



GCSE

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

8062/14: Paper 1 Hinduism
Report on the Examination

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General comments

Students seem to have found this year's paper accessible and one in which they could demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. Most students attempted every question, and no one question stood out as problematic. It is the case that key religious language proved a barrier to some students where it was specifically tested (1.1 and 1.2). Statistics demonstrate that the level of difficulty found by students did increase question by question in each section; but at the same time, also demonstrated that the vast majority of students were able to at least attempt every question. In 2018, many students simply ran out of time for the final question, so that it was much more poorly answered than its 1.5 counterpart; that was not the case this year to the same extent, so that the differential between responses to 1.5 and 2.5 was fractional. It is clear that Centres have worked on timing in exams to the benefit of their students.

Question-based comments

Beliefs

1.1

This question tested key knowledge. Whilst 88% of all students gained the available mark, it is a concern that this most simple of Hindu terms was not recognised by 12%.

1.2

This question again tested key knowledge. It proved to be the most challenging question on the paper, with only 22% of students securing full marks, with a further 21% gained a single mark.

Erroneous responses about the Trimurti were commonly seen as students struggled to recognise the actual topic. This is a key element in the Hindu understanding of the Ultimate Reality, and, for students, would probably be most coherently taught as part of that topic.

1.3

Over 80% of students secured two or more marks for this question. Many answered in terms of the influence of first female and then male deities – as if the question required this gender discrimination. This gained credit. Many students answered more generically about deities and how belief in deities influences Hindus. This also gained credit. Importantly, students were actually suggesting an influence (what this belief makes Hindus think/say/do), and so were answering the question properly and correctly. The format of 'Hindus believe x, so they think/say/do' was very successfully used.

1.4

This question relies on the use of a relevant source of belief, teaching or authority to gain full marks, on top of providing two beliefs, each explained. Only 14% gained full marks, though more than that used relevant teachings. It is important that students know relevant teachings across the whole Specification for the purpose of this question-type.

55% of students gained 2 or more marks, compared with its equivalent of 2.4 (where 70% gained two or more marks). This was partly due to not recognising the key term 'avatar'. Most students gained their marks by referring to Rama, Krishna and Kalki (all avatars of Vishnu), usually

providing explanations of their role, and often using the teaching that when humans are in need, then Vishnu will appear. A much lesser number referred to avatars of Shiva, usually Hanuman.

1.5

This question gave huge scope for different viewpoints, as almost any Hindu belief could be used in juxtaposition against the belief in the atman. It demonstrates the need for Centres to ensure students know about the range of beliefs within the Specification at least, and recognise them as 'beliefs'. This will help make such a question as this one very straightforward. A number of students answered about practices rather than beliefs – that it is more important to do puja, for example. When they did this it was rare that they made the points that actions were more important than any belief (which would have gained higher credit), rather they seemed to be confusing belief and practice.

Erroneously, a number of students seem to believe that the atman is not the same as the self, making the point that the atman would be with a Hindu at moksha. Further to this, moksha was presented as a physical place by a number of candidates.

A small number of students interpreted the question to be about 'believing in/knowing oneself', so discussed esteem, self-confidence, virtues etc. This was not about beliefs, so received no credit.

Practices

2.1

This question was very straightforward for the vast majority of students, with 94% providing a correct answer.

2.2

80% of students achieved full marks for this question.

2.3

70% of students gained two or more marks for this question, with 24% gaining full marks. Students answered from a general perspective, as well as from a specifically British perspective – both ways were appropriate. Most students could at least mention Rama and Sita, and/or the idea of good overcoming evil. Where students did not achieve full marks, reasons for this were not explaining in sufficient detail a point they had made or writing about Holi rather than Diwali (eg giving the story of Prahlad) or explaining *how* Diwali is celebrated.

2.4

Over 70% of students gained two or more marks for this question, with 12% gaining full marks. The biggest struggle students faced with this question was in providing a relevant source of authority, belief or teaching.

Nonetheless, students were able to use references related to offerings 'whatever is given is accepted because it is given with love', 'without a form, how can God be meditated on?', and at least one reference to the Shilpa Shastra scriptures from where the rules around murti-making are found. In this question to have mentioned a holy scripture which gave the manner of how worship

with murtis was to be done would have gained credit, that is to say, a quotation was not the only way to achieve the fifth mark.

Students usually answered this question by focusing on the murti when praying, or on puja. Some students did write about other forms of worship – darshan, circumambulation, arti, etc. A number of students answered about *why* instead of *how* murtis were used.

2.5

Students were able to write easily about the need for a guru or none. The best answers tended to be differentiated by the specificity of their points. However, many simply argued for and against having a teacher on a spiritual journey, giving few concrete examples, or failing to develop the ones they gave. It was uncommon to see references to Shaivism with its tradition of following a guru/sadhu, as it was uncommon to see references to Vaishnavite traditions of following the teachings of a saint, as in the Swaminarayan tradition. Most answers gave quite absolute agree/disagree stances, though the best answers often showed the fluidity in the need for a guru (different times of life, different things to learn, etc).

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.