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Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2019

Pearson Edexcel GCSE

In Religious Studies Short Course (3RA0)

Paper 2: Area of Study 2 – Study of Christianity

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Introduction

GCSE (9-1) Religious Studies

Religious Studies A

Paper 2: Area of Study 2 – Study of Christianity (Paper code: 3RA0/02)

The paper contributes to 50% 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.

This area of study comprises a study in-depth of Christianity as a lived religion in the United Kingdom and throughout the world.

There are two sections:

- Beliefs and Teachings
- Practices

Candidates had studied Christianity within the context of the wider British society.

Please note:

AO stands for 'Assessment Objective'

SPaG stands for 'Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar'

3RA0_02_Q01a

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings.

Bullet point 1.2 **The creation of the universe** and of humanity: the biblical account of creation and divergent ways in which it may be understood by Christians, including as literal and metaphorical; the role of the Word and Spirit in creation including John 1:1–18 and **Genesis 1–3**; the importance of creation for Christians today. (*bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.*)

The question asked was:

'Outline three days in the biblical account of creation.'

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)

The majority of candidates were awarded 3 marks. Candidates who answered the question naming the day but incorrectly giving details of what was created, were not awarded marks.

Candidates should write three sentences containing one piece of information in each. There is no need for development: it will not receive credit.

3RA0_02_Q01b

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings.

Bullet point 1.7: The problem of evil/suffering and a loving and righteous God: **the problems it raises for Christians** about the nature of God, including reference to omnipotence and benevolence, including Psalm 103; how the problem may cause believers to question their faith or the existence of God; the nature and examples of natural suffering, moral suffering. *(bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.)*

The question asked was:

'Explain two problems the existence of suffering causes for Christians.'

Candidates are asked to 'Explain two' on (b) items. Therefore, two reasons are required, and both need to be developed for 4 marks. If three reasons are given the best two are chosen to award.

In example of a good answer gaining four marks the candidate gives two developed reasons and separates them into two paragraphs to enable clarity in the answer, for example:

- The first problem identified is 'to doubt God' (1) developed by 'as God is known to be all loving' (1)
- The second problem caused is 'lose faith' (2 developed in reverse by God is all-powerful so he should be able to prevent all problems in the world' (1)

3RA0_02_Q01c

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings.

Bullet point 1.1. 'The Trinity: the nature and significance of the Trinity as expressed in the Nicene Creed; the nature and significance of the oneness of God; the nature and significance of each of the Persons individually: including reference to Matthew 3:13-17;

how this is reflected in Christian worship and belief today. (*bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.*)

The question asked was:

'Explain two ways the Trinity is reflected in Christian worship today.'

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

GENERIC advice for centres to what constitutes a source of wisdom

- The candidates do not have to reference a quote or quote it word for word.
- If markers of candidate work in centres are unsure if the quote will be accepted, use a search engine. 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 candidate 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 can have 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.

The mark scheme allowed for the individual Persons of the Trinity to be reflected in worship. However, many candidates lost marks by saying that the Trinity was part of the Lord's Prayer. Only the 'Father' is reflected in the Lord's Prayer, so no marks would be awarded if this was used.

The specification is used to set examination questions. Candidates should be familiar with any terminology or content that might be used in assessment.

3RA0_02_Q01d

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 arguments (appraise the arguments to gain the higher grades). Many candidates gave excellent answers citing reasons for and against but not analysing or evaluating them.

Formulas and writing frames restricted the flow of the arguments restricting candidate's progression to the higher levels. In many cases the writing frames used encouraged appraisal, but the candidates did not understand the demands of the skill. Some candidates wrote 'This is a strong argument because ...' and repeating the previous point or giving another point.

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings.

Bullet point 1.4 The last days of Jesus' life: the Last Supper, betrayal, arrest, trial, crucifixion, **resurrection** and ascension of Jesus; the accounts of these within the Bible, including Luke 22–24 and the significance of these events to understanding the person of Jesus Christ. (*bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.*)

The question asked was

"The resurrection of Jesus is the most important event in his life."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Christian teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

Candidates are required to consider the arguments they give. 'This is a strong argument because...' in many cases did not add anything to the answer. In many answers it was clearly part of a writing frame and candidates used it without understanding what they were trying to achieve.

3RA0_02_Q02a

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Practices.

Bullet point 2.4 Pilgrimage: the nature, history and purpose of pilgrimage, including interpretations of Luke 2:41–43; the significance of the places people go on pilgrimage; divergent Christian teachings about whether pilgrimage is important for Christians today, with specific reference to Catholic and Protestant understandings; the activities associated with, and significance of, Jerusalem, Iona, Taize and Walsingham.

The question asked was:

'Outline three places of Christian pilgrimage.'

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

3RA0_02_Q02b

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Practices.

Bullet point 2.3 'The nature and **purpose of** prayer: the nature of and examples of the different types of prayer; set prayers; **informal prayer** and the Lord's Prayer including Matthew 6:5–14; when each type might be used and why; divergent Christian attitudes

towards the importance of each type of prayer for Christians today.'. (*bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.*)

The question asked was

'Explain two reasons why some Christians use informal prayers'.

This question was answered successfully by the majority of candidates.

In an example of a 4 mark response the candidate gives two developed reasons. For example:

- Reason one 'it is more heart felt' (1) developed by 'make a Christian feel closer to God.' (1)
- Reason two 'they feel their previous prayers have not been answered' (1) developed by 'and they want to help someone' (1)

Some candidates did not have reasons for informal prayer except that they liked formal ones which was not credited as a reason. Candidates should be prepared for all parts of each bullet point.

3RA0_02_Q02c

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Beliefs and Teachings.

Bullet point 2.8: 'The role and importance of the Church in the worldwide community: **how** and why **it works for reconciliation** and the problems faced by the persecuted Church; divergent Christian responses to teachings about charity, including 1 Corinthians 13 and Matthew 25:31–46; the work of Christian Aid, what it does and why.'*(bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.)*

The question asked was:

'Explain two ways the Church works for reconciliation in the worldwide community.'

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, a quote 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.

Many candidates were unable to answer this question because they were not prepared for the word 'reconciliation' in the context of this bullet point. A few candidates were awarded marks for demonstrating knowledge of the work of the Church in reconciling people to God. Many candidates rewrote the question to be about Christian Aid.

Candidates must be fully prepared for terminology used on the specification because it will be used in the questions to assess candidate knowledge.

3RA0_02_Q02d

Candidates were assessed on Section Two.

Bullet point 2.5 Christian religious celebrations: the nature and history of Christian festivals in the church year, including Christmas and Easter; the significance of celebrating Advent and Christmas; the significance of celebrating Holy Week and Easter, with reference to interpretations of 1 Corinthians 15:12–34. (*bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.*)

The question asked was

“Easter has lost its original meaning.”

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Christian teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

This question engaged candidates of all abilities and produced a wide range of marks. All candidates should be encouraged to answer every question because every mark is important. Many candidates did not gain more than level two because they did not consider the evidence. Those candidates who did not reach level two mostly discussed the way Easter is celebrated rather than considering the meaning of Easter.

Summary

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

- Answer (a) items in outlines ie full sentences
- Incorrect words or sentences should be crossed out with one neat line through
- Provide three sentences for (a) items, each on a separate line
- (b) items should have only two developed reasons
- (c) items are like (b) items but should also use a source of wisdom and authority as a fifth mark
- (d) items should appraise the reasons given, for and against the statement