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# Examiner's Report Principal Examiner Feedback

## Summer 2018

Pearson Edexcel GCSE  
In Religious Studies A (3RB0)  
Paper 1B Christianity

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## Introduction

GCSE (9-1) Religious Studies  
Religious Studies B - Beliefs in Action  
Paper 1: Area of Study 1 – Religion and Ethics

This paper contributes to 50% of the overall qualification. The paper includes two questions, each covers a section of the specification, Candidates are expected to answer both questions; there is no element of choice on the paper. The details of the assessment content is provided in the specification. Centres are expected to use the Edexcel specification rather than other published resources when planning and teaching the course content. The examination is set from the specification. This paper allows an in depth study of Christianity as a lived religion within the United Kingdom, and its beliefs and teachings on life specifically within families and with regard to matters of life and death. This unit has the largest entry on the specification and engages the interest of young people, as it addresses many Christian beliefs and teachings in addition to some issues affecting young people today.

### 3RB0\_1B\_Q1a

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Christian Beliefs  
Bullet point 1.7 - The problem of evil/suffering

The question asked was:

'Outline **three** ways natural suffering causes problems for Christians.'

The Candidates needed to provide ways not reasons or beliefs.  
Three ways natural suffering causes problems for Christians may have included practical problems or theological ones.

Answers which referred to the characteristics of God and the inconsistent triad were those expected and gained marks easily.

Some Candidates wrote in lists and gained one mark for a list rather than an outline.

Examiner Tip:

- Lists gain a maximum of 1 mark. Candidates need to provide an outline therefore should write in full sentences.
- Candidates should make sure they provide answers in three distinct sentences.
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### 3RB0\_1B\_Q1b

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Christian Beliefs  
Bullet point 1.6 – Christian Eschatology.

The question asked was:

'Explain **two** Christian beliefs about atonement.'

Candidates are asked to 'Explain **two**' on (b) items. Therefore, two reasons are required, and both need to be developed to be awarded 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.

This question proved difficult for candidates who had been taught the general understanding that atonement means being at one with God and was less difficult for those who had been taught the theological concept of the pardoning of all sin through the sacrificial death of Jesus.

Examiner Tip:

- Candidates should ensure they do not use the same information twice, they will only be rewarded once for a specific piece of information.
- Candidates must ensure they follow the requirements of the question which asks for 2 beliefs, some candidates gave lots of information which could not be credited.

### **3RBO\_1B\_Q1c**

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Christian Beliefs  
Bullet point 1.6 – Christian Eschatology

The question asked was:

'Explain **two** Christian teachings about the nature of heaven and hell.'

Candidates are asked to 'Explain **two**' on (c) items. Therefore, two reasons were required, and both needed 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 relate to 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 candidate do not have to reference a quote or quote it word for word.
- If examiners are unsure they will use a search engine.
- If the candidate states that it is in John 1:18 and then states another verse from John – then this can be awarded. Candidates are not expected to know '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.

Examiner Tip:

- Candidates must learn sources of wisdom and be able to use them accurately and in context.
- Candidates should not attempt to use random quotes as sources of wisdom, they must use them appropriately.

### **3RBO\_1B\_Q1d**

The focus of the marking changes from AO1 to AO2 on the d items. The candidates are being assessed on AO2 : Analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief, including their significance and influence. AO2 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 some consideration of the validity of the arguments used / appraisal to gain the higher grades. Many candidates produced excellent answers giving reasons for and against but did not evaluate the credibility of the argument. Formulas and writing frames restricted the flow of the arguments restricting candidate's progression to the higher levels.

d) items are marked using levels and awarding is carried out using 'best fit' according to the level descriptors.

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Christian Beliefs  
Bullet point 1.2 – The creation of the universe

The question asked was:

"The biblical account of creation is a metaphor'

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Christian teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.'

Please note that, neither in the bullet point, nor on the question are candidates required to give a non-religious response.

The statement was about the understanding of the creation accounts as metaphorical or literal, it was not about whether God created the universe. It is important that candidates respond to the question as asked.

Examiner Tip:

- Candidates must ensure they address all the bullet points in the question.
- Candidates should not refer to material that is not asked for - if a question does not ask for a non-religious response and the student provides it, this part of the answer will not gain any credit.

### **3RBO\_1B\_Q2a**

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Christian Beliefs Bullet point 2.8 – Christian teachings about gender prejudice and discrimination.

The question asked was:

‘Outline **three** Christian teachings about gender discrimination.’

The candidates needed to provide any Christian teaching not specifically Bible teachings or any other form of source of wisdom.

This question was very broad, any possible Christian teachings about gender discrimination, including teachings about what each gender is allowed / not allowed to do were accepted.

An outline must be more than one word.

### **3RBO\_1B\_Q2b**

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Marriage and the Family Bullet point 2.5 – Christian teaching about family planning

The question asked was:

‘Explain **two** reasons family planning may be important for Christians.’

Candidates are asked to ‘Explain **two**’ on (b) items. Therefore, two reasons are required, and both need to be developed to be awarded 4 marks.

Development consists of a piece of extra information, a reference to a source of wisdom, a quote or examples. The development must add to the reason given and to the question asked.

In this question we are assessing the student’s knowledge from bullet 2.5 in the specification about contraception. Teachers should use the wording and specialist terminology in the specification to assist candidates understanding of questions.

Examiner Tip:

- Candidates may use a source as the reason – in many other places a source can be accepted as a development of a reason.

### **3RBO\_1B\_Q2c**

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Marriage and the Family  
Bullet point 2.4 – Support for the family in the local parish.

The question asked was:

‘Explain **two** ways the local parish tries to support families.’

Candidates needed to answer giving ways they are helped not reasons why they are helped.

Candidates are asked to ‘Explain **two**’ on (c) items. Therefore, two reasons are required, and both need to be developed to be awarded 4 marks. They must also correctly use a source of wisdom in their answer which must be identifiable, relevant and linked to the way given in the answer.

Examiner Tip:

- 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.
- The source must be relevant and used as part of the candidates reasoning.

### **3RBO\_1B\_Q02d**

The focus of the marking is AO2 on the d items. As explained in the specification this means:

Analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief, including their significance and influence.

AO2 constitutes 50% of the overall mark.

The question asks candidates to ‘**Evaluate**’ this statement **considering the arguments for and against** and reach a **justified conclusion** – there must some consideration of the validity of the arguments used / appraisal to gain the higher grades. Many candidates produced excellent answers giving reasons for and against but did not evaluate the credibility of the argument. Formulas and writing frames restricted the flow of the arguments restricting student’s progression to the higher levels.

d) items are marked using levels and awarding is carried out using ‘best fit’ according to the level descriptors.

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Christian Beliefs  
Bullet point 2.2 – Christian teachings about the nature and importance of sexual relationships.

The question asked was:

“Sexual relationships are only for married couples.”

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.’

Please note that candidates were required to give a non-religious response, this does not have to be specifically Humanist or atheist.

This question does not have SPaG marks.

Candidates who do not consider different viewpoints within the religious tradition or non-religious viewpoints (as instructed in the question) cannot achieve marks beyond Level 2. So if they failed to mention either a Christian view or a non-religious view they cannot be awarded levels 3 or 4.

Examiner Tip:

- There are many different ways to answer d) items and gain marks, a template will not assure good marks.
- Teachers should not try to point mark d answers. They should be read completely and then assessed against the level descriptors to find a best fit.
- Appraisal shows: The value of the evidence provided / the strength of the answer / the validity of the chains in the answer/ a consideration of what is written in order to answer the questions (rather than which side they agree with) / a measurement of which side is more logical / an assessment of which is the more compelling argument / an understanding of which argument is more convincing or rational or cogent.



## Summary

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

- answer a) items in outlines i.e. full sentences
- provide three sentences for a) items , each of a separate line
- b) items should have two developed reasons not more than two
- development may be 1) examples 2) quotes 3) extra relevant material
- development must link to the reason given and still answer the question set
- c) items are similar to b) items but should also use a source as a fifth element
- the source of wisdom may be a paraphrase but should be identifiable
- the source of wisdom must be linked to the reason given
- d) item responses must show AO2 skills to get high marks
- d) items must show an appraisal of the argument not simply rely on a set format
- level descriptors should be used to mark d items not point marking.