



Examiner's Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2018

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Religious Studies B (3RB0)
Paper 1C Islam

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Publications Code 3RBO_1C_1806_ER

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Introduction

GCSE (9-1) Religious Studies

Paper 1: Area of Study 1 – Religion and Ethics, Islam

This paper contributes 50% of the overall short course award. The paper includes two questions, each question covers a section of the specification, and all candidates are expected to answer all four sub-questions from each section. Details of the assessment content are 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 written based on the specification content.

This paper, like its associated full course paper, encourage an in-depth study of Islam today. 3RBO 1C focuses on Islamic Beliefs and Marriage and the Family.

3RBO_1C_Q1a

The question asked was:

“Outline **three** Muslim beliefs about paradise.”

The question is from Specification Point 1:8.

Outline is a new command word for candidates this year and requires them to give three brief sentences in response to the question. This was a gentle introduction to the paper and many candidates achieved full marks. The most common answers referred to aspects of paradise such as: it is a reward for following Allah’s will during a person’s life, Allah decides who goes to paradise, or used quotes from the Qur’an or Hadith to make their point.

Some candidates were unable to avoid the allure of lists and therefore could only achieve 1 mark if they gave three correct beliefs, as it is difficult to outline a belief in this form, few were successful.

For example a candidate who stated:

Paradise is beautiful (1)

Paradise is a garden (1)

Paradise is eternal (1), scored three marks.

However, if the candidate suggested:

Beautiful

Garden

Eternal, only one mark was awarded.

If the candidate failed to list three correct responses no marks were awarded for an incorrect list.

Examiner Tip:

Outline, don't list.

3RBO_1C_Q1b

The question asked was:

“Explain **two** reasons why all Islamic holy books are important for Muslims.”

This is a familiar command word for candidates and the mark scheme follows a familiar marking pattern. In order to achieve full marks in this question candidates are required to give two developed reasons. Only two reasons can be credited and the development must relate both to the reason already provided and the question stem.

Many candidates gave two developed reasons in response to this question. The most frequent responses included ideas such as that they were sent by Allah and that they offer guidance on how to live a good Muslim life.

A number of candidates restricted their response to the Qur'an as though it were the only holy book acknowledged by Muslims or indeed to the Hadith which does not represent one of the holy books required. As these candidates were not addressing the question no marks could be awarded.

Examiner Tip:

Read the question carefully to the end.

3RBO_1C_Q1c

The question asked was:

“Explain **two** ways the characteristics of Allah are shown in the Qur'an.”

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

This is a new question structure for the new specification and many candidates found this difficult to apply in their responses. In order for a candidate to achieve the additional mark for a source of wisdom and authority the source must be linked to a developed way. The source must be correctly attributed such that if a candidate quotes the Hadith, but claims it is from the Qur'an, the mark cannot be awarded since the source is incorrect. As a result many attempted uses of a source of wisdom and authority were credited as a development of a

simple way, rather than an additional point used to further justify a developed way.

Many candidates found this a straightforward and approachable question. Using their knowledge of the Qur'an they gave a characteristic of Allah, developed it with an example from the Qur'an and some supported their assertion with a relevant quotation. The most commonly considered attributes of Allah were his Oneness, his power and his omniscience though other characteristics, such as Allah as the creator, were also considered.

Examiner Tip:

Link your source of wisdom and authority to a developed reason.

3RBO_1C_Q1d

The question asked was:

"Angels are at work in the world today."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Muslim teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

This was also a new question structure for the new examination series. The new style (d) questions are the area of the paper where Assessment Objective 2 is assessed. Candidates are expected to interpret the stimulus to consider different viewpoints and perspectives on the topic by deconstructing the issue and constructing logical chains of reasoning. The definition of the command word also makes it clear that arguments must be justified by the appraisal of evidence leading to a justified conclusion.

Many candidates struggled to achieve more than level 2 in (d) responses due to the absence of the required evaluation of the relative merits of the two sides of the question and little justification for a conclusion, where one was provided it was often in the form of 'I think...'. Some candidates demonstrated detailed knowledge and understanding of relevant information from the Qur'an (for example) but were still limited by the lack of appraisal and evaluation.

Many candidates were able to demonstrate detailed knowledge and understanding of Muslim beliefs about angels. The most commonly used examples to justify the importance of angels today were the Noble Recorders and angel Mika'il and his role in charge of plants and rain, often interpreted to suggest that he is responsible for providing food for the body and nourishment for the soul.

A number of candidates failed to appreciate that it was the role of angels in the world today that was of significance in the question rather than an account of Islamic beliefs about angels. Those who did grasp the significance of the question often suggested the idea that if angels are messengers for Allah and

the Qur'an is the final revelation then there was no further requirement for angels to work in the world today. As in all the (d) questions, the paucity of evaluation or a justified conclusion tended to limit the ability of the candidates to achieve the higher levels.

A maximum of three marks was also awarded in this question for quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar. In general the quality of English used was very good and most candidates achieved three marks.

Examiner tip:

Focus on appraisal and evaluation to reach the higher levels.

3RBO_1C_Q2a

The question asked was:

"Outline **three** Muslim beliefs about the equality of men and women in the family."

This question is based on Specification Point 2: 7.

Many candidates provided examples of beliefs which promoted inequality rather than equality of men and women in the family without suggesting that the belief in question was more likely to promote inequality than equality. As a result many candidates struggled to achieve three marks. The most common example provided and credited was that 'women and men have different roles but they are of equal value'. If the candidate stopped writing after 'women and men have different roles' it became an example of difference rather than equality and was therefore not credited.

Examiner Tip:

Answer the question as it is asked.

3RBO_1C_Q2b

The question asked was:

"Explain **two** reasons Muslims believe the family is important."

This is based on Specification Point 2: 3.

Most candidates had clear ideas about the importance of the family in Islam. Many considered the value of the family as the place where Islam is taught to the next generation and the importance of the family as the foundation of society and the basis of the ummah. Less able candidates tended to use secular

arguments such as 'Your family are always there for you' making little effort to place these ideas in an Islamic context.

Examiners Tip:

Focus on your understanding of Islam.

3RBO_1C_Q2c

The question asked was:

"Explain **two** reasons why some Muslims allow divorce."

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

This is based on Specification Point 2:6.

Candidates had a good grasp of the factors that may contribute to a divorce in Islam. The biggest issue arising from this question was the source of wisdom and authority since the phrase 'of all things permitted divorce is the most hated' was frequently attributed to the Qur'an, rather than the Hadith, and, as a consequence could not be awarded the additional mark for a relevant source of authority since the source was incorrect. The most commonly cited examples were those of spousal abuse, marital infidelity and damage to the children.

Examiner Tip:

Know your sources of authority.

3RBO_1C_Q2d

The question asked was:

"People should only have sex with the person they are married to."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Muslim teachings
- refer to non-religious points of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

This question elicited some very strong opinions on both sides. More comprehensive responses compared the Muslim views with the non-religious views often drawing attention to the common ground between the disparate groups. More able candidates also considered the relevance of this issue to both pre-marital sex and adultery to good effect. As ever the conclusion was almost

always based on personal opinion rather than on the relative merits of the arguments so even candidates with a sound understanding of Islamic belief and how this has an impact modern life failed to achieve the higher levels.

Some candidate failed to give a non-religious point of view and so could not reach level 3, whilst others failed to include Muslim views and gave an entirely secular answer which could not be credited.

Summary

It was very encouraging to see the quality of knowledge and understanding of Islam displayed by many candidates and this bodes well for the future. Centres would be well advised to ensure that candidates understand the demands of the variety of command words used in a question, and to focus on the critique of the arguments in (d) questions (especially encouraging a more considered approach than the 'this is a strong argument').

