



GCE AS MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2024

**AS
RELIGIOUS STUDIES - UNIT 1
OPTION E: AN INTRODUCTION TO HINDUISM**

2120UE0-1

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.

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.

AS Generic Band Descriptors

Band	<p style="text-align: center;">Assessment Objective AO1 – Part (a) questions [15 marks]</p> <p><i>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <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	<p style="text-align: center;">13-15 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 shows an excellent standard of coherence, clarity and organisation. • 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. • Thorough and accurate use of specialist language /vocabulary in context. • Excellent spelling, punctuation and grammar.
4	<p style="text-align: center;">10-12 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 shows a very good standard of coherence, clarity and organisation. • 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. • Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Very good spelling, punctuation and grammar.
3	<p style="text-align: center;">7-9 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 shows a satisfactory standard of coherence, clarity and organisation. • 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. • Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Satisfactory spelling, punctuation and grammar.
2	<p style="text-align: center;">4-6 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Partially accurate response, with some signs of coherence, clarity and organisation. • 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. • Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Some minor, recurring errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
1	<p style="text-align: center;">1-3 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Very limited accuracy within the response, with little coherence, clarity and organisation. • 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. • Some grasp of basic specialist language and vocabulary • Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar affect the meaning and clarity of communication. <p>N.B. A maximum of 1 mark should be awarded for a response that only demonstrates 'knowledge in isolation'</p>
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No relevant information.

Band	Assessment Objective AO2- Part (b) questions [15 marks] <i>Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.</i>
5	<p style="text-align: center;">13-15 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confident critical analysis and perceptive evaluation of the issue. • A response that successfully identifies and thoroughly addresses the issues raised by the question set. • The response shows an excellent standard of coherence, clarity and organisation. • Thorough, sustained and clear views are given, supported by extensive, detailed reasoning and/or evidence. • Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Excellent spelling, punctuation and grammar.
4	<p style="text-align: center;">10-12 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purposeful analysis and effective evaluation of the issue. • The main issues raised by the question are identified successfully and addressed. • The response shows a very good standard of coherence, clarity and organisation. • The views given are clearly supported by detailed reasoning and/or evidence. • Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Very good spelling, punctuation and grammar.
3	<p style="text-align: center;">7-9 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfactory analysis and relevant evaluation of the issue. • Most of the issues raised by the question are identified successfully and have generally been addressed. • The response shows a satisfactory standard of coherence, clarity and organisation. • Most of the views given are satisfactorily supported by reasoning and/or evidence. • Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Satisfactory spelling, punctuation and grammar.
2	<p style="text-align: center;">4-6 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some valid analysis and inconsistent evaluation of the issue. • A limited number of issues raised by the question set are identified and partially addressed. • Partially accurate response, with some signs of coherence, clarity and organisation. • A basic attempt to justify the views given, but they are only partially supported with reason and/or evidence. • Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context. • Some minor, recurring errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
1	<p style="text-align: center;">1-3 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A basic analysis and limited evaluation of the issue. • Very limited accuracy within the response, with little coherence, clarity and organisation. • 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. • Some grasp of basic specialist language and vocabulary. • Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar affect the meaning and clarity of communication.
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No relevant analysis or evaluation.

GCE AS RELIGIOUS STUDIES – UNIT 1

OPTION E: AN INTRODUCTION TO HINDUISM

SUMMER 2025 MARK SCHEME

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

Section A

1. (a) **Examine the significance of the events of Durga Puja for Hindus.**

[AO1 15]

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

- One feature of Durga Puja that is particularly significant is the worship of Durga as the mother goddess. According to many Hindus Durga Puja is the greatest Hindu festival in which God is adored as Mother. Hinduism is the only religion in the world which has emphasized to such an extent the motherhood of God.
- Durga represents the Divine Mother and the power of Shakti or cosmic energy. She is the energy aspect of Shiva.
- The goddess is a divine, not human, mother and her images reflect her supernatural power. Her care and love for her human children is so great that she will do anything to protect them.
- As mother of the universe she personifies tender love, wealth, power, beauty and every virtue.
- Hindus believe that worship of Durga as divine mother gives material prosperity and spiritual freedom. Everyone is blessed with her loving mercy and is protected by her.
- Some Hindus divide Navaratri into sections of three days in order to celebrate different aspects of the divine Mother. The first three days celebrate her power as Durga to destroy impurities, vices and defects. The next three days celebrate her as Lakshmi, the giver of spiritual wealth, who can give unlimited wealth to her worshippers. The final three days celebrate her wisdom as Saraswati. In order to have all round success in life, the blessing of all three aspects of the divine mother are needed.
- The complete image of Durga represents the belief that to become divine then material desires must be kept under control. This is seen in the image of Durga standing on the demon. Hindus believe that by worshipping Durga it is possible to rid themselves of all desires and unfold divinity.
- The festival also reminds Hindus of some of the spiritual values that shape their identity, such as the duty to oppose evil, thanksgiving and the need to help others.

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

1. (b) 'Hindu festivals are no more than community occasions.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 15]

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

- It can be said that celebrations and celebrating is part of the nature of Hinduism. Hindus miss no opportunity to join with family, friends, neighbours and strangers alike to celebrate and have fun, to renew the home and the heart and, most importantly, draw nearer to God. Hinduism is a festival of festivals and perhaps it is true to say that they are more impressive and varied in Hinduism than in any other religion.
- Hindu festivals are without doubt community occasions and are very important and valuable for the perpetuation of the religion. Before each celebration, vows are taken, scriptures are studied and fasts observed in preparation, which are all individual acts of intimate devotion that bring the devotee closer to God. However, as each festival begins they become a collective ritual. They provide the spiritual public square where Hindus engage with one another and affirm shared values. Festivals require the participation of the entire community and create harmony among its members, even if not all contemporary participants are aware of the festival's original character.
- Hindus celebrate a number of important festivals, such as Holi and Diwali, in which all classes of society participate. Festivals allow people within society to be different but also to find common ground.
- Festivals also form a lifeline that binds the Hindu culture to the family and to the community. Diwali is symbolically a new start, a time to forgive and forget in all aspects of life including relationships with family and friends. It is the time for community and family celebration with prayers through puja, of togetherness, of sharing all resources, of food and gifts.
- Festivals connect and bring people together in unity and service. Hindu festivals also reflect and sustain the pluralistic values of Hinduism for diverse people to co-exist harmoniously.
- However, it can be strongly argued that they are more than just community occasions.
- Festivals are colourful and joyous expressions of spirituality, religion, philosophy, culture, service and social values. The spiritual aspect is founded on the human instincts of joy and happiness. The philosophical aspect is found in the struggle between the forces of good and evil with the ultimate triumph of the good.
- Festivals are also valuable as a time to donate and help those in need. It is giving resources of any kind, material or spiritual or physical. Seva during festivals means helping those less fortunate in society.
- Festivals are an expression of Hindu identity. For Hindus living in non-Hindu countries festivals are the most visible and memorable sign of their heritage. Festivals serve as a reminder of their identity and allegiance to Hindu traditions and ideals.

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

2. (a) Examine the nature of puja in the mandir.

[AO1 15]

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

- Most Hindus call at their local mandir whenever possible.
- Hindu temples appeal to the senses – colours, sounds and smells. Larger temples are highly decorated and the murtis on the shrines are dressed in colourful clothes and jewellery.
- There are many kinds of temples but all will have three main features – a murti or symbol of the deity, a canopy over the deity in order to honour it and a priest to care for the sacred image and to give each worshipper prasad, a gift from the deity.
- In some temples, families sit together but usually men and women sit on either side of the shrine on the floor.
- There is no prescribed time for worship. The priest begins temple worship by lighting the sacred fire and burning small pieces of wood, camphor and ghee.
- He then performs the havan ceremony which includes purification of the individual before approaching God.
- Another ceremony performed is arti which is an offering of love and devotion to the deity.
- Pradakshina the Sanskrit word for circumambulation literally means to the right. Therefore, devotees walk around the garbha griha, the innermost chamber of the shrine housing the temple deity or deities, in a left-hand direction keeping the shrine on their right. It is one of the customary aspects of temple worship and usually done after completing puja.
- The word 'prasad' means that which gives peace and refers to the food Hindus offer to God during any form of worship, ritual or ceremony. It can include offerings of sweet rice, fruits, milk and coconut. After they have been offered they are shared between the devotees in the temple so that they receive the blessings of the deities.
- Another important feature of puja in the mandir is darshan - the entire focus of the devotee is absorbed in the image of the deity and Hindus believe that the person who receives darshan is also seen by the deity.

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

2. (b) 'Puja in the mandir is much more important than puja in the home.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 15]

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

- It can be argued that temple 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.
- Temples play an important part 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.
- 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 home and temple puja are of equal importance and significance in Hinduism and in the everyday lives of Hindus.
- Some would argue that home 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 worship.
- Home 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 home puja can be seen by many as being more important than temple 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.

Section B

3. (a) Examine the four ashramas.

[AO1 15]

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

- Hindus believe that the universe is ordered and that each person has a role to play within it. If people fulfil their roles, then the universe operates harmoniously. However, if they act against or outside their given role they threaten cosmic order. Their role is their duty or dharma.
- Each ashrama has its own specified dharma and every Hindu must follow general moral codes and each has duties according to his or her ashrama.
- The ashramas are the four main stages or periods of life – the student stage; the householder stage; the retired person stage and the ascetic stage. Following the four ashramas was seen as very important, but today fewer people observe the system. The ultimate purpose of observing the four ashramas is to help a person achieve moksha, liberation from reincarnation.
- There are specific duties associated with each ashrama:
 - 1) Brahmacharya – the student stage – Traditionally boys were expected to live away from home during this stage and study with a guru for several years to foster spiritual values. However today only a few Brahmin families follow this tradition to the full extent. This stage begins for members of the three upper varnas after the ritual of the sacred thread when they are reborn. The duties at this stage include – studying the Vedas and other texts; living a celibate and simple life; serving the guru and collecting alms for him; learning how to set up and maintain household worship; developing appropriate qualities such as humility; understanding and performing various rituals.
 - 2) Grihastha – the householder stage – This is the stage when a Hindu decides to marry and accept family responsibilities which include having children, forming a family, following a career and becoming an active member of the community. The duties at this stage include – making money and enjoying pleasure in an ethical manner; performing sacrifice and observing religious rituals; protecting and nourishing family members; teaching spiritual values; giving to charity.
 - 3) Vanaprastha – the retired person stage – This stage begins when a man reaches old age. When his son has a family and is ready to take over the leadership of the household, he and his wife will retire. Some choose to withdraw into a secluded area or they may involve themselves more with bhakti of a god or goddess. Others go on pilgrimage when they may be accompanied by their wife, but all sexual relations are forbidden. The duties at this stage include – devoting more time to spiritual matters; going on pilgrimage.
 - 4) Sannyasa – the ascetic stage – Traditionally it is only available to men who exhibit the qualities of a Brahmin. The Sannyasin become wandering hermits, leaving their family and living a life dependant on God alone. They seek spiritual enlightenment and power. The duties at this stage include – controlling the mind and senses, fixing the mind on the Supreme; becoming detached and fearless, fully dependent on God as protector; becoming aware of the self and of God.

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

3. (b) 'The four ashramas are no longer relevant for Hindus.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 15]

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

- It can be argued that the ashrama system is irrelevant to many Hindus. A third of the Hindu population is made up of Shudras, the lowest class in the varna system and the vast majority of them do not observe the four ashramas. Also, the custom does not apply to women as they are religiously excluded from the ashrama system.
- In the beginning it was not obligatory for a Hindu to observe the four ashramas. After the first ashrama a person could choose which of the other ashramas he wanted to follow for the rest of his life. However, there was much opposition and criticism of this system as it went against the traditional teaching in Hinduism about the importance of marriage and having children. Therefore, the system was changed and required the individual to observe the four ashramas in one lifetime as a passage to liberation. It could be argued that the original system mirrors much that happens in modern society where many choose not to conform to the traditional structure of society. This makes the ashramas irrelevant to the structure of their lives and the practices of their lifestyle.
- Many would argue that the four ashramas mirror the structure of human life and that their relevance cannot diminish. However, it is their obligatory nature that is the root of contention.
- The ashrama system has many benefits. It gives each individual a clear framework within which to move through life and emphasises one's obligations to society, while at the same time providing an opportunity to develop one's spiritual side. It further enables each person to know their dharma, and thus to accumulate the good karma that they will need to progress up the varna system in a future rebirth or to achieve moksha. There is no doubt that this framework is a guide that gives life a purpose to many Hindus.
- The four ashramas remain an important ideal in Hindu religious tradition. They are one of the two pillars of Hindu socio-religious tradition, the other being varna. Both are linked together in the Hindu term varnashramadharma which many believe sums up Hinduism very well.
- The ultimate purpose of observing the four ashramas is to help a person achieve moksha, liberation from reincarnation. There are specific duties associated with each ashrama.
- The origins of the ashrama system, like the varna system, are very ancient and also very important within the context of dharma. Individuals can learn and practice their dharma within the ashrama system and by taking the dharmic responsibilities of each stage seriously can work at achieving moksha. However, although they were important foundations in Hindu social and spiritual life, today in modern Hindu society fewer people observe the system.

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

4. (a) Explain Hindu beliefs about the atman.

[AO1 15]

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

- The atman can be thought of as the spirit within every living thing and provides the 'life force' of that living thing and also its consciousness or awareness of the world around it.
- It is ultimately associated with Brahman. A popular greeting in India is 'Namaste' which means 'I greet the divinity within you.'
- Hinduism differentiates between matter and spirit. Spirit is divided into two main categories: The individual self or soul – jiva-atman; and, The Supreme Self or God – paramatman.
- The majority of Hindus believe that the atman is eternal and is not limited to this existence. Shankaracharya explains further that 'the word derived from the root 'ap', 'ad' or 'at', may mean respectively, to obtain or pervade, to eat or enjoy, or to move without ceasing.
- The term atman indicates the essence of the 'Supreme Reality, omniscient, all-powerful, free from all phenomenal characteristics such as hunger and thirst, eternal, pure, illumined, free, unborn, un-decaying, deathless, immortal, fearless and non-dual.
- When each living thing dies the atman within passes on to another form of life. This transmigration is thought of as being a trap which holds the atman in the physical world. Each soul creates its own destiny according to the law of karma. The goal of most Hindus is moksha, liberation from this perpetual cycle and re-identification with the Supreme Brahman although this can be understood in a variety of different ways.
- The atman is impersonal and has no characteristics of the life form it inhabits. When a person dies everything about that person dies – personality, ambitions, emotions and thoughts. Only the atman carries on.
- The atman may be described but descriptions are just signposts pointing in its general direction. The atman is also apophatic since it can only be described negatively.

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

4. (b) 'Brahman and atman are one.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 15]

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

- Brahman and atman are often referred to as God and soul, but these Western terms are misleading. It can be argued that a better understanding of both would be spirit. The relationship is much more profound and mysterious.
- The followers of Advaita Vedanta believe that Brahman and atman are identical. There are no separate atmans 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).
- However, the proponents of Dvaita Vedanta would argue that they are different, separate and distinct from one another. 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 Saguna Brahman, the personal God underlying reality (usually referred to as ishvara). They refute the non-dualistic Advaita philosophy.
- They disagree that everything is Brahman and believe that each jiva is an image of ishvara – they are distinct and separate, have similar qualities, but are completely unrelated.
- There are passages in the Upanishads which seem to support the idea of the relationship between Brahman and atman being dual. However, the main message of the Upanishads is a monistic one that Brahman and atman are one and that the goal of a Hindu's existence is to experience that oneness that is the self -becoming the Self. This is the meaning of the well-known words of the Chandogya Upanisad – 'Tat tvam asi' – 'That art thou'.
- In support of a monist view is the comparison of space in a jar and space outside it. The space in the jar is temporarily confined as the atman is confined in the body. However, the space inside the jar and outside it are the same and when the jar breaks they become one just as atman and Brahman are really one.
- Many Hindus would argue that it is impossible to know the relationship between Brahman and atman rather than to say that it is without doubt a close relationship.

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

5. (a) Examine the main features of the Indus Valley Civilisation.

[AO1 15]

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

- The Indus Valley civilisation was a Bronze Age culture dating from 2500 – 1500 BCE.
- Archaeological evidence shows a highly advanced urban culture with a society that had a wealthy middle class and a centralized government. The inhabitants of this sophisticated culture were a mixture of peoples who appear to have amalgamated into the Indus Valley civilisation. This name was chosen because the first sites excavated were along the River Indus. It is also called the Harappan culture after the town of Harappa which was the first to be excavated.
- Indus Valley civilisation was centred around towns and cities with large populations. The towns and cities were planned, designed on a grid system. They were built on brick platforms constructed to protect them from floods. There were many public wells and many houses had their own water source. There was a highly efficient sewage disposal system. The cities also appear to have granaries and industrial areas.
- Very little is known about the way people actually lived within the Indus Valley civilisation. The reason being that although they had a detailed system of writing and there are thousands of inscriptions, the Indus Valley script cannot be understood and translated. Therefore based only on archaeological evidence there is a lot of conjecture.
- However, since they were traders the Indus Valley people used small, square seals and the images on them give a picture of aspects of life within the culture including religious practices. These usually include an image of an animal – buffalo, cattle, rhinoceros – with people prostrated before them which suggests some kind of worship.
- Very little is known about Indus religious beliefs although there is some evidence to suggest a belief in life after death. Also, on three seals there is a divine being which resembles the Hindu God, Siva which has been named Proto-Siva. There is also some evidence that the female figurines suggest worship of the Mother Goddess.

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

5. (b) 'The origins of modern Hinduism can never be known.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 15]

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

- Hinduism is the oldest of the six major world religions, many believing that it dates back 5,000 years and the search for its origins is both interesting and controversial. Its traditions are rooted in antiquity and contain so much diversity that many scholars argue that it is not Hinduism, but Hinduisms that need to be considered.
- Another problem is that Hinduism as a concept is not originally an Indian one and much of the literature written about Hinduism comes from outside the tradition. Many also believe that it is not a religion at all but a culture, a way of life.
- The word 'Hindu' is not an Indian word but rather a Persian one and was used by the Mughals when they conquered Northern India in the sixteenth century to describe the people living around the Sindhu or Indus river. Interestingly the word was used to describe a people, a way of life and not a religion.
- The British when they conquered India adopted the term 'Hinduism' and applied it to all the different native religious ideas and practices.
- Many within the Hindu tradition would argue that Hinduism as we know it has no beginning, that it is timeless.
- Many scholars would argue that the Indus Valley period can be understood as a pre-Hindu period although many have argued that some features still remain in modern Hinduism – e.g. possible evidence of the worship of a goddess of fertility, ritual bathing and a prototype of Shiva. The problem is that the Indus Valley script has not been deciphered.
- Others argue that Hinduism was brought by the Aryans from Central Asia. However, this invasion or incursion is seen by many as a flawed theory and has become a source of dispute and invasion theorists are often accused of imperialist motives in arguing that Hinduism really came from the West.
- In response opponents argue that very little has been discovered to support the theory and that archaeological evidence discredits it. Excavations have discovered horses not only in Indus Valley sites, but also in pre-Indus sites proving that the use of horses was common in ancient India. There has also been evidence of the use of the wheel, and an Indus seal showing a spoked wheel as used in chariots, has also been found, suggesting the use of chariots.
- Another part of the Aryan invasion theory that has been challenged is the idea of nomads using chariots. Chariots are not the vehicles of nomads and are only suitable on flat land and would have been totally unsuitable for crossing mountains and deserts as would have been required for an Aryan invasion.
- Many see the origins of Hinduism in Aryan religion that was centred on the purifying qualities of fire and influencing the gods through ritual sacrifice. They also used Sanskrit and brought the Vedas.
- Although features of both Indus Valley and Aryan civilization persist in contemporary Hinduism it is impossible to speak of origins with any certainty.

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