

# Cambridge International AS & A Level

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**HINDUISM****9487/03**

Paper 3 Hinduism: Philosophy and Religion

**May/June 2024****MARK SCHEME**

Maximum Mark: 60

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**Published**

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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.

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This document consists of **18** 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 descriptions 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 Levels of response descriptions

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 teachings, beliefs and practices, including relevance for individual Hindus and communities.

#### AO2: Analysis and evaluation

Analyse, evaluate and discuss evidence, points of view and issues in Hinduism.

### Generic marking principles

- (a) Examiners should use the performance summary statements at the top of the descriptors to help to identify a level which matches the candidate's response. However, the final decision on the band and the mark within the band should be made on the basis of **all** the descriptors in the level and not primarily using the performance summary statement.
- (b) Examiners should start at the lowest level, 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 level 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.
- (c) 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.
- (d) 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.

## Section A AO1 12 mark questions

Level	AO1 Knowledge and understanding	Marks
Level 4	<b>Accurate knowledge with good understanding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses a range of detailed, accurate and relevant knowledge.</li> <li>• Demonstrates understanding through a well-developed response.</li> <li>• Fully addresses the question.</li> <li>• Good understanding of the wider context, if relevant.</li> </ul>	10–12
Level 3	<b>Mostly accurate knowledge with some understanding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses a range of mostly accurate and relevant knowledge.</li> <li>• Demonstrates understanding through a developed response.</li> <li>• Addresses most aspects of the question.</li> <li>• Some engagement with the wider context, if relevant.</li> </ul>	7–9
Level 2	<b>Partially accurate knowledge with limited understanding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses a range of knowledge which may be partially accurate.</li> <li>• Demonstrates limited understanding through a partially developed response.</li> <li>• Addresses some aspects of the question.</li> <li>• Attempts to engage with the wider context, if relevant.</li> </ul>	4–6
Level 1	<b>Basic knowledge and basic understanding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies a limited range of knowledge which may not be accurate.</li> <li>• Demonstrates basic understanding through a limited response.</li> <li>• Response is relevant to the topic, but does not directly address the question.</li> <li>• Little or no reference to the wider context, if relevant.</li> </ul>	1–3
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

## Section A AO2 18 mark questions

Level	AO2 Analysis and evaluation	Marks
Level 5	<p><b>Thorough discussion supported with evidence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyses the importance and/or strength of different arguments/points of view.</li> <li>Uses accurate evidence to support a well-structured discussion.</li> <li>Coherent conclusion to the question which evaluates knowledge and points of view and assesses alternative conclusions.</li> </ul>	16–18
Level 4	<p><b>Coherent discussion supported with evidence</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discusses different arguments/points of view in some detail.</li> <li>Uses accurate evidence to support a structured discussion.</li> <li>Coherent conclusion to the question which evaluates knowledge and points of view.</li> </ul>	12–15
Level 3	<p><b>Clear discussion with some support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognises different arguments/points of view and discusses at least one in some detail.</li> <li>Uses some evidence to support discussion.</li> <li>Clear conclusion to the question which is linked to a range of knowledge and points of view.</li> </ul>	8–11
Level 2	<p><b>Attempts a discussion with limited support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outlines one or more argument/point of view.</li> <li>Uses supporting evidence for one or more relevant point. The support may not be wholly relevant or accurate.</li> <li>Attempts a conclusion to the question which is linked to knowledge and/or a point of view.</li> </ul>	4–7
Level 1	<p><b>Basic response with a point of view</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>States a point of view.</li> <li>Little or no supporting evidence.</li> <li>May attempt a basic conclusion, which may not directly address the question.</li> </ul>	1–3
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

## Section B Essay Marking grid

Level	AO1 Knowledge and Understanding	Marks	Level	AO2 Analysis and Evaluation	Marks
Level 4	<b>Accurate knowledge with good understanding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses a range of detailed, accurate and relevant knowledge.</li> <li>Demonstrates understanding through a well-developed response.</li> <li>Fully addresses the question.</li> <li>Good understanding of the wider context, if relevant.</li> </ul>	10–12	Level 5	<b>Thorough discussion supported with evidence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyses the importance and/or strength of different arguments/points of view.</li> <li>Uses accurate evidence to support a well-structured discussion.</li> <li>Coherent conclusion to the question which evaluates knowledge and points of view and assesses alternative conclusions.</li> </ul>	16–18
Level 3	<b>Mostly accurate knowledge with some understanding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses a range of mostly accurate and relevant knowledge.</li> <li>Demonstrates understanding through a developed response.</li> <li>Addresses most aspects of the question.</li> <li>Some engagement with the wider context, if relevant.</li> </ul>	7–9	Level 4	<b>Coherent discussion supported with evidence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discusses different arguments/points of view in some detail.</li> <li>Uses accurate evidence to support a structured discussion.</li> <li>Coherent conclusion to the question which evaluates knowledge and points of view.</li> </ul>	12–15
Level 2	<b>Partially accurate knowledge with limited understanding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uses a range of knowledge which may be partially accurate.</li> <li>Demonstrates limited understanding through a partially developed response.</li> <li>Addresses some aspects of the question.</li> <li>Attempts to engage with the wider context, if relevant.</li> </ul>	4–6	Level 3	<b>Clear discussion with some support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognises different arguments/points of view and discusses at least one in some detail.</li> <li>Uses some evidence to support discussion.</li> <li>Clear conclusion to the question which is linked to a range of knowledge and points of view.</li> </ul>	8–11

Level	AO1 Knowledge and Understanding	Marks	Level	AO2 Analysis and Evaluation	Marks
Level 1	<b>Basic knowledge and basic understanding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifies a limited range of knowledge which may not be accurate.</li> <li>Demonstrates basic understanding through a limited response.</li> <li>Response is relevant to the topic, but does not directly address the question.</li> <li>Little or no reference to the wider context, if relevant.</li> </ul>	1–3	Level 2	<b>Attempts a discussion with limited support</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outlines one or more argument/point of view.</li> <li>Uses supporting evidence for one or more relevant point. The support may not be wholly relevant or accurate.</li> <li>Attempts a conclusion to the question which is linked to knowledge and/or a point of view.</li> </ul>	4–7
Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0	Level 1	<b>Basic response with a point of view</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>States a point of view.</li> <li>Little or no supporting evidence.</li> <li>May attempt a basic conclusion, which may not directly address the question.</li> </ul>	1–3
			Level 0	No relevant material to credit.	0

## Section A

Question	Answer	Marks
1(a)	<p><b>Compare the teachings of Advaita Vedanta and Dvaita Vedanta on the relationship of Brahman with the jiva atman.</b></p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and understanding. Responses will be marked according to the 12 mark level descriptors (AO1).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>'Vedanta' means 'end of the Vedas' and it is used to describe philosophies that are based on ideas and concepts found in the Upanishads. Dvaita (dualism) and Advaita (non-Dualism) are both philosophical systems within this category. All the Vedantic schools are concerned with the nature of Brahman, understanding it variously as the universal soul, the Absolute, the Paramatman, the Supreme Being and so on. The philosophies also seek to explain how the material world and the jiva atman (individual selves) found within it are related to their specific understanding of Brahman. A general comparison of the nature of Brahman and the jiva atman might identify that the former is all-pervading while the jiva atman is not. Other distinctions vary according to the philosophical school but the jiva atman is usually understood as dependent upon or connected to Brahman in some way.</p> <p>Dvaita and Advaita differ in how they understand the nature of Brahman and, consequently, have different views on how Brahman is connected with the jiva atman: put simply, Advaita Vedanta teaches that liberation is dependent on the realisation that the jiva atman (individual self) is identical with Brahman; Dvaita teaches that the jiva atman is wholly distinct from and dependent upon Brahman and achieves liberation through total devotion.</p> <p>Madhva, the founder of the Dvaita tradition, was responding directly to the Advaita Vedanta in his philosophy. Dvaita, which means 'dual' holds that Brahman is the Creator of all things but is of a completely different substance to its creation. The world and the jiva atman are real in the same way that Brahman is real, but they will always be separate. In fact, Dvaita teaches that there are five eternal and real differences between things. Those five differences are between: the individual jiva atman and ishvara; matter and ishvara; different individual jiva atman; matter and jiva atman; different types of matter. The individual jiva atman was created by Brahman to be distinct from all other jiva atman and also from Brahman. That distinction is ontological and eternal.</p> <p>However, Brahman in this school of thought is understood in a way similar to monotheistic views of God in other religious traditions. For Madhva this God is Vishnu and he is an almighty, eternal, all knowing and compassionate being, capable of personal connection with devotees. This is important as Vishnu's grace is ultimately required to achieve liberation and individual selves offer Vishnu devotion (bhakti) as part of this process. Moksha is believed to be a distinct experience for each individual atman but, broadly speaking, it takes the form of an eternity of bliss in the presence of Vishnu.</p>	12

Question	Answer	Marks
1(a)	<p>Shankara's Advaita Vedanta is non-dualist and emphasises jnana as the path to liberation. According to Advaita, Brahman is the sole possessor of absolute reality. All other things are unreal in any ultimate sense and the individual jiva atman is trapped in the cycle of rebirth by the delusion that this is not so. While the jiva atman regards itself as a distinct and real entity it is subject to other delusions such as individual ego, pain, fear, birth or death.</p> <p>But once maya is dispelled the realisation that the jiva atman is not different to Brahman is possible. It is this realisation that constitutes liberation according to Advaita. Brahman is understood as nirguna (without attributes) and therefore indescribable. Anything that might appear to be a form of Brahman is, like the perception of a separate jiva atman, the result of maya. Moksha itself is not a place or a state of being because the jiva atman has understood that it is identical with Brahman. It no longer exists as an individual entity.</p> <p>Madhva criticised the use of maya in Advaita, suggesting it makes no sense for Brahman to deceive itself. Instead, he believed that maya was a tool used by Vishnu to encourage humans to seek God, emphasising the idea of a personal and reciprocal relationship between distinct beings. For Madhva devotion was the key to liberation and Vishnu has the absolute power to save or damn the jiva atman.</p>	
1(b)	<p><b>Evaluate the view that devotion is important in all the Vedanta philosophies.</b></p> <p>AO2 – Analysis and evaluation. Responses will be marked according to the 18 mark level descriptors (AO2).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>There are a number of different Vedantic schools, the most well-known being Advaita Vedanta, Vishistadvaita Vedanta, and Dvaita Vedanta. They are all based on interpretation of the Vedas, but they have different ways of understanding Brahman and atman, and it is therefore likely that they have different ideas about the role of devotion (bhakti). Bhakti is not simply about showing dedication to the divine, but it can also be seen as a means of removing ignorance and therefore loosening the ties which bind the atman to samsara.</p> <p>It might be argued that Advaita Vedanta has no place for devotion at all. The foundation of the philosophy, the non-difference of atman from Brahman, means that jnana is the path recommended for achieving liberation. It is necessary to realise that what appears to be diversity is a delusion (maya) and this is best achieved through scriptural study with the guidance of a guru. However, that does not mean an Advaita perspective has no place for devotion whatsoever. It does recognise that not everyone is spiritually ready to follow the jnana marga and, while devotion to individual deities might ultimately enmesh the atman further in maya it could also serve as a first step towards understanding Brahman as the</p>	18

Question	Answer	Marks
	<p>Absolute. The Smarta Tradition, which is rooted in Advaita philosophy, performs panchayatana puja, worship of five deities as a means of realising nirguna Brahman.</p> <p>The five deities are all equal and represent the idea of saguna Brahman, which is seen as an interim step before realising the truth.</p> <p>However, the Advaita tradition would value bhakti only as a means of pointing the way to jnana, it cannot lead to liberation by itself and therefore it is seen as of lesser importance.</p> <p>Both Vishistadvaita Vedanta and Dvaita Vedanta give more prominence to bhakti because they have different views of the nature of Brahman. According to Vishistadvaita the jiva atman is the same substance as Brahman and depends upon Brahman to exist, however there is a difference between them that goes beyond an illusory difference created by maya. Brahman is understood as consisting of different modes of existence, with Ishvara as the supreme being who is both immanent within the material world, which is achit (unconscious), and an in dweller in chit (conscious) beings, as well as being wholly transcendent. Brahman is therefore one reality that is characterised by multiplicity. This means that it is possible for the atman to have a relationship with saguna Brahman through devotion. Saguna Brahman is not seen as a lesser form or a partial understanding.</p> <p>While it could be argued that understanding the metaphysics proposed by Vishistadvaita philosophy would require jnana it is nevertheless the case that Ramanuja considered bhakti to be primary. His position was that total self-surrender (prapatti) is the sole means by which moksha is attained. The devotee must realise their dependence and offer all their thoughts, words and actions to Ishvara (who was Vishnu, for Ramanuja) so that, at the end of their life, they will receive God's grace (prasada). It is this that ultimately releases them from samsara.</p> <p>Dvaita Vedanta also places a high level of importance on devotion. Brahman is the creator of the atman, and the atman is dependent upon Brahman, so devotion is therefore an appropriate expression of respect and thanks. Bhakti both removes that which binds the jiva atman to samsara and enables realisation of the truth; maya is a tool, which encourages the jiva atman in this direction. However, bhakti is not the only thing required to achieve liberation. Madhva emphasised the need for effort on the part of the jiva atman to overcome maya and realise its true nature. Maya is the tool of a loving deity, but it cannot be overcome solely through devotion to that deity. Since all jiva atman are individual and distinct from one another as well as from God they must be worthy of liberation in order to attain it. This involves all three of the margas identified in the Bhagavad Gita – karma, jnana and bhakti – so that the jiva atman achieves understanding of its true nature and its dependence upon God, performs virtuous and detached actions in the world and is wholly devoted to God.</p> <p>In general devotion seems likely to have the most importance within philosophical traditions that accept the possibility of a personal form of deity as an appreciative recipient of devotional activity, but none of the schools dismisses it entirely.</p>	

Question	Answer	Marks
2(a)	<p><b>Explain why Hinduism might be described as a pluralistic religion.</b></p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and understanding. Responses will be marked according to the 12 mark level descriptors (AO1).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>A pluralistic religion is one that believes that other religions, traditions and belief systems provide ways to reach the same end as it does, however that ultimate aim is understood – salvation, transcendence, heaven etc. Specifically, this means that, if Hinduism is a pluralistic religion, then it would accept that followers of traditions as diverse as Judaism, Bahai, Zoroastrianism and Shinto could achieve moksha by following their own traditions with no need to convert to Hinduism or to adapt their beliefs or practices in any way.</p> <p>Hinduism is often presented as essentially or naturally pluralistic by scholars, for various reasons. Hinduism is a diverse religion, in terms of both its associated beliefs and practices, and these evolved through time taking different forms. The various philosophical schools (darshanas) encompass every theistic position from atheism to pantheism, all justified as a Hindu perspective. There is also a variety of margas (paths) available for practitioners, including bhakti (devotion), jnana (wisdom) and karma (action). It is also true that Hinduism does not seek to convert others through missionary or proselytising behaviour. And, in the modern world, Hinduism has also found adherents outside its traditional social structures and geographical locations, arguably challenging any suggestion that one must be born a Hindu.</p> <p>From the practitioner's point of view, liberation can be sought through meditation, murti-puja, asceticism, and a variety of ritual activities devoted to any of a multiplicity of gods and goddesses, understood in very different ways. The diversity of belief and practice makes it possible to ask whether it is in fact accurate or justifiable to describe Hinduism as a single religion at all. It might be more appropriate to refer to Hinduisms, as a reflection both of diversity and of shared origins and concepts. If it is a single religion, then its great diversity makes it hard to argue that it is not a pluralistic one.</p> <p>Pluralism is not simply a term imposed by outside observers of the diversity of Hinduism. The Rig Veda, the oldest sacred Hindu text, declares that 'truth is one, though sages call it by many names', which can certainly be interpreted as supporting a pluralistic view or, at the very least, opposing the idea that there is a single right way to understand the truth.</p> <p>Hinduism has also been presented as pluralistic by influential Hindus, who have influenced the development and understanding of the religion in the contemporary world. Ramakrishna Paramahansa described himself as having practised all religions and found them to lead to the same God; he said that true devotion goes beyond any form of sectarian worship. Swami Vivekananda, as a disciple of Ramakrishna, described Hinduism as accepting all religions as true because all religion shares the same goal of realising the Divine within ourselves. Ram Mohan Roy considered monotheism to be the</p>	12

Question	Answer	Marks
	<p>central message of the Vedas and saw both Christianity and Islam as expressions of the same ideal. M K Gandhi regarded the New Testament as a whole and the Sermon on the Mount in particular as a scriptural work comparable in its significance to the Bhagavad Gita.</p>	
2(b)	<p><b>Assess the claim that the question of what is or is not astika Hinduism is <u>not</u> important to most Hindus.</b></p> <p>AO2 – Analysis and evaluation. Responses will be marked according to the 18 mark level descriptors (AO2).</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>Using the terms astika and nastika is common in contemporary religious studies to classify philosophical schools, but there is not an absolute consensus as to the application. In the context of Hinduism, a common usage is to regard 'astika' as meaning 'orthodox', a term that indicates conformity to the traditional or most widely accepted tenets of practice and belief. The opposite to astika is 'nastika', meaning 'heterodox', or a position not in accordance with the orthodox view. The two terms are thus often used to differentiate those philosophical schools that consider the Vedas to be the primary source of authority, the foundation of the religion, and of divine origin from those that do not.</p> <p>The Manusmriti explicitly gives this definition of nastika, although it does not define astika and its stance on issues such as the usefulness of ritual can be seen as a selective interpretation of specific Vedic texts. The complex nature of the Vedas, composed of many layers of writings and interpretations compiled over centuries, means that simply calling them authoritative is more likely to open discussion than to close it down. This can also be supported with a consideration of the very different Vedanta philosophies, which support both a position of absolute dualism and a position of absolute monism from the same texts.</p> <p>Relating the issue of what is astika to the status of the Vedas results in the identification of six astika schools of philosophy, including Vedanta and Samkhya, and four nastika schools, including Buddhism and Jainism. One possible point of discussion is whether the nastika schools can be considered Hindu or whether this is a more general categorisation of philosophies of Indian origin. In the latter case, whether something is excluded from being considered Hindu might be of great personal concern to someone who identifies as a Hindu but also follows a nastika path.</p> <p>The status of the Vedas is not the only basis for using the terms as a classification. 'Astika' derives from a Sanskrit word that affirms 'it exists' and it can therefore be used in the context of the acceptance or rejection of specific beliefs, such as belief in Brahman or God or belief in the atman. These different understandings do not always align – for example, Samkhya philosophy is both non-theistic and based on Vedic philosophy – which could be used to argue that this means of dividing philosophies is unhelpful. The terms are less commonly used this way in a specifically Hindu context. Since Vedic</p>	18

Question	Answer	Marks
	<p>ideas can be used to support a great variety of ways to understand the nature of the divine classifying thought on such a basis is perhaps considered less helpful than using attitudes to the foundational texts themselves.</p> <p>It might also be noted that questions of classification, and the systems of thought that are being classified, are often of great scholarly concern and interest without being particularly significant to most practitioners of the religion. The core question of what is and is not astika is rooted in Brahminical Hinduism with its reliance on texts. It is therefore just not relevant to most ordinary practitioners, who are likely to be more concerned with the question of what is or is not dharmic. Similarly, although astika and nastika are presented in this context as opposites there are also many common elements and shared concepts between traditions classified on both sides, including: concepts of karma, samsara, liberation, importance of lineage and the role of guru. These shared elements reflect the nature of Hinduism as a non-doctrinal, dharmic tradition that is more concerned with practice than dogma.</p>	

## Section B

Question	Answer	Marks
3	<p><b>Evaluate the claim that 'Hinduism' is not an appropriate name for the religion.</b></p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and understanding AO2 – Analysis and evaluation Responses will be marked according to the level descriptors.</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>'Hinduism' is a term commonly used in the context of religious studies to identify as a single religion the diverse collection of practices, traditions, beliefs etc. originating (and still widely practised) in what is now called India. These diverse traditions share social, cultural, theological, and historical links and also share a range of concepts and values to a sufficient extent to enable many scholars to consider them, in the broadest possible terms, a unified whole. The origins of the religion are unknown, but it is certainly ancient and has evolved over time in ways that resist classification. There is no certain founder or single story of the religion's origins, nor is there a single agreed source of scriptural authority or set of commandments; these elements are often regarded as essential in identifying 'a religion', however, Hinduism is not the only tradition which encompasses great diversity.</p> <p>Given that Hinduism is so diverse, and its origins are both ancient and uncertain, even scholars of religion dedicated wholly to the study of Hinduism are unlikely to have a clear picture of every possible form it might take; therefore, many people would add that Hinduism is the religion of people who identify as Hindus. This tautology is helpful in that it allows for Hinduism to be taught about in schools and universities and represented in popular culture, but it is also problematic. Some of the difficulties with it arise from the sheer diversity that this definition encompasses, including apparently oppositional or contradictory perspectives on such important matters as the nature of divinity and the relationship of the divine to humanity.</p> <p>Even if the question of whether this is one religion or many is side-lined, the term 'Hinduism' remains problematic for some.</p> <p>The word Hindu was chosen, by outside powers, to describe people living in the region of the Indus River. It is not certain when it was first used to refer to religion rather than geographical region and the religion today is not restricted to a single geographical area. It is clear that, prior to the various colonisations, the peoples of India did not classify themselves purely by belief or religion (a term that is, itself, problematic), but also by region, jati, language and cultural identity. It can therefore be argued that the term originated as a means of simplifying and therefore controlling local practices that new rulers struggled to grasp in the way the original population understood them. This would weight the term with oppression and denial of self-expression and identity. It is also worth noting that, in spite of the geographical association with the name, the religion itself is practised in different forms across Asia.</p>	30

Question	Answer	Marks
3	<p>However, the various traditions within Hinduism could be said to share a core set of principles or concepts, such as karma, dharma and moksha. They also share many of the features of the more common definitions of religion: belief relating to God, gods or an ultimate reality; scriptures, including some considered as of divine origin; ritual practices and a soteriological aim for living a good life. Vivekananda strove to present Hinduism as a single world religion at the Parliament of World Religions in Chicago in 1893, presenting it as an ancient and coherent religion that was at least the equal of any of the other world religions represented at the Parliament. This could be seen as a response to colonial attitudes, which is no longer needed in the modern world as practitioners of this religion have the right to name their own practice in their own terms.</p> <p>It might also be noted that his views of what Hinduism is were, and are, no more universally agreed with than any other Hindu philosophy; his presentation of Hinduism was also, at the time, not popular with his co-religionists.</p> <p>The argument of self-expression is supported by many people who do identify as Hindus and name their religion as Hinduism. But there are also many people who reject this term, preferring to use Sanatana Dharma (Eternal Dharma), which places the tradition outside of the confines of time, or, less commonly, Vaidika Dharma, meaning the dharma relating to the Vedas. Dharma is, itself, a complex term, which can be translated into English as 'religion', but which encompasses a much wider range of meanings as well. This could be seen as confusing or eroding the place of this tradition among the world's religions, but it could also be seen as highlighting the problems with that classification itself.</p> <p>It might also be noted that the political Hindutva movement seeks to define Hinduism as a cultural, and political identity, regarding it as the core feature of Indian identity. Hindutva means 'Hinduness' although, strictly speaking, it refers to a political ideology rather than a religious affiliation. The similarity of the two terms, and the political promotion of this understanding of Hinduism, might be used to support the view that the term is loaded and/or unhelpful as the name for such a set of diverse and complex religious traditions.</p>	

Question	Answer	Marks
4	<p><b>Evaluate the significance of Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga for contemporary Hindus.</b></p> <p>AO1 – Knowledge and understanding  AO2 – Analysis and evaluation  Responses will be marked according to the level descriptors.</p> <p>Candidates might refer to some of the following:</p> <p>The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali address both the theory and practice of yoga. They are considered an astika (orthodox) philosophy, therefore building upon traditional reliance on/respect for texts. They are also rooted in ancient traditions of practice, which could be said to enhance their importance for contemporary Hindus. Through the methodologies explained in the text an individual both cultivates moral virtues and progresses through increasingly complex meditative techniques, which will eventually result in kaivalya – the realisation that the individual purusha (self) is different to everything else. This blissful state is described with the phrase 'citta vritti nirodha', the cessation of mental modifications, which is what enables the perception of one's true nature.</p> <p>One system for achieving this state, and perhaps the best-known form of yoga in the sutras, is referred to as the Eight Limbs, which gives it the name 'Ashtanga'. Ashtanga Vinyasa Yoga is also the name given to a system of yoga as exercise; although this system is presented as being based on Patanjali's system, its popularity outside India and the focus on the physical asanas could lead to concerns about cultural appropriation of Hindu philosophy, lending Patanjali's actual teachings a greater significance for some Hindus.</p> <p>The general approach of Ashtanga Yoga could be seen as an antidote to the frenetic pace of modern life or a means of coping with it, perhaps giving it a central importance to Hindus trying to balance religious practice with the everyday world. The fact that there is no requirement to worship a specific deity, or indeed a deity at all, might also enhance the path's appeal to a contemporary individual, allowing them freedom of choice in regard to belief while maintaining a sense of connection to an ancient spiritual tradition.</p> <p>In Patanjali's Ashtanga system the Eight Limbs progress from the outer areas of the self, the body, through to the innermost parts of the mind. They begin with yamas (disciplines) which are the moral principles an individual should live by; they name things to be avoided. The second limb, niyamas (restraints), consists of things the individual should do. Each of these helps the individual reach a state where the craving for external joys and pleasures ceases. The third limb, asana (postures) and the fourth, pranayama (breathing) are concerned with the physical body, ensuring it is healthy, comfortable and under the conscious control of the individual so that physical needs can't intrude on the desired mental state. All these external limbs together lead to a healthy and moral life and this could be considered significant as it benefits both the individual and society. Many of the yamas and niyamas are common across different schools of Hindu thought, suggesting they are important more generally.</p>	30

Question	Answer	Marks
4	<p>The remaining four limbs are more concerned with internal processes. Pratyahara (withdrawal) is the process of drawing the mind away from sensory experiences to focus on self-knowledge and the inner world.</p> <p>This might be the hardest of the limbs to achieve, given the demands of modern society, and this could be seen as enhancing its significance for those who are able to achieve it, while those who struggle might regard it as less so than other limbs. Dharana (concentration) means focusing the mind on a single point without drifting from it. Dhyana (contemplation) takes this a step further into a meditative observation of the object in all its forms and possibilities without judgement or presumption. The ultimate state of samadhi (absorption) is when awareness that there is a person meditating disappears and only the object of that meditation is present. The ultimate aim of this process is to achieve liberation, which is the central aim of all Hinduism's many different paths. Patanjali's yoga is one path among many, which makes it possible to argue that it is neither more nor less significant than any other path – of great importance to those who choose it and of less importance to those who choose another. While it is intended to be a path that is accessible to all the practical reality might be that it is not for many people, and this might impact on how significant it is felt to be.</p> <p>The Yoga Sutras also describe the less well-known Kriya yoga (yoga of action). This yoga rests on three pillars: tapas in the form of self-discipline and austere living; svadhyaya, meaning self-study in the form of personal reading of the Vedas, and devotion to Ishvara. This less formal and structured form of practice could be descriptive of many individuals who are simply trying to lead a good Hindu life without being drawn to the highly systematised Ashtanga.</p> <p>While it is less well known than Ashtanga the fact that Patanjali included it could be used to argue for the importance of his teaching, since he recognised that a single system is unlikely to work for everyone; Patanjali's Yoga Sutras are regarded as foundational knowledge for any teacher of yoga, regardless of the system they actually teach.</p>	