

Teacher Resource Bank

GCSE Religious Studies Specification A

Unit 8 *Islam*

Exemplar Scripts and Commentaries



Script 1

PART A

A1 Beliefs and Sources of Authority

- (a) Explain what Muslims understand by the **three** beliefs of: (6 marks)

Tawhid: Tawhid is the way Muslims believe in obedience in Allah (Oneness and Unity of Allah). One God.

Risalah: Risalah represents the Islamic prophets – from the Quran, Jesus, Muhammad, Abraham etc.

Akhirah: Akhira says that Muslims believe in life after death.

Commentary

A reasonable answer but with little development on all three concepts.

(3 marks)

- (b) Explain the importance of the Hadith to Muslims. (4 marks)

The Hadiths are the most important extracts from the Qur'an. They represent the 5 pillars of Islam. These extracts are bits of the Qur'an that are the most important rules. All Muslims must follow these rules. If they don't they are breaking Allah's rules. They act as strict guidelines that all Muslims must follow.

Commentary

A weak answer in the sense that the candidate doesn't really cover 'importance' of the Hadith in their response.

(1 mark)

- (c) 'For Muslims, beliefs are more important than practices.'

What is your opinion? Explain your answer. (3 marks)

I don't think that for Muslims, beliefs are more important than practices. I think this because all Muslims pray 5 times a day, this is an action and a practice. So they think that praying 5 times a day is more important than beliefs such as Tawhid and Risalah. However some people may disagree with my view because Muslims have the 5 pillars. These are the most important rules of Islam; the 5 beliefs.

Commentary

This is quite well argued. But there could be a little more said on which beliefs are very important for Muslims and might override their practices. Some generalisations taken into account with the mark of 2/3.

(2 marks)

A2 The Mosque

- (a) Explain briefly the purpose of a mosque. (3 marks)

One of the main purposes of a mosque is it is a place of worship for all Muslims. Muslims pray (an act of worship) in the prayer hall. Another main purpose of a mosque is it is a place of education. Muslims learn Arabic and about the Quran at the mosque. Another purpose of a mosque is it is a place where people can go if they don't have a place to stay. The Mosque is a place for less fortunate Muslims.

Commentary

Sound understanding is shown. The answer is fully focussed on the mosque and gives a number of purposes in the response. Very good.

(3 marks)

- (b) Describe the role of the imam in the mosque. (4 marks)

The role of the Imam is to look after the Mosque, he is head of the Mosque. He leads the prayer and he tells Muslims what they should be praying about. At the more important Islamic festivals such as Eid-ul-Titr and Eid-ul-Adha, the Imam conduct the sermon. He also does this at Friday prayer. The Imam also collects Zakat from rich Muslims. This is a percentage of their income that is given to the mosque and then past on to less fortunate Muslims.

Commentary

The points made are quite extensive and accurate and easily gives the candidate full marks. A variety of aspects of the role of the Imam are covered in a well structured way. Certainly sufficient here for full marks.

(4 marks)

- (c) 'It is impossible to be a Muslim without attending the mosque.'

Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer, showing that you have thought about more than one point of view. (6 marks)

I don't agree with this statement. I think that the most important part of being a Muslim is that you pray five times every day. Going to a mosque is not compulsory for these five prayer times every day. I think that you must try and be in a clean place, facing Mecca and on a prayer mat. These are the most important act of being a Muslim. However, some people may disagree with my point of view. Some people may believe that attending a mosque is the most important part of being a Muslim, because in the Qur'an it says be obedient to Allah. Allah instructs that all Muslims should go to a mosque. I disagree though, I think that Muslims must be able to be Islam without attending a mosque.

Commentary

Lack of content about other aspects of a Muslim's life limits this response to level 3, it is otherwise well argued. The candidate might have commented on the significance of all the pillars of faith, more on the Qur'an and the significance it holds to be a true Muslim. The last phrase is a weak conclusion and could have talked about the significance of niyyah (intention) behind every action is what makes a Muslim a Muslim. Equally no mention of the Ummah which could have gained the candidate some credit. There is insufficient development to make level 4.

(3 marks)

A3 Personal Lifestyle

- (a) 'Rules about food have nothing to do with Islam.'

What is your opinion? Explain your answer. (3 marks)

I disagree with this statement because Islam is all about being obedient. If you don't follow the Islamic food rules then I don't think that you are living out your faith. Muslim food rules must be compulsory to get your full potential out of being of Islamic faith.

Commentary

Quite a good opening line but then fails to go on and develop it further maybe stating and analysing the worth of some particular food laws in Islam.

(2 marks)

- (b) Explain briefly the importance of Ummah for Muslims. (3 marks)

No response given.

Commentary

No response given.

(0 marks)

- (c) 'Modesty in dress is an important part of being a Muslim.'

Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer, showing that you have thought about more than one point of view. Refer to Islam in your answer. (6 marks)

No response given.

Commentary

No response given.

(0 marks)

A4 Family Life

- (a) Explain Muslim teaching about polygamy. (4 marks)

No response given.

Commentary

No response given.

(0 marks)

- (b) 'If everyone had an arranged marriage, there would be fewer divorces.'

Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer, showing that you have thought about more than one point of view. Refer to Islam in your answer. (6 marks)

No response given.

Commentary

No response given.

(0 marks)

PART B

B5 The Five Pillars and Festivals

- (a) Explain why Muslims pay zakah. (4 marks)

Muslims pay Zakah because it helps Muslims that are less fortunate than themselves have a better quality of life. All Muslims have to give away a small proportion of their income so that they can benefit others. Zakah gives poor Muslims food, water, clothing and shelter. Muslims are obliged to give Zakah so that they can feel that they are helping people that are less fortunate than themselves.

Commentary

Good opening line here and in general the response is accurate. There is nothing mentioned about the amount of Zakah collected which could lead into another credit worthy point being made and the candidate repeats their opening line in the last line which adds nothing to the response, even as a conclusion.

(3 marks)

- (b)(i) Describe two ways in which Muslims celebrate Eid ul Fitr. (4 marks)

One way in which Muslims celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr is they go to the Eid prayer. The Eid prayer consists of the Imam in the mosque giving a sermon about their faith. Eid-ul-Fitr helps Muslims celebrate the end of Ramadan. At the end of the prayer, Muslims give Zakah-ul-Fitr. This lets Muslims less fortunate than themselves have a good Eid-ul-Fitr celebration.

Commentary

Further marks could have been gained by noting some detail of the types of celebration Muslims have in greater depth. Here candidates were asked to 'explain two reasons' and 4 marks were available. Development of each through further comment or exemplification would have gained full marks for the candidate.

(2 marks)

- (b)(ii) 'Festivals are just for families to have a good time; they have no religious importance.'

Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer, showing that you have thought about more than one point of view. Refer to Islam in your answer. (6 marks)

I disagree with this statement because both of the Islamic celebrations do have symbolic significance. Eid-ul-Fitr celebrates the end of Ramadan. It is the breaking of the fast. Eid-ul-Adha is the celebration that Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son for Allah and his Muslim / Islamic faith. Families should have a good time at these celebrations because they are supposed to celebrate the two important festivals.

However some people may disagree. Some people may think that celebrations don't have any significance because they don't give Muslims any beneficial thoughts?

Commentary

There is not quite sufficient detail or coherence to achieve above level 3, though it is a sound level 3. The opening few lines is where credit is mainly gained. The opposing view is hardly touched upon and needs to be fully explained before the top levels can be awarded. Clearly the candidate has some good knowledge here. Opinion is generally supported by a few simple reasons.

(3 marks)

Script 2

PART A

A1 Beliefs and Sources of Authority

- (a) Explain what Muslims understand by the **three** beliefs of: (6 marks)

Tawhid: The oneness and unity of Allah.

Risalah: Prophet-hood and Muhammed's importance.

Akhirah: The belief in life after death.

Commentary

Clearly there is accuracy here but no development of each of the three beliefs to gain the higher levels.

(3 marks)

- (b) Explain the importance of the Hadith to Muslims. (4 marks)

The Hadith – the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad – are important to Muslims, as they, along with the Sumi, help modern Muslims to interpret the Qur'an. Muslims regard Muhammad with utmost respect, and believe him to be a role model of a man for future generations. His example in the Hadith therefore, and his interpretation of the will of Allah in the Qur'an, is seen as important.

Commentary

This just fulfils the criteria for level 3. Some pleasing use of technical vocabulary in the opening line shows that the candidate is following the demands of the actual question set closely. The fifth sentence expands on Muhammad as a role model thereby signalling the importance of his words for Muslims. It would have been good to see a conclusion based on how the Hadith offers a guide for Muslims in living their lives today.

(3 marks)

- (c) 'For Muslims, beliefs are more important than practices.'

What is your opinion? Explain your answer. (3 marks)

Islam can be said to dictate a way of life for Muslims – it is not simply believing in Muhammad or the Day of Judgement or Allah. Islam requires people to show their devotion to their faith through acts of worship, which can range from daily prayer to ritual washing during Wudu. I therefore disagree with this statement, as both belief and practices are traditional and equally important to Islam. Muhammad himself showed qualities through beliefs, agreed, but he demonstrated the meanings of his beliefs in everyday life through acts of worship.

Commentary

This easily makes the top level. The first paragraph refers to Islam as a way of life and how much devotion is required but the reference to Muhammad and how he demonstrated the meaning of his beliefs through acts of worship in everyday life is excellent.

(3 marks)

A2 The Mosque

Look at the photograph below.

- (a) Explain briefly the purpose of a mosque. (3 marks)

Mosques act all over the world as a place of meeting, prayer and education for Muslims. Daily prayer is carried out at the mosque, and this is encouraged throughout Islam, though prayer at the mosque is compulsory for men on Fridays.

In non-Muslim countries especially prayers can be focal points for Islamic communities. Muslims can meet here, give Zakah and nurture their community spirit and values. Mosques also provide education for youth, with libraries, and Madrasas – schools where Arabic for reading the Qur'an is learnt.

Commentary

There are many creditworthy points here. The first part of the answer refers to a variety of differing uses of a mosque and then there is further exemplification given in the latter part of the response. Very good.

(3 marks)

- (b) Describe the role of the imam in the mosque. (4 marks)

An imam will primarily lead prayer in a mosque. Whenever two or more Muslims pray together, an imam must act as leaders. However, imams also hold a sermon or Khutbah every Friday at prayer, which will speak on a contemporary issue.

Imams will teach Muslims, give advice, and counselling, and act as a spokesperson when dealing with non-Muslim organisations, usually police.

Commentary

As with the above response, there are again so many credit worthy responses here that it is easy to award full marks. Advice, teaching, acting as a spokesperson, conducting prayers and a very good use of relevant technical terms are all extremely appropriate as a response to this question.

(4 marks)

- (c) 'It is impossible to be a Muslim without attending the mosque.'

Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer, showing that you have thought about more than one point of view. (6 marks)

Those who agree with this statement would say that a mosque is such a focal point in any Muslim community that it is essential for a Muslim to go to one to be part of it. Going to a mosque to pray with others is a sign of dedication – an act of worship – but it is not an absolute obligation. True, it is encouraged that people go to the mosque to pray daily, but in some cases this is not easy.

Especially in non-Muslim countries, where the timings of the prayers are inconvenient or simply impossible salat in itself can be difficult, let alone going to the mosque for it. In fact, Islam actually says that it is alright to pray anywhere – at home or on the street, as long as it is clean and one's intentions are correct. Women often pray at home.

Though it is encouraged that Muslims go to a mosque, it is not compulsory most of the time. Missing a prayer time or not attending on a Friday, in my opinion, does not make

one a bad Muslim or any less of a Muslim, as it is one's intentions dedication and greater beliefs that demonstrate a Muslim's faith.

Commentary

Again, an response. Clearly a level 6 answer from the candidate here. For level 6, there is plenty offered in a balanced way. The candidate has commented on the Muslim Ummah and about the devotional nature of visiting the Mosque and its significance for a great many Muslims today. The candidate then offers some balance by correctly addressing the issue that anywhere can be a Mosque with the correct niyyah and direction indicated etc.

(6 marks)

A3 Personal Lifestyle

- (a) 'Rules about food have nothing to do with Islam.'

What is your opinion? Explain your answer. (3 marks)

I disagree with this statement because Shariah law and Islamic beliefs are deeply rooted in its food rules. The Qur'an clearly states that Muslims should not eat the 'flesh of the swine' and that blood should not be consumed. Food laws are just another thing that demonstrates dedication to Islam. The concept of Halal meat and food is held throughout Islam, and so food roles are deeply connected to Islamic values.

Commentary

Full marks are gained easily by reference to Shariah law, the Qur'an and a quote about 'flesh of the swine'. Equally, the candidate covers references to halal also. Very good response here.

(3 marks)

- (b) Explain briefly the importance of Ummah for Muslims. (3 marks)

Ummah – the 'brotherhood' and unity of all Muslims is the concept that unites all Muslims in a sense of togetherness and community. Family values, charity, and helping others can all be traced back to this concept of Ummah, and that people are united and should care for one another. This stems the Pillar of Islam Zakah – the compulsory condition of money to charity.

Commentary

The candidate clearly defines the concept of Ummah early on and talks about family values as well as implications for the wider community introducing the pillar of Zakah. Very good again.

(3 marks)

- (c) 'Modesty in dress is an important part of being a Muslim.'

Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer, showing that you have thought about more than one point of view. Refer to Islam in your answer. (6 marks)

No response given.

Commentary

Not attempted.

(0 marks)

A4 Family Life

- (a) Explain Muslim teaching about polygamy. (4 marks)

No response given.

Commentary

Not attempted.

(0 marks)

- (b) 'If everyone had an arranged marriage, there would be fewer divorces.'

Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer, showing that you have thought about more than one point of view. Refer to Islam in your answer. (6 marks)

No response given.

Commentary

Not attempted.

(0 marks)

PART B

B5 The Five Pillars and Festivals

- (a) Explain why Muslims pay zakah. (4 marks)

Muslims pay Zakah because it is a pillar of Islam, an act of worship. They believe in the concept of Ummah – that all Muslims are united – and in Tawhid – that Allah created us all as one, under his transcendence and all-powerfulness. Zakah helps create a stronger, more amiable community and keeps the value of humility fresh in Muslim’s minds – that we are lucky to be so wealthy, and should be grateful.

Commentary

Almost at full marks but it would have been a better response possibly with greater reference to where Zakah goes specifically once collected and some indications of the projects Zakah supports in the communities.

(3 marks)

- (b)(i) Describe two ways in which Muslims celebrate Eid ul Fitr. (4 marks)

Eid ul Fitr is celebrated by open air communal praying at the end of Ramadan, which spills into streets and parks. This shows oneness, and celebratory reverence. Also Eid ul Fitr is celebrated on a smaller scale in families by a feast or a meal, where everybody is invited over to eat, and traditional foods are prepared.

Commentary

The answer is good and again, almost at full marks but the candidate generalises a little too much in the latter stages of the response rather than specifically homing in on the actual celebrations commensurate with Eid ul Fitr

(3 marks)

- (b)(ii) ‘Festivals are just for families to have a good time; they have no religious importance.’

Do you agree? Give reasons for your answer, showing that you have thought about more than one point of view. Refer to Islam in your answer. (6 marks)

Festivals in Islam stem from the remembrance of historic events – as do most festivals. Eid ul Fitr, for example, remembers the revelation of the Qur’an to Muhammad after a period of fasting. However, in modern times it helps Muslims remember the gratitude they should show for being so lucky not to be poor.

It encourages charitable giving, brings families together, and brings about a sense of community.

Those who argue with this statement would say that the commercialisation of festivals has taken away from their religious significance, and are now just an excuse to celebrate. Agreed, this may be observed in some festivals, but not all. In Islam, the very purpose of a festival is to strengthen one’s connection with God, one’s family and the community.

I disagree with this statement because all festivals do have an element of bringing people together which in itself can be seen as an act of worship in Islam. Togetherness, charity, peace and a certain connection to Allah can be observed at festivals, reinforcing people’s faith and emphasising the spirituality of such joyous festivals.

Commentary

There is considerable relevance in this response. Superb development of the analysis throughout. This is certainly a detailed answer and covers a number of salient points connected with the issue of festivals. What is particularly good is how the candidate keeps a balanced eye on the religious content of the response and yet it could easily become very generalised. The phrasing too is worthy of note. So often candidates tend to say 'I think.....' and then offer their view. Immediately afterwards they offer the opposing view to an evaluation statement again with the phrase 'I think.....' As though they think this too! This candidate in this case offers the phrase 'Those who agree with this statement' which is an appropriate way of starting the opposing evaluative comment. Impressively done.

(6 marks)