AQA Specification: 3.1.1 Buddhist Beliefs and teachings

Students should study the beliefs, teachings and practices of Buddhism specified below and their basis in Buddhist sources of wisdom and authority. They should be able to refer to scripture and/or sacred texts where appropriate. Some texts are prescribed for study in the content set out below and questions may be set on them. Students may refer to any relevant text in their answers. Students should study the influence of the beliefs, teachings and practices studied on individuals, communities and societies. Common and divergent views within Buddhism in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed should be included throughout. Students may refer to a range of Buddhist perspectives in their answers, for example, Theravada, Mahayana, Zen and Pure Land. They must study the specific differences identified below.

The Dhamma (Dharma)   
• The concept of Dhamma (Dharma).  
• The concept of dependent arising (paticcasamupada).

* The Three Marks of Existence:

1 impermanence (anicca)   
2 no fixed self (anatta)   
3 unsatisfactoriness of life, suffering (dukkha).

* The human personality, in the Theravada and Mahayana traditions:

• Theravada: the Five Aggregates (skandhas) of form, sensation, perception, mental formations, consciousness  
• Mahayana: sunyata, the possibility of attaining Buddhahood and Buddha-nature.

• Human destiny:

• Different ideals in Theravada and Mahayana traditions: Arhat (a ‘perfected person’) and Bodhisattva ideals  
• Buddhahood and the Pure Land.

3.1.1.2 The Buddha and the Four Noble Truths  
The Buddha’s life and its significance:   
• the birth of the Buddha and his life of luxury  
• the Four Sights: 1 illness, 2 old age, 3 death, 4 holy man (Jataka 075)   
• the Buddha’s ascetic life  
• the Buddha’s Enlightenment.

• The Four Noble Truths:   
1 **suffering** (dukkha) including different types of suffering  
2 **the causes of suffering** (samudaya); the Three Poisons, ignorance, greed and hate  
3 **the end of craving** (tanha), interpretations of nibbana (nirvana) and Enlightenment  
4 **the Eightfold Path** (magga) to nibbana/nirvana; the path as the Threefold Way: ethics (sila), meditation (samadhi) and wisdom (panna). Dhammapada 190 –191.