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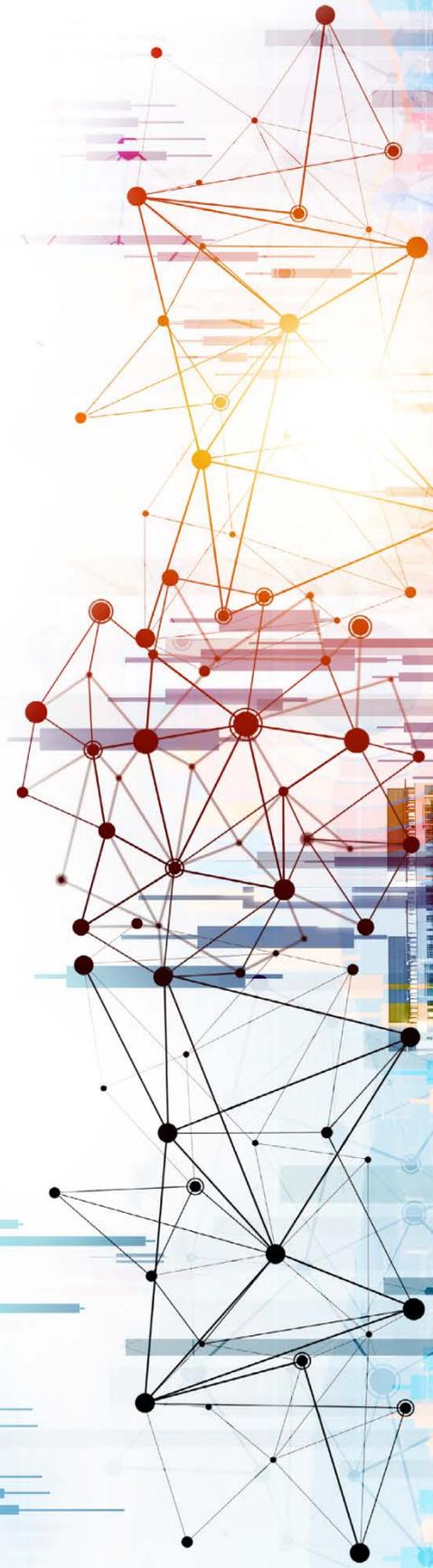
# GCSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES B

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Insight report: 2018 results at a glance

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Published: October 2018





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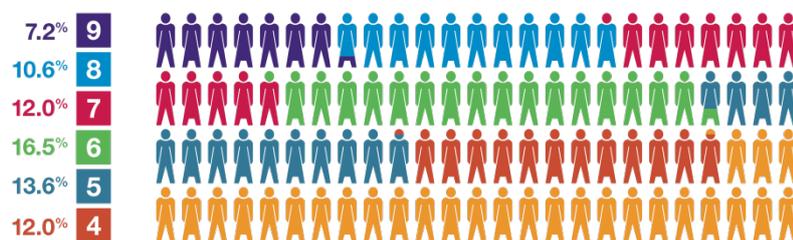
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# Series analysis

Conduct your own analysis using data relevant to you. Watch short [tutorials](#) on using Enhanced Results Analysis (ERA) for school, subject, group or student performance; or log straight in through [aqa.org.uk/log-in](http://aqa.org.uk/log-in)

## Grade summary

This shows the percentage of students achieving each grade.



\*The yellow figures represent the remaining grade levels 3–U.

AQA GCSE Religious Studies B

## Grade summary

98.7% achieved a grade.

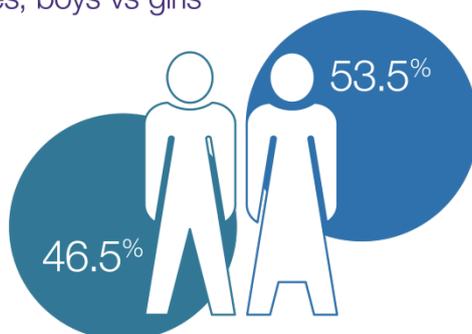
72.2% achieved at least Grade 4.

30.2% achieved at least Grade 7.

7.3% achieved Grade 9.

## Entry volumes, boys vs girls

15,332 entries



AQA GCSE Religious Studies B

## Entry volumes, boys vs girls

## Ratio of examiners to entries



AQA GCSE Religious Studies B

## Ratio of entries to examiners

142 examiners marked papers for 15,322 students.

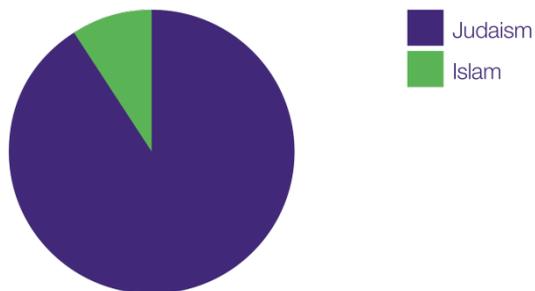
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# Series analysis cont.

Conduct your own analysis using data relevant to you. Watch short [tutorials](#) on using Enhanced Results Analysis (ERA) for school, subject, group or student performance; or log straight in through [aqa.org.uk/log-in](http://aqa.org.uk/log-in)

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Religions picked for study



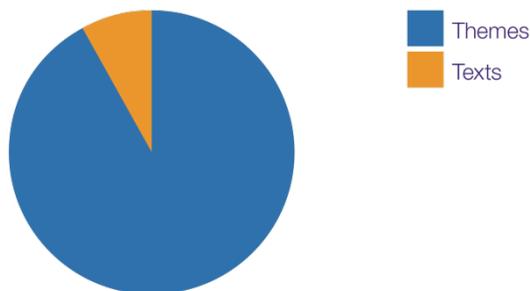
Religions picked for study on this specification

AQA GCSE Religious Studies B

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Paper 2 option popularity



Paper 2 choices

AQA GCSE Religious Studies B

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**Watch tutorials on using ERA for results analysis, or log straight in via e-AQA.**

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# Grade boundaries

## How to interpret grade boundaries

GCSE Religious Studies B is a reformed qualification for 2018; the final grade is based on marks from Catholic Christianity plus the Paper 2 options. You will be able to find the grade boundaries for each route option on our [grade boundaries](#) page. There is no need to convert this mark to the uniform mark scale (UMS).

### Grade boundaries are set using a mix of statistics and expert judgement

Our Centre for Education Research and Practice (CERP) uses a range of statistics to make predictions that suggest the most appropriate grade boundaries. The statistical evidence considers the prior attainment of the given cohort as well as the distribution of marks. Senior examiners then review a script sample to confirm the statistically recommended marks are sensible for the grade.

Boundary setting is overseen by Ofqual. To find more grade boundaries and learn how they are set, visit [aqa.org.uk/exams-administration/results-days/grade-boundaries-and-ums](http://aqa.org.uk/exams-administration/results-days/grade-boundaries-and-ums)

## Qualification summary

Credit should be given to teachers for preparing students for challenging new content. Overall for the first year of a very different specification, the examinations appeared to provide opportunities for students of all abilities to display their cognitive ability, evaluative skills and understanding of the required content. The quality of some answers demonstrated that teachers had effectively prepared students for the requirements of the new specification.

Both Papers 1 and 2 appeared to be appropriate for the full range of students who were entered and achieved widespread differentiation; most students found the paper accessible. Where students lost marks it was often as a result of basic skills requirements and limited use of information, such as not including 'two points' or a source of authority where they were required for example. Overall, on Paper 1 Catholic Christianity, Questions 1 and 4 were more successfully attempted than Questions 2 and 3.

The insight and maturity of thought seen in some of the answers in Paper 2 was impressive, although there were problems caused in some areas by a lack of knowledge of key terms or set texts from St Mark's Gospel.

**Feedback on the exam courses use student responses to explore what happened in each exam series. Visit [aqa.org.uk/rsb-cpd](http://aqa.org.uk/rsb-cpd)**

# Paper 1

This is a snapshot. Learn more about every question from the summer 2018 series in our reports on the exam. Visit [aqa.org.uk/log-in](http://aqa.org.uk/log-in) and follow:

e-AQA > Secure Key Materials > GCSE > History/Religious Studies > Religious Studies A (new specification) > Reports on the exam.

“What worked well”	“Even better if”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Questions 1 and 4 were more successfully attempted than Questions 2 and 3.</li><li>• There were some outstanding responses from students, particularly in the 12-mark essay questions.</li><li>• Many students showed good exam technique for the 2 mark questions and gave the required short sentences or single words.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The least well known appeared to be the topics assessed in 03.3 and 03.4: the contrasting ways of understanding the ‘Magnificat’ and two themes from key documents from the Second Vatican Council.</li><li>• At times in 4 and 5 mark questions students did not explain ‘two’ as they were required to.</li><li>• At times students were let down because they did not understand key terms from the specification.</li></ul>

## Highlights from summer 2018

### Question 01: Creation

In question 01.3, the stronger responses came from those who used two different art works that showed the creation. The most popular examples included Michelangelo, Meière and Wang. However, some only referred to one art work which limited the number of marks that could be awarded, no matter how well developed their answer.

In question 01.4, two ways in which Christians might carry out their duty as stewards were explained in some detail by many and included reference to the Bible or to Church documents. Some answers just said ‘to care for the world’ and lacked any specific ways in which this should be done. Other responses limited the credit which could be awarded as they explained why Christians should be stewards rather than saying what they might do to carry out this duty which highlights again the need for careful reading of the question.

### Question 02: Incarnation

In question 02.3, there were some excellent responses from students who knew the Parable of the

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Sheep and Goats and could explain specific ways in which it influenced Christian responses to those in need. Some focused on the sheep being good and the goats bad with the outcomes for eternal life or damnation but did not say how this influenced Christian responses and so the marks which could be awarded were limited. However, most students did manage to at least simply address 'influences' in 04.3.

Some excellent responses to 02.5 were evident from those who argued clearly on both sides, although weaker responses tended to focus on whether or not sacraments needed 'updating' etc but these answers did not sufficiently demonstrate the detailed reasons needed to achieve higher levels. Some students appeared to not know what 'sacraments' were and confused them with 'commandments'. Others took a secular perspective and argued that sacraments were no longer practised by people such as atheists; however, these responses could not be credited here because the question asked specifically about Christian life.

### Question 03: Church and the Kingdom of God

Students appeared to find 03.3 challenging. The strongest responses came from those who knew the Magnificat. However, some thought it was the Lord's Prayer; and a quarter left this question blank. Similarly, students found 03.4 challenging. This was the most common question where students did not attempt an answer, although of course there were some outstanding responses which referenced documents such as *Dei Verbum* and *Guadium et Spes*. Although the question asked for 'themes', some credit was given if responses mentioned two things that changed in the Church after the Council, as long as they were mentioned in the documents, for example the change in liturgy from Latin to local languages.

### Question 04: Eschatology

Students appeared to find 04.4 challenging with a number who did not know what 'the last rites' were and mistakenly wrote about the funeral service or the last judgement. Very few answers referred to scripture but many gained the fifth mark for citing the words of a prayer or blessing from the service as a source of authority. Overall, 04.5 was the strongest answered AO2 question, with just under a third of students achieving 10-12 marks. 'Most could give convincing arguments on both sides of the euthanasia debate. Given that it was the last question on the paper, it was pleasing to see so many students write well-argued responses with reference to religious perspectives about this topic.

### Spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG)

There were 3 marks for SPaG available for this paper. Spelling, punctuation and grammar was generally good, although capital letters and spelling of key terms continues to challenge some. It was noticeable that the level of English improved on questions where students were confident about the topic, particularly question 04.5.

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# Papers 2A and 2B

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“What worked well”	“Even better if”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Overall the standard was generally very pleasing. The insight and maturity of thought seen in some of the answers were impressive.</li><li>• Students seemed to be at ease with the demands of the new style of questioning.</li><li>• There were very few blank spaces and most students were able to attempt all questions.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• One major weakness was where responses did not demonstrate an understanding of specialist terms, eg cohabitation, nuclear deterrence and conflict resolution. Theme B proved to be a particular problem in this respect.</li><li>• Many students did not note the requirement to refer to Christian beliefs or views in the 4 mark questions which limited the mark which could be awarded.</li><li>• In Paper 2B - blank spaces were generally seen in responses to AO1:1 questions (01.2 and 02.2) which could suggest that the students did not know the set texts thoroughly.</li></ul>

## Highlights from summer 2018

### 2A Themes – highlights

The most popular theme on this paper was Theme A, followed by Theme B, with the least popular option being Theme C. In question 01.4 it was clear that John Paul II’s Theology of the Body had been well taught and teachers are to be congratulated on their success in communicating this element of the specification. Just under two thirds of responses gained at least 3 marks, and of those, just under a third were awarded full marks. There were some very mature evaluative responses to 01.5 in which the Catholic viewpoint was well known and the reasoning behind it was often clearly explained. Just over a quarter of responses were awarded a Level 4 mark of 10-12.

In 02.3 those students who noted the requirement to refer to a Christian view and who focused on

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the question asked gained full marks with ease; which was also the pattern in 03.3. Question 02.5 was the least successfully answered across the three ethical themes, the impression received by examiners was that some students were not familiar with the term 'conflict resolution'. 03.4 was answered very successfully, with just over two fifths of responses gaining full marks. Parables were often effectively applied to the question and it was good to see application of the preferential option for the poor and of other 20th and 21st Century Catholic teaching.

### 2B St Mark's Gospel – highlights

Question 01.4 on the importance of the death of Jesus was exceptionally well answered with most responses achieving full marks. The two 12-mark questions (01.5 and 02.5) were both particularly well answered. Many responses to 01.5 showed good understanding of the importance of the conversation at Caesarea Philippi and managed to link up the disciples' level of understanding with events that transpired later. In 02.5 most responses achieved Level 3 and above, although some did appear to run out of time at this stage in the examination.

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# Papers 2X and 2Y

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e-AQA > Secure Key Materials > GCSE > History/Religious Studies > Religious Studies A (new specification) > Reports on the exam.

“What worked well”	“Even better if”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The questions in the new Religious Studies examination papers are very different in style from previous papers and require a different approach. Many students had been carefully prepared for this.</li><li>• Answers to the 2-mark questions were generally of an appropriate length of the required short sentences or single words.</li><li>• Many responses to 4-mark questions gave and developed two beliefs or ways. Responses almost always attempted to give more than one viewpoint in answering the 12-mark questions.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Some 4- and 5-mark answers consisted of very long paragraphs. As such it was not always easy to pick out the two beliefs or ways that were asked for.</li><li>• In 5-mark questions, although references to sources of authority do not have to consist of quotation, they do have to be recognisable and they do have to be genuine. There were several instances where students created quotations to match what had been said.</li><li>• Some students struggled to produce logical chains of reasoning in the 12-mark questions.</li><li>• Many scripts contained questions that were not attempted, particularly in the practices section of the paper.</li></ul>

## Highlights from summer 2018

### Islam

For 01.3 Most answers included the comparison with Christian beliefs as required by this question, and many gained maximum marks. However, a few accurate and developed answers did not refer to Christianity, therefore could only achieve three marks. Question 02.2 was not well answered, with just over half of responses receiving any credit at all. Many responses demonstrated no understanding of the phrase ‘lesser jihad’. In question 02.4 there were many appropriate references to Qur’anic teachings, although some students made the mistake of confusing sawm with salah or zakat.

### Judaism

It appeared that some students did not understand the term ‘monotheism’ in question 01.3,

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however there were some excellent responses, with just under half of them gaining full marks. For 01.4 most students gave very confident responses, showing clear understanding of a range of Jewish beliefs about the identity and role of the Messiah. The main weakness in answers to this question lay in the absence of reference to scripture or a source of Jewish belief and teaching. Although almost half of responses gained four marks, just under a fifth were awarded full marks. Question 02.4 elicited a wide range of responses. There were many very general comments about the nature of prayer but the more successful responses focused more clearly on Jewish prayer. The mark for a reference to a relevant source of authority was awarded in this question more frequently than for 01.4 as many responses quoted or paraphrased the Shema.

### SPaG

Three marks were available for spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) in each of the 12 mark questions and most students reached at least intermediate performance level.

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# Notes

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## Notes



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