

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2013

GCSE Religious Studies
(5RS13/01)

Unit 13: Hinduism

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Question 1(a) was mostly answered correctly. In 1(b) many candidates were able to give two detailed reasons for why it was important to gain good karma. A minority of candidates used three or four reasons to illustrate their answer; unfortunately only two reasons could be credited. Part (c) asked candidates to explain why some Hindus worship Krishna. This answer was attempted by candidates of all abilities and was answered well by most candidates. Candidates were able to explore in detail why some Hindus worshipped Krishna. The part (d) question required candidates to evaluate a statement about whether Atman and Brahman was the same thing. Most candidates gave their own opinion and gave reasons for it in (d) (i). Many candidates were then able to give a counter argument in (d) (ii).

For question 2(a) most candidates correctly defined atman. Most answers were correct; there were a few incorrect answers and a few partially correct answers. In 2(b) although many candidates were able to give two basic reasons for whether they thought Ganesha was important for Hindus today, it was only more able candidates that managed to give two developed reasons. Some candidates used three or four reasons to illustrate their answer; unfortunately only two reasons could be credited. Part (c) was well answered by nearly all candidates, who were able to explain how and why the guna were important to Hindus. However many candidates wrote far more than was required and then appeared to run out of time later on in the paper. The part (d) question required candidates to evaluate a statement about whether 'Om says it all'. Most candidates were able to state their own opinion and give reasons for it in (i). A large number of candidates were also able to construct counter arguments.

As a glossary definition question, question 3(a) was very well answered by candidates; the majority of candidates who attempted it were awarded full marks. Question 3(b) asked whether candidates thought shruti texts were more important than smriti texts. The question was attempted by candidates of all abilities. Although many candidates were able to give two basic reasons for whether they thought shruti texts were more important than smriti texts, it was only higher level answers that managed to give developed reasons. Some candidates used three or four reasons to illustrate their answer; unfortunately only two reasons could be credited. Candidates need to be prepared to expand on the simple reasons they give in part (b) questions as this is the only way to achieve full marks on this type of question. Part (c) was well answered by many candidates and many candidates gained full marks by stating four brief reasons as to why one Hindu movement was important to its members. Several candidates were able to write from personal experience which meant they often gave a fully comprehensive explanation. As with question two, some candidates wrote far more than the question required and gave up to eight brief reasons or four developed reasons. This impacted negatively on their section four answers where they appeared to run out of time. In part (d) the question required candidates to evaluate a statement about whether Swamis are not relevant in the modern world. Most candidates stated their own opinion and give reasons for it in (d)(i) and a large number of candidates were also able to construct counter arguments in (d) (ii).

In question 4(a) this glossary definition was answered fully correctly by many candidates. 4(b). This question was well answered by most candidates; who gave to detailed reasons for why they thought it was or was not important to follow a guru. Part (c) was well answered by many candidates and many candidates gained full marks by stating four brief reasons as to why Varnashramadharma is important for many Hindus. Some candidates wrote far more than the question required and gave up to eight brief reasons or four developed reasons. This impacted negatively on their section four answers where they appeared to run out of time in their section four answers. Most candidates responded well to the layout of the part (d) question and stated their own opinion on whether caste had nothing to do with Hinduism in (i); they were then able to give an alternative opinion in (ii).

In question 5(a) this glossary definition was known by a large number of candidates; most candidates were awarded full marks. Part (b) was generally answered well and many candidates were able to give developed reasons as to why they thought offerings were important in Hindu worship. Part (c) was answered well by most candidates. Many candidates gave four detailed answers, even though they only needed to give four brief reasons, which described why Ayodhya was important for many Hindus. Again most candidates responded well to the layout of the (d) question and were able to state their own opinion and gave reasons for it in (i); and then gave an alternative opinion in (ii).

Question 6(a) was generally answered well and most candidates gained full marks. Part (b) was well answered and many candidates were able to give two reasons as to why Holi was important to Hindus. The more able candidates were able to develop their reasons and gain the high marks. Part (c) was well answered by the majority of candidates, who were able to explain in detail the features of a mandir (temple). This part (d) was well answered by the majority of candidates, and they were able to state their own opinion and gave reasons for it (i); and then gave an alternative opinion in (ii).

Most candidates knew the glossary definition for brahmacharya in question 7(a). This question generally gained full marks. Part (b) was well answered many candidates and many gave two developed reasons for why they thought sannyasa ashrama was or was not important for modern Hindus. Part (c) asked candidates to explain how a mandirs works for the local Hindu community. Some candidates gave lots of description but did not always then go on to explain how the mandir helps the local Hind community. Therefore these candidates were unable to answer this question well. A small number of candidates left this question blank especially those that had written more than was required in earlier sections of the paper. The part (d) question needed candidates to evaluate a statement about whether karma yoga is the best way to liberation. Most candidates were able to state their own opinion and give reasons for it in (i). A large number of candidates were also able to construct counter arguments.

In question 8, most candidates who answered part (a) gained full marks. The language used also suggested that the glossary definition had been learnt by a large number of candidates. In part (b) most candidates were able to state their own opinion as to whether they thought Hindu death rituals should be followed in the modern world. Many candidates had strong opinions on this and this enabled them to develop their reason. This part (c) question was not generally well answered by candidates. Most candidates were able to give four brief explanations as to how a belief in ahimsa might affect the lives of Hindus. Some candidates left this question blank especially those which had written more than was required in earlier sections of the paper. The part (d) question asked candidates to evaluate a statement about whether all Hindus should help to relieve poverty and/or suffering in the UK. Most candidates were able to state their own opinion and give reasons for it in (i). A large number of candidates were also able to construct counter arguments.

Summary

Candidates generally seemed very well prepared by schools and produced some very interesting and insightful answers to the questions posed. This indicated that they had not only studied the topics but importantly they had linked them to their own life and the world that they live in.

Some general points can be made on how best to answer the various question types:

- Part (a) questions ask for either a definition or examples and learning the glossary definitions is one way to achieve full marks on this question.
- Part (b) questions only need one opinion (the candidate's) backed by two developed reasons. To gain full marks, candidates should give two developed reasons, rather than simple reasons. One way of approaching this is for candidates to give their reason, write two separate reasons for it, each in a distinct paragraph and to develop each of the reasons with an example or a quote.
- Part (c) questions are 'Explain why...' or 'Explain how...' questions, and are testing AO1. Candidates can gain the higher mark within the level by writing coherently and therefore meeting the Quality of Written Communication descriptor.
- Part (d) questions are divided into two parts: (d)(i) asks the candidates to give their own opinion backed by reasons and (d)(ii) requires an alternative opinion backed by reasons; one of the reasons used in the whole of (d) must refer to Hinduism otherwise the candidate cannot go beyond 3 marks for the whole of (d).
- There is a choice of two questions per section, each as four sub-questions. Candidates can either attempt the sub-questions in the top questions (odd numbers) or the sub-questions in the bottom question (even numbered). Candidates who choose questions from a mixture of the top and bottom questions will not be able to access full marks for the question.

- The number of lines given is more than adequate for candidates to achieve maximum marks. Any candidate who needs extra space can use that space allocated to other questions as long as they clearly indicate on their paper that this is what they have done.
- Candidates should be encouraged to spend about twenty minutes per question leaving ten minutes to check through work at the ends of the paper.

This year there were 4 extra marks added for spelling punctuation and grammar. There were 4 marks added to section one 'Believing in God'. Information on this has been sent to all centres.

Teachers who would like to learn more about the specification and this year's examination in particular should attend one of the online Edexcel insets which can be booked through the Edexcel website. Specific queries can be answered through Ask the Expert which is also found on the Edexcel website.

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