

Examiners' Report
June 2019

GCSE Religious Studies 1RA0 4A

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Introduction

The paper contributes 25% towards the overall award and centres can choose to combine the textual study of Mark's Gospel with other options; the most popular being Catholic Christianity 1A, Christianity 1B and Islam 2C and Judaism 2F.

The assessment consists of two questions one from each section of the specification: **Who is Jesus?** and **The Nature of Discipleship**. Candidates are expected to explore the themes and teachings of Mark's Gospel and make an in depth study of the references given in the specification.

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.

This is the second year of awarding this specification and by comparison to the previous year, there is much to commend the candidates for.

In (a) questions, less candidates gave lists and consequently scored higher on the more straight forward questions.

The (b) questions continued to differentiate between candidates and highlighted which had a secure knowledge and understanding of Mark's Gospel and issues of religion and belief associated with the Gospel.

When answering the (c) questions more candidates attempted to link in the source of wisdom and authority into the answer.

It is the (d) questions that remain the most challenging for candidates, and the marks awarded were broadly the same as in the previous year. It was evident that more candidates attempted to 'consider' the arguments for and against and to appraise the evidence, but this did not result in them necessarily achieving the higher levels. The use of writing frames appeared to inhibit the flow and was often at the expense of the development and coherency of the response.

Question 1 (a)

The candidates were assessed on section 1 – who is Jesus? Bullet point 1.1.

The question asked candidates to outline what the people at the time of Jesus expected the Messiah to be like or to do.

There were a wide variety of answers given. Responses were accepted as valid if based on:

- Old Testament passages that are accepted as references to the Messiah, eg Isaiah.
- From Jewish sources before the time of Jesus.
- Commonly held beliefs about the Messiah held by the people of the time, that are derived from the New Testament.

Candidates responded well to this question and most were able to give at least two expectations of the Messiah at the time of Jesus.

1 (a) Outline **three** expectations of the Messiah at the time of Jesus.

(3)

One expectation was that the Messiah was supposed to be a descendant of King David. Another was that the Messiah was expected to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem. A third expectation for the Messiah was that he was supposed to be a warrior for the Jewish people.



This candidate was awarded 3 marks for the following:

- A descendant of King David (1).
- To rebuild the Temple (1).
- The Messiah would be a warrior (1).

1 (a) Outline **three** expectations of the Messiah at the time of Jesus.

(3)

One expectation was for Jesus to be a great warrior. Another was for him to bring complete peace. Finally many expected him to be a descendant of King David.



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This candidate was awarded 3 marks for three points in sentences. These points were:

- The Messiah would be a warrior (1).
- Would bring complete peace (1).
- A descendant of King David (1).



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Examiner Tip

Candidates are advised to write three sentences each containing one point. Starting a new line for each sentence might ensure that three clear points are made.

Question 1 (b)

The candidates were assessed on section 1, bullet point 1.2 - the baptism of Jesus, Mark 1:2-11.

The responses generally referred to the significance of Jesus' baptism, the importance of the baptism narrative in Mark's Gospel or for Christians today.

The (b) questions provide marks for four points; two for reasons and two for the development of each reason.

(b) Explain **two** reasons why the baptism of Jesus is important.

(4)

One reason why the baptism of Jesus is important is because it is one of the only times in the Gospel when the Trinity were all together. A second reason why the baptism of Jesus is important is because it was proof ~~of~~ ~~that~~ that Jesus was the son of God because a voice shouted down "this is my son and with him I am pleased"



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This candidate was awarded 3 marks.

Reason One: Trinity all together (1).

Reason Two: Jesus as Son of God (1).

Development Two: 'this is my Son ..'(1).



Reasons can easily be developed by giving a quote or paraphrase of a text from the Gospel.

Most candidates referred to the significance of the events of Jesus' baptism based on the account in Mark, by referencing it showing Jesus as the Son of God, and furthermore, all persons of the Trinity being present.

(b) Explain **two** reasons why the baptism of Jesus is important.

(4)

It revealed to everyone that he ~~is~~ was the son of god because as the voice of god ~~come~~ said it and it came from heaven which was shown by the heavens opening. It was also important because it was ~~at~~ when all three persons of the trinity was present at the same place and at the same time, Jesus as the son. The dove as the holy spirit and god as the voice that came down from heaven.



This candidate was awarded 4 marks.

Reason One: He was the Son of God (1).

Development One: Voice of God from heaven (1).

Reason Two: All persons of the Trinity present (1).

Development Two: At the same place and time (1).

Question 1 (c)

The candidates were assessed on bullet point 1.7 - the conflicts of Jesus in Mark's Gospel; the healing of the paralysed man (Mark 2:1-12).

This question was about the healing of the paralysed man in Mark's Gospel and not about miracles in general, as such, reasons that gave generic style answers about what miracles show about Jesus were not credited. To answer the question set, candidates needed to refer correctly to this incident in Mark's Gospel. The most popular points made reference to Jesus' authority to forgive sins, blasphemy and as a source of conflict between Jesus and the teachers of the law. A number of candidates incorrectly identified this as a Sabbath healing.

The (c) questions provide marks for five points; two for reasons, two for developments and one for a relevant source of wisdom and authority that relates to one of the reasons/developments given.

Candidates who scored highly on this question clearly knew the incident and based their answer on their study of Mark 2:1-12. They were able to develop their answers by referring to the text and did not just give generic answers.

(c) Explain **two** reasons why the account of the healing of the paralysed man is important for Mark's Gospel.

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

(5)

Healing of the paralyzed man is important for Mark's Gospel because it shows Jesus' ability to perform miracles and forgive sins



This candidate was awarded 1 mark.

Reason One: Shows Jesus' ability to forgive sins (1).

This links directly to Mark 2:1-12.

(c) Explain **two** reasons why the account of the healing of the paralysed man is important for Mark's Gospel.

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

(5)

One reason is because he forgave someone's sins, only God was thought to have been able to do that. This reveals that Jesus is God and it is the first time he revealed to people that he is God. He said your sins are forgiven ^{now} stand up. This was very important because this man has never been able to walk, people would have thought he was cursed ~~or~~ or sinned. Another reason why it is important is because it created tension as some people did not see Jesus as the Messiah or God. This was where the high priests started to plot their plan to get him killed.



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This candidate was awarded 5 marks.

Reason One: Jesus forgives sins (1).

Development One: Only God can do that, reveals Jesus as God (1).

Source of wisdom or authority: our sins are forgiven (paraphrase of Mark 2:5) and this links to the reason given (1).

Reason Two: Created tension as Jesus not seen as Messiah (1).

Development Two: High priests started to plot to kill Jesus (1).



Learn the key points for each of the references in Mark's Gospel given in the specification.

Question 1 (d)

This question asks candidates to consider if 'the transfiguration proves Jesus is the Messiah', taking into account the evidence from Mark's Gospel and non-religious views. This is based on the specification bullet point 1.6.

The candidates who engaged with this question considered the arguments for and against using evidence from Mark as well as the possible non-religious explanations for this event. These candidates did not get side tracked by comparing it with other events that might prove that Jesus is the Messiah.

The better answers showed an accurate understanding of the importance of the appearance of Moses and Elias and appreciated the divergent Christian understanding of this event.

The (d) items assess AO2: analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief. This constitutes 50% of the overall mark for the paper. These questions are marked using levels and marks are given using a 'best fit' approach, according to the level descriptors.

In Q01(d) candidates are also given a maximum of three marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar.

This is an example of a level 2 response.

*d) "The transfiguration proves that Jesus is the Messiah."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Mark's Gospel
- refer to non-religious points of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

(15)

Some Christians would agree that this statement is true. This is because an expectation of the Messiah was to fulfil the prophecies of the Old Testament, and Jesus had now done this as he ~~is~~ was standing with the prophets Moses and Elias. Also, God again speaks, saying ~~that~~ that Jesus is his son, telling the disciples to listen to him. In this event, Jesus has revealed the Messianic secret to his disciples. This argument is robust as God himself confirms yet again that Jesus is his son on Earth, proof that he is the Messiah who has come to bring salvation to the world.

Some non-religious people, however, would disagree with this statement as they would argue that this event did not happen as in Mark's Gospel. They might argue that the story has a metaphorical meaning, based on something Jesus had told his ~~disciples~~ disciples. Other people may not believe that the story proves Jesus to be the Messiah because ~~the~~ the son of God does not necessarily mean Jesus is the Messiah. He was not the profile of character that many people at the time

had expected, for example a warrior to overthrow the Romans. I don't think this argument is as robust as Jesus still managed to fulfil prophecies in this event and to some extent, was a religious leader as he taught many people.

To conclude, I would argue that the transfiguration does prove Jesus is the Messiah. This is because I think it is difficult to argue against the voice of God, especially when he is so clear about us listening to Jesus.



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Examiner Comments

This candidate was awarded level 2 because they:

- Give reasons for and against the statement making brief (superficial) arguments on both sides.
- Demonstrate a limited understanding of the beliefs surrounding this statement.
- Do not attempt to appraise the arguments given or evaluate the argument.
- Attempt making a judgment in the conclusion, but this is not fully justified and builds on a limited range of elements in the answer.
- The candidate is awarded a mark at the top of the mark range because most of the demands of the level descriptor are met.

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

- Spell and punctuate with consistent accuracy.
- Use rules of grammar with effective control of meaning overall.
- Uses a wide range of specialist terms as appropriate.

Use of writing frames such as, this is a robust argument, often inhibit the flow of the answer and can stop candidates achieving the higher levels.



Make sure the arguments and evidence offered are linked to the given statement.

This is an example of a level 3 response.

* (d) "The transfiguration proves that Jesus is the Messiah."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Mark's Gospel ←
- refer to non-religious points of view ←
- reach a justified conclusion ←

FOR	AGAINST
clothes turned white	Non religious say impossible
Moses + Elijah voice from heaven witnesses	Jesus didn't perform miracle

(15)

One reason why some people could say the transfiguration proves Jesus as the Messiah is that his clothes turned white. This is a miracle that could only be explained by Jesus being the Messiah as it doesn't work logically. This is a robust argument because the clothes turning a brilliant white is a sign of purity and the voice from Heaven further shows Jesus' divinity. // Another reason why to agree is that Moses and Elijah appeared. This is significant because Moses represented the law, which the Messiah would know and respect and Elijah was the greatest prophet. This argument stands up to criticism because the Messiah would fulfill the Old Testament, so Elijah's presence with Jesus proves that Jesus is the Messiah. // However, ~~one~~ a reason to disagree is that non-religious people wouldn't believe the event was

possible as it ~~was~~ cannot be explained logically. This means that it doesn't prove ~~Jesus~~ Jesus as the Messiah as the ~~transfig~~ voice from heaven and clothes turning white may just have been ~~or~~ the disciples ~~with an overexaggerating~~ overexaggerating to show Jesus as the Messiah. This point lacks potency because the very fact that the event seems impossible is proof of Jesus as the Messiah because it is something that no one else could do. // Another reason against ~~that~~ is that it wasn't Jesus performing the miracle. Unlike in the calming of the storm, ^{in Mark's Gospel} the transfiguration doesn't show Jesus performing any miracle, only miraculous things happening to him. This argument is weak because the fact that Jesus was chosen for this event proves that he ~~was~~ ^{was} always ~~present~~ ~~to~~ been the Messiah. // In conclusion, after thorough appraisal of both sides I believe that the transfiguration proves ~~Jesus~~ Jesus is the Messiah because Jesus' inner circle witnessed the event and were amazed which proves Jesus to be divine. ~~and~~



This candidate was awarded level 3 because they:

- Make use of an accurate understanding of religion and belief to develop reasoning that addresses the issues raised by the statement.
- Use logical chains of reasoning on both sides of the argument.
- Are starting to make judgements supported by some appraisal of the evidence.



Candidates are not asked for their personal view of whether they think the statement is true or false, but rather to consider the arguments for and against. Therefore, they need to say why the reasons/arguments/evidence are the best/strongest and how they may be brought into question by an alternative view.

Question 2 (a)

Candidates were assessed on the specification bullet point 2.7: women in the ministry of Jesus as shown in Mark's Gospel.

The candidates were required to outline three occasions when women were seen as followers of Jesus.

Most candidates could identify at least two occasions from the Gospel; but a significant number cited examples that are not found in Mark, eg Veronica wiping Jesus' face.

This candidate was awarded 3 marks.

2 (a) Outline **three** occasions when women are shown as followers of Jesus in Mark's Gospel.

(3)

one occasion that women are shown as followers of Jesus is in the ~~1st~~ Anointing at Bethany. Another occasion that women are shown as followers is in the Greek women's faith story. One last place women are seen as followers of Jesus is in the crucifixion story when most of the women are present.



The candidate outlines three occasions in sentences:

Reference to the Greek Woman (1).

Anointing at Bethany (1).

Women at the Cross (1)

2 (a) Outline **three** occasions when women are shown as followers of Jesus in Mark's Gospel.

(3)

In the ~~story~~ ^{story}
~~At the story~~ of ~~the~~ Greek woman who showed great faith in Jesus as she asked for her ~~gotten~~ ^{gotten} daughter to be healed, is one occasion.

A second would be ~~at~~ ⁱⁿ the anointing at Bethany when ~~the~~ ^{the} women showed love and adoration.

A third would be during Jesus' suffering when ~~three~~ ^{three} women were witnesses of all Jesus' suffering, at the foot of the cross, as well as witnessing out about his resurrection.



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This candidate outlines three occasions:

The anointing at Bethany (1).

The Greek woman's faith (1).

Women present at crucifixion (1).



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Examiner Tip

Read the question carefully, if it says in Mark's Gospel, only give examples that can be found in the Gospel.

Question 2 (b)

Candidates were assessed on specification bullet point 2.2: the Parable of the Sower.

This question asks candidates to explain two **different** responses described in the Parable of the Sower.

Most candidates were able to identify the responses and referred to the parable to develop their answer, eg people who hear, but do not listen, as the seed falls on the path.

Some candidates confused the different responses with types of soil.

Some focused on the symbolic meaning, eg the seed as the word of God, so did not answer the question set.

Many candidates gave the development, reference to the parable and detailed what happens to the seed, before the response.

(b) Explain **two** different responses described in the Parable of the Sower.

One ~~response~~ response described in the Parable⁽⁴⁾ of the Sower was that the seed would fall on good soil, grow well and give a lot of wheat. This represents a person listening to the teachings and words of God and fulfilling what it says for them to do in order to live a good life.

Another response was that the seed would grow slightly but then get smothered by thorns and die. This represents somebody who wants to follow Jesus' teachings but they let earthly possessions restrict them from growing fully as they don't want to make sacrifices.

This candidate was awarded 4 marks:

Response One: Person listening and fulfilling what is said (1).

Development One: Seed on good ground/lots of wheat (1).

Response Two: Somebody who lets earthly possessions distract them (1).

Development Two: Seed that gets smothered by thorns (1).

(b) Explain **two** different responses described in the Parable of the Sower.

(4)

One response is that some seeds fell among the thorns which symbolise those who hear the word and embrace it but things like worldly desires and commodities choke their faith and so fall among the thorns.

Another response is the seed that fell on rocky ground that symbolises those who hear the word at first and embrace it, but the faith has no root so disappears in difficult times like persecution.



This candidate was awarded 4 marks:

Response One: Hears the word but worldly desires choke faith (1).

Development One: Seed fell among the thorns (1).

Response Two: Those whose faith has no roots (1)

Development Two: Seed fell on rocky ground (1).



Candidates should aim to write as succinctly as possible to allow themselves more time on the longer answer questions which carry more marks.

Question 2 (c)

Candidates were assessed on specification bullet point 2.1: the sending out of the Twelve (Mark 6:7-13)

The question was about how the sending out of the Twelve may affect a Christian's life today.

A significant number of candidates referred to the call of the first disciples and/or Mark 8:34 which were not credit worthy.

The better responses identified two key teachings from the passage and applied it to Christian life today, eg Jesus commanded not to take any money therefore, Christians should not be dependant on possessions and live a simple lifestyle.

This is an example of a candidate knowing about some teachings about discipleship, but they are not from the sending out of the Twelve.

(c) Explain **two** ways the sending out of the Twelve may affect how a Christian lives today.

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

(5)

The Sending out of the Twelve shows Christians today that, in order to be righteous, you must make sacrifices and follow Jesus, having faith at all times. This is demonstrated when Jesus said "take up your cross and follow me" to his disciples. Another way the sending out of the Twelve may affect Christians today is showing Christians that through faith anything is possible shown when Jesus said "follow me and I will make you fishers of men" showing that with faith Jesus and God will direct you into the right path.



This candidate is awarded 1 mark.

First Way: Must make sacrifices (1).

The candidate refers to Mark 1:17 and Mark 8:34 not Mark 6:7-13.

This candidate gave a full mark answer.

Shows you have to give up all.

(c) Explain **two** ways the sending out of the Twelve may affect how a Christian lives today.

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

(5)

Firstly, one way the sending out of the Twelve may affect Christian life today is it may encourage a Christian to leave all they have behind, like the disciples were instructed to "take nothing" and go out and spread the word of God to other people.

A second way the sending out of the Twelve may affect a Christian life is it may encourage them to live a simple life, as the disciples did "wear sandals" "do not take two tunics". This may persuade them to not get endorsed into today's modern secular society and live simple as the disciples did.



First way: Encouraged to leave everything behind (1).

First development: Spread the word of God to people (1).

Source of wisdom/authority: As disciples instructed to take nothing (1) (Mark 6:8).

Second way: Live a simple life (1).

Second development: As the disciples should wear sandals (1) (Mark 6:9).



As all of section 2 is about the nature of discipleship, candidates are advised to carefully study the references given in the specification and be clear about how each links to the theme of discipleship.

Question 2 (d)

This question asks candidates to consider if 'Peter's denial of Jesus was more of a warning than an example to Christians' taking into account the evidence from Mark's Gospel. This is based on the specification bullet point 2.6: Peter's denial, its significance for Christians today as an example and warning.

The candidates who engaged with this question considered the arguments for and against, that the denial was more of a warning than an example, using evidence from Mark's Gospel, usually by showing how it was a warning and how it is an example.

The better responses started to weigh up if it was more of a warning or more of an example for Christians, using the evidence from the Gospel.

This is an example of a level 3 response.

(d) "Peter's denial of Jesus is more of a warning than an example to Christians."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Mark's Gospel
- reach a justified conclusion.

(12)

Some may agree with this statement as Peter, in the gospel, was displayed as Jesus' closest and most devout disciple, what with Jesus even saying that he will be "the rock to build my church upon", yet towards the end of Mark's Gospel just before Jesus' trial, he warns Peter that he will "deny me three times before the rooster crows". It is almost displayed as a warning as when he did deny Jesus, it was too late as Jesus was already heading for crucifixion; he had betrayed Jesus and is ~~now~~ now paying a heavy price for it: whilst we keep ignoring Jesus' pleas for us to turn to God, we are losing our chance of entering heaven and gradually distancing ourselves from God and before you know it, it will be too late. This is a compelling argument because if Jesus' closest disciple can turn away from him and deny him, so can we, and is a prewarning and almost giving us a chance to change our ways.

However, some may disagree with this statement and believe that it is more of an example to Christians as they may view the story of Peter's denial ~~more than~~ on a more relatable level due to the fact that Peter is human and as humans we do tend to make mistakes, some highly impacting others, and some not so much. As Peter denied Jesus yet God

Still forgive him still shows us Christians that it is never too late to seek redemption of God if you are still his follower and pay attention to the word of God, something you cannot seek if you do not believe in him. This is a strong argument as to see it as more of an example to Christians than a warning allows us time to change our principles and turn back to God and look for his forgiveness.

In conclusion, after thorough appraisal of the evidence, I believe that Peter's denial is both a warning and an example to Christians as, ~~as~~ on that day, Jesus died on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins and if we don't choose to accept that, then we are destroying more and more our relationship with God.



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Examiner Comments

This candidate was awarded level 3 because they:

- On the whole make use of an accurate understanding of religion and belief to develop reasoning that addresses the issues raised by the statement.
- Use logical chains of reasoning on both sides of the argument.
- Are starting to make judgements supported by some appraisal of the evidence.

The best fit is level 3 and 7 marks, as some inaccurate information is used and the conclusion is not fully justified.

This is an example of a level 2 response.

(d) "Peter's denial of Jesus is more of a warning than an example to Christians."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Mark's Gospel
- reach a justified conclusion.

For	Against
<p>- Don't believe him Peter goes against everything Jesus has said "Don't be afraid, just believe!" "wept" - regretted it what happens when you give away Jesus</p>	<p>- Peter is a core example of what not to do we should (12) trust in God "Have you no faith?" But an example that we will sin and forget forget</p>

After the last supper, Jesus declared that Peter will deny Jesus him 3 times before the ~~cock~~ ~~ere~~ crows twice. This ~~but~~ was ~~happ~~ actually happened, despite Peter's ~~attempt~~ ~~not~~ promise not to saying "Get behind me Satan". However some see this as a warning rather than an example.

Firstly, Peter's denial ~~she~~ acts as a warning, showing us ~~to~~ not to lie and believe him. Through ~~us~~ ^{our} Jesus' mystery, he ~~teachers~~ teaches the disciples to remain in faith, despite ~~they're~~ ^{their} ~~lack~~ ^{lack} of faith (for example during the storm when Jesus says "Have you so little faith?") Peter still doesn't listen, showing to Christians ~~that~~ the consequences of not having faith. However, some may argue that as nothing serious happened its impact as a warning isn't grand.

Secondly, Peter's denial shows us the consequences of having little faith in Jesus. This is shown when it says Peter "wept" after realising what he had done, showing his regret and what happens when you deny Jesus. However some might actually say this shows as an example of rather than warning, of the effects of shutting Jesus out.

On the other hand, Peter's denial of Jesus can be an example for Christians as it shows that we are not perfect. Since Peter was chosen by Jesus and becomes the head of the church, despite sinning and denying Jesus, this shows how as Christians we aren't expected to be perfect. ~~and so~~ Peter's denial acts as an example to Christians that we don't ~~have to be~~ will fall in faith at times, but through prayer and forgiveness, we will be forgiven. This is a very strong point ~~that~~ ^{as} all Christians believe in the power of prayer ~~and~~ forgiveness, and accept that only God is perfect.

Overall, I believe that based on the ~~a~~ larger amount of evidence, Peter's denial acts as **(Total for Question 2 = 24 marks)** a warning to the dangers of a lack of faith.



This candidate was awarded level 2 because they:

- Give reasons for and against the statement offering arguments on both sides.
- Do not attempt to appraise the arguments given or evaluate the argument.
- Attempt making a judgment in the conclusion, but do not go beyond a personal statement.

The candidate is awarded a mark at the top of the mark range for level 2, 6 marks, because most of the demands of the level descriptor are met.



Focus on the quality of the evidence to show the arguments for and against, as instructed in the question.

Paper Summary

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

- When answering the (a) questions use three separate, full sentences.
- In (b) and (c) questions references to the text of Mark's Gospel, a source of wisdom and authority, can act as a development. This is advisable when the candidates are asked about a specific event or passage from the Gospel.
- Candidates need to take time to read each question carefully to ensure they understand what the question is asking, eg reasons/ways, but especially which event, teaching, miracle, or theme they are asked about.
- In (d) questions the bullet points after the question indicate which viewpoints will be credited in the response.
- In (d) questions candidates must demonstrate AO2 to achieve the higher levels. The instructions ask them to evaluate by 'considering' or appraising the evidence or arguments in order to reach a justified conclusion.

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>

