



Pearson

Examiner's Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2018

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Religious Studies B (3RB0)
Paper 2C Religion, Peace and Conflict

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Introduction

GCSE (9-1) Religious Studies

Paper 1: Area of Study 2 – Religion, Peace and Conflict, Islam

This paper contributes to 50% of the overall short course award. The paper includes two questions, each 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. 3RB0 2C focuses on Islamic beliefs and Crime and Punishment.

3RB0_2C_Q01a

The question asked was:

'Outline **three** characteristics of Allah.' (3)

This question was based on Specification Point 1.3.

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 straightforward introduction to the examination and many candidates were able to suggest three characteristics of Allah with many using omnipotence, omniscience and omnibenevolence.

As it was a straightforward question, some candidates were unable to resist the temptation to simply provide a list. In this case candidates were only able to achieve one mark if all three characteristics were correctly identified.

For example, a candidate who stated:

Allah is just (1)

Allah is omnipotent (1)

Allah is omniscient (1), scored three marks.

However, if the candidate suggested:

Just

Omnipotent

Omniscient, only one mark was awarded.

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

Examiner Tip:

Make sure an outline is not simply a list.

3RB0_2C_Q01b

The question asked was:

'Explain **two** ways that belief in predestination affects the life of a Muslim.'

This question was based on Specification Point 1:7.

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 ways. Only two ways can be credited and the development must relate both to the way already provided and the question stem.

Some candidates struggled to respond to this question, with a number choosing to leave it out completely. Others directly equated pre-destination with Judgement Day and suggested that a belief in pre-destination would make Muslims do good in order to influence impending judgement or improve one's standing before Allah. However the nature of al-qadr suggests that this responsibility has largely been removed from Muslims since the result is already known. More able candidates considered the concept of good behaviour in response to divine predestination as a means of fulfilling Allah's judgement and often linked this to attitudes towards the impact of pre-destination on the issue of freewill.

Other candidates confined their responses to a factual account of Muslim beliefs with respect to pre-destination whilst failing to consider how these beliefs would potentially influence behaviour.

Examiner tip:

Do not equate predestination with Judgement Day or the test of life.

3RB0_2C_Q01c

The question asked was:

'Explain **two** reasons why angels are important in Islam. In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.'

This question was based on Specification Point 1:6.

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

A number of candidates also 'invented' quotations, in some cases rewriting what they considered to be their best argument with the addition of speech marks. Some also quoted a single word as their source of authority, in this question it was often 'Read' which did not justify the award of the additional mark. However many candidates had clear views on the importance of angels in Islam with many citing the delivery of the Qur'an to Muhammad, the role of the angel of death or the noble recorders. A number of candidates also considered the importance with respect to the Articles of Belief. As a result many candidates were awarded four marks, though five marks remained a rarity.

Examiner Tip:

Always use your source of authority reference linked to a developed reason.

3RBO_2C_Q01d

The question asked was:

"Prophet Muhammad is the only role model a Muslim needs."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

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

This question was based on Specification Point 1:4.

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, and 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.

In this particular example there were simple arguments for and against, some proposed other prophetic role models and then gave a conclusion in favour of Muhammad with no more justification than his importance in Islam. Some cited modern living role models, most frequently parents or imams, but few used it as an opportunity to highlight the value of this line of reasoning given that such examples are both relevant to modern life and immediate.

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.

3RB0_2C_Q02a

The question asked was:

'Outline **three** Muslim beliefs about the importance of justice for the victims of crime.'

This question was based on Specification Point 2:1.

A number of candidates did not read the question in its entirety and, as a result, there were many responses that suggested Muslim beliefs about the importance of justice, which were often more relevant to treating the offender with justice, rather than focussed on the victims of crime, as the question required.

Examiner tip:

Read the question carefully and in its entirety.

3RB0_2C_Q02b

The question asked was:

'Explain **two** Muslim attitudes towards the treatment of criminals.'

This question was based on Specification Point 2:7.

Many candidates did not discriminate between the treatment of criminals and Muslim attitudes to punishment. However, since it could be said the punishment is one way to treat criminals such approaches were credited where they answered the question. As a result some candidates focussed on hudud punishments whilst others focussed on the compassion that should be shown to criminals using the example of Muhammad and his treatment of prisoners.

Examiner tip:

Stick to the question, don't include irrelevant information.

3RB0_2C_Q02c

The question asked was:

'Explain **two** teachings from the Qur'an about punishment.

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

Many candidates, having focussed on punishment as an aspect of the treatment of criminals, were able to reuse information to answer this question. Some focussed on Shari'ah law as a source of information, which, though based on the Qur'an, is an application of Qur'anic teaching rather than 'from the Qur'an' as the question required. There was significantly more appropriate use of a relevant source of wisdom and authority, with many candidates using the idea of 'An eye for an eye' (Surah 5:45).

3RB0_2C_Q02d

The question asked was:

"Capital punishment is good for society.'

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.'

Many responses followed a standard 'For, against, my opinion' model that was more suited to 'old style' (d) questions. Many candidates were well versed in the arguments concerning the use of capital punishment and most included a valid non-religious perspective as instructed. There was some very good use of Humanist perspectives coupled with some rather stereotypical views of atheists. However there was little attempt to consider the relative value of the arguments and reach a justified conclusion so, again, many candidates were limited to level 2 marks.

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 revisit pre-destination as more than an adjunct to Judgement, and to focus on the critique of candidate arguments in (d) questions (especially encouraging a more considered approach the 'this is a strong argument').