

Examiners' Report/  
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2016

Pearson Edexcel GCSE  
in Religious Studies (5RS13)  
Paper 01 - Hinduism

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## Unit 13 - Hinduism

Question 1(a) was mostly answered correctly. In 1(b), many candidates were able to give two detailed reasons for why they thought Krishna is or is not 'the most important deity'. A small 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 Ganesha is significant to Hindus. This answer was attempted by candidates of all abilities and was answered well by most candidates. The part (d) question required candidates to evaluate a statement about whether gaining good karma is the most important part of a Hindu life. 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 Brahman. Most answers were correct and 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 avatars helped people learn about God, 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 answered well by nearly all candidates who were able to explain how and why the samsara is important to Hindus. A small number of 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 'God should be shown as female'. The majority of candidates were able to state their own opinion and give reasons for it in (i). Most 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 the Bhagavad Gita is the most important book for Hindus. The question was attempted by candidates of all abilities. The majority of candidates were able to give two reasons as to whether they thought the Bhagavad Gita was the most important book for Hindus. Many candidates managed to develop at least one of their reasons whilst most able candidates developed both reasons. A small number of candidates used three or four reasons to illustrate their answer but unfortunately only two reasons could be credited. These 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 they thought swamis are important for many Hindus. A minority of candidates gave reasons for why they thought the Swamis are not important to Hindus. Their answers read rather like an evaluative question rather than a knowledge based question, these reasons could not be credited as this did not answer the question. In part (d), the question required candidates to evaluate a statement about whether Hindus should only follow smirit texts. Most candidates stated their own opinion and gave reasons for it in (d)(i) and a large number of candidates were also able to construct counter

arguments in (d) (ii). A minority of candidates confused the two types of texts which resulted in them gaining no marks.

In question 4(a), this glossary definition was answered fully correctly by many candidates. Question 4(b) was well answered by most candidates who gave detailed reasons for why they thought revealed scriptures were more important than remembered scriptures. Part (c) was well answered by many candidates and many candidates gained full marks by giving four brief reasons or a fully developed reason as to why many Hindus believe caste has nothing to do with 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 Brahmins are not needed in modern society, in (ii) 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 and 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 Holi is or is not important for Hindus. Part (c) was answered well by most candidates. Many candidates gave four detailed answers, even though they only needed to give four brief reasons, to explain why pilgrimage to Vrindavan is important for many Hindus. Again most candidates responded well to the layout of the (d) question and were able to state their own opinion as to why they thought a temple is important in the community 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 whether they thought Navaratri is important for Hindus worship. The more able candidates were able to develop their reasons and gain the higher marks. Part (c) was well answered by the majority of candidates, who were able to explain in detail offerings are important in Hindu worship. This part (d) was well answered by the majority of candidates, and they were able to state their own opinion and gave reasons to whether they thought Diwali is the most important festival (i) and then gave an alternative opinion in (ii).

Most candidates knew the glossary definition for grihastha 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 it was or was not important for babies to have a naming ceremony. Part (c) asked candidates to explain why Hindus help those who are suffering. 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 violence should ever be used to get what people want. 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. In part (b), this question was not generally well answered by candidates. Some candidates were able to state their own opinion as to whether they thought Hindus should be involved in social and community cohesion. Many candidates seemed confused by the term social and community cohesion and were therefore not able to give clear reasons. This answer demonstrates the need to insure that candidates have full knowledge of the key words and key topics and meaning on the specification. This part (c) question was generally well answered by candidates. Most candidates were able to give four brief explanations as to why death rituals are important in Hinduism. 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 the brahmacharya ashrama is a significant as other ashramas. 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

The majority of candidates generally seemed very well prepared by centres 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 developed two 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 end of the paper.

