



Pearson

Examiner's Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2018

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Religious Studies A (3RA0)
Paper 04 Study of Judaism

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Introduction

Religious Studies A Short Course 3RAO 04 Judaism

This paper was answered well, with many candidates showing a good knowledge of Judaism and many specialist terms were used accurately. Candidates found the (d) questions difficult which required them to evaluate a statement, appraising the arguments in a coherent chain of reasoning. Many candidates followed a structure which was a for and against with a conclusion and this limited them. There are only 3 marks available for AO1 on (d) questions so they must evaluate the statement to get more than that. This will come with time, as teachers and candidates become more familiar with the new specification.

3RAO_04_Q1a

The first question asked was:

'Outline **three** features of the Covenant with Moses.'

Most candidates answered this question correctly.

Some candidates confused this with the Abrahamic Covenant, and others included the escape from Egypt as a feature of the Covenant.

Examiner tip:

Write in sentences. A list is limited to 1 mark and it can be awarded only if all the elements are correct.

3RAO_04_Q1b

The question asked was:

'Explain **two** reasons why the mitzvot are important for Jews.'

Candidates gave a wide variety of answers and most of them were credited. Very few candidates did not know what the mitzvot were, although a few confused it with Bar Mitzvah.

Examiner tip:

You can leave a line in between the two reasons. This is really helpful to separate the two points made.

3RAO_04_Q1c

The question asked was:

'Explain **two** reasons why the sanctity of life is important for Jews. In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.'

This question about the sanctity of life was well answered by some candidates, but many did not know why it is important restricting their answers to the reason without developing them.

Examiner tip:

- Candidates need to ensure to use sources of wisdom in their answers.
- Make sure candidates understand that the sanctity of life is not the same as Pikuach Nefesh. This has been a common issue with questions on the sanctity of life on all the Jewish papers this year

3RA0_04_Q1d

The question asked was:

“Belief in the Messianic Age is still important.”

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.’

Many candidates had good knowledge about the Messianic Age and got into level 2 but few went further as there was very little appraisal of the arguments or real evaluation of the statement.

Examiner tip:

- Using a structure may hinder the candidates who are capable of getting level 3 and 4 as they are not adequately addressing the question.
- When marking in class, use the level descriptors to find the best fit. The (d) questions are not point marked.

3RA0_04_Q2a

The question asked was:

‘Outline **three** ways Sukkot is celebrated.’

This question about Sukkot was answered well by candidates who wrote about the tabernacle, lulav and etrog, and synagogue services. There were some very vague answers which nonetheless got some marks. Some candidates confused it with Pesach. Others wrote why it is important rather than how it is celebrated.

Examiner tip:

Remind candidates regularly to read the question rather than just write everything they know.

3RA0_04_Q2b

The question asked was:

‘Explain **two** reasons why Bar Mitzvah ceremonies are important for many Jews.’

Most candidates understood the question and there were many good answers. Some candidates wrote that it makes a Jewish boy a man, however, without linking this to faith, or religious responsibilities and this was not credited. Also, some candidates wrote an answer based on Confirmation and although there are some similarities, it meant they wrote very Christian answers and these did not get many marks.

Examiner tip:

Remind candidates about how they word things.

3RA0_04_Q2c

The question asked was:

'Explain **two** reasons why celebration of Shabbat is important.

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

There were some very good answers based on Genesis, and the commandment to keep it holy. Some candidates, however, wrote what the features were without really saying why they were important and these were more difficult to mark.

3RA0_04_Q2d

The question asked was:

“Private prayer is more important than public worship.”

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.'

This question about private versus public prayer was answered very generally by a significant number of candidates, but some did use the Shema as an example of a more private prayer, said at home, and the Amidah in the synagogue. As a result these answers got more marks. As with other (d) questions, there was a lack of evaluation and appraisal.

Examiner tip:

Evaluate and appraise to get the higher levels.

Summary

- Based on their performance on this paper, candidates 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 (a) items use three full sentences.
- The source of wisdom offered to support answers in (c) items must be relevant to the question and support the reason given.
- The (d) items asks for evaluation, after considering the evidence. The higher grades are achieved if the evidence/reasons given is 'considered' or appraised for its value as an argument as part of deciding the evaluation.
- On (d) items the bullet points indicate the viewpoints that can be awarded in the answer.
- Candidates should read the questions carefully and answer the question asked fully.