
A-LEVEL

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

7062/2C – Study of religion and dialogues: Hinduism
Report on the Examination

7062
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General comments

There were some outstanding scripts for this component. Few, if any, appeared to have difficulty completing the paper in the time available, although the handwriting deteriorated in the final question attempted on a number of scripts. There were some scripts where handwriting was a major issue, but on the whole the answers were legible. As is always the case under examination conditions, attention to the exact wording of the question varied considerably so answers were more or less relevant accordingly. This was particularly true, on some scripts, for AO2 questions, where some students lost sight of the issue they were supposed to be evaluating. Many students used technical terms accurately and effectively, but there were some errors which led to considerable confusion in the answers. The new-style dialogue questions appeared to cause no particular problems for most. The way these questions were approached varied considerably and some of those strategies were much more successful than others as will be evident from the comments below.

Section A: Study of Hinduism

Question 1

Part 01.1

There were many very well-informed answers with many students showing a very good understanding of the concept of Saguna Brahman. Most unpacked this with reference to the Trimurti and avatars and many considered how it could be interpreted in the light of other beliefs about Brahman. Weaker answers, in general, were accurate but failed to unpack the ideas presented.

Part 01.2

There were some excellent answers that considered if the claim that there is 'little' agreement matched the evidence, or whether it would be more accurate to claim that there is no agreement or general agreement. However, other answers were mostly summaries of a range of different Hindu beliefs and while such answers were often well-informed, they did not always address the issue. Some simply completed their summary with a statement such as 'this shows there is little agreement', others did not actually state a point of view. The maximum reward possible for an answer which simply explains reasons/presents evidence to support one point of view is Level 2. An answer which does not state a point of view can achieve a maximum of Level 1, which gives credit for awareness of relevant information but recognises that the response has demonstrated no AO2 skills.

Question 2

Part 02.1

There were excellent answers which clearly focused on the reasons why there are different views and supported the ideas with evidence and examples. There were also many answers that described different views, but paid little, or no, attention to the reasons for them, and that limited the marks that could be awarded. Some of the explanations of those different views were very detailed, and the answers would have taken a good while to write, but unless the answer focused on the question asked it could not be highly rewarded.

Part 02.2

There were some excellent answers, although some tended to summarise arguments ‘for’ and ‘against’ the view without critical analysis or evaluation which limited what could be awarded to Level 3. Some distinguished between Hinduism and Indian law to make their case, others contrasted the underlying philosophy and the actual state of affairs but, either way, the resulting answers were often very impressive.

Dialogues

There were many excellent answers to these questions. Some wrote separate AO1 and AO2 sections. This was a perfectly valid approach but it resulted in quite a lot of repetition, because some of the information was then needed as evidence for the AO2 section. Also, the AO1 material, when presented separately, tended to be rather general and broader than required and was not always focused enough to be useful for AO2. Some took a ‘write all you know approach’, and did not select what was relevant to the issue. The better answers tended to combine AO1 and AO2. There were some signs of planning, which was often very effective. A minority of students did these questions first. This was another perfectly valid approach and seemed to have no impact on their ability to complete the whole paper. On the whole, weaker answers tended to have the same weaknesses as answers to the structured questions in Section A such as a failure to develop and support the AO1 content and a failure to critically analyse and evaluate the arguments presented.

Section B: The dialogue between philosophy and Hinduism

Question 3.1

This question was only tackled by a minority of students and, as required, they discussed the revelation of the Vedas and some ways in which philosophical understandings of such religious experiences may undermine their authority. Answers tended to be most focused on whether the religious experiences reported matched the definitions of mysticism or vision offered by scholars. This was a valid approach but it generally only established whether the experiences could be called religious or mystical rather than debating their authority. More direct answers discussed and evaluated the authority or authenticity of religious experiences with reference to their subjectivity, interpretation and possible natural explanations. There were some useful discussions about the use of drugs in that respect.

Question 4.1

This was by far the most popular question in this section. Answers were well-informed about the arguments from Hume and Wiles, and used examples of miracles from Hinduism such as statues drinking milk. However, some used Christian examples to explain and discuss miracles which limited the dialogue between Hinduism and philosophy that the answers should have explored, and some included a great deal of AO1 material about the meaning of miracle which was not then made relevant in the answer. The most direct answers took Hume’s arguments against miracles and pitched these against claims in Hinduism that such events occur, analysing and evaluating the arguments presented. They then discussed if there was another sense of the word ‘miracles’ in which miracles within Hinduism could be said to happen. Some presented arguments ‘for’ and ‘against’ separately with little or nothing in the way of analysis or evaluation which limited what could be awarded.

Section C: The dialogue between ethics and Hinduism

Question 5.1

This was by far the most popular question of the two in this section and was generally well done. Most contrasted the ideas of dominion and the superiority of human life from natural moral law with the ideal of ahimsa and the 'equality' of human and animal life in Hinduism, with particular reference to meat eating and vegetarianism. There was less attention to issues in which there is an apparent conflict between the well-being of animals and of humanity, such as when animals are used as sources of organs for transplant, or as subjects in experiments designed to alleviate human suffering, but this would have allowed responses to explore the possibility that Hinduism and natural moral law have more in common than would first appear. There was some useful discussion about whether it was permissible to kill an animal that threatened human life, which referred to a story about a tiger which was attributed to various different people.

Question 6.1

This was only tackled by a minority of students. In general, they were well-informed about Bentham, but had less understanding of the issue of freedom of religious expression and its implications. Not everyone recognised that on the specification the context for this discussion is multicultural societies. Some explained that Bentham would make a decision according to the consequences in the concrete situation in which the issue arose, and some were able to illustrate this with reference to Indian society. Some awareness of Hindutva was shown and some considered the different contexts of Indian and British society.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.