



Examiners' Report

June 2023

GCSE Religious Studies B 1RB0 1E

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June 2023

Publications Code 1RB0_1E_2306_ER

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Introduction

This paper contributes to 50% of the overall award. The paper includes four questions; each covers a section of the specification. Candidates are expected to answer all four questions; there is no element of choice on the paper. The details of the assessment content are provided in the specification. Centres are expected to use the Edexcel specification rather than other published resources when planning and teaching the course content. The examination is set from the specification.

This paper allows an in depth study of Hinduism as a lived religion within the United Kingdom, and its beliefs and teachings on life; specifically within families and with regard to matters of life and death.

Question 1 (a)

(a) questions require the candidate to give three pieces of information, and the most common command word is 'Outline'. Candidates need to put their three pieces of information into a sentence or phrase.

The candidate was awarded all three marks for this question.

1 (a) Outline three Hindu beliefs about karma.

(3)

One Hindu belief about karma is that it will decide what you will be in your next life. Another Hindu belief about karma is that you need good karma in order to reach moksha. Hindus also believe that one's positive and negative actions will result in good and bad karma.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate gives three relevant pieces of information:

Karma decides what you will be in your next life.

You need good karma to reach moksha.

Positive...actions...result in good...karma.



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Examiner Tip

(a) questions do not require long answers, or elegant sentences. Be concise, and use the time you save on questions that are worth more marks.

Question 1 (b)

(b) questions require **two** developed ideas to get full marks. A development is something that adds to the reader's understanding of the initial point made by the candidate – not a completely new idea.

The candidate was awarded all four marks for this question.

(b) Explain **two** teachings about the importance of sanatana dharma.

(4)
It is important for a good society.
Without it society would fall into ~~chaos~~.
chaos.
You need to do your dharma to get good karma
and break the cycle of samsara. This makes
you achieve moksha which is the ultimate aim
for Hindus.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate tells us that sanatana dharma is important for a good society and then develops this idea, adding that without sanatana dharma, society would fall into chaos.

The second idea offered by the candidate is that doing your dharma gets good karma. This is developed either by it breaking the cycle of samsara, or by achieving moksha – but only one of the two can be credited. The last phrase 'which is the ultimate aim for Hindus' is a development of the development (the point about moksha) and so could not have been credited.



The first paragraph is a good example of how to be concise on (b) questions. The second had already got full marks half way through. Whatever time you can save on your (b) questions can be used on your (d) questions.

Question 1 (c)

(c) questions require **two** developed ideas to get full marks. A development is something that adds to the reader's understanding of the initial point made by the candidate – not a completely new idea. In addition, either of the two ideas presented, if it is developed by reference to a Source of Wisdom and Authority (SOWA), can be awarded an additional mark.

(c) questions require **two** developed ideas to get full marks. A development is something that adds to the reader's understanding of the initial point made by the candidate – not a completely new idea. In addition, either of the two ideas presented, if it is developed by reference to a Source of Wisdom and Authority (SOWA), can be awarded an additional mark.

(c) Explain **two** Hindu beliefs about Saguna Brahman.

In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

(5)

One Hindu belief about Saguna Brahman is that he ~~is~~ can be worshipped with murtis because he has form. ~~They~~ Therefore, making it easier to worship as he can be seen.

Another Hindu belief about Saguna Brahman is that he can be worshipped through different deities because Brahman exists in everything. Therefore, giving the worshipper a choice of which deity they can worship.

A quote to support this is "Brahman is all", therefore Brahman is in everything.



The candidate was awarded all five marks for this question.



The Source of Wisdom and Authority that is referred to is meant to be an integral part of your answer, not an 'add-on' at the end. In this case, the answer still flows correctly if you ignore the empty line, but it is much better to have your SOWA clearly linked to the idea that it is developing. There are examples of this later on.

Question 1 (d)

There is no one single formula for answering a (d) question. Two answers can get the same mark and look completely different. That said, there are some key things that we are looking for. Let's start with the basics.

There should be an argument for, an argument against and a conclusion. The arguments for and against should demonstrate religious understanding – not just knowledge.

Ideas within the arguments should be organised into logical chains of reasoning (x happens, this is because of y, which means z).

Lastly, if you've presented an argument, is it a good one? Why is it a good one? Here, the biggest pitfall is candidates who say "this is a strong argument because..." and then give another reason that could just as easily have gone into their argument. This is a strong reason because it is taught in the Vedas/Upanishads/Bhagavad Gita is a good start (if it actually is!), but then why does the Rig Veda matter? Is the Bhagavad Gita more, or less, authoritative than the Rig Veda? If Gandhi taught it, why does that matter? Does it matter more or less than it being taught in Manusmriti, for example.

This response was placed in Level 3.

Therefore if the true universe is disrupted by
and blocked by ignorance then Hindus cannot attain
the knowledge needed to achieve moksha. This
is a strong argument because maya is written about
in holy scriptures and is a common belief
~~amongst~~ among many Hindus.

However
~~However~~ some Hindus may disagree as the triguna
states the world is made up of - passion, greediness
and ignorance - therefore meaning in order to
have a balanced universe all three things must
be present. moreover one of the 4 hindu



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Examiners Comments

This question proved challenging to a number of candidates who were unaware of the very specific meaning of ignorance in the context of this paper - cf Spec point 1.7 - several of whom wrote about rudeness or bad manners. This candidate is able to relate it to maya and tamas. There is a token element of appraisal about it being in Hindu scriptures and being a common belief but what lifts it is the way that the counter argument refers back to the original argument and, in effect, becomes an appraisal and evaluation.



Read the question carefully. Ask yourself what quotes or examples you know related to the question. Think about whether the source of the quote is reliable, widely respected and so on. Build your answer around this. We deliberately make the question as blunt and one-sided as possible, to make it easier to argue – your answer doesn't have to be blunt *or* one-sided. Sometimes it helps to remember that the question isn't really asking what *you* think – you are just asked to evaluate the statement. Why would people agree with it, why would they disagree, who has the most compelling argument?

Question 2 (a)

The phrase 'Hindu responses to' is found in a number of Specification points (2.1, 2.2, 2.5, 2.6). When the paper is written, we have to make sure that, over time, there are opportunities to check knowledge and understanding of Hindu responses to particular things. A *response* question wants to know how a Hindu reacts to, in this case, different family types; what do they think about them?

This response was awarded three marks.

2 (a) Outline **three** Hindu responses to different types of family.

(3)

one Hindu responses to diffrnt types of family is that they like extended families because it helps them ~~achieve~~ complete their dharma. Another Hindu response to different types of family is that they ~~like~~ like nuclear families as they have procreated and completed their dharma. A final Hindu response to diffrent types of families is that they dislike some sex marriages in a family because they can't complete their dharma.



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Examiner Comments

There were a huge number of responses that could be credited on this question. When we are reading the candidate's responses, particularly with a religious tradition as diverse as Hinduism, we make the assumption that the candidate means *many* Hindus, or *some* Hindus when they say *Hindus*, since there are so many divergent views on ethical matters.



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Examiner Tip

Response questions are typically going to use words such as like, agree, approve, dislike, disagree, disapprove. Simply telling the examiner what the different family types are gets 0 marks.

Question 2 (b)

This question was intentionally open, allowing for candidates to write about pre-marital and extra-marital sex. In questions such as this one, we interpret the word 'Hindus' in the candidate's response to mean *some* Hindus, unless they tell us otherwise. This is particularly important for ethical questions such as this, where there may be divergent, and even contradictory, beliefs.

This response was awarded four marks.

(b) Explain **two** Hindu beliefs about sexual relationships outside of marriage.

(4)

One belief is that ~~sex should~~ a couple should not have pre-marital sex as it should only take place in the grihastha (householder) stage. This is because sex should be a means of having children and this must only happen after a couple is married.

A second belief is that couples should be able to have pre-marital sex, ~~this~~ as it is kama, one of the four Hindu aims of life. This means that couples should be able to enjoy sex without the burden of having children and without restriction.



The candidate gave two developed answers.

A couple should not have pre-marital sex, it should only happen in the grihastha stage.

A couple should be allowed to have pre-marital sex, as it is kama.

The second answer was accepted because there are multiple Hindu sources that concur with it, not because we are unaware that some Hindus would argue very convincingly against it.



There is no obligation to set out your answer in a particular way, but arranging it so that each belief is in a different paragraph makes it easier for the examiner to identify the two beliefs and spot the development.

Question 2 (c)

(c) questions require **two** developed ideas to get full marks. A development is something that adds to the reader's understanding of the initial point made by the candidate – not a completely new idea. It is not necessary to quote a source of wisdom and authority verbatim, the reference just has to be recognisable to the examiner.

This candidate's response was awarded all five marks.

(c) Explain **two** purposes of marriage for Hindus.

In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

(5)

One purpose of marriage for Hindus is so Hindus can complete their dharma. The couple can express kama in a marriage and achieve moksha.

Another purpose of marriage is to have children and pass on morals and traditions. "Those who destroy family traditions will dwell always in hell" meaning that traditions will uphold a stable society of ~~well-meaning~~ children with morals.



The candidate gives two developed *purposes* of marriage.

To complete their dharma, by allowing them to experience marital kama.

To have children, which allows them to pass on tradition – developed by a suitable reference to a source of wisdom and authority.

Some candidates misread the question and described the marriage ceremony – these were only credited where the aspect fo the ceremony or rite could be said to be an articulation of the purpose.



This example was chosen to show how brief an answer can be, and still get full marks.

You do not have to be word perfect when giving a quote from a SOWA, the examiner just needs to be able to recognise it.

Using quotation marks around your reference, even if you know that it is not word perfect, can be very helpful in signposting it to the examiner.

Question 2 (d)

A (d) question should have an argument for, an argument against and a conclusion. The arguments for and against should demonstrate religious understanding – not just knowledge.

Ideas within the arguments should be organised into logical chains of reasoning (x happens, this is because of y, which means z).

Lastly, is the argument a good one? Why is it a good one? What are the weaknesses of the case that has been presented?

This response was placed in Level 2.

mu) is not right divorce is not morally right. This could be considered a questionable logic because some may argue that forcing one to stay in a marriage they are no longer happy in goes against the principle of ahimsa. This is supported by the quote "ahimsa is the highest duty". This teaches hindus that not harming any living being is the most important principle to follow, so if the marriage is causing harm, they should be permitted to break away from it.



The clip shows an extract of an answer to this question. You can see that there is an attempt at appraisal. If the candidate had referred to relevant ethical arguments in their response, they would have found themselves in Level 3. This level of appraisal could have been enhanced by considering the strength of the teaching that ahimsa is the highest duty. What moral authority does Gandhi have, for example? What are the roots of this teaching in Hindu scripture? Does the rest of the quote, that is often omitted, add nuance? Can this same teaching be used to support both sides of the argument – and, since it can, does that weaken its usefulness?

Achieving this in just two sides of A4 can be challenging, but largely because candidates focus on explaining how eg ahimsa applies to this situation. If the candidate makes the assertion briefly, it allows more time for the appraisal of the argument. Some schools have taught this by providing their pupils with the reasons for and against, and only asking their pupils to appraise the reasons they have been given. This may be useful in supporting the most able candidates to access Level 4.



Check the bullet points in the question before you start writing. If you don't cover all of them, your answer can't go above 6 marks. If you're checking through your answers at the end of the exam and realise that you've missed 'relevant ethical arguments,' add them and use an asterisk to show where it should be inserted – we will make sure that we read it the way that you intended.

Question 3 (a)

(a) questions like this one present a particular challenge. Because the answers are all nouns, or noun phrases, it is very easy to get drawn into giving an answer that is just a list. On the mark scheme, lists are awarded 1 mark only. In order to get that one mark, the candidate needs to list three correct pieces of information – if there are only 2, the mark awarded is 0.

This response was awarded all three marks.

3 (a) Outline three features of a Hindu place of worship.

(3)

A Hindu place of worship would have different Murtis of Gods, and Goddesses. Another feature is that there should be offerings given to the Murtis. A Hindu place of worship might also have a stream of water around it to symbolise the purity before entering it.



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The candidate lists three features of a Hindu place of worship, the second of which was not something that we anticipated when the question was written. The question was intended to elicit three architectural features of a Hindu place of worship and, in the end, we also credited things that we were confident a person might see when visiting a Hindu place of worship.



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Examiner Tip

If the candidate had simply written "Murtis, offerings and a stream" they would only have been awarded one mark. Make sure that your answers to (a) questions are always in a sentence or a phrase.

Question 3 (b)

(b) questions require **two** developed ideas to get full marks. A development is something that adds to the reader's understanding of the initial point made by the candidate – not a completely new idea. You can use quotes as development in (b) questions, just like you can in (c) questions.

This response was awarded all four marks.

(b) Explain **two** features of Hindu puja.

(4)

One feature of puja is offerings to the gods. ~~At the time,~~ this is to honour the gods therefore, Hindus would offer food and small luxuries as gifts.

Another feature would be incense because it's scent represents the presence of the gods. Therefore, Hindus would light incense to feel closer to the deities and Brahman.



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The candidate gave two developed answers:

Offerings are made, developed by the example of the types of offering.

Incense, developed by its significance.



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Examiner Tip

This example has been included to show you how short an answer can be and still get full marks.

Question 3 (c)

(c) questions require **two** developed ideas to get full marks. A development is something that adds to the reader's understanding of the initial point made by the candidate – not a completely new idea. In addition, either of the two ideas presented, if it is developed by reference to a Source of Wisdom and Authority (SOWA), can be awarded an additional mark. If the SOWA is misattributed, it is not credited.

This response was awarded all five marks.

(c) Explain **two** reasons why most Hindus worship one god.

In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

(5)

One reason most Hindus worship one god is that the other deities are just aspects of the main god, Brahman. "In truth Brahman is all". This teaches that Brahman is within everything, including the lesser deities, so by worshipping them you are in turn worshipping Brahman.

Another reason most Hindus worship one god is that the other deities just represent aspects of Brahman. This means that you are simply worshipping a smaller part of a whole when you worship a different deity, so you are only ever worshipping one god in many forms.



This question was originally intended to produce responses like the one that is included here, responses about the centrality of Brahman. A number of candidates made one, or both, of their points about worshipping a particular divinity – worshipping Lakshmi for prosperity was a common one – and these responses were credited too.

Here, the candidate gives two developed responses, the first of which is further developed by a suitable SOWA.



Unless you are *absolutely* certain of which book your quote comes from it is best not to say. If you say that it is from Bhagavad Gita and it is actually from Katha Upanishad, we won't give you the mark. Don't worry though, we are quite good at spotting that some quotes appear in multiple places and you won't be penalised for that!

Question 3 (d)

A (d) question should have an argument for, an argument against and a conclusion. The arguments for and against should demonstrate religious understanding – not just knowledge.

Ideas within the arguments should be organised into logical chains of reasoning (x happens, this is because of y, which means z).

Lastly, is the argument a good one? Why is it a good one? What are the weaknesses of the case that has been presented?

This extract is taken from a Level 3 response.

On the other hand, some Hindus would disagree because there are other more important aspects of Hindu life which you should focus on instead. Such as ahimsa, which is supported by the "ahimsa is the highest duty". This teaches that ahimsa should be your foremost priority. Therefore festivals are not an essential part of Hindu life as you should be focusing on other, more important aspects of the religion. This can be seen as a strong view, because by completing ahimsa you are gaining good karma, thus promoting you towards moksha, the ultimate goal for Hindus. Contradictory to this however festivals also contribute towards good karma, so they are essential.



This extract comes from a Level 3 response and has been chosen as it illustrates a natural form of appraisal. The candidate posits that ahimsa is more of an essential part of Hindu life than celebrating festivals. They relate ahimsa to karma and, in turn, moksha – which is the ultimate aim of Hindus (a chain of reasoning), before concluding the paragraph by shooting the karma argument down, on the grounds that celebrating festivals also results in good karma.



Each time you make a point in your answer, ask yourself how important that point is – and why it is important. Remember that we are not so much interested in what you think, as whether you understand how good the argument is.

Question 4 (a)

Like Q03a, this question ran the risk of being answered as a list. Thankfully, there were very few responses like that. We do not credit development in (a) questions.

This response was awarded all 3 marks.

4 (a) Outline **three** Hindu beliefs that are used to show the existence of life after death.

Hindus believe in the atman which cannot die. Hindus believe in the cycle of samsara and that people will be re-incarnated when they die. Hindus believe in moksha which is eternal life and reuniting with Brahman. (3)



There are four creditable ideas in this response; the atman, samsara, reincarnation and moksha. Only three of them can be credited. Depending on how you read the response, you could say that there are three developed ideas here too.



This candidate's answer would still have been awarded three marks if they had only written:

"Hindus believe in the atman. Hindus believe in samsara. Hindus believe in moksha."

The short answer isn't elegant, but we are not judging you on that here. Brief answers save you time that can be spent on the longer questions.

Question 4 (b)

(b) questions require **two** developed ideas to get full marks. A development is something that adds to the reader's understanding of the initial point made by the candidate – not a completely new idea. If you use a technical term in your main idea, defining that term can count as development.

This response was awarded all four marks.

(b) Explain **two** reasons why Hindus believe life is special.

(4)

Hindus believe in sanctity of life, this means that life is holy and sacred as it is given by God. Another reason is that, all living ~~that~~ beings are born with a part of Brahman residing in them - ^{the} atman. Therefore, they believe its special since its a part of God.



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The candidate gave two developed responses:

Hindus believe in the sanctity of life, developed by the definition.

All living things are born with a part of Brahman in them, the atman.



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Examiner Tip

Developments do not need to be long – look at the mark schemes for some examples of just how brief these can be.

Question 4 (c)

(c) questions require **two** developed ideas to get full marks. A development is something that adds to the reader's understanding of the initial point made by the candidate – not a completely new idea. In addition, either of the two ideas presented, if it is developed by reference to a Source of Wisdom and Authority (SOWA), can be awarded an additional mark. The SOWA does not have to be a quote, or paraphrase, from scripture; it can be a reference to a known event or story. On this paper, it is often a reference to an episode in the Ramayana, or a more general reference to part of the Bhagavad Gita.

This candidate was awarded the full five marks for this question.

(c) Explain **two** reasons why Hindus try to care for the environment.

In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

(5)

One reason Hindus try to care for the environment is that god (Brahman) is in everything. ~~As far as~~ "In truth Brahman is all". This teaches that every living thing (the environment) is a part of god, so to damage it or not care for it would be disrespectful.

Another reason Hindus try to care for the environment is that they believe in ahimsa (non-violence). This means that they care for the environment, as they do not wish to inflict harm on another living thing.



This question was specifically about the *reasons why* Hindus care for the environment. Some candidates chose instead to give *ways* in which Hindus care for the environment; these responses were not credited, except where they also gave the reason as part of their answer.

This candidate gave two developed reasons, one of which had a source of wisdom and authority. The candidate was awarded the full five marks.



Whilst it might be ideal to know, and be able to use, lots of quotes; there are some ("In truth Brahman is all" is a good example, "Ahimsa is the highest duty" is another) that can be used in lots of different contexts. Here, the candidate has used the quote well. Think about what your quote can add to your answer – if it isn't adding anything, it isn't going to be credited.

Question 4 (d)

A (d) question should have an argument for, an argument against and a conclusion. The arguments for and against should demonstrate religious understanding – not just knowledge.

Ideas within the arguments should be organised into logical chains of reasoning (x happens, this is because of y, which means z).

Lastly, is the argument a good one? Why is it a good one? What are the weaknesses of the case that has been presented?

This extract is taken from a Level 3 response.

(d) "There are some situations when abortion is acceptable."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Hindu teachings
- refer to relevant ethical arguments
- reach a justified conclusion.

FOR	AGAINST
- ^{bad} step _{Karma}	- ahimsa
- atman only deprived of one life	- drama 'Family is destroyed, tradition gets lost'
- ahimsa	- householder ashrama
- quality of life	- hurt caused to atman
- student ashrama	- sanctity of life

I agree with this statement because I believe in situation ethics. In a situation where a woman does not want to bring a child into the world, I believe that the most loving thing to do would be to terminate the pregnancy. This is because the mother and child could experience a low quality of life if the mother feels emotionally unready to bring life into the world whereas the child may be neglected or even put into the foster care system. I therefore believe that it would be in the best interest of the mother and the fetus for the abortion to be approved.



As with Q02(d), relevant ethical arguments were required to access more than 6 marks.

The most commonly referenced ethical arguments were Situation Ethics. This could lend itself very well to the appraisal part of the mark scheme as the perceived weaknesses of Situation Ethics are well-known and could easily be taught to candidates.



A little time spent planning can help you to make more effective use of your time; it allows you to focus more of your time on appraising the arguments and not just presenting them.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance in this paper, students should:

- Write concise answers to (a) questions
- Ensure that (a) answers are written in short sentences or phrases
- Make sure that developments in (b) questions are clearly linked, or related, to the main idea they present
- Avoid repeating the same development in (b) and (c) questions
- Use sources of wisdom and authority to develop (c) answers, not as a 'bolt-on' at the end
- Carefully consider what exactly it is that makes the arguments in their (d) questions strong or weak; eg how authoritative is the source they cite?

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