

### The sun in Ancient Civilizations

The Sun has always been regarded as prominent in the human view of the universe. This can still be seen in some monuments like the Stonehenge and the rituals performed for the winter and summer solstices.

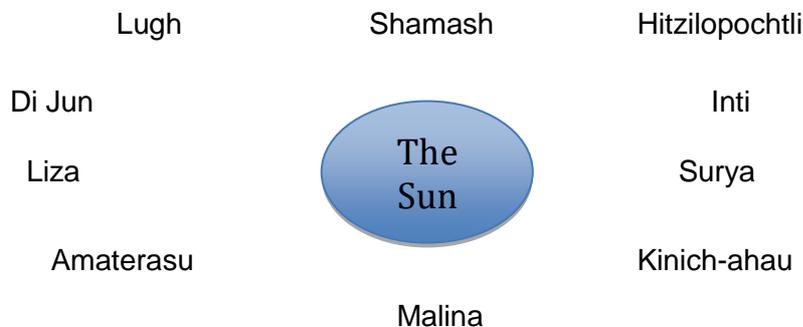
In addition, Sun deities played a prominent role in many ancient civilizations. It is your task now to find out more about the SUN and how it was worshipped.

Below you have 10 gods or goddesses that represent the Sun.

**1) Do you know any of them? If yes, which one do you know? How do you know it?**

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**2) Why do you think people worshipped the Sun?**

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**These are the countries or civilizations where the gods above were worshipped:**

Peru (Inca) - INTI

Mexico (Azteca) - HITZILOPOCHTLI

Europe (Celtic) - LUGH

Yacatan Peninsula (Maya) – KINICH-AHAU

China (Taoist) – DI-JUN

West Africa (Fon) – LIZA

Japan (Shinto) – AMATERAZU

Greenland (Inuit) – MALINA

India (Hinduism) – SURYA

Western Asia (Mesopotamian) - SHAMASH

**3) Now that you already now a bit more about the Sun gods read the texts and match each text with the correct God.**

**Text 1**

The suns were the ten children of the God of the eastern sky. Each morning one of the suns would rise, climb into a chariot pulled by a dragon, and ride across the sky bringing light to the different parts of the world. In this way the earth got the right amount of sunshine, at the different seasons of the year.



**Text 2**

The sun god known as “Face of the Sun”. He was a god of healing and medicine. The later god, Hunab Ku is thought to be a conflation of this God and the Christian God. In some early myths, he is the consort of the goddess Lxazalvoh whereas post-conquest stories place the divine mother with Hunab Ku.



**Text 3**

**Apu-punchau** was believed to be the ancestor of the Incas. He was at the head of the state cult, and his worship was imposed throughout the Inca empire. He was usually represented in human form, his face portrayed as a gold disk from which rays and flames extended. His sister and consort was the moon, Mama-Kilya (or Mama-Quilla), who was portrayed as a silver disk with human features. Among the 20th-century Quechua people, he is occasionally confused with Christ or God.



**Text 4**

The legend of this God tells the story of his mother being shamefully impregnated with him by a ball of feathers. It is why his siblings were determined to kill their pregnant mother; instead, the story says he was born full-grown and came out fighting. He was born to battle and became revered as the national god of the Aztecs. He was a god of war, the sun god, the god of death, and a fearsome guide for all journeys of the Mexica.



### Text 5

The most powerful of all Celtic Gods. It is the god of all arts and crafts. Worshiped as the sun god, he symbolizes enlightenment as he brings light to the world.



### Text 6

In Hindu mythology, he represents the Sun god. He is depicted as a red man with three eyes and four arms, riding in a chariot drawn by seven mares. He holds water lilies with two of his hands. With his third hand he encourages his worshipers whom he blesses with his fourth hand. In India, he is believed to be a benevolent deity capable of healing sick people. Even today, people place the symbol of the Sun over shops because they think it would bring good fortune



### .Text 7

He was a Sun god according to the Sumerian mythology. Since he could see everything on Earth, he represented also the god of justice. Every morning, the gates in the East open up, and he appears. He travels across the sky, and enters the gate in the West. He travels through the Underworld at night in order to begin in the East the next day. In Babylon, located in the south of Mesopotamia, his symbol was the solar disk, with a four-pointed star inside it.



### Text 8

“Great Divinity Illuminating Heaven”, the celestial sun goddess from whom the Japanese imperial family claims descent, and an important Shintō deity. She was born from the left eye of her father, Izanagi, who bestowed upon her a necklace of jewels and placed her in charge of *Takamagahara* (“High Celestial Plain”), the abode of all the *kami*.



**Text 9**

He was the Sun god to the Fon people of West Africa. His sister was the Moon god Mawu. The two were twins, but were also lovers. Together, they created the Universe with the help of the cosmic serpent, Da. It is said that he used his son, Gu to shape the world. Gu was the divine tool in the shape of an iron sword. He taught the people many different crafts, including ironworking. He was also the god of heat, work and strength. Mawu was the goddess of night and motherhood.


**Text 10**

The Sun goddess of the Inuit people who live in Greenland. The word "Inuit" means "people." She and her brother, the Moon god Anningan, lived together. They got into a terrible fight and she spread dirty, black grease all over her brother's face. In fear, she ran as far as she could into the sky and became the Sun. Anningan chased after her and became the Moon. Anningan often forgets to eat, so he gets thinner as the days go by. Every month, the Moon disappears for three days while Anningan eats. He then returns to chase his sister once again.



Malina	Kinich-ahau	Liza	Amaterasu	Inti	Huitzilopochtli	Lugh	Surya	Di Jun	Shamash

4) Why do you think the Sun was one of the most powerful deities?

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5) Would you like to have lived in a time when The Sun was worshipped? Why?

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6) Which God did you like best? Justify your answer

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- 7) Now create your own Sun God. Give it a name, draw and write the corresponding story.