

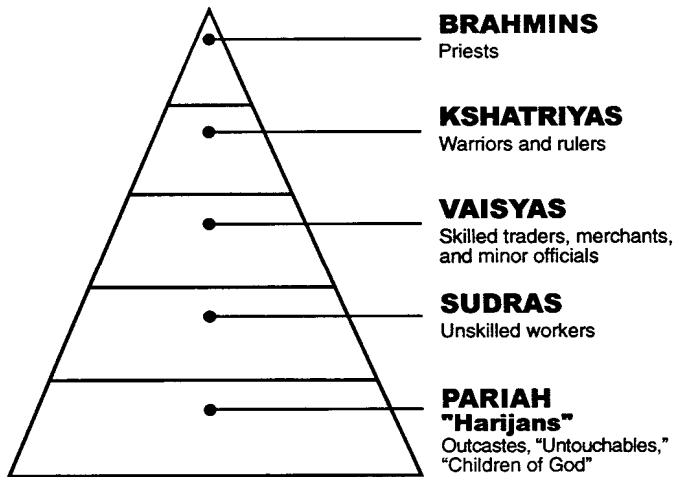
Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## THE CASTE SYSTEM IN INDIA

In traditional India, society was organized into hereditary social classes, known as castes. Hindus believed that each person was born into a particular social class based on behavior in a previous life. Membership in a caste was based on birth and lasted for one's entire life. One could not marry someone from another caste or move into another caste based upon one's achievements. One's children also remain in the same caste.

**Organization of the Castes.** People were organized into four main groups. Within these four major groupings there are thousands of minor sub-castes, each with its own special occupations and rituals. At the bottom of the castes are the *untouchables*), considered to be so lowly as to be outside the caste system, **Untouchables** were given work no one wanted to do, such as sweeping the streets or handling dead animals. Since the caste system was based on heredity, it severely restricted **social mobility** in traditional India. Social mobility is the ability to move from one social class to another.

**The Caste System Today** - Today, the caste system continues to operate in India. The government is trying to overcome prejudices based on caste distinctions. It prohibits discrimination by caste and provides special programs to aid the *Untouchables*. These attempts to end caste discrimination have only been partially successful.



1. What is meant by the term "caste system?" \_\_\_\_\_
2. How does one get into a particular caste? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How long does one remain in a particular caste? \_\_\_\_\_
4. Can one marry someone from another caste? \_\_\_\_\_
5. While you were alive, can you rise into a higher caste? \_\_\_\_\_
6. When an Indian person has a child, what caste does that child go into? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Within the four main castes, how many sub-castes were there? \_\_\_\_\_
8. Who are the untouchables? \_\_\_\_\_. What jobs do they do? \_\_\_\_\_
9. today, how does the Indian government try to protect the untouchables? \_\_\_\_\_
10. Explain YOUR view of the caste system. \_\_\_\_\_

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