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Examiners' Report  
Principal Examiner Feedback

November 2020

Pearson Edexcel GCSE  
In Religious Studies A (1RA0)  
Paper 2: Area of Study 2 – Study of Second  
Religion  
Option 2F - Judaism

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## **Introduction**

Religious Studies Specification A - Judaism

This paper was generally answered well. Some candidates have a secure knowledge of Judaism and used many specialist terms accurately. They had difficulty with the (d) questions, where many candidates gave a basic for and against with a conclusion rather than evaluating and appraising. This led to marks at the lower end on these questions. This will improve as the specification moves through its life.

### **1RA0\_2F\_Q1a**

The question asked was:

'Outline three beliefs about the Messiah in Judaism.'

The majority of the candidates used the specialist terms and spoke of the messianic age, resurrecting the dead and rebuilding the Temple. Some candidates gave an answer which was confused with Christianity and these were not given marks. Other students gave negatives, such as 'Jews do not believe Jesus is the Messiah.'

Examiner tip:

- Write in separate sentences.

### **1RA0\_2F\_Q1b**

The question asked was:

'Explain two ways the Covenant with Moses is important for Jews.'

This question asked about the Covenant at Sinai. Most answers given were about the Decalogue. A number of candidates wrote about the Almighty helping the Jews escape from Egypt and this was not credited as part of the Covenant which happened after.

Examiner tip:

- Separate the two points into paragraphs. This makes it easier for the examiner.
- Exam technique is important - candidates must understand development.

### **1RA0\_2F\_Q1c**

The question asked was:

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

This question was not answered particularly well. Many students did not seem to understand what the word meant, although they recognised it as a characteristic of the Almighty. Some left this blank.

Examiner tip:

- Candidates do not have to write quotes word for word. If a quote or a reference to scripture can be recognised then it will be credited.

### **1RA0\_2F\_Q1d**

The question asked was:

“The Almighty should be the only judge needed in life.”

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- reach a justified conclusion

Most candidates gave a for and against response, but few actually understood what the question was implying, and some used the other characteristics as the against arguments which did not really work. A few candidates gave very good arguments based on human law versus the justice from the Almighty.

Examiner tip:

- The best (d) questions are not pages long. Candidates should answer the question and use their knowledge to back it up, rather than giving their knowledge but not really answering the question
- Evaluation and appraisal

### **1RA0\_2F\_Q2a**

The question asked was:

‘Outline three features of the Tenakh.’

Most candidates answered this successfully. Where candidates did not perform as well was where they wrote a sentence with more than one feature in it. Candidates need to write three separate sentences to get the marks available.

Examiner tip:

- If candidates write a list with three purposes, where one of them is incorrect, they will get 0 marks. It is important to write them in separate sentences.

### **1RA0\_2F\_Q2b**

The question asked was:

'Explain two features of public acts of worship in Judaism.'

Most candidates performed well on this question and understood that public means in the synagogue and communal. Where candidates lost marks, it was in describing Shabbat worship in the home rather than in the synagogue.

Examiner tip:

- Encourage candidates to write succinctly on (b) and (c) questions. However, if they do need more space, tell them it is ok to write on the blank space underneath. It will be marked accordingly.

### **1RA0\_2F\_Q2c**

The question asked was:

'Explain two reasons why Rosh Hashanah is important for some Jews.'

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

A few candidates wrote about New Year, new starts, forgiveness, tradition and carrying on the faith. Too many candidates, however, gave vague answers which could have been for any festival and marks were not awarded where it was not identifiable as Rosh Hashanah.

Examiner tip:

- Candidates need to link their source of wisdom to what they are writing. A quote on its own will not get a mark, it has to support the point being made.

### **1RA0\_2F\_Q2d**

The question asked was:

"Jewish mourning rituals are still important today."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- refer to different Jewish points of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

The best answers included teachings on mourning, using specialist vocabulary, with an understanding that the Almighty's teachings remain important for the future of the faith, alongside the beliefs of some that the community must adapt to the modern day. Similarly to Q1(d), there were only few candidates, who evaluated or appraised. Some candidates did not include any Jewish teachings.

Examiner tip:

- Evaluation questions need more than a for and against response.
- A good conclusion can take an answer up a mark. Candidates need to show evaluation.

## **Summary**

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

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

