**Ancient India – Beliefs, values and practices**

**Key terms:**

**brahman** - the infinite soul.  
**dharma** - law in some Indian religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism.**karma** - an action or deed thought to cause a cycle of cause and effect.  
**moksha** - release from the cycle of birth and death.  
**samsara** - the cycle of birth, death, rebirth or reincarnation within some Indian religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism.

**Summary**

The Indus Valley civilisation had its own language, known as the Indus script, but much of it has not been deciphered. It is written from right to left, and has about 400-600 symbols. Sanskrit developed in India following the migration of the Indo-Aryan tribes into the area. It is a sacred language used in the religious texts of India, and was mainly used by holy men. The language of Prakrit subsequently developed. Prkrta was a much less formal language and used by the general population.  
  
Crafts were an important economic activity in ancient India. The creation of beads, pottery and statues was common in the Indus Valley civilisation.   
  
India is the birthplace of the religion of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism. These religions and known as the Dharmic religions. Dharma is the law, and determines the behaviours that are required, duties, and what is correct or proper. The dharma is described in the Hindu sacred texts known as the Vedas.

Indus people ate a variety of foods such as cattle, pigs, sheep goats, dates, grapes, melons, wheat and peas. These were mostly located locally in nearby farms. The Indus people would also birds and fish in nearby river-based areas.

**Task:**

In groups of approximately 3, research one of the following parts of ancient Indian life:

* Language
* Crafts
* Religion
* Food

Create a poster to teach your other classmates about the topic. Include information in dot points, relevant drawings, titles and sub-headings, and a list of sources.