
GCSE

RELIGIOUS STUDIES B

8063/2X Paper 2 Section A: Perspectives on Faith (Islam)
Report on the Examination

8063/2X
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General comments

Students seemed to have found this paper accessible, and apart from 2.4, there were fewer unattempted questions on scripts than last summer. Marks lost were often because the questions had not been read with sufficient care, because there was no attribution of quotations in the 5 mark questions or because points made in the AO2 questions lacked sufficient development to reach the higher levels.

Students who failed to achieve Level 3 often did so because their answers contained insufficient development of points. They showed recognition of different viewpoints with slight elaboration. One of the criteria for Level 3 is to produce logical chains of reasoning, which means making a point and then developing it with explanation and evidence or exemplification.

The standard of spelling, punctuation and grammar was quite high, but handwriting again proved to be an issue. Some students might benefit from having a scribe or using a laptop.

Question-based comments

Beliefs

1.1

This question asked for the word referring to the all-powerful nature of God was answered correctly by over 95% of students.

1.2

Here two ways in which Ibrahim (Abraham) is important for Muslims was asked. A variety of ways were given, such as his status as a prophet, his stopping of idolatry, his (re)building of the Ka'aba and his willingness to sacrifice all for God. Although most students answered this correctly, over 7% failed to gain any marks. This was often due to confusion of Ibrahim with Muhammad.

1.3

This question asked for the contrasting beliefs of Islam and the main religious tradition of Great Britain about Jesus (Isa). Many students did not name the main religious tradition, and some stated that it was Christmas. As a result, their answers were capped at 2 marks. Over 45% of students, however, gained full marks.

1.4

Muslim beliefs about life after death was a topic that students tend to know well and over 50% of students gained 4 or 5 marks. Many wrote more than was required and this might have led to issues with timing towards the end of the exam session. Two developed accurate and relevant points with attributed reference to a source of authority were sufficient for full marks. Quotations often related to the nature of heaven and hell.

1.5

This question was answered well by those who read the question carefully. Students were asked to evaluate teaching and / or events in Muhammad's life, not Muslim teaching generally. Those who wrote lengthy alternative viewpoints on the importance of prophethood or salah with no reference at all to Muhammad could therefore not receive credit, as this was not answering the question and opportunities to reach the higher levels were lost. There were some detailed and very mature discussions of the importance of Tawhid and the most effective alternative viewpoints related to the revelation of the Qur'an to Muhammad or his Night Journey.

Practices

2.1

Students were asked which of the words given was not one of the Ten Obligatory Acts of Shi'a Islam. It was answered correctly as Shahadah by only just over 35% of students. Many opted for Zakah.

2.2

Question 2.2 asked for the names of two Muslim festivals and most students were able to name at least one. Those who failed to gain any credit often gave one or two of the Five Pillars.

2.3

This question, which requested two ways in which going on hajj might influence the lives of Muslims was often answered with general comments about pilgrims being brought into a closer relationship with God or having their faith deepened. The best developed answers referred to a specific practice on hajj, eg wearing the ihram, standing in the heat at Arafat or stoning the devil at Mina and then explained the impact the action has on the lives of Muslims.

2.4

This question, asking students to explain two Muslim beliefs about greater jihad, proved challenging to many students. About a quarter of students either did not attempt it or failed to gain any credit. Some confused greater with lesser jihad. The better answers explained what was meant by greater jihad being an inward struggle and how it might be addressed. A quotation frequently used or paraphrased was 'This is my path, leading straight, so follow it', but attribution was not always made.

2.5

This final question required students to evaluate the statement, 'The ra'kas (ritual prayer movements) help Muslims to focus on God'. This was usually answered well by those who understood the term 'rak'ah' and who noted that the question was centred around focus on God. Many, however, who were not able to gain any credit for what were sometimes rambling arguments in support of the statement but were able to gain up to 6 marks for a detailed alternative viewpoint. Some students discussed why rak'ahs might not provide a good focus; others argued for other practices giving a better focus.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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