It then describes a chain of cause-and-effect actions that brings about an end to sorrow at last. The passage also employs a "sequence structure," in that it does spell out a sequence or series of steps that lead to the preferred result in the end. Answers may vary as to which of these text structures fits best, though the "cause and effect" pattern seems most obvious. Discussing this question should help as a way to further explore the meaning of the passage. Acceptable responses to the second assessment question will also vary. Some may see the idea as implying disrespect for the dignity and freedom of the individual. Others will disagree. A key point to consider is the claim that "the existence of self is an illusion"—that is, it is an illusion to think each individual self is separate from all others. The doctrine of samsara could be said to undercut this illusion. Obviously, there is much here to discuss.

## Buddhism's Four Noble Truths

**Directions:** This exercise asks you to read one primary source document and answer two questions about specific details in the document. In order to better understand the document as a historical primary source, read and make use of the source information located just below the document itself. When you have studied the document and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

**CCS Standard 5: (9–10)** Analyze how a text uses structure to emphasize key points or advance an explanation or analysis. **(11–12)** Analyze in detail how a complex primary source is structured, including how key sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text contribute to the whole.

### A Primary Source Document

The cause of all sorrow lies at the very beginning; it is hidden in the ignorance from which life grows. Remove ignorance and you will destroy the wrong [longings or desires] that rise from ignorance. Destroy these [longings] and you will wipe out the wrong perception that rises from them. Destroy wrong perception and there is an end of errors in individualized beings. Destroy the error in individualized beings and illusions . . . will disappear. Destroy illusions and the contact with things will cease to beget misconception. Destroy misconception and you do away with thirst. Destroy thirst and you will be free of all morbid cleaving. Remove the cleaving and you destroy the selfishness of selfhood. If the selfishness of selfhood is destroyed you will be above birth, old age, disease, and death, and you will escape all suffering.

The enlightened One saw the four noble truths which point out the path that leads to Nirvana or the extinction of self:

The first noble truth is the existence of sorrow.

The second noble truth is the cause of suffering.

The third noble truth is cessation of sorrow.

The fourth noble truth is the eightfold path that leads to the cessation of sorrow. . . .

There is self and there is truth. Where self is, truth is not. Where truth is, self is not. Self is the fleeting error of samsara; it is individual separateness and that egotism which begets envy and hatred. Self is the yearning for pleasure and the lust after vanity. Truth is the correct comprehension of things; it is the permanent and everlasting, the real in all existence, the bliss of righteousness. The existence of self is an illusion, and there is no wrong in this world, no vice, no evil, except what flows from the assertion of self.

**Source Information:** The key insight of Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha, was that all suffering was due to attachments and desires. Buddha's Four Noble Truths are meant to clarify this reality and offer a way out of it. Siddhartha Gautama never left a written account of his ideas. To grasp them, we must rely on later Buddhist writings, such as this passage. The last of the Four Noble Truths listed here refers to an "eightfold path," which is not actually described in this passage. The steps of this Noble Eightfold Path are usually identified as "right view, right aspiration, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration." This passage is adapted from one based on various Buddhist records compiled in "Enlightenment," Chapter 12 of Paul Carus's *The Gospel of Buddha* (Chicago: Open Court Publishing, 1894).

## Assessment Questions

1. “Text structure” refers to the way paragraphs and longer texts are organized, with different structures serving different purposes. Here are two types of text structure:

- **Sequence Structure:** Steps or phases of a process are described, as in a recipe or procedure
- **Cause and Effect:** A pattern showing what factors caused an effect or set of effects.

Explain why both text structures could apply to this passage and defend the one you think most accurately describes the text structure.

2. In the passage, the Buddha speaks about the need to destroy the “selfishness of selfhood.” Explain what he means and why this idea is so central to his teachings.

Assessment 6 *Basic Level*

# The Aryan Invasion Controversy

## ★ *Craft and Structure*

- 6. (6–8)** Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author’s point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

## ★ *Using This Assessment*

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*Assessment 6* is designed to measure students’ ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 6 for grades 6–8. It asks students to note a text’s point of view as expressed by looking closely at details in the text itself. These details may take the form of emotional language, distorted or exaggerated descriptions, stereotyped labeling, etc. However, even a text with a neutral tone may express bias or point of view by selectively emphasizing some facts while omitting others. Therefore, students also need to go outside the text to interpret point of view by considering sourcing information such as the author’s background, purpose, and audience. In addition, students need to see that when sources express conflicting points of view they may still be reliable in certain ways—for example, by what they share in common or by backing up their claims with solid evidence.

## ★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Acceptable answers to the first assessment question should see that in Document 1 Müller imagines an original Aryan race carrying its culture into Europe as well as India. He speaks about this race’s culture in highly positive tones—for example, he claims it had a concept of a supreme deity just like the one worshipped in Christian Europe as well as in temples in India. In Document 2, he clearly has in mind this earlier Aryan conquest when he says, “India has been conquered once, but India must be conquered again.” Acceptable answers should recognize that what he means is that the second conquest, by the British, could bring a superior culture to India just as the first one did. He wants India to study its own “ancient literature,” meaning the Vedas and other Hindu writings that he believes were brought to India by the Aryan race. Acceptable answers to the second assessment question may vary and should be discussed thoroughly. Most will probably feel Golwalkar is justly angry at Müller’s sense of Aryan superiority. Some may wonder why attitudes from the 1800s should bother anyone today. Others may also question why Golwalkar is insulted, as he seems to be, at the idea that India might have been shaped in part by outside influences of any sort.

## The Aryan Invasion Controversy

**Directions:** This exercise asks you to read three primary source documents carefully and answer two questions about specific details in them. In order to better understand these documents as historical primary sources, read and make use of the source information located just below each document. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

**CCS Standard 6:** Identify aspects of a text that reveal an author’s point of view or purpose (e.g., loaded language, inclusion or avoidance of particular facts).

### Document 1: A Primary Source

We find the same [language] forms preserved by all the members of the Aryan family. It follows that before the ancestors of the Indians and Persians started for the south, and the leaders of the Greek, Roman, Celtic, Teutonic, and Slavonic colonies marched towards the shores of Europe, there was a small clan of Aryans, settled probably on the highest elevation of Central Asia, speaking a language, not yet Sanskrit or Greek or German, but containing the dialectical germs of all; a clan that had advanced to a state of agricultural civilization; that had recognized the bonds of blood, and sanctioned the bonds of marriage; and that invoked the Giver of Light and Life in heaven by the same name which you may still hear in the temples of Benares, in the basilicas of Rome, and in our own churches and cathedrals.

**Source Information:** The Vedas, written in Sanskrit, are evidence of linguistic and cultural influences brought into India sometime after 1500 BCE. According to some nineteenth century Europeans, this proved that a distinct racial group, called “Aryans,” invaded and imposed its culture on India. This passage, written by F. Max Müller in 1861, is an example of this Aryan invasion theory. It is excerpted from *Lectures on the Science of Language*, 2nd edition (New York: Scribner, Armstrong, & Co., 1878), p. 212.

### Document 2: A Primary Source

India has been conquered once, but India must be conquered again, and that second conquest should be a conquest by education. . . .

By encouraging a study of their own ancient literature, as part of their education, a national feeling of pride and self-respect will be reawakened among those who influence the large masses of the people. A new national literature may spring up, impregnated with Western ideas, yet retaining its native spirit and character. . . . A new national literature will bring with it a new national life and new moral vigor. As to religion, that will take care of itself. The missionaries have done far more than they themselves seem to be aware of, nay, much of the work which is theirs they would probably disclaim. The Christianity of our nineteenth century will hardly be the Christianity of India. But the ancient religion of India is doomed—and if Christianity does not step in, whose fault will it be?

**Source Information:** This passage is also by F. Max Müller. It is from a letter he wrote in 1868 to the Duke of Argyll, who had been recently appointed Secretary of State for India. India was then a part of the British Empire. This letter is from Müller's *The Life and Letters of the Right Honourable Friedrich Max Müller* (New York: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1902), pp 357–58.

### Document 3: A Primary Source

It was the wily foreigner, the Britisher, who to achieve his ulterior imperialistic motives, set afloat all such mischievous notions among our people so that the sense of patriotism and duty towards the integrated personality of our motherland was corroded. He carried on an insidious propaganda that we were never one nation, that we were never the children of the soil, but mere upstarts having no better claims than the foreign hordes of the Muslims or the British over this country. The misfortune is that the so-called educated of this land were taken in by this ruse. . . .

The Englishman began training us systematically in various ways. The first thing he taught was that this was one great “continent” and not a country. He said that we are not one people and one nation. There were some aboriginals here staying for ages who had been driven away into the forests and hills. There were also other types of aboriginals called the *Dravidas*. *Aryans* came from the North and with their superior strength of arms conquered this land and dominated over the rest. That is, we were told we had no motherland, that most of us had come from somewhere outside and therefore were equally strangers and foreigners to this country.

**Source Information:** Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar was a leader of the modern-day Hindutva political movement. *Hindutva* means “Hinduness.” The movement is a form of Hindu nationalism. Most of its followers reject the idea of an ancient Aryan invasion or of any outside migration of people as a source of Indian culture. This passage is from M. S. Golwalkar's *Bunch of Thoughts* (Bangalore, India: Jagarana Prakashana, 1966), pp. 79 and 117.

### Assessment Questions

1. In Document 1, F. Max Müller sums up his version of the Aryan invasion theory. How does that theory help explain his attitude in Document 2 toward British rule over India?
2. In Document 3, M. S. Golwalkar expresses anger about the Aryan invasion theory. Do Documents 1 and 2 show that his anger is justified? Why or why not?

## Assessment 6 *Advanced Level*

# The Aryan Invasion Controversy

### ★ *Craft and Structure*

- 6. (9–10) Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.
- 6. (11–12) Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.

### ★ *Using This Assessment*

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*Assessment 6* is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 6 for grades 9–10 and 11–12 combined. It asks students to note a text's point of view as expressed by looking closely at details in the text itself. These details may take the form of emotional language, distorted or exaggerated descriptions, stereotyped labeling, etc. However, even a text with a neutral tone may express bias or point of view by selectively emphasizing some facts while omitting others. Therefore, students also need to go outside the text to interpret point of view by considering sourcing information such as the author's background, purpose, and audience. In addition, students need to see that when sources express conflicting points of view they may still be reliable in certain ways—for example, by what they share in common or by backing up their claims with solid evidence.

### ★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Acceptable answers to the first assessment question should see that in Document 1 Müller imagines an original Aryan race carrying what he clearly regarded as a superior culture into Europe as well as India. In Document 2, he has in mind this earlier Aryan conquest when he says, "India has been conquered once, but India must be conquered again." It seems clear he means that in the second conquest, the British should bring their own superior culture to India just as the Aryans did in the first one. Given the long era of British rule in India, it is not difficult to understand that Golwalkar would still find fault with Müller's sense of Aryan superiority. Acceptable answers to the first assessment question should see that Müller clearly has a sense of the Aryans as a racially distinct and a superior culture. Some may feel that Golwalkar also has a similar notion about a pure Indian nation existing for all time—"one nation and one people." He expresses a disdain for "foreign hordes" and wants to deny that outside influences had any role in the shaping of Indian culture over time. Obviously, this all should be discussed thoroughly.

## The Aryan Invasion Controversy

**Directions:** This exercise asks you to read three primary source documents carefully and answer two questions about specific details in them. In order to better understand these documents as historical primary sources, read and make use of the source information located just below each document. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

**CCS Standard 6: (9–10)** Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts. **(11–12)** Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.

### Document 1: A Primary Source

We find the same [language] forms preserved by all the members of the Aryan family. It follows that before the ancestors of the Indians and Persians started for the south, and the leaders of the Greek, Roman, Celtic, Teutonic, and Slavonic colonies marched towards the shores of Europe, there was a small clan of Aryans, settled probably on the highest elevation of Central Asia, speaking a language, not yet Sanskrit or Greek or German, but containing the dialectical germs of all; a clan that had advanced to a state of agricultural civilization; that had recognized the bonds of blood, and sanctioned the bonds of marriage; and that invoked the Giver of Light and Life in heaven by the same name which you may still hear in the temples of Benares, in the basilicas of Rome, and in our own churches and cathedrals.

**Source Information:** The Vedas, written in Sanskrit, are evidence of linguistic and cultural influences brought into India sometime after 1500 BCE. According to some nineteenth century Europeans, this proved that a distinct racial group, called "Aryans," invaded and imposed its culture on India. This passage, written by F. Max Müller in 1861, is an example of this Aryan invasion theory. It is excerpted from *Lectures on the Science of Language*, 2nd edition (New York: Scribner, Armstrong, & Co., 1878), p. 212.

### Document 2: A Primary Source

India has been conquered once, but India must be conquered again, and that second conquest should be a conquest by education. . . .

By encouraging a study of their own ancient literature, as part of their education, a national feeling of pride and self-respect will be reawakened among those who influence the large masses of the people. A new national literature may spring up, impregnated with Western ideas, yet retaining its native spirit and character. . . . A new national literature will bring with it a new national life and new moral vigor. As to religion, that will take care of itself. The missionaries have done far more than they themselves seem to be aware of, nay, much of the work which is theirs they would probably disclaim. The Christianity of our nineteenth century will hardly be the Christianity of India. But the ancient religion of India is doomed—and if Christianity does not step in, whose fault will it be?

**Source Information:** This passage is also by F. Max Müller. It is from a letter he wrote in 1868 to the Duke of Argyll, who had been recently appointed Secretary of State for India. India was then a part of the British Empire. This letter is from Müller's *The Life and Letters of the Right Honourable Friedrich Max Müller* (New York: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1902), pp 357–58.

### Document 3: A Primary Source

It was the wily foreigner, the Britisher, who to achieve his ulterior imperialistic motives, set afloat all such mischievous notions among our people so that the sense of patriotism and duty towards the integrated personality of our motherland was corroded. He carried on an insidious propaganda that we were never one nation, that we were never the children of the soil, but mere upstarts having no better claims than the foreign hordes of the Muslims or the British over this country. The misfortune is that the so-called educated of this land were taken in by this ruse. . . .

The Englishman began training us systematically in various ways. The first thing he taught was that this was one great “continent” and not a country. He said that we are not one people and one nation. There were some aboriginals here staying for ages who had been driven away into the forests and hills. There were also other types of aboriginals called the *Dravidas*. *Aryans* came from the North and with their superior strength of arms conquered this land and dominated over the rest. That is, we were told we had no motherland, that most of us had come from somewhere outside and therefore were equally strangers and foreigners to this country.

**Source Information:** Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar was a leader of the modern-day Hindutva political movement. *Hindutva* means “Hinduness.” The movement is a form of Hindu nationalism. Most of its followers reject the idea of an ancient Aryan invasion or of any outside migration of people as a source of Indian culture. This passage is from M. S. Golwalkar’s *Bunch of Thoughts* (Bangalore, India: Jagarana Prakashana, 1966), pp. 79 and 117.

### Assessment Questions

1. Documents 1 and 2 were written in the nineteenth century. How do they help explain the deep resentment M. S. Golwalkar expressed in a book he wrote in 1966?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Consider this statement: “Actually, Müller and Golwalkar share a lot in common in their ideas about nationalism and ethnic identity.” Explain this statement and why you do or do not agree with it.

Assessment 7 *Basic Level*

# Aryan Influences in Ancient India

## ★ Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- 7. (6–8)** Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

## ★ Using This Assessment

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*Assessment 7* is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 7 for grades 6–8. It asks students to do something historians must do all the time—integrate evidence found in several primary sources presented in a variety of visual and textual formats. [It may be useful to combine work on this assessment with *Assessment 6*, which covers a similar theme.]

## ★ Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment

Acceptable answers to the assessment question should see that Document 1 summarizes the evidence on which theories of Aryan influence rest. First, there are the language similarities between Sanskrit and other Indo-European languages. Second, there is evidence in the *Rig-Veda* describing the sort of nomadic warrior societies that would most likely have carried this language into India. Document 2 is evidence of the striking similarities of words and word forms in various languages derived from the original Indo-European prototype. Document 3 shows how migrations may have transported the Indo-European languages themselves into various parts of Europe, the Middle East, and India. Best answers will note that all this evidence only suggests some kind of cultural Aryan influence; it does not tell us who the Aryans were or even if they were one distinct ethnic group.

## Aryan Influences in Ancient India

**Directions:** This exercise asks you to study three documents carefully and answer one question on what these sources have in common. In order to better understand the documents and their importance as historical evidence, read and make use of the source information located just below or next to each document itself. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the assessment question that follows.

**CCS Standard 7:** Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

### Document 1: A Secondary Source

Did Aryans in horse-driven chariots invade India from the northwest in the second millennium BCE? Did these Aryans bring with them their Vedic rituals and an early form of India's Sanskrit language? The Aryans and the rituals are described in the hymns of the *Rig-Veda*. . . .

So, did the Aryans found Hinduism and all Indian civilization to follow? Historians in the 19th century were sure this Aryan invasion theory was correct. Today historians are no longer so sure. They are not sure the Aryans invaded and conquered India. They are not even sure who the Aryans were. Some say these Aryans may have migrated in slowly, sometimes fighting groups they met, sometimes simply trading, cooperating, and intermarrying with them. It is hard to tell, as there are just too few clues.

The first clues that led to the Aryan invasion theory had to do with language. In the late 18th century, some European scholars in India began to study Sanskrit. They noticed many words and word forms that were similar to those in Latin, Greek, English, Celtic, Persian, and a whole group of other languages. Soon they began to call all these the "Indo-European languages." But who were the speakers of the first Indo-European language, the one from which all these others developed? Many historians think they were from somewhere in Central Asia or the steppes of what is now the Ukraine and southern Russia. In this view, these original Indo-European speakers were horse-riding herders of cattle and sheep who invaded and conquered India. Others moved into Persia, northern Syria. Still others spread westward throughout Europe.

As for India, the *Rig-Veda* does seem to describe people with horses, chariots, and fire rituals at which animal sacrifices were carried out. . . . Yet it is hard to find actual physical clues that link these references to actual places and material objects. Exactly where were the ruins, chariot wheels, horse bones, weapons, and villages and cities of the Aryan invaders? They have been very hard to find, at least inside India.

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The Indus Valley civilization declined and disappeared sometime after 1900 BCE. Did the Aryans conquer it? This seems unlikely. No physical evidence of such a conquest has been found. Nor does the *Rig-Veda* describe any such complex, urban civilization. Historians now think a change in climate and other economic factors may have led to the decline of the Indus Valley civilization.

In any case, who the Aryans were and how they fit into this ancient history remains a mystery in many ways

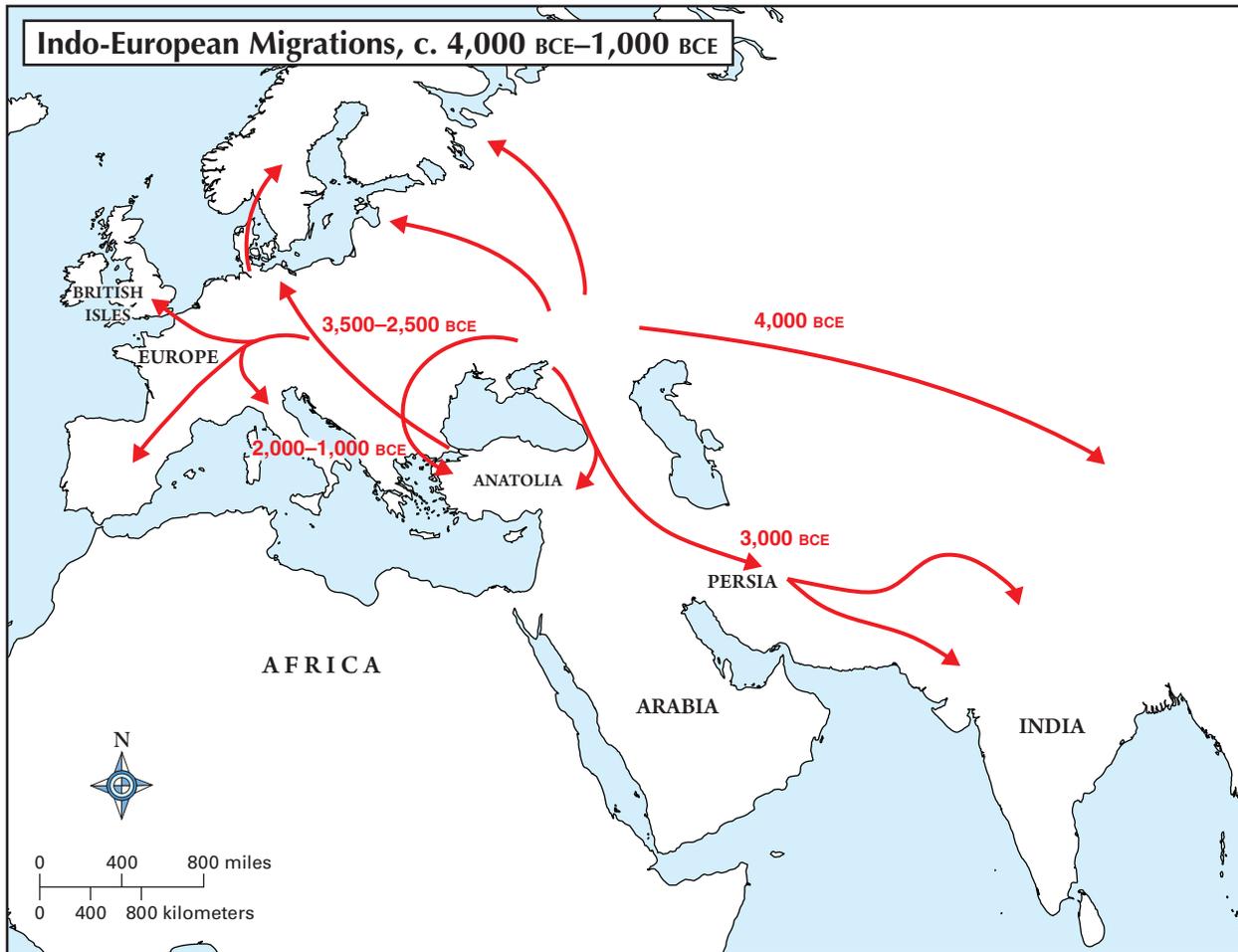
**Source Information:** This is a secondary source document about the issue of Aryan influence in ancient India's history. The passage is adapted and expanded from introductory material for Jonathan Burack's *Ancient India: Was There an Aryan Invasion?* (Culver City, CA: MindSparks, 2010).

## Document 2: A Secondary Source

Latin	<i>regere</i> (to lead or rule), <i>rex</i> (a king)
Old Irish	<i>ri</i> (a king),
Gaulish	<i>rix</i> (a king)
Old English	<i>ric</i> (a king), <i>rice</i> (rich, powerful)
Old English	<i>riht</i> (right, just, correct)
Old High German	<i>riche</i> (kingdom)
Modern German	<i>recht</i> (right)
Iranian Avestan	<i>razeyeiti</i> (directs)
Iranian Persian	<i>rahst</i> (right, correct)
Sanskrit	<i>raja</i> (king); <i>maharajah</i> (great king)

**Source Information:** Linguists have learned to re-create many words of an original Indo-European language from which many other languages evolved—including Sanskrit in India. For example, they can trace back many words to the Indo-European root word **reg**. This root word means either “tribal king” or “to direct in a straight line, to rule or lead.” This table shows just a few of the words that evolved over centuries from this Indo-European root “reg.” This list is adapted from a longer one available at the Online Etymology Dictionary.

### Document 3: A Secondary Source



**Source Information:** This map shows Indo-European migrations from 4000 to 1000 BCE. It is not clear whether this shows the spread of languages and cultures only, or of a single ethnic group carrying those languages and cultures.

### Assessment Question

1. How do *all three* of these sources offer evidence of some kind of Aryan influence in the early history of ancient India?

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Assessment 7 *Advanced Level*

# Aryan Influences in Ancient India

## ★ *Integration of Knowledge and Ideas*

- 7. (9–10)** Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.
- 7. (11–12)** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

## ★ *Using This Assessment*

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*Assessment 7* is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 7 for grades 9–10 and 11–12 combined. It asks students to do something historians must do all the time—integrate evidence found in a wide variety of primary sources presented in many visual and textual formats. It also asks them to judge the relative strengths and weaknesses of visual as compared with written sources. [It may be useful to combine work on this assessment with *Assessment 6*, which covers a similar theme.]

## ★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Acceptable answers to the first assessment question should see that all of these documents offer evidence of some sort of Aryan influence on ancient Indian history and culture. Document 1 sums up the evidence on which the theories of Aryan influence rest. It describes the language similarities between Sanskrit and other Indo-European languages, and it indicates how the *Rig-Veda* describes the sort of nomadic warrior society most likely to have carried this language into India. Document 2 is evidence of the striking similarities of words and word forms in various languages that derived from the original Indo-European prototype, including Sanskrit. Document 3 suggests how migrations might have transported the Indo-European languages themselves into various parts of Europe, the Middle East, and India. Acceptable answers to the second assessment question should see that Document 1 cautions us about the lack of physical evidence in India of a society like the ones described in the *Rig-Veda*. All three documents only suggest some sort of external cultural influence on India. They do not tell us who the Aryans were or even if they were one distinct ethnic group. Languages and other cultural patterns can be transferred from one group to another over time. Much remains unresolved about the Aryan influence on ancient Indian history.

## Aryan Influences in Ancient India

**Directions:** This exercise asks you to study three documents carefully and answer two questions on what these sources have in common. In order to better understand the documents and their importance as historical evidence, read and make use of the source information located just below or next to each document itself. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

**CCS Standard 7: (9–10)** Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text. **(11–12)** Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

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So, did the Aryans found Hinduism and all Indian civilization to follow? Historians in the 19th century were sure this Aryan invasion theory was correct. Today historians are no longer so sure. They are not sure the Aryans invaded and conquered India. They are not even sure who the Aryans were. Some say these Aryans may have migrated in slowly, sometimes fighting groups they met, sometimes simply trading, cooperating, and intermarrying with them. It is hard to tell, as there are just too few clues.

The first clues that led to the Aryan invasion theory had to do with language. In the late 18th century, some European scholars in India began to study Sanskrit. They noticed many words and word forms that were similar to those in Latin, Greek, English, Celtic, Persian, and a whole group of other languages. Soon they began to call all these the "Indo-European languages." But who were the speakers of the first Indo-European language, the one from which all these others developed? Many historians think they were from somewhere in Central Asia or the steppes of what is now the Ukraine and southern Russia. In this view, these original Indo-European speakers were horse-riding herders of cattle and sheep who invaded and conquered India. Others moved into Persia, northern Syria. Still others spread westward throughout Europe.

As for India, the *Rig-Veda* does seem to describe people with horses, chariots, and fire rituals at which animal sacrifices were carried out. . . . Yet it is hard to find actual physical clues that link these references to actual places and material objects. Exactly where were the ruins, chariot wheels, horse bones, weapons, and villages and cities of the Aryan invaders? They have been very hard to find, at least inside India.

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In any case, who the Aryans were and how they fit into this ancient history remains a mystery in many ways

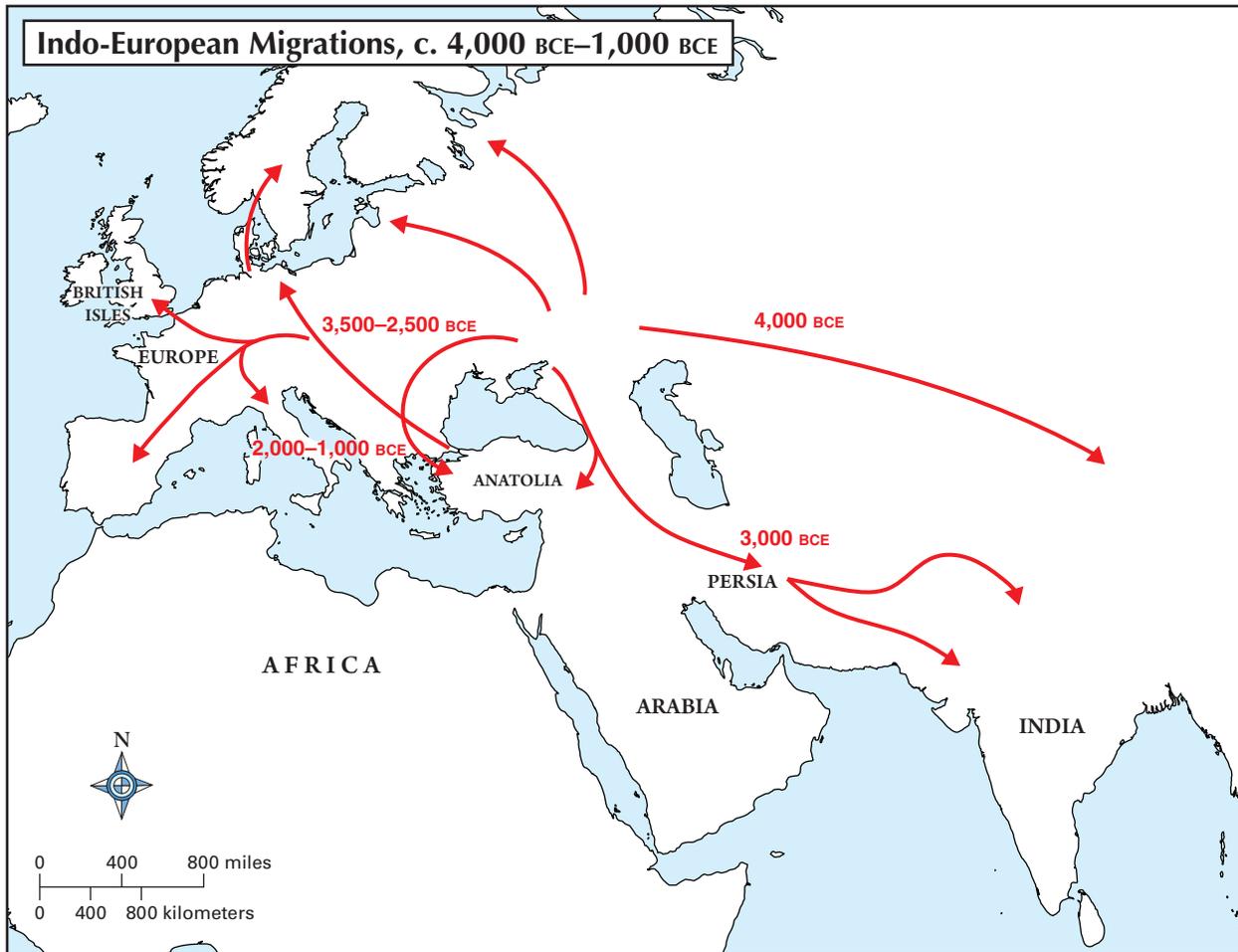
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## Document 2: A Secondary Source

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Old English	<i>ric</i> (a king), <i>rice</i> (rich, powerful)
Old English	<i>riht</i> (right, just, correct)
Old High German	<i>riche</i> (kingdom)
Modern German	<i>recht</i> (right)
Iranian Avestan	<i>razeyeiti</i> (directs)
Iranian Persian	<i>rahst</i> (right, correct)
Sanskrit	<i>raja</i> (king); <i>maharajah</i> (great king)

**Source Information:** Linguists have learned to re-create many words of an original Indo-European language from which many other languages evolved—including Sanskrit in India. For example, they can trace back many words to the Indo-European root word **reg**. This root word means either “tribal king” or “to direct in a straight line, to rule or lead.” This table shows just a few of the words that evolved over centuries from this Indo-European root “reg.” This list is adapted from a longer one available at the Online Etymology Dictionary.

### Document 3: A Secondary Source



**Source Information:** This map shows Indo-European migrations from 4000 to 1000 BCE. It is not clear whether this shows the spread of languages and cultures only, or of a single ethnic group carrying those languages and cultures.

### Assessment Questions

1. Construct a thesis statement or claim about Aryan influence in India that *all three* of these sources could be used to support.
2. Explain why Document 1 might lead a historian to treat Documents 2 and 3 cautiously as evidence of Aryan influence in India.

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Assessment 8 *Basic Level*

# Understanding Suttee

## ★ *Integration of Knowledge and Ideas*

- 8. (6–8)** Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

## ★ *Using This Assessment*

These Common Core History Assessments are intended to help your students develop key literacy and history thinking skills as they study and master the content covered in their ancient history coursework. The assessments are intended to be *formative* more than *summative*. That is, they are meant to be part of the instructional process itself, providing you and your students with information at a point when timely adjustments in teaching and learning can be made.

*Assessment 8* is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 8 for grades 6–8. It asks students to pay attention to the way a text reasons about its factual claims and to distinguish between these and expressions of opinion. This could mean paying close attention to the factual evidence offered or to the reasoning process and logic used to support a claim—as well as an ability to distinguish these from the text's biases or expressions of opinion. This activity assesses the students' ability to read closely in order to understand a text in these ways.

## ★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Responses to the first assessment question should respond to the claim in the third paragraph of the document that a neutral response only makes suttee “seem normal, just a custom to be explained away.” In other words, speaking neutrally is to accept a horrible practice that we all ought to oppose. However, Leslie's argument is that we must try to understand suttee and not just condemn it. Not only does she think we can do both, but she also thinks we ought to do both. Her reasoning is that this will help us better understand why some women find the practice acceptable, even admirable. Leslie says this shows respect for these women and their views. But she also sees it as necessary if we are to “argue at all persuasively for change” to end to this practice. Responses to the second assessment question may vary. They should address Leslie's key argument that a clear and objective understanding of suttee, including its appeal to some women, is necessary in order to argue against it more effectively. This question should be discussed thoroughly.

## Understanding Suttee

**Directions:** This exercise asks you to read one secondary source document carefully and answer two questions about specific details in the document. In order to better understand the document as a historical source, read and make use of the source information located just below the document itself. When you have studied the document and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

**CCS Standard 8:** Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.

### A Secondary Source Document

The caste system divided India in one way. Another clear division was that between men and women. In this, India was not different from many other traditional societies, such as those in China, Christian Europe, or later the Islamic lands of the Middle East. In those societies, women were subordinate to men in many ways. However, one practice unique to India is the ceremony of suttee. In this ceremony, a widow throws herself on her deceased husband's funeral pyre. The practice horrifies many, but some Hindus see it as an act of sacred devotion to the husband, a devotion that continues into the afterlife.

Today, suttee is outlawed in India. Yet some people there still admire it, and it does occasionally still take place. Hence, debates about it go on.

Some people say we should not even try to understand this practice in a neutral or unemotional way. They say this only makes it seem normal, just a custom to be explained away. Julia Leslie, a scholar of Indian religions, disagrees. She says we need both to understand and to judge:

First, there is a real need for understanding. If we wish to argue at all persuasively for change, we must first of all understand what is going on. We must construct [a] pathway to the pyre brick by brick and stone by stone so that, finally, we know how to destroy it and bring the horror to an end. But while trying to understand the empowering aspects of sati, we must never forget the violent and degrading reality. Second, there is a place for outrage. Understanding why sati makes sense to so many women and men does not mean condoning it, or accepting the necessity for it.

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Leslie uses two terms for the custom of burning a widow alive with her deceased husband—“sati” and “suttee.” The word *suttee* was used by the British to identify what they condemned as a barbaric practice. The other term, *sati*, has a more positive meaning, deriving from the word *sat*, meaning “goodness” or “virtue.” Leslie then explains:

I do not wish to suggest that the practice of sati is something to be condoned, or encouraged, or glorified. But I have difficulty with [the] view of women that sees them only as victims. To an important extent, of course, they are victims: both of their religious and cultural ideology in general; and of their menfolk. . . . But what is significant for me—as a woman scholar interested in how women cope with oppressive ideologies—is how these same victims find a path through the maze of oppression, a path that to them spells dignity and power.

**Source Information:** This document is a secondary source account dealing with the Indian custom of suttee. This particular historical account was written in 2014 specifically for use as part of this activity. The two quotations included in it are from “Suttee or Sat : Victim or Victor?” by Julia Leslie, in *Roles and Rituals for Hindu Women*, edited by Julia Leslie (Delhi, India: Motilal Banarsidass, 1992), p. 177.

## Assessment Questions

1. Many say it is wrong to try to understand suttee “in a neutral or unemotional way.” Explain why they feel this way and why scholar Julia Leslie disagrees.
2. Do you agree with Leslie’s views as she explains them in this document? Why or why not?

## Assessment 8 *Advanced Level*

# Understanding Suttee

### ★ *Integration of Knowledge and Ideas*

- 8. (9–10) Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author’s claims.
- 8. (11–12) Evaluate an author’s premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

### ★ *Using This Assessment*

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*Assessment 8* is designed to measure students’ ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 8 for grades 9–10 and 11–12 combined. It asks students to pay attention to the way a text backs up or seeks to explain its factual claims. This could mean paying close attention to the factual evidence offered in the text as compared with expressions of opinion. Or it could mean attention to the reasoning process and logic used to support a claim. It may also require students to examine underlying assumptions and bias in order to see how they shape or distort the reasoning process presented by the text. This activity assesses the students’ ability to read closely in order to understand a text in these ways.

### ★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Responses to the first assessment question should note that the document poses the question of whether a neutral effort to understand suttee only makes it “seem normal, just a custom to be explained away.” Leslie’s argument is that we must try both to understand suttee objectively and also to judge it harshly. The reason for trying to understand suttee in a neutral way, she says, is to better understand why some women find the practice acceptable, even admirable. This shows respect for these women, but also, she says, “There is a real need for understanding if we wish to argue at all persuasively for change.” Responses to the second assessment question may vary. This is a difficult question with which all historians must deal. Most would say that it is impossible not to judge past practices from our own points of view but that we must also at the same time seek to understand the points of view and cultural norms of past societies in their own terms. How to do both ought to be the focus of discussions of this issue.

## Understanding Suttee

**Directions:** This exercise asks you to read one secondary source document carefully and answer two questions about specific details in the document. In order to better understand the document as a historical source, read and make use of the source information located just below the document itself. When you have studied the document and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

**CCS Standard 8: (9–10)** Assess the extent to which the reasoning and evidence in a text support the author’s claims. **(11–12)** Evaluate an author’s premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

### A Secondary Source Document

The caste system divided India in one way. Another clear division was that between men and women. In this, India was not different from many other traditional societies, such as those in China, Christian Europe, or later the Islamic lands of the Middle East. In those societies, women were subordinate to men in many ways. However, one practice unique to India is the ceremony of suttee. In this ceremony, a widow throws herself on her deceased husband’s funeral pyre. The practice horrifies many, but some Hindus see it as an act of sacred devotion to the husband, a devotion that continues into the afterlife.

Today, suttee is outlawed in India. Yet some people there still admire it, and it does occasionally still take place. Hence, debates about it go on.

Some people say we should not even try to understand this practice in a neutral or unemotional way. They say this only makes it seem normal, just a custom to be explained away. Julia Leslie, a scholar of Indian religions, disagrees. She says we need both to understand and to judge:

First, there is a real need for understanding. If we wish to argue at all persuasively for change, we must first of all understand what is going on. We must construct [a] pathway to the pyre brick by brick and stone by stone so that, finally, we know how to destroy it and bring the horror to an end. But while trying to understand the empowering aspects of sati, we must never forget the violent and degrading reality. Second, there is a place for outrage. Understanding why sati makes sense to so many women and men does not mean condoning it, or accepting the necessity for it.

*Continued on next page*



Assessment 9 *Basic Level***Ashoka's Edict 12**★ *Integration of Knowledge and Ideas*

- 9. (6–8)** Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

★ *Using This Assessment*

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*Assessment 9* is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 9 for grades 6–8. It asks students to understand the relationship between primary and secondary sources. This means students must know the difference between the two kinds of sources—that primary sources provide the evidence for secondary source claims and interpretations. This should lead them to adopt a critical approach to secondary sources themselves. That is, such secondary accounts should not be regarded as final and complete. They are interpretations of the past, not the past itself. Students should learn to weigh secondary source accounts against the relevant primary source evidence.

★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Answers to the first assessment question should see that this phrase sums up Ashoka's call for members of each religion to respect and speak well of other religions. It is a call for general religious tolerance. Ashoka sees this as a way to benefit all religions. Best answers will see that he is not trying to limit religion's place in society but rather trying to enable it to evolve and improve. He is against "excessive devotion," but he says a spirit of religious acceptance and mutual respect will lead to "growth in the essentials of all religions." Answers to the second assessment question should note first of all that Ashoka was the powerful ruler of a vast empire. It was created by powerful armies, but Ashoka saw how destructive its wars were becoming. The document suggests Ashoka sincerely embraced Buddhist beliefs and devoted considerable resources to supporting Buddhism. However, best answers will also see how this conversion may have helped Ashoka find a less destructive way of unifying Indian society and culture.

## Ashoka's Edict 12

**Directions:** This exercise asks you to read one primary source document and one secondary source document carefully and answer questions about specific details in them. In order to better understand the documents, read and make use of the source information located just below each document. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

**CCS Standard 9:** Analyze the relationship between a primary and secondary source on the same topic.

### Document 1: A Primary Source

Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, does not value gifts and honors as much as he values this—that there should be growth in the essentials of all religions. Growth in essentials can be done in different ways, but all of them have as their root restraint in speech, that is, not praising one's own religion, or condemning the religion of others without good cause. And if there is cause for criticism, it should be done in a mild way. But it is better to honor other religions for this reason. By so doing, one's own religion benefits, and so do other religions, while doing otherwise harms one's own religion and the religions of others. Whoever praises his own religion, due to excessive devotion, and condemns others with the thought "Let me glorify my own religion," only harms his own religion. Therefore contact (between religions) is good. One should listen to and respect the doctrines professed by others.

**Source Information:** The Mauryan Empire unified much of India. But its third emperor, Ashoka, is remembered more for turning away from conquest and accepting Buddhism and nonviolence. He built many stone pillars inscribed with edicts directed at his subjects. Edict 12 speaks of the importance of tolerating and even honoring all religious traditions. This passage is the main part of Ashoka's Edict 12. In it, the King Piyadasi mentioned is actually Ashoka himself (*Piyadasi* means "Beloved of the Gods"). This translation, by S. Dhammika, is one of several versions of Edict 12 available online at "The Mauryas," Indian History and Architecture.

## Document 2: A Secondary Source

India's various regions have normally been very difficult to unify under a single government. After the fall of the Indus Valley civilization by around 1500 BCE, the first state to come close to such unity was the Mauryan Empire in the fourth century BCE. The Mauryan Empire unified much of northern India and parts of the south. It included regions along the Ganges and other rivers that were heavily influenced by Aryan culture. Brahman priests were an important upper-class group there. The empire also included areas further east where Buddhism appeared sometime in the sixth or fifth centuries BCE. Buddhism was a new philosophical system that rejected certain doctrines of Brahmanism, such as its idea of society divided into rigid castes based on birth and its emphasis on ritual and animal sacrifices.

One of the Mauryan Empire's greatest rulers was its third emperor Ashoka. He ruled from around 269 to 232 BCE. At first, he was a fierce conqueror who extended the empire to include a great deal of new land to the south. Around 261 BCE he conquered Kalinga, on India's east coast, in a very bloody war. It cost some 100,000 lives or more. Perhaps moved by this slaughter, he began to convert to Buddhism. As a result, he is remembered much more for turning away from conquest and accepting Buddhist teachings and their principle of nonviolence. He sent missionaries to spread the Buddhist message. He also built stupas and stone pillars inscribed with edicts directed at his subjects. In the words of historian David Ludden:

Buddhist righteousness ("dhamma") became a moral compass for Ashoka's empire. Ashoka used vast winnings from war to support Buddhist monks, ritual centers (stupas), preachers, and schools. Instead of conquering the kingdoms south of Kalinga, Ashoka brought them under his spiritual patronage, supporting Buddhist kings in Sri Lanka and Buddhist centers in Andhra, Karnataka, and the Tamil country.

**Source Information:** This document is a secondary source account of the Mauryan Empire, the emperor Ashoka, and Ashoka's conversion to Buddhism. This particular historical account was written in 2014 specifically for use as part of this activity. The quote at the end of the passage is from David Ludden's *India and South Asia: A Short History* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2014).



## Assessment 9 *Advanced Level*

# Ashoka's Edict 12

### ★ *Integration of Knowledge and Ideas*

- 9. (9–10)** Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.
- 9. (11–12)** Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

### ★ *Using This Assessment*

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*Assessment 9* is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in Common Core History/Social Studies Reading Standard 9 for grades 9–10 and 11–12 combined. It asks students to understand the relationship between primary and secondary sources. This means students must know the difference between the two kinds of sources—that primary sources provide the evidence for secondary source claims and interpretations. This should lead them to adopt a critical approach to secondary sources themselves. That is, such secondary accounts should not be regarded as final and complete. They are interpretations of the past, not the past itself. Students should learn to weigh secondary source accounts against the relevant primary source evidence.

### ★ *Evaluating Student Responses to This Assessment*

Answers to the first assessment question should see that Ashoka did not merely convert to Buddhism. He also called for a more general religious tolerance among all religious faiths. He was not trying to limit religion's place in society but rather trying to enable it to evolve and improve—or as he says, bring about “growth in the essentials of all religions.” Document 2 makes it clear that Ashoka was the powerful ruler of a vast empire that was forged by powerful armies. Ashoka saw how destructive its wars were becoming. His conversion may have boosted a spirit of tolerance generally, and it also may have provided relief and greater political stability for a time to most of India. Answers to the second assessment question may vary. Document 1 suggests Ashoka's conversion was sincerely felt—but it also suggests his interest was not just in Buddhism itself but also in promoting a spirit of tolerance among all religious sects. Document 2 also implies that his conversion may have helped him in a purely practical political goal—to find a less destructive way of continuing to unify Indian society and culture. Historian David Ludden in particular suggests that instead of conquering new kingdoms, he “brought them under his spiritual patronage” in order to control them less destructively.

## Ashoka's Edict 12

**Directions:** This exercise asks you to read one primary source document and one secondary source document carefully and answer questions about specific details in them. In order to better understand the documents, read and make use of the source information located just below each document. When you have studied the documents and the source information, answer the assessment questions that follow.

**CCS Standard 9: (9–10)** Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources. **(11–12)** Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

### Document 1: A Primary Source

Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, does not value gifts and honors as much as he values this—that there should be growth in the essentials of all religions. Growth in essentials can be done in different ways, but all of them have as their root restraint in speech, that is, not praising one's own religion, or condemning the religion of others without good cause. And if there is cause for criticism, it should be done in a mild way. But it is better to honor other religions for this reason. By so doing, one's own religion benefits, and so do other religions, while doing otherwise harms one's own religion and the religions of others. Whoever praises his own religion, due to excessive devotion, and condemns others with the thought "Let me glorify my own religion," only harms his own religion. Therefore contact (between religions) is good. One should listen to and respect the doctrines professed by others.

**Source Information:** The Mauryan Empire unified much of India. But its third emperor, Ashoka, is remembered more for turning away from conquest and accepting Buddhism and nonviolence. He built many stone pillars inscribed with edicts directed at his subjects. Edict 12 speaks of the importance of tolerating and even honoring all religious traditions. This passage is the main part of Ashoka's Edict 12. In it, the King Piyadasi mentioned is actually Ashoka himself (*Piyadasi* means "Beloved of the Gods"). This translation, by S. Dhammika is one of several versions of Edict 12 available online at "The Mauryas," Indian History and Architecture.

## Document 2: A Secondary Source

India's various regions have normally been very difficult to unify under a single government. After the fall of the Indus Valley civilization by around 1500 BCE, the first state to come close to such unity was the Mauryan Empire in the fourth century BCE. The Mauryan Empire unified much of northern India and parts of the south. It included regions along the Ganges and other rivers that were heavily influenced by Aryan culture. Brahman priests were an important upper-class group there. The empire also included areas further east where Buddhism appeared sometime in the sixth or fifth centuries BCE. Buddhism was a new philosophical system that rejected certain doctrines of Brahmanism, such as its idea of society divided into rigid castes based on birth and its emphasis on ritual and animal sacrifices.

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**Source Information:** This document is a secondary source account of the Mauryan Empire, the emperor Ashoka, and Ashoka's conversion to Buddhism. This particular historical account was written in 2014 specifically for use as part of this activity. The quote at the end of the passage is from David Ludden's *India and South Asia: A Short History* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2014).



## Writing Assessment 1

# Ancient India

### ★ The College and Career Readiness Anchor Standard for Writing

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

This standard is the basis for the corresponding No. 1 Common Core Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects.

### ★ Using This Assessment

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*Writing Assessment 1* is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standard for Writing 1. The Anchor Standards are the basis on which the various Common Core History/Social Studies Standards are based. This assessment asks students to write an essay that makes meaningful claims and that develops those claims using relevant evidence and sound reasoning. The essay should make clear the strengths and limitations of the claims it makes while also considering possible challenges or counter claims.

### ★ Evaluating Student Responses to Writing Assessment 1

- Essays for this assignment should be scored according to these criteria.
- How well does the essay state a claim addressing all elements of the prompt?
- Does the essay use evidence from all or most of the documents assigned for this task?
- Is the evidence explained effectively using careful reasoning and a logical flow of one idea to the next?
- Does the essay defend the claim in relation to any relevant alternative claims?
- Are ideas presented using precise language, effective transitions, and domain-specific vocabulary?
- Does the essay include an effective conclusion supporting its claims?
- How well does the essay follow rules of usage, spelling, and punctuation?

## Ancient India

**The Standard:** Write a brief essay that presents a well-reasoned argument focused on historical content.

### The Question

Using your background history knowledge and the primary source documents listed here, explain why you do or do not agree with the following statement:

*“Ancient India’s greatness is often undervalued and overlooked because of how much we in the modern world stress politics and economics over culture and religion.”*

**Documents:** Base your essay on your general background knowledge and all of the primary and secondary source documents in the *India* assessments.

### Instructions

- Write a brief, well-organized essay that includes an introduction, one to three internal paragraphs, and a conclusion.
- Introduce a specific claim that you can defend in response to the question.
- Support your claim with an argument based on evidence from the documents and sound reasoning about that evidence.
- Consider other possible claims that may differ from your own.
- Include related outside information based on your background knowledge of history.
- Use transitions and a logical arrangement of ideas to connect all parts of your essay to the claim you are making.
- Write a conclusion that follows from the argument your essay has made.

## Writing Assessment 2

# Ancient India

### ★ The College and Career Readiness Anchor Standard for Writing

2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

This standard is the basis for the corresponding No. 2 Common Core Writing Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects.

### ★ Using This Assessment

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*Writing Assessment 2* is designed to measure students' ability to master the skills described in the College and Career Readiness Anchor Standard for Writing 2. The Anchor Standards are the basis on which the various Common Core History/Social Studies Standards are based. This assessment asks students to write an essay that uses sources effectively to provide strong support and evidence clarifying and explaining a central idea or set of ideas and concepts.

### ★ Evaluating Student Responses to Writing Assignment 2

- Essays for this assignment should be scored according to these criteria.
- How well does the introduction address the prompt with a clear, well-defined central idea and a preview of supporting ideas?
- Does the essay use evidence from many of the documents assigned for this task?
- Is the evidence used effectively to support the essay's key ideas and concepts?
- Does the essay engage in careful reasoning and a logical flow of one idea to the next?
- Are ideas presented using precise language, effective transitions, and domain-specific vocabulary?
- Does the essay include an effective conclusion supporting its key ideas?
- How well does the essay follow rules of usage, spelling, and punctuation?

## Ancient India

**The Standard:** Write an informative/explanatory essay clearly describing and explaining historical events and trends.

### The Question

A nearby history museum is planning a major exhibit on ancient India. The museum plans to publish a short brochure on the exhibit. They have supplied you with all of the documents in this set of assessments on ancient India. They tell you to choose only five of these documents for use in the brochure. They want you to pick ones that will best reveal the most important aspects of ancient India's history. They also ask you to write an essay explaining why you chose your five documents from those made available to you. Your task in this assignment is to write that essay.

**Documents:** Base your essay on your general background knowledge and on your selection of sources from all the primary and secondary source documents in the *India* assessments.

### Instructions

- Write a brief, well-organized essay that includes an introduction, one to three internal paragraphs, and a conclusion.
- Introduce the topic with a clear, well-defined central idea, and preview in a general way other key ideas your essay will develop.
- Support each of your key ideas with evidence from many of the documents and with sound reasoning about that evidence.
- Include related outside information based on your background knowledge of history.
- Use transitions and a logical arrangement of ideas to connect the major parts of your essay.
- Write a conclusion that follows from and summarizes the main points your essay has made.

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