South Asia Vocabulary

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| **Physical Geography (pp 542-545)** |
| Subcontinent | Large landmass that is smaller than a continent |
| Himalayas (543) | Mountain range along the northern border of India; home to the highest peaks in the world. |
| Mount Everest | The highest mountain on the planet |
| Ganges River | India’s most important river |
| Indus River | River in Pakistan that was once home to the earliest Indian civilizations |
| Monsoons | Seasonal winds that bring either moist or dry air. |
| **Early Indian Civilizations (pp 472-477)** |
| Harappa | An ancient city along the Indus River in modern day Pakistan |
| Aryan (p476) | A group that was originally from the area around the Caspian Sea in Central Asia |
| Sanskrit | The most important language of ancient India |
| **Origins of Hinduism (pp 478-483)** |
| Varnas (478) | Social divisions in Aryan society |
| Brahmin (478) | Priests in Aryan society |
| Kshatriyas (478) | Rulers and warriors in Aryan society |
| Vaisyas (478) | Farmers, craftspeople, and traders in Aryan society |
| Sudras (478) | Laborers and non-Aryans in Aryan society |
| Caste system | Divided Indian society into groups based on a person’s birth, wealth, or occupation, developed by the Aryans |
| Vedas (480) | Aryan texts containing sacred hymns and poems |
| Hinduism (481) | The largest religion in India today, a blending of Aryan and Harappan beliefs |
| Hindu (481) | People who practice Hinduism |
| Brahma (481) | The main Hindu god, the creator |
| Brahman (481) | The universal spirit |
| Reincarnation | The belief that souls are born and reborn many times |
| Karma | The effects that good or bad actions have on a person’s soul |
| Moksha (482) | The Hindu belief of salvation, or freedom from life’s worries and ending the cycle of rebirth |
| Dharma (482) | One’s place or caste in society |
| Jainism (483) | A religion based on the teachings of Mahavira (559 BC), based on 4 principles: don’t injure anyone or thing, tell the truth, do not steal, and own no property |
| **Origins of Buddhism (pp 484-489)** |
| Meditation | The focusing of the mind on spiritual ideas |
| Buddha (485) | The name for Siddhartha Gautama, the founder of Buddhism, once he was enlightened |
| Buddhism (486) | The religion based on the teaching of the Buddha |
| Four Noble Truths (486) | Four guiding principles at the heart of the Buddha’s teaching |
| Nirvana | A state of perfect peace |
| **Indian Empires (pp 490-493)** |
| Mauryan Empire (490) | An ancient Indian empire founded by Candragupta Maurya |
| Asoka (491) | Candragupta’s grandson that became King of the Mauryan Empire in 270 BC |
| Gupta Empire | A dynasty that took over India in 320 AD and united India once again |
| Bhagavad Gita (497) | One of the most famous stories in the epic, *Mahabharata* |