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ABSTRACT

This unit of study aims to help students in grades 9-12 experience the history, culture, religion, and literature of India by emphasizing active participation in the diverse art forms indigenous to India and those that are shared by India and the United States. Components of study in the unit are: The "Ramayana"; Indian Classical Dance; The "Mahabharata"; and Indian Shadow Puppetry. The unit enumerates seven educational goals for students and lists nine competencies that students should show after completion of activities. Each component in the unit lists materials needed and specific student activities. The unit is illustrated with color photographs. (BT)

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**INDIA: A PERFORMANCE BASED UNIT**

Curriculum Project  
submitted by  
Sharon L. Wheeler  
Power Academic and Performing Arts Complex  
Jackson, Mississippi  
in fulfillment of  
Fulbright-Hays Seminar  
"Tradition and Modernity: India's Quantum Leap Into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century"  
July 3 - August 8, 1998

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*By*

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# INDIA: A PERFORMANCE BASED UNIT

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## Unit Overview

Students will experience the history, culture, religion and literature of India through a unit of study that emphasizes active participation in the diverse art forms indigenous to India and those that are shared by India and the United States. The components that will be studied are:

- The Ramayana
- Indian Classical Dance
- The Mahabharata
- Indian Shadow Puppetry

## Teaching Level

- Grades 9 – 12

## Goals

The student will:

- use language to communicate, express, and exchange ideas in a variety of forms for different audiences
- access, organize, and evaluate information
- use language to work individually and cooperatively to analyze and interpret information, to make decisions, to solve problems, and to reflect
- use language for continuous learning
- discover the heritage and beauty of language and literature from various cultures and perspectives
- read and respond to literature, art and dance
- develop the skills, motivation and organizational tools necessary to ensure success as a performing artist

## Competencies

The student will:

- ❑ produce writing that reflects increasing proficiency through planning, writing, revising, and editing and which is specific to audience and purpose
- ❑ communicate ideas for a variety of school and other life situations through listening, speaking, and reading aloud
- ❑ read, evaluate, and use print, non-print, and technological sources to research issues and problems, to present information, and to complete projects
- ❑ work individually and as a member of an artistic team to analyze and interpret information, to make decisions, to solve problems, and to reflect, using increasingly complex and abstract thinking
- ❑ complete written presentations and performance based projects which exhibit interaction and consensus within a group
- ❑ discover the power and effect of reading, listening to and performing selections from various literary and cultural genres
- ❑ read, discuss, analyze and evaluate literature and art from various genres and cultures
- ❑ sustain progress toward fluent control of grammar, mechanics, and usage of standard English in the context of writing and speaking
- ❑ explore art as both a way of expanding knowledge and skills and as personal expression

## *The Ramayana*

### Materials

a version of *The Ramayana* with glossary of names and terms  
(I recommend downloading a glossary and shortened version from  
<http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/maxpages/special/ramayana/glossary.html> and  
<http://www.maxwell.syr.edu/maxpages/special/ramayana/RAMA/html>)

selected costume pieces

art work representing scenes from *The Ramayana*

### Activities

The student will:

- ❑ read and pronounce words and terms in the glossary
- ❑ orally read *The Ramayana* in a variety of group settings
- ❑ view art work depicting scenes from *The Ramayana*
- ❑ participate in a variety of dramatic activities throughout the reading as a check for comprehension
  - slide show
  - pantomime
  - narrative pantomime
  - re-enactment
  - puppet show
- ❑ participate in a series of complex dramatic activities that connect issues/themes in *The Ramayana* to today.

# THE RAMAYANA

## Activity 1: Advertising Campaign Activity Card

You and the members of your group have just completed the reading and study of the Indian epic the RAMAYANA by the poet-sage Valmiki. With the members of your group, study the advertisements shown on the resource sheets you were given. Discuss the following questions:

What techniques do advertising people use to attract a consumer audience to a play, movie, TV show, or product? Talk about such things as images, slogans, music graphics, and lettering.

What themes or ideas from the RAMAYANA would best represent the work and attract a following?

What product derived from this work would appeal to you?

**PREPARE AN ADVERTISING OR MARKETING CAMPAIGN FOR  
SOME PRODUCT INSPIRED BY THE RAMAYANA.**

**PRESENT YOUR CAMPAIGN TO THE OTHER GROUPS ON  
"SHARE DAY".**

# THE RAMAYANA

## Activity 2: Modern Epic Activity Card

You and the members of your group have just completed the reading and study of the Indian epic the RAMAYANA by the poet-sage Valmiki. With the introduction of the Indian concept of **dharma**, you learned that dharma is like one's role in a play or position on a team. For the play to go well or for the team to win, each person must "stay in character" or "play his/her position". If each thing in the universe does its dharma, the universe functions smoothly. When people or things violate their dharma, things fall apart.

Rama, Bharata and Sita are very important in India because they **always** did their dharma. What are their character traits that are worth emulating?

Several characters **violate** dharma. How did Ravanna violate the dharma of a faithful husband and a good king? How did the Surpanakah violate her dharma?

**CREATE AND DRAMATIZE A MODERN DAY EPIC IN WHICH CONTEMPORARY CHARACTERS/SOCIETY DEAL WITH THE CONCEPT OF DHARMA.**

**(MAKE SURE YOU UNDERSTAND THE DEFINITION OF EPIC.)**

**PRESENT YOUR MODERN EPIC TO THE OTHER GROUPS ON "SHARE DAY".**

# THE RAMAYANA

## Activity 3: Pilgrimage Activity Card

You and the members of your group have just completed the reading and study of the Indian epic the RAMAYANA by the poet-sage Valmiki. In it we discover that the story takes place in many geographical locations in India considered sacred to which people still make **pilgrimage**.

### **Route of Rama and Sita**

See the route taken by Rama and Sita at:

<http://wwwmaxwell.syr.edu/maxpages/special/ramayana/immaprout.jpg>

### **Pilgrimage**

Pilgrims have followed the route of Rama and Sita in Exile for centuries. For a pilgrimage by American university students, see:

<http://classes.colgate.edu/IndiaStudyGroup/rama.html>

### **Define:**

sacred  
pilgrimage  
holy

### **Discuss:**

places in the US considered sacred to Americans  
places outside of US which Americans consider sacred  
society's responsibilities for a place considered sacred

**PREPARE A PERFORMANCE PIECE IN WHICH PILGRIMAGE IS  
THE CENTRAL THEME.**

**YOU MUST INCLUDE ORIGINAL MUSIC, POETRY AND DANCE.**

**SHARE YOUR PERFORMANCE PIECE WITH OTHER GROUPS  
ON "SHARE DAY".**



# THE RAMAYANA

## Activity 4: Dear Abby

### Activity Card

You and the members of your group have just completed the reading and studying of the Indian epic the RAMAYANA by the poet-sage Valmiki. The characters in this story had many problems with which to cope. They sometimes called on the gods to help them with their problems. Today, many people with problems call on Dear Abby or TV talk show hosts or hostesses to help them.

With the members of your group, look at the "Dear Abby letters" and the answers to them. Discuss the following questions:

What were some of the problems faced by particular characters?

How might these problems be shared with Dear Abby or Oprah?

How do you think Abby or Oprah might have responded?

**CREATE FIVE OR MORE LETTERS TO DEAR ABBY WHICH MIGHT HAVE BEEN WRITTEN BY A CHARACTER FROM THE RAMAYANA.**

**THEN ANSWER THE LETTERS AS YOU THINK THAT ABBY WOULD HAVE ANSWERED.**

**YOU COULD HAVE LETTERS FROM TWO DIFFERENT CHARACTERS WHO ARE ON DIFFERENT SIDES OF THE SAME PROBLEM.**

**SHARE YOUR LETTERS WITH THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CLASS.**

**OR**

**DESIGN A TALK SHOW WHOSE GUESTS ARE CHARACTERS FROM THE RAMAYANA.**

**DON'T FORGET THE STUDIO AUDIENCE! (JERRY SPRINGER FORMAT IS UNACCEPTABLE.)**

**PRESENT TALK SHOW TO OTHER GROUPS ON "SHARE DAY".**

STUDENT NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
ACTIVITY NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
VALUE: 10 PTS. EACH; TOTAL: 100 PTS. POSSIBLE

**GROUP INDICATORS**

**self teacher**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Requirements of Activity Met
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Originality/Creativity
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Quality of the Script
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Technical Elements (costume, set, props, makeup, lighting, etc.)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Blocking (use of space, visibility, focus, smooth transitions)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Over-all Impression (well planned, rehearsed, confident)

**INDIVIDUAL INDICATORS**

**self teacher**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Effective Time Management (on task)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Acting (focus, character work, believable)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Voice (articulation, pronunciation, projection)
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Level of Participation /Contribution

\_\_\_\_\_ **GRAND TOTAL**

List your unique contributions to this group.(What did you make? What did you bring from home? What were your ideas? How did you move your group forward?)

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Who (other than yourself!) did an outstanding job? Why?

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# RANGOLI

from Start to Finish



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# Neal plays the Demon RAVANNA



'R' is for RAMA

Students with Indian dancer  
Vidya Murthy of Ahmedabad



U.S. students try their  
hand at Indian dance



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