

Formative Assessment: Evaluating Evidence



Thinking historically means identifying the evidence related to a claim, assessing its validity, and corroborating it by comparing multiple sources' interpretations of events, developments, or processes.

Directions: Read the following secondary source and then answer the questions on evaluating evidence that follow. The multiple choice questions for this formative assessment are Weighted Multiple Choice (WMC) questions. This means that there is only one *incorrect* answer, but the other 3 choices are weighted. The *best* answer is 3 points, the *second-best* answer is 2 points, and the *third-best* answer is 1 point. The *incorrect* answer is 0 points.

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Source: The *Bhagavad Gita*. 500–100 B.C.E.

Translated by Charles Johnston in *Bhagavad-gīta : "The songs of the master,"* 1908. [Library of Congress](#).

Note: The *Bhagavad Gita* is perhaps the most well-known Hindu text around the world. In this excerpt, Arjuna, a prince, asks the god, Lord Krishna, if he should fight in a war against his own relatives.

Arjuna:

2.7 Overwhelmed with pity and fear of sin I ask thee, for my vision of duty is obscured. Which is better? Tell me clearly! I am thy disciple! Teach me! I appeal to thee!

Lord Krishna:

2.18. These temporal bodies are declared to belong to the eternal lord of the body, imperishable, immeasurable; therefore fight, O son of Bharata!

2.27. For certain is the death of what is born, and certain the birth of what dies; therefore deign not to grieve in a matter that is inevitable.

31. Or having regard to thy duty, deign not to shrink back! For nothing is better for a warrior than a righteous battle.

BOOK II.

SANJAYA SAID:

To him thus full of distress, his eyes perplexed and filled with tears, despondent, the slayer of Madhu spoke this word:

THE MASTER SAID:

Whence has this faint-heartedness in trouble come upon thee, unseemly for a noble, not bringing heaven, inglorious, O Arjuna?

Fall not into impotence, O son of Pritha, for this beseems thee not! Put away this mean faint-heartedness, and arise, O consumer of the foe!

ARJUNA SAID:

How can I fight against Bhishma, how against Drona, with my arrows, O slayer of Madhu, for they are both worthy of honor, O slayer of the foe!

Rather than slay these great ones, worthy of all honor, it were better to eat the bread of beggars in this world; for slaying them, even though they seek my possessions, I should eat feasts sprinkled with blood! (5)

Nor do we know which is heavier for us, whether we conquer or whether they conquer us; for Dhritarashtra's sons are here facing us, slaying whom we should not wish to live.

Overwhelmed with pity and fear of sin I ask thee, for my vision of duty is obscured. Which is better? Tell me clearly! I am thy disciple! Teach me! I appeal to thee!

These temporal bodies are declared to belong to the eternal lord of the body, imperishable, immeasurable; therefore fight, O son of Bharata!

He who sees him as slayer, or who thinks of him as slain, both understand not; he slays not nor is slain.

He is never born nor dies, nor will he, having being, evermore cease to be; unborn, eternal, immemorial, this Ancient is not slain when the body is slain. (20)

BOOK II.

7

But even if thou thinkest of him as ever born, ever dying, yet deign not, therefore, to grieve for him, O mighty armed one!

For certain is the death of what is born, and certain is the birth of what dies; therefore, deign not to grieve in a matter that is inevitable.

The beginnings of things are unmanifest, their mid course is manifest, O son of Bharata; their ending is unmanifest; what cause is here for lamentation?

One sees him as marvelous, another speaks of him as marvelous, another hears of him as marvelous, yet even hearing, one knows him not.

This lord of the body dwells ever immortal in the body of each, O son of Bharata; therefore, deign not to grieve even for all beings! (30)

Or having regard to thy duty, deign not to shrink back! For nothing is better for a warrior than a righteous battle.



Formative Assessment: Evaluating Evidence

1. Select the piece of evidence from the above document that *best* represents the Hindu belief of *dharma*, which is the “right way of living,” or duty for all living things.
 - A. “These temporal bodies are declared to belong to the eternal lord of the body, imperishable, immeasurable; therefore fight, O son of Bharata!”
 - B. “For certain is the death of what is born, and certain the birth of what dies;”
 - C. “Overwhelmed with pity and fear of sin I ask thee, for my vision of duty is obscured.”
 - D. “Or having regard to they duty, deign not to shrink back! For nothing is better for a warrior than a righteous battle.”

2. Justify your choice in the space below.



1. Select the piece of evidence from the above document that *best* represents the Hindu belief of *dharma*, which is the “right way of living,” or duty for all living things.
 - A. “These temporal bodies are declared to belong to the eternal lord of the body, imperishable, immeasurable; therefore fight, O son of Bharata!” **(2 points)**
 - B. “For certain is the death of what is born, and certain the birth of what dies;” **(0 points)**
 - C. “Overwhelmed with pity and fear of sin I ask thee, for my vision of duty is obscured.” **(1 point)**
 - D. “Or having regard to they duty, deign not to shrink back! For nothing is better for a warrior than a righteous battle.” **(3 points)**

2. Justify your choice in the space below.

Choice D, worth 3 points, is the best piece of evidence to represent *dharma*, because it incorporates both aspects of the definition: a right way of living and duty for all living things. It advocates for duty by looking at the warrior class as a whole and Arjuna’s individual duty. Choice A is also a clear call for Arjuna to live out his duty (to fight), but it is not as explicit as Choice D. Choice C does address duty, but it does not provide any justification for one’s duty like Choices D and A do. Lastly, Choice B does not address *dharma*, but is more aligned with the Hindu belief of *samsara* (birth, death, and rebirth), so it is worth 0 points.



1. Weighted Multiple Choice

3 points (Choice D)	2 points (Choice A)	1 point (Choice C)	0 points (Choice B)
			Subtotal: _____ / 3

2. Short Answer: Justify Your Answer

3 points	2 points	1 point	0 points
Student thoroughly justifies their choice of the <i>best</i> piece of evidence—which is worth three points as shown on the teacher key—that supports the claim.	Student thoroughly justifies their choice of either the 1 or 2 point option from the WMC question. OR Student's justification of the 3 point option needs deeper analysis.	Student's justification of their choice (either the 1 or 2 point option) lacks deep analysis.	Student either makes no attempt to justify their choice OR try to justify the 0 point option.
			Subtotal: _____ / 3

Total: _____ / 6

