

Religious Studies Spec A

Answers and commentaries
GCSE (8062)

Paper 1: Islam

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

Question 1.3

Explain two ways in which the belief in God's mercy influences Muslims today.

[4 marks]

Mark scheme

Target: AO1:2 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including influence on individuals, communities and societies.

First way

Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate influence – 1 mark

Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate influence – 2 marks

Second way

Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate influence – 1 mark

Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate influence – 2 marks

To be a 'detailed explanation' the 'influence' of the way must be included.

Students may include some of the following points, but all other relevant points must be credited:

- Muslims will repent for the sins that they commit / they do this as Allah is considered as 'All merciful' / it is one of the 99 names of Allah.
- It gives Muslims hope / they will not despair when they commit sins or when things go wrong / 'the man who killed 99 and was forgiven for his repentance and good intentions' (Hadith).
- They will pray to him often / this is something the Prophet Muhammad would do / the Prophet would spend the night asking God for forgiveness and praying for his ummah.
- Submit to Allah's will / read the Qur'an / follow the teachings of the Qur'an / teachings of the Prophet Muhammad.
- Allah will forgive Muslims after death / Muslims will therefore trust in his mercy, etc.

Student responses

Response A

God's mercy may influence Muslims to repent as God will forgive them as God is the most merciful.

God's mercy may influence Muslims to forgive as if God is merciful towards you, you should be merciful towards others.

The answer includes two clear ways that the belief in mercy influences Muslims (repentance and forgiveness of others), each with sufficient detail to be awarded full marks.

4 marks

Response B

One way in which a belief in God's mercy influences Muslims today is that if a Muslim makes a mistake they know they can ask for God's forgiveness. It also influences Muslims to create a stronger bond with God as He is merciful and will not judge but listen and guide them.

The first point includes just enough detail to be awarded two marks – the influence is clear, 'they can ask for forgiveness' and the development is 'if they make a mistake.' The second point is stronger and is clearly detailed enough for two marks.

4 marks

5 mark question

Question 1.4

Explain two reasons why angels are important in Islam.

Refer to sacred writings or another source of Muslim 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 writing or another source of Sikh belief and teaching – 1 mark

Students may include some of the following points, but all other relevant points must be credited:

Angels are important as they receive God's word directly / it is one of the articles of faith / they pass this onto prophets / Jibril brought holy books including the four main books, Torah, Psalms, Gospels and the Qur'an / they are sinless / they do not have the ability to commit sins / some are guardian angels that live on the shoulders of humans (Kiraman and Katibeen) / angels have different roles / Mika'il the weather angel / Israfil will blow the trumpet to announce the Day of Judgement / Izrail is the angel of death / Munkar and Nakeer are angels who appear in the grave / he will take people's souls to God, etc.

Sources of authority might include:

'For him are successive angels before and behind him, who protect him by the decree of Allah.' (13:11)

'The angel of death will take you who has been entrusted with you. Then to your Lord you will be returned.' (32:11)

'We send fertilizing winds, and bring down rain from the sky for you to drink. It is not you who hold its reserves.' (15:22)

As the two recording-angels—'one' sitting to the right, and 'the other to' the left—note 'everything', (50:17)

That night the angels and the .holy. spirit¹ descend, by the permission of their Lord, for every 'decreed' matter. It is all peace until the break of dawn (96:4-5)

Student responses

Response A

One reason why angels are important in Islam is because they send messages of God to the people or prophets. Angel Jibril went to Prophet Muhammad in Ramadhan and revealed the whole Qur'an to him. This shows angels are very important in Islam. Another reason is that angels don't have freewill and are pure and obey Allah with everything he says.

This answer contains two detailed points but does not make a clear reference to a source of authority, and so cannot be awarded the 5th mark. If the student had attributed the point about Jibril to a source by saying something like 'in the Qur'an it says....' or 'it is recorded in Hadiths that....' then the mark could be given.

4 marks

Response B

One reason why angels are important in Islam is because they reveal pieces of the Qur'an to the prophet. On the night of power, the Angel Jibril, Angel of Revelation, revealed a piece of the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad. As well as this, another reason why angels are important in Islam is because they monitor all Muslims. In the Qur'an, Allah has said that every Muslim has an angel on his right which collects good deeds and an angel on his left which collects bad deeds. Allah says "a man is judged by the one on his left and the one on his right".

This answer contains two detailed points with a clear reference to a source of authority within the second. The first point that angels reveal the Qur'an is then developed with the example of the Night of Power. The second point, angels 'monitor all Muslims', is developed with the Quranic teaching about the angels on the left and right. This is clearly attributed to the Qur'an and so gains the 5th mark.

5 marks

12 mark question

Question 1.5

'In Islam, the Prophet Muhammad is the most important of all the prophets.'

Evaluate this statement.

In your answer you should:

- refer to Muslim teaching
- give reasoned arguments to support this statement
- give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

[12 marks]
[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. References 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

- He is considered as the last prophet and so is important as he completed the line of prophets / 'he is God's Messenger and the seal of prophets.' (33:40).
- He received the final revelation and was given the last and final book, the Qur'an / this contains guidance for mankind / 'This is the scripture in which there is no doubt, containing guidance for those who are mindful of God.' (2:2).
- He is important as he reinstated monotheistic belief / 'Say, He is Allah the one.' (1:112).
- He is the most recent prophet and so more important to Muslims today as other prophets lived a long time ago and so their role may be seen as less important.
- He showed Muslims how to interpret the Qur'an and taught this to his companions. He is a role model for Muslims / taught through his Sunnah, Hadith, etc.

Arguments in support of other views

- All prophets brought the same message of tawhid / are of equal importance / 'to all the Messengers that were sent before you We revealed that I am the only God to be worshipped.' (21:25).
- Adam was the first prophet and so his role was the most important / he was taught by Allah the name of all things / 'And He taught Adam the names - all of them.' (2:31) / his role thus was important to put things into motion.
- Other prophets are included in the Qur'an, showing their role is as important / Prophet Ibrahim and Prophet Yusuf have surahs named after them in the Qur'an / their role was important in re-establishing monotheistic belief.
- Many lessons are taught through the trials of other prophets / Ibrahim's sacrifice / 'O my son! I have seen in a dream that I am slaughtering you. So look what you think!' (37:101) / Moses' battle with Pharaoh / the trials of Yusuf.
- Prophet Ibrahim built the Ka'aba / ritual of Hajj are connected to him / Festival of id-ul-Adha is connected to him / He passed all of God's test, etc.

Student responses

Response A

Prophet Muhammad was the Last Prophet in Islam. And He was the Messenger of Allah. He sent Allah's message to people and told them to follow them. And the Quran which was written by Allah word to word was send by angles to Muhammad. Prophet Muhamad was the yonger Prophet in Islam. Prophet Muhammad said when you are speaking to non-muslim about islam mention Tawwhid. He was the examples for Muslims How to be a good muslim and live their life as our prophet did.

This is a Level 2 response

This answer demonstrates some knowledge and understanding and the points made include slight development. Level 2 is the best fit here. For SPaG, 2 marks were awarded because some specialist terms are used and although there are some mistakes, the meaning is not hindered.

5 marks + 2 SPaG marks

Response B

Prophet Muhammad is the most important prophet as he was the blessed messenger.

Some Muslims agree with this statement because he was chosen to reveal the Qur'an to the people and tell the people about the 5 daily prayers. Therefore he becomes very important as if it wasn't for him we wouldn't have the information and resources to go to heaven.

Other Muslims disagree because they believe Moses is the most important Prophet because the 10 Commandments were revealed to him and the 10 Commandments are very important things to keep in mind in Islam and other religions. This makes Prophet Moses more important.

However, most Muslims agree with the statement because Prophet Muhammad was so true hearted and good because his heart was purified by the Angel Jibril and he had a glowing heart like no-one else on the planet. This made him the one and only chosen candidate for Allah's most important messages such as the Qur'an and the 5 Pillars of Islam.

Some other Muslims say that Ibrahim was the most important prophet. This is because Ibrahim means Father or Fathers which people can interpret to being prophet of all Prophets. Also, Ibrahim came before Prophet Muhammad.

In conclusion, I agree with the statement because Prophet Muhammad is the messenger and servant of God.

This is a Level 3 response

This answer includes reasoned consideration of two points of view. The third paragraph is the strongest in terms of its detail and development. The other paragraphs lack some development and some points made are a little weak. However, overall a solid Level 3 answer with a good standard of SPaG where errors do not hinder meaning.

8 marks + 3 SPaG marks

Response C

One reason to agree with the statement is because he was the ‘seal of the prophets’ and revealed the Qur’an to the world. A quote from the Qur’an to support this is “Ramadan was the month in which the Qur’an was revealed. Muhammad was revealed the Qur’an by angel Jibril and Allah. Furthermore he managed to spread the words of Allah in the Qur’an and be a good Muslim. This is why he’s a very important prophet as he was the only prophet to successfully spread the words of Allah which Muslims completely base their life off today. Furthermore his good behaviour makes him the ideal example of a Muslim and shows what good behaviour is like. Therefore a reason to agree is because Muhammad successfully spread the words of Allah and is the best example for Muslims to follow.

However a reason to disagree is because some Muslims see Ibrahim as important. A quote to support this is that he was “devoutly obedient” – from the Qur’an. Ibrahim was willing to sacrifice his son for Allah and rebuilt the Ka’ba after getting rid of idols and multiple Gods. This is why he is an important prophet because he emphasised loyalty and devotion to Allah and the Islamic religion – presenting him as the perfect example of how to treat Allah with respect and devotion. Furthermore he re-emphasised Tawhid in rebuilding the ka’ba, influencing more to trust in Allah. Therefore a reason to disagree is because Ibrahim is the perfect example of loyalty to Allah and reinforced Tawhid.

Another reason to disagree is because some Muslims believe Adam is more important. A quote to support this from the Qur’an is “I am going to place a viceroy on this earth”. Adam was the very first prophet of Islam and not only created Judgement day in being the first person to sin but also built the first Ka’ba. This is why he’s potentially the most important prophet because by creating Judgement day through his actions, he massively influences Muslims lives today. Furthermore he also built the very first physical representation of Tawhid – the Ka’ba (before Ibrahim). Therefore a reason to disagree is because Adam introduced Tawhid through the Ka’ba and massively influences Muslims lives at Judgement day.

In conclusion I believe to disagree is the strongest argument as although Muhammad was the only prophet to successfully spread the word of Allah, other people like Adam and Ibrahim are equally as important as they are perfect examples to learn from in terms of doing good behaviour as well as loyalty, and also emphasised tawhid.

This is a Level 4 response

This answer applies religious arguments well and includes logical chains of reasoning on both sides. It comes to an overall conclusion that makes a judgement on the statement. The answer is certainly deserving of full marks.

12 marks + 3 SPaG marks

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Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at aqa.org.uk/8062

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