



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 2F - Judaism

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Introduction

This paper consists of two questions: candidates must answer all questions on the paper. The detail of the assessment content is provided in the specification. Centres are to use this, rather than other published resources when planning the course content.

This paper was the second paper sat in this specification. The standard of answers was better than last year and candidates used knowledge from all areas of the specification to get marks; Pikuach Nefesh was referenced in questions about the mitzvot, Shekhinah and Maimonides were frequently written about. In general, the standard of Jewish knowledge on this paper is good.

However, where questions were about crime and punishment, candidates struggled more and often answers were vague. Candidates must link their knowledge of Judaism with the theme of the paper. Where this was done, the candidates scored highly.

3RB0_2F_Q1a

1a) asked candidates to write three things which Abraham did as part of the covenant. There were a variety of answers, mostly correct, where candidates wrote about circumcision, being given land, Sarah becoming pregnant, the introduction of monotheism and more. There are a number of candidates who wrote about the sacrifice of Isaac as part of the covenant and this was not accepted. Some candidates are also confused by the Promised Land and Gan Eden.

Examiner tip:

- Write in separate sentences.

3RB0_2F_Q1b

1b) asked to explain two ways the characteristics of the Almighty are shown in the Torah. The majority of candidates understood the demands of the question and most responses included the Almighty as Creator as seen in the Genesis account, and the Almighty as Law-Giver as seen on Mount Sinai. A few candidates wrote answers which were too vague, either not saying what the characteristic was, or not being specific about where in the Torah it is shown. These attracted fewer marks.

Examiner tip:

- Separate the two points into paragraphs. This makes it easier for the examiner.
- Exam technique is important - candidates must understand development.

3RB0_2F_Q1c

1c) This question asked candidates to explain two reasons why the Covenant at Sinai is important for Jews today. Most candidates were aware that the Covenant at Sinai is the Covenant with Moses, there were only a few who confused this with the Abrahamic Covenant. However, many candidates have not separated the actual Covenant from the escape from Egypt and therefore there were a number of candidates who did not get all the marks for this reason. The best answers used two different commandments - the commandment to believe in one God, and the commandment to not commit adultery, and explained why each of these is important for Jews today.

Examiner tip:

- Candidates do not have to write quotes word for word. If a quote or a reference to scripture can be recognised then it will be credited.

3RB0_2F_Q1d

1d) asked candidates to evaluate whether all Jews should obey the mitzvot. There were a large variety of responses to this, where candidates wrote about the difference in belief over the authority of the Torah, Orthodox and Reform Jews, the sanctity of life and Pikuach Nefesh and the food laws. Many candidates were awarded top level 2 marks for giving good arguments on both sides and writing a conclusion, but getting into level 3 and appraising the arguments was less evident.

Examiner tip:

- The best (d) questions are not pages long. Candidates should answer the question and use their knowledge to back it up, rather than giving their knowledge but not really answering the question.
- Evaluation and appraisal

3RB0_2F_Q2a

2a) asks candidates to outline three Jewish teachings about punishments. Most candidates wrote about retribution, reformation, protection and so on. A number wrote teachings, such as an eye for an eye. A small number of candidates wrote about sinning against the Almighty, and punishments that the Almighty would take against humans.

Examiner tip:

- If candidates write a list with three teachings or beliefs, where one of them is incorrect, they will get 0 marks. It is important to write them in separate sentences.

3RB0_2F_Q2b

2b) asks candidates for two Jewish attitudes to the death penalty. There are only really two attitudes - that it is ok to sentence people to death, and that it is not ok to sentence people to death. In order to get the 4 marks available, candidates needed to give a Jewish reason for supporting the death penalty and a Jewish reason for not supporting the death penalty. The most common answers given were the teaching of an eye for an eye compared to the belief in the sanctity of life.

Examiner tip:

- Encourage candidates to write succinctly on (b) and (c) questions. However, if they do need more space, tell them it is ok to write on the blank space underneath. It will be marked accordingly.

3RB0_2F_Q2c

2c) asked candidates about Jewish teachings about suffering. Many candidates used the account of Job and wrote full answers. Some candidates misunderstood this and wrote about making criminals suffer, many of which could not get marks as they did not answer the question.

Examiner tip:

- Candidates need to link their source of wisdom to what they are writing. A quote on its own will not get a mark, it has to support the point being made.

3RB0_2F_Q2d

2d) asked candidates to evaluate whether forgiveness should always be given. This was a wide question which elicited many different responses, some of which were really well argued. However, a number of candidates misunderstood forgiveness to mean that no punishment would be given and therefore their answers were weaker, as they were not evaluating. The best answers brought in Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and compared it with the teaching that only the victim can forgive, and therefore some crimes are unforgiveable.

Examiner tip:

- Evaluation questions need more than a for and against response.
- A good conclusion can take an answer up a mark. Candidates need to show evaluation.

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.