



GCE A LEVEL MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2025

**A LEVEL
RELIGIOUS STUDIES - COMPONENT 1
OPTION E: A STUDY OF HINDUISM**

A120UE0-1

About this marking scheme

The purpose of this marking scheme is to provide teachers, learners, and other interested parties, with an understanding of the assessment criteria used to assess this specific assessment.

This marking scheme reflects the criteria by which this assessment was marked in a live series and was finalised following detailed discussion at an examiners' conference. A team of qualified examiners were trained specifically in the application of this marking scheme. The aim of the conference was to ensure that the marking scheme was interpreted and applied in the same way by all examiners. It may not be possible, or appropriate, to capture every variation that a candidate may present in their responses within this marking scheme. However, during the training conference, examiners were guided in using their professional judgement to credit alternative valid responses as instructed by the document, and through reviewing exemplar responses.

Without the benefit of participation in the examiners' conference, teachers, learners and other users, may have different views on certain matters of detail or interpretation. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that this marking scheme is used alongside other guidance, such as published exemplar materials or Guidance for Teaching. This marking scheme is final and will not be changed, unless in the event that a clear error is identified, as it reflects the criteria used to assess candidate responses during the live series.

Marking guidance for examiners, please apply carefully and consistently:

Positive marking

It should be remembered that candidates are writing under examination conditions and credit should be given for what the candidate writes, rather than adopting the approach of penalising him/her for any omissions. It should be possible for a very good response to achieve full marks and a very poor one to achieve zero marks. Marks should not be deducted for a less than perfect answer if it satisfies the criteria of the mark scheme.

Exemplars in the mark scheme are only meant as helpful guides. Therefore, any other acceptable or suitable answers should be credited even though they are not actually stated in the mark scheme.

Two main phrases are deliberately placed throughout each mark scheme to remind examiners of this philosophy. They are:

- “Candidates could include some or all of the following, but other relevant points should be credited.”
- “This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.”

Rules for Marking

1. Differentiation will be achieved on the basis of candidates' response.
2. No mark scheme can ever anticipate or include every possible detail or interpretation; examiners should use their professional judgement to decide whether a candidate's particular response answers the question in relation to the particular assessment objective.
3. Candidates will often express their ideas in language different from that given in any mark scheme or outline. Positive marking therefore, on the part of examiners, will recognise and credit correct statements of ideas, valid points and reasoned arguments irrespective of the language employed.

Banded mark schemes

Banded mark schemes are divided so that each band has a relevant descriptor. The descriptor provides a description of the performance level for that band. Each band contains marks. Examiners should first read and annotate a candidate's answer to pick out the evidence that is being assessed in that question. Once the annotation is complete, the mark scheme can be applied. This is done as a two-stage process.

Banded mark schemes stage 1 – deciding on the band

When deciding on a band, the answer should be viewed holistically. Beginning at the lowest band, examiners should look at the candidate's answer and check whether it matches the descriptor for that band. Examiners should look at the descriptor for that band and see if it matches the qualities shown in the candidate's answer. If the descriptor at the lowest band is satisfied, examiners should move up to the next band and repeat this process for each band until the descriptor matches the answer.

If an answer covers different aspects of different bands within the mark scheme, a 'best fit' approach should be adopted to decide on the band and then the candidate's response should be used to decide on the mark within the band. For instance if a response is mainly in band 2 but with a limited amount of band 3 content, the answer would be placed in band 2, but the mark awarded would be close to the top of band 2 as a result of the band 3 content. Examiners should not seek to mark candidates down as a result of small omissions in minor areas of an answer.

Banded mark schemes stage 2 – deciding on the mark

Once the band has been decided, examiners can then assign a mark. During standardising (at the Examiners' marking conference), detailed advice from the Principal Examiner on the qualities of each mark band will be given. Examiners will then receive examples of answers in each mark band that have been awarded a mark by the Principal Examiner. Examiners should mark the examples and compare their marks with those of the Principal Examiner.

When marking, examiners can use these examples to decide whether a candidate's response is of a superior, inferior or comparable standard to the example. Examiners are reminded of the need to revisit the answer as they apply the mark scheme in order to confirm that the band and the mark allocated is appropriate to the response provided. Indicative content is also provided for banded mark schemes. Indicative content is not exhaustive, and any other valid points must be credited. In order to reach the highest bands of the mark scheme a learner need not cover all of the points mentioned in the indicative content, but must meet the requirements of the highest mark band.

Awarding no marks to a response

Where a response is not creditworthy, that is it contains nothing of any relevance to the question, or where no response has been provided, no marks should be awarded.

A Level Generic Band Descriptors

Band	Assessment Objective AO1 – Part (a) questions 20 marks <i>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including:</i> - <i>religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching</i> - <i>influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies</i> - <i>cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice</i> - <i>approaches to the study of religion and belief.</i>
5	17-20 marks • Thorough, accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. • An extensive and relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set. • The response demonstrates extensive depth and/or breadth. Excellent use of evidence and examples. • Thorough and accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Insightful connections are made between the various approaches studied. • An extensive range of views of scholars/schools of thought used accurately and effectively. • Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
4	13-16 marks • Accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. • A detailed, relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set. • The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth. Good use of evidence and examples. • Accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Purposeful connections are made between the various approaches studied. • A range of scholarly views/schools of thought used largely accurately and effectively. • Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
3	9-12 marks • Mainly accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. • A satisfactory response, which generally answers the main demands of the question set. • The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth in some areas. Satisfactory use of evidence and examples. • Mainly accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Sensible connections made between the various approaches studied. • A basic range of scholarly views/schools of thought used. • Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
2	5-8 marks • Limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Basic level of accuracy and relevance. • A basic response, addressing some of the demands of the question set. • The response demonstrates limited depth and/or breadth, including limited use of evidence and examples. • Some accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Makes some basic connections between the various approaches studied. • A limited range of scholarly views/schools of thought used. • Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
1	1-4 marks • Very limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Low level of accuracy and relevance. • A very limited response, with little attempt to address the question. • The response demonstrates very limited depth and/or breadth. Very limited use of evidence and examples. • Little or no reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Little or no use of scholarly views/schools of thought. • Very few or no connections made between the various approaches studied. • Some grasp of basic specialist language and vocabulary. N.B. A maximum of 2 marks should be awarded for a response that only demonstrates 'knowledge in isolation'
0	• No relevant information.

Band	Assessment Objective AO2- Part (b) questions 30 marks <i>Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.</i>
5	25-30 marks • Confident critical analysis and perceptive evaluation of the issue. • A response that successfully identifies and thoroughly addresses the issues raised by the question set. • Thorough, sustained and clear views are given, supported by extensive, detailed reasoning and/or evidence. • The views of scholars/schools of thought are used extensively, appropriately and in context. • Confident and perceptive analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied. • Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
4	19-24 marks • Purposeful analysis and effective evaluation of the issue. • The main issues raised by the question are identified successfully and addressed. • The views given are clearly supported by detailed reasoning and/or evidence. • Views of scholars/schools of thought are used appropriately and in context. • Purposeful analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied. • Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
3	13-18 marks • Satisfactory analysis and relevant evaluation of the issue. • Most of the issues raised by the question are identified successfully and have generally been addressed. • Most of the views given are satisfactorily supported by reasoning and/or evidence. • Views of scholars/schools of thought are generally used appropriately and in context. • Sensible analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied. • Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
2	7-12 marks • Some valid analysis and inconsistent evaluation of the issue. • A limited number of issues raised by the question set are identified and partially addressed. • A basic attempt to justify the views given, but they are only partially supported with reason and/or evidence. • Basic use of the views of scholars/schools of thought appropriately and in context. • Makes some analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied. • Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
1	1-6 marks • A basic analysis and limited evaluation of the issue. • An attempt has been made to identify and address the issues raised by the question set. • Little attempt to justify a view with reasoning or evidence. • Little or no use of the views of scholars/schools of thought. • Limited analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied. • Some use of basic specialist language and vocabulary.
0	• No relevant analysis or evaluation.

GCE A LEVEL RELIGIOUS STUDIES

COMPONENT 1: OPTION E – A STUDY OF HINDUISM

SUMMER 2025 MARK SCHEME

To be read in conjunction with the generic level descriptors provided.

Section A

1. (a) **Examine Hindu rishis as philosophers, mathematicians and scientists with reference to Charaka and Aryabhatta.**

[AO1 20]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Rishis are seers or great sages who went into a deep Raja yoga (meditation), focusing on Brahman. As a result, Brahman revealed the truth of rta (cosmic order) and gave them the Vedas. Brahman revealed the perfect truth of the divine order (rta) of the world via the perfectly poetic books or hymns of the Vedas.
- The Vedas not only explains how the world came into creation but also the three planes of existence, earth (bhur), atmosphere (Bhuvas) and sky/heaven (svar). The Rishis received the revelation of the dharmic purpose of Brahman revealing himself within all of nature, as part of the dharmic order. The whole purpose of the revelation within the Vedas is for Hindus to be enlightened and seek God.
- From the wisdom of the Rishis, Hindu scientists and mathematicians interpreted the Vedas and other Hindu scriptures, while also empirically observing the order of the universe, creating outstanding results. This went beyond mathematical understanding and a link was made to the divine. There is clear metaphysical understanding of maths, matter and the spirit.
- Charaka is known as the 'Father of Medicine' due to his work on 'Charak Samhita' which is a detailed account of Ayurveda medicine. Ayru comes from the word medicine and Veda means knowledge, demonstrating that the 'Charak Samhita' is a detailed account of physiological understanding. Charaka's knowledge is quite profound due to his impact in today's modern India. Ayurveda is one of the medical systems used and funded by the Indian Government. Ayurvedic experts will refer to Charaka writings, combining ancient technology with ancient medicine.' This medicine focuses more on prevention rather than a cure, preparing a person to have a more holistic lifestyle.
- Charaka was the first person to develop the understanding of digestion, metabolism and immunity, by understanding the principles for different bodies.
- Charaka was also aware of toxins/poisons to help some bodies and hinder others.
- Ayurveda also aids a Hindu to eat and live more cleanly, it gives them a pure mind for Raja yoga by eating a sattvic diet.
- 'Ayurveda is a sister philosophy to yoga. It is the science of life, or longevity, and it teaches about the power of the cycles of nature, as well as the elements.'
- Aryabhatta's influence in India is clearly seen today with India's first satellite being named after him in 1975. Hindus celebrate the fact that Aryabhatta had mathematical and astronomical works that predate discoveries made in the West.
- Huge amounts of his mathematical ideas were translated into Arabic and influenced Islamic mathematical understanding. For example, he believed the

earth was a sphere that rotated on an axis. He claimed that none of his ideas were original, but merely showed the knowledge already revealed by Brahman.

- Like the Rishis, he explained the mathematical and astrological understanding through poetry, demonstrating that Brahman's *rita* is revealed in perfect synchronisation.
- Some key contributions Aryabhatta made were the theory that the earth rotates on its axis; solving quadratic equations; the idea of solar; the idea of a lunar eclipse; and the values of zero and understanding of Pie (π). It is believed that he even worked out the area of a triangle, showing the symmetry of the world. An amazing mathematical achievement was that he also calculated the length of a year, he was only 'out' by just over 3 minutes over a year, showing his amazing mathematical mind.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

(b) 'Science poses no threat to Hinduism.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

- For many Hindus today, the questions that modern science might raise in connection with their religious outlook on life are not a key concern. Hinduism's scientific richness is evident within the Vedas and Hindu practices, allowing science and religious ideas to intertwine within the faith. They see many scientific theories referred to in the Vedas such as Einstein's cause and effect and the Big Bang Theory.
- However, Hinduism goes beyond science, believing the material revelations from science direct them to the Ultimate Reality. Therefore Humanists and atheistic scientists would agree with the 'how' of the Big Bang but reject the idea of a deity or metaphysical being behind the actions, the 'why'. Stephen Hawking rejected the Hindu's claim of divine beings behind creation, stating, 'I believe the simplest explanation is, there is no god. No one created the universe and no one directs our fate'.
- Another current idea is evolution. The concept of evolution is highly relevant with Hinduism itself, samsara and karma illustrate the point. The atman evolves throughout each samsara, from animals to humans. The movement of the atman which changes from lower lifeforms to human forms, is believed to be the pinnacle of evolutionists thinking, with regards to the adaptation of the species and for a Hindu, the chance in which to reach moksha.
- However, Richard Dawkins would reject the idea of a God in control of the evolutionary process. According to Dawkins and Darwin, evolution came about by chance not by divine order (rta).
- Hindus on the other hand would claim that Brahman is a complete being that includes the scientific understanding and metaphysical knowledge of rta, controlling the order of the world.
- Hinduism has an ethical and spiritual concept of reality. The Shvetashvatara Upanishad makes it clear that the atman is trapped in prakriti and should seek purusha, through Jnana yoga. This is rejected by science because all scientists observe is the factual, empirical evidence
- It can be argued that the Hindu Rishis made a significant contribution to mathematical and scientific knowledge - Charaka is known as the 'Father of Medicine'; Hindus celebrate the fact that Aryabhatta had mathematical and astronomical works that predate discoveries made in the West. He claimed that none of his ideas were original, but merely showed the knowledge already revealed by Brahman.
- However many Western mathematicians would reject the claim that Brahman is behind the order of it all. Again, it is the idea that there is metaphysical presence behind everything that modern maths and science reject.
- Hinduism on the other hand accepts many scientific advancements with no problems - that the world is made of matter and atoms; Hilborn's Butterfly Effect Theory
- Fundamentalist or conservative Hindus accept the Vedas as the direct revelation of God (shruti) and therefore whatever is referred to in the Vedas is truth and even if it contradicts sciences, still should be adhered to.
- Many Hindus (liberals) accept the Vedas contain Brahman's revelation, but again the Vedas are not completely accurate because the Vedas were written by human beings, who are not infallible. Consequently, if the scientific ideas and Vedantic ideals are in conflict, some Hindus will interpret it into a new or different light, which makes sense within modern society.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.

2. (a) **Examine the development of the role of women in Hinduism.**

[AO1 20]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Historically Hindu culture has been patriarchal, meaning that the men hold primary power and predominate in roles.
- The basic principles governing the roles of women in Hindu history were set forth in the Laws of Manu. This ancient code specified that women must be honoured by their fathers, brothers, husbands and brothers-in-law. In Vedic times women were required to be present for the rituals to work, even though they had no official role to play in them.
- Within the Laws of Manu in 300CE it states that women do not need to have money as their father will support them, and once a woman is married her husband will support her.
- These views are reflected in rules which are still expected to be followed within traditional Hindu society. Men are only allowed to lead religious or Vedic rituals in mandirs. Women can perform puja at the home, but whenever there is a sacrificial act it is led by a male. Only boys within the top 3 varnas (castes) are allowed to do the Upanyana ceremony (Sacred Thread Ceremony) and complete all of the 16 samskaras (rites of passage). Only sons can perform funeral rites and the Shraddha (annual memorial of the deceased). A man can choose from a number of potential brides, where it is uncommon for the woman to have numerous choices for marriage.
- Women are expected to marry; however, there has been development in the numbers of female gurus and ascetics in recent years.
- Entering the new home, the bride becomes subject to her mother-in-law. The young wife is expected to obey her mother-in-law and contribute to the well-being of the family. The mother-in-law-daughter-in-law relationship still is a notoriously painful one in India.
- They have a religious duty to have a family, preferably sons. If a woman gave birth to a son her status was even further enhanced. Giving birth to sons vastly improves her standing with her mother-in-law and with the rest of her husband's family. A proverbial blessing for a woman among Hindus is "may you be the mother of a hundred sons".
- They are required to support their husbands in the performance of his varnadharma. As a wife, the Hindu woman was expected to live up to the ideals of the Stri Dharma, the duties of the good wife. According to Stri Dharma, a wife should regard her husband as a god. She should serve him, follow him, pray for his well-being and eat after he eats. She shares his karma and his destiny, for this reason she sometimes should fast and go on pilgrimages to ensure her husbands' long life and success. If he dies prematurely, it was often regarded as her responsibility, her bad karma.
- They are required to bring up the children to understand their dharma and religious duties.
- If they are widowed or divorced, they have no religious duties and become inauspicious.
- However developments in the role of women can clearly be seen over the last two centuries. The Indian Supreme Court in 2017 stating that the ban on women of "menstruating age" entering the Sabarimala hill temple was discriminatory. However, they are not always followed.

Within Hinduism, the divorce rules are referred to in the Dharma – Shastras. It was thought that marriage was for life, as Vivaha (marriage rite) was done in front of the sacred fire, God's presence. The Hindu Marriage Act of 1955 stated that marriage could be ended by divorce. However the higher caste did not practise divorce because it was given such a social stigma and it remains very difficult to re-marry. Since the Independence of India and the National Commission for Women Act, 1990, more women have gained an education. The Constitution of India guarantees equality to all women, including no discrimination by state, equality of opportunity and finally equal pay for equal work. However, this is not always the case due to deep rooted beliefs about cultural and religious expectations of the duties of women. Indira Gandhi showed women, that they did not have to follow the traditional norms of Hinduism, by staying at home and caring for their husband.

- Contemporary feminist groups are fighting against the patriarchy that is still seen in India and the abuse that women see daily. One of these contemporary feminists is Madhu Kishwar
- Within the Hindu community in Britain the status of women is still quite a sensitive issue. Many of these communities still impose patriarchal values. They still want the ideal of a wife and daughter as shown in the Laws of Manu, to continue. Although, there are liberal fractions of third and second generation Hindu immigrants, most remain conservative; where the men in the community still influence the behaviour of the women.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

(b) 'Hinduism supports feminism.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Candidates may begin by defining feminism - the advocacy of women's rights on the ground of the equality of the sexes.
- There may be reference to the 'starting point' – i.e. the status /role of women before feminism made any impact and a definition of 'feminism' in this context. Given the diversity within Hinduism, expect reference to different traditions and contexts.
- Hindu texts present diverse and conflicting views on the position of women, ranging from feminine leadership as the highest goddess to limiting her role to an obedient daughter, housewife and mother.
- The Devi Sukta hymn of Rigveda, a scripture of Hinduism, declares the feminine energy as the essence of the universe.
- Manusmriti asserts that "as a girl, she should obey and seek protection of her father, as a young woman her husband, and as a widow her son." In other sections, the same text asserts that "women must be honored and adorned", and "where women are revered, there the gods rejoice; but where they are not, no sacred rite bears any fruit".
- Many would argue that Hinduism has always given women an honoured place – the only religion to do so. This is reflected in the concept of shakti and in the influence of the goddess in Hinduism.
- It may be argued that traditional views of the status of women within marriage are challenged by feminism, but it is difficult to attribute that to a feminist approach to Hinduism – may be cultural change being brought about under influence of western values. In this way, Hinduism and feminism are compatible.
- However many would argue that feminism has been allowed a profound influence on Hinduism. Early phases of feminism challenged the practice of sati – successful over time; India has passed laws to address disadvantages of women in Hindu society such the Hindu Succession Act 1956 giving right to equal inheritance from parents; there are state level female education programs designed to change attitudes towards women.
- Much of the work of the Manushi organisation involves ensuring that women get the rights given to them by law and its success may be evaluated.
- Scholarly assessments point to achievements 'on paper' but recognise that many issues still remain – including gender selective abortion; there may be reference to the role/status of female gurus.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.

Section B

3. (a) Examine Gandhi's contribution to Hinduism.

[AO1 20]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Although Gandhi was influenced to an extent by Eastern and Western ideas one of his main contributions was that he sought Indian answers to Indian problems. This influenced his interpretation of Hinduism in terms of varnashramadharma.
- Gandhi was a universalist and his Hinduism contains inspirations from a number of different sources which he used in new and dynamic ways. These included Christian and Jainian sources.
- He emphasised the importance of the Bhagavad Gita especially Krishna's emphasis on bhakti marga – working for a better world and offering the karmic fruits of that work to God. Gandhi interpreted the Gita in an allegorical way and that is why it was not contrary to his pacifism. The battle is not external but internal, within each person and the enemy is individual greed and self-interest. He developed the Hindu concept of ahimsa, literally meaning non-violence. Gandhi not only believed in ahimsa as a religious concept but extended its role into the political field. He was influenced by Jesus' teaching on agape – divine love. Gandhi believed that ahimsa was not a passive context merely doing no harm but an active one which meant that it was a duty to oppose and overthrow evil using peaceful means.
- He further expanded the concept of ahimsa with his teaching on satyagraha that truth has an inherent force. Those who speak or act the truth have strength and authority because they are being truthful. Ahimsa and satyagraha are linked because truth would lose the moral high ground if it degenerated into violence.
- Gandhi's interpretation of the ashramas in terms of brahmacharya and aparigraha is a development of Hinduism. He emphasised the simple, selfless existence based upon what a person needs and not what they want.
- He also emphasised the importance of reading sacred texts especially the Bhagavad Gita in order to advance along the spiritual path. He also believed in the merits of education as a means to develop the best in each individual.
- As a universalist he respected and valued all religions and believed passionately that India should continue its long history of diversity in religious ideas rather than splitting along religious lines. This is why he was so opposed to partition and what ultimately cost him his life.
- He also criticised the caste system. He did not wish to eradicate the varna system but to ensure that the Dalits were included within the system.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

(b) 'Gandhi's achievements were more political than religious.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Candidates could offer an introduction by discussing what is political and what is religious and if it is really possible to differentiate between the two. They could also discuss if Gandhi was politically or racially motivated i.e. did his political views influence his religious beliefs or vice-versa. Did Gandhi use his religious ideas to achieve his political goals?
- His political achievements were many – he worked and succeeded in developing a distinctively Indian discourse of politics.
- Politically Gandhi fought for swaraj – home rule. He saw this as an opportunity for real social revolution. He sought a new national identity not imposed by the west but developed at home in order to articulate what was special and unique about India.
- However, the means to achieve this came from his religious beliefs. He reinterpreted the concept of ahimsa and used it politically. In this context he was influenced by the pacifist teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount to practice agape love and to turn the other cheek when assaulted. This influenced his campaigns of civil disobedience which led ultimately to his greatest political achievement of home rule. Reference could be made to the Salt March.
- He also developed the religious concept of satyagraha which ultimately influenced his political philosophy. This was the belief that truth has an inherent force and that those who speak and act with truth have a particular strength and authority because they are being truthful. This influenced his political campaign since truth force would lose its moral coherence if it degenerated into violence and would no longer be true.
- Gandhi campaigned for Indian pupils to be educated in their native tongue as he saw English-language education as robbing the nation of its soul. It impaired Western values. He promoted the teaching of practical skills because the economic development for people living in rural villages lay in the acquisition of such skills. This view was continued in his approach to industry and mechanisation.
- It is also possible to see Gandhi as an early prophet of the sustainability movement – he promoted the idea of living simply rather than exhausting the Earth's resources for the benefit of a few while the rest suffer.
- Gandhi's vision for the new national identity of India was profoundly universalist. It could be argued that this came from his religious belief of sarvodaya.
- He spoke out against the mistreatment of women and the universal discrimination against the Dalits. However, these goals were not achieved. He did not believe in the eradication of the varna system and this shows the influence of his religious beliefs on his political campaigns.
- Candidates could discuss whether the answer given to the question would be different from a Western or Indian perspective

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.

4. (a) Explain different Hindu beliefs about the relationship between Brahman and atman.

[AO1 20]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Generally referred to as God and soul but this leads to many misunderstandings. They are western terms which reflect a particular religious philosophy.
- Brahman is the universal (macrocosmic) spirit and atman the personal (microcosmic) spirit. This way of thinking is much more helpful in understanding the profound and mysterious relationship between Brahman and atman
- The relationship between Brahman and atman is a constant theme in the Upanishads and is described and understood in a number of ways. It is clear that it cannot be correctly described as 'God' and 'soul' and that the relationship is much more profound and mysterious.
- Some Hindus hold a monotheistic view of the relationship and believe that the atman is only a part of Brahman and not wholly identifiable with it.
- Other Hindus have more of a monistic view believing that everything is made of the same essential essence and therefore that Brahman and atman are one.
- The main message in the Upanishads however is a monistic one - based on the principle tat tvam asi – 'That art thou.'
- Many comparisons have been used to explain the relationship between Brahman and atman.
- In the Chandogya Upanishad this relationship is explained through the dialogue between a father called Uddalaka and his son Svetaketu where the father uses a number of images to help his son understand the nature of atman and its relationship to Brahman – e.g. bees collecting juices to make honey; salt in water.
- Advaita Vedanta maintains that Brahman is identical with the inner self (the atman) of each person. There are no separate atman in living things only Brahman penetrating and supporting the entire universe. Moksha is achieved by recognising and experiencing this. Everything else is an illusion (maya).
- A different view is given by Dvaita Vedanta which is often called 'dual' Vedanta. This is the belief that two things exist, separate and distinct from one another – one is the atman (usually referred to as jiva) which exists independently within all living things and Brahman saguna the personal god underlying reality (usually referred to as Ishvara).
- Madhva believed that each atman (or jiva) is an image of Ishvara – they are distinct and separate, have similar qualities but are completely unrelated.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

(b) 'God has to be personal to be worshipped.'

Evaluate this view with reference to Hinduism.

[AO2 30]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Brahman can be understood as both personal (Saguna) and impersonal (Nirguna) within Hinduism. There are different emphases about these two forms of Brahman. The earlier Upanishads and some schools of Philosophy emphasise the personal forms while later schools of thought emphasise the impersonal form.
- Brahman Saguna is the Brahman that can be characterised. It is the underlying essence of the material world as well as the atman, the innermost self. It is manifested in the Trimurti which show the three divine energies – creative (Brahma), preserver (Vishnu) and destroyer and recreator (Shiva). Brahman is also the 'being' of all things in existence – sun, oceans, plant life and all creatures. They all have their origin in Brahman and Brahman as their essence.
- Brahman Nirguna is Brahman beyond all attributes – invisible, ungraspable, eternal and without qualities. It is unconditioned and without origin or end. Brahman is also transcendent and beyond the created universe. It is an all-pervading self-existent power.
- Many Hindus would argue that it is not possible to worship an impersonal God. This is why personal deities are much more in evidence in the popular culture of India and feature in every aspect of life in homes, offices and in street shrines and temples.
- The two major traditions of Hinduism, Vaishnavism and Shaivism are based on devotion to personal manifestations of Brahman, Vishnu and Shiva. Many people support the view that humankind needs a tangible, manifest and anthropomorphic conception of God to worship. It is difficult, if not impossible, to worship a formless 'It' which is why manifested aspects of Brahman are so important within Hinduism." This is why personal deities such as Krishna and Rama have such importance for Hindus.
- Relating to impersonal abstract forces is very difficult since all meaningful human relationships are based on the personal and as such knowing God through personal deities is more possible and meaningful to many Hindus. Many popular forms of worship such as bhakti and daily puja are based on this personal relationship with specific deities. These deities represent higher forces and energies and are the means or channels of divine grace and blessings.
- Many Hindus would argue that it is a common misconception that the Hindu concept of God is ultimately impersonal and that any personhood is anthropomorphic. Another misconception is that the various gods and goddesses and the stories about them are merely ways by which Hindus relate to an Impersonal Supreme. They would argue that there are many schools within Hinduism, mainly Vaishnavas but also within Shaivism and Shaktism who believe that God possesses personality.
- However other schools of philosophy within Hinduism such as Vedanta maintain that knowing God in personal forms is a lower level of truth than knowing God in its impersonal form. This is reflected in the belief that jnana yoga is the highest form of yoga since it enables Hindus to know God in the impersonal forms. This is the ultimate goal for Hindus, self-realisation or realisation that the innermost being atman is one with Brahman. Most Hindus believe in the impersonal abstract force of Brahman symbolised by the symbol OM which is just as much in evidence as personal deities.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.

5. (a) Explain the nature of puja in Hinduism.

[AO1 20]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Puja in Hinduism is very diverse and this reflects the variety of ways Hindus approach the divine. It includes therefore a wide range of practices and activities – some performed in the home, others in the mandir, some personally and some congregationally. Many of these practices can be performed both ways.
- However most Hindu worship takes place in the home rather than the temple. There are no specific days of worship although particular deities are associated with particular days – Shiva is honoured on Monday and Hanuman on Tuesday. God in Hinduism is regarded as a close friend and therefore a main feature of puja is warmth, joy and affection. It can be said that love and devotion are the main characteristics of puja.
- Puja is a sanskrit word which loosely translated means reverence or worship and refers to the worship Hindus perform daily, especially of the sacred image – **Murti**. Worship of the Murti is central to Hinduism and helps many Hindus develop and express their relationship with God. They are more than meditational aids or representations of the different aspects of God. To many Hindus the Murti is considered to be God or the deity it represents.
- Some Hindu groups consider the Murti to be a form of avatar.
- Puja can be performed for anything the performer considers to be the concept of God such as a murti of Vishnu or a Shiva linga. Sometimes a puja is done for the benefit of certain people, for whom priests or relatives ask blessings. As we have already seen because of the nature of Hinduism the practical details of how to perform Puja vary considerably. Many believe that it should only be done after a shower or bath and before breakfast to ensure full concentration.
- Puja can be performed in the temple or at home. It is an act which shows devotion to God or the chosen deity. Puja can also be performed individually or in a group, in silence or accompanied by prayers. Most Hindus believe Puja should be performed daily although some believe that it should be done twice a day. Puja is also performed on a variety of special occasions such as Durga Puja and Lakshmi Puja.
- Candidates may exemplify the nature of puja with reference to specific practices in the home and mandir.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

(b) 'Personal worship is far more important than congregational worship.'

Evaluate this view with reference to Hinduism.

[AO2 30]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Many would argue that personal puja is more important since it is part of a Hindu's dharma. Hindus according to their religion do not have to visit a temple regularly to take part in congregational worship.
- Personal puja is conducted every day and this gives it extra importance. It also enables the worshipper to build a personal relationship with God. Home puja also gives the woman of the household a role of importance in washing and feeding the murtis, something that would not be possible in a temple. In this respect home shrines can be said to be far more intimate.
- The extra importance of home puja can also be seen in its educational role, in passing on the traditions of Hinduism through the family and to unite the family in the worship of their favourite household deity. In this context personal puja can be seen by many as being more important than congregational puja as it is the worship of a personal deity rather than the more generic gods at the temple.
- It can be argued that congregational worship is more important in countries where Hinduism is not regarded as the official religion. Visiting temples gives Hindus in these countries an opportunity to meet as a community. The temple provides a social environment for the Hindu community to meet and prevents Hindus feeling alone.
- Congregational worship plays an important role in safeguarding Hindu culture especially in Western countries where it is easy for the religion to lose its identity.
- In Hinduism temples are regarded as where God lives and therefore are regarded as the best place to receive darshan, a glimpse of God. The murtis in a temple are thought to have much more significance than home murtis as they have been consecrated. Therefore, the presence of God is thought to be far greater in the temple than the home making congregational worship more important.
- Temples are also highly symbolic and help the worshipper to focus on God and to strengthening the relationship between them.
- Sanskrit is the language of Hinduism, the key to understanding its rich heritage and priests in temples speak Sanskrit and ensure its survival.
- Many Hindus would argue that personal and congregational puja are of equal importance and significance in Hinduism and in the everyday lives of Hindus.
- Many would argue that personal puja is more important since it is part of a Hindu's dharma. Hindus according to their religion do not have to visit a temple regularly to take part in congregational worship.
- Personal puja is conducted every day and this gives it extra importance. It also enables the worshipper to build a personal relationship with God. Home puja also gives the woman of the household a role of importance in washing and feeding the murtis, something that would not be possible in a temple. In this respect home shrines can be said to be far more intimate.
- The extra importance of home puja can also be seen in its educational role, in passing on the traditions of Hinduism through the family and to unite the family in the worship of their favourite household deity. In this context personal puja can be seen by many as being more important than congregational puja as it is the worship of a personal deity rather than the more generic gods at the temple.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised