

HINDUISM

Paper 2055/01
Paper 1

Key messages

To score high marks candidates needed to appreciate the command word being used such as 'how' or 'why'

Candidates need to refer to the mark allocation to gauge the amount of time and depth their answers should contain

Higher weighting questions required candidates to, not only show more than one point of view but to demonstrate a critical response and be critical of their own concluding arguments

Question that contained more exploitation and critical discussion generally gained the higher marks.

General comments

Overall there were some very good answers. Some candidates really engaged with the paper and were able to apply, not only accurate facts but critical discussion and evaluation. There could however be improvements; some candidates did not focus on the requirement of the question but wrote what they had prepared. Many candidates did not score maximum marks as they could not understand the way questions were framed and ignored the key command words 'how' and 'why'. It was evident those candidates who paid attention to the mark allocation of questions. Others wrote lengthy answers for questions carrying three marks. Parts **(d)** of questions showed many candidates could give only descriptive answers without any critical engagement. Candidates who were able to score the highest marks in part **(d)** were able to display critical evaluation.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Both **Questions 1** and **2** were evenly popular with candidates.

Question 1

This was a popular question to answer. In part **(a)** candidates were able to list/name different objects held by Lord Ganesh and most responses explained what those objects represented. For part **(b)** candidates were able to explain Ganesha's nature as symbolized by his broken tusk. In part **(c)** many candidates gave valid reasons why Ganesha might be worshipped by a Hindu before an important event such as during the construction of a house, marriage, interviews, examinations, etc. In part **(d)** candidates gave arguments about why a worshipper of Ganesha will have no problems in life. Some candidates scored the highest marks in this section by using critical engagement and evidence such as by worshiping other gods, a worshipper can overcome problems in life.

Question 2

This question was popular. Candidates were able to tackle parts **(a)**, **(b)** and **(c)** easily. Only part **(d)** was answered by some candidates without critical engagement. Many candidates were able to identify the names of the Trimurti, Shiva and Brahma. They also explained the significance of the conch of Lord Vishnu as the voice of God and the sound of creation. Candidates also gave the reasons why Hindu gods are not powerful without their female consorts. Those responses which only gave a description of the role of different consorts such as Parvati, Durga, etc. were unable to gain the higher marks. Some candidates managed to bring a critical discussion in this part of the question which enabled them to score top marks.

Section B

Both questions were thoroughly attempted as the section contains popular topics.

Question 3

Most candidates were able to state the correct meaning of Narasimha as 'Man-Lion'. (ii) This part of the question proved tricky to quite a few candidates who confused the term 'Vamana' with 'Varaha', hence producing inaccurate answers. In part (b) candidates who produced correct answers correctly identified the essence of the 'Narasimha avatara', leading to the highest marks. Those who were unable to provide the correct details of the story could not score the top marks. Candidates were expected to explain the purpose of Vishnu's avatara with a good range of relevant information and a high level of detail development regarding the very basis of the question. Most responses were vague and some candidates only briefly explained the purpose of Vishnu's descent on earth. Candidates who were able to write about the purpose of Vishnu's descent on earth gained higher marks. In part (d) there were a large number of candidates who gave good descriptive answers of the avatars in human form (Krishna, Rama and Buddha) but did not achieve high marks due to limited evaluation. Good answers consisted of both human and non-human forms of avatars supported with critical engagement in different spheres.

Question 4

Most candidates were able to identify 'Yashoda' as the correct answer while others incorrectly stated 'Devki'. As expected, the vast majority of candidates produced the correct answer 'The flute'. In part (b) candidates were expected to outline the story of Krishna as the 'butter-thief' identifying the mischievous pranks; breaking of pots, stealing of butter, the naughtiness of Krishna, the motherly love of Yashoda among others. Most candidates delivered relevant points with enough development. In part (c) quite a few candidates were confused about the question being asked and gave answers that lacked confidence. Many responses were rather vague as they could not explain Krishna's purpose in appearing as Arjuna's charioteer. This part of the question remained one of the least scoring questions on the whole paper. In part (d) those candidates who were able to analyse, evaluate and critically engage with the question set gained the highest marks. Candidates could improve by examining different views and supporting the arguments presented with accurate evidence; as reference to modern lifestyle, the relevance of scriptures, spiritual masters and other guiding principles.

Section C

The most popular question of this section remains **Question 6** and it was well-attempted.

Question 5

In part (a) the meaning of the term 'pilgrimage' was well identified as 'journey to a holy place'. Answers varied from 'sacrifice' to 'walking to a place to pray', and marks were awarded accordingly. Part (ii) answers such as, 'to attain Salvation, to make a sacrifice, to fulfill a promise or to wash their sins' clearly indicated that candidates understand the various reasons as to why Hindus go on pilgrimage. In part (b) it seems candidates are well engaged in giving and receiving gifts during festivals as most of them successfully stated three reasons viz. 'showing respect, love and concern, as a tradition, as offerings, etc.' for gift exchange thus, scoring full marks. In part (c) most candidates could easily give a descriptive answer about how Hindus might observe Cavadi, showing clearly engagement in fasting, preparation of the Cavadi, pilgrimage and prayers. A few answers concentrated on the origin of Cavadi, which was not required, leading to only a few marks being awarded. The responses for part (d) which gained higher marks consisted of viewpoints showing the importance and significance of both fasting and joyful celebration at Hindu festivals along with examples and evidence for each viewpoint. Good answers also referred to festivals of other religions such as Islam and Christianity. Those scoring average marks did not sustain their arguments and rather concentrated on details about fasting and celebrations during festivals.

Question 6

In part **(a)** many candidates were successful in giving two ways about how Hindus might celebrate Ganesh Chaturthi. Most candidates scored the two marks. There were a few candidates who could not understand that the answer required only two short phrases and gave a detailed account about the 'how' aspect of the question, thus wasting their time. In part **(b)** many candidates could easily identify one origin of the Maha Shivaratri festival and could bring some development in the story as well. In part **(c)** this question was an 'explain why' and candidates were expected to explain the reasons for which Hindus give importance to the festival. Many candidates focused on the 'how' aspect of the festival leading to average marks and good responses focused on the identification of the reasons for which Hindus celebrate the Maha Shivaratri festival. Part **(d)** responses demonstrated that candidates had no difficulty in understanding the question since good attempts tried to show how and why both religious and non-religious people should take part in festivals. Being from a multi-cultural country, candidates easily sustained their arguments with evidence from personal experiences.



HINDUISM

Paper 2055/02
Paper 2

Key messages

To score high marks candidates needed to appreciate the command word being used such as 'how' or 'why'

Candidates need to refer to the mark allocation to gauge the amount of time and depth their answers should contain

Higher weighting questions required candidates to, not only show more than one point of view but to demonstrate a critical response and be critical of their own concluding arguments

Question that contained more exploitation and critical discussion generally gained the higher marks.

General comments

Candidates found Paper 2 more challenging than Paper 1. It was observed that many candidates overlooked the number of marks allotted for each question. Some candidates engaged in lengthy responses, going beyond one page for questions carrying 1–5 marks, while the importance of a 10–marks question was ignored and answered in a few lines. Questions were set in ascending order of difficulty, assessing low and high order thinking skills and candidates were expected to demonstrate them in their writing. Those candidates who displayed critical evaluation and application skills were awarded highest marks. In many questions, important instructions like 'outline', 'describe', etc. were disregarded. **Questions 2 and 4** and to some extent, **Question 5** seemed to be within the reach of most candidates as they generated more responses than in the others.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 2 was more popularly attempted. Candidates found questions on the Ramacharitmanas more scoring than those on the Bhagavad Gita.

Question 1

Part **(a)** had two sub-parts of the question assessed the knowledge of candidates. Most managed to give the right answer. However, some ambiguous responses like 'Vyas' and other erroneous ones like 'Valmiki' for the teacher of the Bhagavad Gita were given. In part **(b)** this was diversely attempted. Many candidates provided their own understanding of 'the way of knowledge' instead of its meaning as study of scriptures, learning from the wise teachers, understanding the nature of God, Brahman and Atman. They were awarded accordingly. In part **(c)** it expected candidates to engage in the reasons for the difficulties of 'the way of action', many responses opted for a detailed explanation of the concepts of sakama and Nishkama karma, referring to verse 47 of the second chapter of the Bhagavad Gita. Full marks were awarded to candidates who demonstrated an understanding of the ethical implications of the Karma Yoga. Part **(d)** elicited responses showing wider application and evaluation skills of candidates, many confined themselves to the Bhagavad Gita. The question made room for more personal opinions, supported by evidence from different texts studied in this part of the syllabus (Upanishads, Ramacharitmanas, Bhagavad Gita) and those candidates who were able to provide this in their answer generally gained more marks than those who didn't. Good answers which disagreed with the statement and substantiated their stand reasonably were rewarded consequently. Best answers attempted a 'balanced' response, providing arguments for and against the statement. Those however, who displayed critical analysis obtained highest marks.

Question 2

For part (a) most candidates were able to identify Lakshmana as the brother who accompanied Rama in the forest in the first part of the question. On the other hand, the second part generated responses ranging from Bharat to Sugriva while the expected answer was Hanuman. They were awarded marks accordingly. Most candidates fared well in part (b). The scheming mind of Manthara, the boons of Kaykeyi and the dutiful obedience of Dasharatha's commands were indicated with varying levels of details. A few responses answered the question from a different perspective. As an Avatara, Rama went to the forest to fulfill purposes like establishment of Dharma, the liberation of devotees and teaching a way of life. Since they were in line with the question, they were rewarded. In part (c) the majority of candidates were successfully able to attempt this part with the best answers going beyond a mere narration of the meeting of Shabari and Rama and describing how actually the lady embodied characteristics of a perfect devotee and of the nine modes. In part (d) candidates who were able to tease out the wording of the question e.g. the importance of the word 'only' which actually hinted at the type of engagement expected and dwelt extensively on how the Ramacharitmanas actually leads to liberation through bhakti tended to gain higher marks. Good attempts tried to show Rama's sense of duty and action as an alternative path to freedom. The highest marks were awarded to those candidates who argued that there are alternative avenues prescribed in other scriptures (Jnana in the Upanishads, Karma in Bahagavad Gita).

Section B

Samskaras seemed more accessible to candidates and they found ample space to express themselves.

Question 3

For part (a) there was a second sub-part of the question which proved easier for candidates who were able to name one of the four varnas. Some candidates, however, instead of giving the meaning of 'varna' as colour or class or their equivalents, wrongly provided the etymology (Sanskrit 'vri') of the term. In part (b) candidates were expected in this part to provide at least three differences between 'varna' and 'jati'. While most responded correctly, a few candidates were able to provide relevant descriptions which at best earned them a maximum of three marks. In part (c) this was well answered by a large fraction of candidates as it required them to explain the duties and responsibilities of one of the four varnas and many secured the highest marks. Candidates who engaged in a minute description of one duty also were rewarded similarly. Candidates for part (d) seemed to find this part difficult. Candidates needed to go beyond a description of the four varnas and show how they help towards maintaining a smooth society. Candidates who analysed the advantages and disadvantages of the varna system and its relevance in the modern context were awarded full marks

Question 4

For part (a) most candidates were able to correctly state the timing of the Namakarana Samskara and relate the Marriage Ceremony to Vivaha, with some associating it with the householder's stage (Grihastha ashrama). As expected, a vast majority of candidates who attempted the part (b) question were able to describe the steps in the name-giving ceremony with varying degrees of detail. In part (c) candidates who scored highest were expected in this part to describe the symbolism of different rites performed during Vivaha and how they impact on the life of the couple. Many engaged instead in describing their duties as householders and the satisfaction of artha (wealth) and kama (pleasures). The best answers in this part (d) tried to make a balance of tradition and modernity in relation to the samskaras. Many candidates chose to explain the significance of each samskara without counter-arguing the constraints of modern life, financial difficulties and other aspects which challenge their performance nowadays.

Section C

This section was least scoring for candidates with both questions being found difficult. Many confused the reforms of Swami Dayananda with those of Roy. Nevertheless most opted for **Question 5** rather than **6**, revealing the decreasing popularity of questions on Gandhi.

Question 5

For part (a) most candidates managed to supply the correct answer to both sub-parts of the question. While Bengal was the ideal answer in the first, other places where Ram Mohan Roy was educated were also accepted. In the second, Atmiya Sabha was accepted as an alternative. In part (b) candidates were expected to describe one reform with some development in order to obtain full marks. Candidates who

referred to Sati were rewarded accordingly, as well as those responses which referred to Roy's views on widow remarriage, child marriage, etc. In part (c) was variously attempted. Those who obtained the highest marks referred to Roy's views on modern, western-style education and his plans to make education available to a larger number of children coming from all sections of the society. The statement in part (d) guided candidates to favour Swami Dayananda over Roy as most of the answers agreed with it. Typical answers enumerated the plethora of reforms made by the former and showed how they were more successful than those made by the latter. On the other hand, higher marks were obtained by candidates who related to the geographical and historical contexts of both reformers, showing their difference and complementarity, rather than the superiority of Dayananda over Roy.

Question 6

For part (a) both sub-parts were correctly answered by most candidates. In part (b), while many answers in this part referred to the desire of Gandhi to free India from British rule, those who further developed this point into his notions of Swarajya (self-rule) and Swadeshi (self-sufficiency) secured full marks. In part (c), candidates were expected to refer to Gandhi's methods of Civil Disobedience and non-co-operation based on his 'Satyagraha' ideal. Many candidates could have improved by moving their response away from his concept of non-violence and focusing on the term 'protest'. For part (d) few candidates who managed to obtain highest marks were able to take a stand on the statement and provided arguments showing how Gandhi's teachings were misunderstood by his own countrymen and that they are instead still relevant to the twentieth century. The remainder focused on his teachings on Ahimsa and Satyagraha, thereby scoring average marks.