Ancient India

1. Himalayas – the highest mountains in the world, in the north of India
2. Ganges – a main river in India, sacred to Hindus, used for cremation rites
3. Indus – a main river in early India (now in Pakistan), site of the earliest cities of India’s first civilization starting about 3,000 BC
4. South Asian Subcontinent – a land mass, smaller than a continent, that moved north on a tectonic plate, joining Asia 20-50 million years ago
5. Sanskrit – the oldest written language of India
6. caste – a social group that someone is born into and cannot change
7. monsoon – a strong wind that blows one direction in winter and the opposite direction in summer, producing heavy rains
8. theocracy – a government headed by religious leaders, ruled according to the doctrine of a particular religion
9. dynasty – a series of rulers from the same family
10. Hinduism – one of the world’s oldest religions, today the third largest; its members worship thousands of gods and goddesses – all part of Brahman
11. Mahabharata – a Hindu epic poem (the longest in any language at 88,000 verses) about a great war for control of an Indian kingdom about 1,000 BC
12. Ramayana – a Hindu epic poem which tells of the adventures of king Rama, whose queen, Sita, is kidnapped by the demon Ravana
13. reincarnation – the idea of passing through many lives to reach Brahman
14. karma – for Hindus, the consequences of how a person lives
15. dharma – the divine or natural law that indicates your duties in Hinduism
16. virtue – a positive trait or quality deemed to be morally good
17. Buddhism – the religion founded by Siddhartha Gautama around 500 BC
18. Four Noble Truths – the Buddhist belief that life is full of suffering because people desire things and self-satisfaction, includes the belief that to end suffering you need to stop desiring things
19. Eightfold Path – a Buddhist set of eight steps for enlightenment, including: give up worldly things, don’t harm others, tell the truth, don’t gossip, don’t kill, don’t steal, don’t live an unclean life, do rewarding work for good, use your mind to keep your senses in control, and practice meditation
20. nirvana – the Buddhist belief that if a person gives up all desires, he or she can reach a state of wisdom or enlightenment
21. bodhisattva – Buddhist word for enlightened people who postpone going to heaven, instead staying on Earth to help others and do good deeds
22. algorithm – a series of steps to solve a problem