

Religious Studies

A Level Summer Work

Buddhism

Topic: **The Buddha's context – the influence of Brahmin and Sramana movements**

This is really useful background work as you will need to understand the world before the Buddha and how it came to be that way.

Tasks:

1. Go to timemaps.com. Search Civilization: Ancient India. Write up the timeline to the Buddha. Go down to the end of the timeline and read the following paragraph and click on Indus Valley Civilization. Either print or draw the map and annotations. Then read about this civilization. You'll see that it is over 5000 years old. Make notes on anything that you are surprised to discover.
2. Finish reading to the end of the section on Religion then click on Aryan peoples in the middle of that section. Scroll up on the new page and read from Overview to the end of the page. You'll see it introduces the phrase The Vedic Age (1500BC – 500BC). This is important because 500BC was around the time of the Buddha. Take notes on this section to show you understand Aryan Beliefs and the Caste System. (You may want to look elsewhere for some further information about the Hindu Caste System).
3. Find out what Jains believe by searching 'What do Jains believe – ARC'. Read the first page only. Take notes.
4. Find out about the following Sramana groups (seekers of the truth) at the time of the Buddha: Jains, Ajivakas, Materialists, Skeptics.

Philosophy

Topic: Ancient philosophical influences.

We're going to be looking at what philosophers think about reality.

Task:

1. Spend a day keeping a diary of how you rely on your senses (sight, sound, taste, smell, touch). At the end of the day, work out how many decisions you made using your senses. How many decisions did you make without using your senses (try to be specific)?
2. After you have completed the above task, write a paragraph explaining how YOU know what is real.