

Read through the information on the Three Marks of Existence and summarise in no more than 66 words!



The Buddha explained that existence has three characteristics. Buddhists call these the **Three Marks of Existence or Lakshanas**

- 1. Anicca** means **'nothing lasts forever'**. Everything changes. The world around us changes. Sometimes those changes are quick and easy to see like the burning of a match or the weather; sometimes, like the movement of the continental plates or the gradual wearing away of mountains, the changes are very slow. The Buddha said that existence is like the flowing water in a river or the flame of a candle. It is never the same for two moments.
- 2. Dukkha** means **'suffering'**. Suffering is everywhere. Another word for dukkha is unsatisfactoriness or malaise. Dukkha includes all the things in life that are unsatisfactory – not just really bad things like pain and unhappiness but things like being bored and being uncomfortable too. We suffer because we don't like change and because we crave attachment to people and things. We don't like to grow old or die. Nor do we like it when people we love die. We don't like it when our possessions wear out. Change is upsetting and causes us suffering, as we are never satisfied with what we have. Think about the perfect holiday away whilst we enjoy our time away all too often we spend the last day miserable because it is coming to an end rather than enjoying our time - we crave for more.
- 3. Anatta** means **'no permanent soul'**. The Buddha said that there is no such thing as a soul. Many people at this time found it difficult to understand. Hinduism states that your soul leaves each body when you die and is reincarnated in another body. The Buddha said there was no permanent soul to leave one body and transmigrate into another. He stated that nothing was permanent including a person. As you grow and get older your body changes and your mind changes. Your thoughts, habits and ideas change as you grow. You are never the same. The Buddha taught that each person is made up of Five Skandhas that are constantly in a state of flux.

The Buddha taught that the Three Marks of Existence are intrinsically linked to one other. The Buddha taught his followers that when a person fully understood about the Three Marks of Existence that person would become Enlightened. He told them that an Enlightened person would no longer have to suffer Samsara and would reach a condition called **Nirvana**.

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Extension Tasks:

1. Try to summarise the Three Marks of Existence in 33 words. You must include the terms: Lakshana, Anicca, Dukkha and Anatta.
2. Explain a time in your life when you have 'suffered' (craved something or been dissatisfied) and explain how you overcame this.
3. Explain how you have changed since you were younger. Think about your appearance, likes, dislikes, opinions and personality. Explain how this relates to the Three Marks of Existence.
4. "We should not grieve for the deceased". Evaluate this statement showing more than one point of view. Refer to the religious teachings gained through this exercise to help you develop your arguments. You may also refer to religious beliefs studied through different topics.