**Instructions for Discussion Appointments:**

**Make 4 appointments for this class with different scholars.**

Directions: Please mix and mingle and make discussion appointments. If you select someone they should also have your name in the desired appointment box. Put the person you are sitting next to as Appointment #4. Remember to respectfully and collaboratively work together on each question.

 

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| Appointment 1: |  |
| Appointment 2: |  |
| Appointment 3: |  |
| Appointment 4: |  |
| Appointment 5: |  |

*Mesopotamian Empires Reading*

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|  | **Questions** | **Answer each question in note format. Notes:** |
| **Inferences** | **APPOINTMENT 1**  What two rivers did Indus Valley people settle around?  How do you think we know about the early civilizations in the Indus River Valley? |  |
| **Inferences** | **APPOINTMENT 2**  What was the social class structure like in Harappa?  The Aryans were made up of different groups of people. However, in what way were they alike? |  |
| **Inferences** | **APPOINTMENT 3**  How did Aryans improve farming?  How did Aryans change language? |  |
| **FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE** | **APPOINTMENT 4**  What was the Caste System?  How did it work? |  |
|  | **APPOINTMENT 5**  What was family life like in Indian society?  How was education different in ancient India than it is today for us? |  |

Answer the following question independently:

**Would you like to live in ancient India? Why or why not?**

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**The Indus Valley**

**The Geography of India**

India’s border starts to the south of the continent of Asia. The Himalaya block off India from the rest of Asia. This makes India a **subcontinent**.

The Ganges and Indus rivers are in northern India. The Ganges runs southeast into the Indian Ocean. The Indus flows southwest into the Arabian Sea. Their water comes from melting snow in the Himalaya.

The Deccan Plateau is south of the Ganges and Indus river valleys. It is dry and hilly. The coastal areas have plains, or flat land, that is good for farming.

India’s climate, or usual weather, has **monsoons**, or strong winds. The winter monsoon blows in cold, dry air from the mountains. The summer monsoon brings warm, wet air from the Arabian Sea. Summer monsoons bring the rainy season. If the rain comes in time, the crops will be good. If the rains are late, then there may be a drought, or a long time without rain for crops.

***The Indus Valley Civilization***

India’s first civilization began in the Indus River valley, where the floods wash up rich soil. The Harappa, or Indus, civilization lasted from about 2600 B.C. until 1500 B.C. Over 1,000 towns and cities stretched from the Himalaya to the Arabian Sea.

Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro were large cities with populations of about 35,000 people eafch. The cities had wide main streets and smaller side streets. Fortresses, or strong buildings made for defense, protected the people. Most houses were built with bricks made of dried mud. The houses had flat roofs, an open courtyard, wells, and indoor bathrooms. Brick pipes took wastewater to pits outside the city walls. Houses also had garbage chutes that led to bins in the streets.

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

Most harappans were farmers. They grew rice, wheat, barley, peas, and cotton. lCity dwellers made clay pots, cotton cloth, and metal tools. They made jewelry from gold, shells, and ivory. They even made toys.

The Harappans began trading with the Mesopotamians. Some Harappan traders sailed across the Arabian   
Sea, while other traders traveled by land.

***Aryan Migrations and Settlements***

In about 1900 B.C., the Harappan people began to leave the cities. Although historians don’t know why this happened, there are two possible reasons. A very long drought dried up all the farms and there was no food, or an earthquake shook the river and caused a huge flood. Many years after most Harappans had left, the Aryans began setting the river valley.

The Aryans came from central Asia. They were nomads, so they traveled around to find food for their herds of cattle, sheep, and goats.

The Aryans were not a single race or a tribe. They were a group of people that spoke similar languages. This **language family** is called Indo-European. A language family is a set of similar languages. The Aryans were good warriors, expert horse riders, and expert hunters.

The Aryans left Asia about 2000 B.C. and crossed into India. They arrived in the Indus River valley around 1500 B.C.

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

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

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

***Ancient Indian Society***

In the Aryan society, social groups developed. They were based on a person’s place in the Hindu religion and the work they did. These groups became the **caste** **system**. A caste system is a system of social positions and rules. A person was born into one caste and could never change to any other. The caste system had rules for almost every part of a person’s life, including marriage, work, and friendships.

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

One group was not part of the caste system--the Untouchables. Untouchables did work considered too dirty for caste members. Most Indians thought Untouchables were unclean. As a result, Untouchables were made to live apart from everyone else.

Grandparents, parents, and children all lived together with the oldest man in charge. This is called an extended, or enlarged, family. Men had many more rights than women. Only men went to school. Men had to have 12 years of schooling before they could marry. When they were young, boys studied with a **guru**, or teacher. When they were older, they went to schools in the cities. Only Brahmin men could become priests.

Parents chose marriage partners for their children. Divorce was not allowed. But if a couple could not have children, the husband could marry a second wife.