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EDUCATION

SAMPLE QUESTIONS
One question from each section of this exam, with its marking scheme, so teachers can see what the full paper is like. Full exam and solutions: captivateeducation.com.au/trial-exams

Religion and Society

Question and Answer Book

Practice examination 1 – 2027

- Reading time is 15 minutes
- Writing time is 2 hours

Materials supplied

- Question and Answer Book

Instructions

- Use the additional space at the end of this book if you need extra space to complete an answer.

Students are not permitted to bring mobile phones and/or any unauthorised electronic devices into the examination room.

Contents

Section A (5 questions, 30 marks)

Section B (5 questions, 50 marks)

Practice material in the layout of the 2025 VCAA paper – generated 2027. Not a VCAA examination.

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Section A

Instructions

- Answer **all** questions in the spaces provided.
- Write your responses in English.

Sample – Question 1 of the 5 questions in this section.

Question 1 (6 marks)

‘Wherever people have asked where they came from and how they ought to live, religion has offered them answers.’

With reference to the statement above, explain **two** ways in which religion in general responds to the big questions of life in the search for meaning. 6 marks

1.

2.

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Section B

Instructions

- Answer **all** questions in the spaces provided.
- Write your responses in English.

Sample – Question 1 of the 5 questions in this section.

Question 1 (10 marks)

Analyse the connections between beliefs about the nature and purpose of human life and beliefs about death and the afterlife for a religious tradition or religious denomination that you have studied. Use relevant source material to support your response. 10 marks

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End of sample questions

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Marking scheme for the sample questions

Section A

Question 1. (6 marks)

*With reference to the statement above, explain **two** ways in which religion in general responds to the big questions of life in the search for meaning.*

To be awarded full marks, students were required to:

explain, for religion in general, two distinct ways in which religion responds to the big questions of life, showing how each helps people in the search for meaning and linking the explanation to the statement. A wholly tradition-specific answer could not be awarded marks.

Common error: Answering from one tradition only.

Common error: Listing big questions without explaining how religion answers them.

Common error: Ignoring the statement, or quoting it without using it.

Common error: Two ways that are the same way in different words.

Mark allocation: For each of two ways: 1 mark for identifying a way religion responds to the big questions; 2 marks for explaining how that way helps people in the search for meaning, with a link to the statement (to 6). No marks were allocated to source material.

Responses could have included:

- Religion offers beliefs — ideas held to be true about ultimate reality and the meaning of existence — that answer "Where did we come from?" and "What is the purpose of our existence?".
- Religion offers ethics, codes of conduct and role models that answer "How should we live?", giving direction to daily life.
- Religion answers "Is there anything beyond death?" through beliefs about death and the afterlife, which give hope and purpose in the face of death.
- Religion expresses its answers through rituals, sacred stories, texts and symbols, so adherents meet the answers repeatedly and make them their own.
- Religion places the individual in a community (social structures) that shares the answers, so the search for meaning is supported by others.

Sample full-mark response

> 1. Religion responds to the big questions by offering beliefs that adherents hold to be true. As the statement suggests, people ask where they came from; religion in general answers this through beliefs about the origin of the world and of humanity, often linking human life to an ultimate reality. Because these beliefs are held as truths, they give adherents a secure starting point for understanding why they exist.
> 2. Religion responds to the question of how people ought to live through ethics. Codes of conduct, principles and the example of key figures tell adherents what is right and wrong and how to treat

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> others and the natural world. In this way religion turns its answers into a way of life, so the search for meaning is lived out each day rather than only thought about.

Section B

Question 1. (10 marks)

Analyse the connections between beliefs about the nature and purpose of human life and beliefs about death and the afterlife for a religious tradition or religious denomination that you have studied. Use relevant source material to support your response.

To be awarded full marks, students were required to:

state at least two precise beliefs about the nature and purpose of human life and at least two about death and the afterlife for one tradition, then analyse how they are connected — why one set follows from, depends on or shares a basis with the other — using relevant source material.

Common error: Beliefs stated as categories ("life has a purpose").

Common error: Only the nature, or only the purpose, of human life addressed.

Common error: The connection asserted ("these are connected") rather than reasoned.

Common error: Sources quoted in fragments without citation, or one source repeated.

Mark allocation: 2 marks for at least two precise beliefs about the nature and purpose of human life (both the nature and the purpose addressed); 2 marks for at least two precise beliefs about death and the afterlife (afterlife material credited where its relationship to death is explained); 4 marks for analysis of the connections, signposted with reasoning; 2 marks for relevant, accurate and cited source material (to 10).

Responses could have included:

- Beliefs about the nature of human life (origin, dignity, the soul or self) and its purpose (relationship with the ultimate reality, duty, liberation).
- Beliefs about death — what it is and what follows it (judgement, resurrection, rebirth, liberation).
- Connections: the nature of the self explains what survives death; the purpose of life is shaped by what is believed to follow death; both rest on a shared belief about ultimate reality.

Sample full-mark response

> In Hinduism, the true self of each person is the atman, which is eternal and is not destroyed when the body dies; the Bhagavad Gita compares the atman passing from one body to the next to a person discarding worn-out clothes and putting on new ones (Bhagavad Gita 2:22). The purpose of human life is expressed in the four purusharthas — dharma (righteous duty), artha (prosperity gained rightly), kama (pleasure within dharma) and moksha (liberation) — with moksha the highest goal. At death the atman leaves the body and is reborn according to its karma within samsara, the

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cycle of birth, death and rebirth; moksha is release from that cycle.
These beliefs are connected because the belief about death follows from the belief about the nature of human life: since the atman is eternal, death cannot be an ending, only a transition. As a consequence, the purpose of life is shaped by what is believed to happen at death. Because the next birth is conditioned by karma, a life lived according to dharma leads to a better rebirth, which gives ordinary duties lasting significance. The connection also runs the other way: because the final goal beyond death is release from samsara, the highest purpose of life becomes spiritual — knowledge, devotion and selfless action. The Gita teaches that a person has a right to their action but not to its fruits (Bhagavad Gita 2:47), so action without attachment does not bind the atman to further births. Both sets of beliefs therefore rest on a shared basis, the eternal atman and the law of karma, so how a Hindu understands life and how they understand death cannot be separated.

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