



Pearson  
Edexcel

Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2019

Pearson Edexcel GCSE

In Religious Studies Short Course (3RB0)

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

Option 2E - Hinduism

## **Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications**

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications are awarded by Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at [www.edexcel.com](http://www.edexcel.com) or [www.btec.co.uk](http://www.btec.co.uk). Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at [www.edexcel.com/contactus](http://www.edexcel.com/contactus).

## **Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere**

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: [www.pearson.com/uk](http://www.pearson.com/uk)

## **Grade Boundaries**

Grade boundaries for all papers can be found on the website at: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html>

Summer 2019

Publications Code 3RB0\_2E\_1906\_ER

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2019

## Introduction

This was the second examination series for the revised GCSE 9 - 1 Level 1 and 2 qualification in Religious Studies. It is clear that many centres have learned considerably from the preceding series and have begun to school their candidates in the technique required for success in this examination. The Principal Examiner's report for the 1RB0\_1E contains information and examples that may be of use to candidates preparing for 3RB0\_2E.

**a** type questions require that the candidate give three pieces of information in response to the question. It is important that the candidate not simply give a list of items, but that each piece of information conveyed is presented either in its own sentence, or at least in its own clause within a sentence.

**b** type questions require that the candidate should be able to present two pieces of information; typically two reasons for something, two attitudes to something, two ways for something. To gain full marks on this question, the candidate should aim to develop each of those reasons, attitudes or ways. This can be done by adding additional relevant information, by giving an example or by citing a religious source. The number of reasons/ways etc. is limited to 2 and so candidates are not able to access a third mark by giving a third reason/way.

**c** type questions are answered similarly to **b** questions, except that here the candidate has the potential to gain an additional development mark from the use of a source of wisdom and authority that is relevant both to the question asked and to the point that they are making. The use of a source of wisdom and authority on its own does not automatically gain the additional mark but is a means for the candidate to gain a further mark where they have already given a developed response. On the basis (outlined above for **b** questions) that a source of wisdom and authority can be used as a means of developing a response, candidates can use two, relevant, sources of wisdom and authority in a **c** question to access the third mark for that particular explanation or reason.

**d** type questions allow candidates to give reasons for and against a particular proposition, whilst coming to a justified conclusion. The response needs to show evidence of appraisal if it is to access the higher levels available, and this appraisal should not be superficial. Importantly, appraisal is not the only factor in accessing Levels 3 and 4, but one of several. An answer may show good appraisal, but be full of disparate, undeveloped, ideas that fail to make connections and so be a better fit for the lower levels of the mark scheme.

Overall, the most successful candidates tended to understand key terminology - and whilst 'keywords' are not assessed on this paper, it became apparent that some candidates had benefited from being taught them. Successful candidates were able to develop their responses, however simply, and were able successfully to deploy a range of sources of wisdom and authority to support and develop their responses.

In **d** answers, the most successful candidates considered the various merits of the arguments they were presenting by, for example, appraising the **relative** authority of different sacred texts or the **comparative** validity of secular or scientific arguments in an integrated manner which showed the capacity to link connected ideas. In future examination series, this latter capacity would seem likely to be key to accessing the highest grades.

### **3RB0\_2E\_Q01a**

The single biggest obstacle, for those candidates who did not gain full marks, was that some did not understand what was required in response to the keyword 'nature'.

### **3RB0\_2E\_Q01b**

Nirguna and saguna are both key concepts and securely knowing the difference between the two is a solid foundation for all candidates, often proving useful in a number of questions.

### **3RB0\_2E\_Q01c**

Where this question proved challenging, it tended to be because candidates drifted away from the core idea of 'the importance' of Vishnu. Many candidates were however able to access most of the marks on this question, even if providing an appropriate source of wisdom and authority proved more of a challenge for some.

### **3RB0\_2E\_Q01d**

This question presented the opportunity for candidates to show their knowledge and understanding of karma. Because it is such a widely known concept, some candidates found it hard to move beyond a fairly superficial understanding.

### **3RB0\_2E\_Q02a**

This question tended to be well answered by all candidates, except those who focused their answers on punishment over crime.

### **3RB0\_2E\_Q02b**

B questions *can* be developed by the use of sources of wisdom and authority and, whilst this is not often the case, this particular question presented many examples. The importance of candidates having a secure 'bank' of sources of wisdom and authority to draw on cannot be overstated.

### 3RB0\_2E\_Q02c

This question also lent itself to responses based on karma, with the majority of candidates able to access at least some of the available marks.

### 3RB0\_2E\_Q02d

Whilst this question was often well-answered, there were many instances of candidates offering more generic answers on the rights and wrongs of punishment. It bears saying that candidates are disadvantaged when they fail to read the question carefully, or fail to address the specifics of the question closely enough.

## Summary

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

- Any technical vocabulary used in the question paper will also be in the Specification. Check your understanding of this vocabulary, especially where there are similar looking words with different meanings (arti and artha, karma and kama). It would also seem to be a worthwhile exercise to make sure that you understand some of the technical terms in the Specification that are not subject specific for example, is the difference between 'three beliefs about the nature of Brahman' and 'three beliefs about Brahman'?
- Allow yourself enough time to both read *and* understand the questions. Make sure that you explain things that require explaining and that you are in fact answering the question that has been set. If you don't address the specific question asked, you will lose valuable time in the exam, writing an answer that can only access some of the marks.
- The Specification gives some key texts for each section of the exam. Take time to learn some of these. When you use the quote in your exam, make sure that it is 'doing something' in your answer and not just dropped in as an afterthought. The quote will gain marks only if it is developing one of the points you've made.
- Read the bullet points in part **d** questions carefully and make sure that you cover them - if you are asked to provide non-religious reasons, make sure you do. If non-religious reasons are not asked for, you can save yourself time in the exam by not giving them. Remember that reasons from another religion are not *non-religious* and will not be considered as such.
- **d** questions require you to say how effective or 'strong' the elements of the argument you are giving are - but do not limit yourself to saying that x is a strong argument; tell the examiner why x is stronger than y. Is it supported by a more authoritative text for example? The mark scheme talks about 'superficial appraisal' so try to go beyond the superficial. Answers where every paragraph ends either 'This is a strong argument because it is supported by scripture' or 'This is a weak argument because it is just an opinion' are always going to seem a little superficial.

