



Syllabus

Year III, Quarter III

Age Group : 5 to 8

Gokulam is the place where Lord Krishna's magical days of childhood were spent. It was here that his divine powers came to light.

Every child has that spark of divinity within. Bala-Gokulam is a forum for children to discover and manifest that divinity. It will enable Hindu children in US to appreciate their cultural roots and learn Hindu values in an enjoyable manner. This is done through weekly gatherings and planned activities which include games, yoga, stories, shlokas, bhajan, arts and crafts and much more.....

Balagokulam is a program of Hindu Swyamsevak Sangh (HSS)

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Shloka

गुरुरादिनादिश्च गुरुः परमदैवतम् ।
गुरोः परतरं नास्ति तस्मै श्रीगुरुवे नमः ॥

gururAdinAdishca guruaH paramadaivatam |
guroH parataraM nAsti tasmai shrIguruve namaH ||

Meaning: (My) salutations to that guru who is the beginning and the beginningless, who is the highest deity and for whom there are none superior.

Subhashitam (Words of wisdom)

न चोर हर्यम न च राज हर्यम न भ्रातृ-भाज्यम न च भारकारि ।
व्यये कृते वर्धति एव नित्यम् विद्याधनम् सर्वधनम् प्रधानम् ॥

na chora haryama na cha rAja haryama
na bhrAtR^i-bhAjyama na cha bhArakAri |
vyaye kR^ite vardhati eva nityam
vidyAdhanam sarvadhanam pradhAnam ||

Meaning: It can not stolen by thieves, nor it can be taken away by kings. It can not be divided among brothers (others), and it does not cause load on your shoulders. If spent, it always keep growing. The wealth of knowledge is the most superior of all.

Amrutvachan (Quotes)

The grace of the Guru is like an ocean. If one comes with a cup he will only get a cupful. It is no use complaining of the niggardliness of the ocean. The bigger the vessel the more one will be able to carry. It is entirely up to him.”

- Ramana Maharshi



Geet

चल चल बंधो संगस्थानम्
कांक्षसी यदी निज राष्ट्रोत्थानम्

chala chala baMdho saMghasthAnam
kAMxasI yadI nija rAShTrotthAnam

शिशु ओ बालः द्रुढः किशोरः
तरुणः प्रौढः केचित् स्थविरा
यत्र मिलंति प्रियः प्रतिदिनम्

shishu o bAlaH druDhaH kishoraH
taruNaH prauDhaH kechita sthavirA
yatra milaMti priyaH pratidinam

सायम् प्रातः संध्याकाले
निषिदिने अथवा रजनिकाले
यत्र हि नियतम् ध्वजारोहणम्

sAyam prAtaH saMdhyAkAle
niShidine athavA rajanikAle
yatra hi niyatam dhwajArohaNam

योगः व्यायामो बलदायी
सुर्यनमस्कारः शुभदायी
यत्र ही पुर्वजः पुण्यस्मरणम्

yogaH vyAyAmo baladAyI |
suryanamaskAraH shubhadAyI
yatra hI purvajaH puNyasmaraNam





Guru Dronacharya

Dronacharya was a great archer and warrior. He was also a renowned teacher. He was a son of Sage Bharadwaja who had his hermitage at the bank of river Ganga. It means he was a Brahmin by birth. But unlike his father, he preferred to be a warrior instead of performing duties of Brahmin. He chose to learn weapons and warfare tactics. Dronacharya also acquired the knowledge of weaponry from Parashurama, the great warrior of the time.

Dronacharya spent his youth under poverty. He had a very good friend named Drupada who was a prince of Panchala kingdom. Both studied religion and military skills together. Since Dronacharya was poor, Drupada promised to give him his half of the kingdom. But he never fulfilled his promise. Instead when Dronacharya came to him for help, Drupada denied his friendship and humiliated him.

Dronacharya's wife name was Kripi. They had a son named Ashwatthama. Just like Dronacharya, Ashwatthama also preferred to be a warrior. He learnt weapons and military arts from his father himself.

Afer Drupada denial to help, Dronacharya didn't have any means of earning. He started looking for a job because he had to nurture his family. During that time, King Dhritarashtra was ruling the vast empire of Hastinapur in Northern Bharat. Dronacharya alongwith his family decided to go to the Hastinapur for a job.

When Dronacharya entered the capital of Hastinapur, he saw some young princes gathered around a well. Out of curiosity he went there asked boys, "What is the problem? Did somebody fall in the well? How can I help you?" One of those young princes said, "Hey Brahmin! We were playing a ball. It fell into the well. Now we don't know how to retrieve it?"

Drona laughed, and mildly rebuked the princes for being helpless over such a plain problem. Drona first threw in his ring, brought some grass blades, and uttered Vedic mantras. He then threw the blades into the well one after another, like spears. The

first blade stuck to the ball, and the second stuck to the first, and so on, forming a chain. Drona gently pulled the ball out with this rope of grass.

In a feat that was even more amazing to the princes, Drona then chanted Vedic mantras again and fired a grass blade into the well. It struck within the center of his floating ring and rose out of the well in a matter of moments, retrieving Drona's ring. Young princes were not only happy but also amazed at Dronacharya's outstanding skill. They took him to the king. Young princes were nobody but Kauravas and Pandavas (King Dhritarashtra's sons and nephews).

King Dhritarashtra already knew about Dronacharya. He was extremely happy after arrival of him to the city. He was anyway thinking of appointing a capable teacher for his sons and nephews. He requested Dronacharya to teach them martial arts and the knowledge of weaponry. Dronacharya happily agreed to it. He got a job as well as shelter.

Dronacharya became the Guru of 100 Kauravas and 5 Pandavas. Kauravas and Pandavas lived with him in his abode and learned various skills. With a great interest and zeal, he taught them to operate all kinds of arms like bow and arrows, club, sword and mace. Dronacharya not only taught them the use of weapons, but also the knowledge of Vedas and Upanishadas. In return King Dhritarashtra took good care of Dronacharya and his family. He not only gave them food and shelter but also all kinds of luxury.

Dronacharya lived happily with the royal family. In course of time, many unfortunate things happened between Kauravas and Pandavas because of Kauravas evil mind. Dronacharya was not happy at all with Kauravas because of their bad behavior. But he kept mum as he and his family were under the King's debt. Later a great Mahabharata war erupted between Kauravas and Pandavas. Dronacharya knew that Kauravas were wrong. But since he was loyal to the king, he unwillingly fought this war from their side and became a casualty of it.

Pandavas were the great warriors of the time. Kauravas were bad guys but they were also great warriors! And Dronacharya was the one who made them great warriors. He himself was a great archer and an exceptional Guru!!





Guru Dronacharya and his students

Three thousand years back, there lived a great King Dhritarashtra who was ruling the vast empire of Hastinapur. He had 100 sons named Kauravas and 5 nephews (his brother Pandu's sons) named Pandavas. As the boys grew up, the king thought of appointing a capable teacher who would give them vedic shiksha and the military skills. He appointed Guru Dronacharya as a Guru for them.

Dronacharya agreed to be a Guru of 100 Kauravas and 5 Pandavas. Kauravas and Pandavas lived with him in his abode and learned various skills. They used to get up early in the morning. After doing their routine daily chores, they all used to sit at the feet of Guru Dronacharya to receive teachings from him. With a great interest and zeal, Dronacharya taught them to operate all kinds of arms like bow and arrows, club, sword and mace. After their classes were over, Kauravas and Pandavas were to perform any and every task assigned to them like getting wood from the forest, cleaning the house of Guru, massaging his feet etc. This way they all lived together, learned their lessons and also served Guru and his family.

Guru Dronacharya not only taught them the use of weapons, but also the knowledge of Vedas and Upanishadas. He also advised them to use weapons only for the good of mankind and protection of Dharma. He advised them to use mass-destructive weapons only when extremely necessary and as a last resort.

Arjuna was Guru Dronacharya's favourite student. Kauravas were jealous about it. They thought Guru Dronacharya was doing partiality! But Guru Dronacharya explained, "Arjuna is my favourite shishya because he is sincere, dedicated, hard-working and he learns everything what I teach. He doesn't sleep before he completes his study. He tries to learn even beyond what I teach! He has surpassed all my expectations."

Guru Dronacharya used to test his students during their studies. Once he along with his students - Kauravas and Pandavas was standing on the bank of the river. He deliberately entered into the river full of crocodiles on the pretext of bathing.

Suddenly, he started shouting loudly saying a huge crocodile caught him. He asked for help from his students but they too scared and perplexed to move. They stood there still like statues. Only Arjun demonstrated presence of mind He immediately took his bow and arrow, aimed at the crocodile and shot. As the arrow hit the crocodile, it became ferocious. It left Drona and came towards Arjun. Seeing the angry monster approaching all the pupils ran away except Arjun. He stood there calmly and shot two more arrows killing the crocodile. This way Arjun demonstrated his readiness to do anything for his guru.

On another occasion, Guru Dronacharya wanted to test Kauravas and Pandavas skills. He made a bird from mud and put it on a branch of a tree. He then made everybody stand in a line. Everybody wondered what was about to come! He then ordered to take aim at the bird's head. Everybody did as instructed. He then asked them a question that what they see. Everyone except Arjuna gave similar answers that they saw tree, its branches and leaves, bird, etc. But Arjuna said that he saw nothing but only bird's head. Pleased Dronacharya asked him to shoot and the next moment bird's head fell on the ground. Extremely happy Dronacharya then turned to others and told, "While aiming at the target, you should not see anything but the target."

Kauravas and Pandavas completed their studies. And it was a time of Guru Dakshina. They asked Guru Dronacharya to demand anything as a Guru Dakshina. Dronacharya said them to bring King Drupada of Panchala kingdom bound in chains. Kauravas arrogantly said, "That is it! It is a piece of cake for us. You just wait and watch. We will bring him to you now!!" But they failed to defeat Drupada and thus also failed to give Guru Dakshina. Now it was Pandavas turn. Pandavas were humble. They attacked Drupada without army and captured him as ordered. Then they presented Drupada bound in chains to Guru Dronacharya. Pandavas thus gave their Guru Dakshina by fulfilling Guru Dronacharya's desire.

Dronacharya had an expertise in use of weapons and other military and warfare skills. He was also an excellent teacher in those subjects. He taught Pandavas everything he knew and made them brave warriors. Pandavas too were good students who loved and respected their Guru Dronacharya. They have set a very good example for Guru-Shishya relationship. Shall we try to be a good student like Pandavas?





Characters from Mahabharata

Yudhishtir

Mahabharata:

Mahabharata is one of the greatest epics of Hindus. The core event of the Mahabharata is the great war that was fought on the field of Kurukshetra between Pandavas and Kauravas. The war was the culmination of a long history of struggle and diplomatic maneuvering, and it involved virtually every kingdoms in India at the time.

Pandavas:

Pandavas are the five sons of King Pandu and Kauravas are the hundred sons of King Dhritarashtra. The five Pandavas were - Yudhishtir, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva. Pandavas and Kauravas were step-brothers. Kauravas made several attempts to cheat and harm Pandavas. But all their attempts failed as truth and Dharma were on Pandavas side. At last Pandavas defeated Kauravas and their evil forces in the Mahabharata war and established a Dharma (Righteousness) again.

Yudhishtir:

Yudhishtir was the eldest son of the King Pandu and Kunti. He was first of the Pandavas. Other Pandavas - Bhima, Arjuna, Nakul and Sahadev were his younger brothers. He was born because of the blessings given to Kunti by DharmaRaj. That is why Yudhishtir is also known as DharmaRaj.

Since childhood, Yudhishtir was very quiet in nature, simple and patient. He always used to speak truth. Just like other Pandavas he also learnt from Guru Dronacharya. His favourite weapon was spear. He was very good at it. He was not known as a warrior, but he was quite well known for intellectual debate, politics, diplomacy and king's duties. His character was an extremely spiritually developed and is continuously growing. His ideals are not worldly, but spiritual.

Yudhishtir was married to Draupadi. He was also married to Devika who was a daughter of a tribe. Yudhishtir loved his younger brothers. Alongwith his brothers, he faced many unfair and unjust events in his life. But he was quiet and patient in all

circumstances. He never ever lost a temper. Though his step-brothers Kauravas tried to insult and harm him and his brothers, he never developed bitterness about them. In fact, when a group of Gandharvas captured Kauravas, he asked his brothers Bhima and Arjuna to go after the Gandharvas, fight with them and release Kauravas. Bhima and Arjuna did the same though reluctantly. But still Kauravas never learnt a lesson!

In those days, warriors and royal people used to play a game of dice (gambling) for a fun and entertainment. Yudhishtir was a royal prince, but he was against of this game. According to him, this game would lead to a quarrel, enmity, brawl and nothing but a damage. No intellectual person would play it. He opposed it all the time. But when his step-father Dhritarashtra sent him an invitation to play this game with Kauravas, he himself could not refuse it because he did not want to disobey his own father's command. That would be against the Dharma (righteousness).

Yudhishtir played a game of dice with Kauravas and they cheated him. He never had any interest or a slightest knowledge of gambling. He never played it before. He also knew that he was being cheated, still he kept playing as it was king Dhritarashtra's command (order). At last, he lost everything to them and as a result he had to go the forest for thirteen years along with his brothers and wife Draupadi. He had a fear that after going back to the kingdom after thirteen years of exile, King Dhritarashtra would again invite him for a gambling. So he learnt it and acquires equestrian knowledge from Muni Brihadshva.

Pandavas again showed up in the kingdom after exile. Kauravas rejected Pandavas rights on the kingdom. Yudhishtir didn't want a fuss with Kauravas for a kingdom. So he gave up his rights on the kingdom and demanded just five villages. But when Kauravas refused to give anything at all, Yudhishtir and other Pandavas didn't have any choice but to go to the war.

After the Mahabharata war, Yudhishtir became the emperor. He brought back the law and order in his kingdom. He ruled it according to the Dharma (righteousness). Scholars say that there are many forms of dharma and it manifests itself in different forms in different people. Some one's dharma may be in truth, another's in actions (karma), another's in obedience, in service, in keeping their word etc. Yudhishtir's dharma was in his truth, and in fulfilling the wishes of elders. He always spoke the truth in all his lifetime. In course of time, all Pandavas retired to Himalayas and departed the world. But when Yudhishtir's time came, he was directly taken to the heaven. He was indeed an exceptional character of the Mahabharata.





Guru Dakshina Hundi

Material:

Disposable cup 5oz or more, any color foam sheet, permanent markers, (waterproof paint optional), Tackt glue or hot glue, scissors, cutter and anything more for decoration...

Procedure:

Trace the mouth of the cup on the foam sheet so as to draw a good circle, Cut about 1mm outside the circle. Draw a rectangle 4cm/7mm at the centre of the foam disc. Using adult help cut the rectangle out.using a cutter Now you have a slot to put your coins/bills! Decorate using markers.

Decorate the cup with permanent markers or with paints or by sticking cutouts or stickers. Put lots of Tacky glue or hot glue around the rim of the cup and stick the foam disc so as to cover the cup. Your Hundi or savings bank is ready for Guru Dakshina Utsav!!

Variation:

You can reuse any jar or container for this project like snack containers, food cans (those safely cut) etc



-: Exercise :-

Fill up the blanks

- 1) Guru _____ was Kauravas and Pandavas Guru.
a) Vasishtha b) Dronacharya c) Bheeshma d) None of these
- 2) Guru Dronacharya's favourite shishya (student) was _____.
a) Arjuna b) Bhima c) Nakula d) None of these
- 3) _____ was Guru Dronacharya's son.
a) Arjuna b) Ashwatthama c) Bheeshma d) None of these
- 4) _____ was the eldest son of the King Pandu and Kunti.
a) Arjuna b) Yudhishtir c) Bhima d) None of these
- 5) Kauravas are _____ and Pandavas are _____.
a) 100 b) 10 c) 5 d) None of these
- 6) Yudhishtir was married to _____.
a) Draupadi b) Subhadra c) Uttara d) None of these

Questions

- 1) Alongwith use of weapons, what did Dronacharya teach his students?

- 2) Dronacharya reluctantly fought in the war in support of Kauravas. Why?

- 3) Why Arjuna was Guru Dronacharya's favourite student?

Shloka

यत्र योगेश्वरः कृष्णो यत्र पार्थो धनुर्धरः ।
तत्र श्रीर्विजयो भूतिर्ध्रुवा नीतिर्मतिर्मम ॥

yatra yogeshwaraH kR^iShNo yatra pArtho dhanurdharaH |

tatra shrIrvijayo bhUtirdhruvA nItirmatirmama ||

Meaning: Wherever there is a Krishna, the Lord of Yoga, and wherever there is Partha (Arjuna), the archer, there will be everlasting prosperity, victory and righteousness; this is my firm conviction.

Subhashitam (Words of wisdom)

उद्यम साहस सत्य नय संस्कृति कला विलास ।

सरस्वति लक्ष्मी तहां अविचल करे निवास ॥

udyama sAhasa satya naya saMskR^iti kala vilAsa |
saraswati lakShmI tahAM avichala kare nivAsa ||

Meaning: Where hard work, courage and truth are the life principles that nourish the culture, literature and art, it is there Goddess Saraswati and Lakshmi make their permanent abodes.

Amrutvachan (Quotes)

“Unless one always speaks the truth, one cannot find God Who is the soul of the truth. One must be very particular about telling the truth. Through truth one can realize God”— **Swami Ramakrishna**



Geet

चल चल बंधो संगस्थानम्
कांक्षसी यदी निज राष्ट्रोत्थानम्

chala chala baMdho saMghasthAnam
kAMxasI yadI nija rAShTrotthAnam

शिशु ओ बालः द्रुढः किशोरः
तरुणः प्रौढः केचित् स्थविरा
यत्र मिलंति प्रियः प्रतिदिनम्

shishu o bAlaH druDhaH kishoraH
taruNaH prauDhaH kechita sthavirA
yatra milaMti priyaH pratidinam

सायम् प्रातः संध्याकाले
निषिदिने अथवा रजनिकाले
यत्र हि नियतम् ध्वजारोहणम्

sAyam prAtaH saMdhyAkAle
niShidine athavA rajanikAle
yatra hi niyatam dhvajArohaNam

योगः व्यायामो बलदायी
सुर्यनमस्कारः शुभदायी
यत्र ही पुर्वजः पुण्यस्मरणम्

yogaH vyAyAmo baladAyI |
suryanamaskAraH shubhadAyI
yatra hI purvajaH puNyasmaraNam





Characters from Mahabharata

Bhima

Mahabharata:

Mahabharata is one of the greatest epics of Hindus. The core event of the Mahabharata is the great war that was fought on the field of Kurukshetra between Pandavas and Kauravas. The war was the culmination of a long history of struggle and diplomatic maneuvering, and it involved virtually every kingdoms in India at the time.

Pandavas:

Pandavas are the five sons of King Pandu and Kauravas are the hundred sons of King Dhritarashtra. The five Pandavas were - Yudhishtir, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva. Pandavas and Kauravas were step-brothers. Kauravas made several attempts to cheat and harm Pandavas. But all their attempts failed as truth and Dharma were on Pandavas side. At last Pandavas defeated Kauravas and their evil forces in the Mahabharata war and established a Dharma (Righteousness) again.

Bhima:

Bhima was the second of the Pandava brothers. Yudhishtir was elder to him and all other Pandavas were younger to him. Just like other Pandavas, he was also brave. He was distinguished from his brothers by his great stature and strength. He was born because of blessings of Vayu (God of the Wind) to his mother Kunti. So in one way, he was a brother of Lord Hanuman.

Since childhood, Bhima was very naughty. Bhima would need lots of food. Half of the food of the family was allotted to him, and the other half sufficed for his four brothers and their mother. He was also a good swimmer. From childhood he had vast body with enormous strength. Once he was playing a game of "hide and seek" with his brothers; Pandavas and Kauravas, Kauravas climbed up on a tree and Bhima ran forward to catch them, but with his heavy body, he could not climb the tree. All Kauravas laughed at him. Angry Bheema pulled up the entire tree from its roots and threw it away, thus making Kauravas hurt.

Unlike Arjuna, Bhima's favourite weapon was club which was well suited for his gigantic personality. He was also second to none in wrestling. Guru Dronacharya and Krishna's elder brother Balarama were his principle Gurus. His main rival was Duryodhana who was constantly jealous about him. Duryodhana made several direct and indirect attempts to kill Bhima and other Pandavas, but Pandavas not only failed all his attempts, but appeared more strong and victorious after every attempt made.

Bhima loved his brothers very much. He always honored his elder brother Yudhishtir and a mother Kunti and obeyed their orders. Because of Yudhishtir's decisions, Bhima and other Pandavas suffered a lot. But nobody showed a disrespect to him. They would obey Yudhishtir no matter whether he was right or wrong. Yudhishtir lost everything to Duryodhana in a game of dice. As a result Pandavas had to go in exile for 13 years. Bhima protected them in all difficult times during exile. With his brothers, he was married to Draupadi. He also married to Hidimba from whom he had a son - Ghatotkacha.

Bhima was little arrogant and overconfident. Hanuman wanted to teach him a lesson for his own good. Once, he transforms himself into a frail old monkey and lies blocking Bhima's path. Bhima approaches the old monkey and asks him to move away from his path. The monkey replies that he is too old to move but Bhima could move his tail out of the way and proceed. But Bhima fails to move the monkey's tail even with his legendary strength. Realizing this is not an ordinary monkey, Bhima requests him to reveal himself. Hanuman appears in his true form and advices him to be good

In his lifetime, he killed many demons and wicked kings. Bakasura and his brother Kirmira, Hidimbi, Kichaka, Jarasandha were some of them. During the Mahabharata war, he killed 99 Kauravas including Duryodhana and Dushasana and many other wicked warriors who were on Duryodhana's side. His son Ghatotkacha also fought well and met a brave warrior's death in this war.

Pandavas won the Mahabharata war. Bhima played an important and unforgettable role in this war. Yudhishtir became the emperor and Bhima and Arjuna took the responsibility of protecting the borders. In course of time, Pandavas gave up the kingdom and aristocracies and went to the Himalayas. Soon Pandavas died one after the other. Bhima departed the world after his younger brothers died. Indeed Bhima was an exceptional character in Mahabharata.





Characters from Mahabharata

Arjuna

Mahabharata:

Mahabharata is one of the greatest epics of Hindus. The core event of the Mahabharata is the great war that was fought on the field of Kurukshetra between Pandavas and Kauravas. The battle was the culmination of a long history of struggle and diplomatic maneuvering, and it involved virtually every kingdoms in India (Bharat) at the time.

Pandavas:

The Pandavas are the five sons of King Pandu and Kauravas are the hundred sons of King Dhritarashtra. The five Pandavas were - Yudhishtir, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva. Krishna was their all-time trusted guide, friend and supporter. Pandavas and Kauravas were step-brothers. Kauravas not only attempted to deceive Pandavas time to time but also kill them. But all their attempts failed as truth and Dharma was on Pandavas side. At last Pandavas defeated Kauravas and their evil forces in the Mahabharata war and established a Dharma (Righteousness) again. The two legends pioneered the success for Pandavas. One was Krishna and other was one of the Pandavas - Arjuna.

Arjuna:

Arjuna was the third son of King Pandu. His mother name was Kunti. He was born because of blessings given by Lord Indra to his mother Kunti. He played a significant role in Mahabharata. He was a master archer, great warrior, sensitive, thoughtful and a faithful brother. He is known by various names. Some of his names are Phaalguna, Keerti, Vijaya, Paarth and Dhananjaya.

Arjuna was an outstanding and diligent student. He was a favourite student of his Guru Dronacharya. He learnt everything that his guru Dronacharya taught him.

Even after Dronacharya's teachings, he was not satisfied. Instead he continued learning from various sources such as Lord Shiva, Indra and Agni (fire-god). and became the best archer. His concentration on aiming at the target was outstanding. Aiming at the target even in the dark was a piece of cake for him. The name of his bow was Gandiv.

Arjuna was handsome and had a well-rounded personality. He married to four ladies - Draupadi, Subhadra, Ulupi and Chitrangada. In those days, marriages used to happen to establish relationships between two dynasties or kingdoms. Arjuna loved his four brothers. He never ever disregarded his elder brothers - Yudhishtir and Bhima. Because of Yudhishtir's decisions, he and other Pandavas suffered a lot. But nobody showed a disrespect to him. They would obey Yudhishtir no matter whether he was right or wrong. Yudhishtir lost everything to Duryodhana in a game of dice. As a result Pandavas had to go in exile for 13 years. Arjuna spent this time to improve his skills in archery and learn more.

Arjuna played a significant role in the Mahabharata war. He eliminated many renowned warriors such as Bhishma, Karna, Jayadratha without which victory was impossible. Krishna was his charioteer. In the beginning of the war, Arjuna was quite depressed when he saw his own relatives and respected warriors that include his own Guru - Dronacharya and grand father - Bhishma who were fighting from Kaurava's side against him. He didn't want to fight with his own relatives just for the kingdom. But Krishna convinced him that it is his duty to fight to uphold righteousness without looking into personal relations or personal loss. He cleared his doubts and made him prepare for the war. The dialogues between Krishna and Arjuna are referred as Bhagavad-Geeta. In the war, Krishna not only guided him time to time but also protected him on numerous occasions from injuries and death. Arjuna's son Abhimanyu also fought well but finally killed by Kauravas treacherously.

After the conclusion of war, Yudhishtir became the emperor and Arjuna and Bhima took the responsibility of protecting the borders of his kingdom. In course of time, Pandavas gave up the kingdom and aristocracies and went to the Himalayas. Soon Pandavas died one after the other. Arjuna departed the world after his younger brothers died. Indeed Arjuna was an exceptional character in Mahabharata.





Characters from Mahabharata

Nakula and Sahadeva

Mahabharata:

Mahabharata is one of the greatest epics of Hindus. The core event of the Mahabharata is the great war that was fought on the field of Kurukshetra between Pandavas and Kauravas. The battle was the culmination of a long history of struggle and diplomatic maneuvering, and it involved virtually every kingdoms in India (Bharat) at the time.

Pandavas:

The Pandavas are the five sons of King Pandu and Kauravas are the hundred sons of King Dhritarashtra. The five Pandavas were - Yudhishtir, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, and Sahadeva. Krishna was their all-time trusted guide, friend and supporter. Pandavas and Kauravas were step-brothers. Kauravas not only attempted to deceive Pandavas time to time but also kill them. But all their attempts failed as truth and Dharma was on Pandavas side. At last Pandavas defeated Kauravas and their evil forces in the Mahabharata war and established a Dharma (Righteousness) again.

Nakula and Sahadeva

Nakula and Sahadeva were the youngest two of the five Pandavas. They were, in fact, Pandu's second wife Madri's sons but raised by Kunti along with her three sons. Nakula and Sahadeva were twins and were born as blessings of twin gods - Ashwin to the mother Kunti.

Of the five Pandavas, Sahadeva was the youngest. It is said that he was

wisest amongst all Pandavas. Yudhishtir often spoke about him as wiser than Brihaspati, the teacher of Gods. He used to take Sahadeva's advice whenever required. Sahadeva was also great astrologer.

Nakula was fourth of the five Pandavas. He was younger to Yudhishtir, Bhima and Arjuna and elder to Sahadeva. He was very attractive. Since he was handsome, he was compared to Kamdeva. He was also quite observant. It is said that he used to keep a watchful eye on his elder brother Bhima's mischievous pranks.

Nakula and Sahadeva both were excellent swordsmen. They learnt their weapons from Guru Dronacharya. They were also known for their excellent horse-riding skills. Along with other Pandavas, both also married to Draupadi and each had a son by her.

Yudhishtir as an elder brother used to take special care of Nakula and Sahadeva. During their exile, when all other four brothers died after drinking water from a lake, Yudhishtir chose Sahadeva and Nakula first to bring them back to life. He didn't differentiate between step-brothers and blood-brothers.

Shakuni, Kaurava's uncle, tricked Pandavas and made their life miserable. He was one of the culprits for the Mahabharata war. Sahadeva vowed to punish him and he killed him on the second-last day of the war.

After winning the war, Yudhishtir became the emperor. He chose Nakula-Sahadeva as his bodyguards. And after their mother Kunti's sad demise, Nakula-Sahadeva were the ones who did last rites for her.

Nakula-Sahadeva might not be having a strong personality unlike their elder brothers - Yudhishtir, Bhima and Arjuna, but they were good supporters. The way Lakshmana supported Shri Rama everywhere, Nakula-Sahadeva supported Yudhishtir everywhere. They will surely be remembered along with other three Pandavas.





Wall Hanging (Krishna Picture)

Material: 6"/4" Shri Krishna picture printed on photo paper, sequins, 1 skewer stick, one A4 size sheet of dark blue felt, 1.5' yarn or any string, glue, scissors.(optional-hot glue)

Procedure:

1. Fold 1" of the width side of felt and glue so as to leave openings for the skewer stick to pass through.
2. Make cuts on the other end about 1" long and 1/4" apart to look like a fringe.
3. Cut the pointed end of the skewer stick and pass it thru the fold of the felt.
4. Now tie the two ends of yarn to the two ends of the skewer. Tie double knots. This way it secures the skewer from coming out and also useful to hang our project on wall or in pooja ghar.
5. Glue the Shri Krishna picture on the centre of the felt.
6. Decorate around the picture with sequins.



Variation: If having the picture on photo paper is not possible then use regular paper and stick the picture on foam sheet about the same size and then stick on the felt. Just thin picture will not look good for this project. If smaller picture is used then use smaller size of felt.

Use your creativity in decorating the project. Older kids can try sticking sequins on the the pic itself as the jewellery of Shri Krishna.



-: Exercise :-

Fill up the blanks

- 1) Mahabharata war was fought on the field of _____.
a) Hastinapur b) Kurukshetra c) Indraprastha d) None of these
- 2) _____ was younger to Yudhishtir and elder to Arjuna.
a) Nakula b) Bhima c) Sahadeva d) None of these
- 3) Bhima's favourite weapon was _____. Arjuna's favourite weapon was _____.
a) Bow-Arrow b) Club c) Trishul d) None of these
- 4) The dialogues between Arjuna and Krishna are referred as _____.
a) Ramayana b) Bhagavad-Geeta c) Bhagavat d) None of these

Identify True or False

- 1) Abhimanyu was Arjuna's son.
- 2) Krishna was Pandavas friend and supporter.
- 3) Duryodhana and Dushasana were among the Kauravas.
- 4) Mahabharata war was mainly fought between Kauravas and Pandavas.

Questions:

- 1) What is Bhagavad-Geeta?

- 2) Why was Arjuna depressed in the beginning of the war?

Shloka

नमस्समस्तभुतानां आदिभूताय भूमृते ।
अनेकरुपरुपाय विष्णवे प्रभविष्णवे ॥

namassamastabhutAnAM aadibhUtAya bhUbhR^ite |
anekaruparupAya viShNave prabhaviShNave ||

Meaning: Salutations to Lord Vishnu, who is the creator of all beings, the sustainer of the creation, whose forms is all forms, who is all pervasive, and who is self-effulgent.

Subhashitam (Words of wisdom)

यथा चित्तं तथा वाचो यथा वाचस्तथा क्रियाः ।
चित्ते वाचि क्रियायां च साधुनामेकरुपता ॥

yathA chittaM tathA vAcho yathA vAchastathA kriyAH |
chitte vAchi kriyAyAM cha sAdhunAmekarupatA ||

Meaning: As one thinks, so should one speak; and as one speaks, so should one act. For good people there is uniformity between thought, speech and action.

Amrutvachan (Quotes)

Spontaneous love and compassionate service for the poor in society is held up as the highest form of worship of God. The spirit of selfless social service which makes for the uplift of the needy and deprived sections is thus transformed into a spiritual saadhanaa.

- Ma. Kai. H. V. Seshadri



Geet

चल चल बंधो संगस्थानम्
कांक्षसी यदी निज राष्ट्रोत्थानम्

chala chala baMdho saMghasthAnam
kAMxasI yadI nija rAShTrotthAnam

शिशु ओ बालः द्रुढः किशोरः
तरुणः प्रौढः केचित् स्थविरा
यत्र मिलन्ति प्रियः प्रतिदिनम्

shishu o bAlaH druDhaH kishoraH
taruNaH prauDhaH kechita sthavirA
yatra milaMti priyaH pratidinam

सायम् प्रातः संध्याकाले
निषिदिने अथवा रजनिकाले
यत्र हि नियतम् ध्वजारोहणम्

sAyam prAtaH saMdhyAkAle
niShidine athavA rajanikAle
yatra hi niyatam dhwajArohaNam

योगः व्यायामो बलदायी
सुर्यनमस्कारः शुभदायी
यत्र ही पुर्वजः पुण्यस्मरणम्

yogaH vyAyAmo baladAyI |
suryanamaskAraH shubhadAyI
yatra hI purvajaH puNyasmaraNam





Holy Rivers and Mountains of Bharat

Suranjan had to go to Bharat (India) during his Summer vacation to his grand-parents place. It had become a routine in his life to spend his Summer Holidays in his small town near Haridwar, situated on the banks of river Ganga. He would go to temple every day with his grand-parents. He used to see many people taking bath in holy Ganga with high respect and devotion. Suranjan also used to hear a shloka that he learnt in his Balagokulam back in Michigan which goes like this: *“Gange cha Yamune chaiva, Godavari, Saraswati, Narmade, Sindu kaveri, jalesmin Sannidhim Kuru.”* Suranjan knew that those are the names of rivers, but curiously he asked dadaji, *“Dadaji, What is the meaning of that Shloka? Why are people here chanting it before and while taking bath in the river of Ganga?”*

Dadaji smilingly said to Suranjan, *“Today evening, I will take you to one place and you can see for yourself.”* So that day evening dadaji and Suranjan went to Hari ki paudi situated in Haridwar, on the banks of river Ganga. Suranjan saw a huge crowd of people getting ready to do arati and there was a festive touch in the whole atmosphere. Till then Suranjan had seen and participated in the Arati, but to specific god like Krishna, Shiva, Ram like that. But here he could not see any idol anywhere. So his curiosity increased. After few minutes arati started and he saw all the people during arati to river Ganga. He witnessed the whole crowd immersed in the devotion and Suranjan too felt it in his heart. He too like others performed arati to Ganga. While returning he had many question in his mind which he started asking to his Dadaji, *“Dadaji, why do we do arati to river Ganga?”* Dadaji started explaining, *“We Hindus worship nature and try to preserve it. This practice is being followed by us from thousands of years so that we don't exploit the nature and therefore out of gratitude, we worship trees, rivers and even adore Mountains which plays a prominent role in the existence of human race.”* Suranjan was satisfied with Dadaji's answer. But he was still curious to know more about it.

Next day in the morning Suranjan was searching for some comic books in the shelf of his uncle and he found an old map of Bharat lying there. He opened the map and started tracing all the rivers and montains that he knew and started marking it. He traced Ganga which was flowing from Himalayas through the Northern Plains and joining Ganga Sagar (Bay of Bengal). Also he could trace Yamuna, “Kaveri” flowing in the South, “Godavari” in the east, “Narmada” in the West, “Sindhu” river

flowing through the northern State of Kashmir but couldn't find the river "Saraswati" anywhere in the map. So he took the map to his Dadaji who was busy reading his newspaper and asked him, "Dadaji, I cannot find the river Saraswati anywhere in this map." Dadaji said, "River Saraswati existed thousands of years ago. Hindu Civilization thrived and evolved on the banks of that river. But later river Saraswati dried up and now many Scientists are researching on where the river flowed." At that time Suranjan's friends called him and he ran to the playground with his friends.

After a couple of days Suranjan's uncle came up with an exciting idea of trekking of Himalayan Mountains. Suranjan was so excited that he at once agreed and they started on their trekking trail towards Himalayan valleys from a base which was like a four-hour drive from his hilly village town. On his trekking trail, Suranjan saw many Sadhus and saffron-clad Sanyasis on the way who were either meditating or preparing some medicinal pastes with herbs and plants. On their way, Suranjan's uncle explained him that: Himalayan mountains play an important role strategically as well as geographically and climatically. Himalayas act as a natural barrier between Bharat and China, and at the same time play an important role in the monsoon of Gangetic plains of Bharat. He further continued: Like Himalayas, there are many mountains in Bharat like "Sahyadri", "Vindhyanchal", "Satpura" and "Poorvanchal".

After walking a few more miles Suranjan could see the snow-clad mountains and his joy knew no bounds. The serene mountains of Himalayas were so inviting that he remarked "This is like paradise on earth". They took a break at the banks of river "Alaknanda" for a quick snack.

They further continued their trekking the rest of the day and reached their home very late in the night. Next day morning when he woke up, he overheard his dadaji reciting Ekatmata mantra "Mahendra, Malyah, Sahya, Devatatma Himalaya, Devo Raivatako Vindhya, Girishcharaavali sthathah" which were nothing but names of mountains of Bharat. "What a beautiful way of remembering the names of mountains" Suranjan wondered in his mind.

Days passed, Suranjan learnt more and more about Ganga, Himalayas and many other stories associated with them. And the day came when summer vacations were over and he had to return back to his home in US. This time he had so many things, stories, facts about Bharat that he was looking forward to share with his friends in US. He, with a heavy heart bid farewell to his grand parents and uncle with a promise of returning next year to have another eventful summer time.





Story of Karna

Karna was the son of Kunti from the Sun God. When Kunti, while still very young, had the opportunity to serve Rishi (sage) Durvasa. She looked after him with great dedication. Durvasa was highly pleased. He gave Kunti a mantra (chant) and said that whichever God she would think of after reciting the mantra, would appear before her and bless her with a son endowed with his own godly qualities.

Out of curiosity, Kunti tried the mantra and remembered Suryadev, the Sun God. Suryadev appeared in his dazzling glory. Kunti got scared and wanted the Sun God to go away, but he pleaded his helplessness against the power of mantra. Karna was born with a kavach and a kundal (armor which would make him invincible). Kunti was nevertheless afraid of social stigma and therefore she abandoned the child. She put Karna in a basket and placed the same in the Ganga river, the basket was seen by Adhirath, a charioteer. He picked up the baby and brought him up.

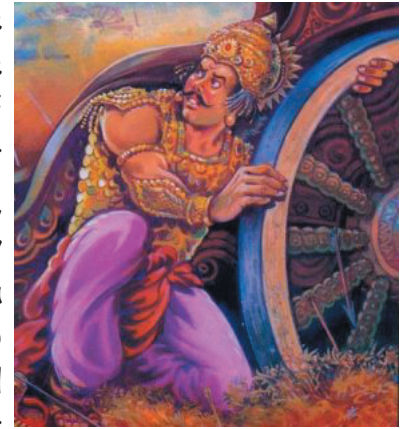
Kunti was later married to Maharaj Pandu. One day when Pandu had gone for hunting, he killed a deer with an arrow. The Rishi cursed Pandu that he would similarly die whenever he would go near his wife. Maharaj Pandu retired to the forest and started living a life of abstinence. At this stage, Kunti confided in him the blessing given by Rishi Durvasa. Pandu encouraged her to use the mantras. That is how her other sons Yudhishtir, Bhim and Arjuna were born. Nakula and Sahadeva were born from Madri, Pandu's other wife.

Karna was keen to acquire the Brahmastra mantra from the great teacher Parshuram. However, he knew that Parshuram gave instructions to Brahmins (the priestly tribe) only. He disguised as a Brahmin and requested Parshuram to accept him as a shishya (disciple). Parshuram accepted him as such and started giving him instructions. One day when Parshuram was resting in Karna's lap, it so happened that a bee stung Karna on the lower portion of his thigh. It was very painful and he started bleeding. However, fearing that if he moved his legs, he would awaken Parshuram, he did not move at all and continued to suffer. When Parshuram woke up, he saw Karna bleeding. He asked, "Son, tell me truthfully who you are? A Brahmin cannot suffer so much physical pain. Only a kshatriya (the warrior tribe) can endure so much discomfort." Karna was obliged to disclose his identity. Parshuram was greatly annoyed because he was a sworn enemy of Kshatriyas. He therefore cursed Karna that as he had learnt through deceit, he shall forget the vidya (skill) which Parshuram had taught him at the

crucial juncture.

Duryodhan and his 99 brothers were jealous and sworn enemies of their cousins, the Pandava brothers (King Panadava's sons). Meanwhile Duryodhan, the son of Pandus brother (and now king) Dhritrashtra patronized Karna and made him the king of Angadesh. Duryodhan, in fact, built him up as a counterbalance to Arjuna. On the eve of the famous Mahabharata battle, Lord Indra, the rain God and king of heavens, disguised as an old Brahmin went to Karna and asked for his Kavach and Kundal in daan (donation). Indra was apprehensive that Karna, by virtue of his phenomenal skills as a warrior, may be able to overwhelm Arjuna. He therefore asked for this gift so as to reduce his strength. Karna had been cautioned by the Sun God that Lord Indra was going to make some such move. But Karna was so large hearted that he could not refuse anyone. Knowing fully well, that Indra was playing a trick on him disguised as a Brahmin, he yet parted with his Kavach and Kundal, which were parts of his body since birth and which made him invincible. Lord Indra was taken aback at Karna's capacity to give away anything asked for. He said, "Karna, what you have done today, no ordinary mortal could have done. I am immensely pleased with your generosity. You can ask for any vardaana (boon)." Karna said, "If you are really pleased with me, then you may kindly give me your weapon Shakti which has the potential to destroy any enemy." Lord Indra gave Shakti to Karna with the condition that he could use it only once and that thereafter the weapon shall return to him (Lord Indra).

Parshuram's curse was to prove Karna's undoing. At the Kurukshetra war, when face to face with Arjun, Karna forgot the Brahmastra mantra taught to him by Parshuram. The wheels of his chariot sank in soft earth and he was immobilized. At that time, Arjun defeated him. While Karna was on his deathbed, Lord Indra and Surya had a dispute regarding Karna's generosity and to settle the same they came disguised as beggars. Karna responded to the beggars by saying that he had nothing left to give, to which the beggars replied that he still had some gold in his tooth which would be valuable to them. On realizing that fact, Karna took a stone and broke the tooth with the gold and gave it to the beggars, exemplify the "way of life" he led.



That was the end of Karna, one of the greatest warriors of Mahabharata who was also the greatest daanveer (person of charity). He was a man who would never refuse the request for any gift or donation, howsoever costly that might be and irrespective of the consequences of giving to his own well being or security.





The Great King Bharat

There lived a great great King Bharat in ancient times. He belonged to Puru dynasty. He was an ancestor of Kaurava and Pandavas. India's original and true name, Bharat (which is pronounced as Bhaarat), is named after him.

Story of Bharat's birth:

Bharat was a son of Shakuntala and Dushyant. Dushyant was the king of Hastinapur and Shakuntala had been found and raised by Kanva rishi and his wife. Once while hunting in the forest, Dushyant came to Kanva's ashram and saw Shakuntala. He fell in love with her. Shakuntala too fell in love with the king and they got married. Dushyant had to leave for his kingdom. He gave Shakuntala a royal ring as a sign of their love and promised her that he would come later and take her to Hastinapur. Shakuntala missed him very much.

Time passed by. Shakuntala waited for the king Dushyant for a very long time. Wondering why did he not return, she then finally set out to go to the Hastinapur and meet Dushyant. She also took the royal ring with her so that Dushyant could recognize her. On her way to Hastinapur, she crossed a river. Unfortunately while crossing a river, her ring slipped off her finger without her realizing it.

Shakuntala reached Hastinapur to see the king. But king Dushyant, being engaged in his duties, completely forgot her. He did not even recognise her when she came to see him. Humiliated Shakuntala had no place to go. She did not want to return to her father's ashram. So she started living in sage Marich's ashram. Here, unknown to Dushyant, Shakuntala gave birth to a son named Bharat.

Bharat was a very brave child. He was not afraid of anyone or anything. He played with wild animals everyday. Opening wild animals' such as lion's mouth and counting their teeth were his favourite games.

Meanwhile, a fisherman found a royal ring lost by Shakuntala. He returned it to the King Dushyant. Upon seeing the ring, his memories came back to him. He remembered about his relationship with Shakuntala. He immediately set out to

find her but could not.

Once, Dushyant happened to pass by the ashram. He watched a little boy playing with a lion. The boy opened the lion's jaws by his hands and said, "O king of the jungle ! Open your mouth wide, so I can count your teeth." Dushyant was very astonished by the child's bravery. Later Shakuntala came out of the ashram and saw Dushyant. Both overjoyed seeing each other. Shakuntala told him that Bharat is nobody but his son. Extremely happy Dushyant hugged Bharat. Dushyant then took Shakuntala and Bharat along with him to Hastinapur.



After Dushyant, Bharat was crowned as a king of Hastinapur. He was unquestionably the greatest king of this land. As mentioned earlier, after him the country came to be known as Bhaarat. He was Chakravarti, literally meaning "turner of the wheel". This term used for a successful or imperial ruler of all. Being the most illustrious king of the dynasty, he expanded the empire greatly and was widely respected by everyone.

King Bharat had three wives and nine sons. But none of his sons seemed fit to rule after him. Bharat was worried about the future of his kingdom. So, he adopted a capable child, Bharadwaja and declared him as his heir. Bharadwaja later succeeded the king Bharat.

King Bharat's time has been one of the greatest and golden times in Indian history. He has been remembered and will be remembered generations to generations for his greatness.



Ganesha Image

Material: Play dough, Black beads, Craft knife, Toothpicks, paper plate, Plastic to cover the work area.

Procedure

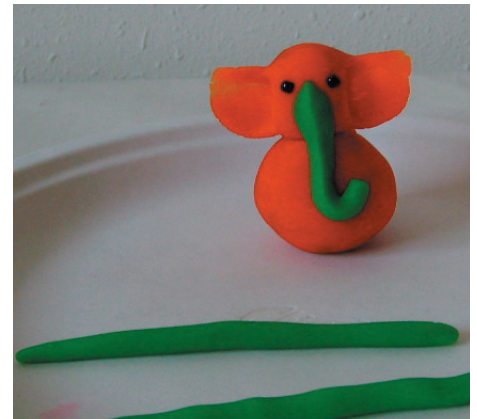
Take the Play dough. Soften and smoothen it by kneading and rolling it in your hands.

Make two balls by the play dough (same color). One ball of 2" diameter and another ball of about 1" diameter. Now join the balls together by pressing and blending the play dough, the bigger ball (2") makes the belly of Ganesha and the smaller ball (1") the head.



Trunk, Eyes and Ears

Make a ball of 3/8" diameter and coil it with your palms, then attach it as trunk of Ganesha. Take two black beads and press them into play dough to make eyes of Ganesha. Make ears of Ganesha, by pull the play dough at the side of the head with your thumb and forefinger. With the help of toothpick make three small lines in the ears.

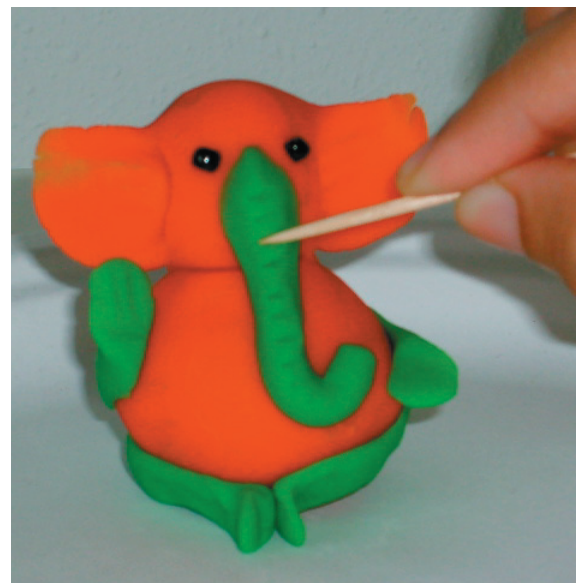


Hands and Legs

Make two balls of 1/2" diameter.

Take the balls and by rolling them into your palms make coils of both balls. Attach by pressing the coils to the body as hands and legs.

Press the ends of the coil with your thumb and finger to flatten them a little. Make fingers in hands and legs by making lines with the help of toothpick.



Jewellery

Make a ball of 3/8 "diameter. Flatten the ball a little and with the help of your fingers and thumb make a crown for Ganesha.

Beads and toothpick can also be used to decorate the crown. Attach the crown to the head of Ganesha.

Make another ball of 3/8" diameter and roll the play dough into a coil. Blend and smooth ends together and garland it Ganesha. You can decorate it with toothpick to make it more beautiful.

Mouse (the vahana of Ganesha)

Make another ball of 3/8" diameter. Pinch the ball with your thumb and finger from one side. Press the clay from sides to make his ears. Attach a small coil for his tail. Take a toothpick and make two holes for his eyes and one for his mouth.

Plate of Laddoos

Now as our Ganesha would need something to eat we can make a plate with lots of laddoos. Make a ball of 3/8" diameter. Pressing it in the middle with the help of your finger and thumb, so that it is a little thin in the center with its edges thicker. Make tiny balls from the play dough to make as laddoo's for our Ganesha and place them on the plate. Place one laddoo in left hand of Ganesha also. Place your Ganesha on a paper plate and let it dry for a day.

So!! Here is your beautiful Ganesha ready to go into your pooja room.

Tips: You can use two or more colors of play dough to make the image. Also you can use some paints to decorate the Ganeshji instead of beads.

All the best!! Be creative!!



-: Exercise :-

Fill up the blanks

- 1) Karna's mother was _____.
a) Kunti b) Draupadi c) Madri d) None of these
- 2) _____ was the mother of Nakula and Sahadeva.
a) Kunti b) Madri c) Subhadra d) None of these
- 3) The name of King Bharata's adopted son _____.
a) Bharadwaja b) Nakula c) Sahadeva d) None of these

Identify True or False

- 1) Draupadi was the wife of all Pandavas.
- 2) Karna was one of the Kauravas.
- 3) Dushyant and Shakuntala were king Bharata's parents.
- 4) India's true and original name is Bharat (or Bhaarat).
- 5) King Bharata was Kauravas/Pandavas ancestor.
- 6) Karna acquired Brahmashtra-mantra from Durvasa.
- 7) Karna was raised by a charioteer Adhiratha.
- 8) Karna was famous for his greediness.
- 9) Yudhishtir, Bhima, Arjuna, Nakula, Sahadeva were 5 Pandavas.

Questions

- 1) Name atleast 4 mountains of Bharat.

- 2) Name atleast 4 holy rivers of Bharat.
