

# Lancashire Agreed Syllabus for RE

## Hindu Dharma concept map (KSI)

The Lancashire Syllabus for RE revisits key concepts in different contexts. When teaching about the Hindu Dharma three key ideas are Brahman, dharma, and samsara. Not all concepts will be explicitly taught about in each year. This document shows how the concepts build upon prior knowledge and develop over time.



### Brahman

Hinduism teaches that there is **one Universal Spirit** which pervades the universe. This Spirit is referred to as Brahman.



### Hinduism teaches that Brahman is in all living things

Brahman is believed to be present in everything and everyone. Because **Brahman resides in all things** it is important for Hindus to treat everything in the universe with respect.



### Hindus believe that Brahman can be thought of in many different ways

Hinduism is **pluralistic**. It offers many ways to understand Brahman. Each of these ways can be given names depending on the role that is being performed. These are the **deities** that Hindus worship using **murtis** (images or statues).



### Dharma

Dharma is often translated as righteous duty – referring to **the religious and moral duties** of Hindu life. However, it is more complex than duty alone. It can also be thought of as **a way of being**.



### Samsara

The term samsara refers to **the cycle of life, death, and rebirth**. It is not the person who is reborn, but the soul (the atman). The ultimate aim is for the **atman** to be freed from samsara and attain **moksha**.

### The Hindu Dharma

The Hindu Dharma is the preferred term for what is commonly referred to as Hinduism. It is also known as 'Sanatana dharma', meaning the eternal law/truth/duty, reflecting the view that it is simply how things are and how things are meant to be.

The Hindu Dharma originated in India thousands of years ago and over time developed into the diverse set of philosophical and spiritual beliefs, values and practices that make up 'Hinduism' today.

Brahman is sometimes translated as 'God' – but the Hindu understanding of God is not like that of the Abrahamic faiths. The Aum symbol is used to represent Brahman. It is a sacred syllable that symbolises the idea that the energy of Brahman vibrates throughout the universe.

Hinduism is sometimes misunderstood as being polytheistic. It is not. Brahman can be understood as having multiple ways of being seen and so we have the idea of one God in many forms. Each of these forms represent a specific role of Brahman. Each form has a name, qualities and can be visualised. These are the deities of Hinduism. They can be male or female.

Three deities - Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the preserver) and Shiva (the regenerator) are collectively known as the Trimurti. Each fulfils a particular role in creating and sustaining the universe.

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## Hindu Dharma concept map (KS2)

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### Brahman

Hinduism teaches that there is **one Universal Spirit** which pervades the universe. This Spirit is referred to as Brahman.



### Hinduism teaches that Vishnu becomes incarnate whenever dharma is threatened

Rama is an **avatar** (incarnation) of Vishnu. The Ramayana (the story of Rama and Sita) explores the theme of duty. Each character fulfils their own duty – even when it is not easy.



### The theme of good overcoming evil is found in many Hindu stories and festival celebrations

**Vishnu is the aspect of the Trimurti that protects and preserves.** It is believed that he has visited earth 9 times (in various avatars) in order to fight evil and **uphold dharma**. The seventh avatar is Rama. The Ramayana tells how he destroys the demon king Ravanna. This story is remembered at Diwali – **light overcomes darkness, just as good overcomes evil.**



### Dharma

Dharma is often translated as duty – referring to **the religious and moral duties** of Hindu life. However, it is more complex than duty alone. It can also be thought of as **a way of being**.



### Fulfilling dharma is one of the aims of Hindu life

Hinduism teaches that there are three 'debts' – duties that are owed to family, to teachers and to the deities. **Familial roles and responsibilities are an important aspect of Hindu life.** These are celebrated at festivals such as Raksha Bandhan



### Dharma involves moral duty

The holy books give moral guidance about what is right and wrong. **Right actions lead to good karma,** whereas **immoral actions lead to bad karma.** People cannot escape the consequences of their actions. Hindu stories such as **the Ramayana** teach children the importance of **moral virtues** such as honesty, courage, loyalty, discipline and being helpful to others.



### Samsara

The term samsara refers to **the cycle of life, death, and rebirth.** It is not the person who is reborn, but the soul (the atman). The ultimate aim is for the **atman** to be freed from samsara and attain **moksha**.



### Brahman

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### The eighth avatar of Vishnu is said to be Krishna

There are many stories about Krishna in the Hindu scriptures. These stories are often remembered at the festival of Holi, along with the story of Prince Prahlad who was saved due to his **loyalty to Vishnu** and refusal to worship the King. These stories demonstrate the belief that **Vishnu becomes incarnate in order to uphold dharma** – order and righteousness.



### The ultimate aim is for the atman to be released from the cycle of samsara and attain moksha

Hinduism is different from the Abrahamic faiths – **Brahman is not a divine judge** who decides the fate of each soul. **Karma is seen as a universal law**, that all actions have consequences. On attaining moksha, the atman becomes one with Brahman. **Moksha is freedom from the cycle of samsara**. Attaining moksha is sometimes compared to a raindrop returning to the ocean.



### Dharma

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### Loyalty and devotion are important to the Hindu dharma

In the stories of Krishna there is a message of **acceptance, love, and devotion**. Krishna multiplies himself to dance with all the gopis. This is a reminder of the belief that **God is not limited by time or space**. It also symbolises Krishna's love for all. Stories of Krishna teach that that **where there is love there cannot be evil**.



### There are different stages to life, each with its own particular dharma

**There are four ashramas** (stages of life) – student (brahmacharya), householder (grihastha), retired person (vanaprastha), renunciate (sannyasin). **Each ashrama has its own particular dharma**. Religious ceremonies called **samskaras remind a Hindu of the new duties** and responsibilities that come with the next stage of life. These are rites of passages that mark a transition to a new role.



### Samsara

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### It is the atman that is reborn within the cycle of samsara

The Hindu greeting '**namaste**' recognises the **presence of Brahman within each person**. The **atman is believed to be the eternal soul**, a spark of the Divine. Through the atman all living beings are connected. **The physical self is just a temporary body for this lifetime**. Throwing coloured powders at Holi are a reminder of this belief. It is a joyful celebration of equality and unity.



### Belief in samsara leads to a cyclical understanding of existence. Death leads to rebirth

**Hindus might say that existence is not a single journey, but many**. At the same time, it could be said that the different lives are what make up the journey of the atman to reach the ultimate aim of moksha. **The Bhagavad Gita** teaches that when clothes are old and worn they are cast off and new ones are put on. In the same way, when a body has reached the end of its time it is replaced with a new one.