






AQA Religious Studies A – Buddhism Practices

Key Words			
Chanting	A type of worship that involves reciting from Buddhist scriptures	Samatha Meditation	A form of meditation focused on calming the mind and mindfulness
Karma	An ethical principle that explains how actions lead either to happiness or suffering	Shrine	A focal point for Buddhist worship and offerings in temples or at home
Karuna	Compassion – feeling concerned for the suffering of others	Skilful	Actions that lead to good karma, unskilful actions lead to bad karma
Mantra	A short sequence of syllables recited during worship	Stupa	A tiered tower structure that is designed to symbolise elements of Buddhist teaching
Metta	Loving-kindness – a desire for other people to be happy	Temple	The focal point of Buddhist worship – the building where Buddhists gather
Parinirvana Day	A Mahayana festival commemorating Buddha’s passing into nirvana	Vihara	A monastery or community where Buddhists gather to meditate
Puja	Worship – it expresses gratitude and respect for Buddha and his teachings	Vipassana Meditation	A form of meditating on a teaching of Buddha to gain greater understanding
Rupa	A statue of Buddha used in worship and meditation	Wesak	A festival celebrating the life and teachings of Buddha

Key Ideas			
<p>Places of Worship + Puja</p> 	<p>Places of Worship</p> <p>Buddhists often worship in a temple where they gather to meditate together and perform puja. A temple or vihara will have rupas (statues of Buddha), stupas (towered structures designed to symbolise Buddhist teaching) and often shrines where offerings can be made.</p>	<p>Puja</p> <p>Puja is the name for Buddhist worship which is a ceremony that expresses gratitude and respect for Buddha and his teachings. Buddhists perform chanting where sacred texts are remembered and taught orally and with devotion. They also recite mantras which are short sequences of syllables that help concentrate the mind.</p>	
<p>Meditation</p> 	<p>Samatha Meditation</p> <p>This is a type of meditation that involves calming the mind and developing deepened concentration. This can be done through mindfulness of breathing where Buddhists concentrate on the pattern of their breath to relax their mind.</p>	<p>Vipassana Meditation</p> <p>This type of meditation focuses on developing an understanding of the nature of reality. Buddhists focus on the teachings of Buddha, especially the Three Marks of Existence in order to move them closer to enlightenment.</p>	
<p>Funerals + Festivals</p> 	<p>Buddhist Funerals</p> <p>Buddhists usually try to spend as little money as possible on funerals as they believe the cycle of samsara means their energy moves onto a new body. In a Sky Burial Tibetan Buddhists leave the body on a mountainside as an offering to the vultures. This reflects a belief in anicca, the impermanence of existence.</p>	<p>Wesak</p> <p>Wesak is a Theravada Buddhist festival which celebrates the Buddha’s birth, enlightenment and passing away into nirvana. It is celebrated by lighting up candles and lanterns to represent enlightenment and by attending the local temple to take part in worship or meditation.</p>	<p>Parinirvana Day</p> <p>Parinirvana Day is a Mahayana festival that commemorates the death and passing into enlightenment of Buddha. It is celebrated by Buddhists reading and studying the last writings of Buddha, meditating at home or in a temple or going on a retreat to reflect and meditate.</p>
<p>Five Moral Precepts + Six Perfections</p> 	<p>Five Moral Precepts</p> <p>These form a Buddhist ethical code. They are five principles that Buddhists try to live their life by.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to abstain from taking life 2. to abstain from taking what is not given 3. to abstain from sexual misconduct 4. to abstain from wrong speech 5. to abstain from intoxicants 		<p>The Six Perfections</p> <p>These are six qualities that Mahayana Buddhists try to develop to become Bodhisattvas. They require practice and thought in order to develop them. They are: generosity, morality, patience, energy, meditation and wisdom.</p>
<p>Karma, Karuna + Metta</p> 	<p>Karma</p> <p>Karma is the ethical idea that a Buddhist’s actions lead either to happiness or suffering. Skilful actions result in good karma and happiness. Unskilful actions result in bad karma and suffering. When a Buddhist is reborn their new life will be affected by their karma from past lives.</p>	<p>Karuna</p> <p>Karuna is compassion, a feeling of concern for the suffering of others. It is one of the four sublime states that Buddha taught Buddhists should develop. Buddhists aim to recognise the suffering of others and do something to make their lives better.</p>	<p>Metta</p> <p>Metta is loving-kindness, another of the four sublime states. It means desiring other people to be happy and is an attitude of warmth and kindness that Buddhists try to feel toward other people. It leads to a feeling of peace and contentment.</p>