

Religious Studies Spec A

Answers and commentaries

GCSE (8062)

Paper 2A: Non-textual studies

Marked answers from students from the June 2022 exams.
Supporting commentary is provided to help you understand how marks are awarded and how students can improve performance.

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Answers and commentaries

Please note that these responses have been reproduced exactly as they were written by the students.

4 mark question

Four mark questions require two pieces of information to be given with a second mark for each one if extra accurate and relevant detail is provided.

Question 4.3

Explain two contrasting religious beliefs in contemporary British society about violence.

In your answer you must refer to the main religious tradition of Great Britain and one or more other religious traditions.

[4 marks]

Mark scheme

Target: AO1:3 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including similarities and differences within and/or between religions and beliefs

First belief

Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate belief – 1 mark

Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate belief – 2 marks

Second belief

Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate belief – 1 mark

Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate belief – 2 marks

Allow up to 4 marks for a response which covers any combination of religions whether contrasting or similar.

Contrasts could include violence or non-violence / motivation for violence / type of violence used / against people or property.

Student responses

Response A

Violence isn't allowed in many religions. In religions such as Islam and Christianity it is important to always be peaceful because God hates violence. Anger should always be controlled and fighting isn't allowed.

In Islam, the only time violence is allowed is for self-defense. If you are trying to protect yourself or someone else violence is allowed to protect. In Christianity, violence is also not allowed and is only acceptable for self-defense.

One mark for 'God hates violence' but there's not sufficient development of the point. The following Islam point contains *just* enough development for two marks. Reference to Christianity is made within the answer so this fulfils the requirement of the question as it asks for 'the main religious tradition of Great Britain.'

3 marks

Response B

Christianity teaches that violence should be forbidden or is a sin Jesus was a pacifist so Christians should follow his example.

Another is Muslims believe violence can be used when protecting their faith. The Quran teaches that Muslims have a duty to protect their faith and should be allowed to use violence, eg self-defense.

This answer was written as two distinct points (it is an equally valid approach to write one paragraph). The requirement of 'the main religious tradition of Great Britain' is fulfilled immediately and the point includes detail.

The second section includes a point "Qur'an teaches that Muslims have a duty to protect their faith," and then provides detail by stating that Muslims are "allowed to use violence e.g. in self-defence".

4 marks

5 mark questions

These should be answered in a similar way to the 4 mark questions and the source mark (5th mark) is gained by including an accurate and relevant reference to a teaching or belief regarded as being from a holy or authoritative source by the religion concerned.

Question 2.4

Explain two reasons why many religious people protect the environment.

Refer to sacred writings or another source of religious belief and teaching in your answer.

[5 marks]

Mark scheme

Target: AO1:1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including beliefs, practices and sources of authority

First reason

Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate reason – 1 mark

Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate reason – 2 marks

Second reason

Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate reason – 1 mark

Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate reason – 2 marks

Relevant and accurate reference to sacred writings or another source of religious belief and teaching – 1 mark

Student responses

Response A

In Islam you are taught that Allah gave us the world for us to live in meaning we should take care of it so Allah's present doesn't ruin.

In Christianity it is said that God created the world for us to live in and to take care of it because it is a present from God.

The first paragraph contains one developed point.

The second paragraph is a complete repetition of the first point, and does not provide another reason for protecting the environment, so no marks are awarded.

There is no reference to a sacred writings or another source of religious belief or teaching within the answer so the 'source mark' is not awarded.

2 marks

Response B

One reason why Christians want to protect the environment is because it is God's creation. This means that they will want to keep it safe as a way to respect God. Another reason why Christians want to protect the environment is because Jesus said 'love thy neighbour.' This means that they will want to leave the environment in a good state for future generations who are 'neighbours.'

The first point includes a simple point (God's creation) followed by a development (want to keep it safe to protect God).

The second reason applies 'love thy neighbour' (development) to the idea that Christians will want to leave the environment in a good condition for future generations.

The source mark is awarded for the answer including "Jesus said".

5 marks

12 mark question

There is no specific recommended writing frame to use for twelve mark questions, however to achieve a Level 4 (10 – 12 marks) students must include reference to more than one point of view. 'Chains of reasoning leading to judgements' are advisable. However, if arguments are not provided in a chain of reasoning but valid and insightful points are made and detailed, this may be a reason for awarding a lower mark but still within Level 4.

Question 1.5

'Religious believers should never divorce.'

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]
[Plus SPaG 3 marks]

Mark scheme

Target: AO2: Analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief, including significance and influence

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

Students may include some of the following evidence and arguments, but all relevant evidence and arguments must be credited:

Arguments in support

- It is seen by some as wrong.
- Religious couples have made vows before God eg 'till death us do part', wrong to break them.
- Marriage is a sacrament / sacred bond.
- Divorce goes against religious teachings.
- Children may be badly affected by divorce.
- They should try to make their marriage work, etc.

Arguments in support of other views

- Couples may drift apart and find they no longer love each other.
- Mistakes are made and marriages do fail.
- Couples may have irreconcilable differences so it is better to part.
- Better for a marriage to end than for an abusive relationship to continue.
- Children may benefit from the couple splitting as greater harm may be done by them remaining in the situation eg experiencing domestic violence / drug addiction / alcoholism.
- Divorce is legal so religious believers should be allowed to do it, etc.

Buddhism

Discourages divorce but it may be seen as the right thing to do / prevents dukkha (suffering) if couple can separate / may promote karuna (compassion) / metta (loving kindness) / ahimsa / Right Intention, etc.

Christianity

Sees divorce as breaking the promises made before God / 'God hates divorce' (Malachi 2:16) / ideal is for marriage to be for life / Roman Catholics and some Protestants generally see divorce as always wrong / 'Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.' (Matthew 19:6) / Roman Catholics believe marriage cannot be dissolved / do not recognise civil divorce so couples are not free to remarry / Eastern Orthodox Church can end marriages and will perform remarriages but not usually for a third time / Protestant Churches recognise civil divorce and might allow remarriage in church, etc.

Hinduism

Believes marriage to be a sacred bond that should last for life / divorce is forbidden to those of the Brahmin caste / it is allowed, though frowned upon, in the rest of society / adultery is not grounds for divorce / Laws of Manu state a woman should respect her husband even if he is unfaithful / divorce permitted if husband is cruel / if the couple are unable to have children after fifteen years of marriage, etc.

Islam

Permits divorce reluctantly / 'Of all legal things the one Allah hates the most is divorce.' (Qur'an) / 'The throne of Allah shakes due to divorce.' (Hadith) / couples must try to resolve their differences / two friends or relatives must be brought in to try and help resolve matters / couples must wait three months (iddah) staying in the same home but sleeping separately - to see if the wife is pregnant and to try and achieve reconciliation (Qur'an 4:35) / a wife can divorce her husband but must repay her dowry / if the cause of the divorce is the husband's the dowry does not need to be repaid / the man remains responsible for supporting his children in all circumstances, etc.

Judaism

Permits divorce if a couple no longer love each other as 'one flesh' and attempts at reconciliation have failed / the Torah says a man can divorce his wife if 'he finds something indecent about her' / 'shameful conduct' (Deuteronomy 24:10) / 'Whenever anyone divorces his first wife even the altar (God) in the Temple sheds tears' (Talmud) / divorce is allowed by mutual consent as marriage is a voluntary agreement / reasonable ground for divorce include infidelity / impotence / financial deprivation / cruelty / irreligiousness / Reform Jews have their own get which treats men and women equally / Liberal Jews accept civil divorce alone / divorce is seen as unfortunate but does not have any stigma attached to it, etc.

Sikhism

Believes marriage should be for life / it is a sacrament / Guru Amar Das said a couple should be 'One spirit in two bodies' / marriage commitment is made in front of God and so should not be broken / when a Sikh becomes a member of the Khalsa they promise to maintain a monogamous relationship with their spouse / when divorce occurs Sikhs follow the laws of the country where they are living, etc.

Student responses

Response A

In Christianity that statement is true because it is said that marriage is until death separates us.

In Christianity you're allowed to divorce someone if they cheat.

In Islam you're allowed to divorce for no reason.

An atheist would say that if you're not happy with your marriage that you should be able to divorce.

In conclusion in Islam you're allowed to divorce and in Christianity you're allowed to divorce but for only a valid reason such as unfaithfulness (cheating).

This is a Level 1 response

This answer includes a series of simple points which don't include any development or explanation of the arguments made. Therefore a mark beyond Level 1 cannot be awarded.

3 marks + 1 SPaG mark

Response B

Some Christians may agree with this statement such as the Catholic Church, who do not allow divorce. This is because Jesus said that in marriage they are “one flesh” so some Christians believe that divorce is not allowed. However, the Catholic Church do allow the marriage to be annulled, only if they have not had sex, or refuse to have children.

It could be argued that some Buddhists would disagree with this statement. Marriage is not a desirable and required ceremony in Buddhism so divorce is allowed. Buddhists will divorce if staying together will cause more unnecessary suffering (Dukkha) which could hinder a Buddhists path to enlightenment. So some Buddhists would say that divorce is ok if it reduces / stops suffering, which also shows compassion (karuna).

Most Atheists would disagree with this statement because If divorce means a better life for the couple then divorce is a viable option.

In conclusion, although the Bible stressed the importance of marriage, and the life long commitment as it is a sacrament, I believe that divorce should be allowed. This is because if it reduces suffering then it is the correct decision.

This is a Level 3 response

A reasoned consideration of different points of view. The student refers to one specific religious teaching within Christianity (“one flesh”) and develops the argument by referring to a marriage being annulled. The following paragraph refers to Buddhism and includes one well-developed argument.

Overall, as there is developed arguments on two sides and chains of reasoning which lead to a justified opinion this is a competent Level 3 answer.

8 marks + 3 SPaG marks

Response C

On the one hand some Christians may agree with this statement. This is because there are many religious teachings in the Bible that highlight that God is against divorce. One reason is because marriage a sacrament and in the Bible God says 'I hate divorce.' Therefore by a married couple getting a divorce they are essentially going against God as he is the all knowing and the 'best of planners.' Furthermore, some Christians may argue that in the Bible God teaches that a married couple become 'one flesh.' This indicates that a civil divorce cannot un-do the bond and commitment that they have made to one another. Additionally in the Bible it says that 'what God has joined together let no man separate.' This essentially reminds Christians of the vows that they had made on their wedding day.

On the other hand more liberal Christians may argue that divorce is not sinful or wrong. This is because they believe that the main message of Christianity is to love one another therefore it would be wrong for one to remain in a loveless marriage as it would cause more harm than good. Furthermore, in Jesus's teaching he teaches that the only time divorce can take place is if adultery is committed therefore divorce is not completely forbidden. Finally, God is all loving and therefore he wouldn't want to see his people suffering in a loveless marriage or even abusive marriage. Therefore God should be more understanding of the situation that person may be in.

In conclusion, I disagree with the statement. This is because people should have the right to get a divorce. This is because by the couple remaining in a marriage where they no longer feel love towards one another is wrong. Additionally, staying in marriage that one may not want to be in anymore may cause more harm than good.

This is a Level 4 response

This answer is made up of a series of detailed points made with reference to specific Christian teachings. The answer includes a great use of connectives and is generally analytical until the conclusion where evaluation is particularly evident.

11 marks + 3 SPaG marks

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