Buddhism: Section 1 – Beliefs and teachings

Activity
Fix it!
Read the answer to this question. Work out how it can be improved and then rewrite the answer to achieve the marks.

Explain two Buddhist beliefs about existence. [4 marks]
Buddhists believe that everything is always changing and never stays the same. It is ‘in flux’. This is anatta. They also believe that humans don’t have a soul, because everything is always changing. This is anicca.

Activity
Fix it!
Read the answer below (which at the moment is worth 2 marks) and improve it (to 5 marks).

Explain two beliefs about human destiny in Buddhism. [5 marks]
Buddhists believe that monks can become arhats, that is perfected beings.¹ Some² believe that by seeking help from Amitabha Buddha,³ they can be reborn in his heaven, and work for their enlightenment there.⁴

¹How do they become this? How close to enlightenment is it?
²Which Buddhists believe this?
³Who was Amitabha? Why can they go to his heaven and expect to attain enlightenment?
⁴You need a teaching.

Activity
Fix it!
A student wrote this in their exam. Can you see what they did wrong and how they can improve? Try to write a better answer.

Explain two ways in which the Noble Eightfold Path influences Buddhists today. [4 marks]
Buddhists are influenced by the Noble Eightfold Path because firstly, it gives structure to every bit of their life. Secondly, they keep it in mind all the time, and keep thinking about how it affects what they are trying to do or say or think.
Buddhism: Section 2 – Practices

Activity

Fix it!

Read this answer. Decide how it could be improved. You are looking for:

- two clear ways
- a clear explanation of each way (not just a simplistic explanation)
- at least one reference to a Buddhist teaching.

Explain two ways in which temples are important to Buddhists. Refer to Buddhist teachings in your answer.

Buddhists think temples are important because they are the focal point for their religion. They have shrines, and statues of the Buddha, and they have monks who can explain the teachings of the Buddha to them if they don’t understand or have questions. I think this is important for western Buddhists, as our culture is sort of the opposite of Buddhism – we are very materialistic and want ‘stuff’, but Buddhism is about non-attachment – so it is more difficult for us to understand.

Now write your own response. Here is a template to help you:

Temples are important to Buddhists for several reasons. First, they are important because (insert reason). This means (explain reason; try to give an example as well). Second, they are also important because (insert reason). This means (explain reason; try to give an example as well).

Don’t forget, you need teachings in your answer.

Activity

Support or challenge?

‘Offerings are not important when going to a Buddhist temple.’ Evaluate this statement. Refer to Buddhism in your answer. You should agree and disagree, and come to a justified conclusion.

Use the list of arguments below to help you write a strong answer to that question. They are mixed up though, so work out which ones agree with (support) and which disagree with (challenge) the statement first. Remember, a conclusion should not just repeat arguments, so it is worth keeping one back to use to strengthen your conclusion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Argument</th>
<th>Supports statement in question</th>
<th>Challenges statement in question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If you’re a tourist, not a Buddhist, they aren’t!</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Offerings show dana, which is merit making so you get good karma.</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The offerings all represent something important in Buddhist teachings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Traditionally, it is what people do – make offerings – that is the same as Christians singing hymns and saying prayers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intention is more important than the offerings themselves.</td>
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<tr>
<td>People might not be able to afford to buy the things to give as offerings.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The food offering eventually goes to the monks, who have taken vows.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Activity

Fix it!

Improve this answer by making it more precise and more detailed.

**Explain two contrasting rituals Buddhists use in funerals.**

Some Buddhists give food offerings to the monks who come to do the blessings. Other Buddhists take away the bones from the cremation to their own shrine.

Activity

**Support or challenge?**

Which comments agree with the statement and which disagree? Extend them by making them clearly applicable. Use them to write your own 12-mark answer.

‘Retreat is more important for British Buddhists than for other Buddhists.’

**Argument**

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<tr>
<td>On any retreat everyone focuses on their spiritual path.</td>
<td>British society is not Buddhism-friendly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British society is not Buddhism-friendly.</td>
<td>The Buddha recommended retreat for Buddhist monks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Buddha recommended retreat for Buddhist monks.</td>
<td>‘Importance’ is a relative concept.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Retreats can be undertaken to learn about Buddhism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retreats can be undertaken to learn about Buddhism.</td>
<td>The most inspirational retreats happen where the Buddha lived.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Buddhism: Section 2 – Practices**

Activity

**It is not reasonable to believe that Jesus really rose from the dead.**

Evaluate this statement. In your answer, refer to Christian teachings, argue for and against the statement, and come to a justified conclusion.

To answer this evaluation question, it might be handy to know some of the questions raised about whether Jesus ‘rose from the dead’ or not. Read the questions and their responses, then use them to answer the question.

| Maybe the women went to the wrong tomb? | No – the women had been on the Friday, so knew which one it was. |
| Maybe Jesus didn’t actually die on the cross, so he escaped from the tomb? | No – not likely if he was on his own, with the stone needing to be moved. |
| Maybe the disciples later ‘saw’ Jesus because they were so desperate to have him back and just hallucinated? | It was the last thing they expected and they were in hiding for fear of their arrest for being linked with Jesus. |
| Maybe the disciples just made up the story? | No – the disciples gained nothing from Jesus’ resurrection. Rather, in telling the story, they were persecuted and martyred for their beliefs. |
**Christianity: Section 2 – Practices**

**Activity**

**Fix it!**
Read this answer and improve it.

*Explain two different ways in which Christians worship.*

1. They sing and pray.
2. They read the Bible and talk about it.

**Islam: Section 1 – Beliefs and teachings**

**Activity**

**Fix it!**
Read the answers to these questions. Work out how they can be improved and then rewrite the answers to achieve the marks.

*Explain two ways in which Prophet Muhammad is important.*

**Answer A:**
He is important because he started the Islam religion off. He is also important because he was a good role model for Muslims.

**Answer B:**
Prophets are important because they tell people how Allah wants them to behave. If people follow the prophets, they will please Allah and He will let them go to paradise after death. Prophets are also important because they have been chosen by Allah and given special tasks. Allah didn’t pick just anyone – He picked them. Muslims say there have been over 120,000 prophets, which sounds a lot, but when you think there are 7 billion people on earth now – it shows they were special.

**Activity**

**Support or challenge?**

Below is a sample statement for an evaluative exam question and a series of points. Which ones support the statement and which ones challenge it? Use them to write your own answer.

‘The Sunnah is the most important guidance for Muslims.’ Evaluate this statement. Refer to Islam in your answer. You should agree and disagree, and come to a justified conclusion.

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<td>The Qur’an is the actual word of Allah.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muhammad’s Sunnah help us understand the word of Allah.</td>
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<tr>
<td>All Shari‘ah is based on the Qur’an.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Qur’an is direct guidance from Allah.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sometimes it is difficult to understand the Qur’an in modern terms.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not all Muslims understand the Arabic of the Qur’an and rely on translations.</td>
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