

# Cambridge International AS & A Level

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**HINDUISM**

**9487/02**

Paper 2 Development of Hinduism

**May/June 2024**

MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 60

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**Published**

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and candidates, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which Examiners were instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began, which would have considered the acceptability of alternative answers.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the question paper and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

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This document consists of **20** printed pages.

**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 descriptions 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.

## Generic Levels of response descriptions

These level descriptors address Assessment Objectives (AOs) 1 and 2, and should be used in conjunction with the indicative content for each question in the mark scheme.

### Assessment Objectives

#### AO1: Knowledge and understanding

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of teachings, beliefs and practices, including relevance for individual Hindus and communities.

#### AO2: Analysis and evaluation

Analyse, evaluate and discuss evidence, points of view and issues in Hinduism.

### Generic marking principles

- (a) Examiners should use the performance summary statements at the top of the descriptors to help to identify a level which matches the candidate's response. However, the final decision on the band and the mark within the band should be made on the basis of **all** the descriptors in the level and not primarily using the performance summary statement.
- (b) Examiners should start at the lowest level, if the answer meets all the criteria they should then move to the next level and so on. The Examiner should repeat this process until there is a match between the overall answer and the level descriptor. Examiners should use a best-fit approach when deciding upon the level, it is possible for a different level to be chosen for each AO.
- (c) If the Examiner identifies all aspects of the level descriptor within the answer then the highest mark for the level should be given. Examiners should also make reference to the indicative content when deciding on the mark within a level to ensure that there is sufficient relevant content evident within the answer for the level and mark. Examiners should be prepared to credit material in answers which is not contained in the indicative content.
- (d) The Examiner may need to make a judgement within a level or between two or more level statements. Once a 'best-fit' level statement has been identified, use the following guidance to decide on a specific mark:
  - Where the candidate's work **convincingly** meets the level statement, you should award the highest mark.
  - Where the candidate's work **adequately** meets the level statement, you should award the most appropriate mark in the middle of the range.
  - Where the candidate's work **just** meets the level statement, you should award the lowest mark.

**5 mark questions**

<b>Level</b>	<b>AO1 Knowledge and understanding</b>	<b>Marks</b>
Level 3	<p><b>Accurate knowledge with good understanding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses a range of detailed, accurate and relevant knowledge.</li> <li>• Demonstrates understanding through a well-developed response.</li> <li>• Fully addresses the question.</li> <li>• Good understanding of the wider context, if relevant.</li> </ul>	5
Level 2	<p><b>Partially accurate knowledge with limited understanding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses a range of knowledge which may be partially accurate.</li> <li>• Demonstrates limited understanding through a partially developed response.</li> <li>• Addresses some aspects of the question.</li> <li>• Attempts to engage with the wider context, if relevant.</li> </ul>	3–4
Level 1	<p><b>Basic knowledge and basic understanding</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies a limited range of knowledge which may not be accurate.</li> <li>• Demonstrates basic understanding through a limited response.</li> <li>• Response is relevant to the topic, but does not directly address the question.</li> <li>• Little or no reference to the wider context, if relevant.</li> </ul>	1–2
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

**10 mark questions**

<b>Level</b>	<b>AO1 Knowledge and understanding</b>	<b>Marks</b>
Level 4	<b>Accurate knowledge with good understanding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses a range of detailed, accurate and relevant knowledge.</li> <li>• Demonstrates understanding through a well-developed response.</li> <li>• Fully addresses the question.</li> <li>• Good understanding of the wider context, if relevant.</li> </ul>	9–10
Level 3	<b>Mostly accurate knowledge with some understanding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses a range of mostly accurate and relevant knowledge.</li> <li>• Demonstrates understanding through a developed response.</li> <li>• Addresses most aspects of the question.</li> <li>• Some engagement with the wider context, if relevant.</li> </ul>	6–8
Level 2	<b>Partially accurate knowledge with limited understanding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses a range of knowledge which may be partially accurate.</li> <li>• Demonstrates limited understanding through a partially developed response.</li> <li>• Addresses some aspects of the question.</li> <li>• Attempts to engage with the wider context, if relevant.</li> </ul>	3–5
Level 1	<b>Basic knowledge and basic understanding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies a limited range of knowledge which may not be accurate.</li> <li>• Demonstrates basic understanding through a limited response.</li> <li>• Response is relevant to the topic, but does not directly address the question.</li> <li>• Little or no reference to the wider context, if relevant.</li> </ul>	1–2
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

**15 mark questions**

<b>Level</b>	<b>AO2 Analysis and evaluation</b>	<b>Marks</b>
Level 5	<p><b>Thorough discussion supported with evidence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyses the importance and/or strength of different arguments/points of view.</li> <li>Uses accurate evidence to support a well-structured discussion.</li> <li>Coherent conclusion to the question which evaluates knowledge and points of view and assesses alternative conclusions.</li> </ul>	13–15
Level 4	<p><b>Coherent discussion supported with evidence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discusses different arguments/points of view in some detail.</li> <li>Uses accurate evidence to support a structured discussion.</li> <li>Coherent conclusion to the question which evaluates knowledge and points of view.</li> </ul>	10–12
Level 3	<p><b>Clear discussion with some support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognises different arguments/points of view and discusses at least one in some detail.</li> <li>Uses some evidence to support discussion.</li> <li>Clear conclusion to the question which is linked to a range of knowledge and points of view.</li> </ul>	7–9
Level 2	<p><b>Attempts a discussion with limited support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outlines one or more argument/point of view.</li> <li>Uses supporting evidence for one or more relevant point. The support may not be wholly relevant or accurate.</li> <li>Attempts a conclusion to the question which is linked to knowledge and/or a point of view.</li> </ul>	4–6
Level 1	<p><b>Basic response with a point of view</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>States a point of view.</li> <li>Little or no supporting evidence.</li> <li>May attempt a basic conclusion, which may not directly address the question.</li> </ul>	1–3
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

Question	Answer	Marks
1(a)	<p><b>‘The smritis are composed by human beings without any specific divine inspiration and passed on to guide ordinary people in the conduct of their lives and the performance of their spiritual and worldly duties. The texts describe the daily life of individuals, prescribing rituals and rules which vary according to each varna or social class. However, since the smritis are man-made and changeable, Hinduism does not claim that laws laid down a millennium ago must be followed to the letter today.’</b></p> <p><b>Summarise what the passage above says about the status of the smriti texts.</b></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>Smriti texts are not directly revealed but have human authors and are changeable. This means that they are not fixed and unchanging in the way revealed texts must be. They are intended to guide people on how to live their daily lives and fulfil their spiritual duties, encompassing religious ritual and moral values or actions. There is no presumption that the rules and laws set out in them must be followed in their entirety in the contemporary world, both because they were written down by human beings and because their contents are subject to change as the world changes.</p>	<b>5</b>

Question	Answer	Marks
1(b)	<p><b>Explain why some Hindus might <u>not</u> consider the Manusmriti a useful guide to living a dharmic life.</b></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 Manusmriti, or Laws of Manu, is a collection of rules covering dharma, svadharma, social structures and roles, samskaras, rituals, purity and pollution. It also encompasses both civil and criminal law. It gives an account of a properly structured society, including the responsibilities of people living within it, and it says that it does so on the basis of the Vedas and the customs of people who know the Vedas, as these are the proper sources for the law. It is, as implied by the name, a smriti text and so potentially considered less authoritative than shruti texts.</p> <p>It is probably one of the best known smriti texts and has had significant impact on how Hinduism is viewed outside India. However, from a Hindu perspective, a smriti text it is less likely to be described as containing eternal and/or universal truths, and it might therefore be critiqued on the basis that the world is constantly changing.</p> <p>The text cannot be specifically dated but is usually considered to have been written between 100 BCE and 200 CE, making it at least 1800 years old, a long enough time for substantial changes to have occurred. Some people have argued that it supports oppression and discrimination by justifying the caste system and the concept of being outcaste or untouchable, making it irrelevant in a world which values equality; for example, the rules and expected behaviours it lists for women can appear discriminatory and inappropriate to contemporary readers. Similarly, the fact that this is a text which was used during British rule in India to inform the British understanding of Hinduism, could contribute to the text being associated with the imposition of unwelcome ideas and/or the homogenisation of disparate forms of Hinduism. It also gives far greater detail of the responsibilities of some varnas than it does for others, which limits its utility for people in the varnas it is less clear about.</p> <p>The text itself could be said to imply that interpretations of what is dharmic are not eternal as it identifies a fourfold foundation of proper sources for such interpretations. These sources include the Vedas, which are not subject to change, together with three other sources which are likely to change over time and with context: the traditions of those who know the Vedas, the practices of holy people, and what is pleasing to the individual.</p> <p>More broadly, it could be said that the Manusmriti reflects a specific form of Hinduism but that this form, and the structures and principles it involves, have never been universal. Similarly, the concerns of practitioners of a religion are not necessarily the same as the concerns of scholars and many Hindus might not look to textual interpretation as their primary source of guidance.</p>	10



Question	Answer	Marks
1(c)	<p><b>Assess the claim that smriti texts are necessary for Hindus to fully understand the Vedas.</b></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>The Vedas are often described as the core religious texts of Hinduism; their origins are ancient and the texts as they exist today were compiled over a long period of time. There are four Vedas, each of which includes different types of text – Samhitas (mantras and prayers), Aranyakas (commentaries on rituals), Brahmanas (explanation and interpretation) and Upanishads (philosophy and spiritual knowledge). This complex and diverse structure means it is difficult to make general claims about what is and is not in the Vedas as a whole. Changes in understanding and practice can be seen in the texts themselves, with the earliest parts giving instructions for rituals that are no longer performed and naming deities who are no longer widely worshipped. Philosophical ideas are also developed throughout the texts, with earlier texts referencing things like Brahman and karma with a more limited meaning that is expanded and developed in the later ones. In this way the Vedic texts explain themselves, with the Upanishads ultimately providing the philosophical basis for the astika darshanas.</p> <p>The Vedas themselves are considered shruti (revealed) by most Hindus, and so their status and importance is generally agreed upon. Much of their content is concerned with the work of a priest in the correct performance of ritual, and it could be argued that an ordinary person has no need to understand what a priest does on their behalf so that no further explanation is needed. The proliferation of smriti texts and the popularity of the Epics suggests that many non-priests do feel a need to understand their religion better. The Bhagavad Gita presents teachings about karma, dharma and liberation that are commonly accepted as the essence of the Vedas by contemporary Hindus and are often presented as a summary of Hinduism as a whole. For some Hindus the Bhagavad Gita is shruti, as it is the words of Krishna, but its popularity and influence certainly support the view that additional explanations of the Vedic texts are welcome and useful.</p> <p>The accessibility of the Vedic texts is also potentially an issue supporting the need for additional explanations of their contents. Originally written in Vedic Sanskrit and with the ability to learn that language often restricted many Hindus would have been unable to read the Vedas for themselves. By contrast smriti texts were widely translated and rewritten in different forms. In addition stories such as the Epics, or poetry like that of the Alvars, may be more likely to hold the attention and remain in the memory than a philosophical treatise. It could also be argued that ethical values and virtuous behaviours are more important things to teach ordinary people about than metaphysics, and smriti texts can distil this material from the entirety of the Vedas.</p>	15

Question	Answer	Marks
1(c)	<p>In practice the contents of the Vedas aren't particularly well known to contemporary Hindus, although the existence of the texts and their status is. Many elements of contemporary Hinduism are regarded by practitioners as being in the Vedas, although the accuracy of such views is likely to be contested by scholars. The age of the Vedas, their compilation over a long period of time, various texts being considered as a fifth Veda and the complex interactions of text and tradition make it hard to pin down what precisely is Vedic and what is not and similarly hard to identify a single overarching need for additional texts. The extent of a personal need to understand the Vedas is likely to vary with situation and context; for some the most important thing is to understand how to live a dharmic life and the Epics and other smriti texts are the most popular and influential sources for this. The connection between the Epics and the contents of the Vedas may well be of greater concern to scholars than to practitioners; the latter might well view such a connection as obvious or not in need of explanation.</p>	

Question	Answer	Marks
2(a)	<p><b>Summarise the main themes of the Aranyakas.</b></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 Aranyakas are known as the forest or wilderness texts, which some sources suggest is because their original focus was on rituals which had to be conducted in secret and/or away from the areas people lived. Later this extended to other rituals which might be considered closed or inappropriate for those who were not priests. In broad terms the texts are concerned with the correct performance of rituals, including rituals which must be performed by specific people in specific places.</p>	<b>5</b>

Question	Answer	Marks
2(b)	<p><b>Explain the significance of each of the different Vedic writings.</b></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 Vedas is the name given to a collection of texts considered shruti ('heard') by most Hindus. There are four Vedas: The Rig Veda ('praise knowledge') is the oldest, concerned with hymns of praise, some of which include references to philosophical or metaphysical concerns. Correct verbalisation of these hymns actualises, or makes manifest, the power of rita which orders the universe. The Sama Veda ('song knowledge') contains chants and songs, largely taken from the Rig Veda. The Yajur Veda ('worship knowledge') focusses on liturgy and ritual and contains mantras and instructions for the priests performing these sruta ('required by shruti') sacrifices. The text is sometimes divided into black/dark and white/bright as a way of distinguishing the clearer, more ordered sections from the more muddled. The Atharva Veda ('Artharvan's knowledge'), which is arguably a much younger text, is concerned with magic and medicine.</p> <p>Each of these four Vedas consists of several different types of text – Samhitas (mantras and prayers), Aranyakas (commentaries on rituals), Brahmanas (explanation and interpretation) and Upanishads (philosophy and spiritual knowledge). Specific examples sometimes blur the boundaries between these categories but together they help organise the large body of writing that make up the Vedas. The significance might therefore be in the way the different types help to organise what is a large and varied body of texts.</p> <p>The different Vedic writings also broadly reflect the development of the Vedas as a whole, with the Samhitas being considered the oldest parts and the Upanishads the most recent.</p> <p>The Samhitas ('collection') can refer to any ordered collection of shorter texts. In the context of Vedic writing it is used to describe the earliest parts of the Vedas which include mantras, prayers and other sacred sounds with no literal, linguistic meaning. As the oldest part of the Vedas they are also among the oldest religious texts in the world and can be considered as the foundation of Hinduism.</p> <p>The Aranyakas ('Forest or Wilderness Texts') describe and comment upon the rituals of the Vedas. Different perspectives are taken, and the underlying philosophy of these rituals is touched upon. The Aranyakas are commonly classified within the section of the Vedas that is focused upon action (karmakanda) although they do include some more abstract ideas. The significance of these texts might be considered to be in their focus on the proper forms of ritual, which contributes to the maintaining of rita (cosmic order).</p>	<b>10</b>

Question	Answer	Marks
2(b)	<p>The distinction between the Brahmanas ('Relating to Brahman') and the Aranyakas is not universally agreed upon. However, broadly speaking the Brahmanas are more concerned with explanations of ritual practices and commentary on hymns and mantras rather than the practicalities. They also include mythology and explain the symbolism of the chants in the Samhitas. The knowledge they contain is an important part of priestly knowledge, understanding the purpose of Vedic ritual and the nature of the world in which these rituals are performed.</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 usually classified as the section of the Vedas most concerned with knowledge (jnankanda) and are perhaps the best known Vedic texts today. The development of philosophy in them is often considered to be the process through which Hinduism moved away from the Vedic rituals and towards its contemporary forms of practice and it is through the Upanishads that central concepts such as dharma and karma come to be understood in their current forms.</p>	

Question	Answer	Marks
2(c)	<p><b>‘Hinduism today is based on the Upanishads’. Discuss.</b></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>The Upanishads are the last section of Vedic writings. The collective name might give the impression that they were all written in a short time but their authorship spans centuries. Precise dates are unknown but the earliest Upanishads certainly pre-date Buddhism and are generally dated between the 6th and 7th centuries BCE. Suggested dates for the authoring of other Upanishads range from 300 BCE to 1500 CE. This vast span of time, and the fact that the Upanishads do not share a unified approach or set out a single philosophical system suggests an ongoing development of philosophical thought. The fact that the Upanishads are considered Vedic texts ties that philosophical development to the development of Hinduism. The diversity of thought in the Upanishads is in keeping with the great diversity of paths recognised by Hinduism today and contributes to the high value placed on such diversity by many Hindus. Different traditions have been able to use different Upanishads to develop their practices and explain their beliefs, while still being able to link these back to the Vedas if that is felt to be important.</p> <p>The Upanishads consist of philosophical reflections on ideas and concepts mentioned in the earliest Vedic texts – concepts such as Brahman, atman and moksha. The texts themselves are probably the best known of the Vedic texts and this is likely to be because these concepts are central to contemporary Hinduism. While there are scholars who argue that the Samhitas are of higher status than the Upanishads, due to their age and importance to ritual, they are not as well-known. Neither are they as influential on later developments within Hinduism, since they can be said to apply only to priests and the rituals which require a priest, while the Upanishads deal with matters relevant to every Hindu. The later Upanishads take a broadly negative view of external ritual, focusing instead on internal reflection on the relation of the atman to Brahman or the nature of the self. This is the philosophical perspective which gives a foundation to the different schools of Vedanta, and these are arguably the most influential Hindu darshanas today.</p> <p>However, there are many different ways to be a Hindu. It could be argued that the most popular form of Hinduism today is bhakti, which does not require scriptural knowledge of any kind; the emphasis on devotion could be said to render philosophical reflection (and therefore the Upanishads) irrelevant for an individual practising bhakti. There are Upanishads classified as Shaivite or Vaishnavite in approach, and this could be said to imply a relevance to bhakti, at least in the sense of giving devotees a link to the Vedas. Similarly, murti puja, a very widespread practice within contemporary forms of Hinduism, is considered by many scholars to have its origins in the Puranas rather than any of the Vedic texts.</p>	15

Question	Answer	Marks
2(c)	<p>While the Vedas overall are considered shruti (revealed) the Upanishads might not be. Although their authors are largely unknown they are understood to be the reflections of gurus and holy people on issues of metaphysics, theology, epistemology and ethics. This does not necessarily equate to their not having shruti status, but knowledge of human authorship might raise questions about that status for some. However, this does not undermine their importance to the development of Hinduism; it could be said to enhance it, since revealed texts might be considered unchanging and unchangeable but human reflections on them can change and develop. It might also be noted that human potential to understand and act upon ultimate truths changes throughout the progression of the Mahayuga and therefore the foundation of Hinduism today (in the Kali Yuga) might well be different than in other ages. The Upanishads, which expand on ideas introduced in the earliest texts, might be said to exist for this reason enabling people to practise dharma even in the Kali Yuga.</p>	

Question	Answer	Marks
3(a)	<p><b>Summarise what the phrase 'neti-neti' tells Hindus about the nature of Brahman.</b></p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and Understanding. Response will be marked according to the 5 mark level descriptors.</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>'Neti-neti' literally means 'not this, not this' (or 'not this, not that'). The phrase is found in the Upanishads, and it highlights the difficulty of understanding the Absolute from the level of human consciousness. It is often used as a meditation to help a person grasp the nature of Brahman by excluding everything which is not Brahman. It is strongly associated with Advaita Vedanta: the material world, which can be grasped by the senses, is not Brahman and so using neti-neti to search for Brahman ultimately leads one away from identification of the self with what is illusory and towards the realisation of non-dual reality.</p>	<b>5</b>

Question	Answer	Marks
3(b)	<p><b>Explain the different ways of understanding the relationship between atman and Brahman.</b></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>Atman, or the self, is generally understood as the essential or real element of a person. It is real in the ultimate sense, unchanging and eternal and so distinct from the impermanent and mutable material world. It is what is reborn into samsara, entangled with maya, and it is what will be freed from that cycle if moksha is attained. Around this general understanding are different ways of explaining how this eternal, unchanging entity is related to the eternal, unchanging Brahman.</p> <p>One school of thought holds the view that atman and Brahman are identical. Believing them to be distinct is a result of the atman’s confusion and entanglement with maya, which leads to the identification of the self with what is unreal rather than what is real. Liberation consists of realising that error so that the perception of a separately existing atman is lost.</p> <p>In opposition to this monist view is the dualist one, which argues the Brahman and atman are wholly distinct. Atman was created by Brahman to be real but also to be eternally separate from Brahman. This is generally characterised as a relationship between God and devotee, with liberation being dependent on God’s grace. God is perfect and individual souls are not, the difference between the two is eternal and real in the same way that souls are eternally different to matter.</p> <p>There is also a view in between these two, which sees atman and Brahman as made of the same substance but as remaining distinct entities even after liberation. Atman possesses chit (consciousness) and chit is eternally real. Brahman is the supreme reality, but atman are modes of Brahman's existence, dependent upon Brahman but separate from the mode which is the Paramatman (Supreme Soul).</p>	<b>10</b>

Question	Answer	Marks
3(c)	<p><b>‘Performing murti puja is a way of knowing the divine.’ Discuss.</b></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>Puja means worship or veneration and it can be used as a general term describing any kind of ritualised devotion; it is therefore an important element of bhakti. Murti puja refers to the veneration of a deity in the form of an image. A murti can be a model, statue or picture of the deity but it can also be a natural object considered to be a manifestation of that deity or an aspect of their power, such as Shiva Linga. The murti is a manifestation of the divine presence and so the worshipper is literally in the physical presence of the deity during puja.</p> <p>A murti does not become an object of worship until the point in its creation when it is awakened and the living presence of the deity is called into it. Traditionally murtis are shaped according to the instructions given the Shilpa Shastras, which include recommendations about materials, details about size, proportion and decoration as well as some information about the symbolism of the murti. All this means that a murti is designed and made to show the worshipper some specific aspects and qualities of the deity being represented by it. Even if the intended symbolism of every feature is not known by the devotee the image as a whole communicates an important aspect of their nature – for example whether they are fierce or welcoming and what areas of human life they are particularly associated with.</p> <p>In the contemporary world murtis are commonly made from modern materials which are not included in the scriptural lists of appropriate materials and/or they may be cast from moulds rather than sculpted individually. However, the iconography used is the same as more traditionally made murti and so the knowledge they give the viewer remains unchanged.</p> <p>Knowledge is not only gained from looking at the murti and understanding the symbolism of the image or the stories associated with the deity, but from the process of puja itself. Darshan literally means ‘looking at’ or ‘viewing’ and it refers to the meeting of the devotees’ eyes with those of the murti. When this happens the devotee is seen and blessed by the deity, this is referred to as giving darshan which is then received by the devotee. Darshan is therefore an active exchange of seeing and knowing by both parties to it. The worshipper sees beyond the inanimate material which makes the image in order to recognise and offer their devotion to the deity whose spirit infuses it and the deity sees the devotee and accepts their offering.</p> <p>It might be argued that murti can only show and provide knowledge of the divine in a limited sense, or in particular forms, while for some schools of Hindu thought nirguna Brahman (Brahman without qualities) is the ultimate reality Hindus should be striving to grasp. However, for other Hindus saguna Brahman (Brahman with qualities) is that ultimate form of divinity. Bhakti can also be seen as the first step on a path to achieving understanding nirguna Brahman, by beginning with concepts the human mind can grasp more easily.</p>	15



Question	Answer	Marks
3(c)	It is also possible to question whether it is necessary to know the divine in order to worship, or indeed to attain liberation.	

Question	Answer	Marks
4(a)	<p><b>‘According to Hindu philosophy, behind the illusion of so many gods there is but one, universal, eternal, omnipotent, formless and transcendent divine. Many names and forms of God became accepted in preference to uniformity. Rishis compared this with the precious metal gold, of which many ornaments are formed even though it essentially remains unchanged.’</b></p> <p><b>Outline what the above passage says about the nature of the divine in Hinduism.</b></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>While there may appear to be many different gods this is an illusion. The illusion hides the truth of a single Divine which is eternal, without form, all powerful and beyond/outside the world. It also does not change its essential nature. A lot of different names can be given to this and Hinduism accepts them all as referring to the truth, in the same way that anything made out of gold can still be described in terms of its fundamental nature as being gold – the different forms it is given do not change what it truly is.</p>	<b>5</b>

Question	Answer	Marks
4(b)	<p><b>Compare the concepts of pantheism and monism.</b></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>Monism is the name given to a theory which presents a concept in terms of it being a singleness or unity. This can be used in relation to a number of different theories about the nature and origins of reality; the view that everything comes from a single point of origin can be understood as a form of monism, even if that point of origin is presented as distinct from the things which emerged. In its strictest form a monist view argues that everything is made from a single substance.</p> <p>Pantheism is the belief that the divine is identical with the universe and/or that nothing exists outside or beyond that divinity. This belief can encompass a range of ideas about the nature of that divinity, but it must be immanent because it is present in the physical matter which makes up the cosmos. It is also commonly considered to imply an impersonal form of deity although a variation of it (panentheism) presents a view of the divine as pervading every part of the world but not being one with it, thus enabling the belief in a personal divinity aware of its creation.</p> <p>Pantheism can be understood as a form of monism, since in all its forms it postulates a single source for everything. However, it does not require the assumption that there is only one substance or a single nature to everything that exists – the divine could itself be made of multiple substances or could have made different things from its original substance as a part of the process of creation. The belief that the divine is present in everything is a common one in Hinduism and could be used to support a categorisation of it as pantheist. However, Hinduism includes many different philosophical schools and the precise nature of that divinity and its relationship to the reality it is present in varies, meaning other categorisations might be equally well supported.</p> <p>Both monism and pantheism rest on understanding the divine as having an immanent nature, and both could also be said to imply that it is impersonal as well. However, monism in its strongest form might lead to ideas which imply duality, such as immanence and transcendence, being considered unhelpful or meaningless.</p>	<b>10</b>

Question	Answer	Marks
4(c)	<p><b>Assess the claim that Hinduism is a monotheistic religion.</b></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>Monotheism is the term used to describe belief in the existence of a single deity. It describes traditions where only one deity is considered to be real and so is distinct from henotheism, where a single god might be exclusively worshipped without rejecting the possible existence of other deities. It is also philosophically distinct from monism because, although monotheist beliefs recognise a single source for all things, that source is personified and (usually) distinct from its creation to some degree, while the divine in monist thinking is impersonal in nature. Monotheism might also entail the idea that the deity requires or demands human worship.</p> <p>Hinduism is an ancient tradition and its many different darshanas encompass a range of different philosophical perspectives on reality and the relationship between material reality and the divine. It could be argued that the nature of this relationship determines which category is the best fit for Hinduism, if indeed there is a best fit for the religion as a whole.</p> <p>If Hindus believe that reality is ultimately a single substance, as argued in Advaita Vedanta, then it would be misleading to describe Hinduism as a monotheist tradition because there is ultimately neither God nor worshipper. On the other hand, if Hindus believe that there is a divinity distinct from the material world, as both Vishishtadvaita and Dvaita Vedanta argue, then monotheism might be a useful descriptor. However, since there are Hindus holding both of these views, and since all three arguments are rooted in the Vedas and are therefore astika (orthodox), choosing either as the sole correct view is likely to be problematic.</p> <p>Although the great diversity of gods evident in Hinduism might lead some to regard it as polytheist in nature the belief that the divine is ultimately one is found throughout Hinduism. The view that there is a single truth, with many different paths by which it can be reached is found in the Vedas and considered by many to be a foundational principle of the religion. Whether this single truth can be meaningfully described as God and therefore whether belief in it can be described as monotheism is more debatable, with some Hindus and scholars choosing that term and some choosing another. For many Hindus the different deities worshipped through murti puja are expressions of different aspects or qualities of a single divine, although the nature of this underlying reality might be understood differently. Some ways of understanding fit the concepts of God associated with monotheism – the creator, immanent in the world and personal in nature (although possibly simultaneously transcendent and impersonal) and interested in humanity – and therefore, for many Hindus, the religion they practise is a monotheistic religion. For others it is not.</p> <p>Arguably the issue, while one which fascinates scholars of religion, may be of little interest to the average worshipper, focused on their own practice and personal experience of the Divine.</p>	15

Question	Answer	Marks
4(c)	It is also worth noting that the descriptor of a practice may change depending on whether the practice itself or the philosophical explanation is the primary factor used in choosing the label. For example, the Smarta tradition could be seen as actively promoting the worship of multiple deities, which could be described as polytheist but which could also be described as monotheist or henotheist, if the metaphysical basis for such worship is taken to be the idea that they are different aspects of a single ultimate being. Classification is further complicated by the foundation of the Smarta tradition in the strictly monist Advaita Vedanta and the stated position that all five deities are the same with the aim of worship being to move beyond them to an understanding of nirguna Brahman.	