
GCSE

RELIGIOUS STUDIES B

8063/2Y Paper 2 Section A: Perspectives on Faith (Judaism)
Report on the Examination

8063/2Y
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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 entails 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 would have benefitted from having a scribe or using a laptop.

Question-based comments

Beliefs

1.1

This question was answered correctly by only approximately 65% of students. The question asked students for a word connected with a Jewish belief about life after death. Many thought that Shekhinah was the right answer.

1.2

Students were required to give two ways in which Jews carry out 'healing the world' and was answered well by most. There was some repetition of points, especially from the vague responses that were sometimes given. A wide range of answers was creditable.

1.3

This question referred to contrasting beliefs about the Messiah between Judaism and the main religious tradition of Great Britain. Those who obeyed the instruction to name the main religious tradition of Great Britain and who included both Jewish and Christian views answered this well. Some students either simply repeated the phrase 'main religious tradition of Great Britain' or identified it as Christmas, and their answers were capped at 2 marks. A number of students contrasted different Jewish perspectives on the Messiah with no reference to Christian views.

1.4

This question required two developed beliefs about God as Judge with reference to a source of authority. Nearly 55% of responses were awarded 4 or 5 marks, but of those, only just under 20% attributed the quotation or paraphrase, which was required for the fifth mark.

Many students wrote about God's judgement at Rosh Hashanah and after death, though some comments on the latter drifted into irrelevant detail about the nature of life after death. Others wrote about the nature of God's judgement.

1.5

This question was answered with varying success. Only 55% of responses reached Levels 3 or 4. This was often because the question had not been read with sufficient care. The question required evaluation of the relative importance of the various promises made in the Covenant with Abraham.

Many discussed the Mosaic Covenant as their alternative viewpoint, and this was irrelevant. Some students also understood the reference to the promised land as a reference to life after death.

The more successful responses considered the importance of Canaan to Jews in the past, the significance of the land of Israel in the modern world and the role of the Messiah in Orthodox Judaism. Many students pointed to Brit Milah as evidence of the continuing importance of the promise contained in the requirement for circumcision. Others discussed the more general importance of the nature of God as revealed in his promise of descendants.

Practices

2.1

Students were asked for the correct identification of Marriage as the ceremony in which a Jewish man often smashes a glass under his foot and was answered correctly by nearly 85% of students.

2.2

This question asked for two symbolic Pesach foods to be named. Approximately a quarter of students gained no credit for their responses. Some confused this with the Eucharistic elements of bread and wine or with the foods eaten at Rosh Hashanah. Many answers identified one food as bread, but its symbolic nature, ie as unleavened, was required. Many other students gave meat or lamb as an answer, but this is incorrect. It is the shankbone that is on the seder plate.

2.3

This question required students to give two ways in which private prayer influences the lives of Jews and this elicited some very general answers, but many students gained full marks. The better answers made and developed points relating specifically to Jewish private prayer, such as noting the requirement to pray three times daily and the impact that might have on a Jew's life.

2.4

This question, which required explanation of two ways in which Jews made sure that food was kosher, was very well answered. Although many students failed to gain the fifth mark through not giving any attribution for the quotation or paraphrase used. Some students did not realise that the 'kid' in Exodus 23 refers to the young of a goat, and so there were references to not boiling a child in its mother's milk. The regulations concerning the slaughter of animals and about not mixing meat with dairy were well known. Attempts to explain why certain animals and types of seafood are not eaten were often confused.

2.5

Question 2.5 was answered slightly better than 1.5, though over 10% of students did not attempt it, perhaps because of timing issues.

The question asked for an evaluation of the statement, 'For Jews the similarities between synagogue services (public acts of worship) in Orthodox and Reform synagogues are more important than the differences'. In giving a different viewpoint, it was important for students to remember that the question concerned public acts of worship. Answers that considered other purposes of the synagogue, such as education and charitable work, were therefore irrelevant. Students were able to give a number of differences, though the reasons for these were not always given or understood. Students quite often wrote that Orthodox Jews discriminated against women, whereas the better answers explained the reasons for the separate seating of women. Similarities pointed to the use of prayers such as the Amidah and Shema, and to the significance in worship of features such as the Ner Tamid, the Bimah and the Aron Hakodesh in both Orthodox and Reform worship.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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