

## INDIA

## Historical and Contemporary Perspectives, Teacher's Guide

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India: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives offers endless opportunities for educators to teach about India. Many colleagues often tell me they feel inadequately prepared to teach about South Asia. The intimidating complexity of the culture and historical past often keeps them from being creative with teaching methods and ideas. This new user-friendly curriculum guide allows educators to move beyond the textbook and to feel more confident in teaching about India.

As a high school teacher, I appreciate the background readings in the beginning of each unit of *Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, which are an excellent source of information for teacher preparation, as well as practical for high school students reading at grade level or beyond. Key terms, people, and events appear in bold text, and easy-to-understand definitions for these terms are printed in the side margin. This instant access to terms and definitions is a plus for busy teachers. The content presented in each section is detailed and informative, yet not overbearing. The authors are direct and straightforward.

Each unit's student-centered, engaging lesson plans offer varying lengths, objectives, and goals. The primary and secondary text readings offered are essential. I am impressed by the flexibility of the lesson plans that integrate both past and present. Lesson 6 of Chapter 3 on Religion and World View allows students to contemplate the concepts of *karma* and *samsara* as they read excerpts of the *Bhagavad Gita*, and then create their own karma report cards that reveal the good and bad deeds in their lives. This is an effective way to connect religious texts and readings to the students' current lifestyles.

Another excellent lesson plan is The Spread of Buddhism, Lesson Plan 25 of Chapter 7. Over the years I have taken students to the Art Institute of Chicago to show images of Buddha from different regions of Asia. This lesson, particularly Source 4, Buddhist Images, and the follow-up discussion questions, will facilitate a more concise and informative approach on my next trip. I have always found students to be eager to learn about Buddha and the origin of Buddhism. The lesson provides the tools they need to identify images of Buddha from different regions of Asia today, which may spark their interest to learn more about Buddhism beyond South Asia.

My final comment about *India: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* concerns the breadth of content covered in the manual. This comprehensive teaching resource on South Asia provides top quality lessons of past and present, and will be applicable for a variety of courses offered at public or private high schools, including World History AP, World Civilizations, Asian Studies, Contemporary Issues, Political Science AP, and Twentieth-Century Modern History.

As I read each unit I became more and more excited thinking about how I will integrate the content and lessons into my existing South Asian curriculum. I look forward to using many of the ideas, and my only regret is that I didn't have access to this academic resource earlier in my teaching career. ■

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**MUSEUM QUALITY EXHIBITS**



**"MY LIFE IS MY MESSAGE"**—40 panels (27 x 41) of photographs with captions on the life of Mahatma Gandhi.

**"INDIA—THE PEOPLE AND THEIR LAND"**—more than 100 color photographs taken over 40 years by Beatrice Pitney Lamb.

**"BEAUTY IN STONE"**—Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic architecture of India; color photographs by Beatrice Pitney Lamb.

Also—smaller portable exhibits (mailed via postal service), video cassettes (including biographical documentaries of Gandhi), and other resources available for loan.

Undergraduate-level CORRESPONDENCE COURSE on Gandhi (study materials from the Gujarat Vidyapith University in India founded in 1970).

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