

---

GCSE

# Religious Studies B

Unit 1: Religion and Citizenship  
Report on the Examination

---

(Unit Code: 40551)  
June 2013

---

Version: 1.0

---

Further copies of this Report are available from [aqa.org.uk](http://aqa.org.uk)

Copyright © 2013 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered schools/colleges for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to schools/colleges to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the school or college.

---

## General Comments

The Unit this year saw a slight fall in the number of students entered compared with the high reached in 2012. This, in part, is no doubt due to the change in regulations meaning full course students now need to sit both units at the end of the course rather than staggering the examinations over two years. Once again though, the full ability range was in evidence and the paper was accessible to the vast majority of students with weaker students being able to gain a reasonable number of marks.

This year also saw an increase in the total number of marks available for the paper, rising from 72 to 76 due to the introduction of a mark for Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPaG). A SPaG mark is awarded to each of the questions attempted. The highest of these marks is then taken forward and added to the total mark for the paper.

This year, for the first time, there were five mark AO1 questions. This did not prove to be a problem because the topics examined enabled students to use a wealth of material. As we have stated each year, schools and colleges should be aware that whole questions on topics will consist of four or five parts, making up a total of 18 marks, 9 marks for AO1 and 9 for AO2. There will always be two AO2 questions, one a 3-mark question and the other a 6-mark question. Marks for individual questions for AO1 may differ from year to year, but, for each whole question, there will always be two or three questions for AO1, totalling 9 marks. Therefore any combination is possible, e.g. 2, 3, 4, or 1, 3, 5, or 3, 3, 3 etc. Whichever combination is chosen will apply to all whole questions on the paper. This enables examiners to examine the AO1 assessment objective in relation to the specification in the most appropriate way, depending on the content being examined from year to year. This is fairer to students. It enables technical terms, or more challenging parts of the specification to be examined appropriately and provides students with opportunities to write at greater length on issues where there is a greater body of knowledge or explanation available.

The emphasis on evaluation allowed students to show that they had considered a range of religious questions and could support their views with reasoned argument. The three-mark questions were generally answered well with many thoughtful and perceptive comments being made on the topics. It is perhaps worth reminding schools and colleges that the three mark questions do not require students to put forward two sides of an argument or require them to include religious teaching, though both of these are perfectly acceptable and credit is given to them. As there is a religious aspect in the statement used by the questions, students are free to engage with the statement and will gain credit for giving their own reasoned opinions.

In the six mark evaluation questions, many students were able to argue taking two points of view on a question but quite often omitted religious teachings or views in their answers, thus limiting the amount of marks available to them. In order to gain the full six marks, students should be using the arguments and the religious teaching in their responses and not merely stating them. Answers do not have to be perfectly balanced and a non-religious counter-argument is acceptable.

There is evidence that many schools and colleges use various forms of scaffolding to help their students tackle these six mark questions and this is to be welcomed. However teachers should check that the methods used will deliver the best outcomes for students. In some instances, there is evidence that students state religious teaching on one side of the argument and some on the other side but do not use that information. The result is that rather than producing a well- rounded evaluative response, students produce a mixture of evaluation with paragraphs of knowledge and understanding thrown in and no links being made. Where students have been more successful in gaining the full six marks, their answers have quite often, but not always, been based around

simple methods such as stating the point, backing it up with evidence or examples and including explanation and then moving on to the next point.

Once again, the freedom to approach topics from the perspective of one or more religions led to some students including the views of several religions in their responses. This is very positive and this year there appeared to be fewer instances of students confusing the beliefs and practices of the different religions. What was seen from many students was good in-depth knowledge and understanding of the major religious traditions they had studied. It was also good to see a wider range of religious teachings being employed by students rather than just sticking to the old favourites such as 'Love your neighbour.'

Another positive noted this year was the drop in the numbers of students who attempted all six of the questions. This appeared to be restricted to a few students in larger schools and colleges. There were almost no reports this year from examiners giving instances of where entire schools and colleges had attempted all six questions. This development is most welcome as students who attempt all six questions frequently under-perform on the paper due to time constraints, meaning they are unable to deal with the questions in the appropriate depth to gain the top marks.

## **Question 1 Religion and Relationships**

This was the most popular question on the paper and elicited many good responses from students.

01 This question required a simple definition of commitment and the vast majority of students were able to provide this. Many students did attempt to define the term by saying it was 'being committed' but managed to gain their mark by then giving a clear example to illustrate their point.

02 Students provided many good descriptions of religious wedding ceremonies with examples from all six major religions being seen. Where students did less well this was usually due to concentrating on the symbolism of the ceremony rather than focussing on what happened in the actual ceremony. Other students tended to ignore the religious elements altogether and concentrated on the build-up e.g. engagement party or after the ceremony, reception etc.

03 This part produced many thoughtful and well-argued responses, with students both agreeing and disagreeing with the statement. Those who agreed that religions should accept homosexual relationships tended to argue that the world had moved on significantly from when religious texts had been written and that as all humans including homosexuals had been created by God, how could God's creation be imperfect? Others argued that if God was a God of love, why would he deny love between two people of the same sex? Students arguing against the statement tended to argue that religious believers should follow their religious teachings and not change them just because they were becoming difficult or inconvenient in the modern age. A minority of students deviated from the set question and instead discussed gay marriage with a consequent impact on the number of marks gained.

04 This question allowed students to show excellent knowledge of religious attitudes to divorce and many gained full marks. Where students did less well this was usually due to them wandering off into explanations around re-marriage or annulment. There was also evidence of a number of students turning the question into an evaluative response.

05 This part produced a varied response from students. Where it was answered well, students frequently argued that both commitment and love were important and made some very perceptive points such as how there may be times when you fell out of love with your partner but remained committed and worked things through, or reflected on how the nature of love might change over the course of a marriage and become almost the same as commitment in some ways in later life. Where the question was less well answered, students tended to write in general about marriage and relationships or moved back and forth between 'You need love to be committed' and 'You need to be committed to love somebody.'

## **Question 2 Religion, Sport and Leisure.**

06 This part required one reason why some activities could be seen as a misuse of leisure time. The majority of students were able to score the mark available. Where they did not, this was usually due to them giving an example of the misuse of leisure rather than a reason.

07 This produced good answers with many students gaining full marks. Answers included appropriate religious teachings and applied them to the situation and/or considered the social impact on families if a believer engaged in gambling. Whilst others differentiated between gambling in a casino compared to putting a few pounds on the National Lottery each week.

08 This question elicited some excellent responses showing how involvement in sport can help to overcome prejudice. There were many good examples used, such as the impact of the Olympic games on people's views of women in sport, the Paralympic games on people's perceptions of the disabled and the increasingly multi-ethnic football teams of the Football League, where the focus was on how well a player played not which country he came from or which religion he followed. Some students did interpret the question as being about suffering personal prejudice and talked about how involvement in sport allowed an individual to relax and forget their problems. A small minority of students did not appear to understand the term prejudice and gave a general answer on the benefits of sport.

09 This was well answered with many students able to explain religious attitudes to the use of Performance Enhancing Drugs and cite suitable religious teachings, such as 'Do not steal' and 'Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit' and correctly apply them in the answer. Only a very small number of students thought that religions accepted the use of PEDs.

10 There was a very mixed response to this part. Where students picked up on the thrust of the question, 'The devotion of fans...', they were able to give thoughtful and well-reasoned responses reflecting on how the actions of fans *had* or *had appeared* to turn sport into a religion but that that was only an appearance, as sport could not really satisfy the inner spiritual element of a person. A significant number of students did not address 'The devotion of fans' element and gave a more general response to 'Is sport a religion?' with a consequent impact on the marks gained.

**Question 3 Religion and Work**

11 Many students were able to explain what was meant by the term fair wage. There was, however, also much confusion of the term with minimum wage and the presumption that a fair wage would also be a living wage rather than an appropriate payment for the work done.

12 Many students were able to explain religious attitudes to the use of money that had been earned, with relevant teachings from various religions being correctly employed. Where students did less well this was usually due to them explaining how money should be earned by religious believers rather than how it should be used.

13 There were many well-argued responses provided here for both sides of the debate, with students making the point that believers should follow the teachings of their religion and if God had a day of rest then so should believers. However the point was also well made that with so many different religions and people therefore having different days off, how was any work going to get done.

14 This part produced a variety of responses with many students able to give clear explanations with good examples of why religious believers may not want to work in certain jobs. Where the response was weaker, this was often due to students giving incorrect information or listing jobs that could not be done but giving no explanation or making sweeping statements that lacked precision, such as Jews or Muslims not wanting to be butchers because they did not eat meat. Other students turned the question on its head and explained what the best jobs for religious believers might be.

15 This provided an opportunity for some students to have a rant, with quite a lot of unsupported assertion about scroungers, asylum seekers and immigrants being outlined. However the question was often well answered with appropriate religious teachings being cited on both sides of the argument. Many students looked at the expectations that religions had of supporting oneself and family, whilst recognising that there were times when this was not possible and that the State had a duty to support the unemployed as the consequences of not doing so would be far more costly in terms of the rise in crime and disorder. Many students also differentiated between those who had worked and been made unemployed, those who were unable to work due to illness or disability and those who lived on benefits with no intention of working.

**Question 4 Religion and the Multicultural Society.**

16 This part produced a mix of responses with the majority of students able to describe how one religious festival was celebrated within the community. The majority of examples seen were those listed in the specification. However some students, responding to the picture in the question, wrote about the festival of Holi and another less common festival used was the Mexican Day of the Dead linked to the Christian All Saints Day and All Souls Day. Some students appeared to confuse festival with ceremony and wrote about baptism or marriage whilst others appeared to have little idea and described the picture.

17 Following on from what they had thought about in part 16, many students went on to give very thoughtful and well-argued responses here, where they were asked to consider whether believers should celebrate the festivals of other religions. As may be expected, the full range of opinion was evident with the key points being made that celebrating together brings the communities together and promotes harmony but what should believers do if the festival went against a key religious belief they held.

18 This part asked for the meaning of ‘political correctness’ and was frequently missed out by students or answered incorrectly. As a key term within the specification, it is expected that students are aware of its meaning. Where responses were offered, many talked about things being right or honest in the law, Parliament or politics in general.

19 There were many good responses produced here, with students able to clearly outline the advantages of living in a multicultural society. Where students failed to gain marks, it was often the result of moving off the advantages and instead outlining disadvantages.

20 This question provided a challenge for many students. The weakest answers displayed little or no understanding of what was meant by ‘Faith communities’ and struggled therefore to evaluate what influence they might have in Britain today. Other answers saw faith communities as small religious groups working in their own areas and therefore frequently came to the conclusion they had little impact in Britain as a whole. Other answers saw faith communities as meaning, for example, the whole Muslim community within Britain and went on to consider how much influence they may have in Britain today. The most complex responses saw faith communities as the whole group of believers of a religion and considered their influence at both local and national level. These answers often came to the conclusion that there was much influence still within the local areas as many religions provided help and support to people and would often work with other religious groups and campaign for improvements in their areas. At a national level, the picture was often much more mixed but examples of Christian bishops sitting in the House of Lords and members of other religions being ennobled together with MPs of different religious backgrounds and debates that had been in the press recently, such as the right to die debate, led many students to the conclusion that faith communities did still have some influence in Britain.

### **Question 5 Religion and Identity.**

Yet again this year, this question was the least popular of the questions on the paper. However there was evidence from many schools and colleges of excellent preparation by students for this section and on a significant number of scripts, students scored their best mark on this topic.

21 There were some very good answers produced here, with students showing detailed knowledge of their chosen ceremony. Many students wrote more than was required and went into the significance of the ceremony in addition to a description of it. For other students the significance was at the expense of the description and so they scored fewer marks. Where students did less well they often confused ceremonies or amalgamated them, for example, writing about both Infant and Believer’s baptism. A small number of students ignored the instruction not to write about marriage and did so with the result that they gained no marks.

22 This part was answered well with most students able to identify one reason why a person may be concerned about their image. The most popular answers appeared to be related to the threat of bullying and the impact of the media.

23 There were some well-argued responses here, with many students arguing that believers should be proud of who they were and their religion and so should wear their clothes and symbols outside their place of worship as well as within it. Others argued that fear of bullying and harassment meant it was right that things were confined to the place of worship.

24 Answers to this question were rather mixed, with the most common mistake being to talk about how healthy living could be achieved rather than why religious believers think it is important. There was evidence of good answers where students linked the ideas of being body, mind and spirit and it was necessary to be healthy in each area. Ideas about being created in God's image, the preciousness / sacredness of life and it being a gift, so needed to be looked after, were also popular.

25 This part seemed to produce quite a clear divide between students. Some students took a straightforward view that the only purpose in life was to have children, particularly if you were religious and others saw a far more complex situation, meaning that if you were religious your purpose was to do God's will. Many of the students in the former category saw a religious believer's duty as to have children to keep their faith going whilst those who were not religious should just have a good time as that was the only real purpose. The latter group tended to consider the purpose of life as finding spiritual fulfilment through serving God or seeking Nirvana and/or fulfilling one's potential in an appropriate way and recognised that that may include having children but equally it may involve giving up the idea of ever having children.

### **Question 6 Religion and Human Rights**

26 The vast majority of students were able to give one Human Right.

27 Students were less secure in answering a question where they were required to explain religious attitudes towards human rights. In many cases, a list of religious teachings was provided with only a limited attempt at applying them to human rights. Some students opted to outline how religions attempted to pervert human rights rather than support them.

28 This part produced some good answers, with many students arguing that if a non-religious pressure group supported the ideals of a religion then believers should support them. A popular example was that of Greenpeace, where students linked the religious ideas of stewardship of the earth's resources with Greenpeace's work.

29 By far the two most popular religious believers whose work was described were Martin Luther King and Gandhi. It was encouraging to see many students focus their answer on the work done and not give a general life story, as many students have opted to do in previous years. Other examples used were Jesus and Muhammad, neither of whom was credited as their focus was not on human rights. William Wilberforce prompted discussion amongst the team and was credited as his work, though many years before the human rights movement, could be seen as a forerunner of the movement. In the case of other believers that were used, credit was given if students had shown clear links between their work and how it had improved human rights for people somewhere.

30 Overall, this part was well answered by many students. Many took the view that laws were built upon religious teachings such as the Ten Commandments and so should be obeyed. Many argued that as non-religious people were expected to obey the law then so should religious believers. Others developed their answers by considering what a believer should do were their beliefs to come into conflict with the law as well as considering whether it would ever be right to steal to survive or to feed their family. Where students did less well, they tended to deviate off the main theme on to something such as punishment and then spend time exploring arguments about why everybody should be punished the same.

## **Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar (SPaG)**

Most students gained 3 or 4 marks from the 4 marks available. Students should be reminded to use specialist vocabulary where possible, write coherently, use paragraphs and appropriate punctuation and ensure that key words are spelt correctly.

## **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

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

## **Converting Marks into UMS marks**

Convert raw marks into Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) marks by using the link below.

[UMS conversion calculator](#)