



# GCSE AQA Religious Studies A Practice Papers

## Component 1: Sikhism

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.

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 Sikhism which is question 7 on a full paper 1, and so all three examples are numbered '7'.

## 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.

July 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

## Free Updates!

Register your email address to receive any future free updates\* made to this resource or other Religious Studies resources your school has purchased, and details of any promotions for your subject.

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

Go to [zzed.uk/freeupdates](https://zzed.uk/freeupdates)

# Schemes of Assessment

## Assessment Objectives

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

- 1(1) is assessed via questions 07.1, 07.2, 07.4, 07.6 and 07.7. 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 07.3 and 07.8. 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 07.9. 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, 07.5 and 07.10. 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:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One point of view stated, with limited justification</li> </ul>	1–3 marks	(12 marks) Plus a possible 3 marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different arguments for and against, with justification</li> <li>OR Several linked and justified arguments supporting one position</li> <li>• This is the highest level which can be reached if only one point of view is considered or there is no mention of religion</li> </ul>	4–6 marks	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good arguments on both sides of the issue, well justified and linked together</li> <li>• Clear reference to religion</li> </ul>	7–9 marks	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very well argued. Arguments on both sides are linked together and fully justified, leading to a reasoned conclusion</li> <li>• Clear and appropriate reference to religion applied to the question</li> </ul>	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.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No response is given</li> <li>OR the response contains no material relevant to the question asked</li> <li>OR the spelling, punctuation and grammar demonstrated in the response do not meet threshold performance</li> </ul>	0 marks	-
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spelling and punctuation are reasonably accurate</li> <li>• Any errors in grammar do not hinder the overall communication of meaning</li> <li>• A limited range of appropriate specialist terms is used</li> </ul>	1 mark	Threshold
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spelling and punctuation are mainly accurate</li> <li>• The rules of grammar are used to give an overall clarity of meaning</li> </ul>	2 marks	Intermediate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spelling and punctuation are consistently accurate</li> <li>• The rules of grammar are used effectively to control and communicate meaning</li> <li>• A wide range of specialist terms is used</li> </ul>	3 marks	High

# Religious Studies

## Component 1: Sikhism

### Practice Paper 1

<b>Name</b>	
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Question	Mark
07.1	
07.2	
07.3	
07.4	
07.5	
07.6	
07.7	
07.8	
07.9	
07.10	
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 7: Sikhism

### Beliefs

- 07.1 Which **one** of the following terms means 'realm of truth'?
- A) Gian Khand                      B) Saram Khand                      C) Sach Khand
- 07.2 Give **one** thing Sikhs think of as a barrier to mukti.
- 07.3 Explain **two** ways belief in the equality of all influences Sikh community.
- 07.4 Explain **two** ways in which Sikhs perform service to others through the Khanda. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer.
- 07.5 'No one can be a Sikh without the sangat.'  
Evaluate this statement. In your answer you should:
- Refer to Sikh teaching
  - Give developed arguments to support this statement
  - Give developed arguments to support a different point of view
  - Reach a justified conclusion

### Practices

- 07.6 Which **one** of the following is **not** a Sikh festival?
- A) Gupurbs                      B) Vaisakhi                      C) Divali
- 07.7 Give **one** feature of a gurdwara which demonstrates the status of the Khanda.
- 07.8 Explain **two** different Sikh attitudes on the importance of the Amrit.
- 07.9 Explain the significance of the names Singh and Kaur.  
Refer to Sikh teaching in your answer.
- 07.10 'Every Sikh should visit Harimandir Sahib (the Golden Temple) once a year.'  
Evaluate this statement. In your answer you should:
- Refer to Sikh 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 7: Sikhism

### Beliefs

07.1 Which **one** of the following terms means 'realm of truth'?

- ☐ A) Gian Khand      ☐ B) Saram Khand      ☐ C) Sach Khand

07.2 Give **one** thing Sikhs think of as a barrier to mukti.

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07.3 Explain **two** ways in which the equality of all influences Sikh community.

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07.4 Explain **two** ways in which Sikhs perform service to others through the Guru's teachings. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer.

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**07.5** 'No one can be a Sikh without the sangat.'

Evaluate this statement. In your answer you should:

- Refer to Sikh 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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07.6 Which **one** of the following is **not** a Sikh festival?

☐ A) Gupurbs

☐ B) Vaisakhi

☐ C) Divali

07.7 Give **one** feature of a gurdwara which demonstrates the status of the

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07.8 Explain **two** different Sikh teachings on the importance of the Amrit

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07.9 Explain the significance of the names Singh and Kaur.  
Refer to Sikh teaching in your answer.

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**07.10** 'Every Sikh should visit Harimandir Sahib (the Golden Temple) once in a lifetime.' Evaluate this statement. In your answer you should:

- Refer to Sikh 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 7: Sikhism

### Beliefs

07.1 Which one of the following terms means being 'God-centred'?

A) Manmukh

B) Haun hāi

C) Hukam

Correct response: D) Gurmukh

07.2 Give one Sikh virtue.

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

- Truthful living/Sat
- Humility/nimrata
- Love/pyaar
- Contentment/santokh
- Compassion/daya
- Patience/dhiraj

07.3 Explain two ways in which belief in liberation (mukti) influences Sikh beliefs and practices.

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

- Sikhs seeking liberation (mukti) may look differently at the world and seek to overcome these bonds of ignorance (maya), desire, attachment and ego. This is sometimes called the negative aspect of mukti because it involves letting go of undesirable things.
- A Sikh who is focused on mukti can realise the true self and become gurmukh; realisation of the true self is sometimes called the positive aspect of mukti.

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07.4 Explain two ways in which Sikhs strive to be united with God. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer.

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

- Nam simran means holding God constantly in the mind and that one does. The Gurus spoke of being filled with God and (Adi Granth 941).
- Nam Japa is sometimes used interchangeably with nam simran, repetition of Nam as a means of achieving nam simran (Adi Granth 941).
- Keeping company with saints (guru people) in the form of coming closer to God as a helps keep one free of bad influence.

07.5 'All the Gurus are equally important.'

Ev.  this statement. In your answer you should:

Refer to Sikh 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 will be credited:

**Arguments in support of the question:**

- All ten Gurus contributed to the form and content of Sikhism to carry the same light of God, passed from one to the next.
- It is not the individual Guru who is important but the truth, the Oneness of God and the importance of living a God-focused life.
- Equality of all people is an important aspect of Sikhism; all ordinary people, it would be wrong to try to set up a hierarchy.

**Arguments in support of other views:**

- Guru Nanak could be thought of as the most important because and without him there might be no Sikh religion today.
- Guru Gobind Singh could be thought of as the most important because of his most influence on the form of modern Sikhism; the Five Ks, the ceremony of initiation, and the Sikh names of Singh and Khanda. The Guru Granth Sahib, which has the status of a living Guru, is one of six out of the ten Gurus.



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07.6 Which one of the following is the name of the ceremony initiating

- A) Anand Karaj                      B) Amrit Samskar                      C) Naam Kar

Correct response: B) Amrit Samskar

07.7 Give one occasion when the akhand path can be undertaken.

Responses may include the following, but any relevant point will be accepted. • As a regular act of devotion • Family occasions – births, funerals, etc. • Before going to war

07.8 Explain two different reasons why the langar is significant for Sikhs.

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

- The langar demonstrates the equality of all Sikhs, as historical groups would not have eaten together
- A shared meal also indicates the importance of community; those who have worshipped together then go and eat together
- Contributing to the langar, either by cooking or by donating, shows that Sikhs can perform sewa (service) to others; since non-Sikhs are welcome in the langar this is a service to the wider community as well as to the Sikh community

07.9 Explain the importance of the gurdwara for the Sikh community and refer to Sikh teaching in your answer.

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

- Any place where the Guru Granth Sahib is kept is a gurdwara. It can be a purpose-built building or a private home; it is a place where the community can gather.
- Gurdwaras are where rites of passage take place, both those of the individual such as initiating someone into the Khalsa and those of the community such as marriage or the naming of a child
- As a place for Sikhs to come together the gurdwara is important for the functioning of the sangat, which the Gurus taught was an essential part of the Sikh religion
- The Guru Granth Sahib ascribes many benefits to the sangeet and the gurdwara: it purifies sinners (44), helps people find inner peace (964) and is an appropriate setting for service (964)

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07.10 'All Sikhs should be amritdhari.'

Evaluate this statement. In your answer you should:

- Refer to Sikh 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 statement:**

- Becoming an amritdhari demonstrates commitment to the religion and the teachings established by Guru Gobind Singh
- The Gurus considered the company of saints (sangat) to be a positive thing; just Sikhs; being clearly identified as a member of that community
- Sikhs value equality and there being different ways of being a Sikh, as a hierarchy, with Khalsa Sikhs being seen as 'better' Sikhs

**Arguments in support of other views:**

- Becoming a member of the Khalsa is a serious matter, requiring a significant commitment. If every Sikh automatically became amritdhari, then it could become a meaningless ritual. The Sikhs should focus on meaningful gestures, emphasising instead the importance of living by the teachings at all times.
- Equality does not mean treating everyone the same regardless of their readiness. People should not be stopped from joining the Khalsa if they are ready; equality does not support forcing those who are not ready; choice in the matter should be equally valued

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## **Preview of Answers Ends Here**

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