River Valley Civilizations: Indus River Valley (2500 B.C.E.-1700 B.C.E.)

Geography of the Indus River Valley
The Indus River Valley was located in what is known as the Indian subcontinent that includes the countries of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh. Unpredictable yearly floods brought rich soil to the Indus Valley. The Indus Valley was protected by the Hindu Kush mountains in the west and the Himalayas in the east. Seasonal winds called monsoons greatly influenced life in the Indus River Valley. The dry and wet seasons due to the monsoons made life unpredictable in that there could either be floods or a massive drought in the Indian subcontinent.

The Cities of the Indus Valley
Around the year 2500 B.C.E., people of the Indus Valley were planning India's first cities. Their cities were laid out on a grid system with buildings constructed of oven-baked bricks. The people of the Indus Valley built strong levees, or walls, to keep water out of their cities. Indus engineers also created an early plumbing and sewage system. One of their greatest achievements was their city planning. Each building was connected by a network of streets and in the center of the city was a citadel, which contained the buildings for the royal family and temples. The two major cities were Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa. Archaeologists sometimes call this civilization the Harappan civilization because of the many artifacts found at the city of Harappa. They also believe that Indus people had a very strong central government because of the consistency (sameness) of the cities and construction of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro.

Harappan Culture
The Harappan culture did have a language but unlike cuneiform and hieroglyphics, it has been impossible to translate. The language is found on seals made out of carved stone and is made up of 400 symbols. Because the Indus River was an excellent way to transport goods, Harappans had a great trade network with other civilizations like Mesopotamia. Around 1750 B.C.E., the cities of the Indus Valley declined. Scientists believe environmental changes like earthquakes, floods and droughts forced the people of Harappa to leave in order to survive.
Indus River Valley (cont.) FCPS World I SOL Standards: WHI 3a and 4b

Key Vocabulary
Subcontinent: a large landmass that forms a distinct part of a continent

Harappan civilization: another name for the Indus River Valley civilization that rose along the Indus with advanced city planning

Monsoon: a wind that shifts in direction at certain times of each year
Drought: a long period without any rain or water
Levees: a barrier constructed to prevent the flooding of a river
Citadel: a heavily protected area
Network: to connect with
Flood: large amounts of water that temporarily cover areas not usually covered by water

Quick Review

2. Which two rivers were important to the ancient civilizations of the Indian subcontinent?
A. The Tigris and Euphrates Rivers
B. The Yangtze and Huang Rivers
C. The Nile and Jordan Rivers
D. The Ganges and Indus Rivers

3. Identify and explain two ways that geography affected the lives of the people in the Indus Valley Civilization.

4. Which answer best completes the graphic organizer?

Connection to Today
The city of Mohenjo-Daro had an extensive plumbing system that looked similar to contemporary plumbing systems. Every house had a private bathroom and toilet and the wastewater would be carried out of the house in an underground sewer system. No other civilization reached this level of skill until the 19th and 20th centuries! What areas of the world are currently lacking basic plumbing systems?

Resources
Learn 360
- Indian Subcontinent (http://goo.gl/Ayo5L)

FCPS Databases (Marshall Cavendish Digital)
- Indus Valley (http://www.marshallcavendishdigital.com/articledisplay/17/4492/46318)