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Examiner's Report Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2018

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Religious Studies B (3RB0)
Paper 2F Judaism

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Introduction

GCSE (9-1) Religious Studies

Religious Studies B Religion Peace and Conflict: Judaism

The paper is 50% of the short course award. The assessment consists of two questions, candidates must answer both questions. The details of the assessment content is provided in the specification. Centres should use this rather than other published resources when planning the course content.

Most candidates wrote knowledgeably about Judaism and used specialist terms accurately. When answering the evaluation questions, some of them relied on their knowledge rather than addressing the question.

3RBO_2F_Q1a

The question asked was:

'Outline **three** features of the Covenant with Abraham.'

Most candidates knew about circumcision and the Promised Land. Some candidates wrote about God asking Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. This is not part of the Covenant so the marks couldn't be awarded. Some candidates in their answers wrote about Abraham being circumcised, Isaac being circumcised, the followers being circumcised and so on. For such an answer only 1 mark was awarded as those are examples of one feature, which is circumcision.

Examiner tip:

Write in sentences. For a list 1 mark can be awarded if all three elements are correct.

3RBO_2F_Q1b

The question asked was:

'Explain **two** reasons why the Decalogue is important for Jewish people.'

Only few candidates were confused by the term; the majority understood and answered accordingly. Some candidates wrote a very developed paragraph instead of writing two separate reasons, restricting their marks to 2. The easiest way to answer this question was to address two commandments e.g. It tells them to only worship one God, so this means that Jews are monotheistic. It also tells them to keep the sabbath day holy. This means that every Friday night Jewish people say a blessing over the candles to welcome Shabbat.

3RBO_2F_Q1c

The question asked was:

'Explain **two** different Jewish beliefs about life after death.

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

Most candidates wrote about Gan Eden, Gehenna and Sheol, using specific language accurately. Those who wrote about heaven and hell also got the marks although no marks were given for eternal damnation, which is not a Jewish belief. A number of candidates wrote about purgatory and this answer was accepted if they said: 'a concept like purgatory' or 'like purgatory'. The answer wasn't credited when they wrote that Jewish people believe in purgatory. Candidates do not get marks for including in their responses what Jews do not believe.

Examiner tip:

Candidates must split their answers into two clearly separate beliefs.

3RBO_2F_Q1d

The question asked was:

"The sanctity of life is the most important Jewish belief."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

Candidates need to write and appraise the arguments, evaluate the statement. Most candidates wrote a for and against answer. Only 3 marks are available for AO1, so this restricted the marks they could get. This question showed that many candidates believe the sanctity of life is Pikuach Nefesh and therefore lost marks in the first paragraph. Pikuach Nefesh is the belief which can prove the statement or disprove it depending on how the candidate argues and this was included in the best answers.

Examiner tip:

Evaluate and appraise

3RBO_2F_Q2a

The question asked was:

'Outline **three** Jewish beliefs about suffering.'

Most candidates wrote good answers, some about charity and prayer, others about the messianic age. A few candidates wrote about the inconsistent triad, which although clever, is not a Jewish belief about suffering, rather an example of how suffering can lead to not believing in God.

3RBO_2F_Q2b

The question asked was:

'Explain **two** Jewish teachings about forgiveness.'

The best answers focused on the fact that humans do not have to forgive and indeed cannot forgive crimes such as murder, only God can. Candidates also wrote about Yom Kippur.

This was a question where some candidates got confused and wrote references to the teachings of Jesus.

3RBO_2F_Q2c

The question asked was:

'Explain **two** Jewish attitudes to capital punishment.

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

This was one of the best answered questions, partly because most candidates know 'do not kill' and 'an eye for an eye' and those were included in their answers.

Some candidates did not perform well, either because they did not know what capital punishment was, or they misunderstood attitudes with reasons, and gave two reasons for one attitude.

When referring to the source of wisdom, it is not enough to say 'in the Tenakh' or 'in the Talmud'. Candidates need to be able to say what it says, or reference it e.g. candidates got marks for saying it went against the 10 Commandments, but not for saying it goes against the Torah.

Examiner tip:

Make sure that candidates understand words such as attitudes.

3RBO_2F_Q2d

The question asked was:

"All criminals should go to prison."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

Lot of candidates did not perform well on this question. It must be remembered that this is a religious studies paper, and that they were asked to refer to Jewish teachings. The best candidates wrote about justice and punishments given in the Tenakh to justify their answers. The weaker candidates said 'Jews believe...' and then wrote non-religious answers. Some candidates got 0 marks on this question if they did not refer to Jews at all, as there was no requirement for a non-religious point of view.

Examiner tip:

Structures given to help candidates may hinder those who are capable of level 3 and 4

Summary:

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

- Do not attach extra sheets to your examination paper, write within the scannable pages using the blank spaces.
- 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.