

## Drawing Hindu Gods and Goddesses

Hinduism has lots of Gods and Goddesses, all with different shapes and appearances. The way that a God or Goddess is shown in artwork changes over time and in different areas of the world, but there are always some core features and details that are important [symbols](#).



For example, [Ganesha](#) - the Hindu God of wisdom - is shown in slightly different ways by different Hindus, but he always has several symbols that represent his power and importance. Study these images of Ganesha from the Oriental Museum's collection, and have a good look at the symbols and images connected to Ganesha.

Ganesha has a big head: he is the God of wisdom, thinking and knowledge!

He has big eyes for looking beyond what everyone else can see.

The lotus flower Ganesha holds symbolises purity and divinity (being a God)

Ganesha's large tummy digests everything that happens in life, both good and bad.

The mouse (or rat) represents the way Ganesha is able to reach into every hidden corner of our minds - just like a mouse can reach every corner of a house.



Ganesha's large ears for listening and paying attention to other people

One of Ganesha's elephant tusks is broken. This shows that in order to be wise a Hindu must be willing to make sacrifices

Ganesha holds an axe so that he can help people cut bonds to things that we are too attached to, like money or fancy possessions.

Indian sweets (called laddoos) are in Ganesha's hand. They represent the rewards of hard work.

A food offering (prasad) symbolises the importance of giving and sharing.

Your first challenge is to draw your own version of Ganesha! Hindu gods take different appearances in different times and cultures, so you can draw Ganesha however you think is best - as long as you **include the important symbolism** we have looked at above! So your drawing should at least include big eyes, an axe, and a rat or mouse!





Your second challenge is to do your **own research** about another one of the Hindu Gods or Goddesses and **create an image** of them. Remember: each God or Goddess has special symbols that must always be included.

For example, **Vishnu** takes many different shapes and sizes - but he is always shown with his symbols - **the lotus flower, his long beard, a book, some prayer beads, and a water pot**. You could start your research by finding out what these symbols of Vishnu mean, and then try to draw your own version of Vishnu including those symbols.

Or you could try to find out the symbols connected to some other Gods and Goddesses, and draw them! Here are some Gods and Goddesses you might like to research, but there are many, many more!

**Saraswati**, the Goddess of Learning.

**Brahma**, the Creator.

**Shiva**, the Destroyer.

**Ganapati**, the Remover of Obstacles.

**Hanuman**, the monkey God.

Once you have done your research, draw your God or Goddess, and send a picture of it to Durham University's Learning Team! You can get in touch with us via email ([4schools@durham.ac.uk](mailto:4schools@durham.ac.uk)) or Twitter ([@dulearning](https://twitter.com/dulearning)). We're looking forward to seeing your artwork!