
GCSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES A 8062/14

Paper 1: Hinduism

Mark scheme

June 2024

Version: 1.0 Final



Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject examiners. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all examiners participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every examiner understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each examiner analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, examiners encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

No student should be disadvantaged on the basis of their gender identity and/or how they refer to the gender identity of others in their exam responses.

A consistent use of 'they/them' as a singular and pronouns beyond 'she/her' or 'he/him' will be credited in exam responses in line with existing mark scheme criteria.

Further copies of this mark scheme are available from aqa.org.uk

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Mark Schemes for GCSE Religious Studies

This paper requires expert markers who have wide knowledge and understanding of the particular subject content of the Specification. With the exception of the multiple-choice question, many of the questions asked have many different creditable answers and students are able to bring to their answers their own knowledge, understanding and background. They will offer details, arguments and evidence which the examiner, with the help of the mark scheme, will need to judge as creditable or not. It is therefore important that the examiner has a good understanding of the principles and spirit of the mark scheme in order to be fair and consistent when marking students' answers. The Content included is designed to be as helpful as possible but in many cases is not exhaustive. So Content sections are introduced by the sentence:

Students may include some of the following points, but all other relevant points must be credited:

this is to remind examiners that there may well be additional correct answers which, with their expertise, they will be able to allow. With all questions if an examiner has any doubt about answers being creditworthy they should consult their team leader.

Structure

The mark scheme for each question shows:

- the question; Each question is printed in full before its target and mark scheme. It is always important that examiners remind themselves of the exact question being asked. In particular, they will need to do this in instances where the answer appears to be 'straying' from the question set or perhaps offers a valid alternative not included in the mark scheme
- target; The target provides the specific assessment objective which the question is testing. It reminds examiners of the skills the question is designed to test, eg knowledge and understanding, evaluation
- the total marks available for the question and if Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar is assessed
- the typical answer(s) or content which are expected
- generic instructions related to the question target of how to award marks (ie levels of response grid).

Themes papers guidance (Specification A and Short Course)

In questions where students may choose religions from which to illustrate their answer, there may be some general Content, ie credible comments which students will make which could be applied to any religion or perhaps to a secular viewpoint as well. Where these are appropriate they are usually given first. The mark scheme will also include, under separate headings, Content sections for each of the six religions allowed within the Specifications.

General Guidance

.../.. means that these are acceptable alternative answers in the mark scheme, eg Guru Har Krishan / Guru Tegh Bahadur / Guru Gobind Singh.

Answers may include specialist terms, in Hebrew or Arabic for example. If this is the case, the mark scheme will usually indicate this by providing in brackets the English as well, eg 'Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement)'. In such questions, answers will be credited whether provided in the original language or in English.

Some mark schemes use bullet points to separate content. Each bullet point refers to a different possible 'belief' or 'teaching' or 'way', depending on the question. Obliques (.../..) used within the bullet point indicate different ways in which the point may be expressed and points which may be made to give the further detail or development needed for the second mark.

Where a student has crossed out a complete answer, it should be marked if it remains legible, unless an alternative is provided in which case only the alternative should be marked. When part of an answer is crossed out, then only what remains should be considered.

In questions where credit can be given to the development of a point, those developments can take the form of:

- example or evidence
- reference to different views
- detailed information.

1-mark multiple-choice questions

Such questions have four alternatives and the one correct answer will be given together with the correct letter, eg 'Answer: D Trinity'.

2-mark short-answer questions

The principle here is provided in the mark scheme: 'One mark for each of two correct points.' Students may give **more than** the two answers required by the question. In such instances:

- **award for the first two answers only, wherever they appear**
- if a student gives more than one answer on the first line and another answer/other answers on the second line, the 'first two answers' will be the **first two** on the first line and **only these two** should be considered for marks. Other answers must be ignored
- if on the first line the first two answers given are correct, award two marks, regardless of what is written elsewhere in the answer
- if the first two answers can only be awarded one mark yet there is a third answer that is correct, this correct third answer must be ignored and no mark given for it
- however, if the student gives some **elaboration after the first answer**, which is clearly developing their first answer, (which they are not required to do), do not consider this elaboration to be their second answer (unless the elaboration happens to contain a second correct answer to the question asked), regardless of whether there are other answers provided. In this case, the second answer also, if correct, may be credited for the second mark.

4 and 5-mark answer questions

Examiners should take care to note the target of the question. Clear information is provided for these types of question on how to award marking points. Examiners should carefully read the additional instructions provided for each type of question (eg for influence questions the final sentence in the general guidance box reminds the examiner that the second mark (detailed explanation) awarded in each case must show clear 'influence').

12-mark answer questions

The 12-mark questions test Evaluation skills (AO2). The mark scheme for these answers is based on Levels of Response marking in which the examiner is required to make a judgement on the completed answer taken as a whole.

Level of response marking instructions

In GCSE Religious Studies, differentiation is largely achieved by outcome on the basis of students' responses. To facilitate this, level of response marking has been devised for many questions.

Level of response marking requires a quite different approach from the examiner than the traditional 'point for point' marking. It is essential that the **whole response is read** and then **allocated to the level** it best fits.

If a student demonstrates knowledge, understanding and/or evaluation at a certain level, he/she must be credited at that level. **Length** of response or **literary ability** should **not be confused with genuine religious studies skills**. For example, a short answer which shows a high level of conceptual ability must be credited at that level. (If there is a band of marks allocated to a level, discrimination should be made with reference to the development of the answer.)

Examiners should **refer to the stated assessment target** objective of a question (see mark scheme) when there is any doubt as to the relevance of a student's response.

Level of response mark schemes include either **examples** of possible students' responses or **material** which they might use. These are intended as a **guide** only. It is anticipated that students will produce a wide range of responses to each question.

It is a feature of levels of response mark schemes that examiners are prepared to reward fully responses which are obviously valid and of high ability but do not conform exactly to the requirements of a particular level. If examiners have any doubt about what level to award a response, they should consult their team leader.

Level of response mark schemes are broken down into levels, each of which has a descriptor. The descriptor for the level shows the average performance for the level. There are marks in each level.

Before examiners apply the mark scheme to a student's answer they should read through the answer and annotate it (as instructed) to show the qualities that are being looked for. They should then apply the mark scheme. It may be necessary to read the answer more than once to be sure of assigning the correct Level.

Step 1 Determine a level

Start at the lowest level of the mark scheme and use it as a ladder to see whether the answer meets the descriptor for that level. The descriptor for the level indicates the different qualities that might be seen in the student's answer for that level. If it meets the lowest level then go to the next one and decide if it meets this level, and so on, until you have a match between the level descriptor and the answer. With practice and familiarity you will find that for better answers you will be able to quickly skip through the lower levels of the mark scheme.

When assigning a level you should look at the overall quality of the answer and not look to pick holes in small and specific parts of the answer where the student has not performed quite as well as the rest. If the answer covers different aspects of different levels of the mark scheme you should use a best fit approach for defining the level and then use the variability of the response to help decide the mark within the level, ie if the response is predominantly level 3 with a small amount of level 4 material it would be placed in level 3 but be awarded a mark near the top of the level because of the level 4 content.

Step 2 Determine a mark

Once you have assigned a level you need to decide on the mark. The descriptors on how to allocate marks can help with this. The exemplar materials used during standardisation will help.

You may well need to read back through the answer as you apply the mark scheme to clarify points and assure yourself that the level and the mark are appropriate.

Indicative content in the mark scheme is provided as a guide for examiners. It is not intended to be exhaustive and you must credit other valid points. Students do not have to cover all of the points mentioned in the Indicative content to reach the highest level of the mark scheme.

An answer which contains nothing of relevance to the question must be awarded no marks.

Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPaG)

Spelling, punctuation and grammar will be assessed in 12-mark questions.

Spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) will be assessed against the following criteria:

Level	Performance descriptor	Marks awarded
High performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners spell and punctuate with consistent accuracy. Learners use rules of grammar with effective control of meaning overall. Learners use a wide range of specialist terms as appropriate. 	3
Intermediate performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners spell and punctuate with considerable accuracy. Learners use rules of grammar with general control of meaning overall. Learners use a good range of specialist terms as appropriate. 	2
Threshold performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners spell and punctuate with reasonable accuracy. Learners use rules of grammar with some control of meaning and any errors do not significantly hinder meaning overall. Learners use a limited range of specialist terms as appropriate. 	1
No marks awarded	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The learner writes nothing. The learner's response does not relate to the question. The learner's achievement in SPaG does not reach the threshold performance level, for example errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar severely hinder meaning. 	0

0 1

Hinduism: Beliefs

0 1 . 1

Which one of the following is not one of the four aims of human life for Hindus?
[1 mark]

- A Artha**
- B Dharma**
- C Kama**
- D Saguna**

Target: AO1:1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including beliefs, practices and sources of authority

Answer: **D** Saguna

0 1 . 2

Give two ways in which Hindus can show the personal virtue of respect.

[2 marks]

Target: AO1:1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including beliefs, practices and sources of authority

One mark for each of two correct points.

If students provide more than two responses only the first two responses should be considered for marking.

Students may include two of the following points, but all other relevant points must be credited:

Speaking kindly to others / not using language to offend or cause harm / not discriminating against others / helping anyone in need, without barriers / treating the elderly with respect / treating teachers and gurus with respect / showing compassion / obeying parents / obeying laws / respect for the environment / for people's rights / for authority, eg Government / shown at the temple / toward deities / self-respect / fight for justice / worship / darshan / kirtan / visit a shrine, etc.

0 1 . 3 Explain two ways in which belief in the Tri-murti influences Hindus today.
[4 marks]

Target: AO1:2 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including influence on individuals, communities and societies

First way

Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate influence – 1 mark
 Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate influence – 2 marks

Second way

Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate influence – 1 mark
 Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate influence – 2 marks

To be a ‘detailed explanation’ the ‘influence’ of the belief must be included.

Students may include some of the following points, but all other relevant points must be credited:

Responses may focus on individual members of the Tri-murti, or the Tri-murti as a whole.

- Belief in the Tri-murti will influence Hindus to try to understand the Tri-murti through study of scripture / or via a guru / they will seek to learn or understand that there are three parts to the Vaishnavite Tri-murti / Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva / together they are the godhead of Hinduism / the Tri-murti are all manifestations of Brahman (Ultimate Reality) / it is very difficult for anyone to understand Brahman / by understanding the nature of the Tri-murti humans can better understand Brahman / to understand Brahman is to see the true nature of the divine / and attain moksha.
- Many Hindus will focus their worship on one of the Tri-murti / particularly Shiva or Vishnu / Shaivites believe Shiva to be the Supreme of the three / and to be Supreme Lord / ‘By knowing Shiva, the Auspicious One who is hidden in all things, exceedingly fine, like film arising from clarified butter, the One embracer of the universe – by realising God, one is released from all fetters’ – Vedas / whereas Vaishnavites believe Vishnu to be Supreme / and the Supreme Lord / ‘Of all types of worship, worship of Vishnu is supreme.’ – Padma Purana / hence each group of Hindus gives their devotion to that specific deity, with the other in a lesser form.
- Hindus who believe in Vishnu will also believe in avatars / many worship Krishna / eg ISKCON / as Supreme Lord or Brahman / will do bhakti yoga (service) as a form of worship / and to attain moksha / for example devoting their life to a job which is service to others such as medicine.
- Hindus might build temples dedicated to one of the Tri-murti / eg the many temples ancient and modern in Varanasi dedicated to Shiva.
- Hindus might make pilgrimage to a place associated with one of the Tri-murti / eg Mt Kailash for Shiva / Vrindavan for Krishna / to come closer to the deity / and gain greater merit, etc.

0 1 . 4 Explain two Hindu teachings about karma.

Refer to sacred writings or another source of Hindu belief and teaching in your answer.

[5 marks]

Target: AO1:1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including beliefs, practices and sources of authority

First teaching

Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate teaching – 1 mark
Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate teaching – 2 marks

Second teaching

Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate teaching – 1 mark
Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate teaching – 2 marks

Relevant and accurate reference to sacred writing or another source of Hindu belief and teaching – 1 mark

Students may include some of the following points, but all other relevant points must be credited:

- Law of karma is part of natural law / every action has a consequence / covers thoughts, words and actions.
- Two types of action / those actions causing hurt and suffering (papa) / those actions which bring joy and happiness (punya) / Hindus should accumulate good merit through acts which are punya.
- Everything humans do comes from the choices they make / from free will / Hinduism stresses the need to be aware, and to make positive choices.
- What happens to a human comes from karmic debt / either as a consequence of what they have done in this or a previous lifetime / or as a result of the decisions of others / hence a person can benefit or suffer regardless of their own karma.
- Consequences of karma can be for the individual / eg bad behaviour leads to punishment.
- Consequences can be for other people or beings / eg drink-driving can lead to car accidents in which other people are hurt
- Consequences can be immediate / eg the pain from cutting oneself whilst cooking without paying due attention.
- Consequences can be deferred / eg spending all one's money now leads to no money to buy what is needed later.
- Consequences can be felt in more than one lifetime / dependent on the severity of any actions / eg story of the priest who sacrificed goats / which illustrates that negative karma might take many lifetimes to work through, and can come from what a person believes to be good actions.
- Karma generated will depend on the attitude and amount of goodness generated / eg an altruistic Hindu might believe that Krishna will reward them with a place in Goloka for their service to others.
- Karma is the reason humans continue to be reborn on the cycle of samsara (birth and death) / central aim of Hinduism is moksha / release from samsara / must build karma positively to make that more likely.
- Attitude behind actions is important / any act will be affected if done selflessly or selfishly / Hindus should always try to be selfless / brings greater merit for reincarnation.

- Following a path of yoga (union with the divine) is a way to generate positive karma / bhakti, karma, jnana, astanga / karma yoga is the path of service / focused entirely on service to others, etc.

Sources of authority might include:

‘If we sow goodness, we reap goodness.’ – Vedas

‘Do not do unto others what you do not want done unto you; wish for others what you wish for yourself.’ – Vedas / Golden Rule

‘This is the sum of duty: do not do to others what would cause pain if done to you.’ – Mahabharata / Golden Rule

‘After death, the soul goes to the next world, bearing in mind the subtle impressions of its deeds, and after reaping their harvest returns again to this world of action. Thus, he who has desires continues subject to rebirth.’ – Yajur Veda

‘By realising God, one is released from all fetters.’ – Vedas

‘These actions which cause hurt and suffering to any other living beings are to be considered papa (sin, demerit, unskillful action); and punya (virtue, merit, skillful action) is defined as those actions which bring joy and happiness to others.’ – Mahabharata

‘Do not do to another what you do not like to be done to yourself; that is the gist of the law – all other laws are variable.’ – Mahabharata

Accept all other sources of authority that correctly support the beliefs given.

0 1 . 5 'Belief in avatars is the most important belief for Hindus.'

Evaluate this statement.

In your answer you should:

- refer to Hindu teaching
- give reasoned arguments to support this statement
- give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

[12 marks]
[SPaG 3 marks]

Target: AO2 Analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief, including significance and influence

Level	Criteria	Marks
4	A well-argued response, reasoned consideration of different points of view. Logical chains of reasoning leading to judgement(s) supported by knowledge and understanding of relevant evidence and information. References to religion applied to the issue.	10–12
3	Reasoned consideration of different points of view. Logical chains of reasoning that draw on knowledge and understanding of relevant evidence and information. Clear reference to religion.	7–9
2	Reasoned consideration of a point of view. A logical chain of reasoning drawing on knowledge and understanding of relevant evidence and information. OR Recognition of different points of view, each supported by relevant reasons/evidence. Maximum of Level 2 if there is no reference to religion.	4–6
1	Point of view with reason(s) stated in support.	1–3
0	Nothing worthy of credit.	0

Students may include some of the following evidence and arguments, but all relevant evidence and arguments must be credited:

Arguments in support

- The concept of avatar is a very ancient belief / it is found in the Puranas and Bhagavad Gita specifically / however the concept is a reflection of the belief in Saguna Brahman / found in the Upanishads / Rig Veda describes Indra as being able to take any form at will.
- 'For the protection of the good, and for the destruction of the wicked, for the establishment of Dharma, I am born from age to age' – Bhagavad Gita re Vishnu / avatars exist for the highest of reasons / so belief in them is to believe in the absolute goodness of the divine / from which all other beliefs are easier to accept.
- Belief in avatars leads to devotion (bhakti) / which is one of the paths to union with the divine / hence the belief is put into practice if belief is true / and the central aim of Hinduism (moksha) can

be attained / eg ISKCON is a form of Hinduism devoted to the avatar Krishna / bhakti yoga is a form of yoga to achieve moksha based on devotion, usually to Krishna or Vishnu.

- Vishnu's ten avatars have included ones which stepped up the level of universal development / they were vital to what now exists / and to humans' capacity to attain moksha / hence they must be the most important of beliefs, etc.

Arguments in support of other views

- There are many competing beliefs for the title of most important / eg fully realising that Brahman is everything (Upanishads) / is the ultimate aim for any Hindu as it is moksha / belief in avatars is simply a stepping stone to this.
- Belief in Brahman / as Brahman is the Ultimate Reality / moksha is reunion with Brahman / this is the key aim of life for all Hindus.
- Belief in the Tri-murti allows Hindus to understand the divine / Vaishnavites see Vishnu as Supreme Lord / Shaivites see Shiva as Supreme Lord / Ganapatians see Ganesha as Supreme Lord / belief in any deity as Supreme Lord makes it the most important belief / because a Hindu follows their teachings primarily.
- Belief in the Dharma acts as a guide to living / this must be the most important belief / if everyone in society lived according to the Dharma / society would be perfect.
- Belief in moksha / since this is the ultimate aim for Hindus / ends suffering / is the outcome of following the four yogas.
- Belief in the atman / that it is they who must achieve moksha / so belief in this aspect of the self is vital to underpin all other beliefs.
- Belief in avatars is a Vaishnavite concept / so for many Hindus, such as Shaivites, avatars are not something important to believe in / as they do not believe in them.
- Hinduism teaches that a person must work hard on their own self in order to attain moksha / belief in avatars encourages a Hindu to rely on the avatar, eg Krishna / so discourages that self-discipline and self-work.
- The stories of the avatars are good stories / eg Rama and Sita, the dwarf Vamana and so on / however, they are important for their messages, eg the good defeats evil / rather than being the most important beliefs / they have a different role in Hindu faith, etc.

0 2

Hinduism: Practices

0 2 . 1

Which one of the following refers to a statue of a deity?

[1 mark]

- A Mandir**
- B Mantra**
- C Moksha**
- D Murti**

Target: AO1:1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including beliefs, practices and sources of authority

Answer: **D Murti**

0 2 . 2

Give two reasons why Hindus use land, hills and rivers for worship.

[2 marks]

Target: AO1:1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including beliefs, practices and sources of authority

One mark for each of two correct points.

If students provide more than two responses only the first two responses should be considered for marking.

Students may include two of the following points, but all other relevant points must be credited:

Homes of deities / they are sacred or holy / everything is Brahman (Upanishads, Vedas, Bhagavad Gita) / all created by the divine / rivers give life, eg by watering fields / linked to deities, eg Vrindavan to Krishna / venue for acts of worship / venue for other rituals, eg cremation at ghats in Varanasi / river water, like Ganges, used in acts of worship / Ganges is the hair of Shiva / the appropriateness of the place eg its beauty or tranquillity / in the absence of a nearby temple, etc.

0 2 . 3 Explain two contrasting ways in which Hindu charities support women's rights. [4 marks]

Target: AO1:3 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including similarities and differences within and/or between religions and beliefs

First contrasting way

Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate contrast – 1 mark
Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate contrast – 2 marks

Second contrasting way

Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate contrast – 1 mark
Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate contrast – 2 marks

Contrasting may mean opposing or may mean different views.

If similar ways are given, only **one** of them may be credited up to 2 marks max.

Students may include some of the following points, but all other relevant points must be credited:

- Allow generic responses – for example, by employing women in their charities / for example, in offices and in outreach / this supports financially / also empowers them / builds self-esteem / by trying to get laws changed to give greater rights and legal support to women / funding legal battles for women / politicising examples of women's rights abuses / establishing women's refuges / celebrating women's achievements / encouraging women to be held in higher esteem within their communities / through better education, capacity to earn etc / supporting skills and education for the setting up of small businesses run by women / promoting positive Hindu teachings about gender, etc.
- Allow reference to specific charities which focus on specific elements of rights, for example:
- Commit2Change educates orphaned girls / gets them out of the poverty cycle / reduces chance of them being sold into prostitution or marriage / helps them gain qualifications to be able to support themselves.
- Sayfty – educates women about keeping themselves safe / being able to protect themselves (self-defence) if under threat of rape / supports reporting and legal action following rape.
- WASH United – makes available sanitary products for free / educates girls to understand menstruation more clearly / reducing taboos around menstruation in girls or women and generally in communities.
- Piramal Sarvajal – sets up 'water ATMs' in rural areas / reduces distance to travel for clean water / giving more time to other roles and more time for rest / allows women to protect their families' health as water is clean / also supports setting up of small co-operatives amongst women who now have more time / to generate wealth for their families.
- Women on Wings – creator of jobs for women in rural India / means they can then support their families financially / escape cycle of poverty.
- Allow examples of charities which have projects for women / for example, Sewa International, which runs projects for women / eg financial learning / and projects which indirectly help women / eg rural medical care, etc.

0 2 . 4 Explain two purposes of Hindu pilgrimage.

Refer to sacred writings or another source of Hindu belief and teaching in your answer.

[5 marks]

Target: AO1:1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including beliefs, practices and sources of authority

First purpose

Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate purpose – 1 mark
Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate purpose – 2 marks

Second purpose

Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate purpose – 1 mark
Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate purpose – 2 marks

Relevant and accurate reference to sacred writing or another source of Hindu belief and teaching – 1 mark

Students may include some of the following points, but all other relevant points must be credited:

- To show devotion and faith / as a pilgrimage is a form of worship which costs more / needs more time out of daily life / thus bringing greater karmic reward (punya).
- To fulfil their dharma / pilgrimage can be considered part of one's duties in the ashrama dharma stage (retirement).
- To be healed / eg bathing in the Ganges is believed to heal / visiting a specific guru can bring healing.
- To help another karmically / by dedicating the pilgrimage and the positive karma gained to another person / eg a sick relative.
- To gain positive karma (punya) / by the journey to the place of pilgrimage / and being at the place of pilgrimage / every aspect is an act of worship / which brings positive karma (punya) / Varanasi is claimed to be the gateway to moksha.
- To totally surrender to the divine will / because all is being done for the divine.
- To do acts of bhakti once there / eg by serving food to other pilgrims / making the karmic reward even greater / these acts also demonstrate the Hindu virtues – love, respect, empathy.
- To be able to scatter the ashes of a relative / for example, in the Ganges at Varanasi / which is believed to aid and quicken rebirth / and bring merit to the pilgrim.
- To seek guidance from one of the gurus, sadhus or priests who are based in those places of pilgrimage / eg Varanasi is a city of temples / Kumbh Mela attracts sadhus who give guidance.
- To be in a place considered special to a deity / breathe in that atmosphere / eg Mt Kailash where Shiva is thought to meditate / receive the blessing of that deity in acts of worship there, etc.

Sources of authority might include:

'A pilgrim must go with total surrender, with a total faith in God, that it is only by God's grace that he can finish the pilgrimage.' – Ma Yoga Shakti

'Do your work with the welfare of others in mind.' – Bhagavad Gita

‘Flower-like the heels of the wanderer, His body growth is fruitful: All his sins disappear, Slain by the toil of sacred journey.’ – Rig Veda

‘Pilgrimages may be undertaken for many personal reasons, such as penance for sin or spiritual regeneration.’ – Swami Chidanand Saraswati

‘Those who bathe at least once in the Ganges in its pure water are protected from thousands of dangers forever.’ – Brahmananda Purana

‘The Lord is so kind that He has spread the River Ganges throughout the universe.’ – Shrimad Bhagavatam

‘There are two ways of contemplation of Brahman; in sound and in silence.’ – Upanishads

Accept all other sources of authority that correctly support the beliefs given.

0 2 . 5 'For Hindus, Holi is the most important festival.'

Evaluate this statement.

In your answer you should:

- refer to Hindu teaching
- give reasoned arguments to support this statement
- give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

[12 marks]

Target: AO2 Analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief, including significance and influence

Level	Criteria	Marks
4	A well-argued response, reasoned consideration of different points of view. Logical chains of reasoning leading to judgement(s) supported by knowledge and understanding of relevant evidence and information. References to religion applied to the issue.	10–12
3	Reasoned consideration of different points of view. Logical chains of reasoning that draw on knowledge and understanding of relevant evidence and information. Clear reference to religion.	7–9
2	Reasoned consideration of a point of view. A logical chain of reasoning drawing on knowledge and understanding of relevant evidence and information. OR Recognition of different points of view, each supported by relevant reasons/evidence. Maximum of Level 2 if there is no reference to religion.	4–6
1	Point of view with reason(s) stated in support.	1–3
0	Nothing worthy of credit.	0

Students may include some of the following evidence and arguments, but all relevant evidence and arguments must be credited:

Arguments in support

- Spring festival at the end of the darkness of Winter / so it brings great joy because life will become easier / rather than being at the start of the most difficult time of year as with Diwali and Winter.
- Best known of Hindu festivals for non-Hindus / helps non-Hindus better understand Hindus / so bringing community cohesion and better inter-faith relations in the UK.
- The messages of Holi are supreme / from Holi day 1 is the story of Prahlad / he showed devotion to and faith in the deity, Vishnu / when walking into the fire / this saved his life / as Vishnu granted him protection / Hindus should have faith and seek protection of Vishnu / from day 2, Krishna's pranks lead to the throwing of coloured powders / showing equality as all are involved and affected.
- Story of Prahlad and Holika shows importance of devotion to the divine / Prahlad's devotion saved his life, and condemned the demon to death / hence this encourages bhakti yoga.

- Symbolism is most important / Holika who tries to kill Prahlad represents the negativity within each person / the fire represents Hindu devotion and worship which extinguish that negativity / since this is how to achieve moksha, it is the most important of messages / relating directly to the central aim for any Hindu.
- This festival has the greatest joyfulness / bonfires and fireworks cheer people / throwing coloured powders is exciting and fun / non-Hindus attend festivals just to do this, etc.

Arguments in support of other views

- Holi is not the most important because it focuses on Vaishnavite concepts / the first part is about Vishnu saving Prahlad / the second part about Krishna, and avatar of Vishnu / for non-Vaishnavites, this might undermine the importance in comparison to another festival.
- It depends on the criteria being used for 'most important' / as this might change attitudes to a festival / for example, children look for fun and joy, so might say Diwali is the best.
- There are very many Hindu festivals / all have specific importance and personal enjoyment or favour / whether to a specific type of Hindu, eg Ganesha Chaturthi celebrating the birth of Ganesha for Ganapatians / or for a specific need, eg to celebrate the brother-sister bond and promote safety through Raksha Bandan / or for a specific hope, eg to bring peace to the world, as with Diwali / which is vital at some times in history / some festivals are locally important / and looked forward to above all others in that small area / so the idea of 'best' is very dependent and relative to individuals, places and times.
- There are other festivals which are longer / eg Dashera is a 13-day festival, Navaratri is a 9-day festival / more days must make these more important.
- Diwali is more important so must be the best / it is five days / the Diwali story of Rama and Sita is more widely known amongst non-Hindus as well as Hindus / Diwali reminds Hindus that devotion within marriage is important / all Hindus can relate to this idea / as most Hindus marry.
- Diwali recalls Vishnu saving the world / Rama as an avatar of Vishnu kills Ravanna, a demon who was terrorising the whole world / hence this festival links to humanity, not just to self (as with Holi) / having a wider brief makes it the best.
- Hindus will have personal favourites / so what is best for one is not for another / for many reasons because humans are individuals / hence it is wrong to decide any is the best / must be a personal reflection, etc.