

## UNIT 3 ANCIENT HISTORY LESSON 1

### Summary

- In this lesson, students will read "Chandra Gupta II" (pp. 50-53) to learn about India's Gupta dynasty and how it flourished under this king.

### Social Studies Background

Chandra Gupta II, also called Vikramaditya, was one of the most powerful leaders of the Gupta dynasty. His reign, from 380- 415 A.D., is often referred to as the Golden Age of India.

As emperor, Chandra Gupta II inherited a large kingdom from his father. But he expanded his realm through both favorable military alliances and the forceful overtaking of neighboring territories. He even arranged for his daughter, Prabhavati, to marry Rudrasena II, king of Vakatakas. This alliance strengthened his influence to the south.

Culturally, India flourished under Chandra Gupta II's reign. People studied art, mathematics, philosophy, and astronomy. He promoted learning in all respects. He also supported a group of scholars known as the "nine gems." Among them was a poet named Kalidasa, who is widely considered to be one of the greatest Indian writers of all time.

Chandra Gupta II also encouraged religious tolerance. He and his family were Hindus, but there were many Buddhist monasteries throughout the empire.

### ENGAGE

Encourage students to flip through the article and turn and talk with a partner to discuss what they see. Invite students to ask questions or share what they already know about ancient India.

### EXPLORE

Instruct students to examine the images and read the captions on pages 50-53 of their Readers. **Ask:** *What do these photos and illustrations reveal about Chandra Gupta II and his empire?* (Possible response: He was a powerful leader. There were different types of religions. Education was a priority.) Brainstorm ideas about what it would have been like to have lived there at this time.

### EXPLAIN

Point out to students that Chandra Gupta II was king of India from 380 to 415 A.D. His time in power is regarded as a golden age in India's history.

**Ask:** *What does the term "golden age" imply?*

(Possible response: This was a time of enlightenment and great learning.) Have students turn and talk as they identify Chandra Gupta II's chief accomplishments. (He expanded the empire. He also promoted education, the arts, and religious tolerance.) Challenge students to give specific examples of each. Then encourage students to discuss how Chandra Gupta II's leadership impacted the country as a whole. (Overall, people were content. This made for a peaceful time during India's history.)

### ELABORATE

During his reign, Chandra Gupta II encouraged religious tolerance. Invite students to read the National Geographic article "Coexist Foundation" ([www.nationalgeographic.org/news/coexist-foundation/](http://www.nationalgeographic.org/news/coexist-foundation/)) to learn how people are working globally to build religious literacy and encourage cross-cultural understanding today.

### EVALUATE

Have students complete the **Content Assessment** for this lesson. Encourage them to share and

**CONTENT ASSESSMENT: Chandra Gupta II**

Describe how Chandra Gupta II influenced India's history in each area.

Military	
Culture	
Religion	

Record six more facts you learned about Chandra Gupta II.

1.  2.  3.  4.  5.  6.
--