

GCSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES A

(8062)

Marked Responses
Paper 1 and Paper 2

See a range of responses and how different levels are achieved and understand how to interpret the mark scheme.

Version 1.0 April 2018

EXAMPLE RESPONSES



Whilst every attempt has been made to show a range of student responses, the following responses and examiner comments provide teachers with the best opportunity to understand the application of the mark scheme. They are not intended to be viewed as 'model' answers and the marking has not been subject to the usual standardisation process.

Two mark questions

0 1

Give two examples of what religious believers might do to help to carry out the duty of stewardship.

[2 marks]

Specimen Set 1: Paper 2A Theme B

Answer A

Christians could write letters to their MPs, trying to put pressure on the government to do more to conserve natural resources and encourage an eco-friendly lifestyle. Muslims could do this also.

Stewardship is about living in a responsible way by not wasting resources and Christians and Muslims could put this into practice in everyday life by turning off computers rather than leaving them on standby and switching off lights when going out of a room.

Answer B

Be kind to animals. Recycle.

Answer C

Christians could look after their pets.

Christians could use recycling bins for packaging, bottles etc.

All answers are awarded 2 marks

The best approach to answering this question is Answer B. As the command here is 'give' there is no explanation required.

Four mark questions

0 | 1

Explain two ways in which practising ahimsa (non-violence) influences Hindus today.

[4 marks]

Specimen Set 1: Hinduism

Answer A

Ahimsa influences Hindus because they believe if they harm others, they will build up bad karma.

Answer B

Many Hindus are vegetarian because they think that the principle of ahimsa applies to animals as well as humans. The atman is in every living being and is a divine spark, so to harm others is wrong.

Answer C

Gandhi practised ahimsa by supporting only non-violent protests. Hindus today see Gandhi as a role model for their lives. They follow his example to avoid creating bad karma.

Answer A: 2 marks awarded for one developed point.

Answer B: 4 marks awarded for two developed points. Although the answer is rather brief, the student does give two valid ways ahimsa may influence believers (being vegetarian and not harming). These two points are developed with the reasons why (the principle applies to both humans and animals; the atman is within all beings).

Answer C: 2 marks awarded for one developed point. The first sentence about Gandhi isn't directly relevant to the question; but the following two sentences show clearly how ahimsa influences the lives of Hindus.

0 2

Explain two contrasting ways in which the Eucharist (Holy Communion) is celebrated in Christianity.

[4 marks]

Specimen Set 1: Christianity

Answer A

Most churches use wine as Jesus used it at the Last Supper. But most Methodist churches use something non-alcoholic as they think drinking alcohol can cause problems and they don't want to encourage people to drink.

Answer B

Some Roman Catholic churches have their services in Latin.

Most Roman Catholic churches have it in the language used by the country where they are, so that people can understand it all.

Answer A: 4 marks awarded for two developed points. Although the first development is brief, the student makes a correct point about the practice (they use wine) and then explains why (Jesus used it at the Last Supper). The contrast identified here is that the Methodist church use non-alcoholic wine, which is then developed with a reason why.

Answer B: 3 marks awarded for one simple point plus one developed point. The second point, although brief, is developed with an explanation of why they use the language of the local community.

0 3

Explain two contrasting beliefs in contemporary British society about abortion.

In your answer you should refer to the main religious tradition of GB and one or more other religious traditions.

[4 marks]

Specimen Set 1: Paper 2A, Theme B

Answer

One belief about abortion in British society is that in some situations it may be the most 'loving thing to do.' Some Christians i.e. Liberal Protestants may suggest in the case of rape or severe disability, which will reduce the quality of life, abortion may be permitted.

In contrast, another belief about abortion is that it is not permitted. Some Buddhists may strictly follow the 'First Precept' – do not harm. They may believe that from the moment of conception a foetus is human; therefore abortion would be equal to murder.

4 marks awarded for two developed points. One of the points in this answer is about Christianity; this fulfils the requirement of the question to refer to 'the main religious tradition of Great Britain'. Note: It is not required here to name the denomination specifically. The contrasting view given is from Buddhism, it would also have been creditworthy to contrast with another Christian view.

Both points here are well-developed and show clear knowledge of religious beliefs about abortion.

0 4

Explain two contrasting Muslim understandings of Jihad.

[4 marks]

Specimen Set 1: Islam

Answer

One Muslim understanding of Jihad is that everyone's struggles are equal (Greater Jihad). The personal struggle of every individual Muslim, no matter what, is equal in the eyes of Allah. If a Muslim struggles to undertake the Hajj, this is equal to a Muslim who cannot fast. The Greater Jihad is a personal struggle.

Another understanding of Jihad is that the Lesser Jihad is someone/some people who are against a family or country that practices Islam. Sometimes violence or force is permitted in this struggle.

4 marks awarded for two developed points. The first point here is over-developed; the student could have saved some time by writing a briefer response. For example, the final two sentences of point one could be deleted and the answer would still score 4 marks.

0 5

Explain two contrasting beliefs in contemporary British society about the death penalty for murder.

[4 marks]

Specimen Set 1: Paper 2A, Theme E

Answer A

Christians do not agree with the death penalty because they think you should follow the example of Jesus and be willing to give someone a chance to change.

Many Muslims agree with the death penalty as justice is a key feature of Islamic morality and they think the death penalty is the only way of getting justice for the terrible crime that has been done.

Answer B

Some Christians agree with the death penalty where the murderer is a serial killer. The Catechism of the Catholic Church accepts it if it is the only way to defend society from such a person.

Many other Christians, though, believe that society should never give up hope of reforming even the worst offender. He or she can then contribute valuably to society.

Note: Answer A uses two different religions; Answer B contrasts two Christian views. Either approach here is accepted. Contrasts could come from within a religion or from more than one religion.

Answer A: 4 marks awarded. The developments here are brief, although they do extend the points made and so they go beyond being 'simple points'.

Answer B: 4 marks for two developed points. Here, the student has not named denominations but clearly demonstrates contrasting beliefs from within Christianity. They have used teachings from the Catechism to develop the first point, and more general beliefs to develop the second.

Five Mark Questions

0 1

Explain two Christian teachings about judgement. Refer to sacred writings or another source of Christian belief and teaching in your answer.

[5 marks]

Specimen Set 1: Christianity

Answer A

Christians believe that God will judge them and decide what happens to them in the afterlife. In the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats Jesus says that people will be separated 'as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.' Those people who have served others will be rewarded in heaven.

However, many Christians do not believe that simply being kind to other people is enough to guarantee a place in heaven. Judgement relies, not just on being kind, but on believing in Jesus.

Answer B

Christians believe that God will judge them and decide what happens to them in the afterlife. In the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats in Matthew 25 Jesus says that 'God will separate people like a shepherd will separate the sheep from the goats'. Those people who have followed Jesus' teachings from the Bible and have served others will be rewarded in heaven.

Answer A: 5 marks awarded for two developed points; with a reference to scripture included with the first point.

Answer B: 3 marks awarded. It is correctly stated that Jesus teaches that the sheep will be separated from the goats. The final sentence could be taken as a development meaning that some will be rewarded in heaven if they have followed biblical teachings or helped others. In that case one developed teaching and a reference are given (1 developed point plus scripture = 3 marks). If the last sentence is seen as a separate point it needs a little more development to get the second mark (1 point with scripture plus 1 point = 3).

0 2

Explain two religious beliefs about the status of women in religion. Refer to sacred writings or another source of religious belief and teaching in your answer.

[5 marks]

Specimen Set 1: Paper 2A, Theme F

Answer

Some Buddhists (e.g. some Tibetan Buddhists) believe that women are equal to men in religion, as we are all part of the cycle of samsara together. Also, the Dalai Lama said there was no reason why a future Dalai Lama could not be a woman.

Other Buddhists (e.g. some Theravada) suggest that men are superior to women. This is because they believe that women can only be ordained into the Sangha from an unbroken line of monks/nuns, as these don't exist anymore it is not possible to ordain women, therefore men have superior positions to women.

5 marks awarded for two developed points plus reference to a source of authority. The reference to the teaching of the Dalai Lama in point one meets the criteria for a reference to a source of wisdom and authority. Note: the schools of thought named in brackets, although correct are not required to gain the full 5 marks here.

0 3

Explain two Buddhist teachings about nibbana / nirvana. Refer to sacred writings or another source of Buddhist belief and teaching in your answer.

[5 marks]

Specimen Set 1: Buddhism

Answer

One teaching taught in the Pali Canon is that Nibbana is ending of craving. The Buddha said that when he reached nirvana he had 'arrived at the extinction of evil desire'.

Also, in the Questions of King Milinda Buddhists are taught that Nibbana can only be fully understood by experiencing it.

3 marks awarded for a simple point, with a reference to scripture (2 marks) plus a simple point (1 mark). Neither point made about nibbana are developed, therefore each achieves 1 mark.

0 4

Explain two ways in which the Ka'aba is important in the Muslim Hajj (pilgrimage). Refer to sacred writings or another source of Muslim belief and teaching in your answer.

[5 marks]

Specimen Set 1: Islam

Answer

On the first day of Hajj, cleansed Muslims circle it seven times whilst praying to Allah to forgive and cleanse them of their sin. Also, they thank Allah and worship him. This is important in the Hajj because it prepares them for the next few days.

Also, the Ka'aba is the holiest place for all Muslims. In the Qur'an, Adam built it to worship Allah. This is a place for only Allah, which makes it of the utmost importance. Muslims visit it not once but twice during Hajj, showing how vital it is. The Qur'an says that if the circling around the Ka'aba is done with the right Niyah, Allah will cleanse all sin.

5 marks awarded for two developed points plus accurate reference to scripture. This answer, although accurate, is too long. The time allocated to these questions is a maximum of five minutes.

The extra development in point one '*Also, they thank Allah and worship him*' is not required

Furthermore, the second point includes two references to scripture as well as development. As such, the final two sentences are not required here to gain the full 5 marks.

Twelve Mark Questions

Mark Scheme

Level	Criteria	Marks
4	<p>A well-argued response, reasoned consideration of different points of view.</p> <p>Logical chains of reasoning leading to judgement(s) supported by knowledge and understanding of relevant evidence and information.</p> <p>References to religion applied to the issue.</p>	10-12
3	<p>Reasoned consideration of different points of view.</p> <p>Logical chains of reasoning that draw on knowledge and understanding of relevant evidence and information.</p> <p>Clear reference to religion.</p>	7-9
2	<p>Reasoned consideration of a point of view.</p> <p>A logical chain of reasoning drawing on knowledge and understanding of relevant evidence and information.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Recognition of different points of view, each supported by relevant reasons / evidence.</p> <p>Maximum of Level 2 if there is no reference to religion or the argument is one-sided.</p>	4-6
1	<p>Point of view with reason(s) stated in support.</p>	1-3
0	<p>Nothing worthy of credit.</p>	0

0 1

'War is never right.'

Evaluate this statement.

In your answer you:

- should give reasoned arguments in support of this statement
- should give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view
- should refer to religious arguments
- may refer to non-religious arguments
- should reach a justified conclusion.

[12 marks]

Specimen Set 1: Paper 2A, Theme D

Answer A

Sometimes war can be justified by the reason, the intent and the means used to fight the war. If the intent, the means and the reason for going to war are just, for example, to defend your country.

However in a war there is no denying that millions of people become displaced, are injured or killed. Moreover most Christians believe that it is better to forgive rather than have to seek retribution. However, war is right in some situations but should be used as the last resort.

Answer B

Many people, e.g. Quakers, argue that war is never right and in many ways I agree with them. It causes untold misery to so many people who lose loved ones on the front line. Jesus taught his disciples not to use violence when he was being arrested in Gethsemane. He said, 'Those who live by the sword die by the sword.' We can see from the Middle East that all the conflict there over the past twenty years has resulted in yet more conflict. The many deaths as a result of war cause lifelong suffering for families and the terrible injuries from cluster bombs and other explosive devices lead to trauma for those injured. War ruins a country's economy and infrastructure, leaving people homeless and hungry. They are left with absolutely nothing and may flee the country, becoming refugees. We see this in the world today, where nothing good has come from the war in Syria. War also uses a lot of money which could be put to much better use. It is bad stewardship to spend huge sums on killing while letting so many people die of starvation. According to Jesus, we shall be judged on how we have treated those in need. This means we should be feeding and educating people, not killing them.

However, it could be argued that in certain situations war is the lesser of two evils. Although it is never good, it may sometimes be right. If a corrupt regime is in power, the only way of overthrowing it, then surely as an absolutely last resort, a nation like ours with the means to get rid of it is justified in doing so to help the population of that country. The Just War theory is a Christian theory that tries to limit the wars being fought, but it does accept that in some cases, going to war might be justified.

Overall, though I think that the statement is right. Jesus told his disciples to love not only their neighbours but also their enemies. Going to war against our enemies is hardly loving them.

Answer A:

This is a Level 2 response.

A short answer at 87 words. The answer makes reference to Just War criteria, and to the importance of forgiveness, but it lacks development overall. For example, the Christian view on forgiveness could have been expanded upon, and some clear evaluation could have been added to the concluding statement to help move the answer up into the next band.

Answer B:

This is a Level 4 response.

A well-argued response with reasoned consideration of different points of view. Logical chains of reasoning leading to an effective conclusion. Sound religious content is included. This is a longer answer (349 words) than would generally be expected in up to 15 minutes (approximately 250 words).

0 2

'It is always right to give charity to the poor.'

Evaluate this statement.

In your answer you:

- should give reasoned arguments in support of this statement
- should give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view
- should refer to religious arguments
- may refer to non-religious arguments
- should reach a justified conclusion.

[12 marks]

Specimen Set 1: Paper 2A, Theme F

Answer

I strongly support claim that it is always right to give to the poor. This is because everybody should do something to help those less fortunate.

In support of my argument, some Buddhists may also agree. This is because a key ethical principle in Buddhism is 'karuna' – compassion. Buddhists can perfect this ideal, by helping those less fortunate, a simple way to do this is by giving to the poor. Moreover, some Buddhists may consider those in the monastic community (the Sangha) as poor and they may be putting into the practice the concept of 'dana' by giving them charity e.g. food, materials for robes etc.

However, other Buddhists may disagree. This is because by giving directly to the poor, it may encourage them to use the donation in an unskilful way i.e. they may use the money to buy drugs/alcohol. This not only breaks on the Five Precepts, but also would not be compassionate to them or potentially others due to the harm intoxicants can cause. These Buddhists may instead give charity i.e. money to organisations who help the poor e.g. soup kitchens, Buddhist charities (Karuna Trust), activism to change laws and trading policies.

Despite this I still support my claim that it is always right to give to the poor. Although it is possible that the donation may be misused by the individual, it is also possible the donation may be misused by the organisation. There have been many scandals when NGOs have used donations unwisely e.g. to pay big salaries to charity officials. Also, an individual rather than give money to the poor as a form of charity, could buy a homeless person food/drink instead, they would then know the donation has been used appropriately.

Overall, I strongly support the claim that it is always right to give money to the poor to the positive direct impact the action can have. Giving I believe is the best form of metta – loving kindness to those around you.

This is a Level 4 response.

This question could have been approached using arguments from any of the world religions studied in Paper 1. This answer applies beliefs and teachings from Buddhism effectively, as well as evaluating non-religious arguments in relation to the statement. Very good level of focus on the statement, clear chains of reasoning and application of knowledge.

03

'The best way for Muslims to understand God is to practise Salah.'
Evaluate this statement.

In your answer you should:

- refer to Muslim teaching
- give reasoned arguments in support of this statement
- give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view
- should reach a justified conclusion.

[12 marks]

Specimen Set 1: Islam

Answer

Some may agree with this statement as in the 5 pillars of Islam (Sunni Islam) and the 12 roots (Shia Islam) is mentioned that all Muslims must pray 5 times a day for Sunni Muslims and 3 times a day for Shia Muslims. This shows that practising Salah is doing what Allah wants and in turn will please Allah. Praying to Allah either 5 times or 3 times a day allows Muslims to submit to him on a daily basis which helps Muslims develop god consciousness (taqwa).

Also, praying and taking time out of a Muslim's daily lives to help pray to God helps them to understand how he is only one (Shahadah) and "none are worthy of worship other than him".

When Muhammad went on the night journey to visit Allah in the 7th heaven he was told to instruct the people to pray "50 times" a day this was then reduced to 5 in Sunni Islam. This just shows how much Allah wanted the Muslims to submit and practice Salah. Salah is an act between just the person who is praying and Allah and some will agree that praying to him is a "personal act" and can help to understand him.

However, some may disagree with this statement as Allah asked Muslims to do many other things as well as prayer (Salah) such as the act of Hajj which is a pilgrimage to the house of Allah and is 2 weeks of continuously submitting yourself to him.

In conclusion, I would say this statement is false as Muslims are able to understand Allah through the 99 names such as "most merciful" and believing in his oneness by reciting the Shahadah (Declaration of faith).

This is a Level 3 response.

This is a reasonable length response in the time allowed (285 words). The second viewpoint is lacking in development. The answer needs clear evaluative judgements on the points made to meet the Level 4 criteria.

0 4

'If God were loving there would be no suffering in the world.'

Evaluate this statement.

In your answer you should:

- refer to Christian teaching
- give reasoned arguments in support of this statement
- give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view
- should reach a justified conclusion.

[12 marks]

Specimen Set 1: Christianity

Answer

In this essay I am going to explore the statement claiming that there would be no suffering in the world if God were loving by focusing on religious and non-religious perspectives.

Christians would not really believe in this statement because even though God is all-loving and holy he gave us the ability to use free choice. If there were no suffering in the world Christians would be unable to fulfil many of the things God wants Christians to do like to 'love your neighbour as you love yourself' as God would be the only one helping. Therefore, God put us on the Earth to practice his teachings and expects us to end the suffering not him.

Many non-religious believers and atheists would support this statement because they believe if that God were real, he wouldn't let the good and friendly people suffer and die. Therefore, this statement has got supporters and explanations for it.

However, Christians also believe that most of the suffering caused in the world is man-made. We are responsible for the suffering due to our pollution and selfish desires and because God gave us free will, he cannot change what we do even if it is to save a life as we must remember 'thou shalt not kill' because God hasn't caused any of the suffering according to some Christians.

However, there are some Christians who may support this quote because within the Bible it claims that God wants us to 'love one another as I have loved you' which makes it seem as if we shouldn't love God if he has caused all of our suffering.

In conclusion, I believe that there are many reasons why this statement is correct but I believe that the reasons against this statement are more suitable as Christians believe that most of the suffering is man-made and instead of God helping, why not us as we would be fulfilling the commandment of 'love your neighbour as you love yourself'.

This is a Level 3 response.

The 'introduction' is not necessary and wastes time. There are some slightly confused points made here, although there is enough application of knowledge and religious teaching in relation to more than one point of view to achieve Level 3.

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