

Examiners' Report
June 2019

GCSE Religious Studies A 1RA0 2C

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June 2019

Publications Code 1RA0_2C_1906_ER

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Introduction

Religious Studies A Paper 2: Area of Study 2 – Study of Religion Option 2C – Islam.

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

Please note the following:

- AO stands for 'Assessment Objective'
- For Q01(d), marks are awarded for correct use of spelling, grammar and punctuation – SPaG

Question 1 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings. Bullet point 1.6. 'the nature and importance of angels for Muslims; how angels Jibril, Izra'il and Mika'il are shown in the Qur'an'

The question asked was:

'Outline the role of **three** angels mentioned in the Qur'an.'

Candidates are asked to 'Outline' on (a) items. Therefore, lists can reach a maximum of one mark.

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)

This question was generally well-answered by candidates: the majority were able to explain the role of the three angels mentioned in the Qur'an. Some candidates outlined the general roles of angels but could not attribute them to angels mentioned in the Qur'an and so could not be credited.

A significant number of incorrect answers mistakenly named prophets as angels.

Candidates should not be afraid to attempt Islamic names, because credit will still be given for responses that use inaccurate spelling, where the intended name is obvious.

One angel mentioned in the Qur'an is Mikah'il whose role is ~~the~~ to bring rain. Another angel mentioned in the Qur'an is Israfil whose role is to blow the trumpet on judgement day. A third angel is Jibril whose role was to reveal ~~the~~ Qur'an to Mohammad.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

The candidate answers outlining the role of three angels in three sentences.

3 marks



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Use Islamic names, even if you are unsure of the exact spelling

Angel Jibril - to spread the word of Allah to the prophets.

Angel Israfil - to sound the trumpet for the day of judgement.

Angel Izrail - taking the last breath for muslims also known as the 'angel of death'.



The candidate answers outlining the role of three angels in three sentences.

3 marks



Write three separate sentences to avoid listing and therefore losing marks

Question 1 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings. Bullet point 1.2. 'The five roots of 'Usul ad-Din in Shi'a Islam (Tawhid (oneness of Allah); 'Adl (Divine Justice); Nubuwwah (Prophethood); Imamah (Successors to Muhammad) and Mi'ad (The Day of Judgment and the Resurrection); the nature, history and purpose of the five roots with reference to their Qur'anic basis'.

The question asked was:

'Explain **two** ways Nubuwwah (Prophethood) is important to Shi'a Muslims.'

Candidates are asked to 'Explain two' on (b) items. 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, quotes or examples. The development must be of the reason given and to the question asked.

It is good practice to separate the two ways using paragraphs. This indicates clearly to the examiner that there are two different reasons given.

One ~~way~~ way that Nubuwwah is important to Shi'a Muslims is that they provided the Holy books. Musa provided the Torah, Ibrahim provided the scrolls etc. This is important because Muslims live their lives by these books.

Another way is that the prophets are good role models. The prophets are ideal examples of what Muslims should follow, to devote their lives to Allah.



The candidate gives two developed ways.

Way 1

- 'provided the holy books' (1)
- developed by the example 'Musa provided the Torah' (1)

Way 2

- 'good role models' (1)
- developed by 'ideal examples of what Muslims should follow' (1)

4 marks



Use separate paragraphs for each way

This response is a good example of a well-developed answer, which adds to the initial point being made.

Nubuwwah is important to Shia Muslims because prophets are the basis of our relationship with Allah. Allah cannot talk to us directly so he sends angels to talk to his chosen prophets to talk to us. We may not even know of Allah if it wasn't for prophets.

Nubuwwah is also important to Shia Muslims because without them we wouldn't have the Qur'an. The Qur'an is the basis of the Muslim faith and the only example of Allah's word that hasn't been distorted.



The candidate gives two developed ways:

Way 1

- 'basis of our relationship with Allah' (1)
- developed by 'Allah cannot talk to us directly' (1)

Way 2

- 'without them we wouldn't have the Qur'an' (1)
- developed by 'basis of the Muslim faith' (1)

Question 1 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings. Bullet point 1.3. 'The nature of Allah: how the characteristics of Allah are shown in the Qur'an and why they are important: Tawhid (oneness), including Surah 16: 35–36, immanence, transcendence, omnipotence, beneficence, mercy, fairness and justice, Adalat in Shi'a Islam'

The question asked was:

'Explain two reasons why belief in the omnipotence of Allah is important for Muslims'.

Candidates are asked to 'Explain two' on (c) items. 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, 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.

This question was not answered well by candidates. Many wrote responses that explained Tawhid but did not link Tawhid to omnipotence. Many could not link the source of wisdom to the question being asked.

Some candidates attempted to force a source of wisdom that they had learned into every answer. This often meant they did not answer the question at all. The reference needs to be part of the answer.

In this response, both points are developed and include a source of wisdom.

The belief that Allah is omnipotent is important for Muslims as it suggests that Allah has full control over mankind which could be comforting as in the surah it states that 'the overall scheme of life belongs to God' which would lead Muslims to be ~~strong~~ ^{comforted} in situations they find are out of their control.

The belief is also important as it means that ~~god~~ Allah is powerful and beyond the strength of humans which is reflected in the surah where it states that '~~no one begot him no~~ he begot no one nor was he begotten. no one is comparable' this is important as it suggests Allah is ^{the} beyond physical power of average humans and is above men in ~~divinity~~ divinity.

'no vision can take him in but he takes in all visions,
he is the all subtle, the all aware'

'no one begot him nor ^{was he} ~~did he~~ beget him, no one is comparable to him'



The candidate gives one developed reason with reference to a source of wisdom and another developed reason:

Reason 1

- 'full control over mankind' (1)
- developed by 'could be comforting' (1)
- further developed by reference to a source of wisdom
Qur'an 'the overall scheme of life belongs to God' (1)

Reason 2

- 'beyond the strength of humans' (1)
- developed by Qur'an 'no one is comparable' (1)

5 marks

In this response, the reference to the source of wisdom is paraphrased and explained, rather than quoted directly.

One reason is that this helps Muslims to understand why Tawhid is so important. For example, Surah H2 teaches that Allah has no partners. This is because He is omnipotent, so doesn't need aid. Thus, Allah's omnipotence helps Muslims to understand their core beliefs.

A second reason is that Allah's omnipotence means that Muslims can understand how He was able to create everything. This is important because it means that they will praise Him for it, allowing them to earn His favours and go to al-Jannah.



The candidate gives one developed reason with reference to a source of wisdom, and another developed reason:

Reason 1

- 'helps Muslims to understand why Tawhid is so important' (1)
- developed by reference to a source of wisdom Surah 112 'Allah has no partners' (1)
- further developed by 'he is omnipotent so doesn't need' (1)

Reason 2

- 'he was able to create everything' (1)
- developed by 'they will praise him for it' (1)

5 marks

Question 1 (d)

The focus of the marking changes from AO1 to AO2 on the (d) items. The candidates are 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 validity of the arguments and evidence given: appraisal of the arguments to gain the higher grades.

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings. Bullet point 1.4. 'Risalah: the nature and importance of prophethood for Muslims, including Surah 2: 136; what the roles of prophets teach Muslims, exemplified in the lives of Adam, Ibrahim, Isma'il, Musa, Dawud, Isa, Muhammad'.

The question asked was:

'The prophet Ibrahim is the best role model for Muslims.'

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Muslim teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

Generally, candidates were able to display good knowledge and reach the higher marks of Level 2 but very few candidates evaluated their arguments, so could not achieve beyond this. Those who wrote good answers giving reasons for and against, often did not analyse or evaluate the validity of their arguments.

Less-able candidates also found it difficult to recall knowledge of Ibrahim's life and to explain why Ibrahim is important to Muslims. Such isolated general responses did not achieve beyond Level 1.

Formulas and writing frames restricted the flow of the arguments, limiting candidates' progression to the higher levels.

In this response, the candidate deconstructs the religious information, showing an accurate understanding of religion and belief.

The candidate considers the validity of arguments.

Simply stating that an argument is strong or weak, or adding more knowledge, or adding further arguments, does not move a response to Level 3.

There must be appraisal of the original argument/evidence and judgements made about the validity of the argument/evidence.

The prophet Abraham was the best role model for Muslims as he was a successful prophet who helped to spread the word of Allah to humans directly. He is also a prophet in which Muslims can follow and replicate in the way he lead his life. An example of this was his sacrifice, which is highlighted in the Q'uran. Muslims can also replicate this by going on Hajj, in which one of the stages is to sacrifice a goat or sheep. However, a critique of this argument would be that all of the other prophets also performed the same roles in which Ibrahim did. They also communicated the word of Allah to humans and were also given the privilege of prophethood by Allah, therefore should be regarded as equally important.

Another reason why the best role model for Muslims was Ibrahim was because he was

revealed one of the holy books by an angel. This revelation helps us to understand another part of the Muslim history and also to understand Allah better through his true word (as the holy books speak his true word). A critique to this argument is that Ibrahim was not the only prophet in which a holy book was revealed to. Muhammad was revealed the Qur'an, in which was the final word of Allah. This could mean that Muhammad was more important, and therefore was revealed the final holy book, which could mean he was more important. The Qur'an is most often regarded as the most important holy book which is read most frequent, therefore surely we should see Muhammad as the best role model.

To conclude, ~~so~~ I believe that the prophet Ibrahim is not the best role model for Muslims as all prophets were given the same role by Allah and should be treated equally. ~~Some~~ Others believe that he was the best role model as he was like us and could be followed (sacrifice etc).



Connections are made among many, but not all, of the elements in the question.

The candidate provides evidence suggesting the lowest mark of the level.

Judgements are supported by limited appraisal of evidence, some of which may be superficial, leading to a partially justified conclusion.

SPaG - 3 marks are awarded because the candidate:

- spells and punctuates with consistent accuracy
- uses rules of grammar with effective control of meaning overall
- uses a wide range of specialist terms as appropriate

Level 3

7 marks

SPaG: 3 marks

Total: 10 marks



Appraisal of the original argument/evidence and judgements made about the validity of the argument/evidence will move your answer to a higher level.

This is an example of good knowledge and a basic attempt at appraisal.

Candidates should improve appraisal by explaining why the reasons given 'for' can be disputed by the alternative opinion.

For example, why one group of Muslims has one opinion and the other group believes their argument is incorrect, or is a weak argument, and why.

Primarily, a muslim may agree with the statement and argue that the prophet Ibrahim is the most significant prophet as he has a festival, Eid-al-adha, celebrated after him. The festival ~~signifies~~^{highlights} his devotion and obedience to Allah, given his willingness to sacrifice his own son, which most muslims would not be prepared to do. Furthermore, as all muslims worldwide recognise this and celebrate via Eid al adha, it solidified how he is the most important role model, and the best as he showed devotion like no other, strengthening the validity of this argument. However, many muslims may disagree and argue that Ibrahim ~~is~~ only showed devotion through his sacrifice, however the prophet Muhammad showed devotion also, and offered much more to the Ummah, so he is the best role model. Furthermore, as prophet Muhammad had the Quran revealed to him by angel jibril (Surah 2), he offered a book of guidance to the muslim Ummah, which is arguably a more significant form of showing devotion, making him the best role model. Additionally, this devotion Muhammad had shown proved and shows a muslim how to live as they are provided with a book of faith, strengthening the validity of this argument.



The candidate gains Level 3 because they deconstruct the religious information, showing an accurate understanding of religion and belief.

Connections are made among many, but not all, of the elements in the question.

The candidate provides evidence suggesting the lowest mark of the level because judgements are supported by limited appraisal of evidence, some of which may be superficial, leading to a partially justified conclusion.

Level 3

7 marks

SPaG: 3 marks

Total: 10 marks

Question 2 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Practices. Bullet point 2.4. 'Sawm as one of the Five Pillars: the nature, role, significance and purpose of fasting during Ramadan including Surah 2: 183-185'.

The question asked was:

'Outline three benefits of fasting for Muslims'.

Candidates are asked to 'Outline' on (a) items. Therefore, lists can reach a maximum of one mark.

Fasting helps you get closer to God. "Be mindful of God!"

Fasting helps you have self-discipline

Fasting helps you empathise and sympathise with the poor and less fortunate.



The candidate outlines three benefits in three separate sentences.

3 marks

Fasting strengthens their faith

Displays their self control

Fasting puts them in the poor's position which then may lead to Muslims giving to the poor.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

The candidate writes three sentences outlining three benefits.

3 marks



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Write three separate sentences to outline three ways/reasons

Question 2 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Practices. Bullet point 2.5 'why khums is important for Shi'a Muslims'.

The question asked was:

'Explain two ways giving khums is important to Shi'a Muslims.'

Candidates are asked to 'Explain two' on (b) items. 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, quotes or examples. The development must be of the reason given and to the question asked.

One way giving khums is important to Shi'a Muslims is that it helps them ~~put~~ purify their wealth and therefore get closer to ~~go~~ Allah.

Another reason, is that it helps support the community as the money goes to the mosque, schools, orphans and poor people. Helping them improve their life.



The candidate gives two developed ways:

Way 1

- 'purify their wealth' (1)
- developed by 'get closer to Allah' (1)

Way 2

- 'support the community' (1)
- developed by 'money goes to the mosque, schools' (1)

4 marks

the first way in which giving Khums is important to Shia Muslims is because it purifies their wealth. Khums is '1/5 of the spoils of war' as stated in the Qur'an Islamic teachings and therefore in modern times this means it is a way to justify what you earn from things such as business.

The second way in which giving Khums is important to ^{Shia} Muslims is because it emphasises the importance of charity. The money is provided for the poor or less fortunate which demonstrates the fundamentals of the Shia Muslim faith as it is stated in the 10 obligatory acts. This brings them closer to understanding their religion and its teachings to the Ummah.



The candidate gives two developed ways.

Way 1

- 'purify (sic) their wealth' (1)
- developed by Qur'an 'spoils of war' (1)

Way 2

- 'emphasises the importance of charity' (1)
- developed by 'for the poor or less fortunate' (1)

4 marks



Reference to a teaching or scripture is a good way to develop a reason

Question 2 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Practices. Bullet point 2.6. 'Hajj as one of the Five Pillars: the nature, role, origins and significance of Hajj'

The question asked was:

'Explain two reasons why Muslims go on Hajj.'

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

Candidates are asked to 'Explain two' on (c) items. 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, quotes, or examples. The development must be of the reason given and to the question asked.

The reasons 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.

Some candidates were not prepared for this question and confused 'what' with 'why'. Few candidates were able to refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

Muslims go on Hajj to become better people. Hajj is a chance to become closer to Allah through prayer and repent themselves from bad deeds. So as a result they become better people. Another reason why it is is Hajj is an obligatory act. It says in Surah 22: 27 "proclaim the pilgrimage to all people". This quote suggests pilgrimage to Mecca is for everyone. It also shows an act of performing a good deed. Completing Hajj is also an act of sacrifice as Muslims pay for travelling and the pilgrimage is physically demanding, this shows Muslims have a lot of love for Allah.



The candidate gives one developed reason and another developed reason with reference to a source of wisdom.

Reason 1

- 'become better people' (1)
- developed by 'repent themselves from bad deeds' (1)

Reason 2

- 'hajj is an obligatory act' (1)
- developed by reference to a source of wisdom Qur'an 'proclaim the pilgrimage to all people' (1)
- further developed by 'is for everyone' (1)

5 marks

Muslims go on hajj since it's a duty, it's a pillar of Islam and obligatory act. So Muslims are following the foot steps of prophet Muhammad. In the Qur'an it says 'proclaim Pilgrimage to all people' and this means Muslims go on hajj to be faithful, submissive and obedient like prophet Muhammad and since it's both a obligatory act and pillar of Islam, ~~every~~ people are expected to go on hajj so they follow Allah's commandments and be like Muhammad who is an example to Muslims. Another reason why Muslims go on hajj since it allows them to reflect on their own lives and be mindful for Allah. Furthermore, they can focus on their beliefs and connect to Allah much more since they are away from their busy lives.



The candidate gives one developed reason with reference to a source of wisdom and another developed reason.

- 'it's a duty' (1) this is developed by 'a pillar of Islam' (1) further developed by reference to a source of wisdom Qur'an 'proclaim pilgrimage to all' (1)
- 'to reflect on their own lives' (1) this is developed by 'away from their busy lives' (1)

5 marks

Question 2 (d)

The focus of the marking changes from AO1 to AO2 on the (d) items. The candidates are assessed on AO2 analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief. This comprises 50% of the overall mark.

This type of question is marked from a levels-based mark scheme: marks are awarded according to levels descriptors.

The question is 'Evaluate' this statement considering the arguments for and against and reach a justified conclusion – there must be some consideration of the validity of the arguments and evidence given (appraisal of the arguments to gain the higher grades).

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Practices. Bullet point 2.8. 'The nature, origins, activities, meaning and significance of the celebration/commemoration of Id-ul-Adha...Id-ul-Fitr...Id-ul-Ghadeer and Ashura'.

The question asked was:

'Festivals are the best way to remember the greatness of Allah.'

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Muslim teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

When appraising, candidates should consider the strengths/weaknesses of the evidence they have presented to support each of their points ie why is some evidence more or less valid?

They should explain why other Muslims may not consider the arguments as valid points.

One reason why some muslims may agree with this statement is because festivals may emphasise the ~~core~~ core beliefs of Islam, such as Eid-Fitr, which emphasises that muslims should fast to remember the poor, therefore this is important to remember the greatness of God as it highlights gratitude that humans should feel, therefore strengthening their faith with God.

Another reason is because muslims may celebrate Eid-UL Adha, which emphasises when Abraham Prophet Abraham sacrificed his son for God, therefore it is important to celebrate it as it emphasises the great greatness of God because God is so great, that the prophet would sacrifice his own flesh and blood for God, this is significant because it reminds muslims that everything belongs to God and only God, therefore keeping muslims humble and grateful.

The validity of this argument is strong because these festivals emphasise why God should be remembered his vast greatness through ancient stories. The validity of this argument may be questioned as muslims may argue to celebrate the greatness of God, we need to realise what God has given us.

One reason why some Muslims may disagree with this statement is because they may argue that to remember the greatness of God, Muslims should pray and do Salat instead, they may argue it's important because this way they are showing devotion towards God.

Another reason may be it's because Muslims may believe Shukran is more important to remember God as it is the declaration of faith, therefore Muslims are showing their love towards God and therefore are expressing his greatness and remembering it.

The validity of this argument is particularly strong because Muslims may believe to truly acknowledge God's greatness, they must remove everything he has blessed them with, this can be partially done through Sawm or fasting during Ramadan, therefore this is important as it makes Muslims realise everything God has given them, therefore by removing it, it lets Muslims ~~over~~ struggle and acknowledge the greatness of God for providing them with it initially. The validity of this argument may come into question as Muslims may argue that Eid is the most important as it celebrates the greatness of God through joy and gratitude.

To conclude many Muslims would agree with this statement because being to remember the greatness of God, it must truly be done with joy, during a celebration such as festivals, as Muslims will be grateful for their happiness, therefore highlighting to them every thing God has blessed them with, showing that God is ~~great~~ great.



The candidate gains Level 3 because they deconstruct the religious information, showing an accurate understanding of religion and belief.

The candidate has considered the validity of arguments, although this is done in a basic way so the candidate does not achieve the higher mark of the level.

Connections are made among many, but not all, of the elements in the question.

The candidate also provides evidence suggesting the middle mark of the level because judgements are supported by appraisal of evidence which may be superficial, leading to a partially justified conclusion.

Level 3

8 marks

Critique can be undertaken in a number of ways, including by appraising the validity of the evidence used to support arguments, or considering why other Muslims may not accept this point.

Simply stating arguments for and against the statement will not enable candidates to move beyond Level 2.

Festivals are the best way to remember the greatness of Allah as they are a time when Muslims can focus on just Allah. ~~at~~
An example of this would be during Sawm as Muslims must fast for Allah in order to self discipline themselves and to attempt to purify themselves in order to try to benefit their decision to go to "paradise" in the afterlife. This time of self-struggle helps Muslim to focus on the nature ~~of~~ of Allah - his oneness, his all loving nature etc. A critique to this argument would be that Muslims have other ways of remembering the greatness of Allah. An example of this would be through Salah. Salah helps Muslim to express their love and express their thankfulness to Allah directly and one to one. Another example would be the Shahadah, where Muslims express the nature and greatness of Allah - "there is only one God". This is also a declaration of faith which helps to strengthen a bond with Allah.

Another reason why festivals are the best time to remember the greatness of Allah is because they are a great time for Muslims to join together and show their love for God as a community. Examples of this are Adul-fitr and Adul-adhir where Muslims are together and ~~can~~ being as one to celebrate God and his oneness. A critique of this argument would be that festivals such as sacrifice do not help us to remember God as one, but also help us to remember others (e.g. Ibrahim during the sacrifice). A better way to remember God and his greatness is by reading the Qur'an to see the nature of Allah and the word of Allah for us to follow in our everyday lives.

To conclude, I believe festivals are not the best way to remember the greatness of Allah as there are better and more personal ways (e.g. through Shahadah or Salah), however some Muslims prefer to be together as a community and as one to remember Allah.



The candidate has attempted to critique their points but does not do this in a robust way, so achieves the lower mark.

The candidate gains Level 3 because they deconstruct the religious information, showing an accurate understanding of religion and belief.

Connections are made among many, but not all, of the elements in the question.

The candidate provides evidence suggesting the lowest mark of the level because judgements are supported by limited appraisal of evidence, some of which may be superficial, leading to a partially justified conclusion.

Level 3

7 marks

Paper 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 booklet 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 ask 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, so candidates must respond to all aspects of the question
- Candidates should read the questions carefully, to ensure that the answer relates to the question asked

Grade Boundaries

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