VCE Religion and Society (2017–2022)  
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

How are primary and secondary sources differentiated in the study of religious traditions?

Primary sources are usually texts spoken, written, or represented in the Arts, by a person who participated in events, observed events, or is reflecting on the events contemporaneously or after a period of time. Secondary sources usually draw on, elaborate or explain primary sources. The distinction between primary and secondary sources will vary between religious traditions and their particular practices at specific times regarding sacred texts.

What is the definition of a denomination?

Groups within a broader religious tradition that may have some elements of various aspects in common but also have variations or distinctive differences in certain elements of those aspects.

Would students need to give examples of each of the nine aspects?

Yes, as relevant to an area of study.

Does each element of the ‘spaces, places, times and artifacts’ aspect need to be studied?

Yes. Each of these is a different part of the one aspect and as such should be considered in each area of study. In some areas of study, according to the religious tradition, denomination and topic, a selection of one or more of the terms may be required due to relevance.

What is meant by the ‘spaces, places, times and artifacts’ aspect?

All of these four components of this Aspect may vary in their spiritual significance according to their function or usage within religions.

Not all four components of this aspect will necessarily be given equal status within a particular religion nor be comparable in importance across religions.

A way for differentiating between places and spaces is to consider that:

* *Places* refers to a location for worship or spiritual engagement, such as Rome, Mecca, Jerusalem, Lourdes, caves, stone circles, rivers, mountains, temples, churches, synagogues, mosques.
* *Spaces*, which are also focus areas for worship or spiritual experience, are within those places, such as shrines and altars and alcoves containing symbolic artifacts or healing or restorative powers. Spaces may also be where particular rituals are performed or individuals worship. There may be many such spaces within a place.
* *Times* refers to those periods that are set for annual, monthly, weekly or daily recognition of and participation in a particular spiritual experience within a religious tradition. Such may engage the whole membership of the religion or a special group or, under the auspices of the religious tradition, be personal.
* *Artifacts* refers to human made objects and works that carry varying degrees of spiritual significance within a religion. Not all artifacts related to a religion hold such spiritual significance. For example, the artifacts that are produced for sale to publicise and commemorate visits of religious leaders or pilgrimage experiences.

Spiritual and religious ideas in Prehistory are studied in Unit 1. What is Prehistory?

Archaeological explanations of what happened in human societies according to the traces left by intentional human activity. Essentially it is what happened in the world before the invention of writing in Sumeria and Meso-America.

Can two Semitic religious traditions be studied for Unit 2 Area of Study 2?

Yes, noting that the context is societies in which multiple worldviews coexist.

Can two denominations from one faith be studied for Unit 2 Area of Study 2?

No, two different religious traditions must be studied.

Unit 3 Area of Study 2 requires study of the expression of religious beliefs and ‘the connections between these expressions’. Does ‘connections’ mean interconnections?

Yes. The term interconnections is a synonym for connections in this area of study.

Can the four challenges studied in Unit 4 Area of Study 1 be for one religious tradition and then the one challenge studied in depth for Unit 4 Area of Study 2 be from a different religious tradition?

Yes

Can a challenge that is currently occurring be studied for Unit 4 Area of Study 2?

Yes, providing that the key knowledge and key skill requirements of the area of study can be met.