

Collins

Key Stage 3

Hinduism

Teacher Material

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Introduction

Knowing Religion provides an overview of the origins and development of religions over the course of history, as well as how they are lived and the challenges they face in the modern world. The books are designed to build students' thinking from the bottom up, with subject knowledge providing a gateway to a rich and rewarding understanding of religion and religions.

Recent work by cognitive scientists has shown that students need to have a large amount of subject knowledge stored in their long-term memory in order to become competent at any subject. Students are far more capable of thinking critically when faced with topics they know and understand. For this reason, *Knowing Religion* is designed to teach about religions in a clear and cumulative way, where content knowledge is secured before complex tasks are undertaken.

Like all subjects, religion is best understood by relating new information to prior knowledge. For example, students will better understand the significance of Constantine's conversion to Christianity if they have previously learnt about the persecution faced by Christians in the first three centuries. Therefore, it is useful to recap information and vocabulary from previous topics before each new one is introduced.

The *Teacher Guide* suggests a range of activities designed to consolidate and enhance learning from the Student Books. It includes evaluative tasks and those intended to provide both additional support and extra challenge to allow for differentiation in the classroom. Resources are suggested to support some specific activities, and some general resources are provided in addition to these, which may be useful for a range of activities and scenarios to support learning. These have been carefully chosen to seize students' interest and complement the material in the Student Book.

In each topic, a core narrative or set of ideas is presented. For ease of reference, in the Student Books key content is collected in a 'Knowledge organiser' at the end of each unit. Knowledge organisers allow students to test themselves. They also allow teachers to design quick factual recall tests, ensuring that all students master important knowledge at an early stage. To assist in this, the key vocabulary and key people are reproduced in the *Teacher Guide* too.

Knowing Religion provides an essential framework for students to learn about religions, but it does not pretend to be exhaustive. It should be complemented with as many activities and texts from other sources that you – the teacher – see fit.

Lesson structure

The recommended lesson structure for teaching from *Knowing Religion* is based on cognitive science and research into highly effective teachers, adapted for use in the RE classroom. It follows a structure of **recap, pre-teach, read, condense, apply, review**.

1 RECAP previous learning: Start lessons with a short review of previous learning. This serves two purposes:

- Frequent review of subject content strengthens its place in students' long-term memory and helps make the recall of words, people, events and concepts automatic.
- It brings to the front of students' minds the relevant prior knowledge that they need to draw upon to understand the new content. This may come from the immediately preceding topic, or from earlier in the book. For the benefit of teachers who have not covered all the previous topics, essential knowledge and key words are noted in this guide.

Recap material could be covered through a starter activity, a short quiz or oral question and answer.

2 PRE-TEACH difficult new material: Before reading the text, you may want to 'pre-teach' any particularly challenging new material. This could include key terms, complicated geography or a difficult concept.

3 READ new material: Each topic is around 800 words. You may wish to ask students to read sections of the text independently or choose to read it as a whole class. Along the way, make sure that you are continually asking questions, illustrating important points and explaining anything that students may be confused about.

4 CONDENSE new material into an easily understood format: Students should then reproduce the information in a new format that will aid their understanding. This can be something as simple as answering comprehension questions, but activities could also include annotating maps, images or pieces of text.

These activities should be followed by a whole-class check, to ensure that students have completed the task correctly and to clarify any confusion that may have arisen. This can be done through self-assessment, peer-assessment or simple question and answer.

5 APPLY new knowledge: Having acquired new knowledge, it is then time to apply it. This could take place at the end of the lesson or during a following lesson. Ways to apply new knowledge include:

- further reading: once students have mastered the basic concepts of a topic in *Knowing Religion*, you may want to introduce a more complex or detailed text. This could include a passage from a holy text, an article from a newspaper or magazine, an extract from a book or from a reputable online source.
- extended writing: answering a well-designed question encourages students to think more deeply about the content they have studied. The five 'Check your understanding' questions at the end of each topic can be used as a basis for such questions. Extended writing should encourage students to make links between different religions they have studied, building increasingly complex networks of understanding.

6 REVIEW material learnt: Lessons should be interspersed with quick diagnostic checks, to ascertain the level of understanding that students have achieved. The quiz questions included in the *Teacher Guide* (20 per unit) can help with this. Such activities are crucial in helping to strengthen student memory: the more students rehearse and review information, the stronger their memory becomes.

End of unit essays: You may want to end each unit with a piece of extended writing, answering a question that draws upon knowledge from all the topics or scatter these through the 16 topics. The fifth 'Check your understanding' question regularly provides students with opportunity and flexibility to do this.

Further reading

Daniel T. Willingham, *Why Don't Students Like School?: A Cognitive Scientist Answers Questions About How the Mind Works*, 2009

Peter C. Brown (*et al*), *Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning*, 2014

Barak Rosenshine, 'Principles of Instruction: Research-Based Strategies That All Teachers Should Know' in *American Educator*, 2012

Shaun Allison and Andy Tharby, *Making Every Lesson Count: Six Principles to Support Great Teaching and Learning*, 2015

Knowing Religion Teacher Guide

Hinduism

Activities

- 1 To develop students' evaluative writing, discursive statements are frequently used in the fifth 'Check your understanding' question in each topic. These can form the basis of paired/class debate as well as offering an opportunity to work on students' extended writing and prepare them for the demands of evaluative questions asked at GCSE. To add support, it might be useful to show students sample paragraphs of model answers with different elements of the paragraph (e.g. point, evidence, evaluation, link to question) colour coded so that students can see how good paragraphs are structured or formed. You could support students by providing sentence starters and examples of subject-specific vocabulary to be used in answers, as well as non-subject specific vocabulary – for example, give them different connectives that could be used in writing. After completing essays, photocopy the best answer for all students to read through. Annotate strengths and weaknesses as a class so that students can see how to improve their work.
- 2 Students who have studied religions other than Hinduism in the *Knowing Religion* series will be able to draw comparisons between them on various issues. This could form the basis of discussion or written activities. For example, students could write the script of a discussion/debate between followers of two or more religions on questions such as:
 - What is God like?
 - What happens when we die?
 - Why is there suffering in the world?
 - Should religions adapt over time or stay the same?
 - Does gender matter?
 - Is it ever right to fight?
- 3 Different religions can have radically different ideas of what God is. It is helpful for students to understand the varieties of theism (a corrective to the teaching they may have encountered at KS2, in which religions can end up being primarily distinguished by their festivals and customs). Commonly accepted types of theism include: monotheism, polytheism, henotheism, and pantheism. For Year 8 give definitions of these, and for Year 9 allow them to find definitions on their devices before introducing definitive versions:
 - **Monotheism:** Worship of and belief in only one god.
 - **Polytheism:** Worship and belief in several gods.
 - **Henotheism:** Believing multiple gods exist, but worshipping one of them as the supreme god.
 - **Pantheism:** Believing that God is in everything, and that the entire universe is God.Ask students to create a diagrammatic illustration of this information. Encourage them to be creative with what they draw to represent each type of theism. If completed on A3 with a nicely written definition with examples of religions for each type this can produce very attractive display work.

For extra challenge, ask students to explain why they have put a religion in a particular category. For Hinduism, the most able students can be assigned to discuss whether it is polytheistic, monotheistic, henotheistic or pantheistic, as it has been called all four at various times!

For Year 9, once they have studied Buddhism, you could extend this by introducing the idea that Buddhism is a non-theistic religion, and thus is in another category entirely.

- 4 Students could read and personally engage with one of the most famous and striking sections of Bhagavad Gita. In Chapter 11, verses 1–31, Krishna, an avatar of Vishnu, reveals his true divine form to his disciple Arjuna, one of the heroes of the epic story of the Mahabharata. Give students a copy of this extract and have students take turns reading verses aloud. The Bhagavad Gita, like many texts, was composed to be recited as a performance.

Other activities related to this passage could be:

- Ask students to produce captioned illustrations from the text (Year 7).
- Ask a series of questions about what Krishna's true form is like and how Arjuna might have felt on seeing it.
- More challenging questions could relate to whether it is ever possible to imagine what God looks like, and what the text tells us about God for Vaishnavas.
- Show students a copy of Bible passages such as Exodus 19 or Ezekiel 1, and ask them to draw comparison between them and the passage from the Bhagavad Gita.
- You could also ask students to write a first person diary entry for Arjuna written shortly after seeing the form of Vishnu. This is a good opportunity to develop students' phenomenological skills, so they should be asked to particularly reflect on the experience of seeing Krishna's form and what it might inspire in a religious person.

Resources

<http://asitis.com/11>

A free-to-use translation of the theophany section of the Bhagavad Gita for use with Activity 4.

- 5 The caste system exists in countries beyond India. A lesson or two on this idea could introduce the medieval feudal system (older students might be reminded that we still call our branches of government 'lords' and 'commons'). It might also be interesting to look at the Egyptian caste system. Either way, a class debate is a great way to explore the concept. Two teams with three or four speakers on each team (giving a speech of a minute or two), with those less keen to speak assigned to thinking of points/research. One team should argue for the benefits of having a system where people have no choice of their occupation, and the other team argues against this. The teams will probably need some help with this, so spend time with each, or set debate preparation for homework.

Themes to explore in a debate include both the hierarchy involved in a caste system (and whether this has to be the case) and the specialisation involved (and whether heredity is the best way to assign specialisations).

Differentiation and extension: All students should be able to understand what a caste system is and understand that points might be made for or against it. All students can develop confidence presenting arguments orally from participating in the debate. A little instruction on good (if not theatrical) debating stance and verbal delivery can make a rather intellectual task more engaging.

Students can be stretched and challenged by attempting to develop skills of rebuttal and counterargument by considering how to respond to their peers' points in the debate. Another way of extending the task is to do more historical reading on what it was like to live in heavily hierarchical/caste-based societies.

- 6 Give students two images – one of Shiva and one of Vishnu. Leave a border around the image. Students can use the symbols in the book to start with, then use internet searches to find the meaning of symbols. The aim is to label the images as comprehensively as possible, ideally with a longer explanation and description of each symbol on the other side of the page, or on a large border if on A3 paper. Good images of the gods should feature most of the following:
- **Shiva:** bull, mountains, meditation posture, animal hide, long/dreaded hair, snake, lines on forehead, third eye, trident, linga
 - **Vishnu:** mace, discus (chakra), lotus, conch, snake, ocean of milk, four arms, victory garland around neck (vajrayanati)

Alternatively, prepare cards prior to the lesson with a description of each symbol (use the internet to find more information if necessary). Put the textbook away for the lesson. Distribute the cards around the class (one or two per table) and have the students 'trade' them to gain a complete set of symbols for each god.

To make this more challenging, encourage students to recognise that symbols can have multiple meanings and may not have one 'true' meaning in a way that, for example, a road sign might. Ask them to note down alternative interpretations and, perhaps to write some answers to follow-up questions on symbolism such as:

- Why do religions have symbols?
- What is the link between symbols and meditation?

Another extension task would be to go back to the Bhagavad Gita theophany (Activity 3) and reflect on what symbols are present there – does God really have a fiery mouth and fearsome teeth, or does this symbolise something else?

- 7 Dramatic adaptations of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana have been made for thousands of years. Students could write scripts for part of the story and act out such scripts in the drama studio. Or they could produce a prose adaptation of the stories for homework. If you have a few lessons free, it might be fun to prepare a 'scenes from the Mahabharata' performance.

More able students can be challenged to consider the intent and meaning of parts of these stories. Is the Mahabharata a classic battle between good and evil? Or is it a warning against war generally, given the empty victory the Pandavas win?

Resources

http://www.mythfolklore.net/india/orientation/content_2.htm

<http://larryavisbrown.homestead.com/files/xeno.mahabsynop.htm>

http://college.holycross.edu/projects/himalayan_cultures/2006_plans/ptiernan/story.htm

Plot summaries of the Mahabharata and Ramayana.

- 8 Students could produce biographies in students' own words of great Hindu figures. They could use the figures in the book – Shankara, Caitanya, Amma, and Gandhi – and research more about their lives. There is a huge amount of material available on the internet.

Students can be stretched by asking them to evaluate sources relating to these figures. Shankara, for example, lived in a distant age and the only sources available for his life are highly devotional.

- 9 Fast-paced, whole-class recap questioning at the start of lessons will inject energy and focus, and help students commit prior knowledge to memory. Regularly setting revision of key vocabulary definitions and key people descriptions as homework also helps students remember what they have learned. This can be monitored by quick quizzes at the start of lessons. These quizzes could contain ten questions, with difficulty levels adapted to match class abilities. A quick and efficient way to do these quizzes is as follows:

- Give students half a piece of lined paper when they arrive at the lesson and ask them to write their name and the numbers 1–10 on it. (Alternatively, you can give students a printed copy of questions.)
- Read out each question twice. Questions with one or two short, clear answers are better than those with a variety of possibilities that students will want to check.
- Ask them to peer mark in a different colour pen. (Silently swapping papers with someone who is not sitting next to them will help avoid talking/disputes!)
- Whilst marking, students should correct any wrong answers. This will reinforce the answers and help students remember for future quizzes.
- Students can stick their quizzes in a book and record their scores with a date in a table at the back. You can also collect scores. The whole process should take no longer than 10 minutes.

Another way of doing this is to give students a list of key words with definitions missing, or vice versa, and ask them to fill in the gaps. To add greater support, give students both the key words and definitions and ask them to match the key words with the correct definitions.

General resources

<https://www.hafsite.org/resources/hinduism101>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/hinduism/>

<http://resources.woodlands.kent.sch.uk/Homework/religion/hinduism.htm>

<http://www.hindunet.org/>

Quizzes

Unit 1: History and belief

- 1 How many Hindus are there in the world?
- 2 What is the name given to the oldest Hindu texts and what language are they written in?
- 3 State one way that Vedic Hinduism was different to modern Hinduism.
- 4 What is the name given to Hindus who worship Shiva as the supreme God?
- 5 What is the name given to Hindus who worship Vishnu as the supreme God?
- 6 What word is used to describe Vishnu coming to earth?
- 7 Name two symbols you might see in an image of Vishnu or Shiva.
- 8 One of the epics is called the Ramayana. What is the other one called?
- 9 What are the King and Queen called in the Ramayana?
- 10 What is the name of the king of the monkeys who helps the King find the queen after Ravana kidnaps her?
- 11 What is the name given to the continual process of death and rebirth that we are travelling through according to Hindus?
- 12 What word means your soul is reborn into a new body?
- 13 What is the name given to the force that Hindus believe determines how your soul is reborn?
- 14 State two ways that moksha can be achieved.
- 15 What is the name of the moral law that Hindus try to follow?
- 16 What is the upanayana?
- 17 Who is Arjuna?

- 18 Name two elements of yoga.
- 19 What is an ascetic?
- 20 Why do people travel to see Mata Devi?

Unit 2: Hinduism in the modern world

- 1 What is puja?
- 2 What is a murti?
- 3 What is darshan?
- 4 What is a mantra?
- 5 What is a mandir?
- 6 Name one 'tirtha'
- 7 What is the Kumbh Mela?
- 8 Name two things Hindus might remember at Diwali.
- 9 How might a Hindu show devotion at Thaipusam?
- 10 What is the modern name for Untouchables?
- 11 Which caste has been seen as highest throughout Hindu history?
- 12 State one way that Untouchables have been/are persecuted.
- 13 State one way that Gandhi opposed caste based discrimination.
- 14 What is pantheism?
- 15 What is meant by ahimsa?
- 16 What is meant by patriarchal?
- 17 What was sati?
- 18 Who is Bhumi Devi?
- 19 What is the goddess Ganga more commonly known as?
- 20 State one way that Hinduism has influenced world culture.

Key vocabulary

Unit 1: History and belief

ascetic Someone who lives a simple life away from society, usually to become closer to the supreme being or to achieve moksha (also known as a sadhu)

Aum A sacred syllable that is very important to Hindus and which they chant

avatar A god who descends to earth as a human or other animal in order to fight evil and re-establish goodness

bhakti A Sanskrit word meaning 'devotion' or 'worship'; some Hindus believe that bhakti alone can be a way to achieve moksha

Brahman A supreme being in which most modern Hindus believe; the source of everything, including the gods

chakra A word meaning 'wheel', one of the weapons that Hindu gods may carry

deity A god or goddess

dharma The moral law that Hindus must follow; the word can be translated as 'duty' or 'righteousness'

ecstasy An extreme feeling of happiness and joy

karma The forces that influence people's fortune and future reincarnation

Mahabharata An epic story that is inspirational for Hindus

meditation The practice of focusing the mind

moksha Escaping from samsara and never dying or becoming reincarnated again; the term literally means 'release'

monotheist Someone who believes in only one god

polytheistic Referring to belief in many gods; someone who believes in many gods is a polytheist

Purana A Hindu text that is more recent than the Vedas, but is still thought to contain profound wisdom and teachings

Ramayana An epic story that is inspirational for Hindus

reincarnated When a soul is reborn by passing into a new body

Rishis The Vedic people who first heard the Vedas and taught them to others

sacrifice A method of worship that involves offering animals or food to the gods

samsara The continual process of death and reincarnation; also the entire universe as we know it

sanatana dharma Eternal dharma or law; this never changes and is always good, regardless of the time and place

Sanskrit A language used in ancient India, which many Hindu texts are written in

Shaiva A Hindu who believes that Shiva is the supreme god

shruti A word referring to religious teachings that are revealed to Rishis directly from God

symbol An image that expresses religious ideas

tapas Literally 'heat'; ascetics and people practising yoga intensively generate tapas

Trimurti A term for the three main Hindu gods: Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva

trishula A word meaning 'three spears', another weapon symbolising the power and authority of the gods

upanayana A traditional Hindu ceremony that children undergo when they are ready to be educated about the Vedas and other sacred texts

vahana An animal 'vehicle' that transports Hindu deities

Vaishnava A Hindu who believes that Vishnu is the Supreme God

Vedas A collection of sacred writings, literally meaning 'knowledge'

vibhuti The three white lines on Shiva's forehead, which represent his superhuman powers

yoga Controlling the mind and body to purify yourself and achieve moksha

Unit 2: Hinduism in the modern world

ahimsa Literally 'non-harming' or 'non-violence'; a Hindu teaching that encourages peaceful resolution of conflict and kindness towards other living creatures

caste system A series of social classes that determine someone's job and status in society

darshan 'Seeing' God; a form of worship and devotion in which the murti of a deity is revealed to worshippers

dharti 'She who holds everything' – a way of referring to the earth goddess

Diwali The festival of lights, celebrated by nearly all Hindus

kavadi A burden carried during the Thaipusam festival to express devotion to Murugan

mandir A Hindu term for a temple

mantra An extract from a sacred text that is chanted repeatedly during worship

murti An image of a god or goddess

pantheism The belief that God is in everything

patriarchal society A culture that is dominated or controlled by men

puja The Sanskrit word for worship

Ratha Yatra A Vaishnava festival in Puri, involving a procession of murtis in chariots

sati When a woman throws herself onto her husband's funeral pyre

Thaipusam A Shaiva festival to worship Murugan, the god of war

tirtha A 'crossing place', where a deity enters the human world; for this reason, they are places of pilgrimage

Key people and gods

Unit 1: History and belief

Agni The Vedic god of fire who consumed the food offered in sacrifices and made it acceptable to other gods

Arjuna A heroic character in the Mahabharata who obeys Krishna by fighting against his own family in order to follow dharma

Brahma One of the main three Hindu gods; the creator of the world

Brahman Supreme being in which most modern Hindus believe; the source of everything, including the gods

Caitanya An exuberant worshipper of Krishna who lived from 1486 to 1534

Ganesha The elephant-headed god of wisdom

Indra The Vedic god of sky, who sent thunderbolts to earth

Kalki A warrior on a white horse; the form that Hindus believe the final avatar of Vishnu will take

Krishna One of the avatars of Vishnu; a charioteer who instructs Arjuna how to live a good life. He is a very popular deity

Lakshmi The god Vishnu's wife; the goddess of wealth

Manu A legendary man saved by the fish avatar of Vishnu

Parvati The god Shiva's wife; a goddess of love and fertility

Rama King in the Ramayana whose wife Sita is abducted by Ravana; he defeats Ravana

Ravana The many-armed demon who abducted Sita

Rudra A much-feared Vedic god who inflicted illness upon farm animals

Shankara An intelligent ascetic who lived 1300 years ago

Shiva One of the main three Hindu gods; the preserver of the world

Sita The wife of Rama in the Ramayana kidnapped by Ravana

Vishnu One of the main three Hindu gods; the preserver of the world

Vishvamitra A character in the Ramayana who had built up massive power and great abilities by meditating and fasting

Unit 2: Hinduism in the modern world

Bhumi Devi 'Mother Earth' – the earth seen as a goddess

Gandhi A Hindu who lived from 1869 to 1948, who opposed caste-based discrimination and led peaceful protests for Indian independence

Ganga A goddess who formed the river Ganges

Jagannath An important deity for many Hindus, believed to be a form of Vishnu

Murugan A fierce god of war worshipped as a form of Shiva at Thaipusam

Purusha A mythical giant whose vast body was sacrificed by the gods to create human society

Yama The god of death

Answers to ‘Check your understanding’ questions

1.1 What is Hinduism?

1 When and where did Hinduism begin?

In India around 3000 years ago.

2 What are Hindu sacred texts called and in what language were they written?

The four Vedas, written in Sanskrit.

3 Explain at least two differences between Vedic religion and modern Hinduism.

Reduction in animal sacrifice and move from polytheism to a belief in one god with many forms.

4 Why is there so much diversity in Hinduism today?

Hinduism developed in different areas of the world; it has a natural tendency to tolerate different approaches; it has existed for a long time so has undergone many changes and additions.

5 How is Hinduism different from one other religion that you have studied?

Points of difference might include Hinduism’s age, the multiple deities in early times, existence of animal sacrifice.

1.2 Hindu gods and goddesses

1 What is the difference between Shaivas and Vaishnavas?

Shaivas believe that Shiva is the supreme god, whereas Vaishnavas believe that Vishnu is.

2 Explain why Hindus might worship a god traditionally worshipped in their local area.

They are considered to be a form or extension of the supreme god.

3 According to the Shiva Purana, why does Ganesha have an elephant head?

Shiva cut off his human head and was later forced to replace it with an elephant head.

4 What do Vaishnavas believe about avatars?

Avatars are forms of Vishnu. He takes these forms periodically to fight evil at particularly crucial times. Examples might be given from the list.

5 Are Hindus monotheists or polytheists? Explain your answer fully.

Good answers will draw upon the previous topic to point out that many Hindus have been polytheists at some point in history. They should also recognise that, for all the forms, consorts and avatars, many Hindus believe that there is only one supreme deity who appears in these many forms. This is a form of monotheism. Some students might make a valid comparison with the Christian trinity, since Christians are undoubtedly monotheists, yet they believe in the mystery of three persons in one.

1.3 How do Hindus use symbols?

1 What is a symbol?

A symbol is an image that expresses religious ideas.

2 What could Vishnu’s four arms represent?

Vishnu’s arms represent his powers, which are numerous, as well as his lordship of all four directions.

3 Explain which symbols in the picture of Shiva refer to meditation.

Legs crossed in meditation posture; sitting in the remote location of Mount Kailasa; wearing an animal skin, showing he is devoted to meditation; vibhuti and the third eye, symbolising, respectively, powers and insight gained through meditation.

4 Explain what the weapons of Shiva and Vishnu might symbolise for Hindus.

Generally, the willingness and ability of the gods to righteously intervene in the world, as well as their authority. Specifically, the chakra can represent unlimited power, whilst Shiva's trishula can represent his role as the destroyer of the world at the end of each cycle, so that it can be created anew. The trishula, as with the trimurti, might be an opportunity with older children to draw their attention to various similarities between Sanskrit and English; I found students quite interested in the story of the migration of the Indo-Europeans from the steppes to India, Iran and Europe.

5 Explain, with examples, why symbols are important in Hinduism.

Points might include:

- They represent important aspects of God. In this sense, they allow Hindus to understand their religion and beliefs better.
- The rich visual material they consist of is more effective than mere written or verbal instruction.
- Symbols appeal to humans' aesthetic, emotional, and intuitive sides.
(KS3 is a little early to introduce Paul Tillich, but the basic point of the richness of symbols compared to mere signs is certainly something KS3 students can appreciate.)

1.4 Sacred texts

1 Why are the Vedas sometimes called 'shruti'?

Because 'shruti' roughly means 'heard', and the Vedas were supposedly 'heard' or 'received' by the sages who passed them on. They are revelations, rather than human compositions.

2 When were the Vedas written and how long did this process take?

They were written around 1500–500 BCE. (It is worth noting that there is an overwhelming scholarly consensus about this, but there are also Hindus who believe the Vedas are much older.)

3 Explain what happens in the Ramayana and why Hindus find it inspiring.

The basic narrative arc is the capture of Sita by a demon and her subsequent rescue by Rama and a group of righteous mythological characters.

4 Explain what happens in the Bhagavad Gita and why Hindus find it inspiring.

The Bhagavad Gita is mostly a long dialogue between Arjuna, a legendary human hero, and Krishna, an avatar of Vishnu. It is inspiring because it gives clear, concentrated teachings on society, religion and ethics. It also contains a description of Krishna revealing his celestial form to Arjuna.

5 What are the Puranas and what might they teach Hindus?

The Puranas are later texts than the Vedas that contain ancient wisdom. They often have teachings particularly important to one sect, for example, Shaivas or Vaishnavas. They can deal with proper devotion to God as well as the apocalyptic teachings concerning the end of the current age. Alert students may refer back to the Shiva Purana from Topic 1.2.

1.5 Karma, samsara and moksha

1 Explain what Hindus mean by reincarnation.

By reincarnation, Hindus mean a soul being reborn in a new body.

2 How is a soul's next reincarnation decided?

By how much good and bad karma it has stored up.

3 What is moksha and why is it difficult to imagine what moksha is like?

Moksha is liberation from samsara. It is having no further births or deaths – the goal of Hindus. It is difficult to imagine because everything we know and experience is in Samsara.

4 Describe two ways to achieve moksha.

Yoga – intensive meditation and fasting. Leads to creating no further karma and thus no further rebirth. Bhakti – faithful devotion leading eventually to being perfectly devoted to God. It purifies the soul and thus leads to no further karma or rebirth.

5 'Karma, reincarnation and moksha do not exist.' Discuss this statement.

Students might discuss whether there is any evidence for past lives. Some might have heard of people with memories of past lives. Others might explore whether, in general, the wicked meet with bad consequences and good acts are rewarded. Some students may recognise that the idea of reincarnation and karma can survive a lack of direct evidence for rewards and punishments by claiming that these happen in the next life, so current fortunate and unfortunate people owe at least some of this fortune to karma in previous lives. A broader question that could be explored is whether karma implies fatalism, and whether that undermines people's motivation to live good lives.

1.6 Dharma

1 What does the word 'dharma' mean?

'Dharma' means duty or righteousness; the rules and principles that Hindus must follow.

2 What did behaving in accordance with dharma mean for Sita?

For Sita, dharma meant being loyal to Rama and not giving up hope.

3 Describe the two ways that Rama needed to follow dharma in the Ramayana.

As king, ruling with justice and setting a good example. As a husband, rescuing his wife from Ravana no matter what the risks were.

4 Explain how dharma changes at different stages of life.

Duties of children, duties of adults to raise children, duties of adults to look after parents, should be mentioned.

5 Using these pages and page 10, describe how Vishnu upholds dharma.

Good answers will explore the role of the avatars in defeating evil and upholding the overall righteousness of the universe. Students could also look at Vishnu's descent as Krishna, whose useful (and highly dharmic) teaching to humanity is contained in the Bhagavad Gita.

1.7 What is yoga?

1 Explain what the word 'yoga' means and why it is important to Hindus.

As key vocabulary. Students might also make reference to yoking, although I suspect the word doesn't crop up much for them!

2 Describe three parts of yoga.

Asana, pranayama and dhyana, as described. The key takeaway from this piece of comprehension is that yoga is not just postures – it is a whole system, of which postures are a part.

3 Explain what an ascetic lifestyle involves and why people choose to follow it.

Students should draw on the details of fasting, living outdoors, living nomadically, having few possessions. It should hopefully be evident to them that this is not mere homelessness or poverty, as the lifestyle aims for an important goal.

4 How did Vishvamitra use the powers he gained from living an ascetic life?

Besides the unfortunate petrification incident, students should note that Vishvamitra helped people in need in a particularly selfless way. One thing they might be encouraged to reflect on is whether the yogic/ascetic life helps with not being selfish.

5 'The most spiritual life is an ascetic life.' Do you agree?

This is a deliberately open question. Students could explore whether it is actually more spiritual to be a priest or focus on bhakti. Or they might argue that it's a matter for the individual, and only some people are suited to an ascetic life. They should at least note the potential benefits of asceticism for spirituality – less distraction from worldly matters, a sense of being close to God, opportunity and time to practise yoga, etc.

1.8 Extraordinary individuals

1 Why do Hindus see Manu as a good person?

Manu was compassionate to the fish; he showed great devotion to God;

2 Describe what happened when Shankara visited the old woman.

The old woman was so faithful that she was willing to give her last piece of fruit as a donation. Shankara recognised and acknowledged this gift, and the woman was rewarded by the goddess Lakshmi. This might be a great chance to remind students of the New Testament story of the old woman in the temple and its parallels here.

3 Describe the way that Caitanya worshipped Vishnu.

The key points are that Caitanya's bhakti was ecstatic and emotional. Illustrations of this are the dancing, singing and general joyfulness.

4 Explain the differences between Shankara and Caitanya.

Students should ideally contrast Shankara's highly learned, relatively academic, intellectual teaching and Caitanya's embrace of a more spontaneous and ecstatic approach. This question could be used as a springboard for exploring ways that individuals may differ in how they are drawn to express religious inclinations.

5 Why might Hindus see Amma as an important spiritual teacher?

There are a variety of reasons: Amma's compassion; her selflessness; her being a good ambassador for the Hindu faith; her ability to inspire others. Some students might also pick up on the fact that Amma was able to resist an arranged marriage, which they may find inspiring.

2.1 Forms and places of worship

1 What is puja?

Puja is worship.

2 What religious activities do Hindus perform in the home?

Hindus perform religious activities such as making offerings and reciting mantras, often in a small house shrine.

3 What is a murti?

A murti is an image of the deity. It is more than just a picture, though – it has a special connection to the deity. In this sense it is a symbol in the strongest sense of the word.

4 Why is darshan important for Hindus?

Darshan is important because it is a form of worship. To see the murti with the attitude of devotion is to receive the blessing of the deity. Students might also note that, since darshan happens in the presence of a murti, it is an important thing because it is a moment when one is, in some sense, in the presence of the deity.

5 Explain how Hindu temples or mandirs are built in a symbolic way.

Answers should refer to the grid of 64 squares, the important position given to the murti, the presence of statues, and the structure of the temple mirroring the structure of the universe. It might be interesting for students to compare this to richly symbolic buildings in other religions, for example the gothic cathedrals.

2.2 Places of pilgrimage

1 What does the word 'tirtha' mean?

'Tirtha' means 'crossing place'.

2 Why do many Hindus believe that the River Ganges is sacred?

Ganga is a goddess in her own right. The sacred status is also enhanced by the mythical story of Ganga's descent through the matted locks of Shiva's hair. The Ganges is also sacred because bathing in it is believed to wash away sins.

3 What do Hindus believe about Varanasi?

It is on the banks of the Ganges; it is a particularly good place to bathe in the Ganges to remove bad karma; it is highly desirable to have one's ashes scattered in the Ganges at Varanasi, or, ideally, to be cremated on a traditional funeral pyre in the open air beside the river at Varanasi.

4 Explain why Hindus would want to see a sadhu.

Sadhus are so holy that seeing them is an instance of darshan. It is a blessing simply to receive darshan of a sadhu, or to have the opportunity to make an offering to them. Additionally, sadhus may provide spiritual advice. Sadhus are also inspiring because they go to such extreme lengths in their devotion to God.

5 'The journey is the most important part of Hindu pilgrimage.' Discuss this statement.

The austerity of the journey is a period of temporary asceticism which, as students learned earlier in the book, is a time when there are fewer distractions in one's relationship with the divine. On the other hand, the destination may inspire great devotion and lead to blessings for the devotee. This is an opportunity for students to see that a human universal, the importance of quests and the transformative nature of some journeys, is found in a particular form in Hinduism.

2.3 Hindu festivals

1 What is Diwali often called and how long does it last?

It is often called the 'festival of lights'. It lasts for five days.

2 Explain in detail two ways that Diwali reminds Hindus of their beliefs and legends.

Two from:

- It reminds Hindus of their beliefs about God the creator and sustainer of the world.
- It reminds Hindus of the legend of Rama and Sita.
- It reminds Hindus of the legend of Nachiketas.

3 Explain what devotees do at Thaipusam and why.

Devotees fast for a few weeks. They go on processions during the festival, taking on a kavadi.

4 Why is the Ratha Yatra important to Vaishnavas?

It is an opportunity to show devotion to Jagannath, a form of Vishnu.

5 Why are there so many different Hindu festivals and why are they celebrated differently?

Answers are likely to mention the range of Hindu deities, some of which are primarily local, and the range of geographical and cultural contexts in which Hinduism developed.

2.4 What is the caste system?

1 What do Hindus think was the original intention of the caste system?

Hindus think that the caste system was intended to create a balanced society in which people were allocated important functions according to their natures.

2 Explain two ways that the myth of Purusha in the Rig Veda could be interpreted.

The two ways should be:

- the hierarchical way of viewing those from the head as the most prestigious and those from the feet as being of low status
- the egalitarian way of emphasising the fact that feet have a vital function too, on which everything else depends, so all classes should be treated with respect.

3 How can ideas about caste cause discrimination?

They can cause discrimination because of the idea that people are given different opportunities and treatment in life depending on whether their caste is seen as prestigious.

4 Explain how 'Untouchables' were treated and why they prefer the name 'Dalits'.

Answers should focus on the uniquely reviled status of Dalits in the past and the adoption of the word 'Dalit' to try to change attitudes towards them. It might seem alien to students, but the point could be made that 'retard' and 'spastic' were once widely used in the English-speaking world but are now avoided for similar reasons to the avoidance of using 'Untouchable'.

5 How effective have modern Hindus been at challenging caste-based discrimination?

Refer to the actions of Gandhi in your answer.

Balanced answers should note the progress made whilst acknowledging the difficulty of eradicating prejudice, in this and many other areas.

2.5 Hindu attitudes to violence

1 Describe Vedic ideas about violence.

It is celebrated in terms of defeating the enemies of the Vedic people. On the other hand, there are general statements like the one mentioned which suggest a general ethical commitment to peacefulness.

2 What is pantheism?

Pantheism is the belief that everything is part of God, or that God is in everything.

3 What advice does Krishna give Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita?

Krishna's message is one of obedience to duty. Arjuna must fight primarily because dharma or justice is on his side in the war and, as an aristocratic warrior, he has a duty to uphold dharma. Violence is regrettable but nevertheless necessary.

4 Explain how Gandhi put the idea of ahimsa into practice.

Gandhi resisted British rule in India by peaceful protests and urged his followers never to react violently.

5 Why is ahimsa important to yogins?

The control of emotions – violent people almost always are not in control of fear, anger or hatred. In this sense they are a long way from moksha. Students may realise that there is a parallel here to the message of the Bhagavad Gita, where violence in the service of dharma is allowed, as long as Arjuna remains detached and does not take pleasure in it.

2.6 Do Hindus believe in gender equality?

1 How was society patriarchal in Vedic times?

In Vedic times, women were expected to have a domestic role. The priesthood was only open to men.

2 How are attitudes towards gender changing in Hinduism?

Hindus are beginning to question traditional gender roles. Asceticism and renunciation are more open to women than they used to be.

3 What is Sati? Explain Hindu views on it.

Sati is the practice of a woman deciding (or being expected) to throw herself on her husband's funeral pyre to join him in the next life. Most Hindus view it as unacceptable.

4 Why are the Laws of Manu controversial?

The Laws of Manu tends to be highly conservative (perhaps even by the standards of its own time). Its message on women's independence restricts women from attaining independence from men at any point of their lives. The controversy is over whether this should be seen as commendably chivalrous, or whether it should be condemned as misogynistic.

5 'Men and women should have different roles in society.' Discuss this statement with reference to Hinduism.

This is a very open question. Hopefully students will enjoy the chance to discuss this topic. Some might draw on Hinduism to argue that different roles are acceptable as everyone will eventually be reincarnated into all gender roles. Others might argue that this is using theology to justify present inequality. Others might think that the example of Amma shows that Hindus are now accepting of women in very powerful positions as teachers and gurus, so there is a good reason to expect them to be given equal freedom in society in general.

2.7 What are Hindu attitudes to the environment?

1 Explain why Hindu beliefs about reincarnation might lead them to want to protect the environment.

Because they believe that they will have to live on earth again in a future life.

2 Why do Hindus believe that the earth is special?

Earth is sacred; she is a goddess in her own right; the earth provides for humans.

3 What happens in the story about demons at the start of the Mahabharata?

The key point is that the demons rapaciously plunder the earth. Their banishment by the gods shows that such behaviour is not dharmic.

4 Describe how the Chipko movement helped to protect the environment.

The Chipko movement is particularly known for protecting forests from excessive logging.

5 'Hindu beliefs help protect the environment.' Discuss this statement.

Students may argue that Hindu beliefs are highly protective of the environment – they stress both the sacred status of earth and the need for us to consider earth's future state for our own sake as well. Some might consider science to be a better lens through which to view the environment and might thus argue that environmentalism is better without religion. Some may argue that, if we have millions of lives ahead of us, there's no particular need to take care of the environment in this particular life.

2.8 Hinduism in world culture

1 Give three examples of words that have entered English from Sanskrit and Hinduism.

'Mantra', 'guru', 'karma', 'yoga', 'avatar' would all be good answers.

2 Why has yoga become popular among non-Hindus?

The benefits of relaxation and fitness are often cited. Some students may pick up on the mental benefits of yoga, which would be a perfectly valid answer.

3 Explain what an avatar is in Hinduism and in the 2009 film.

In Hinduism, the form (e.g. a boar, fish, man) in which God appears on earth. In the film, a genetically engineered alien body controlled by a human consciousness.

4 Describe how the Mahabharata and Ramayana are portrayed in Indonesia and Thailand.

Answers should focus on the Indonesian Wayang puppet theatre and the Thai Khon dance theatre.

5 Using ideas from this book, discuss why Hinduism might be said to be 'diverse'.

Answers might mention the long process of development, the many parts of the world, the deities, etc. Good answers might begin to consider the idea of tolerance: does Hinduism have a spirit of tolerance that allows it to accommodate a wide range of deities, festivals, and forms of worship?