

1

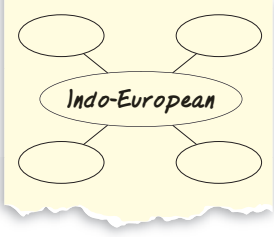
The Indo-Europeans

MAIN IDEA	WHY IT MATTERS NOW	TERMS & NAMES
INTERACTION WITH ENVIRONMENT Indo-Europeans migrated into Europe, India, and Southwest Asia and interacted with peoples living there.	Half the people living today speak languages that stem from the original Indo-European languages.	• Indo-Europeans • steppes • migration • Hittites • Anatolia • Aryans • Vedas • Brahmin • caste • *Mahabharata*

SETTING THE STAGE In India and in Mesopotamia, civilizations first developed along lush river valleys. Even as large cities such as Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa declined, agriculture and small urban communities flourished. These wealthy river valleys attracted nomadic tribes. These peoples may have left their own homelands because of warfare or changes in the environment.

Indo-Europeans Migrate

TAKING NOTES
Categorizing Use a web diagram to record some of the languages that stem from Indo-European.



The **Indo-Europeans** were a group of nomadic peoples who came from the **steppes**—dry grasslands that stretched north of the Caucasus (KAW•kuh•suhs). The Caucasus are the mountains between the Black and Caspian seas. These primarily pastoral people herded cattle, sheep, and goats. The Indo-Europeans also tamed horses and rode into battle in light, two-wheeled chariots. They lived in tribes that spoke forms of a language that we call Indo-European.

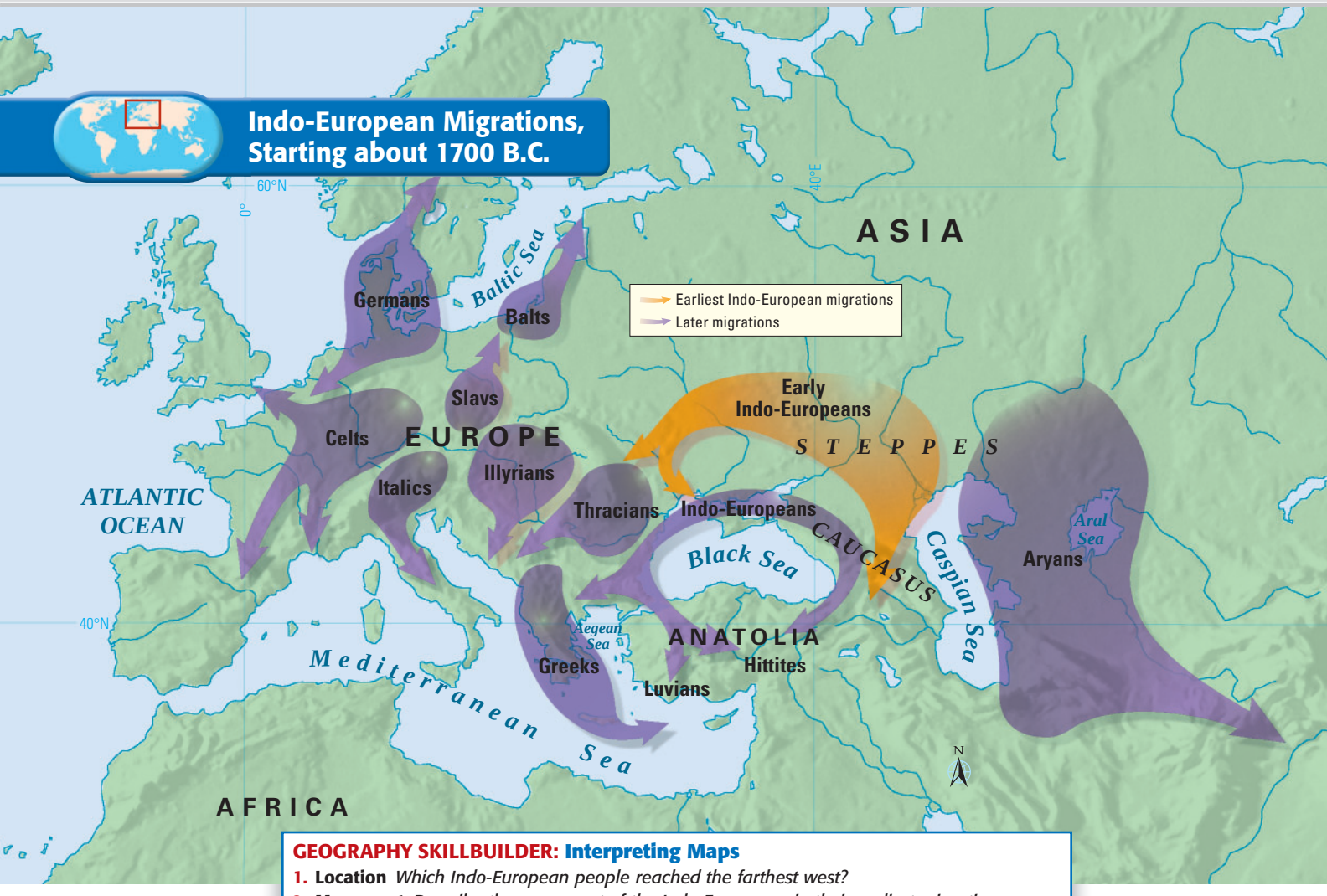
The Indo-European Language Family The languages of the Indo-Europeans were the ancestors of many of the modern languages of Europe, Southwest Asia, and South Asia. English, Spanish, Persian, and Hindi all trace their origins back to different forms of the original Indo-European language.

Historians can tell where Indo-European tribes settled by their languages. Some Slavic speakers moved north and west. Others, who spoke early Celtic, Germanic, and Italic languages, moved west through Europe. Speakers of Greek and Persian went south. The Aryans (AIR•ee•uhnz), who spoke an early form of Sanskrit, penetrated the mountain passes of the Hindu Kush and entered India.

Notice the similarities of words within the Indo-European family of languages.

Language Family Resemblances

English	Sanskrit	Persian	Spanish	German
mother	mātár	muhdáhr	madre	Mutter
father	pitár	puhdáhr	padre	Vater
daughter	duhitár	dukhtáhr	hija	Tochter
new	návas	now	nuevo	neu
six	sát	shahsh	seis	sechs



GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Maps

1. **Location** *Which Indo-European people reached the farthest west?*
2. **Movement** *Describe the movement of the Indo-Europeans in their earliest migrations.*

An Unexplained Migration No one knows why these people left their homelands in the steppes. The lands where their animals grazed may have dried up. Their human or animal population may have grown too large to feed. They may also have tried to escape from invaders, or from disease.

Whatever the reason, Indo-European nomads began to migrate outward in all directions between 1700 and 1200 B.C. These **migrations**, movements of a people from one region to another, happened in waves over a long period of time.

The Hittite Empire

By about 2000 B.C., one group of Indo-European speakers, the **Hittites**, occupied **Anatolia** (AN•uh•TOH•lee•uh), also called Asia Minor. Anatolia is a huge peninsula in modern-day Turkey that juts out into the Black and Mediterranean seas. Anatolia is a high, rocky plateau, rich in timber and agriculture. Nearby mountains hold important mineral deposits. Separate Hittite city-states came together to form an empire there in about 1650 B.C. The city of Hattusas (hah•TOO•sahs) was its capital.

The Hittite empire went on to dominate Southwest Asia for 450 years. Hittites occupied Babylon, the chief city in the Tigris-Euphrates Valley, and struggled with Egypt for control of northern Syria. Neither the Hittites nor the Egyptians were able to get the upper hand. So, the two peoples ended their conflicts by signing a peace treaty. They each pledged to help the other fight off future invaders.

Hittites Adopt and Adapt The Hittites used their own Indo-European language with one another. However, for international use, they adopted Akkadian, the

language of the Babylonians they had conquered. The Hittites borrowed ideas about literature, art, politics, and law from the Mesopotamians. The Hittites thus blended their own traditions with those of other, more advanced peoples.

Chariots and Iron Technology The Hittites excelled in the technology of war. They conquered an empire against Egyptian opposition—largely through their superior chariots and their iron weapons. The Hittite war chariot was light and easy to maneuver. The chariot had two wheels and a wooden frame covered with leather and was pulled by two or sometimes four horses. The Hittite chariot proved itself a superb fighting machine.



▲ This Hittite relief sculpture shows an archer in a chariot with his charioteer.

The Hittites used iron in their chariots, and they owed many of their military victories to the skill of their ironworkers. Ancient peoples had long known that iron was stronger than bronze. They also knew that it could hold a sharper edge. However, the process of purifying iron ore and working it into weapons and tools is complex. Around 1500 B.C., the Hittites were the first in Southwest Asia to work with iron and harden it into weapons of war. The raw materials they needed—iron ore and wood to make charcoal—were easily available to them in the mountains of Anatolia. Knowledge of iron technology traveled widely with the Hittites—in both their trade and conquests. (A)

MAIN IDEA

Recognizing Effects

(A) How did environmental features in Anatolia help the Hittites advance technologically?

Despite its military might, the powerful Hittite empire fell quite suddenly around the year 1190 B.C. As part of a great wave of invasions, tribes attacked from the north and burned the Hittite capital city.

Aryans Transform India

In about 1500 b.c., the Hittites were establishing themselves in Anatolia. At the same time, another Indo-European people, the **Aryans**, whose homeland was probably somewhere between the Caspian and Aral seas, crossed over the northwest mountain passes into the Indus River Valley of India. Though they left almost no archaeological record, their sacred literature, the **Vedas** (VAY•duhz), left a picture of Aryan life. The Vedas are four collections of prayers, magical spells, and instructions for performing rituals. The most important of the collections is the Rig Veda. The Rig Veda contains 1,028 hymns to Aryan gods. For many years, no written form of the Vedas existed. Instead, elders of one generation passed on this tradition orally to the next generation.

A Caste System Develops The Aryans ("the nobles" in their language) called the people they found in India *dasas* ("dark"), referring to the color of their skin. (*Dasa* eventually became the Aryan word for slave.) The Aryans differed from the *dasas* in many ways. Aryans were taller, lighter in skin color, and spoke a different language. Unlike the earlier inhabitants of the Indus Valley, the Aryans had not developed a writing system. They were also a pastoral people and counted their wealth in cows. The *dasas,* on the other hand, were town dwellers who lived in communities protected by walls.

When they first arrived in India, Aryans were divided into three social classes: **Brahmins** (priests), warriors, and peasants or traders. The class that an Aryan

Analyzing Art

The Aryan Caste System

According to Indian tradition, the four major castes emerged from the mouth, arms, legs, and feet of Purusha (the first human being). Purusha (at right) is identified with the creator god Brahma. The body part indicated the dignity and role of the caste that emerged from it.



SKILLBUILDER:
Interpreting Visual Sources
Making Inferences *Why might the caste of Brahmins (priests) have been associated with the mouth?*

belonged to determined his or her role in society. Non-Aryan laborers or craftspeople *(shudras)* formed a fourth group.

As the Aryans settled in India, they developed closer contacts with non-Aryans. To regulate those contacts, the Aryans made class restrictions more rigid. *Shudras* were laborers who did work that Aryans did not want to do. *Varna,* or skin color, was a distinguishing feature of this system. So the four major groups came to be known as the *varnas.* Later, in the 15th century A.D., explorers from Portugal encountered this social system and called these groups **castes** (kasts).

As time went on, the four basic castes gradually grew more complex—with hundreds of subdivisions. People were born into their caste for life. Their caste membership determined the work they did, the man or woman they could marry, and the people with whom they could eat. Cleanliness and purity became all-important. Those considered the most impure because of their work (butchers, gravediggers, collectors of trash) lived outside the caste structure. They were known as "untouchables," since even their touch endangered the ritual purity of others. B

MAIN IDEA
Making Inferences
B How were the more physical forms of work viewed by Aryans?

Aryan Kingdoms Arise Over the next few centuries, Aryans extended their settlements east, along the Ganges and Yamuna river valleys. (See map on page 65.) Progress was slow because of difficulties clearing the jungle for farming. This task grew easier when iron came into use in India about 1000 B.C.

When the Aryans first arrived in India, chiefs were elected by the entire tribe. Around 1000 B.C., however, minor kings who wanted to set up territorial kingdoms arose among the Aryans. They struggled with one another for land and power. Out of this strife emerged a major kingdom: Magadha. Under a series of ambitious kings, Magadha began expanding in the sixth century B.C. by taking over surrounding kingdoms. By the second century B.C., Magadha had expanded south to occupy almost all of the Indian subcontinent.

One of the great epics of India, the ***Mahabharata*** (muh•HAH•BAHR•ah•tuh), reflects the struggles that took place in India as the Aryans moved south. Elements of the *Mahabharata* indicate that a blending of cultures was taking place between

Aryan and non-Aryan peoples. For example, Krishna, a semi-divine hero of the *Mahabharata,* is described as dark-faced. This suggests that he is non-Aryan.

One of the most famous incidents in Indian literature occurs when the hero Krishna instructs a young warrior on the proper way to live, fight, and die:

PRIMARY SOURCE

He who thinks this Self [eternal spirit] to be a slayer, and he who thinks this Self to be slain, are both without discernment; the Soul slays not, neither is it slain. . . . But if you will not wage this lawful battle, then will you fail your own [caste] law and your honor, and incur sin. . . . The people will name you with dishonor; and to a man of fame dishonor is worse than death.

KRISHNA, speaking in the *Mahabharata*

The violence and confusion of the time led many to speculate about the place of the gods and human beings in the world. As a result, religion in India gradually changed. New religions were born, which you will read about in Section 2.



GEOGRAPHY SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Maps

1. **Location** *What waterway served as the focal point for the Aryan kingdom of Magadha?*
2. **Human-Environment Interaction** *Why do you think the Aryans migrated to the east of the Western Ghats?*

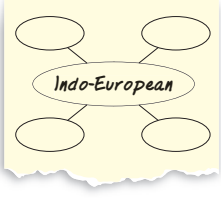
SECTION 1 ASSESSMENT

TERMS & NAMES 1. For each term or name, write a sentence explaining its significance.

• Indo-Europeans • steppes • migration • Hittites • Anatolia • Aryans • Vedas • Brahmin • caste • Mahabharata

USING YOUR NOTES

2. Why did so many languages originate from Indo-European roots?



MAIN IDEAS

3. What were some of the technological achievements of the Hittites?
4. What were some of the borrowings of the Hittites?
5. Where did the Aryans come from when they arrived in India?

CRITICAL THINKING & WRITING

6. **FORMING OPINIONS** What important contributions did the Aryans make to the culture and way of life in India in terms of religion, literature, and roles in society?
7. **DRAWING CONCLUSIONS** Look at the Hittite chariot on page 63. What made it an excellent fighting machine?
8. **COMPARING AND CONTRASTING** What were some of the differences between the Aryans and the *dasas* in India?
9. **WRITING ACTIVITY** INTERACTION WITH ENVIRONMENT Write an **expository essay** in which you discuss environmental reasons why the Indo-Europeans might have migrated.

INTEGRATED TECHNOLOGY **INTERNET ACTIVITY**

Use the Internet to create a **chart** that shows how a word in English is expressed in other Indo-European languages. Choose languages other than the ones listed on page 61 in this section.

INTERNET KEYWORD
words in Indo-European languages