

SHEET TWO – Fact sheet

Read this information to help you complete sheet one

The Trimurti

Hindus have many hundred of gods all of whom represent different aspects of the 'one God' who they call Brahman. Of these hundreds of gods Hindus have three that are considered most important. These three are called the Trimurti. In the Trimurti the three most important features of Brahman are shown to help Hindus understand the true nature of God and the universe. The three features are: creator, sustainer and destroyer. These three things are forces at work in the world. Everything in the universe happens because of these three features of Brahman. You may have heard of the word trinity before, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva form the trinity in Hinduism called The Trimurti.

Key words!

TRINITY - A group of three people or things

INFINITE - limitless or endless space, time or size

Brahma

The first God of the Trimurti is Brahma although he is not considered the most important. Brahma's main job is the creator. Brahma is said to have created the universe. Brahma has four heads and four arms. His four heads represent the four Vedas, the religious writings of Hinduism. He is often shown with a white beard to show he is the oldest being in the universe. He travels on a swan or goose which symbolise knowledge. He is the giver of all knowledge.



Vishnu



The second God of the Trimurti is Vishnu. He is the central and most important god of the trimurti. Vishnu's main job is sustainer. This means he supports and maintains everything that exists. Vishnu is said to protect the universe from harm. He is pictures as a human body with four arms. He is coloured blue like the sky and the sea (the colour blue symbolises the infinite) and has four arms. He holds a conch shell which symbolises creativity. He holds a sharp-spinning discus-like weapon for the mind. He holds a mace for existence and he holds a lotus flower for truth.

Shiva

The last God of the Trimurti is Shiva. Shiva's main job is destroyer. Shiva is said to destroy evil and sins and eventually the universe. Shiva has three eyes. His middle eye sees the truth. From his hair flows the Ganga (The holiest of all rivers in India). From his drum comes the sound 'Aum'. Aum (pronounced 'om') is represented by this symbol ← and is the note or vibrations of the universe. It is also the symbol of all the gods of Hinduism and is the special work used to start prayers. Finally Shiva's trident represents the Trimurti (the three gods).

