

COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

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Conti, L., Easton, M., Saldais, M., Dumovic, V., & KostECKI, R. (2016). *Oxford big ideas: humanities and social sciences 7*. South Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

11.2 Landscape and climate

India's geography and climate have helped to shape its history. Like most major civilisations across the ancient world, the earliest settlements in India developed in river valleys. The Indus Valley, a vast flood plain, became the location of many of ancient India's earliest and largest communities (see Source 2). The Indus River lies in the north-west of the subcontinent, in modern-day Pakistan. It begins high in the Himalayas and flows south 3180 kilometres to the Arabian Sea. The Thar Desert lies to the south-east

of the Indus River, providing a natural barrier and protecting settlements from invaders. Further south, a large **plateau** (a large section of flat land) called the Deccan Plateau makes up the majority of India's southern region. The flat land of the Deccan Plateau is good for farming and animal grazing. The Deccan Plateau slopes down to the Indian Ocean in the west and the Bay of Bengal in the east. This extensive coastline was ideal for sea trade (see Source 1).

THE INDIAN SUBCONTINENT



Source 1

Source: Oxford University Press



Source 2 The fertile lands in the valley of the Indus River in India. It became the location for India's earliest civilisation, the Indus Valley (also known as the Harrapan) civilisation.

India is a warm to very hot place year-round. Temperatures as high as 49°C have been recorded in some places, especially between March and June. The heavy monsoon rains typically arrive in June, with rain then falling most of the time until September.

Most of the year's rainfall is during these few months, and India's agriculture relies on monsoon rains arriving before its fields and crops dry up in the hot, dry months leading up to the monsoon. During the monsoon months, farmers store water supplies so they can irrigate crops during the rest of the year.



Source 3 Part of the Himalayas poking through the clouds. The mountain range, which separates India from China to the north, contains 90 of the 100 highest peaks on Earth.

Check your learning 11.2

Remember and understand

- 1 What four important physical features shaped the history of the Indian subcontinent?

Apply and analyse

- 2 For each feature, state how it may have influenced decisions about early human settlements and lifestyles.
- 3 What problems would a severe monsoon have caused for an ancient settlement?

Evaluate and create

- 4 Ancient India was located about halfway between the ancient societies of the Mediterranean and Asian worlds, which was particularly significant once the Silk Road became a major trade route between East and West. Find out through Internet research what the 'Silk Road' was and create a map showing this route.