Dude, Where's My Karma?

About the Show

When Joe realizes that he's slowly disappearing, the kids find a malfunction in his family tree in *The Book* and follow it to India during the Gupta Empire. Sam, Fred, Samantha, and Freddi have to help Joe's ancestor Prince Karna win the hand of Princess Lakshmi to save the entire family line!

Introduction

Studying ancient India will expand students' knowledge of world history, geography, culture, and religion. It will also enhance students' appreciation of the achievements of non-Western civilizations.

Historical Background

The Gupta Empire unified a group of smaller kingdoms in northern India under the rule of a single family from approximately 320 to 500 C.E. While the Gupta rulers mostly stayed out of the local politics of each kingdom, they instituted a strong military presence across the region. By some accounts, each village was protected by a militia-type civil defense squad that consisted of one elephant, one chariot, three cavalrymen, and five foot-soldiers.

There was a great deal of religious tolerance in Gupta India as well as significant cultural advances. The Gupta taught surgery and veterinary training (so they could cure elephants, who were their primary source of military transportation) at universities so famous that they attracted students from as far away as China. The Gupta established a criminal justice system based on fines rather than capital punishment, and they offered government grants for artists and writers. The empire was also a center of scientific exploration. In the 5th century,

Curriculum Connections

- ancient civilizations
- India

Subject Areas

- language arts
- social studies



Historical Background *continued*

the great astronomer and mathematician Aryabhata stated that the earth was round, that it rotated on its axis, and that it revolved around the sun—centuries before European scientists reached the same conclusions. Indian mathematicians developed the Arabic numerals (digits one through nine and the zero) that are used all over the world today, as well as algebra and trigonometry.

Some of the greatest works of Indian poetry and drama were produced under the Guptas. Art was very much a part of court life. One of the early kings, Samudra Gupta, played the harp and wrote poetry. Kalidasa, who wrote under the reign of Chandra Gupta II, is considered one of the greatest of Indian poets and playwrights. Two great epic poems, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* were recorded during this time. At about 100,000 stanzas, the *Mahabharata* is the longest poem in world literature.

Indian society was divided into four classes, called *varnas* in Sanskrit. At the top were the Brahmans, then the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas, and finally the Shudras. One popular marriage arrangement in this period, particularly among the Kshatriya or warrior/aristocrat class, was known as *swayamvara*. In Sanskrit, *swayam* means "self" and *vara* is alternately translated as "choosing/wanting" and "husband." The bride's family would invite many potential grooms to their house on a certain day and the bride would choose from among them. Often she first assigned tasks for the suitors to accomplish—a sort of competition. The winner would be selected as her husband.



Want students to get even more excited about history?

Check out the India adventure for kids at

www.timewarptrio.com/adventures/india/

Put It Back, Jack! and other interactive games to play.

Plentifax 487—the ultimate time traveler's guide—gives facts about life in India and more!

Cool Books that kids will love.

Activity 1

Book of Knowledge

Give students an opportunity to personalize their research of India by creating a Book of Knowledge.

Instructions

1. Explain that students, individually or in groups, are going to create a Book of Knowledge about India.
2. Discuss what might be included in such a book: descriptions of the people, Indian art and culture, Indian inventions and innovations, native plants and animals, historic locations, famous people, etc. Have students choose one topic to focus on. Decide how many pages per topic each student should contribute.
3. Have students or student groups research their topic. For each fact or item they find, have them draw or copy a picture representing the information and then write a description. Have them paste their information onto a piece of construction paper.
4. Gather the information students have collected and bind the construction paper into a classroom *Book of Knowledge: India*. Students may want to add a cover, write a dedication, and include a table of contents.
5. In small groups, have students present their contribution to the Book of Knowledge, choosing sample pages to share with the group.



Objectives

- to demonstrate students' knowledge of India
- to organize information in a useful format

Materials

- 6" x 9" construction paper or ledger paper
- smaller rectangles of lined paper (not needed if students are using computers)
- glue sticks or rubber cement
- writing supplies

Curriculum Standards

- **NCSS**
  Culture: Students will articulate the implications of cultural diversity, as well as cohesion within and across groups.
- **NCTE/IRA**
  Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and nonprint texts, artifacts, people, media) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and their audience.

Activity 2

Game Plan

This activity familiarizes students with games from various cultures.

Instructions

1. Remind students that in the show "Dude, Where's My Karma?" Prince Mahaloogi and Prince Karna play a game of chess. Sam mentions that the game was invented in India.
2. As a class, brainstorm a list of games—culturally traditional, board or card games, sports, memory games, etc. Encourage students to think of a wide variety of games from many cultures, from mancala and gin rummy to charades, hopscotch, and baseball.
3. Organize students into small groups and tell them that each group will research the origin of a game (by choice or assignment).
4. Have each group first decide on how they will present their information. They can make a replica of the game, play one round of the game, perform a short skit about the game's origins, profile the inventor of the game, etc. Review the "game plan" of each group.
5. Hold a "Game Day" and have each group share their work. Discuss the similarities and differences among the games. Let students play each others' games, if possible.



Objectives

- to practice research skills
- to work cooperatively

Materials

- writing materials

Curriculum Standards

- **NCSS**
  Culture: Students will articulate the implications of cultural diversity, as well as cohesion within and across groups.
- **NCTE/IRA**
  Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people, media) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and their audience.

Resources

Recommended Books

For Teachers

Cultural History of India edited by A.L. Basham. (Oxford University Press, 1999)
A survey of Indian culture, including religion, philosophy, literature, art, architecture, music, and science, as well as an examination of the impact of Indian civilization on the world.

Early India: From Origins to AD 1300 by Romila Thapar. (University of California Press, 2004)
From its prehistoric beginnings to the emergence of mighty dynasties, this is a comprehensive history by a renowned Indian historian.

The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Daily Life, volume 1 edited by Joyce E. Salisbury. (Greenwood Press, 2004)
A comprehensive look at the lives of ordinary people in ancient times—their clothes, food, culture, customs, beliefs, etc.

India: A History by John Keay. (Grove Press, 2001)
A narrative, illustrated history of India, from its beginnings in 3000 B.C.E.

Indian Art, rev. ed. by Roy Craven. (Thames & Hudson, 1997)
The World of Art series. The traditions, symbolism, and variety of Indian art are presented and explained.

For Students

Fiction

The Conch Bearer by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. (Simon & Schuster, 2003)
A conch shell with special powers, a street-wise girl, and an old man with surprising skills lead Anand to take a journey far from home.

Jamil's Clever Cat by Fiona French with Dick Newby. (Frances Lincoln Ltd., 1998)
Jamil's cat, Sardul, tricks the Rajah into allowing his daughter to marry a lowly weaver in this Bengali folk tale.

Nine Animals and the Well by James Rumford. (Houghton Mifflin, 2003)
This is the cumulative tale of nine animals' attempts to find just the right birthday presents for a young raja-king. Also traces the origins of numerals from Arabia to North Africa and India.

Rama and the Demon King by Jessica Souhami. (DK, 1997)
In this ancient tale, Rama is exiled by his father at the request of his jealous stepmother. He returns from exile to become the king.

Robi Dobi, The Marvelous Adventures of an Indian Elephant by Madhur Jaffrey. (Dial Books, 1997)
When the elephant Robi Dobi saves a small orange animal named Kabbi Wahabbi, he finds a lifelong friend who shares adventures with him.

Savitri: A Tale of Ancient India by Aaron Shepard. (Whitman, 1996)
A retelling of a story from *The Mahabharata*, in which the king's only daughter searches for a perfect husband. Then she has to convince her father to let her marry her choice.

Shiva's Fire by Suzanne Fisher Staples. (HarperCollins, 2000)
Parvati's skill as a dancer leads to a wonderful opportunity to study with a master of classical Indian dance but she is not sure if she can leave behind all that she loves. For older readers.

Tusk and Stone by Malcolm Bosse. (Front Street, 1995)
Arjun is a member of the Brahman class of priests and scholars but when he is captured by bandits, he must train to become a *mahout,* an elephant driver, in 17th century India.

Nonfiction

Ancient India by Virginia Schomp. (Watts, 2005)
Cultures of the Ancient Societies series. The culture and history of ancient India is explored through literature, documents, and artifacts.

Ancient Medicine: From Sorcery to Surgery by Michael Woods. (Runestone, 1999)
A look at the medical practices and innovations in ancient Egyptian, Indian, Chinese, Greek, and Roman cultures and how they have influenced medicine today.

The Asian Empires by Rebecca Steffof. (Benchmark Books, 2005)
World Historical Atlases series. An overview of Imperial China, the rulers of India, and Ottoman Turkey, with maps and pictures.

Checkmate at Chess City by Piers Harper. (Candlewick, 2000)
The basic strategies of chess are introduced in the context of a story of a city caught between warring armies. For young readers and beginning game players.

Resources

Chess Basics by Nigel Short. (Sterling, 1994)
A professional chess player shares the strategies and complexities of the game, starting with setting up the chessboard.

India by Marilynn G. Barr. (Teaching & Learning Company, 2003)
Exploring Ancient Civilizations series. Presents basic information about India, along with 13 related craft projects.

India by Manini Chatterjee and Anita Roy. (Dorling Kindersley, 2002)
Eyewitness Books. A broad introduction to the country, its history, customs, arts, foods, religions, technology, and daily life today.

India by David Cummings. (Cherrytree Books, 2005)
Letters from Around the World series. Lakshmi writes to her pen pal Sam about a typical day's activities—school, work, cooking, walking the dog. For younger readers.

The Life and Times of Buddha by Monda K. Gedney. (Mitchell Lane Publishers, 2005)
Biography from Ancient Civilizations series. This biography puts Buddha's life into historical context.

Science in Ancient India by Melissa Stewart. (Watts, 1999)
Science in History series. Presents the scientific contributions of ancient India, including Arabic numerals, medicine, astronomy, yoga, and more.

Snake Charmer by Ann Whitehead Nagda. (Henry Holt, 2002)
Like his father and grandfather, Vishnu wants to become a snake charmer, but his father insists that he stay in school in his small village.

Web Sites

ANCIENT INDIA
www.ancientindia.co.uk/index.html
This British Museum site gives brief information about ancient India, including some interactive features.

ANCIENT INDIA
www.indianchild.com/ancient_india.htm
Learn about the kingdoms of ancient India, Indian rulers, and ancient Indian empires, including the Gupta Empire.

DAILY LIFE IN ANCIENT INDIA
members.aol.com/donnclass/Indialife.html
This site for kids shares facts about daily life during three major time periods in ancient India: the Indus Valley Civilization, the Vedic and Epics Periods, and the Age of Empires.

THE GUPTA EMPIRE, 400 AD
www.wsu.edu:8080/~dee/ANCINDIA/GUPTAMAP.HTM
A map of ancient India showing the extent of the Gupta Empire and its tributary states.

THE GUPTA PERIOD
www.webindia123.com/history/ANCIENT/gupta_period.htm
A historical overview of the Gupta Empire in India from the 4th century to the 6th century.

HISTORY FOR KIDS: ANCIENT INDIA
www.historyforkids.org/learn/india/
This site provides information about the history, environment, religion, clothing, food, people, art, science, and architecture of ancient India. Includes a timeline and teacher's guides.

MAPS OF INDIA
mapsofindia.com/maps/india/topographic-map.htm
Part of a travel Web site, this offers a detailed topographical map of India.

Please note:
Although these sites were verified at the time of publication, Web site addresses and content are frequently subject to change.

©2006 WGBH Educational Foundation. All rights reserved. Time Warp Trio™ is produced by WGBH in association with Soup2Nuts for Discovery Kids. Major funding was provided by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in these classroom materials do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Based on THE TIME WARP TRIO book series written by Jon Scieszka and illustrated by Lane Smith. Time Warp Trio is a registered trademark of Chucklebait, LLC. Used with permission. Third party trademarks are the property of their respective owners. Used with permission.