

Note to teachers:

The following set of lesson plans as been prepared at the request of Hinduism Today magazine to assist with the teaching of it series on Hindu history.

Teachers are invited to improve upon the plans and offer suggestions to Arumugaswami, managing editor of Hinduism Today, at [ar@hindu.org](mailto:ar@hindu.org).

Not all web sites listed in the plans have been thoroughly vetted, so teachers should explore them first.

The plans are preceded by an explanation of the teaching method employed in their creation.

Hinduism Chapter One  
Lesson Plan #1 – Ancient India

**Learning Objectives:** Students will describe the geography of the Indian subcontinent and explain why ancient Indians migrated from the Indus and Sarasvati Valleys to the Gangetic Plain.

**California State Standards:**

Historical and Social Sciences Analysis Skills: Chronological and Spatial Thinking

**3.** Students use a variety of maps and documents to identify physical and cultural features of neighborhoods, cities, states, and countries and to explain the historical migration of people, expansion and disintegration of empires, and the growth of economic systems.

World History and Geography: Ancient Civilizations

**6.5.1** Locate and describe the major river systems and discuss the physical setting that supported the rise of the early civilizations of India.

**Materials:** Blackboard / Chart Paper  
Chalk / Markers  
Map Worksheet (handout)  
Colored Pencils / Crayons / Markers (brown, yellow, green, & blue)  
Maps of the Indian Subcontinent (either from social studies textbook, on overhead or digital projector)

**Do Now:** 1. Why do you think civilizations began in river valleys? What did people need from the rivers? Why?  
(5 mins)

2. Read “What if YOU lived then” on page I-2. What happened to the Sarasvati River? How would you feel about the long journey?

**Whole Group Instruction (15 mins):** Review student responses to the Do Now. The students should grasp that agriculture depends on an abundant regular supply of fresh water. You may want to briefly describe how river valleys are dependent on melt water from mountain snows and how silt in floodwaters provides nutrients to crops. (5 mins)

Display a physical map of the Indian subcontinent (some examples are in the resources below). Show where the Indus River Valley is, and ask students where it gets its water from (the melting snow of the Himalaya and Hindu Kush). You can explain that “Himalaya” means “storehouse of snow”. (3 mins)

Read the first paragraph in the section “Understanding Ancient Indian History” on page I-2. You may need to review how to convert from “B.C.E.” to years before present. Discuss what might have caused the Sarasvati River to dry up (earthquakes, sandstorms, and landslides could have diverted its waters elsewhere; climactic change could have completely melted the glaciers that fed the river) (7 mins).

**Independent Work (15 mins):** Distribute map worksheets and colored pencils or crayons. Have students follow the directions on the worksheet to label and color the maps and draw an arrow indicating the migration routes. Depending on the level of the

Hinduism Chapter One  
Lesson Plan #1 – Ancient India

class and the quality of the maps you can acquire, you may want to scaffold the beginning this assignment by labeling some of the geographic features together. When students finish the directions, have them write an explanation of what the arrow represents and why the ancient inhabitants of the Indus-Sarasvati civilization migrated to the Gangetic Plain. Have the homework questions on the board in case any students finish the entire assignment early.

**Summary (7 mins):** Review the correct answers for the worksheet, using a map on the board, drawn on chart paper, or projected on a screen. Inform the students that the Gangetic Plain was already inhabited by a number of tribes. Ask the students what they think might have happened when the people from the Indus-Sarasvati civilization began to move into the area.

**Homework:** How are city people different from people who live in small villages? What do you think happened when the people from the great cities of the Indus-Sarasvati civilization migrated to the Gangetic Plain?

**Formal Assessment:** Spot-check the answers to the Do Now. Collect the map worksheets, and assess students' explanations of the migration.

**Informal Assessment:** Participation during questioning and discussion. Cooperation with partner or group during independent work.

**Resources:**

[http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/thumb/7/7a/India\\_Geographic\\_Map.jpg/622px-India\\_Geographic\\_Map.jpg](http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/thumb/7/7a/India_Geographic_Map.jpg/622px-India_Geographic_Map.jpg) -- detailed physical & political map of the subcontinent

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:Indiahills.png> -- simplified physical map of India

<http://www.gsbkerala.com/saraswatih.htm> -- information on the Sarasvati River and its decline

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Indian Geography



Label: Himalaya Mountains  
Hindu Kush  
Western Ghats  
Eastern Ghats

Indus River  
Ganges River  
Deccan Plateau  
Thar Desert

Color:

Mountains & Plateaus – Brown  
River Valleys & Islands – Green

Rivers – Blue  
Deserts – Yellow

Draw: arrow from Indus River Valley to the Ganges River

Explain: Why did people migrate from the cities of the Indus-Sarasvati civilization to the Gangetic Plain?

Hinduism Chapter One  
Lesson Plan #2 – Ancient Hinduism

**Learning Objective:** Students will describe the archaeological, textual, and genetic evidence that the inhabitants of the Indus-Sarasvati civilization developed important religious practices and beliefs that would evolve into Hinduism.

**California State Standards:**

English Language Arts: Reading

- 1.4 Monitor expository text for unknown words or words with novel meanings by using word, sentence, and paragraph clues to determine meaning.
- 2.3 Connect and clarify main ideas by identifying their relationships to other sources and related topics.
- 2.4 Clarify an understanding of texts by creating outlines, logical notes, summaries, or reports.

Historical and Social Sciences Analysis Skills: Historical Interpretation

5. Students recognize that interpretations of history are subject to change as new information is uncovered.

Visual and Performing Arts: Visual Arts

5.2 Research how traditional characters (such as the trickster) found in a variety of cultures past and present are represented in illustrations.

**Hinduism Today's Teaching Standards:**

- 1. Explain the similarities between Indus-Sarasvati civilization and later Hindu culture.
- 2. Discuss why the Aryan Invasion theory has been disputed by many scholars.

**Materials:** Blackboard / Chart Paper  
Chalk / Markers  
Text (pp. 2-4)  
Proto-Siva Worksheet (handout)

**Do Now:** 1. What are three ways we can learn about people who lived thousands of years ago?  
**(2 mins)**

**Whole Group Instruction (15 mins):** Review Do Now. Discuss the methods of archaeology (the study of human history and prehistory through excavation and analysis of artifacts and other physical remains). Important artifacts include tools, pottery, and art. Among literate cultures, texts are important ways of learning about ancient peoples. Recently, analysis of DNA and RNA has allowed scientists to study ancient phenomena such as migration and diet based on biological samples such as bone and hair. Explain that our theories about the past are based on evidence, and, like the sciences, as new evidence comes to light, our theories might change.

Explain that current evidence indicates that beliefs and practices of Hinduism, the religion of India, began with the Indus-Sarasvati civilization. This contradicts older theories, which may appear in older textbooks. In this text, there is archaeological, textual, and genetic evidence that supports the newer theory. Read the sections “The

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Religion of the Indus-Sarasvati People,” “The Vedas,” and “The Aryan Invasion Theory” on pages 2 -4 as a class or in small groups. In each section, question students where is the evidence that Hindu religion goes back to the Indus-Sarasvati civilization.

- 1) **Archaeological Evidence:** Many artifacts from that civilization bear connection to Hindu beliefs and practices [depictions of deities (Siva), ceremonies, symbols (swastika, sindur powder in hair) and practices (meditation, greeting)]
- 2) **Textual Evidence:** The Vedas, the central texts of Hinduism, describe the Sarasvati as a powerful river, meaning that they date to at least 2000 B.C.E. (when that river dried up) and are tied to the Indus-Sarasvati area.
- 3) **Genetic Evidence:** Genetic analysis of Indians indicate that there was no significant influx of foreigners after about 6000 B.C.E.

Also, as you go through this section, be sure to cover the important vocabulary words:

**Vedas** – the most ancient holy texts in Hinduism; originally chanted, not written down

**Sanskrit** – the language of the Vedas and a holy language for Hindus; for thousands of years, the common language of educated Indians

**Spiraling:** Distribute Proto-Siva worksheets. Explain that the first image is of a seal excavated from Mohenjo-Daro, a city in the Indus-Sarasvati civilization that was one of the greatest cities in the world at the time, if not the greatest. It was built along an organized grid system, and its strong bricks allowed its buildings to be more than one-story tall. The inhabitants had rooms set aside for bathing, and their waste water drained to a sewer system that ran below the streets. In addition to organized water mains, it appears there was garbage collection. These innovations in urban planning and waste management may have been unique at the time of its construction 4500 years ago.

**Independent Work (15 mins):**

Have students partner up or work in small groups. While students answer questions, circulate, assess student learning, and give assistance as needed. Have the homework up on the board, so if students finish the worksheet early, they can get started on the homework questions.

1. (clockwise from top left): elephant, rhinoceros, buffalo/bull, goat/deer, tiger
2. The tiger is the largest of the animals. Its stripes resemble those of the human figure.
3. The horns show some connection between the figure and the bull or buffalo. It could mean that the figure possesses the strength of that animal, or that he is in touch with or commands the animals. Marshall called him Siva Pashupati, meaning Siva, Lord of the Animals/Cattle
4. Similarities include the connection with the animal world, especially the tiger and the bull, the trident, the necklaces and armbands, and his yogic posture.
5. As long as the student justifies their answer, yes or no can be acceptable.

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Lesson Plan #2 – Ancient Hinduism

**Summary (10 mins):** Review the correct answers for the worksheet, on the board or chart paper, or projected on a screen. Review student responses to Homework from Lesson 1-1. Answers may vary, but try to stress that people in the country are generally more involved with the natural world, while people in the city may have more complex cultural developments.

**Homework:** What is the Aryan Invasion theory? Does modern evidence support or deny the Aryan Invasion theory? Give an example. What is some evidence that the Rig Veda comes from the Indus-Sarasvati civilization and not from Aryan invaders?

**Formal Assessment:** Spot-check the answers to the Do Now and the Homework. Collect the proto-Siva worksheets, and assess student responses.

**Informal Assessment:** Participation in questioning, discussion and independent work.

**Resources:**

<http://www.harappa.com/har/har0.html> -- comprehensive site with information, images, and links on the Indus-Sarasvati civilization. Get started by clicking on the Introduction (4 page summary).

[http://www.jcu.edu/faculty/nietupski/rl251/Indus\\_civilization.htm](http://www.jcu.edu/faculty/nietupski/rl251/Indus_civilization.htm) -- story about archaeological dig at Indus-Sarasvati site

<http://sarasvati.tripod.com/veda.htm> -- audio samples of Vedic chanting

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Archaeological Evidence of Ancient Hinduism



This seal, excavated at Mohenjo-Daro by archaeologist John Marshall in the 1920s, was made before 2000 B.C.E.

1. What animals do you see surrounding the figure on the left?

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2. The tiger seems especially important in this image. How?

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3. Why do you think this figure has a headdress that resembles the horns of the bull or buffalo?

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4. What similarities do you see between the 4000-year-old image above and the modern images?

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5. John Marshall believed the seal he found was an early image of "proto-Siva." Do you agree? Why or why not?

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Modern illustrations of Siva





## Hinduism Chapter One

### Lesson Plan #3 – The Development of Ancient Indian Culture

**Learning Objective:** Students will describe the development of early Hinduism and the caste system. Students will compare life in ancient India with life today.

#### **California State Standards:**

English Language Arts: Reading

**1.4** Monitor expository text for unknown word or words with novel meanings by using word, sentence, and paragraph clues to determine meaning.

**2.3** Connect and clarify main ideas by identifying their relationships to other sources and related topics.

English Language Arts: Writing

**2.2** Write expository compositions (e.g., description, explanation; comparison and contrast, problem and solution): state the thesis or purpose; explain the situation; follow an organizational pattern appropriate to the type of composition; offer persuasive evidence to validate arguments and conclusions as needed.

Historical and Social Sciences Analysis Skills: Historical Interpretation

**3.** Students explain the sources of historical continuity and how the combination of ideas and events explains the emergence of new patterns.

World History and Geography: Ancient Civilizations

**6.5.4** Outline the social structure of the caste system.

#### **Hinduism Today's Teaching Standards:**

**3.** Discuss the social and political system and advancement of science and culture.

**4.** Explain the development of religion in India between 1000 B.C.E and 500 C.E.

**Materials:** Blackboard / Chart Paper  
Chalk / Markers  
Caste Worksheet (handout)

**Do Now (2 mins):** We learned that the people of the Indus-Sarasvati civilization moved south and east into the plains around the Ganga River. Other people, with different cultures, were already living in that area. What do you think happened to their cultures?

**Whole Group Instruction (12 mins):** Review Do Now. Discuss the phenomenon of creole cultures and “cultural borrowing.” A good example might be reggaeton music, which began in Panama, where musical styles from Jamaica (reggae) and the U.S. (hip-hop) mixed with their own Latin styles of music. From Panama, it spread into Latin communities throughout the Caribbean and Central America until 2004, when it became very popular in the U.S., largely due to Latino communities here. Take a couple examples from other students of creolization & cultural borrowing. (Other examples: the Haitian Creole language, with elements of French, Spanish, Portuguese and many African languages; Japanese baseball, which allows tie games; and “Chinese-Mexican” restaurants that fry their taco fillings in woks). This whole discussion should not take more than 5-7 minutes, and chart student responses on the board.

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Lesson Plan #3 – The Development of Ancient Indian Culture

Read the section “Hinduism Emerges” (p. I-4) as a shared reading. As you read this section and the following section, you may want to put the vocabulary words (**continuity**, **hereditary**, **varna**, **jati**) on the board. Make clear that Hinduism, the shared religious culture of the subcontinent by 600 B.C.E., was in **continuity** with elements of the Indus-Sarasvati religion, the religions of the tribal peoples of central India, and the Dravidian people of the south. The first Hindu temples were built at this time.

**Scaffolding (5 mins.)** – Review vocabulary, and how to find their definitions.

**Continuity** and **hereditary** are defined in the margin of the text, but to define **varna** and **jati** we must read the section called “Indian Society.” Read the first five sentences as a class (through the sentence, “The system provided order and stability to society.”). Point out that **varna** appears in italics because it’s a word from another language (Sanskrit). Then ask students to develop a definition of **varna**. Write answers on the board and keep pushing them for more until the answer approximates the example below:

**Varna** – one of India’s four hereditary classes: priest, warrior, merchant, and worker

**Independent Work (15 mins):**

Have students partner up or work in small groups. While students answer questions, circulate, assess student learning, and give assistance as needed. Question #5 on the back of the worksheet can be completed for homework, as most students will not have time to sufficiently answer it in class.

Sample Answers:

1.

Purusa’s Body	Varna	Occupation
Mouth	Brahman	Priests
Arms	Rajanaya / Ksatriya	Warriors
Thighs	Vaisya	Merchants
Feet	Sudra	Workers

- Varnas* are broad social classes, where *jatis* are sub-sections. There are only four *varnas*, but there are hundreds of *jatis*. *Varnas* were developed first. *Varnas* are hereditary, but people could change caste or start new ones.
- Women are among India’s foremost political and religious leaders. Hinduism worships God in female forms. Women had fewer legal responsibilities, so they faced lighter punishments for crimes and paid fewer taxes. There was equal participation in religious ceremonies and celebrations. Some women were highly educated and composed religious texts, including some of the Vedic hymns.
- Mathematics – established modern numerals, including zero and decimals.  
Science – Astronomy (Earth goes around sun, length of a solar year)  
Medicine – Complex surgeries
- Some things they should include in their answers:
  - Like American culture, the culture of Ancient India was influenced by a diverse populace (Indo-Sarasvati, tribal, and Dravidian influences)

## Hinduism Chapter One

### Lesson Plan #3 – The Development of Ancient Indian Culture

- b. Social classes in India were hereditary, and thus different from social class in America, which depends on economic status and is flexible.
- c. We do not live in a society with hereditary occupations like the *jati*.
- d. While some women in ancient India had the opportunities for education, education is available to all women today.
- e. Much like ancient India, America is one of the world leaders in advancements in scientific and medical technologies today.

**Summary (8 mins):** Review the correct answers for worksheet questions 1-4. Assess if students will be able to answer question 5 at home, and help students to begin thinking about the subquestions as needed.

**Homework:** Complete Question #5. (Compare and contrast what you've learned about ancient Indian society with life in America today.) You may want to ask students to write a specific format (i.e. one paragraph of similarities and one paragraph of differences), or present it as a more open-ended assignment.

**Formal Assessment:** Spot-check the answers to the Do Now, definitions to the vocabulary words, and answers to questions 1-4. When you collect the homework, you can assess it according to the following rubric:

	4	3	2	1
Answered Question (Compare & Contrast)	Several (4-5) clear examples of similarities & differences	A few (2-3) examples of similarities & differences	An example of a similarity or a difference	Did not compare and contrast
Content & Supporting Details	Strongly supported claims with examples from text and their own lives	Used some examples from text and their own lives to support their claims	Some examples either from text or their own lives, but did not support their claims	No examples were used. Claims, if made, were unsupported.
Writing Mechanics	Few, if any, errors in spelling, grammatical or punctuation. Errors do not interfere with comprehension of writing.	Some errors in spelling, grammatical or punctuation. Errors do not interfere with comprehension of writing.	Several errors in spelling, grammatical or punctuation. Errors may interfere with comprehension of writing.	Serious errors in spelling, grammatical or punctuation. Errors greatly interfere with comprehension of writing.
Focus and Organization	Consistent and organized with good use of transitions	Mostly consistent and organized with some use of transitions	Inconsistent and/or unorganized with awkward transitions.	Lacks consistency, organization, and transitions

Hinduism Chapter One  
Lesson Plan #3 – The Development of Ancient Indian Culture

**Informal Assessment:** Participation in questioning, discussion and independent work.

**Resources:**

<http://teachers.eusd.k12.ca.us/mguerena/castewebquest/index.htm>

WebQuest on caste, but the links are not very good (except for the one listed below) – some no longer work, and one discusses the history of caste based on the discredited Aryan invasion theory. This said, in the Introduction page, there is a simplified illustration of Purusa showing how the four *varnas* came from his body

<http://www.csuchico.edu/~cheinz/syllabi/asst001/spring98/india.htm>

Site with brief explanation of *varna* and *jatis* photos of people from each *varna*.

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women\\_in\\_India#Ancient\\_India](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Women_in_India#Ancient_India)

[http://www.thisismyindia.com/ancient\\_india/woman-in-ancient-india.html](http://www.thisismyindia.com/ancient_india/woman-in-ancient-india.html)

Further information on the high status of women in ancient India. Claims that it was in the Gupta period when women became regarded as property.

<http://www.crystalinks.com/indiascience.html>

Overview of the scientific advancements of ancient India. This topic will be dealt with in more depth in Chapter 2-2.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

The Development of Indian Culture  
1000 B.C.E – 6<sup>th</sup> century C.E.

**Base your answers to questions 1--3 on the section in your text called “Indian Society” (pp. I-4 to I-5)**

**1.** A *varna* is one of the four hereditary social classes from ancient India. The *varna* system is more often called “the caste system.” The Sanskrit word for caste is *jati*. What are some differences between *varna* (class) and *jati* (caste)?

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**2.** List three examples that demonstrate how women in India were held in high regard.

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**3.** Give examples of advancements made in ancient India that are still important today.

**Mathematics:**

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**Science:**

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**Medicine:**

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**4.** Compare and contrast what you’ve learned about ancient Indian society with life in America today. You should discuss the social class system, treatment of women, and advancements in technology. Be sure to give examples. Some questions you might want to consider:

- Is our culture a blend of cultures from different regions?
- Do we live in a society with social classes?
- Are occupations today hereditary?
- What is different about women’s lives today?
- Does our society make advancements in math, science, and medicine?

## Hinduism Chapter One

### Lesson Plan #4 – Hindu Beliefs – God, Gods, and Goddesses

**Learning Objective:** Students will explain how Hindu beliefs and practices illustrate the idea that, “Truth is one, paths are many.”

#### **California State Standards:**

English Language Arts: Reading

**1.4** Monitor expository text for unknown words or words with novel meanings by using word, sentence, and paragraph clues to determine meaning.

**2.4** Clarify an understanding of texts by creating outlines, logical notes, summaries, or reports.

**2.7** Make reasonable assertions about a text through accurate, supporting citations.

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**6.5.7** Discuss important aesthetic and intellectual traditions (e.g., Sanskrit literature, including the Bhagavad Gita; medicine; metallurgy; and mathematics, including Hindu-Arabic numerals and the zero).

#### **Hinduism Today’s Teaching Standards:**

**5.** Explain the basic Hindu beliefs regarding God, the Gods and Goddesses, dharma, karma, and reincarnation. Describe basic Hindu practices.

**6.** Discuss the Hindu principles of nonviolence and religious tolerance.

**Materials:** Blackboard / Chart Paper  
Chalk / Markers  
Hindu Beliefs Worksheet (handout)  
Text (pp. I-6 to I-8)

**Vocabulary:** Sanatana Dharma (p. I-6)  
Brahman (p. I-6)  
deva (p. I-7)  
puja (p. I-7)

**Do Now (2 mins):** Is a drop of water the same thing as the entire ocean? Explain.

**Whole Group Instruction (10 mins):** Take student responses. On one hand, the drop and the ocean are the same thing – water. On the other hand, they are very different, as one is tiny and the other is enormous. Explain that this is one common way that Hindus understand the relationship between God and the universe. Hindus believe that each of us has a soul, called *atman*. A famous Hindu philosopher (Adi Shankara) wrote that each of our souls contains a piece of God, just like the drops of water each contain a tiny amount of the ocean. The quest in Hinduism can be understood as the search for this piece of God inside each of us.

As a class, read the section called “Building Background” on the top of page I-6. Ask student the meaning of the phrase “Truth is one, paths are many.” Emphasize the religious tolerance that is central to this Hindu belief – that there is no one correct way to approach God.

## Hinduism Chapter One

### Lesson Plan #4 – Hindu Beliefs – God, Gods, and Goddesses

**Scaffolding (5 mins.)** – Before you start reading the next section, tell the students that this chapter has a lot of unfamiliar vocabulary words. Some of the words are defined in the sidebar titled “Academic Vocabulary” on page I-7, and other words are defined right in the text.

Read the first paragraph in the next section, “Religion Permeates the Hindu’s Daily Life” as a shared reading with the class. After reading the third sentence, point out the unfamiliar word, “subordinate.” Ask the class where they could find the definition of that word. Either you or a student should point out that its definition (“lower in rank; less important”) is in the sidebar. Continue reading the paragraph as a class. When you get to the vocabulary term *Sanatana Dharma*, ask students what the definition of that term is. (The answer, “the original Sanskrit name for Hinduism, meaning ‘eternal religion’,” is right in the text.)

**Independent Work (15 mins):** Distribute the worksheet. Tell students that the answers to questions 1-5 are right in the text, and that the last two questions require their own thought. Also tell them that some of the answers are in the section on the bottom of I-7 called “One Supreme God and Many Gods and Goddesses.” Have students work independently or with a partner to read the rest of this section and answer the questions on the worksheet. Circulate during their work period to help students having difficulty and question their understanding of the text.

Sample Answers:

1. *Sanatana Dharma*: the original Sanskrit name for Hinduism, meaning “eternal religion”  
*Brahman*: the Supreme God of Hinduism  
*deva*: Sanskrit term for a Hindu God or Goddess meaning “shining one”  
*puja*: a ritual or ceremony where Hindus worship their Gods and Goddesses with bells, fire, chanting, and presenting offerings at temples and shrines.
2. Brahman is transcendent because God exists beyond the physical universe, but Brahman is immanent because His divine form is present throughout all nature and humanity. [You can tell students to remember it because “trans-“ can mean “trans-“ has lots of meanings related to difference. To “transform” literally means change shape, “transportation” literally means bringing something from one place to another, “Transcend” literally means to climb outside of this world. *Immanent* means *in* this world.]
3. The four major branches of Hinduism are Saiva, Shakta, Vaishnava, and Smarta. They are different because they have different ideas of the Supreme God, and they call Brahman by different names. They are similar because, no matter what name they give God, they all believe in Brahman. Also many Hindus from all four branches worship *devas* by performing *puja* at temples and shrines.

## Hinduism Chapter One

### Lesson Plan #4 – Hindu Beliefs – God, Gods, and Goddesses

4. Before starting a new project, a Hindu might pray to Ganesha, Lord of Obstacles. Hindus pray to Ganesha to remove any obstacles blocking their way, to make sure their project will be a success. Hindus who are in the Saiva, Shakta, or Vaishnava traditions would not consider Ganesha to be the Supreme God, but a *deva*. A Hindu in the Smarta tradition might consider Ganesha to be the Supreme God.
5. Vaishnava; Lord Vishnu; all the other Gods and Goddesses within himself
6. Hindus worship in temples with a ceremony called *puja*. In *puja*, priests guide the worship of God, Gods, and Goddesses with sacred rituals that use bells, fire, chanting, and offerings of flowers and incense. Other ways Hindus might worship include repeating the name of God, singing, and meditation.

**Summary (10 mins):** After completing your spot-check of the independent work, review the correct answers for worksheet questions. Spend the last couple of minutes discussing how Hindu beliefs and practices illustrate the idea that, “Truth is one, paths are many.”

**Homework:** How do Hindu beliefs and practices illustrate the idea that, “Truth is one, paths are many”? Give examples from what we learned today.

**Formal Assessment:** Spot-check the answers to the Do Now, and the worksheets (you may want to let students to take them home to help them with their homework).

**Informal Assessment:** Participation in questioning, discussion and independent work. Cooperation with their partner if you have the students work in pairs.

#### **Resources:**

<http://www.hinduism.fsnet.co.uk/>

This is an excellent Hindu website for kids. The section titled Primary Hinduism would be good for students at lower reading levels. The relevant sections for this lesson are called “Thinking of God” and “Hindu Practices.” The section titled Secondary Hinduism would be good for students at higher reading levels. The section called “Thinking of God” also has good images of and information about the different Hindu Gods and Goddesses.

<http://tinyurl.com/3qvjvr>

Website for kids about Hindu beliefs, this link goes straight to the section explaining how Brahman also encompasses Atman and all of the Gods and Goddesses.

[http://www.netglimse.com/holidays/vasant\\_panchami/saraswati\\_puja\\_in\\_bengal.shtml](http://www.netglimse.com/holidays/vasant_panchami/saraswati_puja_in_bengal.shtml)

Website with lots of photos and information about the puja to Sarasvati, Goddess of Education, in West Bengal. Relevant, and maybe interesting to students.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pqInuR9MQuo>



## Hinduism Chapter One

### Lesson Plan #4 – Hindu Beliefs – God, Gods, and Goddesses

A short video of another Sarasvati Puja. There are a couple of misspellings in the subtitles, but it should be interesting for students. You see the Brahmin priest leading the congregants in reciting Sanskrit chants, and the distribution of the flowers and food that have been offered to Sarasvati. After it has been accepted by Sarasvati as an offering, the offering (*prasad*) is infused with her power, and students can benefit from eating the food or wearing the flowers.

<http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-2388554967783510522>

A video of a *puja* performed by children at a Hindu temple in Illinois.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Hindu Beliefs – God, Gods, & Goddesses

1. Define the vocabulary words:

*Sanatana Dharma*: \_\_\_\_\_

*Brahman*: \_\_\_\_\_

*deva*: \_\_\_\_\_

*puja*: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Explain the Hindu belief that Brahman is both transcendent & immanent.

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3. What are the four major branches of Hinduism? How are they different from each other? How are they similar?

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4. To whom might a Hindu pray before beginning a new project? Why? Is this God considered to be the same as the Supreme God? What type of Hindu might consider this God to be the Supreme God?

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5. Fill in the blanks:

In the \_\_\_\_\_ tradition, Lord Krishna is one of the two most important avatars of \_\_\_\_\_. The illustration from the Bhagavad Gita shows Krishna containing \_\_\_\_\_.

6. How do Hindus worship in temples? What are other ways they worship God?

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## Hinduism Chapter One

### Lesson Plan #5 – Hindu Beliefs – *Dharma*, *Ahimsa*, *Karma*, and Reincarnation

**Learning Objectives:** Students will create stories that demonstrate the basic Hindu principles of *dharma*, *ahimsa*, *karma* and reincarnation.

#### **California State Standards:**

English Language Arts: Reading

**1.3** Recognize the origins and meanings of frequently used foreign words in English and use these words accurately in speaking and writing.

**1.4** Monitor expository text for unknown words or words with novel meanings by using word, sentence, and paragraph clues to determine meaning.

**2.3** Connect and clarify main ideas by identifying their relationships to other sources and related topics.

**2.4** Clarify an understanding of texts by creating outlines, logical notes, summaries, or reports.

English Language Arts: Writing

**2.1** Write narratives:

Write narrative texts of at least 500 to 700 words. Student writing demonstrates a command of standard American English and the research, organizational, and drafting strategies outlined in Writing Standard 1.0.

#### **Hinduism Today’s Teaching Standards:**

**5.** Explain the basic Hindu beliefs regarding God, the Gods and Goddesses, *dharma*, *karma*, and reincarnation. Describe basic Hindu practices.

**6.** Discuss the Hindu principles of nonviolence and religious tolerance.

**Materials:** Blackboard / Chart Paper  
Chalk / Markers  
Student Notebooks / Paper  
Text (pp. I-8 to I-9)

**Vocabulary:** *dharma* (p. I-8)  
*ahimsa* (p. I-8)  
*karma* (p. I-8)  
reincarnation (p. I-8)

**Do Now (5 mins):** What do you think are the characteristics of a good person? Do you think it is important to try and fulfill these characteristics? Why or why not?

**Whole Group Instruction (15 mins):** Review the first question of the Do Now and chart student responses. (Answers may include: kind, helpful, generous, honest, ethical, etc.) Tell students that, in Hinduism, the path one must follow to be a good person is called one’s *dharma*. Read the first paragraph of the section “Dharma, Karma, and Reincarnation” and develop a definition for *dharma*. (Example: “dharma – In Hinduism, the proper way that someone should lead their life; being a good person”). Write the definition on the board and have students copy it in their notebooks. Also, give a definition for *ahimsa* (“the Sanskrit word for nonviolence; not injuring others in thought,

## Hinduism Chapter One

### Lesson Plan #5 – Hindu Beliefs – *Dharma*, *Ahimsa*, *Karma*, and Reincarnation

word, or action.”). You may want to tell the students that, not only is this Hindu principle of nonviolence shared by other religions (like Buddhism and Christianity), but that Hindus have been an inspiration to Christian and Buddhist leaders (like the relationship between Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Aung San Suu Kyi that’s highlighted in the sidebar on p. I-8).

At this point, begin a short discussion of what motivates people to be good. Some students will probably mention the negative consequences that follow breaking the law, others may discuss the immediate benefits of being good (happiness, peace, friendship, etc.) Explain the relationship between causes and effects, (“If you’re kind to people, they’re likely to be kind back to you. If you hurt somebody, they’ll want to hurt you back.”) and that this idea in Hinduism is called *karma*. Read the second paragraph of the section and develop a definition as a class. (Sample: “the Hindu belief in cause and effect.”) You may want to tell students that this idea is expressed in the English phrase, “what goes around comes around.”

Ask students to re-read the sentence, “It means that anything you do will eventually return to you in this or future lives,” and ask them what that means – “this or future lives.” Someone will probably know about the Hindu idea of **reincarnation** – that after death, the soul is reborn in a new body. You can break down the word into its components. *Carne* – meat, flesh. To be “incarnate” means to be in a body. The prefix “re-“ means to do something again, so “reincarnation” means to be in a body again. Read the final paragraph of the section. Ask students to explain the purpose of reincarnation in their own words (sample responses: “if you’re bad, you have to suffer the consequences,” “each life is a learning experience,” “we keep coming back until we get it right”). If any of them have seen the movie “Groundhog Day,” they or you might refer to it.

**Independent Work (15 mins):** Ask students to write a short story that incorporates some of the Hindu ideas of *dharma*, *ahimsa*, *karma* and reincarnation. It can be about a page long, or, if they want to write even shorter stories (one paragraph each), they can write more than one. Circulate during the work period to assist students with their ideas. The main point is that the character commits an action and then experiences the consequences of that action either in this life or a future life. They may want to use an example where an individual is confronted with violence and chooses to react with nonviolence. Or they may want to describe how a person’s actions in one life affect their situation in their next life. Often students may write exceedingly simple stories where the karmic repercussions are almost immediate (i.e., a student steals something from another student at school, and returns home to find his house has been robbed). In these cases, challenge the student to extend the story and have the character learn something.

Alternatively, if you want students want to work together, divide the class into small groups (three students works well) and say that they can write a skit that they will perform for the class in a following class period. The knowledge that they have to perform the skit may motivate students to put more effort into the assignment. If this is the case, you should add to the assessment to take into account group cooperation and participation.

## Hinduism Chapter One

### Lesson Plan #5 – Hindu Beliefs – *Dharma*, *Ahimsa*, *Karma*, and Reincarnation

**Summary (7 mins):** Have students read their stories aloud. Ask other students to explain how these stories use the Hindu concepts from class. If students created skits, have them perform these skits at the beginning of the following class period.

**Homework:** In a couple of sentences, explain how your story is an example of the Hindu beliefs of *dharma*, *ahimsa*, *karma*, and reincarnation.

**Formal Assessment:** Spot-check the answers to the Do Now, definitions to the vocabulary words. When you collect the stories, either at the end of the period or the following day, you can assess it according to the following rubric:

	4	3	2	1
Content	Story clearly demonstrates the principles of at least three Hindu concepts.	Story incorporates the principles of two or three Hindu concepts.	At least one Hindu concept is alluded to, but it may be somewhat unclear.	No Hindu concepts are incorporated into the story.
Writing Mechanics	Few, if any, errors in spelling, grammatical or punctuation. Errors do not interfere with comprehension of writing.	Some errors in spelling, grammatical or punctuation. Errors do not interfere with comprehension of writing.	Several errors in spelling, grammatical or punctuation. Errors may interfere with comprehension of writing.	Serious errors in spelling, grammatical or punctuation. Errors greatly interfere with comprehension of writing.
Focus and Organization	Consistent and organized with good use of transitions	Mostly consistent and organized with some use of transitions	Inconsistent and/or unorganized with awkward transitions.	Lacks consistency, organization, and transitions

**Informal Assessment:** Participation in questioning, discussion independent work, and presentation.

#### Resources:

<http://www.vivekananda.btinternet.co.uk/primaryschoolspage3.htm>

## Hinduism Chapter One

### Lesson Plan #5 – Hindu Beliefs – *Dharma*, *Ahimsa*, *Karma*, and Reincarnation

This is the section of a Hindu website geared for children that explains reincarnation and *karma* very simply. Recommended.

<http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/Homework/religion/hinduism.htm>

This site published by a British junior school has information about Hindu beliefs written in a simple style, and is intended for students of about a fifth-grade reading level.

[http://www.uri.org/kids/world\\_hind\\_basi.htm#What%20is%20reincarnation](http://www.uri.org/kids/world_hind_basi.htm#What%20is%20reincarnation)

The information at this site is written at a higher reading level, but give more in-depth explanations of Hindu beliefs. This link goes straight to their section on reincarnation and *karma*.



Hinduism Chapter One  
Lesson Plan #6 – The Development of Ancient Indian Culture

**California State Standards:**

English Language Arts: Reading

**2.4** Clarify an understanding of texts by creating outlines, logical notes, summaries, or reports.

**3.6** Identify and analyze features of themes conveyed through characters, actions, and images.

English Language Arts: Writing

**2.4** Write responses to literature that: develop an interpretation exhibiting careful reading, understanding, and insight; organize the interpretation around several clear ideas, premises, or images; and develop and justify the interpretation through sustained use of examples and textual evidence.

World History and Geography: Ancient Civilizations

**6.5.7** Discuss important aesthetic and intellectual traditions (e.g., Sanskrit literature, including the Bhagavad Gita; medicine; metallurgy; and mathematics, including Hindu-Arabic numerals and the zero).

**Hinduism Today’s Teaching Standards:**

**5.** Explain the basic Hindu beliefs regarding God, the Gods and Goddesses, dharma, karma, and reincarnation. Describe basic Hindu practices.

**7.** Describe the Vedas and their Upanishads, Ramayana, Mahabharata, (including the Bhagavad Gita) and other important Hindu scriptures.

**Materials:** Text (pp. I-9 to I-11)  
Hindu Texts Worksheet (handout)  
Transparency of Worksheet (optional)  
Overhead or Digital Projector (optional)

**Learning Objectives:** Students will describe the major texts of Hinduism. Students will analyze and respond to a selection from the Upanishads.

**Do Now (2 mins):** *Scripture* means a text that is sacred or holy. Why do religions have scriptures? What kinds of stories are in scriptures?

**Whole Group Instruction (8 mins):** Discuss the Do Now. Question students to come up with examples of scripture (*i.e.*, the Christian Bible, the Jewish Torah, the Muslim Quran, Native American creation stories) and what kinds of stories are contained therein (creation of the world, creation of their religion, moral parables, etc.). Most scriptures contain divine stories (about deities), origin stories (about how things became the way they are), and ethical stories (about how to live).

Hindu scriptures are no different. Remind them that they’ve already read about the holiest scriptures in Hinduism, the Vedas. Have students do a quick “pair and share” by turning to the student sitting next to them for 1 minute to review what they learned about the Vedas in Lesson 1-2. Then, question the students. They should know that the Vedas



## Hinduism Chapter One

### Lesson Plan #6 – The Development of Ancient Indian Culture

are thousands of years old, that they were passed down orally, and that they are composed in Sanskrit.

**Scaffolding (5 mins)** – Distribute the Hindu Texts Worksheet (this can be done during the Pair & Share) and have the students open to page I-9 in the text. It would be helpful to have the worksheet on an overhead so you can model how to fill it in for the class.

Have students read the description in the second column of the first row (“the holiest scriptures in Hinduism”). Ask them the title of these scriptures (“The Vedas”) and instruct them to write the title in the appropriate space (under the first column in the first row). Then have students look at the third column in the first row. Have a student read the prompt aloud (“The Upanishads explain \_\_\_\_\_”). Then ask the class where they can find the answer to fill in the blank. (It’s in the second sentence of the section “Hinduism’s Sacred Scriptures,” and the answer is “the Hindu philosophy”). Ask a student to read the sentence where they found the answer, and model filling in the blank in the third column. If the word philosophy is unfamiliar for students, turn to page I-10, where it is defined in a sidebar (“a theory or attitude that guides behavior”).

**Independent Work (20 mins):** Independently or in pairs, students should read pages I-9 to I-11 and fill out the worksheet. Circulate and assist as needed.

Title	This is...	This text describes...
<b>Vedas</b>	the holiest scriptures in Hinduism	The <u>Upanishads</u> explain the <b><u>Hindu philosophy</u></b>
Agamas	the <b><u>next most important scriptures,</u></b> also in Sanskrit.	The Agamas explain philosophy, worship, and temple construction for each of the major Hindu traditions.
<b>Puranas</b>	a collection of encyclopedic accounts of the forms of God	The <b><u>Puranas</u></b> also discuss <b><u>creation, spiritual teachings, historical traditions, geography, and culture.</u></b>
Tirukural	<b><u>A Tamil</u></b> masterpiece	The Tirukal is about <b><u>ethics and moral living.</u></b>
<b>Ramayana</b>	A sacred epic history of India that’s immensely popular in India and Southeast Asia	The story of <b><u>Rama and Sita.</u></b> It’s about <b><u>Prince Rama’s birth, his banishment to a forest, Sita’s abduction by Ravana, and Rama’s victory over Ravana.</u></b>
Mahabharata	a <b><u>78,000-verse</u></b> story of <b><u>a massive war in ancient times.</u></b>	A central section called the <b><u>Bhagavad Gita</u></b> narrates <b><u>Krishna</u></b> ’s dialogue with the archer named Arjuna.

2. The main idea of the story is that Brahman is the Supreme God, and it is vain to think that one’s successes are only the result of one’s own actions. At the beginning of the story, the Gods are happy with themselves that they’ve defeated the demons. The conflict is that they do not give Brahman credit, although their victory was only achieved

## Hinduism Chapter One

### Lesson Plan #6 – The Development of Ancient Indian Culture

through His power. Brahman decides to test the Gods to see if they'll recognize Him as the Supreme God. Brahman is so powerful that the God of fire cannot burn him and the God of wind cannot blow him away. The conflict is resolved when Indra, the greatest of the many Gods, humbly approaches Brahman. Indra's recognition that Brahman is superior causes Brahman to teach Indra of Brahman's true nature, and the debt that even the Gods owe to Him.

**Summary (7 mins):** Review the answers to question 1, preferably on an overhead or projected digitally. Depending on time, you may want to review the answers to question 2 or assign it for homework. Either way, you should review the main idea of the story (even the Gods are weak compared to Brahman, and it is vain to think that we accomplish things on our own, without His power) before ending class. Some questions to ask:

- What is the conflict at the beginning of the story?
- How does Brahman demonstrate His power to the Gods?
- Who resolves the conflict? How?

**Homework:** Either have students finish question 2 or ask them to bring in another example of a scriptural story that teaches a lesson. This can be a research assignment (some internet resources are below), it could be a story from their own religious tradition, it could be from another religious tradition they've learned about, or it could be a creative assignment to write their own sacred story. You as the teacher best know the class dynamic and their prior knowledge. Ask students to summarize the story's main idea, conflict, and resolution and to provide examples from the text.

**Formal Assessment:** Spot-check the answers to the Do Now and answers to question 1. Question 2, when collected can be graded with the following rubric:

	4	3	2	1
Answering the Questions	Clear statement of the story's main idea, conflict and resolution	Gives important elements of the main idea, conflict and resolution	Describes elements of the story's main idea, conflict, and resolution	Does not describe elements of the main idea, conflict or resolution
Content & Supporting Details	Strongly supported claims with examples from text	Used some examples from text to support their claims	Some examples from the text, but did not support their claims	No examples were used. Claims, if made, were unsupported.
Writing Mechanics	Few, if any, errors in spelling, grammatical or punctuation. Errors do not interfere with	Some errors in spelling, grammatical or punctuation. Errors do not interfere with comprehension	Several errors in spelling, grammatical or punctuation. Errors may interfere with comprehension	Serious errors in spelling, grammatical or punctuation. Errors greatly interfere with comprehension

Hinduism Chapter One  
Lesson Plan #6 – The Development of Ancient Indian Culture

	comprehension of writing.	of writing.	of writing.	of writing.
Focus and Organization	Consistent and organized with good use of transitions	Mostly consistent and organized with some use of transitions	Inconsistent and/or unorganized with awkward transitions.	Lacks consistency, organization, and transitions

**Informal Assessment:** Participation in questioning, discussion and independent work.

**Resources:**

<http://www.vivekananda.btinternet.co.uk/bgtitle.htm>

This website comments on the Bhagavad Gita. The Conclusion section is particularly relevant for the information about Brahaman from Lesson 1-4 and would be a good supplement to the reading from the Upanishads.

<http://www.bl.uk/learning/cult/sacred/stories/>

This website has beautifully animated versions of the story of Rama & Sita (a much simplified version of the Ramayana) and of Nachiketa & Yama (from the Upanishads). Each is about 5 minutes in length and would provide a good basis for discussing *dharma* and other Hindu beliefs with the class. Warning: the imagery when Nachiketa travels to Yama's kingdom of the dead is graphic and might frighten some students.

<http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/panchatantra.html>

A selection of the Hindu tales called the Panchatantra, which is not a holy text, but a collection of animal fables that probably served as the model for Aesop, as well as Arabian literature and the fables of La Fontaine. Each story has a moral, and they are appropriate for 6<sup>th</sup> grade students, except perhaps "The Bullock's Balls."

<http://www.indiadinivine.org/categories/Hindu-Scriptures/>

This is an amazing archive with dozens of Hindu scriptures - requires a little legwork, but lots of readings here.



Hinduism Chapter One  
Lesson Plan #7 – Hindu Practices

**Learning Objective:** Students will explain how Hinduism has been practiced for thousands of years.

**California State Standards:**

English Language Arts: Reading

**2.4** Clarify an understanding of texts by creating outlines, logical notes, summaries, or reports.

English Language Arts: Writing

**2.4** Write responses to literature that: develop an interpretation exhibiting careful reading, understanding, and insight; organize the interpretation around several clear ideas, premises, or images; and develop and justify the interpretation through sustained use of examples and textual evidence.

Historical and Social Sciences Analysis Skills: Chronological and Spatial Thinking

**3.** Students use a variety of maps and documents to identify physical and cultural features of neighborhoods, cities, states, and countries and to explain the historical migration of people, expansion and disintegration of empires, and the growth of economic systems.

**Hinduism Today's Teaching Standards:**

**8.** Describe the spread of Hinduism outside of India in ancient and modern times.

**9.** Describe the daily observances of Hindus, home and temple worship, religious teachers, and the major festivals.

**10.** Explain how Hinduism has survived over the last 5,000 years.

**Materials:** Blackboard / Chart Paper  
Chalk / Markers  
Hindu Practices Worksheet (handout)  
Text (pages I-12 to I-15)  
Transparency of map from page I-13 (optional)  
Overhead projector (optional)

**Do Now (2 mins):** Hinduism has been practiced for about 5,000 years. What do you think Hindus are still doing today that they also did thousands of years ago? Give examples of how these traditions might help cultural practices like religion last so long.

**Whole Group Instruction (5 mins):** Discuss Do Now responses. Chart student responses of Hindu traditions that maintain continuity with their past. Answers should include: worship (*pūja*) at temples and shrines, belief in one Supreme God (Brahman) and the Gods and Goddesses, learning about *dharma* from their sacred scriptures like the Vedas and the Ramayana and Mahabharata epics. You can say at this point that in this lesson, you will be learning about other traditions that have helped Hinduism last for thousands of years, including the traditions of spiritual teachers and religious festivals.

**Scaffolding (8 mins.)** Have a student read the first sentence in “If YOU lived then...” on the top of page I-12 (“You are born in Fiji in 1910.”). Stop them at this point, and have the students look at the map with their partner. Tell them to find Fiji (it’s all the way on

Hinduism Chapter One  
Lesson Plan #7 – Hindu Practices

the right hand side) and use the key figure out at what period Hindus migrated to Fiji. Review with them that the green arrow indicates it was in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. You can have a student read the rest of the paragraph and hold a quick discussion of student responses to the final question. There is no right answer to this dilemma, but you can stress that, while the Hindu tolerance of many paths to God may help Hindus acculturate to other religions, the traditions of worship and festivals help Hindus maintain their own religion.

Distribute the worksheet and help students get started on the first question. Go around the room, and ask students to use the map and key to give one example of a region to which Hindus immigrated in each of the three time periods. Tell students to begin filling out the worksheet and that they should find at least three examples for each time period in question.

**Independent Work (20 mins):** While students are reading and working on the handout, circulate the room and help them as necessary. Question students to determine their comprehension of the text, and ask to hear students read passages aloud.

1. Through the 12<sup>th</sup> century: **East Asia, Southeast Asia, Malaysia, Indonesia**  
In the 19<sup>th</sup> c.: **Caribbean, South America, Africa, Kenya, South America, Mauritius and Reunion, Fiji**  
In the 20<sup>th</sup> c.: **North America, Europe, Middle East, Australia, New Zealand**
2. *samskara*: **Hindu rites of passage, such as the name-giving ceremony, the beginning of school, and marriage**  
*bindi*: **the red dot that Hindu women often wear on their foreheads**  
*puja*: **the Hindu worship ceremony involving offerings to a deity**  
*swami*: **unmarried Hindus who have chosen to lead spiritual lives; literally “he who knows himself”**  
*Kumbha Mela*: **a Hindu festival that takes place in a twelve-year cycle where millions travel to worship at a sacred river; the 2001 Kumbh Mela was the largest religious gathering in human history**
3. (This should be a paraphrase of the second sentence of the section “Basic Practices,” and not a word-for-word transcription.) **The five basic practices of Hinduism are: to worship every day, to follow *dharma* as best as one can, to observe the rites of passage called *samskaras*, to celebrate the holidays and festivals, and to go on pilgrimages or visit sacred places.**
4. **When Hindus worship at home or at the temple, there are certain things that are usually done. Offerings of flowers, incense, light and food are made to a deity. Sacred verses are chanted, bells are rung, and lamps are lit. All of this takes place within a special space dedicated to the deity. One major difference between worship at home and worship at the temple, is that at the temple, the worship, or *puja*, is usually led by a priest. Another difference is that the priest always chants in Sanskrit from the scriptures. Lastly, the temples are typically an entire building, whereas a home shrine might be a room or just part of a room.**
5. 1 c; 2 d; 3 a; 4 e; 5 b

6. **Some of the characteristics that have helped Hinduism last for thousands of years are its traditions of religious tolerance, daily worship, devotion to a spiritual teacher, and a yearly cycle of important festivals. First, Hinduism accepts many paths to God, so one can choose to practice religious devotion in many different ways. While temples are very important to Hindus, every family also has a shrine in their own home where they worship every day. This tradition makes the religion very personal, and a part of one's family life. Part of the worship may include devotion to a *swami* or *guru*, a personal spiritual teacher. This teacher may have a popular way of explaining the profound teachings of Hinduism, which speaks to this student. Finally, the yearly festivals and pilgrimages also help keep Hindus involved with their tradition. These ceremonies maintain a sense of Hindu community from the personal or family level to the community of tens of millions of pilgrims who attend the Kumbha Mela.**

**Summary (7 mins):** Review the answers to the worksheet questions. If students did not have time to answer Question #6, you can have them copy the question and finish it for homework.

**Homework:** At the end of the chapter, you may want to give some sort of formal assessment. This could be an essay assignment, a quiz, or a project that ties together what the students have learned in Chapter One. Possible assignments include:

- Write a historical essay that discusses the development and spread of Hinduism from the early Indus-Sarasvati civilization to the entire subcontinent to over 150 different countries. Be sure to include the role of sacred scriptures such as the Vedas and the Ramayana epic.
- Write a narrative account from the perspective of a Hindu about their beliefs and practices. Your narrators should include: where they are from; what branch of Hinduism they follow; what deity they worship; how they try and follow *dharma*; their beliefs about Brahman, *karma*, and reincarnation; and their observance of different festivals.
- Write an expository piece that compares and contrasts two different branches of Hinduism or Hinduism and another religion that you have studied. Remember to discuss both their beliefs and their practices.
- Create a short comic book to explain some of the major Hindu beliefs and practices. You may want to illustrate the story of the Ramayana, or tell the story of a Hindu kid going about their daily life.
- Put on a skit with Hindu characters that expresses Hindu beliefs and makes references to different practices or scriptures. It could be a scene from one of the epics (Lord Krishna teaching Arjuna about Brahman) or it could be a modern ethical dilemma (should we give this money to help the poor or to help build a new temple?).

**Formal Assessment:** Spot-check student responses to the Do Now, and grade the answers to the worksheet. They should have at least three examples for each section on

Hinduism Chapter One  
Lesson Plan #7 – Hindu Practices

question 1, and question 4 must have both similarities and differences between home worship and temple worship.

**Informal Assessment:** Participation in questioning, discussion and independent work.

**Resources:**

[http://www.asia.si.edu/pujaonline/puja/lesson\\_contents.html](http://www.asia.si.edu/pujaonline/puja/lesson_contents.html)

This is a comprehensive site on teaching about *puja*. The section “Background Info for Teachers” has a number of short video clips, including *puja* at a Hindu temples as well as at shrines in Hindu homes.

<http://www.vivekananda.btinternet.co.uk/interactiveworship.htm>

This site gives a link to a virtual *puja* of Krishna. By clicking on the various icons, you can ring a bell, perform *arati* with the lamp, and make offerings of flowers and coconut. If you take students to the site, prepare them that they will be hearing devotional music, which should be respected the same way as the music from their own church or temple.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hgeTIZSwcMQ>

This is an excellent 35 minute documentary video about the Kumbh Mela. The first three minutes give a general description of the history of the festive pilgrimage. After that, it focuses for some time on a particular swami, whose lecture would lose students, but you can show the *puja* before his arrival and the devotion that his followers give him at his arrival. There are other excellent sections showing various practices of the festival. Please note that, later in the video, (esp. 15:30 to 16:00) there are some nude *saddhus* (holy men), so preview any sections before showing them to the class.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MxQmAK5wRlw>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMguvWvA5Yk>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rMjbhV3SdOM&feature=related>

These are three videos of Diwali celebrations. The first is fun, and is from Indian television for children. The second is more informative, but the music is overdramatic. The third explains the connection between Diwali and the Ramayana epic and has clips from an animated version of the Ramayana.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Hindu Practices

1. Using the map on p. I-13, give examples of regions to which Hindus immigrated:

Through the 12<sup>th</sup> century: \_\_\_\_\_

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century: \_\_\_\_\_

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century: \_\_\_\_\_

2. As you read pages I-12 to I-15, define the following vocabulary words:

*samskara*: \_\_\_\_\_

*bindi*: \_\_\_\_\_

*puja*: \_\_\_\_\_

*swami*: \_\_\_\_\_

*Kumbha Mela*: \_\_\_\_\_

3. In your own words, describe the five basic practices of Hinduism.

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4. Compare and contrast Hindu worship in the home and Hindu temple worship.

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5. Match each Hindu festival with the appropriate letter:

- |                 |       |   |
|-----------------|-------|---|
| 1. Diwali       | _____ | a. sprinkling with colored water & powders    |
| 2. Guru Purnima | _____ | b. dedicated to the Goddess                   |
| 3. Holi         | _____ | c. the Festival of Lights                     |
| 4. Kumbha Mela  | _____ | d. honors one's spiritual teacher             |
| 5. Navaratri    | _____ | e. the largest religious gathering in history |

6. What are some characteristics of Hinduism that have helped it last for thousands of years? Give specific examples. You can answer on a separate sheet of paper or the back of this page.