

Introduction:

This context for learning explores the story of the Ramayana to develop Higher Order Thinking and Communication Skills. This learning experience aims to develop the following **Learning Intentions**:

- I can recall the main points of the story
- I can retell the story in my own words
- I can make links between the story and celebrations during Diwali
- I can offer an analysis of different aspects of the story and their meanings for Hindus
- I can consider how key features of the story are linked to contemporary events/situations
- I can imaginatively engage with one or more characters from the story
- I can offer my personal reflections on aspects of and themes from the story
- I can create a product which summarises my learning about the Ramayana

Prior learning:

Learners will already be familiar with a range of stories and are likely to be able to explain that stories can have various levels of meaning.

They are also likely to be able to explain that a variety of meanings can be taken from stories in different ways by different people.

Learners may also be aware of different genres of stories at this stage of learning, and be able to show that they understand this.

Learners will also have reflected upon a range of stories in relation to their meaning for them – they will be able to explain how stories can help people make sense of things.

Skills:

- Exploring
- Reflecting
- Critical thinking
- Discussing
- Listening
- Explaining
- Clarifying
- Questioning
- Collaborating
- Evaluating
- Describing
- Presenting

Possible relevant Experiences and Outcomes:

Religious and Moral Education:

- As I explore stories, images, music and poems, I am becoming familiar with the beliefs of the world religions I am learning about **RME 0-04a**
- Through exploring stories from world religions, I can describe some of their key beliefs **RME 1-04a**
- I can talk about my own beliefs, or express them in other ways **RME 1-04c**
- Having explored stories from world religions, I can show my developing understanding of key values of those faiths and how they might be put into action in people's lives and communities **RME 1-05a**
- I can describe the key features of the values of world religions which are expressed in stories **RME 1-05b**
- I am becoming aware of the importance of celebrations, festivals and customs in religious people's lives **RME 0-06a**
- I am developing respect for others and my understanding of their beliefs and values **RME 0-07a / 1-07a / RME 2-07a / RME 3-07a / RME 4-07a**
- I can show my understanding of values such as caring, sharing, fairness, equality and love **RME 1-09b**
- I am becoming aware that people's beliefs and values affect their actions **RME 1-09c**

Learning experience: The Ramayana

Introduction:

The Ramayana is a popular story within Hinduism and has religious/spiritual and cultural aspects within Hinduism. The story helps Hindus to understand and explore a number of key concepts such as loyalty, courage, faithfulness. It also has links to cultural celebrations in India such as Diwali and Dusshera. This learning experience sequence familiarises learners with the story, its content and characters and allows them to begin to develop a basic analysis of the story. It also helps learners to reflect upon the messages in the story and how the story fits into beliefs and practices within Hinduism.

Possible learning opportunities/tasks:

- Learners can be shown pictures from the Ramayana and discuss what they think is happening. Role Play/Story – The teacher will read out the story of the Ramayana whilst asking learners to act out different parts. They should give learners roles such as Rama, Sita, Hanuman, Ravana etc. as the story progresses. Learners as a class can mime the different parts of the stories. A question and answer session can then take place to engage learners in thinking about the story. Questions such as why is this happening? What do you think will happen next? Why did this character do this? What would you do next if you were Rama? How do you think this character is feeling? Plenary: As a class, learners will place the pictures of the stories on an interactive whiteboard (or an ordinary whiteboard) in the right order.
- How many of the characters can the class remember? Can they retell the story? As a class learners should decide on the 8 main points of the story. Learners should create a comic strip using the 8 main points decided as a class. These should be annotated. Learners will then be invited to explain which part of the story they think was the most important and why.
- Question session with learners to prompt thinking about why the story is so important for Hindus. ‘What If?’ activity: In groups of 3, learners to discuss the 5 statements and what would have changed in the story should these things have happened? Just a minute: Learners invited to speak for a minute about the Ramayana without repetition or hesitation. Alternatively, this could be focused more through inviting learners to talk for a minute about Rama, Sita, Ravana etc.
- Show a video clip of Diwali celebrations. Learners will be invited to identify any features of the celebrations they think are linked to the Ramayana story. Discussion around how each character in the story is treated during Diwali celebrations and what this treatment says about Hindu beliefs concerning their role in the story. Learners could also discuss similar celebrations in UK culture – e.g. Guy Fawkes and bonfire night. To develop HOTS further, learners could consider parallels between the Ramayana story/ Diwali celebrations and stories and celebrations they know about. What common themes and differences are there? What does this tell us about human nature, good and evil, courage, loyalty etc.
- Creative task for learners: They will be creating a product for 3-5 year olds teaching them the story of the Ramayana. This is an “Apprentice” style task where they must create a presentation, poster and product design. Learners should also be made aware they will be investing in each other’s products and will need to sell their products to other teams. There are questions to help learners think about their product. Learners can use the self-evaluation questions to evaluate their teamwork. This task should culminate in presentations and groups investing their money into other products. Learners should then peer assess each other’s product.
- Analysis of the Ramayana story in contemporary culture. Now that learners have a deepened level of understanding of the story and its meanings and symbolism, they could be invited to consider how the key messages from the story could be applied in contemporary settings. For example, the loyalty and faithfulness of Sita and Lakshman; the courage of Rama; the friendship of Hanuman etc. Learners could create a graffiti wall here where each characteristic/quality/meaning in the story was displayed and learners are then invited to say how they think this should be applied in a modern setting – for example, “loyalty – you should always stick by your family and your friends”.

Possible Assessment / Evidence:

- Can learners act out parts of the story appropriately?
- Sequencing tasks – can learners correctly sequence images from the story?
- Learner discussion about the story, its characters and messages
- How effectively and clearly can learners retell the story using a variety of methods?
- How far can learners think creatively about the likely effect of possible amendments to the story?
- Learner presentations in the 'Apprentice' style task could be used to assess progress and achievement
- Learners' ability to apply the messages in the Ramayana to contemporary settings