

Examiners' Report
June 2019

GCSE Religious Studies 1RA0 3B

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Introduction

The paper contributes to 25% of the overall award. The assessment consists of two questions, candidates must answer both 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.

This paper allows an in-depth study of Christianity within the United Kingdom, focusing on its beliefs and teachings. The unit engages the interest of candidates, as it addresses many Christian beliefs and teachings in addition to some issues affecting young people today.

The standard of candidate responses was similar to last year. Candidates' knowledge and understanding of the specification content was demonstrated well, however, candidates need to be fully prepared to evaluate and appraise arguments on the (d) questions. Candidates were not as successful when answering Q01(d) on the Design argument as they did not answer the specific question asked.

Question 1 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Arguments for the Existence of God, specifically bullet point 1.1: Visions as proof of the existence of God.

Some candidates did not address the question about what the visions show about the nature of God and simply gave examples of visions. These responses could not be awarded any marks.

This candidate is awarded 1 mark.

Question 1: Arguments for the Existence of God

1 (a) Outline three things that visions show us about the nature of God.

(3)

one thing visions show about the nature of God is that he is omnibenevolent and omnipotent and omniscient. Another is that we know he is with us. And one last thing is it shows he is real and he is always there for us and he is watching over us no matter what.



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Examiner Comments

Examiners awarded one mark for each point identified and written in a full sentence.

This candidate stated three things in the first sentence and as a result could not be awarded more than 1 mark.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Lists gain a maximum of 1 mark. Candidates need to provide an outline and therefore, should write in full sentences.

This candidate writes three sentences outlining three things visions show about the nature of God.

Question 1: Arguments for the Existence of God

1 (a) Outline three things visions show about the nature of God.

(3)

visions show that God is omnibenevolent
because he loves and cares for Christians.
visions also show that God is omnipotent
visions also show that God is
omniscient he knows everything and
has a reason to give us visions.



The candidate correctly says that:

- 'God is omni-benevolent' (1).
- 'God is omnipotent' (1).
- 'God is omniscient' (1).



Centres should always refer to the specification and ensure that candidates are familiar with all the content outlined.

Candidates should make sure they have three distinct sentences.

Question 1 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Arguments for the Existence of God, specifically bullet point 1.3: Miracles as proof of the existence of God.

Candidates are asked to 'explain two' on (b) items. Therefore, two points are required and both need to be fully developed in order to attain 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 point given and be relevant to the question asked.

This question was successfully answered by most candidates. The question did not specify the nature of God, therefore more general answers were accepted.

This candidate is awarded 4 marks for two developed reasons.

(b) Explain **two** things miracles show about God.

(4)

One thing miracles show about God is that he is omnipotent. This is because only God has the power to perform ~~the~~ miracles.

Another thing is that miracles show that God wants to connect with us through miracles. This means that God performs miracles to prove he is there and connect with us.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

The candidate gives two developed ways:

The first is: 'He is omnipotent' (1), developed by, 'has the power to perform miracles' (1). The second is: 'He wants to connect with us' (1), developed by, 'performs miracles to prove he is there' (1).



When candidates have given two answers and crossed out the first, the examiner marks the second, replacement answer. If the crossed-out answer was correct and the replacement is incorrect marks are not awarded. The candidate has chosen to give the wrong answer. If the candidate crosses out a correct answer, and does not offer a replacement (and we can read through the crossing out), it is possible to award marks.

This candidate is awarded 4 marks for two developed reasons.

One thing that miracles show about God is his omnipotence. Miracles are things that are seen as impossible becoming possible, so for God to ~~reveal~~ reveal to us that he can make the impossible possible shows his true power as he wouldn't be able to do it if he wasn't powerful enough.

Another thing is that it shows God's love for us, his omnibenevolence, as he performs miracles to us to reveal himself to us and help us when things get really tough.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

The candidate gives two developed ways:

The first is: 'He is omnipotent' (1), developed by, 'wouldn't be able to if he wasn't powerful enough' (1). The second is: 'God is omnibenevolent' (1), developed by, 'to reveal himself to us and help us' (1).

Question 1 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Arguments for the Existence of God, specifically bullet point 1.8 - Religious upbringing: Christian teachings about raising children to believe in God.

Candidates are asked to 'explain two' on (c) items. Therefore, two reasons were required and both needed to be fully developed in order to attain 4 marks. Development consists of a piece of extra information, a reference to a source of wisdom, quotes or examples. The development must relate to the reason given and be relevant to the question asked.

This question required one of the reasons to be supported with a 'reference to a source of wisdom', this should have added to the reason given and could not be awarded twice. Therefore, if it was used as development it did not gain a second mark for being the source.

Advice for centres regarding what constitutes a source of wisdom:

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

This candidate demonstrates that it is not necessary to write lengthy answers to gain the marks. Although the candidate does not refer to a source of wisdom, they gain 4 marks for two developed reasons.

(c) Explain **two** ways a Christian upbringing might lead to belief in God.

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

(5)

one way a christian upbringing may lead to belief in God because
if the people around you all believe in the same thing they may think it is
~~what~~ what everyone believes in and that they should too. Also if they
hear so many teachings of God then they may believe in it from ~~it~~ ^{interesting}.



The candidate provides two developed ways:

The first way: 'If the people around you believe the same thing' (1), developed by, 'then they should too' (1).

The second way: 'They hear so many teachings' (1), developed by, 'they believe by just listening' (1).



Candidates must learn sources of wisdom and be able to use them accurately and in context.

The (c) questions are point marked, requiring two developed reasons and a reference to a source of wisdom.

This candidate was awarded 4 marks.

One way a Christian upbringing might lead to belief in God is through Bible stories. If a child is told Bible stories, he/she will follow the path that God has set out for them, which is Genesis 2:25, "A man leaves his mother ~~and~~ ^{and} father ~~and~~ ^{to be} united with his wife and they become one flesh."

Another way a Christian upbringing might lead to belief in God is Youth groups. A youth group could help put a child on the right path through God, leading to his belief.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate is awarded 4 marks for two developed reasons, the reference to a source of wisdom does not support the reason given for religious upbringing leading to a belief in God.

The candidate provides two developed ways: The first way: 'Through Bible stories' (1), developed by, 'follow the path God set out for them' (1). The Bible reference does not support the way given.

The second way: 'Youth groups' (1), developed by, 'put the child on the right path, leading to his belief' (1).



- The source must support the reason/teaching/belief/way given.
- Sources are checked using a search engine.
- If the source is attributed to the wrong person/source/numerical reference it cannot be credited, eg a Pauline quote attributed to Jesus cannot be credited.
- Numerical references on their own are not credited. The candidate must use it correctly, eg not just write John 10:10.
- The source of wisdom can be given as a recognisable paraphrase.

Question 1 (d)

The focus of the marking changes from AO1 to AO2 on the (d) questions. The candidates 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 grades). Many candidates provided excellent responses giving reasons for and against but did not then analyse or evaluate them.

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

The (d) responses must not be point marked, in live marking they are marked using levels and awarding is carried out using 'best fit' according to the level descriptors.

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Christian Arguments for the Existence of God, specifically bullet point 1.6 - Design argument: the classical design argument for the existence of God and its use by Christians as a philosophical argument for the existence of God.

This question was a challenge to many candidates. Candidates saw the word 'designed' and proceeded to explain the design argument and Paley's watch. Other candidates answered the question 'the design argument proves God exists'. The question asked about the beauty in the world, not complexity as some complex things are not beautiful. Many candidates did not even mention beauty.

This candidate was awarded no marks. Referring to the information in the introduction, the candidate does not answer the question about beauty in the world.

The candidate therefore cannot be awarded marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar.

In this question, 3 of the marks awarded will be for your spelling, punctuation and grammar and your use of specialist terminology.

*(d) "The world is so beautiful it must have been designed by God."

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)

~~Some~~ Christians ^{will} ~~may~~ agree that the world was created by God due to the teleological argument which was theorised by William Paley. He argued that ~~the~~ a watch has a complex design and needs a creator. Therefore, since the world is so complex (shown by every human having unique fingerprints or the structure of DNA) it must also require a creator. This creator must be God.* This is a valid argument because in Genesis 1, it describes God creating the world and this supports the teleological argument.

However, a non-religious people may argue that the world is not made by God. This is because of the Red-shift Spectrum. This is the argument that background radiation in space is remembrance of the Big Bang. This means God didn't create the world as the Big Bang theory (which was fabricated by a catholic priest) states that

The Big Bang created the universe. This is a valid argument because it's backed by scientific research and evidence carried out by professional scientists.

In conclusion, Christians believe that the world must have been created by God as it is so complex and needs an omnipotent creator. However, Catholics believe that the red shift spectrum provides evidence for the Big Bang which they believe created the universe. I believe the world was caused by the Big Bang, not God, as it's backed up by scientific evidence.

* because he is omnipotent enough to create something so complex.



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Examiner Comments

Examiners were required to look for content that could be awarded marks in cases like this in order to be able to award the spelling, punctuation and grammar marks. In some cases, candidates did address the statement by raising questions about evil and suffering in the world in the opposing viewpoint.



Candidates must address the statement given. Interpretations of the statement in this question caused many candidates to lose marks.

This candidate is awarded level 2 and 4 marks.

They are also given 3 marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Some Christians may agree with the statement and argue that the world and universe has so many complexities that it must have been designed by God, given his omnipotent nature, expressed in Genesis. William Paley introduced the teleological argument due to the fact that the universe is ^{too} complex ~~for exist~~ to have just been a coincidence. For example, many believe that ~~the~~ the structure of the DNA and ~~the~~ Fibonacci sequence are complex ~~designs~~ ^{designs} that must have been invented by a supreme being, and that being, being God. Furthermore, the validity of this argument is extremely strong, as in Genesis, God is the only being that is omnipotent enough to fabricate such a diverse universe that is unflawed, and eloquently placed together. Despite this, many may ~~disagree~~ disagree with the statement and argue that actually, the universe is not beautifully designed, in fact it is heavily flawed. For example, there are many natural disasters such as hurricanes, sandy, and horrific events that take place, therefore proving how the universe must not have been designed by an omnibenevolent God, and so God did not create it at all. The validity of this argument is weak however, as disasters may be viewed as a test from God, and are all apart of his planning for the complex design of the world.

Many Christians may still agree with the statement and argue that as in Genesis, it states that God knew you in the "womb" before you became flesh, & proves how God has designed all in this universe and what it consists of. Furthermore, this is known as ~~cont~~ contingency planning, meaning that God had designed all and it was planned to carry out processes in the world, such as ~~every~~ the cycle of life, strengthening the validity of this argument. Also, as no other supreme being to man has ever known, God must be the only being to have created such magnificence. However, non-religious people such as atheists may disagree and argue that although the universe is magnificent, there is no proof that God designed it. Also, despite God's known divinity and prosperity, there is no proof that he even exists, and other theories such as the big bang and red-shift can explain the complexity ^{of the} universe. The big bang states that all matter was concentrated and then exploded, creating the universe. Evidence that supports this theory exists, such as red shift and cosmic background radiation that still exists, proving that this radiation existed thousands of years ago, & still in existence, making the validity of this argument ^{strong}.

In conclusion, & a Christian should agree with the statement as all has a cause and effect, and God ~~is the~~ ^{is the} only cause that is known to man to have created the universe. Also, if God created the universe, it is linked to infinite regression, as God is a source of ultimate authority, **(Total for Question 1 = 27 marks)** and nothing stronger than him is known.



The candidate gained level two because:

- The response shows understanding of the issue raised in the opposing argument.
- The candidate talks about the flaws in the design of the universe and lists natural disasters, therefore, raising issues about the nature of God.
- This is more than isolated knowledge overall and therefore is awarded level 2.

Spelling, punctuation and grammar was awarded 3 marks in this example because:

- The candidate spells and punctuates with consistent accuracy.
- Candidate uses rules of grammar with effective control of meaning overall.
- Candidate uses a wide range of specialist terms as appropriately.



Candidates should ensure they take opportunities to assess and analyse the validity of the evidence supporting the statement.

Question 2 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Religious Teachings on Relationships and Family in the 21st Century, specifically bullet point 2.4: Support for the family in the local parish.

The (a) questions are point marked and require three outlined points. Candidates are advised to write in three clear sentences so that there is no confusion about the three points being outlined.

The majority of candidates answered this question successfully and gained 3 marks. Some candidates lost marks because they listed rather than outlined points in their response.

Question 2: Religious Teachings on Relationships and Families in the 21st Century

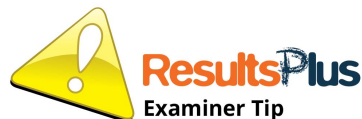
2 (a) Outline **three** ways the local church community tries to support families.

(3)

Sunday school, Charity, Food bank



In this example, the candidate states three correct things, however, as they are a list they can only be awarded 1 mark.



Encouraging candidates to write three full sentences is advised.

Question 2 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Religious Teachings on Relationships and Family in the 21st Century, specifically bullet point 2.2 Christian teachings about the nature and importance of sexual relationships.

The question asked was: Explain two Christians teachings about the nature of sexual relationships.

Candidates answered the question by explaining Christian teachings about sexual relationships and were awarded appropriately. Some candidates went off track and explained teachings about divorce which they could not be credited for as they did not respond to the question asked.

Two developed ways are needed to gain full marks. This candidate gives two developed teachings.

(b) Explain **two** Christian teachings about the nature of sexual relationships.

(4)

Sexual relationships are only to be between a man and a woman who are married. Christians believe that sexual relationships creates a strong bond between a married couple. And Christians also believe that sex is a gift from God and a sacrament to allow them to procreate.



The candidate correctly outlines:

Teaching 1: 'Only to be between a woman and a man' (1), developed by, 'who are married' (1). Teaching 2: 'Sex is a gift from God' (1), developed by, 'allow them to procreate' (1).

The awarding of marks does not rely on the quality of the writing or sophistication of English but on an appropriate response to the question.



Although not all Christians agree with the statements made they are teachings from within Christianity and are awarded.

Two developed ways are needed to gain full marks. This candidate gives two teachings but only one is about the nature of sexual relationships.

Sex after marriage

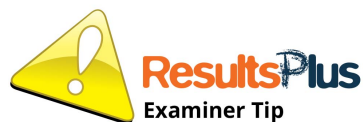
Don't deverse → goes against

Gods will



The candidate correctly states, 'sex after marriage' (1).

The awarding of marks does not rely on the quality of the writing or sophistication of English but on an appropriate response to the question.



Centres should remember the requirement that 'teachings' should be about Biblical teaching, or Church teaching, or What Christians are taught.

Question 2 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Religious Teachings on Relationships and Family in the 21st Century, specifically bullet point 2.6 Christian teachings and attitudes towards divorce and remarriage.

The question asked for 'different' Christian attitudes so the marks were awarded for each 'different' attitude. If there was no difference then only 2 marks could be awarded plus one for the source of wisdom (if given).

Candidates answered this question successfully and many could reference a source of wisdom. Some candidates did not do so well as they only gave one attitude when the question asked for two attitudes. Candidates must respond to every part of the question in order to gain full marks.

(c) Explain **two** different Christian attitudes to divorce.

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

(5)

Catholics allow annulment but generally believe that ~~divorce should be~~ divorce should be avoided at all costs. Catechism 2383 states that ^{the} ~~mar~~ bond in marriage should not be broken by human power, as it is the holy union of two people witnessed by God. Divorce can be seen as sinful, against God's will.

Liberal Protestants allow divorce. Although ~~some believe in~~ they believe that although the Bible is negative about it, teachings should be re-interpreted ~~at times~~ at modern times and sometimes divorce is a lesser ~~is~~ and more necessary evil.



This candidate provides two developed reasons with reference to a source of wisdom.

The first attitude is: 'Avoided at all costs' (1), developed by, 'should not be broken by any human power.' This is also a reference to a source of wisdom (1). The attitude is further developed by, 'it is a holy union witnessed by God' (1).

The second attitude is: 'Allow divorce' (1), developed by, 'is the lesser and necessary evil' (1).



Candidates must be prepared for the whole breadth and depth of the specification in order to achieve higher grades. It is best to check that materials used in centres cover the specification.

Question 2 (d)

The focus of the marking changes from AO1 to AO2 on the (d) questions. The candidates 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 grades). Many candidates provided excellent responses giving reasons for and against but did not then analyse or evaluate them.

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

The (d) responses must not be point marked, in live marking they are marked using levels and awarding is carried out using 'best fit' according to the level descriptors.

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Religious Teachings on Relationships and Family in the 21st Century, specifically bullet point 2.5: Christian teaching about family planning and regulation of births.

It was clear in this year's marking that many centres are using writing frames and many of the candidates were so intent on 'filling the gaps' on the frame or completing sentence starters that they did not answer the question. The for, against, moreover, furthermore, this is a strong argument because, this is a weak argument because, often made nonsense of the information the candidate tried to present. The actual answer was lost in the amount of framing that was not needed. This was very evident with those candidates who were working in level three, who might have reached level four with a more fluid answer.

Candidates were well versed in the for and against arguments of the use of artificial contraception, but very few tried to explain why Catholic reasons for not using it are not accepted by the other Christian groups and vice versa; this would have increased marks as it would have demonstrated appraisal of the evidence.

This candidate was awarded level 3 and 7 marks.

No spelling, punctuation and grammar marks were awarded for Q02(d).

(d) "Christians should not use artificial contraceptives."

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)

Some Christians would agree with the statement because the Catholic Church teaches in its catechisms that ~~sex is for procreation~~ that the main purpose of sex is "procreation" and so contraception should not be used as it denies the chance of procreation to occur.

Some would also agree because artificial contraception can encourage ~~promiscuity~~ promiscuity. Hebrews 13:4 states that God will judge the sexually immoral which is significant as it means that people should not behave lustfully which contraception encourages. This is a valid argument as the encouragement of sin leads to people not achieving ~~the~~ salvation and being separated from God by sin ~~as~~ as shown in the parable of the sheep and the goats.

Some Christians however would disagree because contraceptives can stop the spread of STIs which is ~~significant~~ significant as it means that people can't be infected and suffer from them.

Some would also disagree because they allow Christians to control the size of their families ~~as~~ which is significant as this means that families are able to support themselves as having too many children would mean parents can't provide for them as resources are stressed. This is a valid argument as in the gospel Jesus taught "Love thy neighbour" and this is the most loving thing to do as families can support their children.

In conclusion I think ~~as~~ Christians would disagree as it means they can have pleasure in marriages and not stress family resources. Also the bible doesn't ever mention anything against contraception.



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The candidate gained level three because:

- The candidate meets all the level descriptors in level 2 fully.
- The candidate uses the religious information to provide chains of reasoning and attempts to make a reasoned judgement, although superficial.

Using the best fit approach it can be awarded at the lower end of level 3.

The candidate was awarded level 1 and 3 marks.

There are no spelling, punctuation and grammar marks available for Q02(d).

(d) "Christians should not use artificial contraceptives."

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)

Some Christians, such as Roman Catholics, will agree with this statement because when two people have sex it should be to procreate and by using artificial contraceptives it means you can't do that. This means that Roman Catholics will not use artificial contraceptives because it is preventing them from procreating.

Other Christians will disagree with this statement because artificial contraceptives stop unwanted pregnancies, so that when a couple do have a baby it can be brought up in a loving and stable family.

Overall, I disagree with this statement because it stops unwanted pregnancies and the spread of STIs.



The candidate gained level 1 because:

- The candidate provides two arguments about the issue raised that are underpinned by isolated elements of understanding of religion and belief.
- The judgement made is a personal response to the statement supported by generic arguments.

It is important to use the level descriptors to find the level rather than look for a number of facts - these are AO1.

Paper Summary

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

- When answering the (a) questions use three full sentences and ideally write these on three separate lines.
- The source of wisdom offered to support answers in (c) questions must be relevant to the question and support the reasons given.
- The (d) questions ask for an evaluation after considering the evidence. Higher marks are achieved if the evidence/reasons given, is/are 'considered' or appraised for their value as an argument.
- On (d) questions the bullet points indicate the viewpoints that will be credited in the answer, so candidates must respond to all aspects of the question.
- Candidates should read the questions carefully in order to ensure that their answer fully responds to the question being asked.

Grade Boundaries

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