

Inside a Hindu mandir

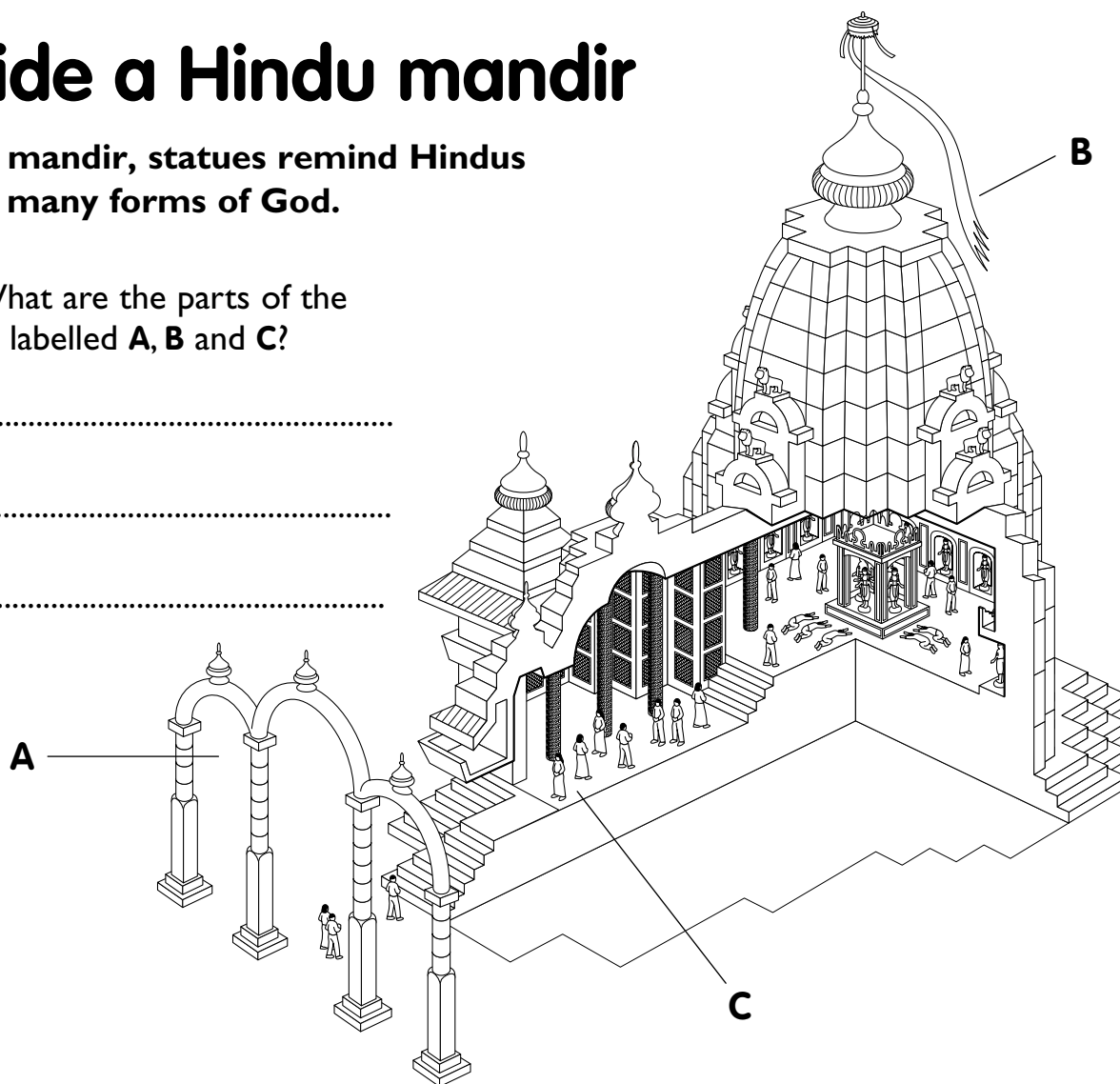
In the mandir, statues remind Hindus of the many forms of God.

Q1. What are the parts of the mandir labelled **A**, **B** and **C**?

A 

B 

C 



Q2. What is the Hindu word for the images inside the mandir? 

Q3. What do the images represent?

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..... 

Q4. Do the images always look like people? 

Q5. What are the names of three of the most important gods?

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Q6. What is in the middle of the mandir?

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Answers

1. **A = arch; B = flag/dhaja;
C = entrance hallway**
2. **Murti.**
3. **Hindu gods and goddesses.**
4. **No.**
5. **Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.**
6. **The shrine of the main god or goddess of the mandir.**

Lesson objectives

- ▶ To provide an introduction to some of the things found inside the mandir.
- ▶ To understand the purpose of murtis.
- ▶ To introduce some of the features of a traditional mandir.

Lesson outcomes

- ▶ The children know what murtis are.
- ▶ The children can describe some of the features of a traditional mandir.

Teaching notes

The design and construction of a traditional mandir is very complicated and is based on ancient mathematical concepts and construction techniques. Traditional mandirs are usually built so that all of the masonry is loadbearing and so no reinforcement with steel or other metal is needed.

It is important for the children to be aware that there are many traditions of mandir construction throughout India and so even in the home of Hinduism there is a huge variation in mandir design. Here, we have tried to focus on a few elements that many traditional mandirs have in common.

The 'peaks' of the mandir roof have an important role in Hinduism. They help to focus the energy of the god or goddess whose shrine lies under the peak. Similarly, tall poles found inside many mandirs also help to focus divine energy on the shrines.

Most of the murtis in the mandir are statues, but if students look carefully, they may also see other images, such as paintings or sculptures which look like small pillars. All of these images are actually murtis.

Complementary work

The children could use secondary sources to find out about some of the construction principles involved in traditional mandir construction.

Resources

Secondary sources about mandirs in India.