**Reference Sheet**

**Part IV: Reading Skills Part V: Constructed Response Rubric**



Score 0 – No response or the response does not address the prompt

Score 1 – Identifies only one of the four requirements of a level four performance

Score 2 – Fulfills only two of the four requirements of a level four performance

Score 3 – Fulfills only three of the four requirements of a level four performance

Score 4 – Student explains one factor that influences social hierarchies, and provides two similarities between the charts, and describes one negative characteristic of social hierarchies

3

2

1

7

6

5

4

The Ramayana is one of the two great Indian epics, the other being the Mahabharata. The Ramayana tells about life in India around 1000 BCE and offers models in dharma. The hero, Rama, lived his whole life by the rules of dharma; in fact, that was why Indians consider him heroic. When Rama was a young boy, he was the perfect son. Later he was an ideal husband to his faithful wife, Sita, and a responsible ruler of Aydohya. "Be as Rama," young Indians have been taught for 2,000 years; "Be as Sita."

The original Ramayana was a 24,000 couplet-long epic poem attributed to the Sanskrit poet Valmiki. Oral versions of Rama's story circulated for centuries, and the epic was probably first written down sometime around the start of the Common Era. It has since been told, retold, translated and transcreated throughout South and Southeast Asia, and the Ramayana continues to be performed in dance, drama, puppet shows, songs and movies all across Asia.

From childhood most Indians learn the characters and incidents of these epics and they furnish the ideals and wisdom of common life. The epics help to bind together the many peoples of India, transcending caste, distance and language. Two all-Indian holidays celebrate events in the Ramayana. Dussehra, a fourteen-day festival in October, commemorates the siege of Lanka and Rama's victory over Ravana, the demon king of Lanka. Divali, the October-November festival of Lights, celebrates Rama and Sita's return home to their kingdom of Ayodhya Prince Rama was the eldest of four sons and was to become king when his father retired from ruling. His stepmother, however, wanted to see her son Bharata, Rama's younger brother, become king. Remembering that the king had once promised to grant her any two wishes she desired, she demanded that Rama be banished and Bharata be crowned. The king had to keep his word to his wife and ordered Rama's banishment. Rama accepted the decree unquestioningly. "I gladly obey father's command," he said to his stepmother. "Why, I would go even if you ordered it."

When Sita, Rama's wife, heard Rama was to be banished, she begged to accompany him to his forest retreat. "As shadow to substance, so wife to husband," she reminded Rama. "Is not the wife's dharma to be at her husband's side? Let me walk ahead of you so that I may smooth the path for your feet," she pleaded. Rama agreed, and Rama, Sita and his brother Lakshmana all went to the forest.

When Bharata learned what his mother had done, he sought Rama in the forest. "The eldest must rule," he reminded Rama. "Please come back and claim your rightful place as king." Rama refused to go against his father's command, so Bharata took his brother's sandals and said, "I shall place these sandals on the throne as symbols of your authority. I shall rule only as regent in your place, and each day I shall put my offerings at the feet of my Lord. When the fourteen years of banishment are over, I shall joyously return the kingdom to you." Rama was very impressed with Bharata's selflessness. As Bharata left, Rama said to him, "I should have known that you would renounce gladly what most men work lifetimes to learn to give up."

Later in the story, Ravana, the evil King of Lanka, (what is probably present-day Sri Lanka) abducted Sita. Rama mustered the aid of a money army, built a causeway across to Lanka, released Sita and brought her safely back to Aydohya. In order to set a good example, however, Rama demanded that Sita prove her purity before he could take her back as his wife. Rama, Sita and Bharata are all examples of persons following their dharma.

This lesson focuses on how the Ramayana teaches Indians to perform their dharma. Encourage students to pick out examples of characters in the epic who were faithful to their dharma and those who violated their dharma. Mahatma Gandhi dreamed that one day modern India would become a Ram-rajya.

Source: <http://ramayana4.tripod.com/summ.htm>