The Indus Valley civilization flourished from about 2500 to 1500 B.C., toward the end of which came several waves of invaders.

- The region is home to two major world religions, Hinduism and Buddhism, and over several centuries a series of invaders founded and conquered empires in South Asia.
- Muslim invaders founded the Sultanate of Delhi, and later the Mughal Empire.
- Over time, European companies set up trading posts along the coast, but eventually the English East India Company edged out rivals and built a colonial empire across South Asia.
- Resistance to British rule eventually led to the independence and partition of India and Pakistan, and India became one of the nonaligned nations, which adopted neutrality during the Cold War.
Chapter 28, Section 2
Physical Characteristics
Because of its size, South Asia is often referred to as a subcontinent.

- Deserts stretch across Afghanistan and Pakistan.
- Rain forests spread across the slopes of the Western Ghats along India’s west coast.
- The glacier-covered Himalayas, often referred to as the “rooftop of the world,” tower above the villages of Nepal.
Altitude and distance from the Indian Ocean affect climates in South Asia.

- Tropical wet covers parts of India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.
- Tropical wet and dry extends over parts of India and northern Sri Lanka.
- Humid subtropical stretches over northern India.
- Arid and Semiarid cover much of Pakistan and Afghanistan and parts of India.
- Highlands lies in a thin ribbon in the north along the Himalayas.
South Asia’s size and varied elevations and landforms give the region a wide range of ecosystems.

- Tropical grassland stretches over most of India.
- Tropical rain forest extends over Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and parts of southern and western India.
- Temperate grassland lies in most of Afghanistan and parts of Pakistan.
- Desert scrub covers parts of Pakistan and India.
- Vegetation varies with altitude in the Himalayas.
Chapter 28, Section 5
People and Cultures
South Asia is one of the most densely populated areas on earth.

- Cattle are commonplace sights in South Asia, and in Hinduism, cows are sacred and are not used for food.
- India has a population growth rate of 1.6 percent, which will lead to the doubling of the nation’s population in 36 years.
- Urban landscapes are a mixture of old and new building styles.
Agriculture dominates South Asia’s economy, but many people are leaving rural areas to live and work in cities.

- Subsistence farming is practiced through much of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.
- Nomadic herding is important in most of Afghanistan and parts of Pakistan and India.
- Manufacturing and trade are practiced in large urban areas in India and Pakistan.
India’s future economic growth is tied to telecommunications, but despite the large number of daily newspapers, many Indians are too poor to afford subscriptions and thus have limited access to information.

Pakistan is very poor, and power is in short supply; therefore many Pakistanis cannot afford radios or televisions, and those who have them are hard-pressed to use them.

Although Sri Lanka is economically better off than its neighbors, recurring civil wars weaken the economy, and over-expansion strains existing power and telecommunication facilities.

Bangladesh has an almost entirely rural population that cannot afford telecommunications technology and, like Pakistan, suffers frequent power shortages.