



Cambridge Assessment
International Education

Syllabus

Cambridge O Level
Hinduism 2055

For examination in November 2020.



Changes to the syllabus for 2020

The latest syllabus is version 1, published September 2017.

There are no significant changes which affect teaching.

You are strongly advised to read the whole syllabus before planning your teaching programme.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Why choose Cambridge International?

Cambridge Assessment International Education prepares school students for life, helping them develop an informed curiosity and a lasting passion for learning. We are part of the University of Cambridge.

Our international qualifications are recognised by the world's best universities and employers, giving students a wide range of options in their education and career. As a not-for-profit organisation, we devote our resources to delivering high-quality educational programmes that can unlock learners' potential.

Our programmes and qualifications set the global standard for international education. They are created by subject experts, rooted in academic rigour and reflect the latest educational research. They provide a strong platform for students to progress from one stage to the next, and are well supported by teaching and learning resources.

Every year, nearly a million Cambridge learners from 10 000 schools in 160 countries prepare for their future with an international education from Cambridge International.

Cambridge learners

Our mission is to provide educational benefit through provision of international programmes and qualifications for school education and to be the world leader in this field. Together with schools, we develop Cambridge learners who are:

- **confident** in working with information and ideas – their own and those of others
- **responsible** for themselves, responsive to and respectful of others
- **reflective** as learners, developing their ability to learn
- **innovative** and equipped for new and future challenges
- **engaged** intellectually and socially, ready to make a difference.

Recognition

Cambridge O Level is internationally recognised by schools, universities and employers as equivalent in demand to Cambridge IGCSE® (International General Certificate of Secondary Education). There are over 700 000 entries a year in nearly 70 countries. Learn more at

www.cambridgeinternational.org/recognition

Support for teachers

A wide range of materials and resources is available to support teachers and learners in Cambridge schools. Resources suit a variety of teaching methods in different international contexts. Through subject discussion forums and training, teachers can access the expert advice they need for teaching our qualifications. More details can be found in Section 2 of this syllabus and at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/teachers**

Support for exams officers

Exams officers can trust in reliable, efficient administration of exams entries and excellent personal support from our customer services. Learn more at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/examsOfficers**

Our systems for managing the provision of international qualifications and education programmes for learners aged 5 to 19 are certified as meeting the internationally recognised standard for quality management, ISO 9001:2008. Learn more at www.cambridgeinternational.org/ISO9001

1.2 Why choose Cambridge O Level?

Cambridge O Levels have been designed for an international audience and are sensitive to the needs of different countries. These qualifications are designed for students whose first language may not be English and this is acknowledged throughout the examination process. The Cambridge O Level syllabus also allows teaching to be placed in a localised context, making it relevant in varying regions.

Our aim is to balance knowledge, understanding and skills in our programmes and qualifications to enable students to become effective learners and to provide a solid foundation for their continuing educational journey.

Through our professional development courses and our support materials for Cambridge O Levels, we provide the tools to enable teachers to prepare students to the best of their ability and work with us in the pursuit of excellence in education.

Cambridge O Levels are considered to be an excellent preparation for Cambridge International AS & A Levels, the Cambridge AICE (Advanced International Certificate of Education) Diploma, Cambridge Pre-U, and other education programmes, such as the US Advanced Placement program and the International Baccalaureate Diploma programme. Learn more about Cambridge O Levels at www.cambridgeinternational.org/olevel

Guided learning hours

Cambridge O Level syllabuses are designed on the assumption that learners have about 130 guided learning hours per subject over the duration of the course, but this is for guidance only. The number of hours required to gain the qualification may vary according to local curricular practice and the students' prior experience of the subject.

1.3 Why choose Cambridge O Level Hinduism?

Cambridge O Level Hinduism is recognised by universities and employers as proof of knowledge and understanding.

The Cambridge O Level Hinduism syllabus enables learners to:

- develop their interest in, and enthusiasm for, a study of religion and its relation to the wider world
- develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of Hinduism by exploring the significance and impact of beliefs, teachings, ways of life and forms of expressing meaning
- develop an enquiring and reflective approach to the study of Hinduism
- enhance their spiritual and moral development, and contribute to their health and well being
- enhance their personal, social and cultural development and their understanding of different cultures locally, nationally and in the wider world.

The course looks at aspects of Hindu belief, worship, scripture, ethics, values and reformers. Learners build on this foundation to identify and explore some of the religious and ethical questions raised in the sacred texts of Hinduism. The syllabus will give learners an appreciation of one of the major religions of the world.

Prior learning

Candidates beginning this course are not expected to have studied Hinduism or Religious Studies previously.

Progression

Cambridge O Levels are general qualifications that enable candidates to progress either directly to employment, or to proceed to further qualifications.

Candidates who are awarded grades C to A* in Cambridge O Level Hinduism are well prepared to follow courses leading to Cambridge International AS and A Level Hinduism, Religious Studies, or the equivalent.

1.4 How can I find out more?

If you are already a Cambridge school

You can make entries for this qualification through your usual channels. If you have any questions, please contact us at **info@cambridgeinternational.org**

If you are not yet a Cambridge school

Learn about the benefits of becoming a Cambridge school at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/startcambridge**

Email us at **info@cambridgeinternational.org** to find out how your organisation can register to become a Cambridge school.

2. Teacher support

2.1 Support materials

You can go to our public website at www.cambridgeinternational.org/olevel to download current and future syllabuses together with specimen papers or past question papers, examiner reports and grade threshold tables from one series.

For teachers at registered Cambridge schools a range of additional support materials for specific syllabuses is available online from the School Support Hub. Go to www.cambridgeinternational.org/support (username and password required). If you do not have access, speak to the Teacher Support coordinator at your school.

2.2 Endorsed resources

We work with publishers who provide a range of resources for our syllabuses including print and digital materials. Resources endorsed by Cambridge International go through a detailed quality assurance process to make sure they provide a high level of support for teachers and learners.

We have resource lists which can be filtered to show all resources, or just those which are endorsed by Cambridge International. The resource lists include further suggestions for resources to support teaching. See www.cambridgeinternational.org/i-want-to/resource-centre for further information.

2.3 Training

We offer a range of support activities for teachers to ensure they have the relevant knowledge and skills to deliver our qualifications. See www.cambridgeinternational.org/events for further information.

3. Syllabus content at a glance

Paper 1: Hindu Gods and Festivals

Section A: Gods	Section B: Avatars	Section C: Festivals
<p>The concept of creator, maintainer and destroyer (Trimūrti: Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva).</p> <p>The main iconographic features and attributes of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vishnu 2. Shiva 3. Durga 4. Ganesha 5. Kartikeya (Murugan). 	<p>The concept of incarnation.</p> <p>The meaning, purpose and significance of avatars.</p> <p>The avatars of Vishnu including the life, actions and significance of the following avatars of Vishnu:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vamana 2. Narsimha 3. Rama 4. Krishna. 	<p>The cultural, social and religious significance of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maha Shivaratri 2. Ganesh Chaturthi 3. Cavadi 4. Divali (Deepavali). <p>The different elements of these festivals, including the activities and worship with specific reference to sacrifice, fasting and pilgrimage where appropriate in the context of these festivals.</p>

Paper 2: Scriptures, Ethics and Hindu Life

Section A: Aspects of knowledge, action and devotion	Section B: Hindu life and ceremonies	Section C: Reforms and reformers of the 18th to 20th centuries
<p>The following concepts are to be studied: Brahman, karma, jnana and bhakti.</p> <p>With reference to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mundaka Upanishad – III.1–2.II 2. Chandogya Upanishad – VI.10.1–VI.13.3 3. Bhagavad Gita – Chapter III 4. Shri Ramacharitamana of Tulsidas <p>Kishkinda – Kanda Chaupai 1–5 and Dohas 1–3</p> <p>Aranya Kanda Dohas 33–36.</p>	<p>Principles and structures which guide Hindu living including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the four varnas 2. the four ashramas 3. the four purusharthas 4. the samskaras. 	<p>The work, teachings and legacy of the following reformers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ram Mohan Roy and the Brahmo Samaj 2. Swami Dayananda Saraswati and the Arya Samaj 3. Ramakrishna Paramahansa: his spiritual experiences 4. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi: his concepts of Truth and Non-violence.

4. Assessment at a glance

Candidates take two components.

All candidates take:		Weighting
<p>Paper 1: Hindu Gods and Festivals</p> <p>Candidates answer three questions each worth 20 marks. The paper has three sections. Each section has a choice of two questions. Candidates must answer one question from each section.</p> <p>Section A: Gods Section B: Avatars Section C: Festivals</p>	1 hour 30 minutes	50%
and		
<p>Paper 2: Scriptures, Ethics and Hindu Life</p> <p>Candidates answer three questions each worth 20 marks. The paper has three sections. Each section has a choice of two questions. Candidates must answer one question from each section.</p> <p>Section A: Aspects of knowledge, action and devotion Section B: Hindu life and ceremonies Section C: Reforms and reformers of the 18th to 20th centuries</p>	1 hour 30 minutes	50%

Availability

This syllabus is examined in the November examination series.

This syllabus is available to private candidates.

Detailed timetables are available from www.cambridgeinternational.org/timetables

All Cambridge schools are allocated to one of six administrative zones. Each zone has a specific timetable. From 2020 this syllabus is not available in all administrative zones. To find out about the availability visit the syllabus page at www.cambridgeinternational.org/olevel

Combining this with other syllabuses

Candidates can combine this syllabus in an examination series with any other Cambridge International syllabus, except:

- syllabuses with the same title at the same level.

Please note that Cambridge O Level, Cambridge IGCSE and Cambridge IGCSE (9–1) syllabuses are at the same level.

5. Syllabus aims and assessment objectives

5.1 Syllabus aims

The aims of the syllabus are to:

- encourage learners to adopt an enquiring and reflective approach to the study of Hinduism
- help learners to explore Hindu beliefs, reflect on fundamental questions, engage with them intellectually and respond personally
- help learners develop their interest in and enthusiasm for the study of religion, and relate it to the wider world
- encourage learners to reflect on and develop their own values, opinions and attitudes in light of their learning.

5.2 Assessment objectives

AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the main ideas, concepts and beliefs related to Hindu teachings and tradition

AO2: Use evidence, evaluation and reasoned argument to explain teachings, practices and issues in Hinduism, from differing viewpoints

5.3 Relationship between assessment objectives and components

Assessment objectives	Paper 1 Hindu gods and festivals	Paper 2 Scriptures, ethics and Hindu life	Weighting of AO in overall qualification
AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the main ideas, concepts and beliefs related to Hindu teachings and tradition	50%	50%	50%
AO2: Use evidence, evaluation and reasoned argument to explain teachings, practices and issues in Hinduism, from differing viewpoints	50%	50%	50%
Weighting of paper in overall qualification	50%	50%	

6. Syllabus content

Paper 1: Hindu Gods and Festivals

This paper focuses on Hindu belief about gods, worship and festivals. Candidates are expected to be aware of the common ground that all Hindus share, as well as appreciate the great variety of practices and views found in Hinduism.

Candidates will be required to:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the syllabus content
- explain why Hindus might differ in their attitudes to beliefs about religious stories and traditions, different forms of worship and observance of festivals
- offer explanation of values and practices supported by different opinions expressed in Hindu culture
- present a reasoned response on a topic studied for this Paper, based on evidence gained from independent research and/or personal experience of Hindu belief and practice.

Syllabus content	AO1 learning outcomes	AO2 learning outcomes
<p>Section A: Gods</p> <p>The concept of creator, maintainer and destroyer (Trimūrti: Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva).</p> <p>The main iconographic features and attributes of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vishnu 2. Shiva 3. Durga 4. Ganesha 5. Kartikeya (Murugan). 	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe the gods specified, including how they are portrayed in images (icons, murtis, etc.), stories and teachings • explain the meaning and significance of their iconographic features and attributes • describe and explain the features and attributes which might influence the choice of a god for worship/devotion • where appropriate, relate these features to stories, teachings and traditions. 	<p>Candidates should be able to present reasoned arguments based on study or personal experience to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • why one god might be chosen for worship over another by different individuals, communities or traditions • why the significance given to stories and teachings about the gods might differ for different individuals, communities or traditions • differing views on the symbolic attributes and iconographic features of the gods specified • differing views on the significance of stories, teachings and traditions in relation to the gods.

Syllabus content	AO1 learning outcomes	AO2 learning outcomes
<p>Section B: Avatars</p> <p>The concept of incarnation.</p> <p>The meaning, purpose and significance of avatars.</p> <p>The avatars of Vishnu including the life, actions and significance of the following avatars of Vishnu:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vamana 2. Narsimha 3. Rama 4. Krishna. 	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe the life and actions of the four specified avatars of Vishnu • explain the meaning of the term 'avatars' • explain the purpose and significance of the four specified avatars of Vishnu to Hindu teaching and tradition • describe and explain the features and attributes of an avatar which might make an avatar a popular focus for devotion • where appropriate, relate ideas about the purpose and significance of the avatars to stories and scriptural teachings. 	<p>Candidates should be able to present reasoned arguments based on study or personal experience to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • why one avatar might have particular significance for different individuals, communities or traditions • differing views on the purpose of the avatars • differing views on the significance of stories, teachings and traditions in relation to the avatars.
<p>Section C: Festivals</p> <p>The cultural, social and religious significance of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maha Shivaratri 2. Ganesh Chaturthi 3. Cavadi 4. Divali (Deepavali). <p>The different elements of these festivals, including the activities and worship with specific reference to sacrifice, fasting and pilgrimage where appropriate in the context of these festivals.</p>	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe devotional, family and community activities associated with these four festivals • explain beliefs associated with these festivals, including gods with which they are particularly identified • explain the purpose and significance of devotional activities associated with these festivals • where appropriate, relate particular practices to stories, teachings and traditions. 	<p>Candidates should be able to present reasoned arguments based on study or personal experience to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • why worship and observance at festivals may be different for different individuals, communities or traditions • differing views on worship and observance at these festivals • differing views on the significance of stories, teachings and traditions relating to worship and observance at these festivals.

Paper 2: Scriptures, Ethics and Hindu Life

This paper focuses on Hindu values as studied through scriptures, ethical duties and the lives of reformers. Candidates are expected to be aware of the common ground that all Hindus share, as well as appreciate the great variety of practices and views found in Hinduism.

Candidates will be required to:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the syllabus content
- explain why Hindus might differ in their attitudes to beliefs about religious stories and traditions
- offer explanation of values and practices supported by different opinions expressed in Hindu culture
- present a reasoned response on a topic studied for this Paper, based on evidence gained from independent research and/or personal experience of Hindu belief and practice.

Syllabus content	AO1 learning outcomes	AO2 learning outcomes
<p>Section A: Aspects of knowledge, action and devotion</p> <p>The following concepts are to be studied: Brahman, karma, jnana and bhakti.</p> <p>With reference to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mundaka Upanishad III.1–2.II 2. Chandogya Upanishad – VI.10.1–VI.13.3 3. Bhagavad Gita – Chapter III 4. Shri Ramacharitamans of Tulsidas – the story of the meeting of Rama with Hanuman and Sabrī <p>Kishkinda – Kanda Chaupai 1–5 and Dohas 1–3 (the first 4 Chaupai after Doha 3 inclusive)</p> <p>Aranya – Kanda Dohas 33–36.</p>	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe the content of the prescribed passages of Hindu scripture • explain the meaning of these passages • explain the meaning of the four specified concepts (Brahman, karma, jnana and bhakti) in relation to the teachings of the prescribed scriptural passages. 	<p>Candidates should be able to present reasoned arguments based on study or personal experience to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • why different concepts are given emphasis or significance by different individuals, communities or traditions • how and why the values expressed in ancient Hindu writings can be interpreted in different ways, and consider why this can cause disagreement • the relative significance of the specified concepts and the scriptures as religious texts.

Syllabus content	AO1 learning outcomes	AO2 learning outcomes
<p>Section B: Hindu life and ceremonies</p> <p>Principles and structures which guide Hindu living, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the four varnas <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. brahmin ii. kshatriya iii. vaishya iv. shudra 2. the four ashramas <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. brahmacharya ii. grihastha iii. vanaprastha iv. sannyasa 3. the four purusharthas <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. dharma ii. artha iii. kama iv. moksha 4. the samskaras with specific reference to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. namakarana ii. upanayana iii. vivaha iv. antyeshti. 	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe the concepts of varna, ashrama, purushartha and samskara • explain how these concepts might be understood and put into practice by Hindus today • explain how these concepts and associated practices and traditions might relate to ethical thinking and decision making • explain the purpose and significance of the four identified samskaras according to Hindu teaching and tradition. 	<p>Candidates should be able to present reasoned arguments based on study or personal experience to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • why the application and practice of the identified concepts may be different in the modern world than they have been in the past • the contribution of these concepts to Hindu ethical thought • differing views on the application of these concepts to ethical matters • differing views on the significance of the samskaras in Hindu life.

The focus of this section is faith in action. Candidates should consider how the beliefs held by these reformers shaped their actions and life choices and how their lives influenced their teachings about Hinduism.

Dates are included to give these reformers a historical context but specific knowledge of dates will **not** be assessed.

Syllabus content	AO1 learning outcomes	AO2 learning outcomes
<p>Section C: Reforms and reformers of the 18th to 20th centuries</p> <p>The work, teachings and legacy of the following reformers:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ram Mohan Roy (1772–1833) and the Brahmo Samaj <p>Context and significance of the following life events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> his upbringing, education and marriage in childhood his writings and debates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> on interpretation of Hindu, Muslim and Christian scriptures on social issues of caste, education and the rights of women his campaign to prohibit sati, under Lord William Bentinck, Governor-General of British India his founding and leadership of the Brahmo Samaj his journey to Europe and stay in Britain, where he died. 	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand the historical context in which each of the reformers lived and taught, and relate this to their lives and teachings describe the core elements of the identified teachings of each reformer where appropriate, relate elements or events from the biography to the teachings of the reformer understand the legacy the work and teaching of the specified reformer has had on Hinduism today. 	<p>Candidates should be able to present reasoned arguments based on study or personal experience to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> why different reformers may be given greater prominence by different individuals, communities or traditions the influence of the reformers on individuals, society and Hinduism why aspects of the work and teachings of the specified reformers might cause controversy how the life experiences of the reformers influenced their actions and teachings.

Syllabus content	AO1 learning outcomes	AO2 learning outcomes
<p>2. Swami Dayananda Saraswati (1824–1883) and the Arya Samaj</p> <p>Context and significance of the following life events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • his early education and rejection of idol worship • his years as a sannyasi and Vedic education under Virjananda • his meeting with Brahma members in 1872 and decision to teach in Hindi • his founding (1875) and leadership of the Arya Samaj • his lectures and writings on interpretation of the Vedas, the varnas, the position of women and the education of children. 	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand the historical context in which each of the reformers lived and taught, and relate this to their lives and teachings • describe the core elements of the identified teachings of each reformer • where appropriate, relate elements or events from the biography to the teachings of the reformer • understand the legacy the work and teaching of the specified reformer has had on Hinduism today. 	<p>Candidates should be able to present reasoned arguments based on study or personal experience to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • why different reformers may be given greater prominence by different individuals, communities or traditions • the influence of the reformers on individuals, society and Hinduism • why aspects of the work and teachings of the specified reformers might cause controversy • how the life experiences of the reformers influenced their actions and teachings.
<p>3. Ramakrishna Paramahansa (1833–1886): his spiritual experiences</p> <p>Context and significance of the following life events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • his early life, his visionary experiences and desire to devote himself to God as Mother • his instruction by a Brahmin woman and a guru (Totapuri) • his celibate marriage • his encounter with Swami Vivekananda. 		

Syllabus content	AO1 learning outcomes	AO2 learning outcomes
<p>4. Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869–1948): his concepts of Truth and Non-violence</p> <p>Context and significance of the following life events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • his early life, marriage and family influences that shaped his principles during his stay overseas • his unflinching faith in God and his attitude towards other religions • his efforts to improve conditions for the poor and powerless • his concepts of Truth, Non-violence and <i>Satyagraha</i>. 	<p>Candidates should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand the historical context in which each of the reformers lived and taught, and relate this to their lives and teachings • describe the core elements of the identified teachings of each reformer • where appropriate, relate elements or events from the biography to the teachings of the reformer • understand the legacy the work and teaching of the specified reformer has had on Hinduism today. 	<p>Candidates should be able to present reasoned arguments based on study or personal experience to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • why different reformers may be given greater prominence by different individuals, communities or traditions • the influence of the reformers on individuals, society and Hinduism • why aspects of the work and teachings of the specified reformers might cause controversy • how the life experiences of the reformers influenced their actions and teachings.

7. Other information

Equality and inclusion

We have taken great care in the preparation of this syllabus and assessment materials to avoid bias of any kind. To comply with the UK Equality Act (2010), we have designed this qualification with the aim of avoiding direct and indirect discrimination.

The standard assessment arrangements may present unnecessary barriers for candidates with disabilities or learning difficulties. Arrangements can be put in place for these candidates to enable them to access the assessments and receive recognition of their attainment. Access arrangements will not be agreed if they give candidates an unfair advantage over others or if they compromise the standards being assessed.

Candidates who are unable to access the assessment of any component may be eligible to receive an award based on the parts of the assessment they have taken.

Information on access arrangements is found in the *Cambridge Handbook* which can be downloaded from the website **www.cambridgeinternational.org/examsOfficers**

Language

This syllabus and the associated assessment materials are available in English only.

Grading and reporting

Cambridge O Level results are shown by one of the grades A*, A, B, C, D or E, indicating the standard achieved, A* being the highest and E the lowest. 'Ungraded' indicates that the candidate's performance fell short of the standard required for grade E. 'Ungraded' will be reported on the statement of results but not on the certificate. The letters Q (result pending), X (no result) and Y (to be issued) may also appear on the statement of results but not on the certificate.

Exam administration

To keep our exams secure, we produce question papers for different areas of the world, known as 'administrative zones'. We allocate all Cambridge schools to one administrative zone determined by their location. Each zone has a specific timetable. Some of our syllabuses offer candidates different assessment options. An entry option code is used to identify the components the candidate will take relevant to the administrative zone and the available assessment options.

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