

KSHATRIYA BACKGROUND

CASTE: Kshatriyas are the second-highest class, in between Vaishyas and Brahmins. If they create good Karma in their lifetime, they can be reincarnated as a Brahmin or as another Kshatriya.

The main goal of Kshatriyas is to protect the people. Today, Kshatriyas still have the duty to govern and protect. You might see modern Kshatriyas who are governors, mayors, or part of the military.



JOBS:

**SOLDIERS – WARRIORS – POLITICAL LEADERS
GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS**

Kshatriyas might wear clothing that has to do with their jobs – wartime clothes for militia men and political uniforms for leaders.

PRIMARY SOURCE: THE BHAGAVAD GITA

The most famous Kshatriya is Arjuna, the main character of a book of Hindu scripture called the Bhagavad Gita. Arjuna is a great warrior who is helped in battle by a god named Krishna. At one point, Arjuna starts to feel guilty about killing men in battle and informs Krishna about how he is feeling. Krishna then tells Arjuna how important it is to fulfil the duty of his Kshatriya caste:

“Do thy part!

Be mindful of thy name, and tremble not!

Nothing better can happen to a warrior's soul

Than lawful war; the warrior is happy

Who gets to fight in battle - war comes, as now,

Glorious and fair, unsought; opening for him

A gateway unto Heav'n. But, if thou shunn'st

This honorable field

If, knowing thy Kshatriya duty and thy task, thou

Thou does not fight - that shall be sin!”



Kshatriya

Instructions

1. Read the “Kshatriya Background” document & fill out the Kshatriya section in your notes.
2. Read the Primary Source from the Bhagavad Gita.
3. Partner Discussion on primary source:
 - The 2 members of the group with the next birthdays answer this question: Based on this quote, what is the duty of a Kshatriya?
 - The 2 members of the group who had the most recent birthdays answer this question: Who is saying this and who are they saying it to? What does this teach us about Hindu beliefs?
 - Everyone else, answer this question: What does this quote teach us about the importance of doing your caste duty?
4. Group discussion: after discussing your question with your small group, share your answers with the entire table.