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Examiners' Report
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2022

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Religious Studies A (1RB0)
Paper 2: Area of Study 2 – Religion, Peace and
Conflict
Option 2G: Sikhism

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Introduction

This area of study comprises a study in depth of Sikhism, its beliefs and teachings on life, specifically within families and with regard to creation.

This approach encourages candidates to reflect upon the links between beliefs and teachings of Sikhism and the topics of families and creation which are an important part of life today.

There are four sections: Sikh Beliefs, Crime and Punishment, Living the Sikh life, Peace and Conflict. The details of the assessment content are provided in the specification. Centres are to use this rather than other published resources when planning the course content.

Section 1, Sikh beliefs were well answered, with sound knowledge and key Sikh terms used throughout, especially AO1 questions. The AO2 questions were not answered so much in depth (but it is improving through the guidance on the website), although the knowledge was there. The candidates are beginning to start to critically analyse the statement using various techniques, although there needs to be more chains of reasoning and a justified conclusion for candidates to gain the higher levels. Candidates should compare and contrast the areas of ethics within Sikhism and non-religious views when asked. Candidates should also look at divergent views within Sikhism in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed.

Section 2, Crime and Punishment were answered well with sound knowledge especially on punishment. Candidates needed to use more Sikh appropriate knowledge to gain the higher marks, although there was some improvement in Sikh information. Sources of wisdom must be used that are appropriate to the question and not just 'random quotes' that the candidate has learnt.

Section 3, Living the Sikh Life. Candidates were well prepared for this section due to the advanced notice however 3c was poorly answered due to lack of knowledge on the history of langar.

Section 4, Peace and Conflict. Some questions were difficult for the candidates to decipher especially 4b; therefore, they did not gain full marks. The question used language specifically from the specification. Candidates need to practice these types of questions for them to achieve higher marks.

Question 1 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Sikh beliefs.

Bullet point 1.8 . 'Sangat: the nature and history of the sangat.'

The question asked was:

'Outline three features of the sangat.'

Candidates are asked to 'outline' on (a) items. Therefore, lists can reach a maximum of one mark.

If candidates specifically mentioned the features of the sangat and not just say what it is they gained full marks. The most popular answers were 'it provides opportunities to perform sewa ' and unites Sikhs in worship.'

GENERIC advice for centres to what constitutes a list.

An example:

Outline 3 characteristics of God:

- **God is creator** (1 mark)
- **God is creator**, judge, and lawgiver (1 mark for list or sentence)
- **God is creator**, busy and distant. (1 mark for the sentence identifying one correct piece of information)
- Busy, distant and **God is creator**, (1 mark for the sentence identifying one correct piece of information)
- Creator, judge, lawgiver (1 mark for list)
- Creator, busy, distant (0 Marks) (all three elements need to be correct for 1 mark)
- Creator, judge, distant (0 marks)

Question 1 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Sikh Beliefs.

Bullet point 1.5. '...what actions make a gurmukh Sikh'.

The question asked was:

'Explain two actions that make a Sikh gurmukh.'

This question was well answered, and candidates had sound knowledge of the actions that a Sikh must do to become gurmukh for example, performing selfless service, developed by, an example of serving in the langar.

Candidates are asked to 'Explain two' on (b) 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 as quotes or examples.

Question 1 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Sikh Beliefs.

Bullet point 1.1 '...The nature of God: how the characteristics of God are shown in the Mool Mantar.

The question asked was:

'Explain two teachings in the Mool Mantar about the nature of God'.

Candidates had sound knowledge of the Mool Mantar. A lot of candidates achieved full marks on this question with excellent sources of wisdom used. This question was very accessible.

Candidates are asked to 'Explain two' of (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 as 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.

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 the candidate gives the paraphrase and then puts (Guru Granth Sahib 15) in brackets the paraphrase can have the mark and the bracketed reference is ignored.
- If a candidate quotes Guru Nanak and it was Guru Gobind Singh or vice versa; and the quote is not accredited to them, it is not awarded.

Question 1 (d)

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. This 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 be some consideration of the arguments, that is appraising the arguments which will help to gain the higher grades. Many candidates gave excellent answers giving reasons for and against but not analysing or evaluating them. Still some candidates used formulas and writing frames which restricted the flow of the arguments restricting the candidates' progression to the higher levels.

We are now marking using levels and award a best fit according to the level descriptors

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Sikh Beliefs.

Bullet point 1.6. 'how and why complete equality of men and women is important for Sikhs today.'

Please note that, neither in the bullet point, nor on the question, are candidates required to give a non-religious response. Candidates must respond to the question asked.

The question asked was

"Men and women are treated equally in Sikhism"

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Sikh teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

Candidates overall achieved level 2 and some candidates achieved level 3, they failed to deconstruct religious information and critically analyse the statement throughout. Generic answers were given, and Sikh key words were limited. Those who achieved the higher level 2 or at times level 3 analysed the treatment of men and women in Sikhism, using good sources of wisdom to 'back up' their statements. This however was quite limited and logical chains of reasoning throughout would benefit the candidates to achieve higher levels. Overall, the candidates are beginning to use phrases such as 'this is a strong argument' or 'this is a weak argument'. If they then explain why it is a strong argument evaluating the statement, they can achieve higher levels.

Question 2 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Crime and Punishment.

Bullet point 2.7 'Sikh teachings about the treatment of criminals'

The question asked to

'Outline three Sikh teachings about the treatment of criminals.'

There were some good answers with candidates identifying three Sikh teachings about the treatment of criminals. Some candidates did not gain the full three marks as they wrote about the Sikh belief of 'retribution' which is incorrect, so they did not gain full marks. Reformation and treating the criminal fairly were two of the main responses given.

Question 2 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Crime and Punishment.

Bullet point 2.2 'what action is taken by Sikh individuals and Sikh groups to end crime,'

The question asked was:

'Explain two actions taken by Sikhs to end crime.'

The candidates that wrote about positive actions to end crime achieved good marks, for example, Sikhs act to end crime by educating criminals developed by giving the criminals time to reflect and not to reoffend or mentioning Sikh groups that help (e.g., SWAT). Some candidates mentioned negative responses which was not in accordance with Sikh belief, so did not gain marks.

Candidates are asked to 'Explain two' on (b) 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, and quotes or examples. The development must be of the reason given and to the question asked.

Question 2 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Crime and Punishment.
Bullet point 2.5 'Sikh attitudes towards the aims of punishment'

The question asked was:

'Explain two Sikh beliefs about the aim of punishment.'

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

Candidates had sound knowledge of the aims of punishment but very few gave a correct source of wisdom. The specification gives a guide of where the sources can be found so teachers should try to use these to help them in their answers. For example, 'By the pre-ordained order of the Lord and Master, they are beaten badly, and struck down.' (Guru Granth Sahib 148) – this quote is in relation to justice. Or even use the teachings given in the Rahit Maryada 'If you commit transgression of the Khalsa discipline, you must present yourself before the congregation and beg pardon, accepting whatever punishment is awarded. You must also resolve to remain watchful against defaults in the future.' (Rahit Maryada XXIV) – in relation to reformation.

Question 2 (d)

The question is '**Evaluate**' this statement **considering the arguments for and against** and reach a **justified conclusion** – there must be some consideration of the arguments (appraise the arguments to gain the higher grades). Many candidates gave excellent answers giving reasons for and against but not analysing or evaluating them. Formulas and writing frames restricted the flow of the arguments restricting candidates' progression to the higher levels.

We are now marking using levels and award a best fit according to the level descriptors.

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Crime and Punishment.
Bullet point 2.3: Sikh teachings about good, evil and suffering.'

The question asked was:

"Suffering cannot be avoided".

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Sikh teachings
- refer to a non-religious point of view.
- reach a justified conclusion

Overall, most candidates gave a two-sided answer with some good links to Sikh teachings especially on the other view, for example, karmic beliefs. These candidates who used their knowledge to evaluate the statement achieved higher levels. There is still room for improvement for candidates to show logical chains of reasoning for and against the statement and to reach a justified conclusion. Candidates need to link their answer to the statement given and, in this case, give a non-religious point of view.

Question 3 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section Three: Living the Sikh Life.

Bullet point 3.8 '...the significance of the names Singh and Kaur in the naming and Amrit ceremonies, and for Sikh identity today).'

The question asked was:

'Outline three reasons why the names Singh and Kaur are important for Sikh identity today.'

This question was answered well with sound knowledge of the using the names Singh and Kaur for Sikh identity.

Question 3 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section Three: Living the Sikh Life.

Bullet point 3.7 '...purpose of gurpurbs and commemorations; why they are important for Sikhs today.'

The question asked was:

'Explain two reasons why gurpurbs may be important for Sikhs.'

Well answered with sound knowledge on how gurpurbs are celebrated and why they are important.

Question 3 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section Three: Living the Sikh Life.

Bullet point 3.3 : the history of langar '

The question asked was:

'Explain two events in the history of the langar.'

This question was poorly answered with most of the candidates writing about the purpose or the nature of the langar. There was very little reference to the langar's history. Candidates failed to write any source of authority to this question. The whole

specification must be taught so that candidates can access these types of questions. One of the prime examples of the history of the langar- The langar was established by Guru Nanak, developed by, to eradicate the caste system, sourced by, 'The Langar- the Kitchen of the Guru's Shabad has been opened...' (Guru Granth Sahib 967)

Question 3 (d)

The question is '**Evaluate**' this statement **considering the arguments for and against** and reach a **justified conclusion** – there must be some consideration of the arguments (appraise the arguments to gain the higher grades). Many candidates gave excellent answers giving reasons for and against but not analysing or evaluating them. Formulas and writing frames restricted the flow of the arguments restricting candidates' progression to the higher levels.

We are now marking using levels and award a best fit according to the level descriptors.

Candidates were assessed on Section Three: Living a Sikh Life:
Bullet point 3.4: – Meditating on the name of God'

The question asked was:

'Meditating on the name of God is the most important form of worship.'

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In response you should:

- refer to Sikh teachings.
- reach a justified conclusion

Some candidates gave a general explanation why it is important to meditate on the name of God but did not link it to the statement to evaluate why it is the most important form of worship. Those that did discuss this gained higher levels showing they had evaluative knowledge of the importance of Nam japna as a form of worship but also discussed other forms of worship and analysed why they are just as important, such as sewa and celebrating gurburbs. The main conclusion was that meditating on Gods name is an excellent form of worship as it can keep a Sikh focused on God and it helps the Sikh become gurmukh (God-centred).

Question 4 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section Four: Peace and Conflict.

Bullet point 4.6 'Sikh attitudes to Holy War: Sikh teachings about war '

The question asked was:

'Outline three Sikh teachings about Holy War.'

Candidates gave good responses to Sikh teachings on Holy War that were appropriate and correct, for example, Holy War is necessary to protect human rights and to defend the faith.

Question 4 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section Four: Peace and Conflict.

Bullet point 4.8 '.....responses to the nature of problems involved in conflict - '

The question asked was:

Explain two responses to problems involved in conflict.'

Candidates need to be clear on what the question is asking. Some candidates did not write about a response to problems involved in conflict, they just wrote about what conflict leads to. Therefore, they failed to achieve good marks. The question is looking for answers such as, Sikhs will try to help those who are affected by conflict, by working with refugees.

Question 4 (c)

Candidates were assessed on Section Four: Peace and Conflict.

Bullet point 4.5 '.... the conditions of a just war within Sikhism, with specific reference to Dharam Yudh '

The question asked was:

'Explain two conditions of a Just War.'

Those that answered the question achieved mainly the 4/5 marks. A lot of candidates failed to give a source of wisdom. They must use the specification to guide them on the appropriate source of wisdom for each section. 'No one should remain hungry or naked....' (Dasam Granth 1133)

Question 4 (d)

The question is 'Evaluate' this statement considering the arguments for and against and reach a justified conclusion - there must be some consideration of the arguments (appraise the arguments to gain the higher grades). Many candidates gave excellent answers giving reasons for and against but not analysing or evaluating them. Formulas and writing frames restricted the flow of the arguments restricting candidates' progression to the higher levels. If the candidate wrote 'this is a strong argument' but did not back it up with evidence, then it was a weaker answer. The quality of the d question answers is improving with most candidates are relating their answer to the statement given.

Candidates were assessed on Section Four: Peace and Conflict.

Bullet point 4.1 ' Sikh attitudes towards peace: Sikh teachings about the nature and importance of peace '

The question asked was:

'All Sikhs should work for peace today.'

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In response you should:

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

Some good Sikh knowledge of the importance of peace in Sikhism, reference by some good teachings. There is still a need to continue to write logical chains of reasoning for and against the statement for example, it is up to all people to work for peace or situation ethics teaches the most loving thing to do, then relating it to the statement showing evidence of appraisal. In this question a relevant ethical argument should have been used to get higher than a level 2.

Summary

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

- When answering the (a) questions use three full sentences.
- The source of wisdom offered to support answers in question (c) must be relevant to the question and support the reason given.
- The (d) questions ask 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) questions, the bullet points indicate the viewpoints that can be awarded in the answer.
- Understand all key words on specification.