







AQA Religious Studies A – Buddhism Beliefs

Key Words			
Arhat	A 'perfected person' who has overcome the main sources of suffering	Four Noble Truths	Four truths the Buddha taught about suffering and how to overcome it
Asceticism	A lifestyle of strict self-denial – rejected by Siddhartha for the Middle Way	Four Sights	Four things Siddhartha saw that inspired him to leave his life of luxury
Bodhisattva	An enlightened person who chooses to remain in samsara to teach others	Jataka	A book of popular tales about the life of the Buddha
Dependent Arising	The idea that everything is dependent on everything else	Meditation	The practice of focusing or calming the mind and reflecting on teachings
Dharma	The Buddha's teachings – how to reach the state of enlightenment	Nirvana	A state of complete enlightenment which lies outside the cycle of samsara
Dukkha	Suffering or dissatisfaction – something Buddhists seek to overcome	Samsara	The cycle of life, death and re-birth
Eightfold Path	Eight aspects of life Buddhists live by to try and reach enlightenment	Three Marks of Existence	Three Buddhist beliefs about the truth of existence
Enlightenment	A state of spiritual wisdom which arises from understanding the nature of reality	Three Watches	Three realisations Siddhartha made in order to become enlightened

Key Ideas				
Buddha's Life + Four Sights 	<p>Buddha was born Siddhartha Gautama around 500BC in southern Nepal. He grew up in a life of luxury as the son of a Queen. He was inspired to leave this life by the Four Sights. After this he lived an ascetic life of self-denial and pain but wasn't able to become enlightened so left it for the Middle Way between pain and luxury.</p>		<p>The Four Sights Siddhartha saw on his trip outside the palace were:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An old man – everyone ages 2. An ill man – everyone becomes ill 3. A dead man – all things die 4. A holy man – the only answer to these problems 	
Enlightenment + 3 Watches 	<p>After the failure of Siddhartha's ascetic life to provide him with enlightenment Siddhartha chose to follow the Middle Way. He meditated under a tree and was tempted by Mara who tried to distract him, but he stayed focused on meditation and reaching enlightenment. Eventually he became enlightened during the Three Watches of the Night where he understood: knowledge of all his previous lives, the cycle of life, death and re-birth (samsara) and that all beings suffer due to desire. After this Siddhartha became enlightened and began to be known as Buddha.</p>			
Three Marks of Existence 	<p>The Three Marks of Existence are the fundamental Buddhist beliefs about the nature of human existence. They present a very different view of the world to Christianity. That suffering is inevitable, that everything is impermeant and that we have no fixed, immortal soul.</p>			
		Dukkha Suffering is a part of life that all people must face. Buddhists can try and overcome it.	Anicca The idea of impermanence – that everything constantly changes and we suffer when we resist it	Anatta The idea that we don't have a fixed soul – there is no unchanging essence to us
Four Noble Truths + Eightfold Path 	<p>The Four Noble Truths are what Buddha taught about suffering 1. There is suffering >> 2. Suffering has a cause >> 3. Suffering can come to an end >> 4. There is a way to end suffering One of the main causes of suffering is tanha or craving. Other causes are known as the Three Poisons of greed, hatred and ignorance. Ultimately Buddha teaches that we can and must overcome these causes of suffering in order to become enlightened and reach nirvana – a state of freedom, happiness and peace The Eightfold Path consists of eight aspects that Buddhists practise and live by in order to do this. e.g. Right speech (speaking truthfully and kindly), right mindfulness (developing awareness of the world around you) and right understanding (developing an understanding of Buddha's teachings)</p>			
Types of Buddhism 	Theravada Known as the ' lesser vehicle ' as only male monks achieve enlightenment. Oldest form of Buddhism, found in southern Asia	Mahayana Known as the ' greater vehicle ' as anyone can become enlightened. Teaches sunyata or emptiness – nothing as a separate soul or self	Pure Land Mostly found in Japan – a form of Mahayana Buddhism. Based on faith in Amitabha Buddha and his paradise.	
Bodhisattva + Arhat 	<p>Bodhisattva Mahayana Buddhists aim to become a Bodhisattva. Someone who reaches an enlightened state but chooses to remain in the cycle of samsara to help others reach enlightenment</p>		<p>Arhat Theravada Buddhists aim to become an Arhat by following the Eightfold Path. An Arhat is a 'perfected person' who overcomes the main sources of suffering and reaches nirvana</p>	