

HISTORY · CHAPTER 3

Kinship, Caste and Class – Early Societies (c. 600 BCE–600 CE)

A 1-page guide for parents · 90-second read.

EXPECTED MARKS**7-8 out of 10 on this chapter's questions.****Below 5 means the terms and examples are not memorised.****TIME TO MASTER****10-12 hrs****HELPLINE****70330 05444****WHAT THIS CHAPTER IS, IN PLAIN ENGLISH**

Your child is learning how families, marriage, caste, and class were organised in EARLY INDIA (about 600 BCE to 600 CE), using the great epic the MAHABHARATA as the main source. The chapter covers: how descent was traced through the father (patriline); rules about whom one could marry (gotra, exogamy); different marriage forms (including Draupadi's marriage to five brothers); the fourfold varna order of priests, warriors, traders and servants laid down in texts like the Manusmriti; the people pushed outside that order (the 'untouchables' and forest groups like Ekalavya's); and women's limited rights to property (stridhana). A key skill is learning that an epic is evidence of what society THOUGHT it should be, not a literal record. This is a heavily-tested chapter — the source-based Mahabharata question is near-annual.

5 QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR CHILD

- What is patriline, and how did the Mahabharata reinforce it?
- What is gotra exogamy? Give the rule and one exception.
- Name the four varnas and what each was supposed to do.
- Who was Ekalavya, and what does his story show about social differences?
- Why do historians say the Mahabharata is a 'dynamic' text? What is the Critical Edition?

WEAK-SPOT INDICATORS

- Thinks the Mahabharata had one author and one fixed version (it grew over ~1000 years).
- Confuses gotra with caste/jati (gotra is a clan; jati is a birth-occupation group).
- Cannot name the four varnas in order with their functions.
- States the varna order as how everyone actually lived (it is a prescriptive ideal).
- Forgets the Draupadi (polyandry) and Ekalavya (exclusion) examples.

WHEN TO WORRY — AND WHAT TO DO

Class 12 History rewards SPECIFICS — names (Sukthankar, Fa Xian, Manu), terms (patriline, exogamy, stridhana), and examples (Draupadi, Ekalavya). Vague answers fail. A daily 15-minute term-and-example drill for 3 weeks is the proven fix.

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