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EXTENSION

Name:

1 The words below appear in the text in Exercise 2. Find the words and guess their meanings. Use a dictionary to check your guesses.

1. races
2. mixing
3. merchants
4. allowed

2 Read the text and tick (✓) the statements T (true) or F (false). Then find evidence in the text to support your answers.

India – A Changing Society

India is the seventh largest country in the world, but its population is the second largest after China. At present, India has got just under 1.3 billion citizens, and people believe that by the year 2028, it will have the largest population in the world. It is also the world's largest democracy.

India has got a long history, going back as far as 2500 BC. Its people come from many different races and speak many different languages. The majority of people in India – 80.5% – are Hindus, and Hinduism still plays an important part in their daily lives. However, in the past, religion had an even greater influence on Indian society.

According to the Hindu religion, there are four main categories of people. These categories are called castes. In the past, there was very little mixing between the castes. People from the same caste used to live, work and eat together. They couldn't marry a person if they didn't come from their own caste. There was no way of moving from one caste to another ... in this life. Hindus believe in reincarnation, so if a person is considerate and contributes to the well-being of others, he or she will be born into a better caste in the next life.

The most important caste was the Brahmins. They were the priests, teachers and judges. Next came the people who were the soldiers and rulers – the Kshatriyas. They were in charge of the government and had the most power in their society. The Vaishyas were farmers and merchants. The Shudras were the workers. They worked on farms or were servants.

There was one group of people who were not allowed to mix at all with people from other castes. They were called the Dalit, although some people called them Untouchables. The Dalit lived in poverty and did jobs that no one else wanted to do, like cleaning the streets, collecting litter and washing clothes. Today, there are still problems in India, but the situation is improving. It is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of his or her caste. In 1997, there was real proof that things had changed. K. R. Narayanan, a man from the Dalit group, became President of India.

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EXTENSION

1. Only China has got more people than India.
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2. The majority of people in India are no longer Hindus.
.....
3. People spent a lot of time with other people from the same caste.
.....
4. Teaching was not considered an important job.
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5. In the past, Untouchables were very poor.
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T	F
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3 Complete the sentences. Use the First, Second and Third Conditional.

1. If the number of people in India continues to grow,
2. According to the Hindu religion, if a person behaves kindly towards others in this life,
3. In the past, if you wanted to marry a person from a different caste,
4. If the laws in India hadn't changed, K. R. Narayanan

4 Write a brief description of some of the differences among the people in your country.