

Strayer 5: People, Places and Things

**Ahura Mazda:** In Zoroastrianism, the good god who rules the world. (*pron.* ah-HOOR-ah MAHZ-dah)

**Angra Mainyu:** In Zoroastrianism, the evil god, engaged in a cosmic struggle with Ahura Mazda. (*pron.* AHN-grah MINE-you)

**Aristotle:** A Greek polymath philosopher (384–322 B.C.E.); student of Plato and teacher of Alexander the Great.

**atman:** The human soul, which in classic Hindu belief seeks union with *Brahman*. (*pron.* AHT-mahn)

**Ban Zhao:** A major female Confucian author of Han dynasty China (45–116 C.E.) whose works give insight into the implication of Confucian thinking for women. (*pron.* bahn joe)

**Bhagavad Gita:** A great Hindu epic text, part of the much larger *Mahabharata*, which affirms the performance of caste duties as a path to religious liberation. (*pron.* BAH-gah-vahd GHEE-tah)

**bhakti movement:** An immensely popular development in Hinduism, advocating intense devotion toward a particular deity. (*pron.* BAHK-tee)

**Brahman:** The “World Soul” or final reality in upanishadic Hindu belief. (*pron.* BRAH-mahn)

**Brahmins:** The priestly caste of India. (*pron.* BRAH-min)

**Buddhism:** The cultural/religious tradition first enunciated by Siddhartha Gautama (the Buddha).

**Confucianism:** The Chinese philosophy first enunciated by Confucius, advocating the moral example of superiors as the key element of social order.

**Confucius (Kong Fuzi):** The founder of Confucianism (551–479 B.C.E.); an aristocrat of northern China who proved to be the greatest influence on Chinese culture in its history. (*pron. of Chinese form of name:* kuhng fuh-tzuh)

**Constantine:** Roman emperor (r. 306–337 C.E.) whose conversion to Christianity paved the way for the triumph of Christianity in Europe.

**Daodejing:** The central text of Daoism; translated as *The Way and Its Power*. (*pron.* dow-day-jing)

**Daoism:** A Chinese philosophy/popular religion that advocates simplicity and understanding of the world of nature, founded by the legendary figure Laozi. (*pron.* dow-ism)

**filial piety:** The honoring of one’s ancestors and parents, a key element of Confucianism.

**Greek rationalism:** A secularizing system of scientific and philosophic thought that developed in classical Greece in the period 600 to 300 B.C.E.; it emphasized the power of education and human reason to understand the world in nonreligious terms.

**Hinduism:** A word derived from outsiders to describe the vast diversity of indigenous Indian religious traditions.

**Hippocrates:** A very influential Greek medical theorist (ca. 460–ca. 370 B.C.E.); regarded as the father of medicine.

**Isaiah:** One of the most important prophets of Judaism, whose teachings show the transformation of the religion in favor of compassion and social justice (eighth century B.C.E.).

**Jesus of Nazareth:** The prophet/god of Christianity (ca. 4 B.C.E.–ca. 30 C.E.).

**Judaism:** The monotheistic religion developed by the Hebrews, emphasizing a sole personal god (Yahweh) with concerns for social justice.

**karma:** In Hinduism, the determining factor of the level at which the individual is reincarnated, based on purity of action and fulfillment of duty in the prior existence.

**Laozi:** A legendary Chinese philosopher of the sixth century B.C.E.; regarded as the founder of Daoism. (*pron.* low-tzuh)

**Legalism:** A Chinese philosophy distinguished by an adherence to clear laws with vigorous punishments.

**Mahayana:** “Great Vehicle,” the popular development of Buddhism in the early centuries of the Common Era, which gives a much greater role to supernatural beings and proved to be more popular than original (Theravada) Buddhism. (*pron.* mah-hah-YAH-nah)

**moksha:** In Hindu belief, liberation from separate existence and union with Brahman. (*pron.* mokesuh)

**nirvana:** The end goal of Buddhism, in which individual identity is “extinguished” into a state of serenity and great compassion. (*pron.* neer-VAH-nah)

**Plato:** A disciple of Socrates whose *Dialogues* convey the teachings of his master while going beyond them to express Plato’s own philosophy; lived from 429 to 348 B.C.E.

**Pythagoras:** A major Greek philosopher (ca. 560–ca. 480 B.C.E.) who believed that an unchanging mathematical order underlies the apparent chaos of the world. (*pron.* pith-AG-or-us)

**Saint Paul:** The first great popularizer of Christianity (10–65 C.E.).

**Siddhartha Gautama (the Buddha):** The Indian prince turned ascetic (ca. 566–ca. 486 B.C.E.) who founded Buddhism. (*pron.* sidd-ARTH-uh gow- TAHM-uh)

**Socrates:** The first great Greek philosopher to turn rationalism toward questions of human existence (469–399 B.C.E.).

**Thales of Miletus:** A Greek natural philosopher (ca. 624–ca. 547 B.C.E.), noted for his application of reason to astronomy and for his questioning of the fundamental nature of the universe. (*usually pron.* THAY-lees)

**Theodosius:** Roman emperor (r. 379–395 C.E.) who made Christianity the official religion of the Roman state, banning all polytheistic rituals.

**Theravada:** “The Teaching of the Elders,” the early form of Buddhism according to which the Buddha was a wise teacher but not divine and which emphasizes practices rather than beliefs. (*pron.* THAIR-ah-VAH-dah)

**Upanishads:** Indian mystical and philosophical works, written between 800 and 400 B.C.E. (*pron.* ooh-PAHN-ish-ahds)

**Vedas:** The earliest religious texts of India, a collection of ancient poems, hymns, and rituals that were transmitted orally before being written down ca. 600 B.C.E. (*pron.* VAY-dahs)

**Warring States period:** Period in China from 403 to 221 B.C.E. that was typified by disorder and political chaos.

**yin and yang:** Expression of the Chinese belief in the unity of opposites.

**Zarathustra:** A Persian prophet, traditionally dated to the sixth or seventh century B.C.E. (but perhaps much older), who founded Zoroastrianism. (*pron.* zah-rah-THOOS-trah)

**Zhuangzi:** A Chinese philosopher (369–286 B.C.E.) who spelled out the teachings of Daoism. (*pron.* jwang-tzuh)

**Zoroastrianism:** Persian monotheistic religion founded by the prophet Zarathustra. (*pron.* zor-oh-AST-ree-an-ism)