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Contents

PUBLISHER'S NOTE.....	vii
Background.....	vii
General Approach.....	vii
Geographical Terms.....	viii
Three Essential Questions.....	x
Key Themes.....	xi
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 1	
From the Mediterranean to India	
1200–600 BCE	3
LESSON 1	
Mapping the Period	8
Student Handout 1.1.1.....	9
Student Handout 1.1.2.....	10
LESSON 2	
Metallurgy: Iron	11
Student Handout 1.2.1.....	12
LESSON 3	
Urbanization	14
Student Handout 1.3.1.....	15
Student Handout 1.3.2.....	17
LESSON 4	
Trade: The Phoenicians	18
Student Handout 1.4.1.....	19
Student Handout 1.4.2.....	22
LESSON 5	
Empire Building: The Assyrians	23
Student Handout 1.5.1.....	24
Student Handout 1.5.2.....	26
Student Handout 1.5.3.....	29
Student Handout 1.5.4.....	30

LESSON 6	
Religion: Judaism and Hinduism	31
Student Handout 1.6.1	32
Student Handout 1.6.2	36
Student Handout 1.6.3	40
CHAPTER 2	
Emergence of Complex Society in East Asia	
1200–200 BCE	41
LESSON 1	
Emergence of Complex Society in East Asia	46
Student Handout 2.1.1	48
Student Handout 2.1.2	49
Student Handout 2.1.3	51
LESSON 2	
Reader’s Theater: The One That Got Away	52
Student Handout 2.2.1	54
LESSON 3	
According to Master Kung	57
Student Handout 2.3.1	58
CHAPTER 3	
Migration and Change in Africa South of the Sahara	
1000 BCE–200 CE	59
LESSON 1	
Peoples without History?	63
Student Handout 3.1.1	66
Student Handout 3.1.2	68
Student Handout 3.1.3	69
Student Handout 3.1.4	70
LESSON 2	
Ironworking	71
Student Handout 3.2.1	73
Student Handout 3.2.2	75

LESSON 3	
Agriculture	76
Student Handout 3.3.1	77
Student Handout 3.3.2	79
Student Handout 3.3.3	80
LESSON 4	
The Commercial Revolution in Africa	81
Student Handout 3.4.1	84
CHAPTER 4	
An Age of Greek and Persian Power	
600–200 BCE	87
LESSON 1	
Empire—Rule of Awe	93
Student Handout 4.1.1	96
Student Handout 4.1.2	99
Student Handout 4.1.3	102
Student Handout 4.1.4	105
Student Handout 4.1.5	108
Student Handout 4.1.6	111
LESSON 2	
Emperors Speak for Themselves	114
Student Handout 4.2.1	116
Student Handout 4.2.2	117
LESSON 3	
Global Trade Routes	118
Student Handout 4.3.1	120
Student Handout 4.3.2	123
Student Handout 4.3.3	124
Student Handout 4.3.4	125
Student Handout 4.3.5	126
Student Handout 4.3.6	127
Student Handout 4.3.7	128

CHAPTER 5	
Giant Empires of Afroeurasia	
300 BCE–500 CE	129
LESSON 1	
Gathering/Classifying Data	133
Student Handout 5.1.1	135
Student Handout 5.1.2	137
LESSON 2	
Selling the Destination to Time Tourists	139
Student Handout 5.2.1	141
Student Handout 5.2.2.....	143
Student Handout 5.2.3.....	144
Student Handout 5.2.4.....	146
LESSON 3	
Learning to Evaluate Work	147
Student Handout 5.3.1	150
Student Handout 5.3.2.....	151
Student Handout 5.3.3.....	153
CHAPTER 6	
Empires and City-States of the Americas	
800 BCE–500 CE	155
LESSON 1	
Characteristics of Empires and City-States in the Americas	158
Student Handout 6.1.1	159
Student Handout 6.1.2.....	160
LESSON 2	
Comparing Characteristics	161
LESSON 3	
Comparing Calendars	162
GLOSSARY	164
IMAGE CREDITS	172
ABOUT THE AUTHORS	173

Introduction

During the Neolithic period, humans in several parts of the world began to produce food, adopt new forms of social organization, and interact more intensively with one another over longer distances than in any earlier times. In Big Era Four those patterns continued, though at a faster pace. World population continued to increase in the first millennium BCE, though it leveled off in the early centuries CE. More cities appeared. States, which first emerged as a way of organizing large populations under a single governing authority, now appeared in new forms that were bigger, more complex, and more efficient at collecting taxes from the population.

Interregional systems of communication allowed goods, technologies, and ideas to circulate, sometimes travelling thousands of miles. Interlocking networks of roads, trails, and sea lanes connected almost all parts of Afroeurasia and, in the Americas, extensive areas of Mesoamerica and the Andean mountain spine of South America. Among the ideas transmitted along these routes were new belief systems, which enabled peoples of differing languages and cultural traditions to share common standards of morality and trust.

From the Mediterranean to India

Patterns of Power and Trade



WHY STUDY INDO-MEDITERRANEAN POWER AND TRADE?

In the period from 1200 to 600 BCE, change accelerated. In the Indo-Mediterranean region the introduction of iron technology enabled not only armies to wield an ever more deadly array of weapons. It also gave farmers plows that could tackle hard soils resistant to wooden implements. Iron technology was certainly a factor in population growth during this period. Trade networks also expanded as Phoenician and Greek traders crisscrossed the Mediterranean exporting and importing goods, people, technology, and ideas. The resulting trade network tied into other trade networks that reached deep into northern Europe, Africa, and Asia. It was in this period that the Phoenicians began to use a shorthand system of writing that would eventually become our alphabet. On the political landscape, big states fell and rose, while small states multiplied. Aside from Egypt, none of the powers dominant in the Mediterranean in 1200 BCE were still dominant 600 years later. At the same time, two of the world's major religions—Judaism and Hinduism—took root.

OBJECTIVES

Upon completing this chapter, students will be able to:

1. Locate on a map the Iberian Peninsula, Anatolian Peninsula, Levant, Ganges, Tigris, Euphrates, Nile, Red Sea, Aegean Sea, Persian Gulf, Khyber Pass, Nineveh, Babylon, and Jerusalem.
2. Describe the impact that iron technology had on the Indo-Mediterranean region.
3. Identify the Phoenicians and describe the impact of their trade on the Indo-Mediterranean world.
4. Locate the Assyrian Empire, and describe the ways in which Assyrians expanded and controlled their empire.
5. Explain the relationship between the Phoenician trade network and the Assyrian Empire.
6. Define monotheism and its relationship to the Hebrews and the emergence of Judaism.
7. Define and explain the significance of the caste system in India as it emerged in the first millennium BCE.
8. List some similarities and differences in religious beliefs between Judaism and Hinduism.

TIME AND MATERIALS

If all six lessons are used, then approximately 3–4 hours of class time is needed. If the readings are done as homework, then the class time can be cut drastically. If only Lesson 1 is discussed, it can be covered in 30–45 minutes. Lessons 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6 include lessons and Student handouts that can be mixed and matched to fit instructional needs and time frame. Materials: Maps, student handouts, paper, and pencils.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Between 1200 and 600 BCE, there were great changes in the Indo-Mediterranean world. Before then, the Aegean was dominated by the Mycenaean. By 1200 BCE, Mycenaean power evaporated and the eastern end of the Mediterranean was ravaged by waves of “sea peoples” who, over the following 200 years or so, brought about the downfall of the Hittite Empire, ravaged cities along the Levantine coast (the coast of the Levant), and invaded Egypt. In the wake of these depredations, small states blossomed in the Levant, and Assyria began to spread its tentacles until it swallowed up all of the little states, reaching even into Egypt. Meanwhile, in northern India, which was beyond the reach of the aggressive Assyrians, agrarian kingdoms developed, notably along the Ganges River.

Trade, disrupted between 1200 and 1000 BCE, thereafter resumed and expanded.

The growing use of camels, horses, and mules for transport stimulated overland trade, while the Phoenician merchant seamen of the eastern Mediterranean extended their reach as far as

Spain, even to Britain. Into this increasingly interconnected world, the Assyrians muscled their way, creating, by 750 BCE, one of the largest empires the world had known.

During this period, iron technology spread. On one hand, it enabled farmers to increase their yields, which could then support ever larger populations. Larger yields meant crop surpluses, which could feed people who had specialized occupations rather than farming and which speeded the building of new cities across Indo-Mediterranea. On the other hand, iron technology also transformed the weapons and tactics of war. Iron was cheap and plentiful, and therefore it put military power in reach of more kings, queens, and aristocrats.

By 600 BCE the world was considerably more complex than it had been 600 years earlier. Except for Egypt, none of the major players were the same. Assyria's power had collapsed, and the political map of Indo-Mediterranea took on a new shape.



In this curriculum, Indo-Mediterranea refers to a belt of land and sea stretching from the northern Indian subcontinent (thus “Indo”) westward across the Mediterranean Sea basin (thus “Mediterranea”). The region cuts across (and its whole central part lies within) the Great Arid Zone, the expanse of arid or semi-arid land that runs from southwest to northeast across Afroeurasia. Indo-Mediterranea is defined by several unifying geographical and environmental characteristics that help explain why it became a focus of farming and later of agrarian societies. The region encompasses a fairly narrow range of latitude. The lands within it all share about the same lengths of day, night, and seasons throughout the solar year. This means that they also generally share similar ranges of annual temperature, plant populations, and animal habitats. No lofty mountain ranges or other natural obstacles impede communication and travel across the region. Think of the Mediterranean Sea, Black Sea, Red Sea, and Persian Gulf as “lakes” that are inside Indo-Mediterranea.

THREE ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

Humans and the Environment

Why did the spread of ironworking technology in the first millennium BCE likely contribute to increasing deforestation in various parts of Afroeurasia? Do mining industries today contribute to deforestation? If so, how might mining companies, governments, and environmental groups address the problem?

Humans and Other Humans

As of 2010, approximately 13.8 percent of the world's population identified with Hinduism. About .22 percent identified with Judaism (www.cia.gov). What long-term historical factors might account for the great differences in the numbers of people adhering to these two world faiths, which both emerged in the first millennium BCE?

Humans and Ideas

Examine the basic principles of alphabetic and logographic, character-based writing systems. How do these principles differ? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each? Why do you think neither alphabetic systems (e.g., the Roman alphabet we use) nor logographic systems (e.g., the Chinese system) have become entirely dominant in today's world?

KEY THEMES

This chapter addresses the following historical themes:

Key Theme 2: Economic Networks and Exchange

Key Theme 3: Uses and Abuses of Power

Key Theme 7: Spiritual Life and Moral Codes

CORRELATIONS TO NATIONAL HISTORY STANDARDS

National Standards for World History

Era Three: Classical Traditions, Major Religions, and Giant Empires, 1000 BCE–300 CE,
Standard 1: Innovation and change from 1000–600 BCE: horses, ships, iron, and monotheistic faith.

INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

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LESSON 1

Mapping the Period

Activities

1. If this is the only lesson used to cover Indo-Mediterranea from 1200 to 600 BCE:
 - a. Organize students into groups. Give each group Student Handout 1.1.1 and 1.1.2.
 - b. Have students compare the Student Handout 1.1.1 and 1.1.2 maps. Ask them to make a list of the major powers on Student Handout 1.1.1. Then make a list of the powers on Student Handout 1.1.2. Now ask them to brainstorm to come up with theories as to possible causes for the differences between the two lists. Tell them to write down their theories. Let groups compare theories and list them at the front of the class.
 - c. Distribute the Historical Context section above. Ask students to look at the list of theories at the front of the class and see which ones match the historical information in that essay.
 - d. Using the other the maps in this chapter (Student Handouts 1.4.1, 1.5.4, 1.5.5, and 1.6.2), discuss the background information as it relates to the maps.
 - e. Assessment: Ask students to write an essay explaining the changes in power in the Indo-Mediterranean region between 1200 and 600 BCE.
2. To use this lesson along with your text or with one or more of the other lessons in this chapter:
 - a. Organize students into groups. Give each group Student Handouts 1.1.1 and 1.1.2.
 - b. Have students compare the maps on Student Handout, 1.1.1 and 1.1.2. Ask them to make a list of the major powers on Student Handout 1.1.1. Then make a list of the powers on Student Handout 1.1.2. Ask students to brainstorm to come up with theories that might explain the differences between the two lists. Tell students to write down their theories. Let groups compare theories and list them at the front of the class.
 - c. Distribute the Historical Context section above. Have students look at the list of theories at the front of the class and see which ones match the historical facts.
 - d. Assessment: Have students write a brief paragraph explaining a historian's view of this period: 1400–1200 BCE.
 - e. Proceed to your textbook and/or to lessons 2–5 or any combination thereof.

Mediterranean Power, ca. 1400 BCE

