

GCSE
**RELIGIOUS STUDIES (SHORT
COURSE)**

8061/2 Paper 2: Christianity
Report on the Examination

8061
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General comments

The exam this year seemed to provide an appropriate challenge for students of all levels of ability. It seems likely that students were assisted by the advance notice of topics that appeared in questions, but knowledge of other areas of the specification was also used to provide further detail in answers. Students seemed to be better prepared in examination technique than in 2019 when the previous examination was taken. This was especially evident in 01.3 where many students were able to provide the influences required in the question, and in 01.4 where a reference to sacred writings or a source of religious authority was provided, although unfortunately many students did not mention the source. This is a requirement for the 'source mark'.

Evaluation skills were mixed, with many still relying on formulae to structure their answer. It was common to see students giving three reasons for and 3 reasons against, adding religious teaching of mixed relevance, before giving their own opinion in the conclusion. Some gave a brief evaluation of the strength or weakness of each argument but usually this didn't really add any real insight to the answer. Their apparent need to find three arguments for and against lead to some weak points and reasoning for the third point (and in some cases second point). Insisting on a number of points is not always helpful and if students are taught to argue for and against, they miss out on more nuanced answers that an alternative rather than opposing view may provide for them, especially on a topic such as linking the Holy Trinity to the nature of God. Whilst it is appreciated that using a technique such as this, or a writing frame e.g. PEE or DREARER, is helpful to students who find this style of question difficult, examiners formed the impression that some more able students were restricted by using it when maybe they could have earned more marks without it.

Most students were awarded two marks for SPaG but some of the handwriting was extremely difficult to read either because it was extremely small or because letter and word formation really did obstruct meaning because it was totally unclear.

1.1

The multiple-choice question tested knowledge of a technical term (resurrection) and the large majority of students answered it correctly.

01.2

This question, asking for knowledge of the crucifixion and why it is important to Christians, was quite well done with over half of students giving two correct answers. Some referred to other events such as resurrection and the birth of Jesus and these were marked as incorrect (apart from those that said specifically that the crucifixion allowed the resurrection to happen). Most correct answers referred to sacrifice and forgiveness of sin.

01.3

This was a question that had a mean score of over three marks. There were plenty of answers that stated that the promise of heaven influenced Christians to act in such a way that they would go there. This was developed by giving an example, often backed up with a teaching of what they had

to do to go to heaven. The second point was often the reverse. The punishment of hell encouraged people not to sin, or again to live in a way that God approves of. A few students made reference to karma which was not allowed.

01.4

Many students made good reference to original sin, referring to Adam and Eve disobeying God in the Garden of Eden and bringing sin into the world. Many referred to the story appearing in the Bible or specifically the book of Genesis and earned the source mark by doing so. It is very important that students are made aware that to get this 'extra source mark', not only should they include a story or quotation / paraphrase of a teaching **but they also need to correctly identify the source**. This could be from the Bible, a specific book in the Bible, an authoritative Christian or even Jesus or God if they quote what either of them said.

01.5

This was a challenging statement, linking the Trinity to the nature of God. The majority of students had a good effort here and we saw some outstanding answers. Around one in eight students earned level 4, which was pleasing to see, with a further one in four reaching level 3. Most of these split the Trinity into its three persons and made reference to the nature of each one. Omnipotent, loving and just are the three descriptions of the nature of God within the specification but many students also referred to omniscience, omnipresence and omnibenevolence. This was pleasing to see.

Whilst most students knew that the Trinity consists of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, some got little further than this and many others showed some confusion.

Many used the idea of the oneness of God and compared it to the Trinity, coming to their own conclusion about whether this was an inconsistency.

Examiners expressed concern that some students made reference to other religions, mainly Islam, in their answer to a question about Christian belief and teaching. These reference were given no credit. More concerning was the significant number referring to atheism in a question about the Trinity and the nature of God. Again such responses earned no credit and students should refrain from using references to atheism, or to non-religious people on this paper about Christianity. Many of those that referred to atheism when writing about their views on the Trinity, seemed to show no awareness that atheists have no belief in God and so would not express a view.

SPaG

The mean mark for SPaG was around 2 marks with some excellently and fluently written answers that also included technical terms spelled correctly. However, as noted above, this was sometimes difficult to judge due to poor handwriting.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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