

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2015

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
in Religious Studies (5RS06)

Unit 6: Religion and life based on a
study of Hinduism

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications are awarded by Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk. Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: www.pearson.com/uk

Summer 2015

Publications Code UG042473

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2015

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

Unit 6 Religion and Life Based on a Study of Hinduism

Unit 6 is a study of Hinduism and life. This unit allows an in depth study of Hinduism a religion which is fascinating for both Hindus and non-Hindus alike. Hinduism is the second largest minority religion in the UK (census 2011) and study of the faith is becoming increasingly important in today's multi-faith society. The course engages the interest of young people, it addresses many moral and spiritual issues affecting young people today.

The mean on this paper has risen slightly showing that even though candidates are now sitting a linear examination it has affected candidate achievement; in fact the use of the required skills in the subject amongst the candidates had improved.

Worryingly there are a number of candidates who appear to have been taught a formula for questions which involves giving a valid reason and then a phrase such as 'by this I mean' or 'Hindus care about this because' as an introduction for development and these candidates do not then give any form of development they simply repeat (often rewording) at the reason already given. This is not helpful and leads to incoherent answers rather than the marks which the candidate would want.

Question 1

This question is based on Section One in the specification. Each of the sub-questions covers a different bullet point within the specification.

b) This question was about whether people should have a religious upbringing. Answers describing a religious upbringing which did not link to the question asked gained no marks. Answers needed to include a personal opinion and stronger candidates used examples from religious texts as development of opinion.

c) This question required candidates to outline how religious experiences lead to belief in God. Most candidates were able to describe religious experiences but many did not link them to belief in God. There were some excellent responses showing that many teachers were introducing candidates to modern and AS style religious arguments.

d) The question needed candidates to evaluate a statement about whether suffering is proof that God does not exist, it was possible to use a wide range of material to respond to the question. Many candidates concentrated on the inconsistent triad and gave well thought out responses. Some found the justification for suffering more difficult. Most candidates are now familiar with the layout of the d question and were able to state their own opinion and give reasons for it in di) and give an opposite view in dii).

Candidates who set answers out clearly were a pleasure to read whereas candidates who relied upon formulaic answer formats were often confused and sometimes incoherent.

Question 2

This question is based on Section One in the specification. Each of the sub-questions covers a different bullet point within the specification.

a) This was a glossary definition question about prayer, this question was very well answered by candidates. Most candidates who did not know the glossary definition were able to give an alternative correct wording, very few only gave an example. The description of someone who prays gained no marks.

b) Most candidates were able to state their own opinion and then give a reason for why the search for meaning and purpose might or might not lead to belief in God. Better candidates developed their answers with examples from religious texts or experience.

c) This question was generally well answered by candidates, the majority of candidates were able to explain how a film / programme might affect belief. Some able candidates were able to link parts of films to the question in a very erudite way. However it was less well answered by candidates who generally described a film / programme they had watched without answering the question – how it might affect belief. Note this question did not require reference to any examples of the media.

d) Many candidates answered this question very well; they gave reasons why miracles can and cannot happen and were able to develop using several examples from the media and religious texts.

Question 3

This question is based on Section Two in the specification each sub-question addresses a different bullet point within the specification. Question 3 was more popular with candidates than question 4.

a) This question asked for a definition of moksha, the vast majority of candidates knew the glossary definition or close to it.

b) Most candidates were able to state their own opinion about whether Hindus should be against abortion. Better candidates were able to refer to religious texts and examples as part of their answer.

c) The vast majority of answers to this question about why Hindus do not agree with euthanasia were very good and candidates were able to answer either by giving a number of Hindu reasons, including development using quotes. Lower achieving candidates included fewer reasons and relied upon secular rather than religious argument.

d) Candidates were able to give at least one reason in response to this stimulus about life after death but many did not use religious texts in their responses which would have enhanced answers greatly. Better answers were given by candidates who responded by giving a number of reasons linked to a specific religion.

Question 4

This question is based on Section Two in the specification each sub-question covers a different bullet point within the specification.

4a asks for a definition of voluntary euthanasia. Many candidates received partial rather than full marks as they failed to include all 'parts' of the definition: the persons choice, the persons death, the persons illness.

Learn the glossary definition from the Edexcel specification. It might help to have these visible around the classroom for candidates to learn.

b) Candidates were usually able to state their own opinion about whether they felt the media should be able to criticise what religion says about matters of life and death. Most candidates were able to give one reason for their opinion, some struggled to think of two reasons and these were frequently repetitive.

Candidates who did less well were those who provided examples which had nothing to do with this section 'matters of life and death' often they referred to cartoon of the Prophet and as such did not answer the question set. Candidates need to be prepared to answer questions on all of the specification.

c) This question which required candidates to explain how Hindu beliefs about life after death affect the way they live. The vast majority of candidates were able to answer well, but those who describe Hindu beliefs about life after death and then justified then failed to gain marks. Candidates should be encouraged to read questions carefully as to what they need to include in their response. The topics covered in this section, life after death, euthanasia and abortion, are clearly listed in the specification.

d) Most candidates responded well to the question and were able to state their own opinion about whether abortion should always be allowed. Some candidates gave responses which ignore the word always and as such limited the marks they could be awarded.

It is disappointing that, even though previous examiners reports have highlighted the wording of d) questions, many candidates failed to gain more than 3 marks for all of d) as they ignored the part of the question stating 'you should refer to Hinduism in your answer'.

All bullet points in the specification must be covered in the life of the specification, including ones which could be considered secular in nature, centres should not assume that any bullet point will not be examined.

Question 5

This question is based on Section Three in the specification; each of the sub-questions covers a different bullet point within the specification.

- a) Most candidates knew the glossary definition for a re-constituted family although a few gave descriptions and clearly were not familiar with the term.
- b) Most candidates were able to state their own opinion about whether sex outside marriage is acceptable, most gave two reasons either for or against but a few made a distinction between extra martial and premarital sex and gave coherent answers where they gave reasons explaining why adultery was wrong and premarital sex was acceptable. Less able candidates were not however to think of more than one reason.
- c) Most candidates responded well giving clear Hindu reasons for the non-acceptance of divorce. Better candidates were able to develop the reasons with examples and quotes from scriptures.
- d) There were some excellent answers to this question which clearly held great interest to the candidates. Answers were mostly based on religious and sociological ideas surrounding the use of contraception. The best answers to this question discussed issues such as natural and artificial contraception and the different methods of contraception. Weaker answers failed to refer to Hinduism.

Question 6

This question is based on Section Three in the specification, each of the sub-questions covers a different bullet point within the specification.

- a) This question asked for a definition of adultery, most candidates knew the glossary definition or close to it. Some candidates explained Hindu attitudes to adultery which was irrelevant in an a) sub-question. Candidates should understand that an a) question will ask for a definition or examples not opinions.
- b) This was answered well and most candidates were able to state their own opinion about whether attitudes to homosexuality have changed and most linked their reasons to modern understanding of homosexuality or scriptural teachings about homosexuality.
- c) This question was well answered by the majority of candidates. It required candidates to discuss why Hindus might disagree with the use of contraception. Answers that did not achieve full marks were those that included reasons why some Hindus might be against the use of contraception, candidates should not be taught to always give both opinions as this is not required by many c) questions.

d) Most candidates were able to give reasons supporting their view about whether divorce is bad for family life in di) and reasons for an alternative view in dii) More able candidates quickly realised this was not a 'for and against' divorce question, they responded to the questions as it was posed and they used examples to support their opinion. Poorer candidate responses simply gave arguments for and against divorce.

Question 7

This question is based on Section Four in the specification; each of the sub-questions covers a different bullet point within the specification. It was noticeable that many of questions 7 and 8 were not complete; candidates should be advised to spend about 20 minutes on each question.

a) Most candidates knew the glossary definition for religious freedom and were awarded full marks. However, some candidates used the definition for religious pluralism and gained no marks.

b) Better candidates were able to answer this question about equal rights in religion using both the information they had been taught and developing using examples from their personal experience. Lower scoring responses confused equal rights in religion with equal rights in society and gained no marks.

c) Most candidates responded well to this question about why Hindus help promote racial harmony and were able to develop their reasons using quotes. However some candidates explained what people do to encourage racial harmony and this did not answer the question. Some candidates discussed religious harmony and this gained them no marks.

d) Most candidates were able to respond to the quote about whether conversion is desirable but many were unable to use scripture or evidence to support their reasons.

Some candidates were able to give their own opinion and reasons for it but were unable to explain why others might disagree with their opinion. It is important that for d) questions candidates are encouraged to fully discuss both their own opinions and reasons for them and those opinions that other people might hold.

Question 8

This question is based on Section Four in the specification; each sub-question is aimed at a different bullet point within the specification. It was noticeable that many of questions 7 and 8 were not complete; candidates should be advised to spend about 20 minutes on each question.

a) Most candidates knew the glossary definition for prejudice. A few candidates gained no marks as they defined discrimination.

b) Most candidates were able to state their own opinion as to whether living in a multi-faith society reduces racism using both the information they had been taught and their personal experience. Lower scoring responses confused multi-faith with multi-ethnic and gained no marks.

c) This question was well answered by candidates who had been clearly taught about interfaith marriages and could understand the issues this might cause.

d) Some candidates left this question blank as they had clearly run out of time.

Most candidates were able to respond to the quote, many had obviously been taught community cohesion very well and they were able reasons why the government should do more. Weaker responses were very one sided and failed to include a Hindu response.

