

### Study Guide for Valmīkī's *Rāmāyana*

As with earlier study guides, wherever possible you want to note the family relationships between the participants and the regular descriptors of them. You also want to know the events in which they participate.

#### Gods, Demons, People, Other Beings, Concepts and Places in the *Rāmāyana*

brāhmaṇas	Janasthāna
King Daśaratha	Aśoka (grove)
Kaikeyī	Brahmā
Rāma	Nidrā
Sītā	Janaka
Ayodhyā	Sampāti
Kausalyā	vānaras
Bharata	Aṅgada
Daṇḍaka (forest)	Hanumān
Lakṣmaṇa	Sugrīva
dharma	Jāmbavān
Viṣṇu	Supārśva
Indra	Niśākara
Vedas	Vindhya
Pañcaviṭi	Aṅgada
Sūrpaṇakhā	Añjanā
Rāvaṇa	Sāgara
Khara	Maināka
Dūṣaṇa	Surasā
Laṅkā	Nāgas
Cupid	Simhikā
Mārīca	Kumbhakarṇa
Jaṭayū	Vibhīṣaṇa

Indrajīt	Janaka
Lakṣmī	Trijaṭā
Puṣpaka	Sumitrā
Kiṣkindhā	

### Sample Questions

Rāma's view of family duty is held up as a model. Several characters disagree with him on what duty he owes and to whom. Pick out one character whose view differs from Rāma's and summarize both sides of the disagreement. Ultimately within this story, what duties does a virtuous man owe to his family and the individual members of the family?

The relationship between Rāma and his parents demonstrates his expected duties to his father, his mother, and his stepmother (also called his mother). Compare his view of his duty of submission to his father, to his mother and to his stepmother.

Rāma is described as an avatar or incarnation of Vishnu. What does this mean?

Several characters are stricken with an instant passion for other characters in this story. Pick out two of these instances and describe how Valmīkī's *Rāmāyana* treats these precipitous passions and compare them to the model of love within marriage as represented by the relationship between Rāma and Sītā.

Rāma is presented as the model hero and Sītā as the model heroine. What are the properties they embody that make them so ideal?

Valmīkī's *Rāmāyana* presents us with several changes much like Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. How are these changes similar to those presented by Ovid and how do they differ?

Valmīkī's *Rāmāyana* presents us with a range of fully sentient beings with disparate powers and histories. Give a catalog of the various races/species of sentient beings and describe how they (including people) are similar to and different from each other.

The sages have important roles in the society in the Valmīkī's *Rāmāyana*. What is a sage? and what is his role in society?

What is the relationship between gods, demons and men in Valmīkī's *Rāmāyana*?