



GCSE AQA Religious Studies A Practice Papers

Component 1: Hinduism

Update v1.2, October 2025

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Teacher's Introduction

This resource consists of a selection of practice exam-style questions and mark schemes for AQA Specification A, papers 1 and 2.

The sample questions are numbered as per the specimen materials published by AQA, so that all three examples from within a religion have the same number. This is to help avoid confusion between these materials and a live paper numbered as the relevant section. This resource is focused on Hinduism which is question 4 on a full paper 1, and so all three examples are numbered '4'. There are also some sample questions for the Thematic Studies Element (component 2).

Remember!

Always check the exam board website for new information, including changes to the specification and sample assessment material.

There are similar resources available for other religions, making it possible to mix and match an entire exemplar paper 1 from these resources. Note that the cover of each paper assumes it is being sat as a standalone 50-minute exam on one religion, whereas the real exam is a 1 hour 45 minute exam on two religions.

The mark scheme content given is indicative, meaning that it includes a selection of material likely to appear across a range of candidate responses, but does not seek to exhaustively list all possible material.

August 2017

Update v1.1, January 2020

SPaG marking has been removed from Question 10 Practices and applied to Question 5 Beliefs (12 mark questions) in all papers. SPaG marking has also been corrected to 3 marks.

Update v1.2, October 2025

As per the exam board assessment updates, the following changes have been made to these papers:

- "contrasting" replaced with "different" in the 4 mark question
- 5-mark question replaced with a 6-mark question
- 2-mark question reduced to a 1-mark question

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* resulting from minor specification changes, suggestions from teachers and peer reviews, or occasional errors reported by customers

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Schemes of Assessment

Assessment Objective 1 has three elements, which are assessed with different styles of question.

- 1(1) is assessed via questions 04.1, 04.2, 04.4, 04.6 and 04.7. Responses to these questions should demonstrate:
 - ✓ knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including practices and sources of authority
- 1(2) is assessed via questions 04.3 and 04.8. Responses to these questions should demonstrate:
 - ✓ knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including influence on individuals, communities and society
- 1(3) is assessed via question 04.9. Responses to these questions should demonstrate:
 - ✓ knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including differences and similarities between and within religions

Assessment Objective 2 is always assessed via the 12-mark questions, 04.5 and 04.10. The objective is to:

- ✓ analyse and evaluate aspects of religion, including their significance and influence

Allocation of Marks

Questions assessing Assessment Objective 1(1) are awarded one mark for each correct point, up to the maximum marks available for the question.

Questions assessing Assessment Objective 1(2) and 1(3) are either 4- or 6-mark questions which ask for two separate points to be made. One mark is given for the point itself, and a second for appropriate development of that point. In the 6-mark question, the final two marks available are awarded for the reference and application to teachings required by the question. One mark is awarded for naming a relevant source of authority, and one mark for the application. Each mark can be awarded individually, and if the source is both named and applied, then two marks should be awarded.

Questions assessing Assessment Objective 2 are 12-mark questions. Marks are allocated according to the following levels of response:

• One point of view stated, with limited justification	1–3 marks	(12 marks) Plus a possible 3 marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG)
• Different arguments for and against, with justification OR Several linked and justified arguments supporting one position • This is the highest level which can be reached if only one point of view is considered or there is no mention of religion	4–6 marks	
• Good arguments on both sides of the issue, well justified and linked together • Clear reference to religion	7–9 marks	
• Very well argued. Arguments on both sides are linked together and fully justified, leading to a reasoned conclusion • Clear and appropriate reference to religion applied to the question	10–12 marks	

Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar

Marks are awarded for Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar. These marks are awarded based on the candidates' responses to the 12-mark questions only.

• No response is given OR the response contains no material relevant to the question asked OR the spelling, punctuation and grammar demonstrated in the response do not meet threshold performance	0 marks	-
• Spelling and punctuation are reasonably accurate • Any errors in grammar do not hinder the overall communication of meaning • A limited range of appropriate specialist terms is used	1 mark	Threshold
• Spelling and punctuation are mainly accurate • The rules of grammar are used to give an overall clarity of meaning	2 marks	Intermediate
• Spelling and punctuation are consistently accurate • The rules of grammar are used effectively to control and communicate meaning • A wide range of specialist terms is used	3 marks	High

Religious Studies

Component 1: Hinduism

Practice Paper 1

Name	
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Question	Mark
04.1	
04.2	
04.3	
04.4	
04.5	
04.6	
04.7	
04.8	
04.9	
04.10	
Total	
SpaG	

Time allowed

50 minutes

Instructions

Answer **all** of the questions.

Information

The total marks available for each religion is **51**. The number of marks available for each question is shown in brackets.

Marks are available in the 12-mark question of the Beliefs section for using good spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Question 4: Hinduism

Beliefs

- 04.1 Which **one** of the following describes Brahman without form?
- A) Saguna B) Prakriti C) Nirguna
- 04.2 Give the name of **one** female deity worshipped by Hindus.
- 04.3 Explain how **two** of the four aims of human life influence individual behaviour.
- 04.4 Explain **two** Hindu teachings about avatars.
Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer.
- 04.5 'Dharma is the same for everyone.'
Evaluate this statement. In your answer you should:
- Refer to Hindu teaching
 - Give developed arguments to support this statement
 - Give developed arguments to support a different point of view
 - Reach a justified conclusion

Practices

- 04.6 Which **one** of the following is the name given to the path of devotion?
- A) Astanga yoga B) Bhakti yoga C) Jnana yoga
- 04.7 Give **one** form of Hindu worship.
- 04.8 Explain **two** different focuses for worship.
- 04.9 Explain **two** ways in which Hindus work towards yoga.
Refer to Hindu teaching in your answer.
- 04.10 'Pilgrimage is not important for Hindus.'
Evaluate this statement. In your answer you should:
- Refer to Hindu teaching
 - Give developed arguments to support this statement
 - Give developed arguments to support a different point of view
 - Reach a justified conclusion

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Question 4: Hinduism

Beliefs

04.1 Which **one** of the following describes Brahman without form?

☐ A) Saguna

☐ B) Prakriti

☐ C) Nirguna

04.2 Give the name of **one** female deity worshipped by Hindus.

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04.3 Explain how **two** of the four aims of human life influence individual

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04.4 Explain **two** Hindu teachings about avatara.
Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer.

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04.5 'Dharma is the same for everyone.'

Evaluate this statement. In your answer you should:

- Refer to Hindu teaching
- Give developed arguments to support this statement
- Give developed arguments to support a different point of view
- Reach a justified conclusion

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04.6 Which **one** of the following is the name given to the path of devotion?

- ☐ A) Astanga yoga ☐ B) Bhakti yoga ☐ C) Jnana yoga

04.7 Give **one** form of Hindu worship.

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04.8 Explain **two** different focuses for Hindu worship.

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04.9 Explain **two** ways in which Hindus work towards yoga.
Refer to Hindu teaching in your answer.

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04.10 'Pilgrimage is not important for Hindus.'

Evaluate this statement. In your answer you should:

- Refer to Hindu teaching
- Give developed arguments to support this statement
- Give developed arguments to support a different point of view
- Reach a justified conclusion

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Preview of Questions Ends Here

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Mark Scheme

Question 4: Hinduism

Beliefs

04.1 Which of the following is not one of the tri-guna?

A) Sattva

B) Ahimsa

C) Tamas

Correct response: B) Ahimsa

04.2 Give one personal virtue for Hindus.

Responses may include the following, but any relevant point will be accepted:

- Harmlessness/ahimsa
- Mind/sense control
- Respect
- Humility
- Empathy
- Love

04.3 Explain how Hindu beliefs about prakriti influence Hindus.

Responses may include the following, but any relevant point will be accepted:

- Prakriti is an element of Hindu metaphysics, so belief in it helps Hindus understand the world around them and the way in which it operates.
- Prakriti is the matter from which everything is made; it has three gunas (sattva, rajas, tamas) and the interactions and balance of these three gunas determine the nature of material things.
- Prakriti is unconscious and always changing, as it is acted upon by the conscious mind (consciousness).

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- 04.4 Explain two beliefs about Maya.
Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer.

Responses may include the following, but any relevant point will be

- Maya is the illusion that things in the world are distinct and when the reality is that everything is Brahman
- Maya is the illusion of permanence that leads people to believe things were real and lasting
- The world is Maya, not because it doesn't exist, but because we perceive it to be
- Scripture is a common source in Hinduism, which has many vast stretches of time, modern Hindu concepts are usually the result of interpretations of these texts and/or traditional practices rather than a single authoritative scriptural source; Maya has several meanings include, in the Rig Veda, 'magic' and 'illusion'; the concept is also used in the Upanishads

- 04.5 'Everything that dies will be reborn.'
Evaluate this statement. In your answer you should:

- Refer to Hindu teaching
- Give developed arguments to support this statement
- Give developed arguments to support a different point of view
- Reach a justified conclusion

Responses may include some of the following evidence and arguments which will be credited:

Arguments in support of the question:

- The cycle of samsara is a key part of Hindu beliefs and all living beings are part of it. The universe itself moves through a cycle of creation and destruction.
- If there is an eternal part of the self, then something has to survive death; Hindus believe there is such an eternal self, the atman.
- Reincarnation is a common belief in many religions which originated in the ancient world. In the modern world many people who do not affiliate with a particular religion still believe in it.

Arguments in support of other views:

- The ultimate aim of Hinduism is to achieve liberation (moksha). Once reached there will be no more rebirth for that person.
- Like other forms of life after death there is no reliable evidence for its applicability to all forms of life.
- Some people believe that only human beings have souls and that the concept of rebirth can only apply to human deaths.

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04.6 Which one of the following terms means 'looking at'?

- A) Japa B) Guru C) Havan

Correct response: D) Darshan

04.7 Give one focus for Hindu worship.

Responses may include the following, but any relevant point will be accepted.

- Murti
- Sacred plants
- Gurus
- Sacred animals (specific examples not required)
- Holy land

04.8 Explain two different Hindu views about the importance of worship.

Responses may include the following, but any relevant point will be accepted.

- Worship is a means of communicating with the divine, giving thanks and asking for support when it is needed
- Worship is a form of bhakti yoga; bhaktas show their devotion to achieve liberation (moksha)
- Different yogas seek the divine in different ways; worship of God (or of God) is not necessary when following paths like Jnana yoga

04.9 Explain two Hindu practices that take place during Kumbh Mela. Refer to Hindu teaching in your answer.

Responses may include the following, but any relevant point will be accepted.

- Many sadhus attend Kumbh Mela and give darshan to other devotees; the gathering of sadhus en masse is part of the spectacle
- Ritual bathing in the river is the most important part of the festival; devotees can wash away not only their own sins but those of their family
- Scripture is a complex issue in Hinduism, which has many different texts over a vast stretch of time; modern Hindu concepts are usually the result of interpretations of these texts and/or traditional practices rather than a single authoritative scriptural source; Kumbh Mela is believed to be the result of churning the world ocean; this story is told in the Mahabharata

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Evaluate this statement. In your answer you should:

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Arguments in support of the question:

- Arguments in support of other views:

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Preview of Answers Ends Here

This is a limited inspection copy. Sample of answers ends here to stop students looking up answers to their assessments. See contents page for details of the rest of the resource.