

Examiners' Report
June 2018

GCSE Religious Studies A 1RA0 3B

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Introduction

GCSE (9-1) Religious Studies

Religious Studies A Paper 1: Area of Study 3 – Study of Religion Option 3B – Christianity.

The paper contributes to 25% of the overall award. The assessment consists of four questions, students must answer all four questions. The details of the assessment content is provided in the specification. Centres are to use this rather than other published resources when planning the course content.

The paper is divided into two sections:

- Arguments for the Existence of God
- Religious teachings on Relationships and Families in the 21st century

Question 1 (a)

Students were assessed on Section One: Arguments for the Existence of God. Bullet point 1.8 'Features of a Christian upbringing.'

The question asked was 'Outline three features of a Christian upbringing.'

Students are asked to 'Outline' on part (a) questions. Therefore, lists can reach a maximum of three marks.

GENERIC advice for centres to what constitutes a list.

An example:

Outline 3 characteristics of God:

- God is creator (1 mark)
- God is creator, judge and lawgiver (1 mark for list or sentence)
- God is creator, busy and distant. (1 mark for the sentence identifying one correct piece of information)
- Busy, distant and **God is creator**, (1 mark for the sentence identifying one correct piece of information)
- Creator, judge, lawgiver (1 mark for list)
- Creator, busy, distant (0 Marks) (all three elements need to be correct for 1 mark)
- Creator, judge, distant (0 marks)

The student is awarded 2 marks.

1 (a) Outline **three** features of a Christian upbringing.

(3)

They attend church every Sunday.
They listen or read the bible.



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Examiner Comments

The student gives two features of a Christian upbringing in sentence form.



Students should be encouraged to write three distinct sentences.

The student is awarded 1 mark.

1 (a) Outline **three** features of a Christian upbringing.

(3)

children should go to a catholic school.



The student gives one correct feature.

The student is awarded 3 marks.

1 (a) Outline **three** features of a Christian upbringing.

(3)

- One feature of a christian upbringing is going to church every sunday
Another features of a christian upbringing is reading the Bible with your family.
Lastley, another feature of a christian upbringing is attending a church youth group.



There are three features identified and presented in sentence form.

Question 1 (b)

Students were assessed on Section One: Arguments for the Existence of God. Bullet point 1.1 'Divergent understandings of what revelation shows about the nature of God.'

The question asked was 'Explain two things that revelation shows about the nature of God.'

Students are asked to 'Explain two' on part (b) questions. Therefore, two reasons are required, and both need to be developed for 4 marks. Development consists of a piece of extra information, a reference to a source of wisdom a quotes or examples. The development must be of the reason given and to the question asked.

The student is awarded 4 marks.

(b) Explain **two** things that revelation shows about the nature of God.

(4)

One thing that revelation shows about God is that he is omnibenevolent as he loves his creations because he had created us and given us life ^{as well as giving us gifts like St Bernadette's vision in France because in many} and wants us to know that a spring water fountain in France because in many.

Another thing that revelation shows that God is ~~omnipotent~~ omnipresent as he is able to show/give miracles to anyone in the world this means that God can reveal himself and be anywhere He needs to which reinforces the idea that he cares for his creations (us).

One thing that revelation shows about God is that he is omnibenevolent as he created art perfectly for us and revealed it to the human kind not only that but he also has given us many gifts such as many showing to St Bernadette at Lourdes in France to show her to a water spring since then it has healed around 69 people which science cannot explain showing that God helps and cares for the mankind.



The student identifies two examples of revelation and suggests that they show that God is omnipresent and omnibenevolent. The two ways are confused within the answer but can still be awarded.



When students make mistakes in writing and need to cross out and start again they should be encouraged to follow this example. Cross it out and point with an arrow to where they are going to continue or begin again. Using the space after the 'lines' is the best way to ensure no work is lost or unseen. Do not add additional sheets if it is possible.

The student in this example literally answers the question asked. The student is awarded 2 marks.

(b) Explain **two** things that revelation shows about the nature of God.

(4)

that he is omnipotent and all knowing.



The student identifies that revelation shows that God is omnipotent (1) and all knowing (1). Neither is developed to gain full marks.

Question 1 (c)

Students were assessed on Section One: Arguments for the Existence of God. Bullet point 1.3 'biblical examples of miracles'

The question asked was 'Explain two examples of miracles in the Bible'.

Students are asked to 'Explain two' on part (c) questions. Therefore, two reasons are required, and both need to be developed for 4 marks. Development consists of a piece of extra information, a reference to a source of wisdom a quotes or examples. The development must be of the reason given and to the question asked.

The reasons then should be supported with a 'reference to a source of wisdom'. This must support the reason given and cannot be awarded twice. Therefore, if it is used as development it does not gain a second mark for the source.

GENERIC advice for centres to what constitutes a source of wisdom

- The students do not have to reference a quote or quote it word for word.
- If students are unsure they will use a search engine. Enter the gist of the paraphrase and 'Bible' or 'Christian teaching'.
- If the student states that it is in John 1:18 and then states another verse from John – then this can be awarded. We are not holding students to 'verses' but it must be the correct book.
- If the student gives the paraphrase and then puts (John 1:18) in brackets the paraphrase can have the mark and the bracketed reference is ignored.
- If a student quotes Jesus and it was Paul or vice versa; and the quote is not accredited to them, it is not awarded.

The student was awarded 3 marks.

(c) Explain **two** examples of miracles in the Bible.

In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

(5)

Within the bible there were many miracles, for example, ~~when~~ Jesus' ^{resurrection} ~~resurrected from the~~ gave Jesus the power and authority to sacrifice himself to deliver us from evil and show everybody his true omniscience.

Another example of a miracle, when virgin Mary had fallen pregnant with God's child (Jesus) as ~~the~~ God felt she had the wisdom and authority to have a child.



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Examiner Comments

There are two examples offered here. Firstly, the resurrection of Jesus, and this is developed; and secondly, the virgin birth, which is not successfully developed. The virgin birth development is about why God chose Mary, not the miracle of the incarnation.



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Examiner Tip

Students need to be taught that the reference to the source of wisdom is a third point or development in the reason they have given.

The student is given no marks for this answer.

(c) Explain **two** examples of miracles in the Bible.

In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

(5)

One is when everyone was starving and Jesus miraculously from one piece of bread made it possible to get hundred to feed with it, and another one is when he gave 3 boys different amount of money and then one that got given the least made significantly more profit than the others which got greedy for example.



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Examiner Comments

The attempt at identifying the feeding of the five thousand is not clear enough to be credited and the second story is a parable.

Question 1 (d)

The focus of the marking changes from AO1 to AO2 on part (d) questions. The students are being assessed on AO2 Analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief. This constitutes 50% of the overall mark.

The question is '**Evaluate**' this statement **considering the arguments for and against** and reach a **justified conclusion** – there must be some consideration of the arguments (appraise the arguments to gain the higher marks). Many students give excellent answers giving reasons for and against but not analysing or evaluating them. Formulas and writing frames restricted the flow of the arguments restricting student's progression to the higher levels.

We are now marking using levels and award a best fit according to the level descriptors.

Students were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings. Bullet point 1.8. 'The cosmological argument'

The question asked was

""The cosmological argument proves that God exists.""

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Christian teachings
- reach a justified conclusion."

This student reaches level 4 : 10 marks and is awarded 3 marks for SPAG.

*(d) "The cosmological argument proves that God exists."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Christian teachings
- refer to non-religious points of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

(15)

In Thomas Aquinas' 5 ways, he described the Cosmological argument through 3 of them; way of motion, way of causation and way of contingency. In simple words; if something begins to exist, it must have a cause, the universe began to exist and therefore it must have a cause. ~~That~~ However, the universe needs a prime mover; an uncaused causer and that causer is God.

~~How~~ Many non-religious people like atheist and Humanists would disagree with this argument. They would refer to Bertrand Russell saying that according to him, the universe does not need a cause. Russell argued that even though everything within the universe needs a cause does not ~~mean~~ mean that the universe itself needs a cause. They would further refer to David Hume saying that it is not wrong to say that something does not have a cause. Not every-thing needs to have a cause. They would also argue that even if the universe does have an uncaused causer,

Why does that cause have to be God? This argument does not need to point to God. These non-religious people would also say that if the universe needs a cause then that means God must need a cause as well and therefore this argument does not prove the existence of God.

On the other hand many Christians would agree with this statement. They would argue that the world depends on cause and effect, and therefore the theory of everything needing a cause to exist, cannot be denied. They would (Total for Question 1 = 27 marks)

also say that the Bible presents God as the creator ~~with~~ which means that the uncaused cause is God. The Bible also presents God as being eternal which means God does not need a cause. They would further argue that a being that is eternal and all-powerful can be ~~nothing else~~ nobody else but God. ~~They would refer to Romans 1:20 saying~~

I personally believe that the Cosmological argument proves the existence of God, as a being who is uncaused, eternal and powerful enough to create the universe can be no other than God. In Romans 1:20 it is written that God reveals himself through the nature and the world around us, which means that he created these things.

the mark has been reduced by 1 - to make the justification easier



The student reaches level 4 - 10 marks because:

- There is a sustained, accurate and thorough understanding of religion and belief to develop reasoning which addresses the issues raised by the statement. There are clear chains of reasoning.
- The elements of the question are linked together – the for and against, teachings etc. are shown to be part of the argument leading to coherent and reasoned judgements.
- Judgements are supported by some appraisal of evidence.
- The conclusion is not fully justified.



Students do not have to give a personal opinion, as this is not required by the question.

To gain level 4 - 12 marks the arguments need to flow more comprehensively, using one side of the argument to discredit the other and then reaching a conclusion to evaluate the statement. This cannot be done by formulas.

Question 2 (a)

Students were assessed on Section Two: Religious Teachings on Relationships and Families in the 21st Century. Bullet point 2.4. 'How... the local church communities tries to support families'

The question asked was 'Outline three ways the local church supports the family.'

The specification offers examples : 'rites of passage, classes for parents, groups for children, Sunday school and counselling'

The student is awarded 3 marks.

2 (a) Outline **three** ways the local church supports the family.

(3)

→ Provide youth clubs

→ Provides day-care facilities

→ Some churches offer local food banks for those struggling financially



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Examiner Comments

Despite looking like a list, the student adds to the list with the word 'provides', it is therefore more than a list and is awarded the marks.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Students must be advised to write in full sentences to avoid confusion between lists and sentences.

This question was answered well by the majority of student. This student is awarded 3 marks.

2 (a) Outline **three** ways the local church supports the family.

(3)

Firstly, the church offers ~~parent~~ counselling for families that have issues. Secondly, the church offers activities to children of the family. Finally, the church offers mother and child clubs.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

The student gives three ways in sentence form.

The student gains 1 mark.

2 (a) Outline **three** ways the local church supports the family.

(3)

Good banks

Counseling

• a place to ~~god~~ go if you need someone



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

This is an example where the student gains 1 mark. It can be awarded for the list of three correct things, or for the one sentence at the end.

Question 2 (b)

Students were assessed on Section Two: Religious Teachings on Relationships and Families in the 21st Century. Bullet point 2.1 'The importance and purpose of marriage for Christians.'

The question asked was 'Explain two purposes of marriage for Christians.'

The student gives two reasons, one of which is correctly developed.

(b) Explain **two** purposes of marriage for Christians,

(4)

One purpose of marriage for Christians is for them to be able to have children. This is because some Christians believe it is a sin to have sexual contact with someone outside of marriage. Another purpose of marriage for Christians is for someone to feel closer to their partner, as it creates a sense of commitment towards each other. The vows that have to be said during marriage also show the commitment they should have for each other, as some Christians believe that breaking the marriage vows is a sin.



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Examiner Comments

The student identifies:

- 'to be able to have children' (1) the development is not about having children but about having sexual relations that are accepted.
- 'feel closer to their partner... creates a sense of commitment' (1) developed by 'vows... show the commitment' (1)

The student gives two developed reasons and is awarded 4 marks.

(b) Explain **two** purposes of marriage for Christians.

(4)

Some Christians marry in order to start a family as that is what God intended "Be fruitful and multiply" Genesis.

Other Christians believe marriage is mostly out of love and becoming 'one flesh', joining together as partners



The student identifies two purposes:

"start a family" (1) developed by 'be fruitful and multiply' (1)

and 'becoming one flesh' (1) developed by 'joining together as partners' (1)



The sources of wisdom can be used as development. This is good practice on (b) and (c) questions.

Question 2 (c)

Students were assessed on Section Two: Religious Teachings on Relationships and Families in the 21st Century. Bullet point 2.6 'Christian teachings and attitudes towards divorce.'

The question asked was 'Explain two reasons why some Christians think divorce is wrong.'

The student is awarded 3 marks.

(c) Explain **two** reasons why some Christians think divorce is wrong. *marked*

In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

(5)

One reason why some Christians think divorce is wrong, because when you get married, you make a promise ^{in your vows} to each other, "till death do us part". Meaning that the only way they ~~to~~ could be separated is by death. Otherwise, you are breacking a promise that you have made not only to each other, but to God as well.



The student gives a developed reason and includes a source of wisdom for further development.

The student explains 'when you get married you make a promise' (1) 'till death us do part' (1) and identifies that it is 'to God as well'. (1)



Students should be prepared to give a reason and develop it twice, one being a source of wisdom.

The student is awarded 1 mark.

(c) Explain **two** reasons why some Christians think divorce is wrong.

In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

(5)

it breaks up a stable family unit
also that children are more
likely to believe in god less ~~as~~ ^{from} their
~~parents~~ parents wrong doing



Some Christians do believe that it is wrong because it 'breaks up a stable home' and therefore the student is given a mark for this. The reason is not successfully developed.

The student gives one developed reason and is awarded 2 marks.

(c) Explain **two** reasons why some Christians think divorce is wrong.

In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

(5)

One reason why some Christians think divorce is wrong is because it goes against God's will. Once you marry someone, it's supposed to last forever. You have made vows to love and stick with them forever.

Another reason why some Christians think divorce is wrong is because marriage is supposed to be ~~taken~~ ^{taken} seriously. Marriage is a serious commitment which people have to be prepared to stick with for the rest of their life which is why some Christians advise that you only marry if you are prepared to commit to this.



It is not always clear cut as to where the development is awarded. In this case the reason is identified as 'marriage is supposed to last forever,' or 'it goes against Gods will'. Both are reasons but also a development of each other.

There is no clear second reason given.

Question 2 (d)

Students were assessed on Section Two Religious Teachings on Relationships and Families in the 21st Century. Bullet point 2.7 'Christian teaching on the roles of men and women in the family...divergent Christian attitudes.'

The question asked was

"Men and women should be equal within the family."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Christian teachings
- refer to different Christian points of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

This question caused some problems for students. Many did not address the 'in the family' part of the question and went down the root of in the church and therefore struggled to achieve marks.

The specification clearly identifies the need for students to be taught 'Christian teaching about the equality of men and women in the family' and 'divergent Christian attitudes about the equality and role of men and women in the family'. It appeared in the marking that students had not studied the teachings about family nor had they appreciated the implications of these teachings on family life. Students did not use Ephesians 5 21-30 effectively in answering this question but referred to [1 Corinthians 14:33-35](#) which is not about family life.

This student gained level 1. Due to the difficulty of the question students were awarded for the identification of assumed Christian attitudes.

(d) "Men and women should be equal within the family."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Christian teachings
- refer to different Christian points of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

(12)

The statement is very controversial as quite a number of Christians believe the mother/wife should be staying at home cleaning and nurturing while the father/husband should be out doing hard work to put food on the table for the family to survive.

But in a modern day society roles being set for women or men is wrong because of the equal rights act allowing women to have just as much rights as men do letting women work if that's what they want to do.

So in my own personal opinion it all depends on you or your family and society, whether your parents believe that women should stay at home or not.



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Examiner Comments

The student gained level 1 because:

- there is isolated information relating to the statement.

This student is awarded the lower end of level two.

(d) "Men and women should be equal within the family."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Christian teachings
- refer to different Christian points of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

(12)

"Men and Women should be equal within the family". The traditional role for Women was to stay at home and do house work. The traditional role for men was to go out and work and provide for their families. Christians Some Christians believe that are for this statement as they believe that men and Women are equal as God created men and Women to be equal. ~~and~~ God created both of them to have the same power and no difference is needed.

On the other hand, some Christians are against this statement as they believe that men and Women should not be equal within the family as men in the Bible were Jesus' disciples and Women were never portrayed to

be relevant in the Bible. They also believe that God created Adam first so men were supposed to be the relevant and superior ones.

In conclusion to this I believe that God created equality between men and women and that men and women should be equal within the family.

(Total for Question 2 = 24 marks)



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Examiner Comments

The student is awarded the lower end of level two because:

- there is an identification of a simple for and against.
- there is more than isolated knowledge and understanding
- there is an attempt at a reasoned conclusion although it is superficial.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, students are offered the following advice:

- Do not attach extra sheets to your examination paper, write within the scannable pages using the blank spaces.
- When answering the part (a) questions use three full sentences.
- The source of wisdom offered to support answers in part (c) questions must be relevant to the question and support the reason given.
- The part (d) questions ask for evaluation, after considering the evidence. The higher marks are achieved if the evidence/reasons given is 'considered' or appraised for its value as an argument as part of deciding the evaluation.
- On part (d) questions the bullet points indicate the viewpoints that can be awarded in the answer.
- Students should read the questions carefully and answer the question asked fully.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

