



GCSE

Religious Studies B

8063/2Y Paper 2 Section A: Perspectives on Faith (Judaism)

Report on the Examination

8063
June 2024

Version: 1.0

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General Comments

Students found this paper accessible. The majority of students attempted every question. If any questions were unattempted, these tended to be in the practices section, possibly due to timing. Marks lost were often because there was no attribution of quotations in the 5 mark questions or because points made in the AO2 questions lacked sufficient development to reach the higher levels.

In the 12 mark questions, students who failed to achieve Level 3 often did so because their answers contained insufficient development of points. They showed recognition of different viewpoints with slight elaboration. One of the criteria for Level 3 is to produce logical chains of reasoning which entails making a point and then developing it with explanation and evidence or exemplification.

The standard of spelling, punctuation and grammar was quite high. Some students may have benefited from having a scribe or using a laptop.

1.1

This question relating to an understanding of the sanctity of human life was generally answered correctly by students.

1.2

Students were required to give two commandments that focus on how Jews should treat other people. Those who answered this well, referenced specific commandments regarding the relationship between man and man. Students lost marks because they ignored the term 'others', listing general views about how people should be treated or gave the Golden Rule.

1.3

This question was answered well on the whole. Most students recognised Orthodox and Reform beliefs about the Messiah. This allowed students to distinguish between a Messiah who will rebuild the temple and establish a time of peace with his arrival in comparison to the community working together to achieve the messianic age. A small, but significant number of students wrote a Christian view about the Messiah which was not credited.

1.4

This question which required an explanation of two Jewish beliefs about the covenant between God and Abraham was answered well overall. Successful responses referred to Abraham being a father of a nation with many descendants and to the promised land for Jews to reside in. Others considered circumcision and how Brit Milah is still practised today, showing the significance of the covenant. A small number of students confused the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants. As in previous years, many students failed to gain full marks because they did not state the source of authority for the quotations they had included in their answers.

1.5

Students demonstrated a clear understanding of the different natures of God in this question which asked for an evaluation of the statement: 'For Jews, belief in God as Creator gives the best understanding of the nature of God'. Many answers gave a reasonable development of a range of views. The majority of responses referred to God creating everything in a limited time, showing his omnipotence. The better responses compared literal and metaphorical interpretations of the creation story allowing students to consider whether God as a Creator was the best way to understand God's nature.

Most students contrasted God as a Creator with God as a Lawgiver and Judge or monotheism. Those students who delved into these concepts and provided judgements linked to the statement tended to fulfil the higher-level criteria. Unfortunately, not all students related their knowledge to the statement which limited their explanation and evaluation of the different beliefs. Many students provided a list of terms such as omnipotent, benevolent, omniscient; however this often read like a scattergun approach to incorporate the terms without sufficient development.

2.1

This question asked students to pick the practice associated with Yom Kippur. This was poorly answered with most students choosing the options associated with Rosh Hashanah or Pesach.

2.2

This question concerning religious features found in Orthodox synagogues was answered well by most students. A few students lost marks because they did not write about a physical feature of the synagogue, instead referencing male Rabbis and music.

2.3

Many students responded well to this question referencing mourning rituals (customs) and specific practices that take place during this time. The best answers focused on the impact the practices of shiva had on the family members. Others successfully referenced mourning rituals up to a year later for those who had lost a parent. A small, but significant number of students misread the question and wrote about burial and funeral rites. Other students wrote about an influence without reference to a mourning ritual which limited the marks they could achieve.

2.4

Many students were able to attempt this question and explain something of the importance of the Bat Mitzvah ceremony. The majority of students were able to explore that the girl is recognised as a woman allowing her to take on responsibilities including following the 613 mitzvot. Many also acknowledged that in Reform Judaism, she could now form part of the minyan. Many students failed to gain full marks because they did not state the source of authority of a quotation or reference. A few also lost marks because they focused on physical maturity, puberty and marriage rather than the religious importance of the ceremony.

2.5

Many answers indicated a good understanding of the purpose of Shabbat as a time to spend with family. Good answers made reference to the fact that families are required to eat a meal together and how they observe Shabbat as a family for example, the lighting of candles and Kiddush. Many were able to explain how this keeps the family together as well as attending the synagogue as a family. Weaker responses focused on the family spending time together to play board games and not using electricity.

Other answers described the importance of Shabbat in the synagogue with a focus on the practices that occur on the Saturday. Marks were awarded for those who connected the synagogue practices to the building of a relationship with God and children being educated. Many included reference to quotes and the Ten Commandments. Unfortunately, students did not always link these arguments back to the specific statement in the question. As in 1.5, it was observed that many students did not extend their 'logical chains of reasoning' to provide judgements and so did not reach the higher levels.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.