Scheme of work

**Section A: The study of religions: beliefs and teachings – Judaism (Short Course)**

**Introduction**

This SOW offers a route through the GCSE Religious Studies Short Course (8061). This is a sample scheme of work and is only one suggestion for how the delivery of the GCSE Religious Studies specification might be planned. It is not intended to be prescriptive or definitive and can be edited to suit your delivery model and the particular needs of your learners.

Teachers can use the ideas below to develop schemes which suit the arrangements and time allocations of their own schools and colleges.

Please remember that assessment is always based on the content of the [specification](https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/religious-studies/gcse/religious-studies-short-course-8061/specification-at-a-glance).

You can find past assessment materials on [Centre Services](https://onlineservices.aqa.org.uk/).

**General timings**

The scheme of work is based on a total of 60 teaching hours. Of these 60 hours, we suggest that each of the religions studied should be covered in approximately 15 hours.

**Contents**

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Lesson 1

Topic title

Introduction to Judaism.

Specification content

Introduction to the idea of common and divergent views within Judaism.

Learning outcomes

The focus is on encouraging awareness of the diversity of and within Judaism and of its common basis in the Torah.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* What does it mean to say that Judaism is a world religion?
* Students might be enabled to recognise the diversity of Judaism with the help of a distribution map (there are many on the internet).
* Teachers might create a collage of appropriate photos created from reliable Jewish sources, eg [Jewish lens](http://www.jewishlens.org/) to reinforce the diversity and discourage stereotypes.
* Students should be aware that within Judaism there are different groups, reflecting differing understanding of how to be a Jew in an ever-changing world. In the specification there is reference to Orthodox and Reform Judaism, but some might also look at the perspectives of Conservative and Liberal Judaism. (For teachers needing an introduction to the differences in emphasis, [BBC religions website](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/judaism) contains explanatory summaries).
* The Institute for Jewish Policy Research website considers the 2021 Census of England and Wales information, together with a breakdown of trends and geographical data.
* Students also need to be aware of the centrality to Orthodox and Reform Judaism of the written and oral Torah and might create a chart showing the three parts of the Tenakh and the two parts of the Talmud. The 4th of Maimonides’ (12th century Jewish philosopher) 13 Principles states that both written and oral Torah were given to Moses. Orthodox Jews believe this. Some Reform Jews and all Liberal Jews reject this belief.

Resource

* Internet access.
* [Board of Deputies of British Jews](http://www.bod.org.uk/)
* [BBC Religions website](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/judaism).
* Relevant chapters of Judaism text books.

Lesson 2

Topic title

Key beliefs: The nature of God.

Specification content

God as one.

Learning outcomes

The focus is on encouraging awareness of the diversity of and within Judaism but of its common basis in the Torah.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Students could learn the opening verses of the Shema in English (Deuteronomy 6:4-5) and should be familiar with the contents of at least the first part (Deuteronomy 6:4-9). Students should be able to identify the key teaching about God in verse 4.
* There are many online versions showing the Hebrew, transliteration and translation.
* Students could listen to the Shema being chanted, eg on YouTube.
* They could create a table with two columns and five rows. In the first column, they would put the reference and in the second, paraphrase/summarise the contents of five of the following texts: Exodus 20:3-5; Deuteronomy 32:39; 2 Samuel 7:22; Psalm 86:9-10; Isaiah 43:10-13; Isaiah 44:6-8; Isaiah 45:22.

Differentiation and extension

* Find out what the first four of Maimonides’ Thirteen Principles of Faith state about God.
* Apart from the type of script, what is the key difference between reading/writing Hebrew and English?
* Find out the part that the Shema plays in the everyday lives of Jews.
* Why is the Shema such an important text?
* Why in the chanting of the Shema are the 3rd and 5th words of the Hebrew replaced with a different word?
* For students with knowledge of Hebrew: why are the ayin at the end of shema and the dalet at the end of echad larger in the Torah scrolls than the other letters?
* Students could find out about the Noachide Commandments (the laws given for the whole of humanity to obey) and the standard by which non-Jews will be judged.

Resource

* Copies of the Tenakh or Old Testament. (The Jewish Scriptures/Old Testament are also available online).
* Internet access.
* Relevant chapters of Judaism text books.

Lesson 3

Topic title

Key beliefs: The nature of God.

Specification content

* God as Creator.
* God as Law-Giver and Judge, loving and merciful.

Learning outcomes

The focus is on understanding the nature of God as Creator, Law-Giver and Judge, loving and merciful and the importance of these concepts in Jewish belief.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Students could work in small groups, each taking one of the following texts: Genesis 1-2; Job 38:22-41; Psalm 104; Isaiah 40:12-26. What do they say about the nature of God as Creator and about his creation? Report back to the rest of the class. More able students should be encouraged to use words/phrases such as ex nihilo, eternal, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, showing by what they say in their feedback that they understand them. Students could create a piece of art based on one of these texts (bearing in mind Exodus 20:3-5).
* Teachers could introduce the term mitzvot by pointing students to the first mitzvah in Genesis 1:28. Students could discuss in pairs why they think that God gave the Jews rules to live by and why for Jews all 613 are equally important, though not all can be kept because some relate to men, others to women and some to the Temple.
* Students could read Genesis 3 and answer some of the following questions:
* What was the serpent implying about the nature of God? Why did the woman give into the serpent’s persuasion?
* How might verses 14-24 reflect God as both Judge and merciful?
* Students could read the Exodus 20:2-17 as an example of different types of laws given by God and understand why for Jews, all types are equally important.

Differentiation and extension

* Students could be given a card-sorting activity with two piles of cards (using a different colour for each pile). One consists of texts from the Tenakh that portray God as Creator, Law-Giver, Judge, loving/merciful. The other consists of the four terms listed in the previous sentence and students have to match them.
* Students could consider whether the concept of God as Judge contradicts the concept of God as loving and merciful. They might use their own life experiences of the tension between judgement/punishment and mercy to help them with this. The more able might consider whether it is appropriate to understand the nature of God in the light of human experience.
* Note: Teachers might want their students at this point to study the festivals of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, which are covered later in this scheme of work (which follows the order of the specification).

Resource

* Copies of the Tenakh or Old Testament.
* Relevant chapters of Judaism text books.
* Card-sorting activity.

Lesson 4

Topic title

Key beliefs: The divine presence (Shekhinah).

Specification content

The divine presence (Shekhinah).

Learning outcomes

The focus is on understanding what is meant by the Shekhinah and its significance for Jews.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Shekhinah literally means ‘dwelling’ and it refers to the descending of God’s presence to ‘dwell’ in the world. It is a term found in the Talmud and in the Targumim (the translations of the Tenakh into Aramaic, which was the everyday language of the Jews from the later period of the monarchy) to avoid anthropomorphism and so honour the holiness (total ‘otherness’ of God). This is not an easy concept for students unfamiliar with Judaism to grasp and teachers may want to tailor what follows to the needs/ability of their students.
* Teachers could perhaps introduce it with a general discussion of how respect is shown to important figures in the secular and religious world, eg the titles given in the UK to the Queen and MPs, the phrases used by Roman Catholics for the Pope, by Muslims for Muhammad and Buddhists for the Dalai Lama. They could move from this to a discussion of how respect for God, believed to be a Being ultimately beyond human understanding and the source of everything, is shown in practice, ie not using any form of images of God, and how it might be shown in language used of God. The beginnings of this can be seen in the Tenakh itself, eg Ezekiel’s repeated use of the word ‘glory’ to refer to God’s presence (1:28). Make the link with the rabbinic use of Shekhinah in the following ways of God’s presence in/with:
* The Tabernacle (the Hebrew root is the same as that for Shekhinah). constructed after Moses received the Ten Commandments (Exodus 25:8).
* Jerusalem (Zechariah 8:3).
* The Temple in Jerusalem (Ezekiel 43:1-8). This links back to Ezekiel’s earlier description of the Shekhinah leaving the Temple and Jerusalem because the Temple worship had become corrupted/idolatrous.
* The people of Israel (Zechariah 2:10 in the Old Testament / 2:14 in the Tenakh).
* The Shekinah was identified by rabbis with Moses’ vision at the burning bush (Deuteronomy 33:16) and the pillar of cloud and fire that accompanied the Israelites at the time of the Exodus and the revelation to Moses on Sinai (Exodus 13:21-22; 24:15-18).
* Students could discuss the significance for Jews in the 21st century of the following Talmudic texts:
* ‘If ten men sit together and occupy themselves with the Law, the Shekhinah rests among them.’
* ‘Whenever ten men are gathered for prayer, there the Shekhinah rests.’
* ‘When three sit as judges, the Shekhinah is with them.’
* ‘The Shekhinah dwells over the head side of the sick man’s bed.’
* ‘Wheresoever they were exiled, the Shekhinah went with them.’

**Differentiation and extension**

* Worksheets could be given to students. The more able could look up the texts that are listed for themselves and then summarise what they contain and their meaning for Jews. For less able students, the texts being used could be printed out for them and they could be asked to write one or two sentences, explaining what they say about the presence of God.
* Answer relevant exam question.

Resource

* Copies of the Tenakh or Old Testament.
* Relevant chapters of Judaism text books.
* Differentiated worksheets.
* Relevant exam question.

Lesson 5

Topic title

Key beliefs: Beliefs about life after death.

Specification content

Beliefs about life after death, including judgement and resurrection.

Learning outcomes

The focus is on understanding the diversity of Jewish beliefs about life after death and the avoidance of dogma.

Possible teaching and learning activities.

* Students need to be aware of certain key beliefs:
* Death is not the end.
* There are a range of ideas about life after death.
* There is no official teaching that all Jews must accept; it is left to personal opinion.
* The main focus is on this life.
* Students could work in small groups, using the internet and/or text books to prepare and give a presentation on some of the ideas to be found in Judaism, eg:
* The concept of Sheol in the Tenakh (eg Psalm 88) and other references to life after death such as Nehemiah 2:8; Daniel 12:2.
* Teaching in the Talmud about Olam Ha- Ba.
* Beliefs about HaGan and Gehinnom.
* Beliefs in resurrection (including Maimonides’ 13th principle) and reincarnation.

Differentiation and extension

Students could find out how Reform Judaism’s lack of belief in resurrection is reflected in its version of the second blessing of the Amidah prayer.

Answer relevant exam question Resources

* Internet access.
* Copies of the Tenakh or Old Testament.
* Relevant chapters of Judaism text books.
* Relevant exam question.

Lesson 6

Topic title

Key beliefs: The nature and role of the Messiah.

Specification content

The nature and role of Messiah, including different views on the role and importance of the Messiah.

Learning outcomes

The focus is on understanding the nature of the Messiah, including different views within Judaism on his role and importance.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Teachers might introduce this topic with a class discussion, asking students to say what their ideal world would be and how they envisage it being implemented. Students should be aware that the concept of Messiah is a key concept in Judaism, occurring in the Amidah prayer. Reform and Liberal Jews, however, tend not to believe in a personal Messiah and their understanding of the messianic age is one in which all Jews play their part in tikkun olam (‘healing the world’). Students could research Maimonides’ 12th Principle and look up these passages: Genesis 49:10, Isaiah 2:2-5; 9:2-7; 11; Micah 4 :1-9; 5:2-5; Zechariah 9:9-10.
* Students should be aware that the Hebrew term Messiah means ‘anointed’. Students might read the account of the anointing of David in 1 Samuel 16:1-13 to understand the significance of anointing. Teachers could explain why the texts came to be seen as referring to a figure who in the future would be sent to rule on behalf of God.
* Students could create a table showing the following five aspects of the nature and role of the Messiah and link them to the texts listed above:
* Davidic descent.
* Establishing Israel as the centre of government.
* Gathering the Jews from all corners of the earth.
* Restoring full obedience to the Torah.
* Bringing peace to the whole world.
* Teachers could explain to students the differing interpretations of the references in some texts to harmony within the animal kingdom and the belief of many Jews that the Messiah will rebuild the Temple and restore its worship.
* Answer relevant exam question.

**Resources**

* Copies of the Tenakh or Old Testament.
* Relevant chapters of Judaism text books.
* Relevant exam question.

Lesson 7

**Topic title**

The Covenant and the mitzvot.

Specification content

The promised land and the Covenant with Abraham, Genesis 12:1-3.

Learning outcomes

Focus is on understanding the concept of covenant, the Covenant made with Abraham, God’s promises, including that of the promised land, and their importance for Jews.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Teachers could give some scenarios, and then ask how they are known to be legal, ie by signing a contract agreement. What are the key features of contracts/what do all contracts have in common?
* Buying and selling a house.
* Taking out a loan from the bank.
* Registering a mobile phone with an ISP.
* Getting married.
* Another word for contract is ‘covenant’ and this is the word used by the Jews for the relationships with humans initiated by God that are found in the Torah and elsewhere in the Tenakh.
* Teachers should ensure that students understand the concept of covenant as:
* Initiated by God.
* Consisting of promises made by God.
* Sometimes unconditional, sometimes conditional.
* Summed up in the statement often found in the Tenakh: ‘I will be their God and they will be my people’.
* Students could see from a map Abraham’s origins in Ur and his resettlement in Haran, where he received God’s call to journey to the promised land. They should study Genesis 12:1-3 which presents:
* The call to Abraham as an act of God’s love.
* The promises:
  1. Of the promised land (Canaan/Israel).
  2. That Abraham’s descendants will be a great nation.
  3. Of Abraham’s significance as the conduit of God’s blessing to the world.
* Students could work in pairs or small groups to research the importance of this Covenant for Jews today. Students could examine further references to the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant found in the following passages, highlighting or making a note of the key verses: Genesis 12:4-6; 15:1-21; 17:1-21; 22:1-8. They could note what these passages teach about Abraham as the father of the Jewish people, his faith in the fulfilment of God’s promises, his obedience to God’s requirement of circumcision and his willingness to offer his son, should that be God’s will.
* Students could produce a piece of written work that explains how God’s Covenant with Abraham influences the lives of 21st century Jews.
* Note: Teachers might want their students at some point in this section on the Covenant with Abraham to study the ritual of Brit Milah, which is covered later in this scheme of work.

Resources

* Copies of the Tenakh/Old Testament.
* Relevant chapters of Judaism text books.
* A simple map showing Abraham’s journey from Ur to Haran and from Haran to Canaan.
* Internet access.

Lesson 8

Topic title

The Covenant and the mitzvot.

Specification content

The Covenant at Sinai and its importance, including the role of Moses and the Ten Commandments, Exodus 20:1-17.

Learning outcomes

The focus is on understanding the Covenant made through Moses at Sinai and the importance of the Ten Commandments for Jewish belief and practice.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Teachers could summarise the background to the Sinai Covenant: Israel living in and enslaved in Egypt, Moses’ birth and upbringing, his flight to Midian, his vision at the Burning Bush, his return to Egypt, the plagues, the Exodus and journey to Sinai. Students could create a fact file or a ‘comic strip’ relating to these events.
* Students should read/be familiar with the contents of Exodus 19:3-8, which is a conditional covenant. They should note the role of Moses as mediator of the Covenant, its basis in God’s act of deliverance, the promises made by God, the responsibilities of Israel and of Israel’s assent to this. Students could read the account of the sealing of the Covenant (Exodus 24:1-11).
* Students should study in detail each of the Ten Commandments. They could divide into small groups, each group taking two or three of the Commandments and preparing a presentation for the whole class on their contents, meaning and their significance for 21st century Judaism.

Differentiation and extension

* What would students, perhaps working in pairs, include in their own rules for living? Would some overlap with the Ten Commandments? Would the rules relate at all to God or to their inner spirituality, or would they be concerned only with relationships with one another. Would ten rules be too many, just right or insufficient?
* Note: Teachers might want their students at some point in the section on Moses and the Covenant at Sinai to study the festival of Pesach, which is covered later in this scheme of work.
* Teachers might also want their students at the relevant point to study Shabbat in the home and synagogue and its significance. This is covered later in this scheme of work.

Resources

* Copies of the Tenakh/Old Testament.
* Relevant chapters of Judaism text books.
* Internet access.

Lesson 9

Topic title

The Covenant and the mitzvot.

Specification content

Key moral principles including justice, healing the world, charity and kindness to others.

Learning outcomes

The focus is on understanding the nature and importance for 21st century Jews of the key moral principles of Judaism, including justice, healing the world, charity and kindness to others.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Teachers could start by pointing out that in Judaism, there are 613 mitzvot (commandments) that all Jews are expected to obey, eg those relating to justice (tzedkah) and charity (chesed), and that from the 613 mitzvot, rabbinic discussion has developed other attitudes that are to be encouraged, eg healing the world (tikkun olam).
* Teachers should explain the meaning of justice (tzedakah) as fairness, as giving each individual, whether Jew or non-Jew, as sense of his/her dignity as a human being of and his/her duty to give tzedakah even when in need of it him or herself. Students should realise that in Judaism justice (righteousness/tzedakah) and charity are inseparable. Students could read and summarise the following: Deuteronomy 16:20; Amos 5:24; Micah 6:8 and for the amount suggested: Genesis 14:20; 29:23; Deuteronomy 14:22; 26:12.
* Students could create a table, giving Maimonides’ eight levels of giving. How does this link to tzedakah, as explained above? Do the students agree with Maimonides’ levels?

Differentiation and extension

* Find out about pushke boxes in Jewish homes and how they relate to justice (tzedakah).
* Create a poster informing people about the work of Tzedek ([Jewish volunteering network](www.jvn.org.uk)).
* Some students could create a poster or a collage illustrating Maimonides’ eight levels.
* What is a Gemach and how does it illustrate the highest of the eight levels? Some students could watch and make notes on Rabbi Sacks’ talk (available on YouTube) about tzedakah and social justice.
* Why is it recommended that no more than 20% of one’s income is given in charity?
* Find out the order of those to whom charity should be given. Read Leviticus 19:9-10, 33-34. What does these verses tell Jews about charity to non-Jews?
* Loving kindness (chesed) is at the heart of the Torah and the whole of the Tenakh. Students could read and summarise the following; Exodus 33:19; Isaiah 43:1-4; 63:7-11; Ezekiel 34:15-16; Micah 6:8; Hosea 11:3-4, 8-9.
* Students could find out from reliable Jewish internet sites what the Talmud teaches about loving-kindness. How did Rabbi Hillel sum up the essence of Judaism? What did Rabbi Akiva say about Leviticus 19:7? What, according to Simon the Just, were the three foundations on which the world stands?
* Students should realise that healing the world (tikkun olam) is not one of the 613 mitzvot but that it is a concept developed in the Mishnah, though based on the principles of the Torah. Some Jews believe the concept is referred to in Joshua; others connect it to the development of Rosh Hashanah. It is translated as repairing or healing the world and is taken by many Jews in the 21st century to refer to their duty to make the world a better place by practising moral virtues such as justice, charity and kindness. Tikkun olam includes attitudes to other Jews, non-Jews, animals and the rest of the environment.
* Students could work in pairs, exploring two different ways on how Jews in the UK apply the principle of tikkun olam to working for social justice and environmental conservation.
* They could, for example, download from [Board of Deputies of British Jews](http://www.bod.org.uk/) the Greening Toolkit, which includes reference to tikkun olam. They could also research the life-saving and life-enhancing work of the [Hatzola Trust](https://hatzola.org/) in North London.

Resources

* Copies of the Tenakh/Old Testament.
* Relevant chapters of Judaism text books.
* Internet access for research and YouTube clip of Rabbi Sacks.

Lesson 10

Topic title

The Covenant and the mitzvot.

Specification content

The importance of the sanctity of human life, including the concept of ‘saving a life’ (pikuach nefesh).

Learning outcomes

The focus is on understanding the importance for Jews of the sanctity of human life, including the concept of pikuach nefesh.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* The Hebrew phrase means ‘supervising matters of the soul’ and this is used in the sense of saving a life that is endangered. Students should know that based on texts such as Leviticus 19:16 and Deuteronomy 30:19, the Talmud states that in an emergency pikuach nefesh overrides all other laws, even those relating to Shabbat, Yom Kippur and Kashrut.
* Students could find out more about how pikuach nefesh is applied, using the internet and YouTube clips.
* Teachers could create a worksheet showing different scenarios, some of them life- threatening and others not. Students could then indicate what a Jew should do in that situation, explaining why that action should be taken.

Resources

* Internet access.
* You Tube clips.
* Relevant chapters of Judaism text books.
* Worksheet.

Lesson 11

Topic title

The Covenant and the mitzvot.

Specification content

* The relationship between free will and the 613 mitzvot.
* Mitzvot between man and God and mitzvot between man and man, including the difference between them and their importance.

Learning outcomes

The focus is on understanding the relationship between free will and the mitzvot and the differing focus and significance of the mitzvot.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Teachers could start by reminding students about the written Torah and the oral Torah as both given by God to Moses, and that the oral Torah has continued to be developed through the centuries as the 613 mitzvot given to Moses have been interpreted by rabbis for different circumstances and changing society. This interpretation is known as the halakhah (‘the way’ in which a Jew should walk) and is a reminder that Judaism is not just a set of beliefs; it is above all a way of life that stems from and expresses those beliefs and teachings.
* Students should know that there are 613 mitzvot (248 positive and 365 negative commands) and that these were organised into different categories by Maimonides.
* They fall into two groups: ritual and ethical laws. Above all, students should know why Jews are expected to obey the mitzvot and their purpose, even those where there might seem to be no obvious reason for them:
* Jews obey the mitzvot because God commanded them.
* Their purpose is that Israel might be holy: Exodus 19:6; Leviticus 19:2.
* Students should also be able to distinguish between mitzvot that relate to the relationship between humanity and God and those that relate to the relationship between humans (which includes the world in which they live).
* Students could look at an abbreviated list of Maimonides’ list of the mitzvot and select three that refer to the relationship between God and humans and three that related to the relationship between humans and their fellow-humans.
* Teachers could recap the story in Genesis 3 as a way of introducing the topic of free will, which is where the distinction between Orthodox and non-Orthodox Judaism can be seen. For Orthodox Jews, free will is about the initial choice to obey rather than to disobey God. Those who choose to obey then seek to obey because that is God’s will. Reform Jews who make the choice to obey continue to exercise free will in which interpretations of the mitzvot they follow.
* Answer relevant exam question.

Differentiation and extension

* Read Jeremiah 31:33-34, which contains the prophet’s vision of the day when all Israel will obey the mitzvot. Answer some or all of the following questions:
* To what does the statement ’I will be their God, and they will be my people’ refer?
* Why will the Jews be able to obey God?
* The Hebrew word yada (to know) refers to an intimate relationship and not just to intellectual knowledge. How does this affect one’s understanding of this passage in Jeremiah?
* Find out about Mitzvah Day on the internet, eg [Mitzvah Day website](http://www.mitzvahday.org.uk/)
* When it is celebrated.
* How it is celebrated.
* How it links to justice, charity, kindness and healing the world.
* Give examples of activities that took place on the most recent Day.

Resources

* Copies of the Tenakh/Old Testament.
* Relevant chapters of Judaism text books.
* Internet access for research.
* Relevant exam question.

Lesson 23

Topic title

Exam technique.

Specification content

Study of AO1 and AO2 questions.

Learning outcomes

The focus is on enabling students to develop the correct exam technique.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Teachers could begin by handing out copies of a previous Judaism paper and explain the structure of the exam paper.
* Students should understand how to answer AO1 questions and what is required.
* Teachers could create a PowerPoint to explain this, using appropriate extracts from mark schemes.
* Students should also understand the technique for answering AO2 questions. To do this, teachers could go through each bullet point in AO2 questions, explaining what is needed. They could use a PowerPoint to explain the different levels of response in the mark scheme.
* Teachers could use the [AQA Answers and Commentaries documents](https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/religious-studies/gcse/religious-studies-short-course-8061/assessment-resources) to show some sample answers to previous questions and students could mark these in pairs and discuss in class.
* Students could write their own responses to a previous question, which could be either peer or teacher marked.

Resources

* Judaism question paper and mark scheme.
* Answers and Commentaries document.
* PowerPoint on AO1 and AO2 technique.