



GCSE

RELIGIOUS STUDIES A

8062/14: Hinduism

Report on the Examination

8062

June 2022

Version: 1.0

Further copies of this Report are available from aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2022 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.
AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered schools/colleges for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to schools/colleges to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

General comments

The advance information published by AQA was a clear aid to students in their examination for this subject. Many students were clearly very well prepared, for the topics, and for potential questions. The statistical profile of the subject is not dissimilar to that of 2019, showing that performance overall for the paper was as 2019.

It was clear that for many students the pandemic meant that their handwriting and grammar was negatively impacted. A significant number of students wrote in a very untidy style, making legibility difficult; additionally, the simple use of full stops and sentencing has been forgotten by a not insubstantial number of students. The latter of these did affect SPaG marks.

The paper was clearly accessible to the vast majority of students, as they attempted every question. Those questions which students chose not to answer, albeit in very small numbers, were 1.2, 1.3 and 2.3. It was surprising that only 65% of students chose the correct answer in each of the multi-choice questions.

In the .4 (5-mark) questions, Centres need to be clear that the fifth mark is awarded for naming a relevant source of authority. It was very common to see wide-ranging, good and relevant quotations in answers on most questions on the paper. However, it was noticeable that students often prefaced those in the 5-mark questions with the phrase ‘In Hindu scriptures, it says...’. This does not gain credit, as no specific source is named. In other questions, students often did name the source, e.g Bhagavad Gita, Vedas, Gandhi, etc. Teachers need to drill students to do this across the whole paper.

Teachers continue to drill technique in regard to the 12-mark AO2 questions, and this is very noticeable in the student responses. This has meant continued improvement in the quality of responses seen in the exam. Many students now use a style which sees them present an argument, and then evaluate its strength/weakness. Unfortunately, many students actually just present a different viewpoint in the guise of evaluation – for example, in 1.5, presenting arguments why moksha is the most important aim, and declaring the arguments weak “because a better aim is artha if you have a family to look after”. This is simply a different point of view, not an evaluation. This was noticeable in both 12-mark questions where that specific formula was used.

Question-based comments

Beliefs

1.1

This question tested key knowledge. 65% of students gave the correct answer.

1.2

This question again tested key knowledge. 48% of students secured full marks, with a further 25% gaining a single mark.

A number of students clearly had no idea what the term ‘matter (prakriti) meant. Most of them made guesses, rather than not attempt it, perhaps on the principle that they might get lucky – which is always worth a try. A number of students gave answers which were too vague or limited to make sense in terms of the question. Students need to remember to always write clearly and in

good sentences to make sure that the person marking/examining can actually see that an answer is both relevant and correct.

1.3

Over 78% of students secured two or more marks for this question. It is clear that teachers have done much work with students to ensure they address the idea of 'influence', because this emphasis was the norm for answers. Importantly, students now suggest an influence (what this belief makes Hindus think/say/do), and so answered the question properly and correctly, gaining good credit. The format of 'Hindus believe x, so they think/say/do y' has now become a common way to answer.

It was the case that many students did not recognise 'personal loving God' as one of the three features of the divine (sat-cit-ananda), so did not answer the question as it really demanded. Many students also picked out 'personal' or 'loving', rather than both together, which was credited. A small but significant number clearly wrote about the Christian God, but this often still allowed for some credit.

1.4

This question relies on naming 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 many more than that used relevant teachings. This was very often because of a failure to name a source. It is important that students know relevant teachings across the whole Specification for the purpose of this question-type, and that they can give the name of the source.

77% of students gained 2 or more marks, proving it to have been a more difficult topic than its equivalent of 2.4 (where 83% gained two or more marks). However, in the 41% who gained 4 or 5 marks, there were some superb and detailed answers, which showed excellent command of the subject knowledge.

A significant number of students believe free will to be a gift of God. This is not the case in Hinduism, where it is part of the evolution of the atman as it moves from plant/animal to human through reincarnation. This seemed to be, at times, as students confused Christianity and Hinduism, but it is important that teachers teach clearly the Hindu understanding. There was also some confusion of free will with human rights, which usually did not gain credit.

1.5

There was a good spread of marks in the answers to this question, with most answers bunched in the 7-9 mark zone. 54% of students gave Level 3 or 4 responses; 18% providing Level 4 answers (10-12 marks). The question had a better average score than its counterpart, 2.5, did – probably because time is more of an issue with the final question.

This question should have been focused around the four aims of life – artha, kama, dharma and moksha. Some students did tackle it in those terms. Many students did not explore why moksha was the most important aim for Hindus – which, if done, gave good evaluation material. The normal response was to juxtapose moksha (what it is, why it so important, how it is achieved) with dharma – essentially the contrast between focusing on getting one's duty met here and now as opposed to a focus beyond this life. Some brought in the other two aims as well. It was a little concerning to see a significant number of students believing artha to be entirely about sex and sexual relations. The best answers did explore how and why moksha was so important, brought in the contrast with other potential most important aims, and made the point that all aims actually lead to the overarching aim of moksha. These responses extensively used teachings to provide good evidence for the arguments they made.

Practices

2.1

Only 62% of students correctly selected 'signing hymns' as their answer for the definition of bhajan/kirtan. Other students chose all other responses showing it was a case of either knowing the answer or not.

2.2

76% of students got full marks for this question on Diwali; with a further 37% getting one mark. This was a very straightforward question. Generally those students who did not score full marks gave responses more fitting for Holi than Diwali (usually the throwing of coloured powders).

2.3

80% of students gained two or more marks for this question, with 36% gaining full marks. Students gave good reasons why gurus are important, from their role as teachers to their status as being enlightened. Many students used a range of teachings to support the points they made. A small number of students confused gurus with deities or murtis, which gained no credit.

2.4

Over 80% of students gained two or more marks for this question, with 10% gaining full marks. The biggest struggle students faced with this question – as with 1.5 - was to name a relevant source of authority, belief or teaching. This should not have been difficult because of the question topic, and students clearly knew and used a wide range of teachings; they simply did not name the source, or they used the phrase 'In Hindu scriptures it says...'. Generally the answers were very good – with 'Brahman is all', ahimsa and reincarnation being commonly used. Give the current topical importance of environmental activism, it was surprising to see few answers which argued for wanting a better world now, or referred to the massive issues humanity is facing now – both of which gained credit in the few examples seen. Some students included answers about the importance of animal projects. Where these students wrote about wild animals in relation to the environment, or the sanctity of these because of their status as vehicles of the deities, credit was given.

2.5

The mark spread for 2.5 was bunched in the 4-8 mark zone, with 26% gaining 10-12 marks (Level 4). This is slightly lower than for 1.5 (32%) and may have been a reflection of the timing in the exam.

The question intended students to debate the different focuses of worship which Hindus use. Many students recognised that ultimately all focuses of worship are actually on the Ultimate Reality, and this formed the conclusion of their answer – certainly the best responses made this point clearly.

The majority of responses only compared a focus on the Ultimate Reality with that on the Trimurti/deities. The best responses additionally referenced the wider focuses, such as hills, rivers, animals and plants. This is a large section of the Specification, and it would help students for teachers to cover all of it in more detail.

For some students, this question was understood to be a debate about how many deities a Hindu should worship – this meant that they could gain credit, but more indirectly and so found it difficult to gain more than Level 2.

Some students failed to notice the word 'worship' so wrote responses about whether Hindus focused on the Ultimate Reality or the aims of life, moksha, dharma, yogas and so on. They did gain some credit, but only for the Ultimate Reality side of their response.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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