World Religions Pre-Assessment

STATE STANDARD: The students will explain the belief systems of various religious groups.

INQUIRY QUESTIONS: What are the basic beliefs of at least 3 of the major religions (Hinduism, Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and Buddhism)? How do these beliefs impact the lives of their followers?

TASKS: This task is based on the accompanying documents. Some of these documents have been edited for the purpose of this task. This task is designed to test your ability to work with historic documents. As you analyze the documents, take into account both the source of the document and the author’s point of view. You will be writing a 5 paragraph Document Based Question essay according to the specifications.

SPECIFICATIONS:
1. Historical Context- Religions and philosophies that developed in ancient times have had a great impact on the lives of their followers. Your essay should include evidence of the historical context of the World Religions in the introduction paragraph.
2. Thesis- The essay must have a thoroughly developed thesis using all aspects of the task evenly, and in depth. The thesis should relate to the impact that various religions have on the lives of their followers.
3. Documents- Reference at least 4 documents within a well organized essay.
4. Outside Information- Support your ideas by incorporating outside information from your prior knowledge on World Religions. This outside information must richly support the thesis with many relevant facts, examples and details.
5. Analysis- Think critically about the impact that various religious beliefs have on their followers. Explain your ideas with an in-depth analysis.
6. Conventions- Your paper must be 5 paragraphs with an introduction, 3 body paragraphs, and a conclusion.
7. Guiding Support- To help support you in your writing process, guiding questions and an outline is provided.

ASSESSMENT: Please refer to the attached rubrics for specific grading considerations. You will be assessed on the criterion A: Knowledge and Understanding and criterion D: Critical Thinking.
Document 1- The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17)

1. I am The Lord your God  
2. You shall have no other gods to rival me  
3. You shall not misuse the name of The Lord your God  
4. Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy  
5. Honor your father and your mother  
6. You shall not kill  
7. You shall not commit adultery  
8. You shall not steal  
9. You shall not give false evidence against your neighbor  
10. You shall not covet

Q: To which religion(s) does this apply?  
Q: How does a person follow the moral code of this religion?

Document 2- The following is an excerpt from the Quran (Surah 92 The Night al Lail)

“The Night”
In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful

By the night, when she lets fall her darkness, and by the radiant day!
   By Him that created the male and the female, your endeavors have different ends!
For him that gives in charity and guards himself against evil and believes in goodness, We shall
   smooth the path of salvation; but for him that neither gives nor takes and disbelieves in
   goodness, We shall smooth the path of affliction. When he breathes his last, his riches
   will not avail him.

It is for Us to give guidance. Ours is the life of this world, Ours the life to come. I warn you,
   then, of the blazing fire, in which none shall burn save the hardened sinner, who denies the
   truth and gives no heed. But the good man who purifies himself by almsgiving shall keep
   away from it: and so shall he that does good works for the sake of the Most High, not in
   recompense for a favor. Such men shall be content.

Q: What two attributes of Allah are identified in the opening line of “The Night”?
Q: How will Allah punish those who deny the truth?
Document 3- The following is an excerpt from Mahabharata and Ancient Indian Epic from about 400 B.C.E.

Enjoy the pleasure
bestowed on you,
and bear the pain
bestowed on you,
wait patiently for
what time brings,
as does the farmer
with the fruit.
Let us overcome
the angry man
with gentleness,
the evil man
with goodness
the miser
with generosity
the liar
with truth

Q: List two lessons “The Mahabharata” teaches about Hindu life.
Q: What characteristics of an advanced civilization did ancient Ghana possess?

Document 4- The following is the Four Noble Truths taken from a Chinese Buddhist canon text.

1. The Nature of Suffering (Dukkha):
   "This is the noble truth of suffering: birth is suffering, aging is suffering, illness is suffering, death is suffering; sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair are suffering; union with what is displeasing is suffering; separation from what is pleasing is suffering; not to get what one wants is suffering; in brief, the five aggregates subject to clinging are suffering."

2. Suffering’s Origin (Samudaya):
   "This is the noble truth of the origin of suffering: it is this craving which leads to renewed existence, accompanied by delight and lust, seeking delight here and there, that is, craving for sensual pleasures, craving for existence, craving for extermination."

3. Suffering’s Cessation (Nirodha):
   "This is the noble truth of the cessation of suffering: it is the remainderless fading away and cessation of that same craving, the giving up and relinquishing of it, freedom from it, nonreliance on it."

4. The Way (Marga) Leading to the Cessation of Suffering:
   "This is the noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering: it is the Noble Eightfold Path; that is, right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration."

Q: According to the 4 Noble truths what is the cause of suffering and how does one end it?
Document 5- The following depicts the origins of the Hindu Caste system. The four major castes emerged from Purusha (the first human being). Purusha is identified with the creator god Brahma.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Caste</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Brahmins</td>
<td>The priestly class, born from the mouth of Brahma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Kshatriyas</td>
<td>Warriors and rulers, senators, presidents, majors, born from the chest of Brahma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Vaisyas</td>
<td>Farmers, merchants, lawyers, doctors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Sudras</td>
<td>Unskilled workers. Born from the feet of Brahma.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other sub-castes</td>
<td>Up to 3,000 sub-castes, with the untouchables at the bottom.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q: What group makes up the Sudras class?
Q: Why might the caste of Brahmins be associated with the mouth?

Document 6- As part of the Islam religion, all true Muslims must perform 5 duties called the Five Pillars of Faith

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pillar</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shahadat</td>
<td>A Muslim must acknowledge that &quot;There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his Prophet&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salat</td>
<td>A Muslim must pray five times daily facing Mecca: at dawn, at noon, in the midafternoon, at dusk, and after dark.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zakat</td>
<td>Each Muslim give charity and help the needy. Must pay a zakaat to the government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sawm</td>
<td>A Muslim must fast for the month of Ramadan. During the fasting month, one must refrain from eating, drinking, smoking, and sexual intercourse from dawn until sunset.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hajj</td>
<td>A Muslim must make a pilgrimage to Mecca. Every adult Muslim who is physically and financially able to do so must make this pilgrimage at least once in his or her lifetime.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q: What duties does each Muslim have according to the 5 pillars?
Document 7- The following is an excerpt from the New Testament of the Christian Bible

1 And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:
2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,
3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
4 Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.
5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.
6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.
7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.
8 Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.
9 Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.
10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.
12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

-Matthew 5

Q: What happens to those Christians who are merciful?

Document 8- The following is an excerpt from Genesis 17 of the Old Testament. The subject is Abraham, the father of Judaism (the first Jew)

2 And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly.
3 And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying,
4 As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations.
5 Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee.
6 And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.
7 And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.
8 And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

-Genesis 17

Q: What did God give to Abraham and his descendants?

Document 9- The following is an excerpt from the Buddhist Eightfold Path to reaching enlightenment

Q: How does a Buddhist life improve by following the Eightfold Path?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Level descriptor</th>
<th>Task-specific clarification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>The student does not reach a standard described by any of the descriptors below.</td>
<td>The student does not reach a standard described by any of the descriptors below.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1–2   | The student:  
  i. uses **limited** relevant terminology  
  ii. demonstrates **basic** knowledge and understanding of content and concepts with **minimal** descriptions and/or examples. | The student:  
  makes a **limited attempt** to use **some** terminology relevant to World Religions.  
  demonstrates **basic** knowledge and understanding of the impact of religious beliefs with **minimal** descriptions and/or examples. |
| 3–4   | The student:  
  i. uses **some** terminology accurately and appropriately  
  ii. demonstrates **adequate** knowledge and understanding of content and concepts through **satisfactory** descriptions, explanations and examples. | The student:  
  uses terminology related to World Religions that is **accurate and/or appropriate**  
  demonstrates knowledge and understanding of the **adequate** descriptions, explanations or examples. |
| 5–6   | The student:  
  i. uses a range of terminology accurately and appropriately  
  ii. demonstrates **substantial** knowledge and understanding of content and concepts through **accurate** descriptions, explanations and examples. | The student:  
  uses a **range** of terminology related to the World Religions **accurately and appropriately**  
  demonstrates **good** knowledge and understanding of World Religions **detailed and accurate** descriptions, explanations and examples. |
7–8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The student:</th>
<th>The student:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i. consistently uses a wide range of terminology effectively</td>
<td>uses a wide range of terminology related to World Religions accurately and appropriately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. demonstrates excellent knowledge and understanding of content and concepts through thorough, accurate descriptions, explanations and examples.</td>
<td>demonstrates detailed knowledge and understanding of World Religions through developed and accurate descriptions, explanations and examples.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Criterion D: Critically Thinking**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Level descriptor</th>
<th>Task-specific clarification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>The student does not reach a standard described by any of the descriptors below.</td>
<td>The student does not reach a standard described by any of the descriptors below.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1–2   | The student:  
   i. analyses concepts, issues, models, visual representation and theories to a limited extent  
   ii. summarizes information to a limited extent to make arguments  
   iii. describes a limited number of sources/data in terms of origin and purpose and recognizes nominal value and limitations  
   iv. identifies different perspectives and minimal implications. | **Thesis:** Thesis is limited in detail and the paper makes limited argument to prove the thesis statement  
**Documents:** References few or no documents  
**Analysis:** Limited analysis and evaluates a limited range of sources/data regarding World Religions in terms of origin and purpose, recognizing nominal value and limitations  
**References from Sources:** In text citations may not be present and allow for a minimal range of different perspectives on the topic and their implications. Synthesizes information to a limited extent to make arguments  
**Outside Information:** Paper makes a limited attempt to incorporate outside information in order to allow for a discussion of concepts surrounding World Religions |
| 3–4   | The student:  
   i. analyses concepts, issues, models, visual representation and theories  
   ii. summarizes information to make arguments  
   iii. analyzes and/or evaluates sources/data in terms of origin and purpose, recognizing some value and limitations | **Thesis:** Thesis is somewhat clear, somewhat detailed and the paper makes adequately supported argument to accurately prove the thesis statement  
**Documents:** References at least 3 documents  
**Analysis:** Somewhat effectively analyzes and evaluates a range of sources/data regarding the World Religions in terms of origin and purpose, recognizing value and limitations  
**References from Sources:** In text citations are present and allow for an average range of |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 5-6         | The student:  
  i. discusses concepts, issues, models, visual representation and theories  
  ii. synthesizes information to make valid arguments  
  iii. effectively analyses and evaluates a range of sources/data in terms of origin and purpose, usually recognizing value and limitations  
  iv. interprets different perspectives and their implications.  
  **Thesis:** Thesis is clear and detailed and the paper makes a well-supported argument to prove the thesis statement  
  **Documents:** References at least 4 documents  
  **Analysis:** Effectively analyzes and evaluates a range of sources/data regarding World Religions in terms of origin and purpose, recognizing value and limitations  
  **References from Sources:** In text citations are present and allow for a range of different perspectives on the topic and their implications. Synthesizes information to make valid, well-supported arguments  
  **Outside Information:** Paper effectively incorporates outside information in order to allow for a mostly complete discussion of concepts surrounding World Religions |
| 7-8         | The student:  
  i. completes a detailed discussion of concepts, issues, models, visual representation and theories  
  ii. synthesizes information to make valid, well-supported arguments  
  iii. effectively analyses and evaluates a range of sources/data in terms of origin and purpose, recognizing value and limitations  
  iv. thoroughly interprets a range of different perspectives and their implications.  
  **Thesis:** Thesis is very clear and detailed and the paper makes a very well-supported argument to completely prove the thesis statement.  
  **Documents:** References at least 5 documents  
  **Analysis:** Effectively analyzes and evaluates a wide range of sources/data regarding World Religions in terms of origin and purpose, recognizing value and limitations  
  **References from Sources:** In text citations are present and allow for a wide range of different perspectives on the topic and their implications. Synthesizes information to make valid, well-supported arguments  
  **Outside Information:** Paper effectively incorporates outside information in order to allow for a complete discussion of concepts surrounding the World Religions |