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GRADE 12 2022

Religion Studies

NORMATIVE SOURCES
SELF STUDY GUIDE
BOOK 8

basic education
Department: Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Second Chance Matric Support Programme

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1. Introduction

The declaration of COVID-19 as a global pandemic by the World Health Organisation in 2020, led to the disruption of effective teaching and learning in all schools across South Africa.

Many learners, across all grades, spent less time in class due to the phased-in reopening of schools, as well as rotational attendance and alternative timetables that were implemented across provinces, to comply with social distancing rules. This led to severe teaching and learning time losses. Consequently, the majority of schools were not able to complete all the relevant content prescribed in Grade 10-12 in accordance with the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement.

In order to mitigate and intervene against the negative impact of COVID-19, as part of the Recovery Learning Plan for Grades 10-12, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) worked in collaboration with Subject Specialists from various Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) to develop this Self-Study Guide for learners in Grade 12.

The content in this study guide is critical towards laying a strong foundation to improve your performance in this subject.

The main aims of this study guide is to:

- Assist learners to improve their performance, by revising and consolidating their understanding of the topic;
- Close existing content gaps in this topic; and
- Improve and strengthen understanding of the content prescribed for this topic.

This study-guide is meant as a self-study guide for learners and therefore should be used as a revision resource to consolidate learning at the end of a particular topic taught in class.

Learners are encouraged to complete the exercises and activities to test their understanding and to expose themselves to high quality assessment.

This study guide can also be used by study groups and peer learning groups, to prepare for the final NSC examination in this subject.

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2. How to use this Self Study Guide?

This study guide covers 8 of the topics that pose the most challenges in the examinations. Please also note the remaining topics that are set out in the CAPS. This Self-Study Guide includes the following topics:

- History and present dynamics of inter-religious relationships in South African, African and international communities
- Religion in areas of recent conflict in South Africa, Africa, and the world
- Analysis of secular worldviews with reference to the definition of religion and universal dimensions of religion: atheism, agnosticism, humanism, and materialism
- Religion and the natural sciences
- Religious freedom, human rights, and responsibilities
- Normative Sources
- Internal Differentiation
- Central Teachings
- Social Issues

This is a Self-Study Guide that is designed to explain the concepts and content that is examinable in Religion Studies Paper 1 and Paper 2. It also provides explanations of the common action/command verbs used in the Question Papers and how to use these to analyse and understand what you are required to do to respond to a question. It also provides quick tips on how to approach specific content in an exam situation in order to save time.

The booklets have been designed to provide simplified notes and a variety of questions sourced from various past question papers. Instead of providing responses for all questions, the Self Study Guides assist with the analysis and interpretation of questions. This is to ensure that learners focus on studying the content instead of the questions. Learners are also reminded that the same content may be tested in different ways. Therefore, it is important to understand the command verbs and to have both conceptual and content knowledge.

A second package of the Self Study Guide labelled the Revision Package focuses on subject specific key concepts as examined over a period of 6 years and sourced from past Question Papers. There are 12 sets of questions/activities and Marking Guidelines provided to guide you and assist with revision and exam preparation. You are expected to answer these

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questions without looking at the responses. You may do a self-assessment after you have completed answering the questions.

Additional to this Self Study Guide learners are expected to:

Know current affairs or topical issues in the media that are relevant to Religion Studies

Use of past NSC papers – (Thutong and past papers on your internet search engine)

Use the 2021 Examination Guidelines (Thutong – Religion Studies Exam Guideline)

Use various textbooks, newspapers and other sources such as internet

Lastly, Religion Studies is designed to test critical thinking, application of knowledge and provision of advice or solutions from a religious perspective. Therefore, a good grounding in the prescribed knowledge, skills and values in Religion Studies is essential.

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3. NORMATIVE SOURCES

3.1 BACKGROUND

Normative sources explain or relate the origin of norms or standards across various religions. These sources include inspiration, oral traditions, and sacred scriptures. Since most of the normative sources in the various religions have both a figurative and literal meaning hermeneutics may be applied to enable one to interpret texts that are used in religions.

Over time each religion has developed its own ways of interpreting and re-interpreting its normative sources. Two broad hermeneutical approaches occurring in all religions are the conservative and the progressive approaches. Both conservative and progressive hermeneutics can be applied more strictly or more loosely.

Generally, the conservative style of interpretation insists on a strict adherence to the words of the normative source, no matter how old it is or how different the circumstances of the time in which it was written were to the circumstances of today. The progressive style of interpretation is generally just as serious about being loyal to the original normative source as the conservative approach is. However, it is also serious about the historical differences between the time of the source and the present, realises that simply repeating the old message of the source is not enough.

In hermeneutics, the word 'text' does not only refer to something that is written down, it is also about interpreting oral texts. Sacred texts do not contain teachings that remain the same throughout time; this is because the way in which texts are understood or interpreted will always change. In the same way as cultures and societies change over time, so do interpretations of religious texts.

Hermeneutical principles are not just about the text, they are also about the reader. This is because, in hermeneutics, the role of the reader is to first place texts into their historical and cultural contexts. Secondly, the reader interprets them in a way that their message is understood and has meaning in the present time and place. So, through the act of interpretation, the reader has the power to change the meaning of the sacred text to suit the needs of a particular society and culture.

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This section will address four aspects under normative sources, namely:

- Inspiration
- Oral tradition
- Sacred texts
- Hermeneutics, and
- How to interpret normative sources

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3.2 KEY CONCEPTS YOU SHOULD KNOW

	Term/concept	Meaning
1.	**Normative source**	A source that relates to, or determines the norms or standards. In religion the normative sources include sacred texts or books.
2.	**Descriptive statements**	Descriptive statements present an account of how the world is. The word is connected to 'description'. Descriptive statements are statements about ***what is.***
3.	**Normative statements**	Normative statements present an evaluative account, or an account of how the world should be. The word contains the stem 'norm': something that should be lived up to; or that should be pursued. Normative statements are statements about ***what ought to be***.
4.	**Inspiration**	Inspiration from a religious perspective is often closely tied to the concept of revelation, the belief in information being revealed or disclosed through communication with a deity or other supernatural entity or entities.
5.	**Divine inspiration**	Divine inspiration that comes directly from a higher power. It is the concept of a supernatural force, typically a deity, causing a person or people to experience a creative desire. It has been a commonly reported aspect of many religions, for thousands of years.
6.	**Contemporary inspiration**	Inspiration that is ongoing and unites members of the faith with the higher power
7.	**Oral tradition**	Recounting of the religion verbally by elders and teachers, and passed on to successive generations of the faith
8.	**Sacred**	Holy/ connected with God or god or dedicated to a religious purpose
9.	**Sacred texts**	sacred text - **writing that is venerated for the worship of a deity** religious text, religious writing, sacred writing
10.	**Hermeneutics**	H**ermeneutics** is defined as a specific system or methodology for the interpretation of texts.

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3.3 INSPIRATION AS A NORMATIVE SOURCE

This section will address the various normative sources.

3.3.1 What is INSPIRATION?

Inspiration refers to **the BREATH (POWER/KNOWLEDGE) of an** extra ordinary being or power.

An example of the breath of an **extra-ordinary power is a DEITY**, coming into a person and taking that person's own breath.

Inspiration refers to a **state of being INSPIRED either to write, do something or commit oneself to a particular life or experience.**

Inspiration is a significant/important NORMATIVE SOURCE in various religions.

In the different religions there are individuals who **received inspiration from a higher being which consists of either a form of power or wisdom.**

All religions are rooted in inspiration.

In different religions there are various persons who have inspired many followers, for example:

a. In Christianity Jesus inspired many followers.

b. In Judaism Abraham inspired many Jewish people.

c. The Buddha is an inspirational figure in Buddhism.

d. Prophet Muhammad serves as a great inspiration in Islam.

e. Baha'u'llah serves as an inspiration in the Bahai'i Faith.

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- Whilst in Christianity, Islam and Judaism followers may claim to have received inspiration from God, in Buddhism, Taoism and Confucianism there is a belief that some higher, deeper wisdom inspires great leaders.
- Inspiration still occurs in our modern day societies and this is referred to as CONTEMPORARY INSPIRATION.

> - TIP: the word INSPIRATION in a religious sense means the way in which GOD or the gods takes control of someone and gives him/her wisdom beyond that of other beings.
> - Therefore, be careful not to write about how different role models inspire you to become a better person. Your focus should be on the RELIGIOUS **EXPLANATION!**

Inspiration can be divided into two branches:

3.3.2 WHAT IS CONTEMPORARY INSPIRATION?

- The term divine inspiration refers to **divine guidance** or influence exerted directly on a human mind or soul even in our modern day
- The term contemporary inspiration refers to inspiration that **still take place today**.

3.3.3 UNDERSTANDING THE OCCURANCE OF INSPIRATION IN ATR

- Immediate **contact with the dimension beyond everyday** life lies at the root of ATR.
- In this religion people **communicate with their ancestors** and **receive messages from them.**

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- **Mediums, sangomas and diviners specialise in communicating** with the ancestors and spirits.
- They are believed to have gained insight into or made discoveries of the unknown or future by supernatural means.
- Such mediums go through a process of “death and rebirth” during their training.
- The personality of the medium is terminated and the medium or diviner receives a new personality.
- In Southern Africa the priestly function of intermediaries usually rests with the head of the family.
- These intermediaries are the ANCESTRAL SPIRITS (sometimes also referred to as the living dead, the shades or the lesser deities.
- In some areas a natural object, especially an animal may be adopted and respected as an emblem of a clan or individual.
- The clan or individual may be given the name of a particular animal or element of nature to prove that they are inspired.

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3.4 ORAL TRADITION AS A NORMATIVE SOURCE

3.4.1 WHAT IS ORAL TRADITION?

- a community's cultural and historical traditions passed down by word of mouth for example from one generation to another without written instruction

3.4.2 The role of ORAL TRADITION

- The original inspiration was spread through oral tradition in the different religions.
- The original message was passed on from generation to generation by word of mouth.
- Oral traditions develop and change and get adapted over time

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3.4.3 THE ROLE OF ORAL TRADITION IN ATR

- In ATR oral tradition plays an important role.
- Oral tradition is the most sacred method of conveying sacred messages.
- The sacred stories are helpful in the passing of values and norms of the African communities.
- The stories contain the core teachings of ATR.
- The elders, such as the assigned aunts and uncles play an important role in ensuring that the younger generation receive proper development towards adulthood.
- The family elders play a vital role as the repositories and interpreters of the sacred texts.
- Traditional information is passed on to generations by word of mouth.
- Oral tradition allows for flexibility and local context.

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3.5 SACRED SCRIPTURES AS NORMATIVE SOURCES

3.5.1 WHAT ARE SACRED SCRIPTURES?

- Scripture, are also called sacred scripture, the revered texts, or Holy Writ, of the world's religions.
- Scriptures comprise a large part of the literature of the world.
- They vary greatly in form, volume, age, and degree of sacredness, but their common attribute is that their words are regarded by the devout as sacred.
- Below are the sacred scriptures of the 8 religions that are prescribed:

3.5.2 SACRED SCRIPTURES IN DIFFERENT RELIGIONS:

RELIGION	SCRIPTURES	ADDITONAL SACRED SCRIPTURES
African Traditional Religion	No written scriptures	None
Baha'i Faith	Kitab-i-Aqdas	
Buddhism	Pali Canon	Tripitaka
Christianity	Bible	
Hinduism	Vedas	The Bhagavad Gita The Mahabharata The Ramayana
Islam	Quran	Hadith
Judaism	Tanach	Torah (the Law)
Taoism	Tao-te-Ching	

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3.5.3 The role of SACRED SCRIPTURES

- Many religions have developed sacred books, e.g. the Quran, the Bible, etc.
- Oral traditions can run parallel to written traditions.
- In many cases sacred books do not exist as individual writings, but as part of larger collections.
- The word CANON refers to a general law or principle.
- The collections of sacred books are generally called CANONS.
- There are primary and secondary sacred writings. Secondary writing are commentaries on the primary writings.

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3.6 DIVINE INSPIRATION of the scriptures IN DIFFERENT RELIGIONS

Divine inspiration refers to inspiration that comes directly from a higher power. Divine inspiration in the writing of the sacred texts of the different relations will be discussed below:

3.6.1 DIVINE INSPIRATION of the scriptures IN JUDAISM

- In Judaism the primary scriptures are collectively known as the Tanach (which consists of the Torah, Nevi'im and Ketuvim).
- The Torah was revealed to the Jewish people on Mount Sinai.
- Inspiration occurred when God spoke to individuals as it is recorded in the Bible i.e. old testament.
- God revealed Himself through the prophets. God spoke to Prophet Isaiah, Hosea, Jeremiah, and others.
- The primary scriptures collectively known as the Tanach are known to have been revealed inspirationally, and therefore, they are considered to be the revealed Word of God.
- These inspirational messages were transferred down the generations until the present day.
- The prophets and the writings are regarded as divinely inspired but not divinely dictated.
- The main Scripture in Judaism is the Old Testament.
- Views of divine inspiration vary between the different branches.
- Orthodox and Conservative schools view the **Pentateuch** as the most inspired part, the Prophets and Writings less so.
- Another important book is the Talmud which includes the Mishnah and Gemara.
- The Talmud is a collection of commentaries and interpretations which form detailed oral, rabbinic explanations of the Torah.
- The most important of these is the Midrash which consists of commentaries that were written down.
- Another sacred scripture is the Kabbalah which consists of writings that guides the Jews to a direct relationship with the En Sof ((the infinite, the Limitless).

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3.6.2 DIVINE INSPIRATION of the scriptures IN CHRISTIANITY

The Bible is a collection of 66 books believed to have been written by more than 40 divinely-inspired authors. It's thousands of years old, and Christians still place their trust in it today. So where did the Bible come from? How did we end up with these 66 books?

- "All scripture is given by inspiration of God" 2 Timothy 3:16.
- The word "inspire" signifies to *in-breathe*, and breath is both the means and evidence of *life*; for as soon as a person ceases to breathe he is dead.
- The Word of God, then, is vitalized by the very life of God, and therefore it is a *living* Book.
- The earliest collection of written words from God was the Ten Commandments.
- The Ten Commandments form the beginning of the biblical canon.
- God himself wrote on two tablets of stone the words which he commanded his people:
- "And he gave to Moses, when he had made an end of speaking with him upon Mount Sinai, the two tablets of the testimony, tables of stone, *written with the finger of God*" (Exodus 31:18).
- Again we read, "And the tables were the work of God, and *the writing was the writing of God*, graven upon the tablets" (Exodus 32:16, see also Deuteronomy 4:13 and 10:4).
- The tablets were deposited in the ark of the covenant (Deuteronomy 10:5) and constituted the terms of the covenant between God and his people.
- This collection of absolutely authoritative words from God grew in size throughout the time of Israel's history.
- Moses himself wrote additional words to be deposited beside the ark of the covenant (Deuteronomy 31:24–26).
- After the death of Moses, Joshua also added to the collection of written words of God: "Joshua wrote these words in the book of the law of God" (Joshua 24:26).
- It is said that Joshua and many other prophets were inspired by **God himself and authorized to make such additional writings.**
- The Old Testament was finished in 435 B.C.
- The books of the New Testament were all or nearly all written by Jewish Christians —that is, Jewish disciples of Christ, who lived in the Roman Empire, and under Roman occupation.

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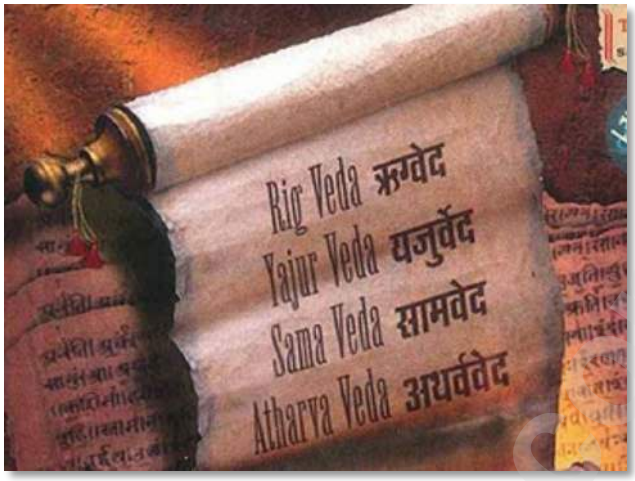
3.6.3 DIVINE INSPIRATION of the scriptures IN HINDUISM



Source: sacred texts meaning - Bing images

- The sound of the spoken word is given paramount importance in Hinduism.
- Both the written and oral texts in Hinduism were divinely inspired about 4000 years ago.
- "Heard" writings also known as Shruti are the oral traditions that were written down.
- Original inspiration was transmitted in writing for the generations so they could also benefit.
- Originally revealed and heard inspirational writing have been distinguished from secondary writings.
- The Hindu religion has many deities who serve as the inspiration to them and these deities keep their spiritual lives healthy and holy.
- Hinduism also uses many other sacred texts such as the Puranas in which the ancient history of Hinduism has been recorded.
- A distinction is made from the secondary writings such as interpretations and explanations.
- The Brahmanas and Upanishads played an important role in providing commentaries and interpretations of earlier works.
- The sacred traditions of the Vedas were included later.
- Over time other commentaries and re-interpretations have occurred, for example the Shankara (also Sankara) and Vivekananda.
- These innovative and authoritative commentators have lead the tradition forward into changing times.

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3.6.4 DIVINE INSPIRATION of the scriptures IN ISLAM

- In Islam, there are two main sacred texts: the **Quran (also spelled "Koran") and the Hadith (or Hadeeth)**.
- These books teach and illustrate Islamic beliefs, values, and practices.
- They are also important historical documents (especially the Quran), which tell the story of the origins of the Islamic faith.
- According to conventional Islamic belief, the Qurʾān was revealed by the angel Gabriel to the Prophet Muhammad in the West Arabian towns Mecca and Medina beginning in 610 and ending with Muhammad's death in 632 CE.
- The word *qurʾān*, which occurs already within the Islamic scripture itself (e.g., 9:111 and 75:17–18), is derived from the verb *qaraʾa*—"to read," "to recite"—
- The Qurʾānic corpus, is traditionally believed to be a literal transcript of God's speech.
- The Quran constitute the earthly reproduction of an uncreated and eternal heavenly original, according to the general view referred to in the Qurʾān itself as "the well-preserved tablet".

3.6.5 DIVINE INSPIRATION of the scriptures IN BUDDHISM

- In Therevada Buddhism, the very large canonical tradition was transmitted orally for a few centuries before it was eventually written up.
- Buddhist scriptures are seen as divine dictates, which have been divinely inspired.
- Over the years the Therevada Buddhists have continued to produce an ever growing body of commentaries on the canonical tradition.
- Mahayana Buddhism distinguishes between primary scriptures (sutras) and secondary commentaries and philosophical interpretations (sastras).
- Sastras were often linked to individual scholars and schools.

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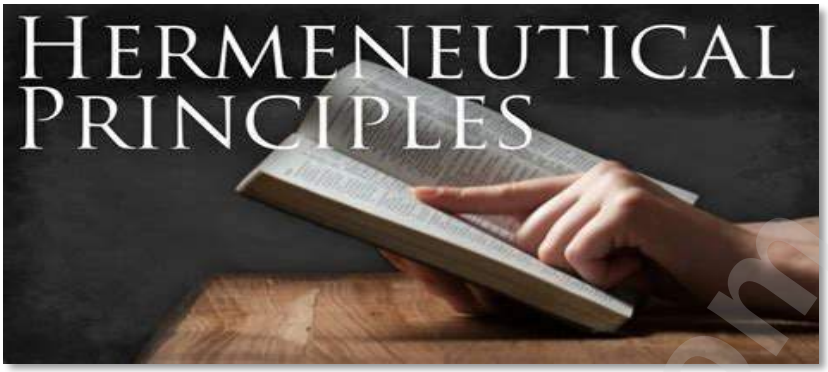
3.7 HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLES



3.7.1 WHAT DOES THE WORD HERMENEUTICAL MEAN?

- In Religion Studies hermeneutics means the interpretation of (sacred) texts.
- Hermeneutics involves looking at a spiritual text in its context and considering all these factors:
    - What type of writing is it? When was it written? Who wrote it? Who was it written for? What were the circumstances at the time it was written?

3.7.2 WHAT ARE THE HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLES?

- **Grammar and historical context –**
    - Grammatical-historical principle means you must use the rules of grammar and the historical facts to interpret sacred text.
    - You must look at the exact meaning of the words used in their most ordinary sense.

- **Clearest meaning –**
    - People write to communicate thoughts and ideas.
    - The writer generally aims to do this as clear as possible.
    - When interpreting a sacred text or any normative source, you should take the meaning that is the clearest to you.

- **Plan, purpose and context –**
    - You need to view a piece of writing as a whole.
    - What is the writing plan or structure underlying it?
    - What was the author's purpose in writing the text?

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- **Meanings of words –**
  - The meanings of words change over time and in different places.
  - Try to find out what the meanings of the words were when they were originally used in the normative source.

- **Figurative language –**
  - Some sacred texts use highly figurative, non-literal language.
  - This needs to be taken into account when interpreting such texts.

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3.8 INTERPRETATION OF SACRED TEXTS

There are various approached to interpret scriptures in the different religions.

3.8.1 WAYS OF INTERPRETING NORMATIVE SOURCES

- There are specific rules for the interpretation for both the primary and secondary sources.
- The procedure differs from community to community.
- However, in general the maternal brother and the paternal sister are the key to opening the sacred lineage text (poem or praise song).
- They must be the first to invoke the dead of the lineage, in order of seniority and familiarity.
- Once they have opened the communication, the other members of the lineage present at the occasion have a chance to provide their own interpretation and express their wishes.
- The family's traditional healer ensures that the wishes of the living and those of the dead are expressed according to the specific requirements of the particular occasion.
- When interpreting secondary sacred texts (poems, praise songs) the king or chief takes the lead.

Below are **quotations** from different religions followed by an **interpretation** that shows the **application** of relevant hermeneutical principles.

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3.8.2 **Buddhism**

The Fourth Noble Truth

Monks, what is the noble truth about the way that leads to the cessation of suffering? Just this noble eightfold path, namely right view, right purpose, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

(Digha Nikaya 11 305)

INTERPRETATION

Buddhism

- In this verse, the Buddha teaches that there is a solution to the problem of human suffering.
- The word 'way' in the first line suggests that to put an end to the 'craving' that causes humans to suffer is to follow a certain path.
- The Buddha outlines eight steps that will lead to freedom from
- 'craving'.
- The purpose is to get rid of desire, which goes with becoming completely unselfish.
- So 'right speech' means to speak in ways that do not enflame your desire and that encourage you to become less selfish.
- The eightfold Path should not be seen as similar to the Ten Commandments in Christianity.
- It is not just a list of rules to live by.
- It is a series of steps that follow on from each other.
- The eightfold Path is a spiritual journey.
- In any journey, you have to follow a certain path in order to get to where you want to be.

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3.8.3 **Judaism**

For my thoughts are not your thoughts,

Neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the Earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

(Isaiah 55: 8 - 9)

INTERPRETATION

Judaism

- This extract shows that although God is sometimes described as having human qualities (anthropomorphic features), God is so different.
- In seeming contradiction to this, God is transcendental or totally 'other' (transcendentalism).
- He is actually beyond the understanding of humans.
- Anthropomorphic language is a way for humans to try and understand God but does not actually describe the nature of God.
- This is because God is unlike anything in the universe and therefore any human language or concept will never be able to describe God.
- He is a God with human qualities (thoughts).
- Even though human beings have their plans God has a final plan for man, as the creator.
- Mans thought are limited and operates at a certain level as compared to Gods thoughts.
- God is in everything (immanentism): This is a relatively new feature and is followed particularly by mystics (believe that one can experience God through direct experience).
- God is the God of all creation (universalism).

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3.8.4 Christianity

Now when He saw the crowds, He went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to Him, and He began to teach them saying:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those that hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled

(Sermon on the Mount, Matthew: 1 - 6)

INTERPRETATION

Christianity

- Jesus' 'Sermon on the Mount' reflects a variety of ideas that influence Christians' understanding of their conduct in social and communal life.
- The sermon illustrates how the relationship between the children of God and their loving Father becomes an intimate loving relationship.
- Like the Ten Commandments, this sermon intends to structure and organise the relationship between God and his people.
- The 'blessings' form part of the introduction to the sermon.
- The blessing formula is a typical expression, which belongs to Biblical wisdom literature.
- It assumes the so called retribution principle where good deeds are blessed while wicked deeds are punished.
- Each blessing is a motivation to convince people about how to behave correctly in order to receive God's blessings.
- Like Moses receiving the law on Mount Sinai, Jesus goes up to the mountainside to teach his 'new law'.
- The mountain stresses the relationship between the mountain of Moses and the mountain that Jesus ascends here to teach.

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- Jesus is portrayed as a rabbi or teacher of all the people; and not only his disciples.
- The retribution principle in the blessings spells out the basic belief of Jesus' followers, namely justice.
- Justice has two aspects: to have the right attitude before God and to do the right things.
- The right attitude is spelled out by the first blessing, to show dependence upon God. The 'poor in spirit' are those who know their place before God.

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3.8.5 **Hinduism**

For sure this body is mortal, held in the grip of death. Yet it is the dwelling place of the mortal, incorporeal Self…While still in the body, it is held in the grip of pleasure and pain; and as long as it remains in the body there is no means of ridding it of pleasure and pain. But once it is freed from the body, pleasure and pain cannot touch it.

The wind has no body. Clouds, thunder and lightning – these too have no body. So, just as these arise from the space up there and plunge into the highest light, revealing themselves each in its own form, so too does this deep serenity arise out of this body and plunge into the highest light, revealing its self in its own form.

(Chandogya VIII, xii. 1–3)

INTERPRETATION

Hinduism

- Release or liberation (Moksha) is the key message.
- The first paragraph of this extract teaches that everyone has a soul or 'Self' that lives in the body.
- The grip of pleasure and pain refers to the cycle of birth and rebirth.
- This cycle keeps the immortal soul trapped in the mortal body.
- According to Hindu belief, if the whole universe is made up of one 'Self' (Brahman), all humans must also have only one 'Self' or soul.
- The aim of every Hindu is to free the 'Self' from the cycle of rebirth so that it can become one with Brahman.
- The second paragraph explains what the true nature of the soul is by comparing it to natural elements.

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- Just as wind and thunder do not have a physical form or 'body', neither does the soul.
- The true nature of the person's soul can only be experienced when it is released from the cycle of rebirth.
- Once the soul is no longer trapped in the body, it is free to become one with the 'highest light', which is Brahman.
- 'Deep serenity' in other words, true happiness, is experienced when a person has wisdom and understanding of Brahman.

3.8.6 **Islam**

Say: He is God, the One and Only. God, the Eternal, the Absolute;

He begetteth not, nor is He begotten; And there is none like unto Him.

(Holy Qur'an, Chapter 30, Verse 112)

INTERPRETATION

Islam

- This sura (verse) of the Qur'an teaches that Islam is completely monotheistic.
- Muslims believe that there is only one true God.
- This God is referred to as 'Allah'
- The word 'Allah' in Arabic has no plural, no gender and no diminutive.
- Words referring to God start with a capital letter. (One, Only etc).
- This shows that these qualities apply solely to God.
- 'Begetteth not, nor is He begotten' indicate that God was not created.
- It also means that He did not 'father' any being.
- God has always existed, and will continue to do so. (i.e. God is not limited by time and space).
- The last line teaches that nothing compares to God. (He is unique in His attributes)

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3.8.7 **Baha'i Faith**

These principles and laws, these firmly- Established and mighty systems, have proceeded from one Source and are the Rays of light. That they differ from one another is to be attributed to the varying requirements of the ages in which they were promulgated. Ye are the fruits of one tree, and the leaves Of one branch ... So powerful is the light of Unity that it can illuminate the whole Earth.

(Baha'u'llah's Gleanings from the Writings of Baha'u'llah)

INTERPRETATION

Baha'i Faith

- Baha'i teachings state that all religions are part of God's divine plan.
- In the first paragraph, Baha'u'llah teaches that the 'mighty systems' all come from God. God is the 'Source' of all religion.
- God sent many messengers throughout history.
- Each messenger preached according to the needs of his time
- (varying requirements of the ages)
- This is the reason why religions have some differences.
- However, there are more common teachings across religions than there are differences. This is borne out by there being one 'tree'
- For the Baha'i, there is only one religion. All religions of the world are 'fruits' of the same tree.

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3.8.8 African Traditional Religion

Qamata*, I love you

Qamata, I love you

Qamata, I love you

Qamata, you love us all.

Your love is everlasting and unconditional Through your love you created us all equal Who then has got the power to judge?

You are everywhere

You are beyond imagination of the brain that you gave me I therefore cannot make any images of yourself

Who then told your creatures that you are male?

Who then has got the powers to limit your highness to that of man?

Qamata, I love you

You talk to me every day

You talk to me any time

You talked to my ancestors You talk to all humanity

If the manner I worship pleases you

Who else has got the power to demonise me?

Who else thinks he is your only spokesman?

My oppressors use your name for their selfish interests

Thank you for the courage you are giving me

Qamata, I love you

*Qamata is a personal name for God Creator

(Taken from *Religion Studies Grade 12*, *Shuters*, p. 40)

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INTERPRETATION

African Traditional Religion

- This poem expresses deep love for the God Creator. (Qamata)
- Qamata is the supernatural power that created the universe and all in it.
- The Creator loves all of creation.
- This love extends even to sinners.
- It was Qamata's love that made all humans equal.
- However, humans started judging one another, each feeling superior to others.
- Some people feel that they have exclusive contact with the spiritual world, whereas Qamata is accessible to all. Qamata is omnipresent.
- Qamata is constant, as Qamata has spoken to both ancestors as well as all of humanity.
- Qamata cannot be comprehended by the human brain.
- However, humans make images of Qamata, without knowledge of the Being.
- They also conclude that Qamata is male, when there is no such claim by Qamata. Qamata is neither male nor female.
- Humans limit the qualities of Qamata to their own human attributes. This is an insult to the Creator.
- Religion is often used to oppress people, when in fact all humans are created equal.

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3.9 ACTIVITIES

QUESTION 1

1.1 Explain the following normative sources in the context of ONE religion:

1.1.1 Contemporary inspiration (10)
1.1.2 Oral tradition (10)
1.1.3 Sacred texts (10)

RESPONSE:

NB: You may utlise ANY religion of your choice to answer the above questions.

TIP: In a question such as the above MAIN THE SAME religion to provide responses for the 3 three questions assessed.

As an EXEMPLAR the response provides examples from TWO religions, namely ATR and EASTERN RELIGIONS. You can however choose ANY religion out of the 8 prescribed religions

1.1.1 Contemporary inspiration

African Traditional Religion (ATR)

- The term 'contemporary inspiration' refers to inspiration that still takes place in our day.
- ATR does not have a founder.
- Immediate contact with the dimension beyond everyday life lies at the root of ATR.
- When the first generation of humans died, they joined the Supreme Being in the spiritual world and become the first ancestors.
- People communicate with their ancestors, even today, and receive messages from them.
- Mediums and diviners specialise in communicating with the ancestors and spirits.
- Such mediums go through a process of 'death and rebirth' during their training
- In this process the personality is terminated and the medium or diviner receives a new personality, dedicated to the supernatural forces.

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- Priests are also very important intermediaries between the divinity and human beings.
- This priestly function usually rests with the head of the family.
- Sometimes there is a prophetic role which rests upon a person
- who has been inspired or may feel possessed by such a power, usually mediums or diviners.
- We do not know the names of all the inspired figures, such as early African Traditional religious leaders.

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Middle Eastern Religions

- Inspiration is an extremely important normative source in many religions.
- It refers originally to the breath (power, knowledge) of an extraordinary being or power.
- It may be said to be the true origin of all religions.
- There are many religious figures who have inspired many generations of followers.
- Examples of figures who have inspired generations are Abraham, Moses, Jesus Christ, Muhammad and Baha'u'llah.
- All the above figures have felt that they have had special direct and immediate access to a dimension of being, understanding or power that is beyond everyday experience.
- The inspiration of these figures is accepted by their followers as having been direct and immediate, without other go-betweens such as books or other people.
- Instead, these figures are believed to have stood face-to-face with God, and have received their messages straight from God.
- In the Abrahamic faiths they believe that their prophets received divine inspiration which was written down as their holy scriptures.

1.1.2 Oral tradition

African Traditional Religion

- African religion is the indigenous religion of Africans; it has been handed down from generation to generation by the forefathers.
- Africans have made it theirs by living it and practising it.
- It is a religion that originated from the people's environment and on their soil.
- It is neither preached to them nor imported by them.
- Africans are not converted into it. Each person is born into it, lives it, practises it, and makes it their own.
- The original inspiration is often spread first by oral tradition, i.e. the original message is passed on from one person to another, and from generation to the next by word of mouth.

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Middle Eastern religions

- The oral tradition, in passing on normative sources, has played a very important role in all major religions through the ages.
- In Middle Eastern religions, the original inspiration is often spread first by oral tradition.
- This means that the original message is passed on from one person to another and from one generation to the next, by word of mouth.
- In terms of the long history of humankind, writing is a fairly recent invention.
- Before that, religious traditions were carried by word of mouth only.
- Such traditions changed and developed and adapted over time, but this takes nothing away from the remarkable phenomenon of oral tradition as a normative source of prime importance throughout religious history.
- In Christianity the doctrine of the apostles came to them in oral form from Jesus.
- In one sense the entire Christian message is based on oral tradition and is only augmented by using the written revelation of the Old Testament.

1.1.3 Sacred texts

African Traditional Religion (ATR)

- African Traditional Religion has no sacred texts, religion is written in the minds and actions of the people.
- All its beliefs and teachings are passed down in two ways: through the spoken word or through ritual actions.
- In most African religions, morals, values and knowledge are communicated through the telling of stories known as proverbs.
- ATR focuses on ritual participation and observance rather than on text, as a sacred authority.
- It is based on a daily practical routine of showing respect to the elderly, siblings, nature and oneself.
- Practitioners of ATR know that one has to consult the clan regarding action she/he intends to take, rather than consult a 'book'.
- In ATR there are attempts to write down some basic beliefs of the religion.

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Middle Eastern Religions

- Writing entered the religious scene roughly 4000 years ago. Writing has played a very important role in many religions.
- Middle Eastern religions have developed Sacred Text when writing began.
- Oral tradition can run parallel to written traditions.
- In religions of the Book (Judaism, Christianity and Islam), sacred texts play a key role in teachings.
- As Prophet Muhammad was illiterate, he shared the revelations orally with his followers, who wrote them down.
- The text containing the revelations is known as the Qur'an.
- This book is regarded as the supreme scripture of Islam.
- It is regarded as the word of God.
- The Qur'an cannot be separated from the language in which it was revealed (Arabic)
- Jews speak of a written and an oral law, both of which were received by Moses on Mount Sinai and transferred down the generations until the present day.
- The oral law, which explains the Torah, was only written down around 200 CE.
- The oral Torah was transmitted from one generation to the next until it was committed to writing in a work known as the meaning 'teaching'. The Christian Bible consists of the Old and the New Testaments. Mishnah,
- These scriptures were declared authoritative by their various faith communities through the ages to become the Christian Holy Scriptures.
- Different lists of books (we call such lists 'canons') originated from the scriptures.
- Every canon is authoritative and precious to the Christians of its own tradition, even though it may differ from the canon of another tradition.
- The term 'Bible' originates from a Greek word, which means 'book'.
- For Christians the Bible is a book of faith, therefore Christians call the Bible the word of God.

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4. STUDY AND EXAM TIPS

Command verbs

Candidates need to be skilled in the application of knowledge. Analytical skills of candidates need to be developed through open- ended questions. It is essential that candidates have a good understanding of the "action words" commonly used in the NSC Examinations.

L1 and L 2	
Remembering	**Understanding**
Exhibit memory of previously learned material by recalling facts, basic concepts; and answers.	Demonstrate understanding of facts and ideas by: organising, comparing, translating, interpreting, giving descriptions and stating main ideas.
Choose Define Find How List Match Name Relate Select What When Where Which Who Why	Classify Compare Contrast Explain Illustrate Outline Summarise Infer Relate Show Demonstrate

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L3 and L 4	
Applying	**Analysing**
Solve problems to new situations by applying acquired knowledge, facts techniques and rules in a different way.	Examine and break information into parts by identifying reasons or causes. Make inference and find evidence to support generalisations.
Apply Choose Develop Identify Interview Construct Report Change Conclude Demonstrate Discuss Explain Illustrate Interpret Report Review Summarise Tell Prepare Show	Analyse Assume Categorise Classify Compare Contrast Conclude Distinguish Examine Infer

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L5 and L 6	
Evaluating	**Creating**
Present and defend opinions by making judgements about information, validity of ideas or quality of work based on a set of criteria	Compile information together in a different way by combining elements in a new pattern or proposing an alternative solution
Apply Appraise Assess Compare Conclude Consider Criticise Decide Defend Determine Evaluate Explain Interpret Judge Justify Recommend Support Argue	Change Choose Combine Compile Compose Construct Create Develop Elaborate Imagine Improve Plan Predict Propose Solve Suppose Produce

IMPORTANT:

- Command verbs guide us on what each questions is requiring us to do.
- Ensure that you analyse the question to understand the command verb.
- Use a highlighter to highlight or underline the command verbs..

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Examination Tips

The table below outlines the topics that need to be covered in Grade 12 for Religion Studies.

TOPIC	SUB-TOPICS
VARIETY OF RELIGIONS	Conceptual distinctions • Internal differentiations within religions • Main features of such differentiations * • Unique features of various religions * • History and present dynamics of inter-religious relationships
COMMON FEATURES OF RELIGION AS A GENERIC AND UNIQUE PHENOMENON	• Religious teachings • The central teachings in one religion • Normative sources in various religions • Interpreting one normative source • Analysis of secular worldviews • The origin, purpose and influencing factors behind at least two worldviews
TOPICAL ISSUES IN SOCIETY	• Developing a strategy to solve a major social problem * • Role of media in influencing public opinion on religion * • Religious freedom, human rights and responsibilities
RESEARCH INTO AND ACROSS RELIGIONS	• Religion in areas of conflict in South Africa, Africa and the world • Religion and the natural sciences

NB: the SELF STUDY Guide consists of 8 BOOKLETS that cover a variety of topics. The only topics that are not covered by the SELF STUDY Guide are those indicated with an asterix (*). These are generally open-ended topics that will require application of knowledge. You need to go through past papers to ensure that you see how this content is assessed.

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5. REFERENCES

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