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Examiner's Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2018

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Religious Studies B (3RB0)
Paper 2BX Christianity

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Introduction

GCSE (9-1) Religious Studies
Religious Studies B - Beliefs in Action
Paper 2X: Area of Study 2 – Religion, Peace and Conflict
Option 2BX – Christianity

The paper was run as a hybrid paper this year. All the references about items Q2(a), Q2(b), Q2(c) and Q2(d) refer to the full course section four rather than to the short course specification.

This paper contributes 50% of the overall qualification. The short course paper includes two questions, each covering 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 are provided in the short courses specification. Centres are expected to use the short course Edexcel specification rather than the full course specification or other published resources when planning and teaching the course content. The examination is set from the short course 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 about the issues of peace and conflict and crime and punishment. This unit engages the interest of young people, as it addresses many Christian beliefs and teachings in addition to some issues affecting young people today.

3RBO_2BX_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 suffering causes problems for Christians.'

The candidates needed to provide 'ways', not 'reasons', and the 'ways' could be practical or theoretical.

Examiners awarded one mark for each point identified and written in a sentence.

Examiner Tip:

- Lists gain a maximum of 1 mark. Candidates need to provide an outline and therefore should write in full sentences.
- Teachers should refer to the specification for likely questions.
- Candidates should make sure they have three distinct sentences.

3RB0_2BX_Q1b

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Christian Beliefs.
Bullet point 1.1 – The Trinity.

The question asked was:

‘Explain **two** ways belief in the Trinity is shown in Christian worship.’

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, quotes or examples. The development must be of the reason given and to the question asked.

Candidates who did not read the question carefully did not address the ways the Trinity is shown in Christian worship, and instead described the Trinity itself.

Examiner Tip:

Generic information about crossing out:

- When candidates have given two answers and crossed out the first, examiners mark the replacement answer.
- If the crossed-out answer was correct and the replacement is incorrect, marks are not awarded. The candidate has chosen to give the wrong answer.
- If the candidate crosses out a correct answer, does not offer a replacement, and we can read through the crossing out, it is possible to award marks.

3RB0_2BX_Q1c

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

The question asked was:

‘Explain **two** ways the Bible describes the creation of the universe.’

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.

Information about the creation of Adam and Eve cannot be credited as this is about creation of humanity, not creation of the universe.

Examiner Tip:

Candidates must learn sources of wisdom and be able to use them accurately and in context.

Generic information - Sources of wisdom and authority

- The source must support the reason/teaching/belief/way given.
- Sources are checked using a search engine - type it in, followed by the word Bible or Jesus (according to who the answer attributes it to).
- If the source is attributed to the wrong person/source/numerical reference it cannot be credited, e.g., a Pauline quote attributed to Jesus it cannot be credited.
- Numerical references on their own are not credited the candidate must use it correctly, e.g. not just write John 10: 10.
- The source of wisdom can be given as a recognisable paraphrase.

3RBO_2BX_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 failed to 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 1.5 – The nature and significance of salvation and the role of Christ within salvation.

The question asked:

"Atonement is all that is needed for people to be saved."

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 different understandings about salvation and whether atonement is needed or not. Candidates who performed better referred to the sacrificial death of Jesus and faith shown by action. However, some candidates misunderstood the concept of atonement.

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 candidate provides it, this part of the answer will not gain any credit.
- Candidates should ensure they take opportunities to assess and analyse the validity of the evidence supporting the statement.

3RB0_2BX_Q2a

This is section four of the full course; it is not part of the Edexcel Short Course specification. The paper was run as a hybrid paper this year.

The references to the bullet points are references to the full course, as this option is not present in the short course.

Candidates were assessed on Section Four: Peace and Conflict.

Bullet point 4.1 – Christian attitudes towards peace.

The question asked was:

‘Outline **three** Christian teachings about peace.’

The candidates needed to provide teachings about the peace, which is bullet 4.1. This elicited a wide range of correct responses, as it did not need teachings quoting a source of wisdom.

Examiner Tip:

- Some candidates answered using a list, which is not an outline, and thus could only receive 1 mark according to the mark scheme.
- Candidates should provide three full sentences to answer an item.

3RB0_2BX_Q2b

Candidates were assessed on Section Four: Peace and Conflict.

Bullet point 4.5 – Christian attitudes to the Just War theory.

The question asked was:

‘Explain **two** reasons why a conflict might be described as a Just War.’

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, quotes or examples. The development must be of the reason given and to the question asked.

Candidates who knew the conditions of a Just War were able to give reasons but often were unable to develop this reason.

Examiner Tip:

- Candidates should ensure they read the secondary command word in each question. In this case it is 'reasons'.
- Candidates should try to vary their answers as much as possible to avoid overlapping material.

3RBO_2BX_Q2c

Candidates were assessed on Section Four: Peace and Conflict.

Bullet point 4.6 – Christian responses to non-religious arguments against life after death.

The question asked was:

'Explain **two** Christian responses to the problems caused by conflict.'

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, 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.

This item was straight off the specification, almost using the exact wording, and yet some candidates assumed it was looking for Christian teachings about conflict and so received no marks. The specification identified three problems; violence, war and terrorism. Candidates who were taught to the specification did very well in this question.

Examiner Tip

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 examiners are unsure of the validity of a reference they will use a search engine to check.
- 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 is awarded a 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 a mark.

3RB0_2BX_Q2d

Candidates are assessed on AO2: Analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief, including their significance and influence.

AO2 constitutes 50% of the overall marks on this paper.

The question asks candidates to '**evaluate**' this statement **considering the arguments for and against** and reach a **justified conclusion**. There must be 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 failed to evaluate the credibility of the argument. Formulas and writing frames restricted the flow of the arguments, restricting candidates' 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 Four: Matters of Life and Death.

Bullet point 4.4 – Implications of the value and sanctity of life for the issue of abortion.

The question asked was:

'Abortions should never be allowed.'

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Christian teachings
- refer to relevant ethical arguments
- reach a justified conclusion.'

Please note that as required in the bullet point in the question, candidates were required to give an ethical argument.

Candidates were able to give knowledge and understanding of this issue, sometimes at length, but very few were analytical in their approach and limited themselves to level 2 as a best fit.

Examiner Tip:

Candidates should be familiar with the requirements in the levels for (d) item mark schemes.

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: examples, quotes and 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.