2.2 In-depth study: Buddhism

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____ **Total: 30 marks**

KEY WORDS Four Noble Truths • Noble Eightfold Path • enlightenment • impermanence • craving • bodhisattva • Middle Way

Objective

Study **Buddhism** in depth: the life of the Buddha, the **Four Noble Truths**, the **Noble Eightfold Path**, the **three marks of existence**, and the main schools, **Theravada** and **Mahayana**.

You must be able to:

- outline the life of the Buddha and its meaning
- explain the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path
- explain the three marks of existence
- compare Theravada and Mahayana
- evaluate how Buddhists understand suffering

1 Key knowledge and worked examples

The life of the Buddha

Siddhartha Gautama, a prince, saw the **four sights**: an old man, a sick man, a dead body and a holy man. He left home, tried extreme self-denial, then chose the **Middle Way** between luxury and harshness. Meditating under the Bodhi tree, he gained **enlightenment** and taught for the rest of his life.

The teaching

Three marks of existence: **anicca** (impermanence), **dukkha** (suffering, dissatisfaction), **anatta** (no fixed self).

Four Noble Truths: (1) life involves dukkha; (2) its cause is craving (*tanha*); (3) it can end: **nirvana**; (4) the way is the **Noble Eightfold Path**: right view, intention, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, concentration, grouped as wisdom, ethics and meditation.

The Five Precepts for lay Buddhists: avoid killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, false speech and intoxicants.

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Schools

	Theravada	Mahayana
where	Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar	China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam; Tibet (Vajrayana)
ideal	the **arhat**, who gains nirvana	the **bodhisattva**, who delays final nirvana to help all beings
texts	the Pali Canon	also the Mahayana sutras, e.g. the Lotus Sutra, Heart Sutra

2 Practice

2.1 Name the **three marks of existence**. [2]

2.2 The Eightfold Path has 8 parts in 3 groups: wisdom (2 parts), ethics (3) and meditation (3). Calculate the fraction of the Path that is ethics, and explain why ethics comes before meditation in practice for many Buddhists. [3]



2.3 Explain how the **four sights** led Siddhartha to seek enlightenment. [4]

2.4 Compare the **arhat** and **bodhisattva** ideals. [6]

3 Exam-style questions

3.1 *(Paper 2 style.)* "The Four Noble Truths are a diagnosis and a cure." Discuss this description of the Buddha's teaching. [15]



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