

Hinduism glossary

These are useful as specialist vocabulary to improve your marks in c) and d) questions.

Ashrama A stage of life.

Bhagavad Gita The Song of Krishna, one of the most important Hindu scriptures.

Brahman The ultimate reality.

Dharma Religious duty.

Gandhi A great Hindu thinker and leader of the non-violent independence movement in India.

Gunas The qualities of goodness, passion and ignorance.

Guru A spiritual teacher.

Hijras A caste of men who behave as women as a sign of their devotion to Parvati.

Iskcon The International Society for Krishna Consciousness, a Hindu group often known as Hare Krishna.

Karma Actions or deeds, often called the law of cause and effect.

Krishna An avatar (descent to Earth) of the God Vishnu.

Laws of Manu An ancient scripture of instructions on how Hindus should live.

Mandir A Hindu temple.

Moksha Release from the cycle of rebirth.

Nirvana The state after moksha about which Hindus have different views.

Parvati The mother goddess.

Puja Worship.

Samsara The eternal cycle of birth, life, death and rebirth.

Sarvodaya Gandhi's idea that progress should be for all strata of society.

Shiva One of the principal deities of Hinduism.

Shruti scriptures The Vedas and Upanishads, regarded as authoritative by many Hindus.

Smriti scriptures Less authoritative scriptures including the Ramayana and Mahabharata Epics.

Swami A religious teacher.

Swaminarayan A Hindu group also known as BAPS (Worldwide Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Swaminarayan Sanstha).

Tantric tradition An unorthodox form of Hinduism concerned with acquiring spiritual power and liberation by discovering one's inner divinity.

Upanishads Hindu scriptures that explain the Vedas.

Vahara Purana One of the eighteen Puranas (stories based on the Vedas).

Vedas The first Hindu scriptures.

Virashaivas A Hindu group following Vishnu.