

HINDUISM

Paper 2055/01
Hindu Gods and Festivals

Key messages

Candidates are encouraged to manage their time effectively when answering questions.

Candidates are encouraged to pay close attention to key words and command words in order to understand the requirements of each question. This would help candidates to write coherent and well-structured answers.

Candidates need to be able to argue for and against the given statement in **part (d)** questions.

General comments

Many candidates did not pay enough attention to key words or phrases in questions leading to some unfocused answers. Overall, the paper was within the reach of candidates of all ability levels.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Part (a) (i) Most candidates were able to name the creator Brahma.

(ii) Most candidates were able to name almost all objects held by the murti of Brahma.

Part (b) Most candidates were able to describe Kartikeya holding a vel and seated on his peacock in a murti.

Part (c) Most candidates were able to explain how the features of Vishnu in a murti help Hindus to worship Him.

Part (d) Candidates need to remember to pay attention to the key words of the question. Many candidates provided a description of Durga in her fierce and caring aspects without critically analysing the statement. Few candidates gave relevant answers.

Question 2

Part (a) Many candidates were able to identify two objects held by a murti of Ganesha.

Part (b) Most candidates were able to associate the trident of Lord Shiva with the three gunas or with the functions of the gods of the Trimurti.

Part (c) Most candidates could not explain why the gods of the Trimurti are shown with female deities in a murti.

Part (d) Many candidates provided balanced argumentative responses.

Question 3

Part (a) Most candidates were able to name two things covered by Vamana's steps.

Part (b) Most candidates were able to narrate a story about any one non-human incarnation such as Matsya, Kurma or Narsimha.

Part (c) Candidates need to remember to pay attention to the key words of the question. Many candidates gave a description of Krishna's life without explaining what it teaches Hindus.

Only few answers referred to Krishna's role as an ethical teacher in the Bhagavad Gita.

Part (d) Candidates need to remember to pay attention to the key words of the question. Many candidates described the importance of Avatars without explaining whether or not these incarnations are the best way for Hindus to understand Vishnu.

A few candidates argued that Vishnu can also be understood not only through Avatars but also through scriptures such as the Vishnu Purana or the Vedas.

Question 4

Part (a) Most candidates were able to outline two forms that an avatar of Vishnu has taken.

Part (b) Many candidates were able to describe how Krishna is depicted in a murti.

Part (c) Candidates need to remember to pay attention to the key words of the question. Many candidates gave a description of the stories of Vamana without explaining what Hindus can learn from them.

Part (d) Many candidates did not seem to understand the meaning of 'three paths to liberation'. Answers were often descriptive rather than argumentative.

Question 5

Part (a) Candidates were able to name two activities that a family performs when celebrating Divali such as the distribution of sweets, making of rangolis or lighting of lamps.

Part (b) Candidates were able to describe the Visarjan ceremony.

Part (c) Many candidates were able to explain the importance of fasting to Hindus.

Part (d) Responses were satisfactory. Many candidates explained the celebration of Divali as a religious observance or Hindu tradition. Candidates also disagreed with the statement by referring to instances whereby Divali is not celebrated by Arya Samajists or Hindus who are mourning over the death of near relatives.

Question 6

Part (a) (i) Most candidates were able to explain the term 'fasting'.

(ii) Many candidates were able to explain why Hindus fast during a festival.

Part (b) Candidates were able to attempt this question. Some answers also referred to the experience of Swami Dayananda during the night of Maha Shivaratri.

Part (c) Candidates were able to explain that some Hindus do not celebrate Maha Shivaratri due to medical reasons or because they are part of the Arya Samaj.

Part (d) Many candidates agreed and also disagreed with the statement by explaining that while some Hindus celebrate festivals only for fun, others celebrate by reciting sacred verses, worshiping gods and goddesses and keeping fasts in order to show their commitment to the key beliefs in Hinduism.

HINDUISM

Paper 2055/02
Scriptures, Ethics and Hindu Life

Key messages

Candidates would benefit from referring to the mark allocation to determine the amount of time they should spend answering each question.

Attention should be paid to command words or phrases, such as 'Explain' and 'To what extent do you agree?'

Candidates need to be able to argue for and against the given statement in **part (d)** questions.

General comments

Some answers were too long for **part (b)** questions. Candidates are reminded to refer to the mark allocation to determine the amount of time they should spend answering a question. Candidates need to ensure that their answers for **part (d)** questions are balanced and include enough critical analysis. Some candidates answered all six questions instead of choosing one from each section, as the rubric stated. Candidates are therefore reminded of the need to pay due attention to instructions.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Part (a) (i) Most candidates were able to name one of the three brothers of Rama: Bharat, Laksmana or Shatrughan.

(ii) Many candidates misunderstood the key word of the question 'from' for 'to'. Instead of giving answers such as 'Ayodhya', 'kingdom' or 'palace', many gave 'forest' as their answer, for which they did not score a mark.

Part (b) Most candidates were able to outline a brief story on Sita's role in the Ramayana.

Part (c) Candidates were able to explain the importance of the Ramayana for Hindus. Some answers also focused on the importance of the nine forms of Bhakti in the Ramayana.

Part (d) Most answers were one-sided. A number of candidates were unable to explain the relevance of ancient scriptures for Hindus.

Question 2

Part (a) (i) Most candidates were able to give Karma Yoga as an answer.

(ii) Most candidates were able to give Krishna, the ethical teacher or the charioteer as answers.

Part (b) Most candidates referred to the duty of Arjuna as a Kshatriya or warrior.

Part (c) This question was not properly understood by many candidates who described the roles of avatars without explaining what Hindus can learn about them by reading Hindu scriptures. A few candidates explained the role of Rama and his teachings in the Ramayana.

Part (d) Most answers for this question were one-sided. Candidates were not seen to have made any comparative study between the two paths.

Question 3

Part (a) (i) Most candidates were able to give 'Vivaha Samskara' as an answer.

(ii) Most candidates were able to give the name of one other samskara apart from Vivaha Samskara.

Part (b) Most candidates were able to attempt this question by describing the brahmacharya ashrama and some of the duties of the Brahmachari and the guru.

Part (c) Most candidates explained that those who belong to the shudra varna are manual workers and they serve the other Varnas for the welfare of the society.

Part (d) Candidates need to understand the meaning of 'social structures'. This did not always seem to be fully understood. Answers were often one-sided and not sufficiently focused.

Question 4

Part (a) (i) Most candidates seem to know the meaning of ashrama and provided good answers.

(ii) Most candidates were able to give the meaning of samskara as a purificatory ceremony.

Part (b) This question was accessible to most candidates. They were able to describe the role of those belonging to the Brahmin varna as gurus and priests.

Part (c) Candidates were able to explain how the four purusharthas are important to some Hindus. Stronger candidates mentioned how some Hindus only consider Artha and Kama to be important, while Dharma and Moksha are irrelevant for them.

Part (d) Answers for this question were mostly one-sided. Many candidates only explained the importance of the Brahmacharya and Grihastha Ashramas and there was far less discussion of the last two Ashramas. A few candidates were able to explain how the last two Ashramas are also important despite not being practical in this modern era.

Question 5

Part (a) (i) Most candidates were able to give 'Brahmo Samaj' as answer. Answers such as Atmiya Sabha were also credited.

(ii) Most candidates were able to give the correct answer such as Banaras, Bengal or Patshala village.

Part (b) This question was accessible to most candidates. They were able to describe one or more reforms that Roy aimed to achieve, such as the eradication of Sati, child marriage, dowry etc.

Part (c) This question was not properly understood by many candidates who only gave a general description of Roy's work. Few answers were able to explain the impact of Roy's work on the lives of Hindus such as condemning idol worship or preaching the concept of monotheism.

Part (d) Most answers for this question were one-sided. Most candidates explained how modern reformers were successful in their attempts to eradicate social and religious evils in Hindu society. A few answers were able to argue how some malpractices that reformers fought against, such as animal sacrifices or the dowry system, are still being observed by orthodox Hindus.

Question 6

Part (a) (i) Most candidates were able to give the name of Swami Dayananda.

(ii) Most candidates were able to give one principle of the Arya Samaj.

Answers comprising one of the teachings of the Arya Samaj were also credited.

- Part (b)** Most candidates were able to attempt this question. Answers outlining any one of the several works of the Arya Samaj were credited.
- Part (c)** This question was not properly understood by most candidates. Many candidates only gave a description of the work done by the Arya Samaj and did not explain how this work affected the lives of Hindus.
- Part (d)** Many candidates did not properly understand the question. The answers were mostly one-sided; they only agreed with the view that ancient religious practices such as recitation of sacred verses, pujas or fastings are timeless. A few answers consisted of how religious practices should evolve in relation to an ever-changing world.