



GCE AS MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2022

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

B120UE0-1

INTRODUCTION

This marking scheme was used by WJEC for the 2022 examination. It was finalised after detailed discussion at examiners' conferences by all the examiners involved in the assessment. The conference was held shortly after the paper was taken so that reference could be made to the full range of candidates' responses, with photocopied scripts forming the basis of discussion. The aim of the conference was to ensure that the marking scheme was interpreted and applied in the same way by all examiners.

It is hoped that this information will be of assistance to centres but it is recognised at the same time that, without the benefit of participation in the examiners' conference, teachers may have different views on certain matters of detail or interpretation.

WJEC regrets that it cannot enter into any discussion or correspondence about this marking scheme.

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 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.

AS Generic Band Descriptors

Band	<p style="text-align: center;">Assessment Objective AO1 – Part (a) questions [25 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;">21-25 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 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 and vocabulary in context.
4	<p style="text-align: center;">16-20 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 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.
3	<p style="text-align: center;">11-15 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 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.
2	<p style="text-align: center;">6-10 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. • 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.
1	<p style="text-align: center;">1-5 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. • 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. <p>N.B. A maximum of 2 marks 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 A02- Part (b) questions [25 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;">21-25 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. • 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.
4	<p style="text-align: center;">16-20 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 views given are clearly supported by detailed reasoning and/or evidence. • Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
3	<p style="text-align: center;">11-15 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. • Most of the views given are satisfactorily supported by reasoning and/or evidence. • Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
2	<p style="text-align: center;">6-10 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. • 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.
1	<p style="text-align: center;">1-5 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Some use of basic specialist language and vocabulary.
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No relevant analysis or evaluation.

EDUQAS GCE AS RELIGIOUS STUDIES – COMPONENT 1

OPTION E: AN INTRODUCTION TO HINDUISM

SUMMER 2022 MARK SCHEME

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

Section A

1. (a) **Examine ethical teachings found in the Ramayana and Mahabharata.**

[AO1 25]

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

- The Ramayana is widely used to teach moral values and ethics. It shows the ideal relationship between brothers. Lakshmana gave up all his status as a prince to voluntarily live with his elder brother in exile. It also shows the duty of brothers standing up for each other in times of need.
- The Ramayana teaches the importance of honouring a promise made. When Dashrath began to weaken on actually keeping his promise and pleaded with Rama not to leave, Rama reminded his father of the value of a promise given. Rama's insistence on keeping the promise also shows the deep love and devotion that he had for his parents. He is the 'ideal' son.
- The Ramayana teaches the values of life and the ways to uphold them. Rama and Sita and the other characters in the Ramayana lead by example and are role-models in developing divine qualities. Rama is closely associated with dharma (righteousness) in all his thoughts, words and actions. Sita is the embodiment of purity, patience, devotion and forgiveness – the ideal daughter, wife and mother. Hanuman is presented as an example of courage, strength and selfless service. Lakshmana is an example of selfless caring.
- The Mahabharata is also widely used in the teaching of moral and ethical values. The central teaching of dharma as holding together the cosmos runs right through the epic. Krishna warns Arjuna not to focus solely on the rewards of fulfilling duty and not to fight for his own benefit on the basis of greed and desire. Arjuna must fight for the good of others. This reminds people that they are social as well as moral beings; in this context the Mahabharata discusses proper conduct of kings and warriors.
- Arjuna also expresses his support for family values and is a defender of tradition. It is also said that the Mahabharata contains all that a person should know to achieve the four human goals of dharma, artha, karma and moksha. Two of the eighteen chapters of the epic, Santi and Anusaasanika Parvas deal with useful aspects of human life – code of conduct, values, morals and philosophy.
- It also teaches about justice and fairness – Krishna was intent on the triumph of good over evil whatever the cost. It also raises the issue of the legitimate use of violence, honesty and the abuse of women (Draupadi's story). In addition, it teaches that blind pride and wrong actions have serious consequences.

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

(b) 'Shruti texts are much more important than smriti texts in Hinduism.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

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

- There are two types of Hindu texts – shruti and smriti. Tradition (smriti) differs from revelation (shruti).
- Shruti texts are generally regarded as being the oldest and most sacred. This gives them more importance than the more recent smriti texts. They were handed down orally before being written and is one of the main reasons why the spoken word has always been important in Hinduism.
- Shruti means 'that which is heard' referring to their status of not being human words, but the words of the gods as heard by the rishis who had direct contact with them. Therefore, Shruti literature is regarded as containing universal laws which are unchangeable and eternal.
- Many would argue that the Vedas (shruti) are the most important scriptures in Hinduism. Veda means knowledge, wisdom or vision and the laws of the Vedas regulate the social, legal, domestic and religious customs of Hindus to the present day.
- It is believed that the teachings of the Vedas were first revealed by God at the beginning of time for the benefit of humankind and that they are inseparable from Brahman. Their significance lies in the fact that the truths and thoughts they contain are eternal and timeless. Nobody invented or created them. The truths have always existed, and the human race has received these in the manner of revelations. They are still used today as a basis for ritual ceremonies and as a source of great wisdom and truth.
- The Upanishads (shruti) also have a very special status because they explain the Vedas and in so doing reveal sacred truths in philosophical formulas. They are not products of human intelligence, but the whisperings of God. They are regarded as being as relevant and inspiring today as they were when they were first written.
- Others would argue that smriti texts are just as important if not more so because to many Hindus smriti literature is easier to understand spiritual truths through its use of mythology, symbolism and stories. This is one of the main reasons for the popularity of the texts for Hindus today.
- The great Hindu epics – the Mahabharata and the Ramayana are smriti scriptures, but some would argue that this diminishes their importance; however, many point to the fact that they are well known by all Hindus.
- These two great epics – the Ramayana and the Mahabharata teach the ideal way of life and the festivals centered around the principal characters of the two epics – Rama and Krishna – exhibit the ideals upheld by Hindus. They also list the codes and rules which govern the actions of Hindu communities. They are open and accessible to all and effectively teach the ideals and values of Hinduism to all Hindus, regardless of social background and education.
- Although the Bhagavad Gita is a section of the Mahabharata many Hindus give it a special status. It is the most famous and well known of all Hindu scriptures. Many believe it not only gives wisdom but very valuable practical advice for life.

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

2. (a) **Explain how Arjuna's conflict of personal dharma was helped by Krishna.**

[AO1 25]

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

- Candidates may give the background to the discussion which takes place between Krishna and Arjuna in which he presents the teaching on dharma and varnadharma
- Candidates may also give a brief overview of the varna system in order to put the teaching in context.
- Arjuna the great archer was a member of the kshatriyas (the warrior, ruler varna) and therefore his duty was to fight. Krishna sees Arjuna withdrawing and begins to persuade Arjuna that he should stick to his duty as a warrior and engage the enemy. This is the beginning of the conversation we know as the Bhagavad Gita which forms part of the Mahabharata.
- Arjuna was clearly worried because he was in a situation where he was going into a war where he would have to kill family and friends. He is facing a conflict of personal dharma. He therefore asks Krishna for advice.
- Krishna tells him not to worry as he will attain no bad karma from taking part in the war.
- He then discusses varnadharma and states that an action done out of a sense of duty with no attachment has no karmic effect. A clear teaching here is that evil is not to be found in actions themselves, but in the intentions behind them.
- It is Arjuna's honour and duty to fight. He is a member of the kshatriya varna – the battle is the very reason for his existence.
- Krishna warns Arjuna not to focus solely on the rewards of fulfilling duty and not to fight for his own benefit on the basis of greed and desire or to follow his own emotions. Arjuna must fight for the good of others.
- Finally, Arjuna decides to listen to Krishna's advice by engaging in battle and in the end the Pandavas regain control of the kingdom.

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

- (b) **‘There is nothing more influential in Hinduism than the relationship between Krishna and Arjuna.’**

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

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

- Many would argue in favour of this statement as the relationship between Krishna and Arjuna has a far-reaching influence on many beliefs and aspects of Hinduism.
- The theological significance of the dialogue between the two friends is immense. Krishna explains the nature of the universe and Arjuna embodies the qualities of the ideal student. Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita explains the responsibilities of varnadharma and the relationship between that concept and personal dharma.
- Arjuna is a role model in his own right. Arjuna’s willingness to accept the word of Krishna, even though it involved fighting against family, illustrates his ideal devotion to God. Together, the inseparable friendship between Krishna and Arjuna represents the cosmic inseparability of Brahman and atman, or the essence of the universe and the soul, one of the fundamental ideas of Hinduism.
- Others would argue that there are other features which are more or just as influential in Hinduism – the relationship between Rama and Sita which has far reaching influence on men and women in Hinduism especially married couples.
- The Trimurti and their influence on the two great traditions within Hinduism – Vaishnavism and Shaivism or other deities such as Durga who is celebrated at Navaratri, one of the great festivals of Hinduism.
- Others could argue for the influence of concepts such as varnashramadharma. Some have argued that such is the influence of this concept that varnashramadharma is Hinduism. It influences every aspect of a Hindu’s life from birth to death.
- Another concept that has great influence in Hinduism is ahimsa which influences aspects of a Hindu’s ethical response e.g. to abortion or euthanasia.

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

Section B

3. (a) Explain the importance of the Trimurti to the Hindu understanding of Saguna Brahman.

[AO1 25]

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

- Many Hindus understand the concept of Saguna Brahman through the Trimurti.
- The three gods of the Trimurti are Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva and are regarded as different aspects of God – Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver and Shiva the destroyer.
- This can be seen in representations of the Trimurti as one God with three heads.
- In this respect they also represent earth, water and fire. Hindus see time as being cyclic and the Trimurti expresses this understanding - all life is created by Brahman and Brahman is in all life, Brahman sustains all life and Brahman is responsible for death and reincarnation. The path of liberation from the cycle of samsara leads to Brahman. Death is not the end, but an opportunity to return to life in a new form and move closer to being liberated from the cycle of samsara.
- They also represent the three gunas, the three strands of life – Vishnu the sattva guna, Shiva the tamas guna and Brahma the rajas guna. H. P. Blavatsky explains ‘the fact is, that all the three “persons” of the Trimurti are simply the three qualificative gunas or attributes of the universe of differentiated Spirit-Matter, self-formative, self-preserving and self-destroying, for purposes of regeneration and perfectibility.’
- Although they are male in nature they are associated with shakti (female energy) since each one has a female consort. Saraswati, goddess of knowledge and learning is the shakti of Brahma; Lakshmi, the goddess of beauty and wealth is the shakti of Vishnu and Parvati, daughter of Himavat, the god of the Himalayan mountains, is the Shakti of Shiva.
- Brahma expresses that all the manifestations of the cosmos from the life-giving elements, sun, oceans etc., all creatures have their origin in Brahma. It is the concept of a creator God.
- Vishnu expresses the concept that Brahman is maintainer and preserver of cosmic harmony, order and the forces of goodness on earth. He represents the concept of divine incarnation, God in human form, through his avatars.
- Shiva expresses the concept of Brahman as both destroyer and creator.

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

(b) 'The Trimurti is the most important concept in Hinduism.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

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

- It is difficult to evaluate in the context of a religion which concepts, if any, are more important than others. The concept of the Trimurti is a very important concept within Hinduism and is the basis for understanding many of the other concepts within the religion.
- The Trimurti expresses the concept of God in Hinduism.
- They are three different manifestations of the ultimate supreme reality of Brahman, the impersonal absolute. Many would argue that it is very difficult to form a relationship or worship an impersonal God and that the concept of the Trimurti helps to overcome these problems.
- The concept also represents the energies of creation, maintenance of harmony and order, destruction and recreation of every aspect of the material universe.
- The concept of the Trimurti also helps Hindus to understand the cycle of birth, death and rebirth.
- The specific features of each of the deities within the Trimurti also express the concept of God. This helps Hindus to understand the concept of Brahman Saguna – Brahman with qualities or attributes.
- Many also believe that the Trimurti also represent various stages in an individual's life and therefore helps to explain the ashramas.
- Many would argue that there are other concepts within Hinduism which are as if not more important.
- Some would refer to the concept of atman and the importance of its relationship with Brahman.
- Others would suggest the concepts of karma and reincarnation because of their influence on the behaviour of Hindus in the present life.
- A concept that many would consider fundamentally important in Hinduism is varnashramadharma because of its influence on all aspects of a Hindu's life.
- It is very difficult to divide a religion into neat little boxes as all concepts relate in some way to each other and therefore it is a difficult if not impossible task to decide if those concepts are more or less important than each other.

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

4. (a) Examine the Hindu concept of ahimsa.

[AO1 25]

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

- Candidates may refer to the Jainian origin of the concept - meaning 'radical non-violence founded on the belief that all living beings are worthy of respect' and therefore all Jains are vegetarian.
- The meaning of the word ahimsa is literally 'without violence'. Himsa means 'not to inflict pain or injury upon others'.
- However, the meaning of ahimsa is broader than this – it also means positively showing love, forgiveness and friendliness and supporting peace.
- In Hinduism it is a spiritual concept, an integral part of the religion's philosophies. Many consider it to be the highest virtue and practising it leads to spiritual growth on the path to liberation.
- However, in Hindu scriptures there is some debate about its importance – some stating that it is the highest duty whilst others point out the exceptions such as war, hunting, law enforcement and capital punishment. Some scriptures also promote the eating of meat. The Dharmasutra law books, written in the fifth or fourth century BCE contain regulations about eating meat and which animals were eatable.
- Gandhi gave the concept a new direction by interpreting it in a political sense. In this context his interpretation of ahimsa was also influenced by Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount where he tells Christians to practise agape love by turning the other cheek.
- However, for Gandhi ahimsa was not a passive concept which meant avoiding any type of confrontation, it was an active concept requiring people to oppose and overthrow evil and injustice using non-violent means.

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

(b) 'It is impossible to follow ahimsa in the modern world.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

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

- Ahimsa to many is a very practical ideal that could lead to a better relationship between people and world peace.
- Many would refer to Gandhi's example as being a strong endorsement of the principle of ahimsa as a practical concept in the modern world, not only in the religious context, but in the political one as well.
- Others would argue that many Hindu communities have successfully combined the principle of ahimsa with life in the modern world. This is seen in the context of care for the environment.
- Gandhi introduced a new dimension to the concept of ahimsa which he called satyagraha, which means 'truth force' and many would argue it is this new dimension that makes ahimsa more compatible with life in the modern world.
- In a world full of violence and conflicts, of threats and counter-threats, many believe that ahimsa is not a practical solution to modern problems. Sometimes violence needs to be answered with violence.
- Many Hindus would point out that the principle in certain situations comes into conflict itself with other beliefs, practices and principles within Hinduism. This conflict can be seen in the issue of war and the belief in dharma.
- Modern society is far more complex than the society from which ahimsa originated and it is not easy or practical to apply an absolutist principle to the issues of modern society. Sometimes force is needed to maintain law and order and sometimes force and the use of violence is the only choice.
- Ahimsa is a principle that requires self-discipline, and some would argue that modern communities are too diverse in nature to follow a single guiding principle such as ahimsa. Therefore, ahimsa could be practical to an individual but not to society as a whole.
- The interpretation of ahimsa has an influence on its practicality in today's society. The underlying issue is whether it applies to human life or all life.

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

5. (a) **Explain the importance of personal and congregational worship in Hinduism.**

[AO1 25]

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

- The relationship between devotees and deities is personal. Devotional Hinduism is based on the love of the devotee for God. It enables the worshipper to build a personal relationship with God.
- Personal worship enables the worshipper to make offerings to the deity in order to seek their blessings. It makes the presence of God become active and alive for the worshipper
- The arti ceremony which is part of puja enables the worshipper to receive the power and wisdom of the deity into their hearts and minds. It gives a spiritual focus to their lives.
- Personal worship includes darshan i.e. the vision or sight or glance of God which bestows special blessings on the devotee. However, darshan is also central to congregational worship or any form of worship involving a murti.
- A feature of puja in Hinduism is that devotees show much warmth, joy and affection since God is regarded as a close friend or loved one. In fact, love and devotion are the main characteristics of puja. This is the ritual of paying respects to the presence of God.
- Congregational worship in the temple is an act which shows devotion to God. Most Hindus call at their local mandir whenever possible.
- Congregational worship stresses the communal nature of Hinduism.
- The temple provides a social environment for the Hindu community to meet and prevents Hindus feeling alone.
- Congregational worship is also important in that a priest is present to conduct rituals. It is also a way of strengthening and expressing Hindu identity.

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

(b) 'Puja is the most important practice in Hinduism.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 25]

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

- Many would agree with the statement and argue that the main aim and focus of puja is for the devotee is to make a spiritual connection with the divine – it allows the devotee to experience direct communication with the gods. It is a multi-sensory experience that helps Hindus to establish, express and enhance their relationship with the deities.
- Darshan is a reciprocal act between the worshiper and the deity. Not only does the devotee "see" the deity, but the deity is understood to "see" the worshiper.
- By doing darshan properly a devotee develops affection for God, and God develops affection for that devotee. This shows the importance of puja as a practice.
- The entire aim of performing puja is to create a protective layer of spiritual forces around the devotee, warding off all evils and negative forces, thereby creating an environment to lead a happy and peaceful life according to the values of Hinduism. This again shows the importance of puja as a practice in Hinduism.
- However, others would argue that it is not a meaningful practice but a chore repeated day after day and as such has no real meaning. The devotee is not open to a spiritual experience as the devotee is not searching for one.
- Performance of the ritual may not necessarily ensure moral behaviour during the day. This questions its value and importance as a religious practice.
- Others would argue that there are more important practices in Hinduism such as celebrating festivals.
- Others would argue for practices associated with different rites of passage or with varnashramadharma.

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