

Markscheme

May 2015

World religions

Standard level

Paper 2

18 pages

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Markbands

	AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4	Paper 2 Marks 0–20
Level descriptor	Knowledge/understanding	Application/analysis	Synthesis/evaluation	Skills	
A	No relevant knowledge	No evidence of application	No evaluation	None appropriate	0
B	Little knowledge and/or understanding; largely superficial or of marginal relevance	Very little application; important aspects of the question are ignored	No evaluation	Very low level; little attempt at organization of material	1–4
C	Some relevant knowledge and understanding	Limited attempt at application; answer partially addresses the question; there is no or little analysis of the key concepts	No evaluation	There is some evidence of an attempt to follow a structured approach	5–8
D	Relevant knowledge and understanding, but with some omissions	Some attempt at application; competent answer although not fully developed, and tends to be in parts descriptive; there is some analysis of the key concepts	Limited evaluation or unsubstantiated evaluation	There is a clear structure to answers in line with the question	9–12
E	Generally accurate knowledge and understanding, but with some minor omissions	Appropriate application; developed answer that covers most aspects of the question; there is a developed analysis of the key concepts; using both secondary and/or primary sources	There is evaluation of all major areas of the answer; answers demonstrate a consistently critical approach	Answers are well structured; ideas are organized in a clear, coherent and balanced essay	13–16
F	Accurate, specific, detailed knowledge and understanding	Detailed application; well-developed answer that covers most or all aspects of the question; the answer demonstrates an in-depth analysis through effective use of ideas drawn from a wide range of secondary and/or primary sources; there is evidence of rigorous analysis of the key concepts	Good and well-balanced attempt at evaluation; arguments are clear, coherent, relevant and well substantiated where appropriate, there will be a successful challenge to the assumptions implied in the question	The specific question is addressed in a clearly structured and focused essay that indicates a high level of awareness of the demands of the question.	17–20

Section A

Hinduism

1. Discuss the significance of the Vedas in Hindu belief and practice.

Please note that the question directs candidates to both belief **and** practice; answers should address how the Vedas should be used in ritual practice (refer to page 29 of the subject guide, under section theme 2: Sacred texts: Collation and development, bullet point two).

Hindus regard the body of texts known as the Vedas as shruti (heard), and they are believed by many to be eternal, breathed out by Brahman at the beginning of each cosmic day or cycle of creation. Thus they are considered to be authorless, but were “picked up” by sages or rishis due to their supernormal insight and then passed on to others. For centuries they have been passed on orally from teacher to student in their original Sanskrit form. Generally attributed to the second millennium BCE they form the oldest canon of text in the Hindu body of sacred texts.

When discussing the significance, candidates may refer to the following:

- The texts provide Hindu priests (Brahmins) with the knowledge that they need to perform the rituals of sacrifice to appease and honour the deities. The Rig Veda contains the words recited by the principal priest; the Yajur Veda contains the ritual formulas used by the priest who carries out the manual aspects of the ritual; the Sama Veda contains the tunes that are used by the chant specialists; and the Atharva Veda contains formulae for private rituals such as cures, curses and prayers for success.
- Today the full Vedic ritual is not followed, but the learning of Vedic formulas in Sanskrit remains the heart of a Brahmin’s training as a temple priest, and the formulae are still used in Hindu rites of passage and prayers of supplication. Knowledge of the Vedas is considered a virtue in itself as the formulae are believed to have power.
- Some Brahmins believe that liberation from samsara is not possible without Vedic knowledge. The Vedas (eg creation stories and Purusha Sukta) are said to be the foundation of later Hindu cosmology.

Good responses should show awareness of some of the above but might also consider that, as only the twice-born castes are allowed to study the Vedas, the Vedic mantras are not used in the life-cycles of other castes. Indeed, few outside the Brahmin caste know more than a few common mantras, and even most Brahmins are unfamiliar with a close working knowledge of the texts. Since its knowledge is restricted, it is not an effective authority for the majority of Hindus. Even traditional Hindus believe that the conditions for Vedic knowledge to be effective belong only to the sat-yuga or golden age. Many of its practices such as animal sacrifice are no longer considered permissible. However, some of the doctrines have become universal, such as the belief that all phenomena are manifestations of one cosmic being.

Accept any other relevant answer.

Marks should be allocated according to the markbands on page 3.

2. Examine the relationship between God (Brahman) and self (atman) in Hindu thought.

One of the key questions in Hindu philosophy, dating back to the earliest centuries, is the relationship between God (Brahman) and self (atman). This is particularly found in the Vedanta.

Good answers will probably show awareness of the variety in Hindu thought, ranging from the doctrine that there is only one self to the belief in many selves.

- God as an underlying reality or being can be known by many names in Hinduism. Brahman is usually understood to be the impersonal, formless Being without attributes (nirguna). However, God as creator and personal Lord to devotees can have many forms (saguna), depending upon sectarian allegiance. These personal aspects of God are known as ishvara, and command the full devotional attention (bhakti) of their respective followers.
- The self (atman) is considered to be eternal and changeless so shares in God's characteristics. Consciousness or knowledge is a key quality of the atman and it can be either conscious of the world through the avenues of sense perception or conscious of God. It is the world-conscious self that remains in the cycle of birth and death. It is the self which experiences pain, pleasure, change, birth and death, but it remains unchanging and deathless.
- Some Hindus argue that there is one self that is shared by all sense beings and is identical to Brahman. Sense perception and mental processes provide an awareness of distinction. The liberated self experiences total unity of Atman and Brahman. Most other understandings of the relationship are more conventionally theistic, holding that there are many selves with a range of relationships to the Divine. Some in bondage to karma, others in communion or union with God.

Accept any other relevant answer.

Marks should be allocated according to the markbands on page 3.

Buddhism

3. Assess the importance of the Three Jewels to lay Buddhists.

Candidates should demonstrate that they know what the Three Jewels are and what they mean. The Three Jewels are: the Buddha, the dharma and the sangha. The first refers both to the historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama, and to other Buddhas. The dharma is the truth that upholds the cosmos, and is what the Buddha taught. The sangha means “community”, and usually refers to the Buddhist monastic community although some Buddhists believe it refers to the whole community of practising Buddhists.

With reference to the importance of the Three Jewels, candidates should recognise the importance of going for refuge in the Three Jewels. When lay Buddhists go to their temples, they recite “I go to the Buddha for refuge. I go to the dharma for refuge. I go to the sangha for refuge”. Doing this makes a person a Buddhist. The Three Jewels are, therefore, central to the identity of lay Buddhists.

Candidates may assess each “Jewel” in turn, including some of the following points:

- The Buddha is revered as a teacher of the truth, and also as an embodiment of wisdom and compassion. He is not considered to be a god. He was born a human, after many previous lives in which he trained to become a Buddha, and became enlightened in his last life.
- His importance lies in the fact that he taught the way to Enlightenment, to liberation from birth and rebirth.
- The dharma can be summarised through doctrines such as the Four Noble Truths, including the Eightfold Path, and the three marks of existence.
- The importance of the dharma for a lay Buddhist cannot be overestimated, but some lay Buddhists place more emphasis on following the five precepts and gaining a better rebirth than on aiming for Enlightenment in this life.
- The importance of the monastic sangha for lay Buddhists is that it is a major source of teaching and inspiration. It is usually through the monastic sangha that lay Buddhists learn what the Buddha taught. Some lay Buddhists see the monastic sangha as representing the Buddha.
- In contemporary Buddhism lay people are reading the texts more and meditating more, and so directing their own spiritual practice. Among these, it is more likely that the sangha will be seen as the whole community of practising Buddhists. This whole community gives strength and inspiration to lay Buddhists to continue their Buddhist practice.

Accept any other relevant answer.

Marks should be allocated according to the markbands on page 3.

4. Examine the meaning and importance of the principle of karma within Buddhist ethics.

Candidates should demonstrate an awareness that the principle of karma is that every moral action has a consequence or fruit. Good action produces good fruit. Bad or unwholesome action produces bad fruit. Candidates should be given credit if they know that the word “karma” comes from the word for action, and that the Buddha stressed that volition or intention was “karma” or action. If one intends to harm someone, the intention produces a fruit. Buddhists see the principle of karma as a natural law that is present throughout samsara.

Buddhist ethics are underpinned by the principle of karma. Candidates may outline the most important ethical principles in Buddhism: the five precepts; the ethical components of the Eightfold Path. They should be given credit for this. However, they should also make some of the following points:

- That the principle of karma teaches us that what harms others also harms the self. Harming others will result in negative consequences for the one who harms.
- This means that benefit to self and benefit to others, and harm of self and harm of others, cannot be separated in Buddhist ethics. What benefits others benefits self.
- This may make Buddhist ethics appear “selfish”. This would be a misunderstanding, since if a Buddhist does what is good purely to benefit the self and not out of loving kindness towards others, this motivation will also bring negative consequences.

Buddhists believe that they make merit when they do what is good, and that this will help them gain a better rebirth. This belief is rooted in the principle of karma.

Accept any other relevant answer.

Marks should be allocated according to the markbands on page 3.

Sikhism

5. Examine the link between Sikh ritual life and Khalsa membership.

Responses should show awareness that Sikh ritual and worship are influenced by the status and role accorded to the human gurus, the Guru Granth Sahib and the Khalsa.

- The creation of the Khalsa brotherhood in 1699 by Guru Gobind Singh was to provide a set of external markers for Sikhs (five Ks).
- Those that joined the Khalsa were initiated into membership providing a key religious rite of passage with the Amrit ceremony that added to Sikh ritual life. In addition, Khalsa Sikhs agree to perform set prayers in the morning and evenings.
- Although it is not considered essential, it has become normative for Khalsa Sikhs to control the ritual life of the gurdwara, the Sikh place of worship, performing the daily rituals of the gurdwara and the Sikh rites of passage around child birth, naming, marriage and death.
- Arguably, it is the passing of the guruship to the sacred text, the Guru Granth Sahib on the death of Guru Gobind Singh, that has created most Sikh ritual life.
- A sacred text, as opposed to a human teacher, has done much to institutionalize Sikhism around the daily rituals offered to the Book in the gurdwara.
- Candidates should provide some examples of common Sikh rituals showing the centrality of the Guru Granth Sahib.

Good responses may show awareness of the processes of routinization of ritual throughout Sikh history, and the contestation that can take place when Sikh reformers insist that the founder Guru Nanak was opposed to ritual life in religion. In such answers there may be an awareness that the Khalsa has formally taken over the running of the gurdwaras from Amritsar and centralized the training of Sikh religious officiates (Granthis). Today it is increasingly unlikely that non-Khalsa Sikhs would officiate in the gurdwara or carry out Sikh ritual life, except in the home.

Accept any other relevant answer.

Marks should be allocated according to the markbands on page 3.

6. Assess the degree to which the emphasis on family life (kirat karni and vand ke chakna) forms the foundation of Sikh ethics.
- Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, was opposed to renunciation of home and family as a pre-condition for enlightenment or salvation. The Sikh gurus reject asceticism as they considered renunciates to be parasitic on the community.
 - According to Nanak it was only by “living amid wife and children that one could attain release” (*Guru Granth Sahib* p.661). He considered that detachment from the world was an internal process achieved by attaching oneself to God, rather than an external giving up of worldly activities or family life.
 - He advocated that family life and working for one’s living (kirat karni) to support the family was the foundation for Sikh ethical living. This was to have various consequences. For example, monastic living tended to create spiritual hierarchies in which householders supported monks and sometimes nuns to live the ideal religious life. By insisting that all family members had equal access to God’s grace, Nanak was able to create a more equal religious community.
 - The insistence upon family life as the appropriate arena to worship God, was to have knock-on effects on gender. The reestablishment of the family at the heart of Sikhism raised the position of women.
 - Guru Amar Das also praised family life as a vehicle for practicing charity and hospitality. He argued that excess wealth should be used to serve others (vand ke chakna).
 - Good answers should point out that family life is not an end in itself but the means to live a God-centred and moral existence. The *Guru Granth Sahib* would appear to endorse family life as God-determined. For example:

“Mother, father, progeny – all are God’s creation.
All by God in relationships are joined.”
(*Guru Granth Sahib*, p.494).
 - However, some candidates will be aware that there is an element of renunciation built into household religion. Sikhs are expected to remain unattached through internal orientation towards God, prayer and service to the community.
 - Sikhs need to be aware that the family, when it becomes the centre of attachment, can lead to corrupt and dishonest behaviour. Thus, devout Sikhs remain aware of impermanence and use the family as a base for religious practices and social duties and obligations.

Accept any other relevant answer.

Marks should be allocated according to the markbands on page 3.

Open-ended question

7. With reference to **one** religion, **either** Hinduism **or** Buddhism **or** Sikhism, discuss the importance of overcoming clinging to the "self".

Hinduism

- Hindus believe human beings live in a state of illusion.
- Part of this illusion is not to realize that the ego/self (jiva) is separating the human being from Brahman, and for human beings to promote and pamper this ego.
- Most Hindus aim to move beyond this sense of ego in order to realize union/unity with Brahman or perfect devotion to a deity.
- To have unity with Brahman or to offer perfect devotion to a deity means that the individual ego has to disappear.
- Transcending the ego or the idea that we have an ego that is separate from Brahman lies at the heart of the Hindu path towards liberation.
- Individuals who cling to their "ego" tend to be selfish and non-compassionate towards others.
- Societies in which people try to promote their own selfish interests at the expense of others tend to be more violent societies.
- The society that Hindus aim for is one where people fulfil their duties selflessly as determined by caste restrictions.

Candidates may recognize that the institution of caste can lead to caste discrimination, although this is illegal in India, and that this discrimination can reinforce a sense of hopelessness connected with the ego.

Buddhism

- The third mark of existence in Buddhism is anatta or lack of permanent self (non-self), and for Buddhists this means that there is no independent, unchanging self that is separate from its surroundings.
- The human person is interconnected with everything else. Because of this, there is no need to cling to the self or the ego.
- The Buddhist path to enlightenment involves eradicating such clinging.
- Buddhists believe that compassion and loving kindness arise in us when clinging to self is eradicated.
- Individuals who cling to their "ego" tend to be selfish and non-compassionate towards others.
- Societies in which people try to promote their own selfish interests at the expense of others tend to be more violent societies.
- The society that Buddhists aim for is one in which people act compassionately towards one another, avoiding such things as greed, anger, hatred, violence and jealousy.

Sikhism

- Haumai or ego-centredness is something that all Sikhs try to overcome.
- The goal of religious life is that the Sikh should shift from ego-centredness to God-centredness.
- Meditating on God's name leads to the lessening of ego-centredness and the reduction of greed and selfishness. Sikhs also place great emphasis on seva (altruistic service) and on protecting the weak and the vulnerable.
- These practices also lessen ego-centredness, by turning the attention of Sikhs away from themselves towards others.
- Individuals who cling to their "ego" tend to be selfish and non-compassionate towards others.
- Societies in which people try to promote their own selfish interests at the expense of others tend to be more violent societies.
- The society that Sikhs aim for is one in which people act with generosity, kindness and a sense of service to the whole of society.

Accept any other relevant answer.

Marks should be allocated according to the markbands on page 3.

Section B

Judaism

8. To what extent do you agree with the statement that “Judaism teaches that abortion is always wrong”?

Candidates would not necessarily be expected to deal in depth with all the issues raised, but should examine a range of instances to which the statement in the question applies.

Candidates may consider some of the following arguments:

- Jews believe that, as God created human beings, God is in charge of when they live and when they die. Judaism considers that abortion not only interferes with God’s plan for the world but also destroys what has the potential to become a human being. However, according to the Jewish scriptures, the life of a human being is more important than the life of the unborn child. This is shown in Exodus 21:23–25. This passage is often misunderstood. It does not suggest that these penalties should be paid literally, but that money should be exchanged to the value of what is lost. It also limits what money people can ask for.
- Rabbis have argued that killing is allowed in certain circumstances. For example, enemies may be killed in battle, meat is slaughtered, insects are killed, and plants are cut down or dug up.
- The rabbinical tradition established that the foetus became a person at the moment of birth, not at conception. Therefore, abortion is not murder.
- “If a woman is in difficult labour (to the point that her life may be in danger) her child must be cut up while it is still in her womb since the life of the mother is more important than the life of the foetus. But if the greater part of the child has already emerged it may not be damaged, since one life cannot be more important than another.” (Mishnah)
- The life and well-being of the mother is the most important issue, and abortion is acceptable if the mother or child is at risk either physically or mentally, or if the pregnancy is the result of rape. The mother must be the person who decides in these circumstances. Abortion would never be approved simply for the sake of convenience or as a method of birth control, and the later in the pregnancy the mother is, the more difficult it becomes for Judaism to sanction it.
- Candidates may refer to the teaching about the sanctity of life (Pikuah Nefesh).

Accept any other relevant answer.

Marks should be allocated according to the markbands on page 3.

9. “The Torah, both written and oral, is the word of God; so to seek to interpret it for the 21st century is to call its authority into doubt.” Assess the accuracy of this statement.

Good answers are likely to consider the approaches of different Jewish denominations in relation to the statement, and that this is a highly contested area in modern Judaism. Some may mention casuistic and apodictic laws.

Candidates are free to consider whether the Torah is the actual word of God, and if so whether this applies to both the written as well as the oral Torahs. Some may choose to consider whether this is direct revelation or divine inspiration.

If the Torah is the actual word of God then it would appear that to reinterpret it is to doubt its authenticity. On the other hand, it could be argued that reinterpretation does not challenge the authority of necessity because it may indicate that it was misunderstood in the past. The tradition of continuous revelation of the oral Torah in *eg* Responsa could be used to suggest that the process of interpretation is still on-going.

Accept any other relevant answer.

Marks should be allocated according to the markbands on page 3.

Christianity

10. Compare and contrast Christian daily private devotions and communal prayer.

Candidates need to be clear what they understand by these two categories of worship.

Daily private devotions are likely to include some or all of the following: silent prayer, meditation, Bible study, praying the rosary, *etc.* Private times of prayer and communion with God have long been an important aspect of Christian devotion from the time of hermits, anchorites and ascetics.

Communal prayer could cover a whole range of worship activities such as structured or unstructured church worship, collective worship at home (family prayers for example) group worship, home, church, *etc.* Communal prayer and worship is what is most commonly regarded as Christian practice, particularly the celebration of the Eucharist which dates to the first century CE.

For compare:

Private and communal prayer are both important aspects of Christian devotion; they both are forms of worship; they both involve Christians reaching out to God; they have both been practised since the earliest days of Christianity; they can both be structured or unstructured.

For contrast:

Private devotion which might, in some circumstances, be seen as turning away from the world, communal prayer and witness might sometimes be regarded as losing sight of a personal relationship with God, *etc.*

Accept any other relevant answer.

Marks should be allocated according to the markbands on page 3.

11. Examine the Christian belief that Christ is Redeemer.

Redeemer: Christ regarded as saving humanity from sin or its effects.

- Candidates need to explain the unique position and nature of Christ as the second person of the Trinity; God becoming man through the Incarnation.
- They should be able to explain the Fall and Original Sin, and the Christian understanding of these. They may then mention the work of Jesus on earth and the path he laid out for his followers. This continues with the crucifixion and resurrection, and the Descent into Hell as showing that his atoning grace freed the Patriarchs as well as his followers.
- Christ is seen as saving people from the consequences of the Fall and the resulting broken communion with God and, through his atoning death, redeeming humanity with the opportunity of eternal life.
- Candidates may refer to this as fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies of the coming Messiah in Job, Micah, Malachi, Daniel, *etc.* Some may refer also to the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53. They should realise however, that this is a Christian interpretation of these texts and not a Jewish one.

Candidates should also be aware that different Christian denominations have varying views about Christ as Redeemer.

Accept any other relevant answer.

Marks should be allocated according to the markbands on page 3.

Islam

12. Discuss how communal ritual prayer (salat) by Muslim women is affected by gender.

Candidates need to clearly indicate what their argument is (whether performance of salat is affected to a great, some, or limited extent by gender). Candidates' arguments may include:

Evidence for gender playing an important role:

- A woman is not required to attend Friday (jum'a) prayer, in fact in some societies mosques do not even have facilities for women (entrance doors, prayer rooms, ablution facilities). Muslim scholars justify this lack of requirement as a greater freedom for a woman to fulfil her roles as mother, who needs to look after her children, as a daughter to look after sick parents, etc. Hence, her roles in society take precedence over attendance in, and performance of, communal prayer.
- A menstruating woman or a woman who has just given birth and is still bleeding is not to approach prayers. Quranic statements are clear about the necessity to be ritually pure in order to perform salat (Qur 4.43); menstruation has traditionally been associated with impurity in a number of religions and societies. Therefore menstruating women are not to attend communal prayers.
- Women cannot be imams of a mixed congregation in prayer because legally and politically they are not to hold positions of authority, and because of issues of modesty and social propriety.

Evidence against gender playing an important role:

- A woman is not required to attend Friday (jum'a) prayer, but, if she wishes to attend, she can do so. According to a hadith, not even her husband can prevent her from fulfilling Allah's commandments. Hence, her social role as an obedient wife is secondary to her role as a believing Muslim who obeys Allah. There are specific female facilities in many mosques, so that women can attend and still maintain their modesty and not distract men who pray. Evidence can be provided of mosques with women's prayer rooms and separate entrances, or of women praying behind men in the same prayer room.
- According to Quranic verses (33:35) men and women are equal in front of Allah, and their reward for performing the pillars of Islam will be the same as men. Menstruating women will perform their prayers when they cease menstruating, so the performance of prayer is only affected for a limited period of time. Their condition of impurity is only temporary, not permanent.
- To maintain a spiritual focus on prayer and not being distracted by, or distract believers of the other sex, according to most Islamic legal schools, Muslim women can indeed be imams of other women, as long as they stand in the middle of the congregation. Women can therefore have positions of ritual leadership, even though in society they might not have similar roles.

Accept any other relevant answer.

Marks should be allocated according to the markbands on page 3.

13. Examine how hajj can be a unique communal and personal religious experience.

Good responses will probably focus on the spiritual experience resulting from hajj, not simply listing the rituals performed in it or the doctrines associated with those rituals.

Candidates should explain what hajj is:

- one of the Pillars of Islam;
- a religious requirement for all able Muslims;
- it is performed during dhu'l hijja; and
- it follows a defined set of rituals.

Candidates may then move on to examine how doctrines and rituals are an essential part of a pilgrim's personal and communal experience.

Some of the underlying doctrines that can make hajj a unique spiritual experience are:

- The central doctrine of umma. Muslims are brothers and sisters in faith, their cultural, linguistic, social, and other backgrounds are of secondary importance. They experience this bond in faith by being part of the community of believers who are gathered in the same place for the same purpose: to obey the divine command to perform hajj.
- Tawhid (oneness of Allah) and iman (faith in Allah): Muslims worship the same God, believe in the unity and uniqueness of Allah, and share this fundamental belief. They experience this by focusing on Allah throughout the hajj, by praying, by standing at Arafat, and hence, having a taste of the Day of Judgment (Yawm al-din). This is both a personal as well as communal experience.
- Risalah: Allah's message as revealed to prophet Muhammad and to other prophets before him (association of the Ka'ba with Abraham, with Adam). In particular, the centrality of Mecca as the place of worship for all Muslims (qibla, direction of prayer) is linked to specific revelations to prophet Muhammad. Hence, the pilgrim re-lives the narrative of the historical origins of Islam and the spiritual experience of its Prophet.

Some of the underlying rituals that can make hajj a unique spiritual experience are:

- The whole set of hajj rituals are directly linked to Prophet Muhammad and particularly his last pilgrimage to Mecca. The pilgrims follow on the footsteps of what many consider to be the most perfect human being, their exemplar: Muhammad hence, connecting them more closely to his own spiritual experience.
- Touching of the black stone in the Ka'ba: touching what Muslims consider to be a divine sign of the covenant between Allah and humankind.
- Running between the hills of Safa and Marwa: remembering and re-living Hagar's thirst and desperation, living the awareness and certainty that Allah comes to help believers who trust in Him. This can be both a personal and communal experience.
- Standing at Arafat: this is one of the central rites of the hajj. It could be a very strong spiritual personal experience to do with one's individual deeds in life and the judgement to come. It is a way of reviewing one's priorities in life, assess one's past actions and evaluate which future actions to take.

Accept any other relevant answer.

Marks should be allocated according to the markbands on page 3.

Open-ended question

14. With reference to **one** religion, **either** Judaism **or** Christianity **or** Islam, assess the origins and authority of its sacred texts.

Candidates should refer to some of the following:

Judaism

- Judaism has both the written Torah and the oral Torah.
- The written Torah (Tenakh) consists of the Torah itself, the Neviim (prophets) and Kethuvim (writings).
- The oral Torah is the Talmud (Mishnah and Gemara).
- The Torah (five books of Moses) is traditionally believed to have been dictated by God to Moses. The Neviim and Kethuvim are viewed as inspired by God but written down by humans.
- The oral Torah is the work of generations of rabbis, and serves to expand upon and explain the Torah.
- The written Torah therefore has the greatest authority and in particular the first five books of the Torah (Pentateuch). There are Torah readings from the Sefer Torah (scrolls) at services particularly at Shabbat. The Neviim and Kethuvim are also read as the haftarah.
- The 613 mitzvot are found in the Torah.
- The Torah is a guide to Jewish life and belief augmented by the oral Torah.

Christianity

- Christianity shares its sacred texts, in part, with Judaism. The Old Testament of the Bible consists of the same books as found in the Tenakh, although in a different order. Some Christians also believe the same account of the origins of the text as do Jews.
- The New Testament comprises the four gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the epistles and the book of Revelation. Although not claimed to be divinely dictated, nevertheless the gospels are seen to have more authority than the other books in the New Testament.
- Jesus' teachings and way of life are seen as models to be followed by Christians and as bringing fulfilment to the Old Testament prophecies.
- Both the Old and New Testaments are read aloud at most church services although the gospel reading is given priority.

Islam

- The sacred text of Islam is the Qur'an. It is believed that the text of the Qur'an was dictated to Muhammad (pbuh) over a period of 26 years by the Angel Jibril.
- The true Qur'an is to be found in paradise with Allah and was brought down to a half-way place from where it was dictated by Jibril.
- The Qur'an which exists on earth is believed to be unchanged from this dictation and inerrant. It only exists in Arabic and any "translations" into other languages are considered to be paraphrases. The Qur'an is used in all prayers and services.
- In addition there are the Sunnah and Hadith. These do not have the same sacred status as the Qur'an. The Sunnah is a collection of accounts of the life and teachings of Muhammad (pbuh) whilst the Hadith is a collection of his teachings, deeds and sayings.

Accept any other relevant answer.

Marks should be allocated according to the markbands on page 3.