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HINDUISM

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Paper 2 Written Paper

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MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 60

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Generic Marking Principles

These general marking principles must be applied by all examiners when marking candidate answers. They should be applied alongside the specific content of the mark scheme or generic level descriptors for a question. Each question paper and mark scheme will also comply with these marking principles.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 1:

Marks must be awarded in line with:

- the specific content of the mark scheme or the generic level descriptors for the question
- the specific skills defined in the mark scheme or in the generic level descriptors for the question
- the standard of response required by a candidate as exemplified by the standardisation scripts.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 2:

Marks awarded are always **whole marks** (not half marks, or other fractions).

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 3:

Marks must be awarded **positively**:

- marks are awarded for correct/valid answers, as defined in the mark scheme. However, credit is given for valid answers which go beyond the scope of the syllabus and mark scheme, referring to your Team Leader as appropriate
- marks are awarded when candidates clearly demonstrate what they know and can do
- marks are not deducted for errors
- marks are not deducted for omissions
- answers should only be judged on the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar when these features are specifically assessed by the question as indicated by the mark scheme. The meaning, however, should be unambiguous.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 4:

Rules must be applied consistently, e.g. in situations where candidates have not followed instructions or in the application of generic level descriptors.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 5:

Marks should be awarded using the full range of marks defined in the mark scheme for the question (however; the use of the full mark range may be limited according to the quality of the candidate responses seen).

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 6:

Marks awarded are based solely on the requirements as defined in the mark scheme. Marks should not be awarded with grade thresholds or grade descriptors in mind.

5 mark questions

Level	AO1 Knowledge and Understanding	Marks
Level 3	Explains significance of knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a range of accurate and relevant knowledge. • Demonstrates understanding through developed discussion. • Addresses the question. • Some engagement with the wider context, if relevant. 	5
Level 2	Range of knowledge partly addressing the question <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a range of knowledge with some accuracy. • Demonstrates understanding through use of appropriate knowledge, may be less well developed. • Partially addresses the question. • Uneven engagement with the wider context, if relevant. 	3–4
Level 1	Limited answer to question with limited knowledge/understanding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies a limited range of knowledge some of which may not be accurate. • Demonstrates basic understanding. • Response is relevant to the topic, but does not directly address the question. • Limited reference to the wider context, if relevant. 	1–2
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

10 mark questions

Level	AO1 Knowledge and Understanding	Marks
Level 4	<p>Explorative with detailed significant knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a range of detailed and relevant knowledge. • Demonstrates understanding through well developed and connected discussion. • Addresses all aspects of the question. • Good understanding of the wider context if relevant. 	9–10
Level 3	<p>Explains significance of knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a range of accurate and relevant knowledge. • Demonstrates understanding through developed discussion. • Addresses most aspects of the question. • Some engagement with the wider context, if relevant. 	6–8
Level 2	<p>Range of knowledge partly addressing the question</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a range of knowledge with some accuracy. • Demonstrates understanding through use of appropriate knowledge, may be less well developed. • Partially addresses the question. • Uneven engagement with the wider context, if relevant. 	3–5
Level 1	<p>Limited answer to question with limited knowledge/understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies a limited range of knowledge some of which may not be accurate. • Demonstrates basic understanding. • Response is relevant to the topic, but does not directly address the question. • Limited reference to the wider context, if relevant. 	1–2
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

15 mark questions

Level	AO2 Analysis and Evaluation	Marks
Level 5	<p>Assesses alternative conclusions with analysis of points view</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyses the importance and/or strength of different points of view. Uses accurate evidence to support a coherent and well-structured discussion. Addresses all aspects of the question. Coherent conclusion which evaluates knowledge and points of view and assesses alternative conclusions. 	13–15
Level 4	<p>Coherent conclusion supported by evidenced points of view</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discusses different points of view in some detail. Uses accurate evidence to support a well-structured discussion. Addresses most aspects of the question. Coherent conclusion which evaluates knowledge and points of view. 	10–12
Level 3	<p>Clear conclusion with different points of view</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognises different points of view and discusses at least one in some detail. Uses accurate evidence to support discussion. Partially addresses the question. Clear conclusion to the question which is linked to a range of knowledge and points of view. 	7–9
Level 2	<p>Attempts conclusion with a supported point of view</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discusses one point of view. Uses supporting evidence for one or more relevant point. The support may not be wholly relevant or accurate. Partially addresses the question in a limited way. Attempts a conclusion to the question which is linked to knowledge and/or a point of view. 	4–6
Level 1	<p>Basic conclusion with a point of view</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> States a point of view. Little or no supporting evidence. Response is relevant to the topic, but does not directly address the question. Attempts a basic conclusion. 	1–3
Level 0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No relevant material to credit. 	0

Section A
Answer **EITHER** Question 1 **OR** Question 2.

Question	Answer	Marks
1(a)	<p>Outline the different areas of concern for the four Vedas.</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and Understanding. Response will be marked according to the 5 mark level descriptors (AO1).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>The Rig Veda ('praise knowledge') is the oldest of the texts. As its name implies, it is concerned with hymns of praise, which are addressed to various devas. Some of these hymns include references to philosophical or metaphysical concerns. Correct verbalisation of these hymns actualises, or makes manifest, the power of rita which orders the universe.</p> <p>The Sama Veda ('song knowledge') contains chants and songs. Most of the 1549 verses it contains are taken from the Rig Veda, and therefore shares the concerns of that text. Only 75 verses are not. These are concerned with giving instructions about the melodies to which the verses should be sung by priests.</p> <p>The Yajur Veda ('worship knowledge') focusses on liturgy and ritual. It contains mantras and instructions for the priests performing these śrauta ('required by shruti') sacrifices. The text is divided into black/dark and white/bright as a way of distinguishing the clearer, more ordered sections from the more muddled.</p> <p>The Atharva Veda ('Artharvan's knowledge'), which is arguably a substantially younger text than the others, is concerned with magic and medicine. It includes some texts from the Rig Veda, other poetry and mantras. It includes issues of surgical treatments, charms against illness and other misfortunes and spells relating to wealth, family and relationships.</p>	5

Question	Answer	Marks
1(b)	<p>Explain the importance of the Upanishads for the development of Hinduism.</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and Understanding. Response will be marked according to the 10 mark level descriptors (AO1).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>The Upanishads ('Sitting Beside') consist of philosophical writings on the central concepts and ideas of Hinduism - such as Brahman, atman and moksha. They are probably the best known of the Vedic texts, because these concepts are central to contemporary Hinduism and other sections of the Vedas are more focussed on devotion and practice than philosophy or metaphysics. Many scholars would argue that the Samhitas have a higher status than the Upanishads, but they are less well-known in practice and have had less influence on later developments within Hinduism than the Upanishads.</p> <p>The philosophy developed in them is considered by many to be the process through which Hinduism moved away from the Vedic rituals and towards its contemporary forms of practice. Later Upanishads reject external ritual, in favour of internal reflection on the relation of the atman to Brahman or the nature of the self; this philosophical perspective gives a foundation for the various schools of Vedanta, which are arguably the most influential Hindu darshanas today.</p> <p>While the Vedas themselves are considered shruti (revealed), the Upanishads are generally not; they are the reflections of gurus and holy people on a wide range of issues of metaphysics, theology, epistemology and ethics. Because they were written over a long period of time which spans many centuries, the Upanishads are not uniform in nature or approach to the issues they reflect upon, neither do they set out a single philosophical system. That means that different schools and traditions within Hinduism have been able to use different Upanishads to support their different beliefs and practices. The claim that the Vedas are the foundation of Hinduism can thus remain true, with the diversity found in these influential Vedic writings supporting the great diversity of belief and practice found in contemporary Hinduism.</p>	10

Question	Answer	Marks
1(c)	<p>Assess the claim that nastika traditions are not forms of Hinduism.</p> <p>AO2 – Analysis and Evaluation. Response will be marked according to the 15 mark level descriptors (AO2).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>Astika, which literally means ‘one who affirms it exists’, is the name given to those schools of Hindu thought which hold the Vedas to be authoritative. Therefore, it is sometimes translated as ‘Orthodox’. Nastika, ‘one who denies it exists’, is the name given to schools of thought which reject the authority of the Vedas and it is sometimes translated as ‘Heterodox’ or ‘non-conformist’. Astika has sometimes been defined more broadly as a position affirming Brahman, atman or Ishvara, with nastika being the opposite view.</p> <p>Living traditions commonly classified as nastika are Buddhism and Jainism. These might be considered schools of Hindu thought because they share several important concepts with Hinduism. However, they might also be considered separate religions because they have distinct interpretations of those concepts. If the origin of those concepts is considered to be the Upanishads, then it could be argued that they are heterodox developments of Hinduism, which is a diverse and often pluralistic religion. Alternatively, followers of those religions may regard their foundational teachings as distinct from the Upanishads’ reflections, possibly connected to Hinduism without being a part of it in a way analogous to the relationship between the Abrahamic religions.</p> <p>The diversity of Hinduism, which reflects the diversity of approaches and ideas contained in the Vedas themselves, makes it difficult to argue from a scholarly perspective that any one tradition is the ‘true’ or ‘proper’ Hinduism. It has been argued that the term ‘Hinduism’ itself is little more than an academic umbrella term for a range of traditions that developed from the same sources, rooted within the same culture. However, there are sources and individuals taking the view that there is a correct or orthodox Hinduism, and this tends to be based on attitudes to the Vedas. For example, the Manusmriti says that the Vedas are revealed, and the Dharmashastras remembered and that these two sources of truth should not be criticised or rejected by those who wish to live dharmic lives (II, 10–11). It goes on to say that a Dharmic society should cast out people who reject these sources of truth, which supports the view that nastika tradition should not be regarded as Hinduism. By contrast, there are practices and beliefs which blur the distinction between astika and nastika, for example, the view and worship of Gautama Buddha as an avatar of Vishnu. It could also be argued that because the Manusmriti is not a revealed text, its authority and accuracy could be contested.</p>	15

Question	Answer	Marks
2(a)	<p>Summarise the story told in the Mahabharata.</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and Understanding. Response will be marked according to the 5 mark level descriptors (AO1).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>The Mahabharata is the story of a conflict between two sets of cousins, the Pandavas and the Kauravas. Both groups are seeking the throne of Hastinapura.</p> <p>The Kaurava branch of the family is older, but Duryodhana, the eldest Kaurava heir, is younger than Yudhishthira, the eldest Pandava; both have a claim to the throne and supporters.</p> <p>The text covers the story of how these two branches of the family were established, with blind Dhritarashtra being denied the throne, in favour of his brother, Pandu, who later renounces the world to live in the forest.</p> <p>Dhritarashtra assumes the throne after Pandu steps down and, after Pandu's death, is pressured into naming Pandu's eldest son, Yudhishthira, as his heir. The Kauravas plot to remove the Pandavas from the succession and, following a game of dice in which Yudhishthira gambles and loses everything, the Pandavas go into exile.</p> <p>The Pandavas spend thirteen years in exile before summoning an army to fight the Kauravas. They are victorious and all the Kauravas are killed. The Pandavas rule for 36 years, before a curse laid by the Kauravas mother comes to fruition. They renounce the world and try to climb to heaven but each in turn falls from the mountain into the underworld, due to their karma. Only Yudhishthira reaches heaven directly, although ultimately the whole family is reunited there.</p>	5

Question	Answer	Marks
2(b)	<p>Explain why there is disagreement about whether some texts are smriti or shruti.</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and Understanding. Response will be marked according to the 10 mark level descriptors (AO1).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>Shruti literally means ‘that which is heard’. It is the term used to describe those Hindu texts which are considered to be divinely revealed. Smriti literally means ‘that which has been remembered’. It is used to describe texts with a human author, even if that author is considered to have been divinely inspired in their writings. In general terms smriti texts are considered human responses to the truths contained in shruti texts.</p> <p>The Vedas are usually considered to be shruti, and it is this which makes them authoritative for most Hindus. This means they are less likely to be considered shruti by nastika traditions which reject that authority. Followers of these traditions might reject the idea of shruti texts entirely, but they might also claim shruti status for other texts, such as the Agamas. Many of the Shaiva Agamas are believed by Shaivites to have been directly revealed by Shiva.</p> <p>In practise, the Vedas are not particularly well-known to contemporary Hindus. The later Upanishads have been the most influential on the philosophy of the religion, but the Epics are the most popular and influential texts. Because the text itself or a tradition associated with it is likely to be the authority for considering a text revealed, there is a great scope for diversity of opinion. Claims to be the Fifth Veda can be found in the Puranas, most particularly in the Bhagavata Purana, which also declares itself supreme over the other Puranas. Some people have also applied this title to the Mahabharata.</p> <p>There is also disagreement about the status of the Bhagavad Gita, arguably the most popular and best-known Hindu text in the contemporary world. Some Hindus argue that it is the words of Krishna, and therefore shruti. It is, however, a part of the Mahabharata, which most Hindus would consider to be smriti.</p>	10

Question	Answer	Marks
2(c)	<p>‘The Bhagavad Gita is the only important part of the Mahabharata.’ Discuss this claim.</p> <p>AO2 – Analysis and Evaluation. Response will be marked according to the 15 mark level descriptors (AO2).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>Although it is contained within the longer epic of the Mahabharata, the Bhagavad Gita (‘Song of the Lord’) is arguably better known by both Hindus and non-Hindus. It consists of a dialogue between Arjuna, one of the Pandavas, and Krishna, which takes place immediately before the climactic battle of Kurukshetra. Arjuna is filled with doubt about the morality of fighting against his kinsmen and former teachers, but he is also aware that as a kshatriya he has a duty to fight. In the conversation which follows the declaration of his dilemma, Krishna teaches Arjuna about the connection between dharma and desire or attachment to results. He also addresses the nature of the atman and different paths to liberation from rebirth.</p> <p>The text is widely significant because it presents teachings about karma, dharma and liberation that are widely believed by contemporary Hindus and are often presented as a summary of Hinduism entirely. The Mahabharata tells an epic story, while the Bhagavad Gita presents philosophical positions in the context of a character within that story. Therefore, it teaches more explicitly than much of the rest of the text, as Krishna has incarnated to teach Arjuna the principles outlined in the Gita. Although the Mahabharata is generally regarded as a smriti text, some Hindus regard the Bhagavad Gita as shruti because it is Krishna’s words. However, it is also possible to argue that the Mahabharata can provide guidance and role models for living a dharmic life in broader contexts than the tightly focussed Bhagavad Gita. Additionally, the greater scope of the longer text allows for a more nuanced exploration of the interconnected concepts of dharma and karma, and for them to be related to a greater variety of events, meaning the text may provide useful, specific and applied guidance as to how the ideas function in the real world.</p> <p>The Vedanta tradition of philosophy identifies three essential texts (prasthanatraya), which must be engaged with and commented on by philosophers wanting to find a new school of thought, as the founders of the existing three Vedanta schools wrote commentaries on them. One of these is the Bhagavad Gita, which arguably gives it the same status as the other two essential texts, the Brahmasutras and the Upanishads. The Bhagavad Gita is of particular importance to devotees of Krishna and is the foundational text of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON).</p> <p>The Bhagavad Gita has been used in support of Hindu Nationalism and violent political action, but it was also an important text for M K Gandhi who considered it to provide the foundation for his teachings on ahimsa. It is accessible to anyone who can read, is open to a variety of interpretations without contradicting the text and it recognises and endorses several different margas (path to liberation), all of which makes it uniquely appealing to Hindus from all traditions and darshanas.</p>	15

Section B
Answer **EITHER** Question 3 **OR** Question 4.

Question	Answer	Marks
3(a)	<p>“Do you aspire after Divine Grace? Then propitiate the Mother... She it is who has deluded the whole world, and is conjuring up the triple device of creation, maintenance and dissolution. She has spread a veil of ignorance over all and unless she unbars the gate none can enter the Inner Court.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><u>Sri Ramakrishna</u></p> <p>Summarise what the above passage says about the nature of the divine.</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and Understanding. Response will be marked according to the 5 mark level descriptors (AO1).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>The passage presents the divine as essentially feminine when in a relationship with the world. It instructs people who seek ‘Divine Grace’ (prasada) to try and please the Goddess, which implies a saguna form of divinity that is capable of a form of personal relationship with worshippers.</p> <p>The passage then goes on to explain how maya (the ‘veil of ignorance’) is the deliberate work of the divine, using cycles of creation and destruction to delude the world and to keep those within it from being liberated, unless the Goddess chooses to allow that. This supports the idea of a saguna, personal deity and further suggests that individual souls are ultimately dependent on that deity to achieve liberation.</p> <p>There is a specific reference to the need for the Goddess to ‘unbar the gate’, which implies that it is not human effort which leads to liberation, neither is liberation gained through meritorious action or knowledge. Only grace (prasada) can enable liberation.</p>	5

Question	Answer	Marks
3(b)	<p>Explain why believing Brahman is saguna might help Hindus on the path to liberation.</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and Understanding. Response will be marked according to the 10 mark level descriptors (AO1).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>Saguna Brahman is Brahman with attributes or qualities. It is this understanding of Brahman which allows for bhakti worship of Ishvara, because saguna Brahman is a more personal form of deity than nirguna (without qualities) Brahman.</p> <p>While Advaita Vedanta philosophy takes the view that saguna Brahman is ultimately an illusion that must be released in order to achieve liberation, other philosophies believe that saguna Brahman is the Ultimate Reality and possesses infinite attributes which include form. This personal form of deity means that margas, other than the jnana margas, can be effective paths to liberation without requiring a high level of education and study.</p> <p>Believing in saguna Brahman means that bhakti can be rewarded with divine grace, releasing the atman from karma and thus from rebirth. If the only Ultimate Reality is nirguna Brahman, this is not possible because there can be no personal relationship. However, saguna can be a path to realising nirguna Brahman, and thus it is a helpful step towards liberation, even if it does not, in itself, result directly in that end.</p> <p>Candidates might also draw on the passage they summarised in part a to consider saguna forms of Brahman as bestowers of divine grace, and therefore liberation.</p>	10

Question	Answer	Marks
3(c)	<p>Assess the claim that Shaktism has nothing in common with other theistic traditions.</p> <p>AO2 – Analysis and Evaluation. Response will be marked according to the 15 mark level descriptors (AO2).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>Shaktism is the branch of Hinduism that worships Devi (the Goddess) as the supreme creative power. This is a feminine concept of the Absolute, unlike other theistic traditions, which have a masculine deity or deities as their focus are also distinct from approaches that consider gender to be irrelevant as Brahman is nirguna (without attributes).</p> <p>Devi is dynamic, active and manifests in the material world. This connection between the feminine principle and activity is not unique to Shaktism; it is also found in other traditions, with each masculine deity having a feminine consort who personifies their active power. The masculine deity is understood to be passively conscious, with the active feminine being unconscious. Where Shaktism differs in its view that the passive and conscious masculine principle is encompassed by Devi; it rejects the dualism of masculine-feminine or transcendent-immanent, in favour of a holistic view of the cosmos itself as a divine and unified whole. However, ardhnari (half female) murti of Shiva and, less commonly, Vishnu suggest that this view can be found within other theistic traditions, as these images display the inextricable union of Shiva and Shakti.</p> <p>Shaktas may engage in many religious practices common in other theistic traditions. However, there is also a tradition of blood sacrifices in Goddess worship while other traditions are more likely to regard blood as a polluting substance. Shaktism could be said to combine both orthodox and heterodox aspects of Hinduism within one tradition, and this is one thing which might distinguish it from other theistic traditions. Different reasons might be given for the association between Shaktism and blood sacrifice, with some people connecting it to Durga and her slaying of the Buffalo Demon and others suggesting that it is the only adequate repayment for the Devi's generosity. On a more abstract level, it also allows for the recognition that Devi has both a benevolent and fierce aspect, and that creation and destruction are as intertwined and interdependent as other apparent dualities. Devi is often portrayed as a Mother, with the corresponding implications of nurturing and protectiveness meaning that this archetype could be said to contain both the aspects within itself.</p>	15

Question	Answer	Marks
4(a)	<p>Outline the difference between henotheism and polytheism.</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and Understanding. Response will be marked according to the 5 mark level descriptors (AO1).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>Henotheism means ‘of one god’, and it describes religions which worship one deity without denying the existence (or possible existence) of other deities.</p> <p>Polytheism literally means ‘many gods’, and it describes religions which allow for the existence and worship of multiple gods.</p> <p>Neither position makes an absolute statement about how many deities exist. However, one difference between them is that a henotheist might recognise only the possibility of other deities rather than their actual presence or power, while a polytheist considers their existence certain. Additionally, a henotheist is likely to ascribe greater power and authority to one deity, while a polytheist is more likely to consider all deities as equally powerful even if that power has different expressions or areas of concern.</p> <p>Another area of difference is in the focus of worship. Henotheism could be considered a form of polytheism (depending on the precise nature of an individual’s belief about the existence of multiple deities), but such a henotheist worshipper would be devoted to only one deity among the many which they believe to exist. By contrast, a polytheist might worship multiple deities at the same time. The two merge together when a worshipper directs their worship to one specific deity according to their current circumstances.</p>	5

Question	Answer	Marks
4(b)	<p>Explain why some people might argue that monotheism is the best way to describe Hinduism.</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and Understanding. Response will be marked according to the 10 mark level descriptors (AO1).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>Monotheism is the term used to describe religions that teach there is only one God. It is usually associated with concepts of the divine which consider that single God to be an all-powerful creator that can intervene in the world.</p> <p>At first glance, monotheism does not appear to fit Hinduism, as there are evidently many different deities being worshipped. However, some Hindus argue that these are different aspects of a single Ultimate Reality meaning that worship of any named deity is worshipping that Ultimate deity. The different representations are ways of grasping different aspects of a whole being that is far beyond human understanding.</p> <p>Brahman is sometimes considered synonymous, with the concept of God found in Abrahamic traditions, leading to the belief that Hindu philosophies that regard Brahman as the Ultimate deity, or the only thing which has real existence, could be described as monotheist. It could also be argued that both concepts of saguna and nirguna Brahman present a concept of the Ultimate that is similar in nature to the God of much Western religious philosophy.</p> <p>Henotheism, the worship of one deity while recognising that it is possible that others exist, can also be considered as a form of monotheism. While many different named deities are present within the Hindu pantheon, it is debatable whether this is best characterised as henotheism. Worshipping one deity at a time, depending on circumstance and context, may be better described as polytheism, but many Hindus following the bhakti path are wholly devoted to a single deity and, if worship is only ever offered to one deity, the worshipper might justifiably consider themselves to be a monotheist.</p> <p>By contrast, it could be argued that some Hinduism is monist rather than monotheist. For example, Advaita Vedanta is better described this way, because it argues for a single reality comprising everything that exists. However, all these different terms for describing religious belief are, arguably, the product of philosophies/theologies derived from a very different religious and social context than that in which Hinduism developed. If these academic terms are the product of the European Enlightenment, it would be unreasonable to expect non-European traditions to reflect them and perhaps inappropriate to apply terms developed regarding one context-specific tradition of thought to another which is wholly distinct from it.</p> <p>Linked to this view is the fact that not everyone who describes Hinduism is themselves a Hindu; the issue of whether the religion is being described from the outside or the inside might affect the preferred terms used to describe it. It could be argued that monotheism is intrinsically connected with a Judeo-Christian perspective of the divine and is therefore an inappropriate term to use in a context outside such a worldview.</p>	10

Question	Answer	Marks
4(c)	<p>‘Hindus believe the divine is unknowable.’ Discuss this claim.</p> <p>AO2 – Analysis and Evaluation. Response will be marked according to the 15 mark level descriptors (AO2).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>Hindu religious belief and philosophy encompass different ways of explaining or understanding the divine. It could be argued that some Hindu margas are focussed on achieving knowledge of the divine, as the way to liberation. Jnana marga connects liberation with the appropriate knowledge of the ultimate truth, while bhakti marga is focussed on a more personal relationship and personal knowledge of the divine. In this respect, many Hindus believe the opposite of the statement and that the divine must be knowable in some way for liberation to be a possibility. However, other paths associate liberation with freedom from karma or detachment, which suggests that knowledge of the divine is less important.</p> <p>However, a case can be made for the divine being unknowable within the limits of human knowledge. Attempts to understand Brahman can only ever be partial, which explains why personal forms of deity are important for some Hindus. Devoting oneself to Ishvara allows for a degree of personal relationship that could result in divine grace and therefore liberation. This is a partial form of knowledge only, as perfect knowledge of the divine is not possible before liberation.</p> <p>Other philosophical approaches do arguably assume that the divine cannot be truly grasped by human minds. Instead, they offer ways of achieving partial or analogous understanding. For example, neti-neti, which means ‘not this, not this’, is an analytic position found in the Upanishads, which propose an approach to understand Brahman by grasping what Brahman is not. Similarly sat, chit, ananda proposes three central elements to Brahman’s nature, but each of these components is as slippery and open to differing interpretation as that of Brahman as a whole. Some candidates might refer to incarnations or avatars who, like Krishna with Arjuna, manifest the divine to impart spiritual knowledge, reveal their cosmic nature and make the divine more knowable.</p> <p>It is also worth noting that the term ‘jnana’ is not wholly synonymous with its closest English translation (knowledge), and it can encompass other forms of divine, intuitive or revealed knowledge.</p>	15