**Dharma and the *Bhagavad-gita***

**Focus Question: How does Arjuna's dilemma in the *Bhagavad-gita* teach the concept of dharma?**

Part 1: Defining Dharma

Using information from Site 1, write four defining elements of dharma and explain what they mean (the prescribed conduct and morality within the religious system of Hinduism).

Dharma is

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Part 2: Arjuna's Dilemma

*Read Chapters 1, 2, and 4 on the website. Summaries are provided below to help you understand the poetry.*

**Chapter One: Observing the Armies on the Battlefield of Kurukshetra:** As the opposing armies stand poised for battle, Arjuna, the mighty warrior, sees his intimate relatives, teachers and friends in both armies ready to fight and sacrifice their lives. Overcome by grief and pity, Arjuna fails in strength, his mind becomes bewildered, and he gives up his determination to fight.

**Chapter Two: Contents of the Gita summarized:** It is revealed that Arjuna’s chariot driver, Madhusudan, is actually Lord Krishna. Arjuna submits to Lord Krishna as His disciple, and Krishna begins His teachings to Arjuna by explaining the fundamental distinction between the temporary material body and the eternal spiritual soul. The Lord explains the process of transmigration, the nature of selfless service to the Supreme and the characteristics of a self-realized person.

**Chapter Four: Transcendental knowledge:** Transcendental knowledge – the spiritual knowledge of the soul, of God, and of their relationship – is both purifying and liberating. Such knowledge is the fruit of selfless devotional action (karma-yoga). The Lord explains the remote history of the Gita, the purpose and significance of His periodic descents to the material world, and the necessity of approaching a guru, a realized teacher.

Read the account of Arjuna's dilemma in the *Bhagavad-gita*. Write down two quotations from Arjuna's speech that you think most clearly express his concerns and insights. How would you feel if you were Arjuna?

Apply your understanding of *dharma* to Arjuna's dilemma. Pretend you are the Hindu incarnation of Krishna. Write a paragraph letter to Arjuna. Give him advice on what he should do and why based on the reading. Be sure that your response answers the Focus Question.

We have already read the Ramayana, another Hindu text with similar themes. Compare and contrast the two below (may also use information in the “Arjun” film. Can do this in a paragraph or create a Venn diagram—just be sure to do both compare AND contrast.