



Cambridge International AS & A Level

HINDUISM

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Paper 1 Written Paper

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MARK SCHEME

Maximum Mark: 60

Published

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and candidates, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which Examiners were instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began, which would have considered the acceptability of alternative answers.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the question paper and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

Cambridge International will not enter into discussions about these mark schemes.

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This document consists of **17** printed pages.

Generic Marking Principles

These general marking principles must be applied by all examiners when marking candidate answers. They should be applied alongside the specific content of the mark scheme or generic level descriptors for a question. Each question paper and mark scheme will also comply with these marking principles.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 1:

Marks must be awarded in line with:

- the specific content of the mark scheme or the generic level descriptors for the question
- the specific skills defined in the mark scheme or in the generic level descriptors for the question
- the standard of response required by a candidate as exemplified by the standardisation scripts.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 2:

Marks awarded are always **whole marks** (not half marks, or other fractions).

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 3:

Marks must be awarded **positively**:

- marks are awarded for correct/valid answers, as defined in the mark scheme. However, credit is given for valid answers which go beyond the scope of the syllabus and mark scheme, referring to your Team Leader as appropriate
- marks are awarded when candidates clearly demonstrate what they know and can do
- marks are not deducted for errors
- marks are not deducted for omissions
- answers should only be judged on the quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar when these features are specifically assessed by the question as indicated by the mark scheme. The meaning, however, should be unambiguous.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 4:

Rules must be applied consistently, e.g. in situations where candidates have not followed instructions or in the application of generic level descriptors.

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 5:

Marks should be awarded using the full range of marks defined in the mark scheme for the question (however; the use of the full mark range may be limited according to the quality of the candidate responses seen).

GENERIC MARKING PRINCIPLE 6:

Marks awarded are based solely on the requirements as defined in the mark scheme. Marks should not be awarded with grade thresholds or grade descriptors in mind.

Generic marking grids

These level descriptors address Assessment Objectives (AOs) 1 and 2, and should be used in conjunction with the indicative content for each question in the mark scheme.

Assessment Objectives

AO1: Knowledge and understanding

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the specified topics and texts

AO2: Analysis and evaluation

Analyse and evaluate the specified topics and texts

Generic marking principles

- 1 Examiners should start at the lowest descriptor, if the answer meets all the criteria they should then move to the next level and so on. The Examiner should repeat this process until there is a match between the overall answer and the descriptor. Examiners should use a best-fit approach when deciding upon the level, it is possible for a different level to be chosen for each AO.
- 2 If the Examiner identifies all aspects of the level descriptor within the answer then the highest mark for the level should be given. Examiners should also make reference to the indicative content when deciding on the mark within a level to ensure that there is sufficient relevant content evident within the answer for the level and mark. Examiners should be prepared to credit material in answers which is not contained in the indicative content.
- 3 The Examiner may need to make a judgement within a level or between two or more level statements. Once a 'best-fit' level statement has been identified, use the following guidance to decide on a specific mark:
 - Where the candidate's work **convincingly** meets the level statement, you should award the highest mark.
 - Where the candidate's work **adequately** meets the level statement, you should award the most appropriate mark in the middle of the range.
 - Where the candidate's work **just** meets the level statement, you should award the lowest mark.

5 mark questions

Level	AO1 Knowledge and understanding	Marks
Level 3	<p>Explains significance of knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a range of detailed, accurate and relevant knowledge. • Demonstrates understanding through a well-developed response. • Addresses the question. • Some engagement with the wider context, if relevant. 	5
Level 2	<p>Range of knowledge partly addressing the question</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a range of knowledge with some accuracy. • Demonstrates understanding through use of appropriate knowledge, may be less well developed. • Partially addresses the question. • Uneven engagement with the wider context, if relevant. 	3–4
Level 1	<p>Limited answer to question with limited knowledge/understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies a limited range of knowledge which may not be accurate. • Demonstrates basic understanding. • Response is relevant to the topic, but does not directly address the question. • Little reference to the wider context, if relevant. 	1–2
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

10 mark questions

Level	AO1 Knowledge and understanding	Marks
Level 4	Explorative with detailed significant knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a range of detailed and relevant knowledge. • Demonstrates understanding through well-developed connected discussion. • Addresses all aspects of the question. • Good understanding of the wider context if relevant. 	9–10
Level 3	Explains significance of knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a range of mostly accurate and relevant knowledge. • Demonstrates understanding through developed discussion. • Addresses most aspects of the question. • Some engagement with the wider context, if relevant. 	6–8
Level 2	Range of knowledge partly addressing the question <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses a range of knowledge with some accuracy. • Demonstrates understanding through use of appropriate knowledge, may be less well developed. • Partially addresses the question. • Uneven engagement with the wider context, if relevant. 	3–5
Level 1	Limited answer to question with limited knowledge/understanding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies a limited range of knowledge some of which may not be accurate. • Demonstrates basic understanding. • Response is relevant to the topic, but does not directly address the question. • Little reference to the wider context, if relevant. 	1–2
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

15 mark questions

Level	AO2 Analysis and evaluation	Marks
Level 5	<p>Assesses alternative conclusions with analysis of points view</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyses the importance and/or strength of different points of view. Uses accurate evidence to support a coherent and well-structured discussion. Addresses all aspects of the question. Coherent conclusion which evaluates knowledge and points of view and assesses alternative conclusions. 	13–15
Level 4	<p>Coherent conclusion supported by evidenced points of view</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discusses different points of view in some detail. Uses accurate evidence to support a well-structured discussion. Addresses most aspects of the question. Coherent conclusion to the question which evaluates knowledge and points of view. 	10–12
Level 3	<p>Clear conclusion with different points of view</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognises different points of view and discusses at least one in some detail. Uses accurate evidence to support discussion. Partially addresses the question. Clear conclusion to the question which is linked to a range of knowledge and points of view. 	7–9
Level 2	<p>Attempts conclusion with a supported point of view</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discusses one point of view Uses supporting evidence for one or more relevant point. The support may not be wholly relevant or accurate. Partially addresses the question in a limited way. Attempts a conclusion to the question which is linked to knowledge and/or a point of view. 	4–6
Level 1	<p>Basic conclusion with a point of view</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> States a point of view. Little or no supporting evidence. Response is relevant to the topic, but does not directly address the question. Attempts a basic conclusion. 	1–3
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

Question	Answer	Marks
1(a)	<p>‘The three twice-born classes, remaining within their own activities, should study the Vedas. But among them only the brahmin and not the other two should proclaim the Vedas. The brahmin is the best by nature. The brahmin, the kshatriya and the vaishya are the three twice-born classes. The fourth, the shudra, has only one birth. There is no fifth.’</p> <p>Summarise what the above passage says about the varna system.</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and Understanding. Response will be marked according to the 5 mark level descriptors (AO1).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>There are four recognised varnas, of which three are considered ‘twice-born’. A hierarchy is implied in the observation that brahmins are ‘the best by nature’. There is also reference to the specific duties or roles of the varnas as being different. The three twice-born varnas are all permitted to study the Vedas, as long as it doesn’t interfere with their other responsibilities, but only brahmins are allowed to teach others about them or use them in worship. The existence of a fifth varna is explicitly ruled out.</p>	5

Question	Answer	Marks
1(b)	<p>Explain how varna might influence a Hindu's understanding of their svadharma.</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and Understanding. Response will be marked according to the 10 mark level descriptors (AO1).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>Varna is usually understood as a reference to social classes and their respective duties within an idealised society. The four varnas named in the Rig Veda are the brahmins (priests), kshatriyas (warriors), vaishyas (merchants) and shudras (servants) and each has a role in keeping society in harmony. This is also connected with rita (cosmic order).</p> <p>Svadharma is personal dharma, it is inherent within the individual and it is this form of dharma which is being referred to when Krishna says that it is better to practise one's own dharma poorly than another person's well (Bhagavad Gita 3:35). In the broadest terms this means that a member of the kshatriya varna has a duty to rule or to fight (when appropriate) while a member of the shudra varna has a duty to serve. Generally, varna is understood to be determined by a person's suitability for that varna, rather than conferred by birth. A person's svadharma is therefore considered a matter of choice, which is formed by their inherent nature and/or choices in the current birth.</p> <p>Svadharma is generally considered to have a foundation in a person's varna, but the areas of responsibility associated with each varna are broad and include many different specific roles and activities. Therefore, varna on its own does not offer a complete understanding of an individual's svadharma but is rather a starting point. Svadharma is further shaped by both ashrama (stage in life) and gender. Duties derived from these are described in the Dharmashastras.</p> <p>Svadharma can be further divided into common (samanya) and special (vishesha) duties. Samanya dharma includes the yamas (disciplines) and niyamas (restraints) of virtuous living, as well as a duty to discriminate between right and wrong. Vishesha dharma is unique to the individual and to determine it fully would require consideration of their nature, aptitudes, physical characteristics, place in their community, location in time and space and the sum of their past karmas. Among all this varna (and ashrama) are of central importance both because these can be known with relative ease and because they serve as indicators of the station in life and the inherent temperament of the person.</p>	10

Question	Answer	Marks
1(c)	<p>To what extent is it true to say that the principles of dharmic living are more relevant to men than to women.</p> <p>AO2 – Analysis and Evaluation. Response will be marked according to the 15 mark level descriptors (AO2).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>Dharma is a concept which can be understood in many different ways. For some Hindus Sanatana (Eternal) Dharma is a better name for their religion. Since this encompasses laws and ethical principles considered to be universal, it would therefore be of equal importance to men and to women.</p> <p>However, because it is a complex concept used in a variety of contexts this starting point can be challenged. One thing dharma describes is the intrinsic or inherent nature of something; the heat of fire and the sweetness of sugar are common examples used to illustrate this. This essential nature determines how most things behave in the material world. It is only human beings that can make conscious choices and therefore it is only human beings who need to be concerned with dharma in more depth. The varna system builds on this idea of an inherent nature to things, with a person's varna being determined by the nature they are born with. In a similar way the idea that men and women are different can be developed and the argument made that because of the differences in their nature they have different duties and responsibilities within society as well. The New Religious Movement, International School for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), argues for the existence of spiritual equality but functional differences between men and women, and so supports traditional views of women's responsibilities in life.</p> <p>There are central ethical principles considered universally applicable by most Hindus. Among these the duty to discriminate between right and wrong and, by extension, to determine one's personal dharma in any given situation, might be included. This kind of determination is complex and should take many different things into account. The Dharmashastras is a body of Hindu religious texts reflecting and commenting on these kinds of question, which might be used as guidance by some Hindus. Similarly, religious stories such as the Epics illustrate both dharmic and adharmic living. Both kinds of text have explicit differences in expectations with regard to gender. The clearest example is probably found in the Manusmriti; while many texts simply presume a male reader or a focus on masculine concerns, the Manusmriti sets out explicit principles and rules for women's dharma. According to these a dharmic life for women is far more limited in scope than it is for men. Women can be daughters, wives, and widows, with each of these roles being defined in terms of the man who is responsible for her. A woman living according to the principles of dharma set out in the Manusmriti should not live an independent life; her focus should be on raising sons, remaining pure, and helping her husband to pursue his dharma.</p>	15

Question	Answer	Marks
1(c)	<p>Texts such as the Manusmriti are well known to Western scholarship. They have attracted much commentary from contemporary feminists, with problematic traditions such as sati, issues around education, property, and dowry and the denial of basic human rights to widows being connected with them. However, the reality of many women's experiences and understanding of dharma are likely to be more complex than this. Women might have been less likely, historically, to engage with texts directly instead learning about their dharma from the customs and practices which surrounded them. These are things which have varied widely across India throughout the history of Hinduism, including the existence of communities structured on matriarchal rather than patriarchal power. That the nature and status of the feminine is complex and multivalent can be seen in the presence and diverse nature of goddesses within Hinduism. The existence of female gurus, rishis and sadhus, and the inclusion of female saints among the poets who led the bhakti movement further demonstrates that personal dharma can take someone beyond the expected or normalised social roles for their varna or their gender.</p>	

Question	Answer	Marks
2(a)	<p>Describe the cycle of the four ages.</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and Understanding. Response will be marked according to the 5 mark level descriptors (AO1).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>The cycle of the four ages is also called the Mahayuga, or Great Year. It consists of four distinct ages – the Satya Yuga, Treta Yuga, Dvapara Yuga and Kali Yuga. These are the ages of human history, and the sequence is characterised by a reduction of dharma and an increase in adharma. The appearance of specific avatars is associated with the balance of dharma in a particular yuga. Vishnu is said to appear as an avatar in each yuga.</p> <p>At the end of the cycle the world is destroyed and created again, beginning a new Mahayuga. 1000 Mahayugas is a single day of Brahma, or a Kalpa.</p>	5

Question	Answer	Marks
2(b)	<p>Explain why living a dharmic life might be considered easy during the Satya Yuga.</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and Understanding. Response will be marked according to the 10 mark level descriptors (AO1).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>The Satya Yuga is the first stage in the Mahayuga cycle. It is the age of truth or goodness generally characterised as a golden age of peace and wisdom. During this age humanity as a whole is enlightened and wise and acting dharmically is its natural response to events. People living in the Satya Yuga had significantly longer lifespans than in later yugas and their former nature was determined by sattva guna (purity) meaning they were wholly free of impurity and inclined towards religious practices such as meditation and renunciation. People were better able to understand the Vedas than they would be in later times, virtuous or moral behaviour was the norm and righteous people predominated.</p> <p>The environment was also different, manifesting an ideal form where food is produced in plenty without the need for work. An abundance of resources and an absence of commerce meant that vices such as greed and envy, and social ills like poverty were unknown and could not result in adharma. Similarly, the fact that everyone was in full possession of qualities such as mercy, tolerance and compassion meant society was unified without class divisions and the resulting imbalances of crime and conflict.</p> <p>The four ages of the Mahayuga are characterised overall by a gradual decline of dharma and a corresponding increase in adharma the analogy of the bull of dharma which begins the Mahayuga standing on four legs but by the Kali Yuga stands only on one, demonstrates this principle. As the Satya Yuga is the first of the four stages, the bull has all four legs.</p> <p>There is no adharma and it must therefore be easier to live dharmically than at other times.</p>	10

Question	Answer	Marks
2(c)	<p>Assess the claim that morality is universal.</p> <p>AO2 – Analysis and Evaluation. Response will be marked according to the 15 mark level descriptors (AO2).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>Attitudes to morality are commonly divided into universal (absolute) and relative stances. Universal morality is the view that there are some universal standards, some things which are inherently right or wrong and which remain so regardless of context. Relative morality is the view that issues of what is right or wrong vary with social and cultural context. It is also possible to hold a blended view, regarding some things as inherently wrong while accepting that other issues might require more flexibility.</p> <p>Another version of this perspective might be found in the deliberate rejection or transgression of norms as a spiritual practice – for example, there are sadhus who deliberately do things generally seen as impure, such as meditating on cremation grounds and covering their bodies in the ash; doing what is considered wrong by most people can be seen as a step towards liberation from samsara.</p> <p>In the context of Hinduism concepts such as Sadharana and Sanatana Dharma imply at least an element of universalism, at least in the sense that there are certain virtues and values with universal application. On an abstract level practising the yamas (virtues) and niyamas (restraints) could be viewed as taking an absolutist stance. But in practice there is likely to be a degree of judgement required because the concepts encompassed in those practices are subject to varying interpretations. What it actually means in practice to observe, for example, saucha (purity) or tapas (austerity) seems likely to be subject to substantial variation across the entire population of the world's Hindus. However, that need not mean that the concept is inherently relative. It might rather be that human understanding or the will to truly understand has diminished across the Mahayuga. It is also true that each individual has different spiritual abilities, aptitudes, and tendencies that determine their capacity for moral decision making.</p> <p>It is also worth noting that there are various lists of virtues considered to be essential. While each school that has such a list might be described as absolutist and its adherents might argue for the existence of universal moral principles, it is also the case that there will be other schools that think differently. From an outside perspective it could be argued that the diversity of philosophical schools and their respective lists of virtues argue that Hinduism as a whole, and perhaps morality in general, is relative in nature.</p>	15

Question	Answer	Marks
2(c)	In Hinduism it is generally believed that ethics and ethical behaviour cannot be imposed from outside but should be voluntarily observed by each individual. There must also be intention to behave morally. In other words, virtuous behaviour is not truly virtuous if done for motives other than the desire to live dharmically. The need to reflect on ethical questions when they arise and actively work to discern the right path to take might be considered a part of every Hindu's dharma. This encompasses both absolutist thinking, because the duty to question and reflect is universal, and relative thinking, because the decisions being reached are individualised and context dependent.	

Question	Answer	Marks
3(a)	<p>Outline the characteristics of a person who is jivan mukti.</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and Understanding. Response will be marked according to the 5 mark level descriptors (AO1).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>Jivan mukti is the state of being liberated while still alive within samsara; the person will not be reborn. It is a term often used to describe people considered saints, such as Ramakrishna. However, some schools of Hinduism reject the possibility of liberation prior to physical death.</p> <p>A person who is jivan mukti might also be referred to as self-realised because they have understood the nature of their true self and so do not fear death. This might be the realisation that the self is not different from Brahman (as in the Advaita philosophy) or it might be freedom from desires and attachments (and therefore from karma). A jivan mukti speaks only truth and sees the world differently to a person who has not yet achieved liberation; they might be considered to possess unlimited knowledge for this reason. According to the Upanishads a person who is jivan mukti is freed from religious obligations such as wearing the sacred thread, they have no need to perform sacrifices, pray or recite mantras. However, they might wish to teach others in order to lead them towards liberation.</p>	5

Question	Answer	Marks
3(b)	<p>Explain how the cat and monkey analogies show Hindus different ways to achieve liberation.</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and Understanding. Response will be marked according to the 10 mark level descriptors (AO1).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>The cat and monkey analogies are based on the behaviour of a mother and baby within those two species. A cat mother who needs to carry her kitten holds it dangling from her mouth and the kitten, by instinct, simply dangles. No effort is needed by the kitten to hang on and if it were to try and do anything on its own behalf it would impede its mother's efforts. By contrast a mother monkey doesn't actively carry her baby at all, the baby has to cling on to her itself.</p> <p>In both analogies the mother is being used to represent God and the baby a human being seeking liberation. That means of liberation for those people with a cat mother view of God is simply to trust that God will get them there. This is a view of God as personal and active, in relationship with devotees. It can also be understood as a deterministic view of liberation. The means of liberation for those with a monkey mother view of God is to make personal efforts to earn or achieve liberation. This is a view of God as impersonal, a source of foundation and strength perhaps but not in a personal relationship of any kind with worshippers. This is sometimes described in terms of the question of whether it is human works (monkey) or divine grace (cat) which is the path to liberation.</p> <p>Vaishnavism is most strongly associated with the cat analogy and Shaivism with the monkey, but these are not absolute positions and elements of both views can be found within each tradition. Similarly the cat analogy could be seen as describing the bhakti path, with the monkey analogy karma or jnana.</p>	10

Question	Answer	Marks
3(c)	<p>'Ignorance of their true nature is the only thing keeping people trapped in samsara.' Discuss.</p> <p>AO2 – Analysis and Evaluation. Response will be marked according to the 15 mark level descriptors (AO2).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>While there is generally an agreement across the various schools of Hindu philosophy that souls are trapped within samsara and will be continually reborn until they achieve liberation there is variation regarding how that liberation can be achieved and what it is that keeps the atman trapped in the meantime. While some schools might agree that it is ignorance which holds the atman prisoner there might be disagreement as to what that ignorance is about. There will be other schools which will attribute the entanglement of the atman to something else and there may also be Hindus who regard a number of reasons as true.</p> <p>For some Hindus ignorance of the true nature of the atman is the main reason for its entanglement in samsara. This is generally explained in terms of the atman and Brahman being ultimately the same but the atman being deluded about that by the distractions and experiences of the material world. As long as the atman believes it is distinct from Brahman and/or that the material world is ultimately real then it cannot achieve liberation. This could be seen as being ignorant of their true nature, but it could also be described more broadly as being ignorant of the true nature of reality or as being deluded or entangled by maya. There are also different views on what it means to say that atman is not different to Brahman.</p> <p>For other Hindus being trapped in samsara is caused by attachment, either to the material world itself or to the fruits of one's actions in the form of past or present karma. The former is connected with maya and could therefore be considered as ignorance while the latter is less clearly connected with knowledge and ignorance. It could however be argued that to detach from karma requires knowledge of the way things truly are.</p> <p>People have different spiritual abilities, aptitudes and tendencies and these are what create either the desire for liberation or a continued entanglement with maya.</p>	15

Question	Answer	Marks
4(a)	<p>‘Unreality is the world of the five senses; it is materialism; it is the illusion that this world is real in the sense that we can enjoy it forever. Samsara means coming and going, and includes the idea that our real self, the atman which is spiritual and non-material, is imprisoned in our body and is destined to pass from one body to another until we become aware of this fact and do something about it.’</p> <p>Summarise what the above passage says about the cycle of samsara.</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and Understanding. Response will be marked according to the 5 mark level descriptors (AO1).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>Samsara is the name for the physical/material world into which atman are born within a body. The atman is the true self and is not material; the body is part of the world and so it is like a material prison for the atman. This world is not, ultimately, real because it is not eternal, but it may feel real, and this illusion is what keeps souls trapped within it. The atman will keep being reborn in different bodies until it understands that the world isn’t truly real and takes action to free itself from the illusion.</p>	5
4(b)	<p>Explain the relationship between sanchita, prarabdha and agami karma.</p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and Understanding. Response will be marked according to the 10 mark level descriptors (AO1).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>Sanchita (accumulated) karma is the sum of all past karmas, whether positive or negative, from all births prior to the current one.</p> <p>From this pool of karma a selection is made which will be expressed throughout the current lifetime. This is prarabdha (ripened) karma, which creates the circumstances in which we find ourselves – both the things which happen and the body and situation within which we encounter those things. None of these things can be changed or avoided, they must be experienced and then the karma which created them is exhausted.</p> <p>In encountering the things determined by prarabdha karma choices have to be made and actions taken. These create new karma, to be added to the pool of sanchita karma and played out in future births. This is known as agami karma, meaning karma that is yet to come. It can only be created during human lifetimes.</p> <p>These three parts are not different forms of karma but rather different aspects of the same thing. All karma is created by human actions and choices, and all is played out across human rebirths within samsara. These three different strands help to explain how that process works.</p>	10

Question	Answer	Marks
4(c)	<p>Assess the claim that thinking about the karma one is creating will prevent liberation.</p> <p>AO2 – Analysis and Evaluation. Response will be marked according to the 15 mark level descriptors (AO2).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>Most Hindus would agree that being born into samsara, in a human body, is the result of karma. Prarabdha karma shapes the life being lived out and agami karma is created throughout that lifetime and will affect future births. Understanding this might contribute to the decisions being made that create agami karma. Popular understandings of karma recognise that it can be positive or negative, and that good actions create good consequences. Therefore, thinking about the karma that will be created by your actions might result in successively better rebirths.</p> <p>However, no amount of positive karma can, by itself, result in liberation. Thinking about karma and the karmic results of a given action is, in effect, being attached to karma. Attachment to karma means that one continues to create it and karma keeps the atman entangled. For some Hindus freedom from this is achieved through bhakti (devotion). Devotion to a deity can result in liberation through the grace of the deity (anugraha, kripa or prasada can all be translated as grace or favour). Being truly devoted seems likely to preclude anxiety about personal karma, as the focus would be entirely on serving the deity. Jnana yoga is another path to liberation which is not primarily focused on karma although the various paths to liberation are not mutually exclusive.</p> <p>Among the paths to liberation is karma yoga, the path of (unselfish) action. On the face of it this would seem to require the individual to think about karma, but it is a path which removes the attachment to karma from the process. Following the karma marga involves performing dharmic actions without any attachment to the fruits of them or allowing the results to manipulate the choices being made. The individual should be neutral about outcomes and/or rewards. This is nishkama karma, desireless action, and it does not create new karma. By contrast, actions performed with a concern for the fruits of them would be sakama karma; such actions might be good, but they will still create new karma and so cannot lead to liberation. Nishkama karma could be described as not thinking about karma since actions should be motivated by dharma. However, to understand this path some thinking about karma must be required, at least in the form of reaching an understanding of the teachings about following this path, for example those of Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita.</p>	15