

Religious Studies B

General Certificate of Secondary Education **GCSE 1931**

General Certificate of Secondary Education (Short Course) **GCSE 1031**

Report on the Components

June 2006

1931/1031/MS/R/06

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All Examiners are instructed that alternative correct answers and unexpected approaches in candidates' scripts must be given marks that fairly reflect the relevant knowledge and skills demonstrated.

The reports on the Examinations provide information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the syllabus content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Mark schemes and Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers.

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this mark scheme or report.

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1031 – SHORT COURSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES B

GENERAL COMMENTS

These comments apply to both papers in this specification and should be read in conjunction with the reports on the individual papers.

There was, once more, a significant increase in candidature for these papers. This produced a very full spread of ability in the papers received with, again, a general increase in standard with many responses being of excellent quality. There were very few low level scripts. Most candidates were thoroughly prepared for the examination and all sections of the questions were well-addressed. As in previous years, the vast majority of responses were on Christianity. However there was again an increased number answering from Hinduism, Islam and Judaism. There were also some excellent papers from candidates doing exclusively Hinduism, Islam or Judaism.

Mostly scripts were of a high standard – with high scores and good use of terminology. Even when whole cohorts appear to have been entered the standard was usually high.

The new rubric avoided a lot of errors in candidates attempting all the questions or even just the wrong ones.

Comments are on the Christianity questions, the most popular choice, noting others as appropriate.

COMMENTS ON INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS

These comments apply equally to the papers for Option A and Option B.

TOPIC 1 – THE NATURE OF GOD

- 1 (a) Describe what Christians believe about miracles. [8]

Most were able to state what a miracle was and usually gave a working example. Some better answers referred to the breaking of the laws of nature; whilst some argued that Christians do not believe in miracles because God is omnipotent and therefore it was not a miracle.

- (b) Explain how believing in miracles might help a Christian. [7]

Many candidates found this a difficult question. There was mention of the idea that miracles only happen to good people but very few stressed the idea that faith comes before a miracle. There was repetition of part (a) because some did not understand the focus of the question.

- (c) 'If miracles were true, they would happen all the time.'
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your opinion and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

Again some candidates found this difficult and usually tried to answer it from the viewpoint of whether miracles happen at all. The better answers stressed that it would not be a miracle if they happened all the time.

TOPIC 2 – THE NATURE OF BELIEF

- 5 (a) Describe a Christian place of public worship. [8]

Many candidates struggled with this question and answered it from the worship point of view: in other words what sort of services happened in a church. It was surprising how few altars, pulpits and lecterns were mentioned – candidates seemed unaware of their correct terminology. However there were some very good answers.

- (b) Explain how the features of this building reflect Christian beliefs. [7]

Most candidates were able to attempt some form of answer relating to symbols but many were unable to explain the symbolism behind the features.

- (c) 'People do not need symbols to worship God.'

Do you agree? Give reasons to support your opinion and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer.

[5]

This was usually attempted reasonably well. There were some references to the Holy Grail which seemed to owe more to the *Da Vinci Code* than to lessons.

TOPIC 3 – RELIGION AND SCIENCE

- 9 (a) Describe Christian teachings about the origins of humanity. [8]

Some candidates were not able to address this part of the question because they did not understand the terminology even though it is directly quoted from the specification. Some discussed organ transplants. Some were able to show the distinction between the two accounts in Genesis – although most jumbled the two accounts together or concentrated on Genesis 2. Some answers concentrated on the account of the Fall thus straying from the point of the question. A few candidates brought in Paley and Aquinas' First Cause to support a fundamentalist point of view.

- (b) Explain why Christians might believe that they should care for animals. [7]

Most candidates were able to access this with some reference to biblical teachings such as 'Adam named the animals' and stewardship. Noah's Ark was mentioned and some referred to the Noachide laws. Some answers strayed on to how Christians should look after the animals and whether or not animal testing was appropriate. Some felt that as people were re-incarnated as animals, they should be looked after. There were also some mentions of sacrifices of animals in the Bible.

- (c) 'Human beings are not capable of caring for the environment.'

Do you agree? Give reasons to support your opinion and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer.

[5]

Many answers failed to demonstrate reference to biblical/Christian views and usually just concentrated on how the world is being destroyed. Better answers referred to the fact that God would not have made humans stewards if they were not capable of looking after it. A few talked about care for the poor as well as pollution issues.

TOPIC 4 – DEATH AND THE AFTERLIFE

- 13 (a) Describe Christian beliefs about heaven and hell. [8]

As usual reincarnation ideas were mentioned. However, most candidates were able to access this question even if it was just to say if you are good you go to heaven etc. There were either descriptions of what heaven and hell are like; descriptions of how hell was made or accounts of what you have to do to get to heaven including the fact that God forgives. Some candidates mentioned Purgatory.

- (b) Explain how these beliefs might affect the way a person lives. [7]

There was some repetition of part (a); some focussed on what jobs a Christian would do whilst others talked about helping the poor, going to church, confessing sins etc. Because the question asked about a 'person' some mentioned non-believers and said what they would do to get to hell and a few discussed Satanism. Some candidates stated that committing suicide was not a way to heaven whilst others believed it was.

- (c) 'It cannot be true that there is life after death, because there is no evidence for it.'
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your opinion and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

Answers were usually reasonable; some referring to biblical evidence and others to faith. Ghosts etc. were mentioned as evidence.

TOPIC 5 – GOOD AND EVIL

- 17 (a) Describe Christian beliefs about God and the Devil. [8]

Some candidates focussed on heaven and hell but most answered this question well. For many it was the best answer they produced on the paper. All the attributes of God were mentioned: omniscient etc., along with the Trinity. Weaker answers talked of God being a nice kind man. Satan was described as a shape shifter.

- (b) Explain how these beliefs might help people who are suffering. [7]

Again this was usually answered well with the story of Job either being referred to or narrated in full detail. A test of faith, punishment and God's unknowable plan were mentioned. Exorcisms were discussed by a few.

- (c) 'If God was really good then people would not suffer.'
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your opinion and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

There were many candidates who referred back to part (b) but again this was usually attempted quite well. A few candidates demonstrated implicit ideas of freewill and determinism.

TOPIC 6 – RELIGION AND HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

- 21 (a) Describe the roles of men and women in a Christian family. [8]

Some candidates experienced difficulty with this and most were only able to discuss sociological issues. Very few were able to relate to biblical references although some mentioned Eve's punishment of suffering in childbirth and also Paul's views. The purposes of marriage were mentioned by some candidates and the vow to be faithful.

- (b) Explain Christian attitudes towards divorce. [7]

Most candidates were able to answer this either through the vows or biblical teachings. Some strayed further into the realms of re-marriage.

- (c) 'Every Christian should get married.'
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your opinion and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

Weaker answers discussed choices whilst better answers referred to Paul or God wanting people to be married and one or two referred to Jesus being celibate.

TOPIC 7 – RELIGION AND MEDICAL ETHICS

- 25 (a) Describe Christian attitudes towards abortion. [8]

Inevitably there were some simply social answers but most were able to support their statements with reference to Christian teachings.

- (b) Explain why some Christians might be against fertility treatment. [7]

Some candidates did not know what fertility treatment was and believed it could stop you having a baby. Better answers related the different attitudes including implicit adultery with some reference to part (c) and God.

- (c) 'It is up to God to decide if a woman is going to have a baby.'
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your opinion and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

There were different interpretations of this: fertility treatment, contraception, and abortion. Quite a few stressed that if it was up to God why there were so many underage pregnancies. One did talk about it being impossible for God to come down and make someone pregnant.

TOPIC 8 – RELIGION AND EQUALITY

- 29 (a) Describe Christian beliefs about equality. [8]

Many answers focussed on sexism rather than racism but valid interpretations of 'equality' were accepted. Answers tended to be weakened by lack of reference to biblical teachings.

- (b) Explain Christian teaching about the role of women in society. [7]

There were many weak responses with no reference to biblical or church teachings – usually a repetition of 21(a).

- (c) 'Men and woman are not equal.'
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your opinion and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

There was again a lack of Christian teaching and many answers were purely sociological. Many responses appeared to owe more to the sex of the candidate rather than any teachings.

TOPIC 9 – RELIGION, POVERTY AND WEALTH

- 33 (a) Describe Christian teachings about concern for the poor. [8]

Although this was a very straightforward question there were many weak answers with little reference to teachings other than some candidates who discussed the value of education.

- (b) Explain why Christians might give money to charity. [7]

Many repeated the material from part (a). There were some answers which had implicit reference to tithing.

- (c) 'People must look after their family before they worry about the poor.'
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your opinion and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

Many concentrated on teaching about the family rather than actually addressing the question as asked.

TOPIC 10 – RELIGION, PEACE AND JUSTICE

- 37 (a) Describe Christian teachings about war. [8]

There were many good answers. Some focussed on the Ten Commandments, some on Just War theory, others considered what Jesus taught or how his actions reflected his attitude towards war.

- (b) Explain why Christians might work for peace. [7]

There were some interesting discussions about pacifism, sometimes building on material from (a). Some displayed good understanding of the Quaker position.

- (c) 'Violence is sometimes necessary.'

Do you agree? Give reasons to support your opinion and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

Most candidates appeared to think that violence was almost always wrong but that, nevertheless, there would always be occasions when it was the only possible answer.

1031 – SHORT COURSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES B - COURSEWORK

GENERAL COMMENTS

Work for this component continues to be of a very high standard.

Also the standard of marking and administration by Centres was generally very good, however, some of the new procedures for this year i.e. the new system for the return of Centre marks and the introduction of the Centre Authentication statements clearly caused problems for some.

Almost all of the work submitted was on approved titles. Where this was not the case centres are urged to seek approval for titles used.

A small number of centres had their marking adjusted. Again, the main cause of correspondence with centres was missing Centre Authentication Statements.

Nevertheless, teachers who are inevitably under great pressure must be commended overall for their work and expertise. The use of the Internet as a source of information seems now almost universal as does the word-processing of coursework. Both of these are highly commendable though students may need to be reminded that books can also be used as reference material and that the use of a dozen different fonts with complex page layouts does not help improve poorly prepared work in any way. Candidates should be encouraged to acknowledge downloaded material so that there can be no suggestion of plagiarism.

Again, the increasing maturity of the candidates' responses should be noted as should the degree of humanity which so often appears in the work submitted.

1931 – RELIGIOUS STUDIES B

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Comments are on the Christianity questions, the most popular choice, noting others as appropriate.

COMMENTS ON INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONS

These comments apply equally to the papers for Option A and Option B.

PAPERS 1 AND 3

TOPIC 1 – THE NATURE OF GOD

- 1 (a) Describe what Christians believe about miracles. [8]

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- (c) 'If God was really good then people would not suffer.'
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your opinion and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

There were many candidates who referred back to part (b) but again this was usually attempted quite well. A few candidates demonstrated implicit ideas of freewill and determinism.

PAPERS 2 AND 4

TOPIC 6 – RELIGION AND HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS

- 1 (a) Describe Christian teachings found in the marriage ceremony. [8]

There were many good responses. Some candidates concentrated on the vows whilst others dealt more with the non-religious elements. However, the majority were able to describe some Christian teachings.

- (b) Explain why some Christians might think that contraception is wrong. [7]

This was generally well done although some did not know what contraception was and confused it with abortion.

- (c) 'Every Christian should get married.'
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your opinion and show that you have thought about different points of view. [5]

This produced some interesting responses though there appeared to be a lot of confusion as to 'why' they should get married.

TOPIC 7 – RELIGION AND MEDICAL ETHICS

- 5 (a) Describe Christian teachings about euthanasia. [8]

Some answers produced the now almost inevitable response about caring for youths-in-Asia however the better responses focussed on the idea that God created all life and that therefore only God has the right to end it.

- (b) Explain why Christians might have different views about euthanasia. [7]

There were some good responses here though many thought that euthanasia was legal in the UK.

- (c) 'People in great pain should be allowed to die if they want to.'
Do you agree? Give reasons to support your opinion and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer. [5]

This was generally well answered with good supported arguments from both Christian and humanist perspectives.

TOPIC 8 – RELIGION AND EQUALITY

- 9 (a) Describe Christian attitudes towards missionary work. [8]

Despite being clearly on the specification a very large number of candidates commented that they had not been taught about the topic. Some confused missionaries with mercenaries and could not gain any credit. However, some candidates had clearly studied the area and there were some very good responses.

Note: Q.10 worked well. Unfortunately Q.11(a) & 12(a) should have referred to proselytizing rather than missionary work. Allowance was made in the marking of these responses.

- (b) Explain Christian attitudes towards other religions. [7]

There were some very good answers but far too many wrote generally that Christians respect everyone, love everyone and think that all religions are equal.

- (c) 'People should not try to persuade others to join their religion.'

Do you agree? Give reasons to support your opinion and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer.

[5]

This produced a very wide range of responses from the excellent to the very weak. A number considered the intrusive nature of proselytizing and some thought that it was an infringement of Human Rights.

TOPIC 9 – RELIGION, POVERTY AND WEALTH

- 13 (a) Describe Christian teachings about moral and immoral occupations. [8]

Candidates had very wide ranging views about what constituted moral and immoral occupations: teaching is certainly moral; medicine is both – saving life and carrying out abortions; prostitution is immoral but fun. Iraq was allowed as an immoral occupation.

- (b) Explain Christian attitudes towards the use of money. [7]

Many answers were very general. There was far more description of what people might do rather than explaining attitudes. Better responses dealt with tithing, caring for the family, contributing to church funds and giving money to charity and the poor.

- (c) 'It is better to be poor than to ignore religious teachings.'

Do you agree? Give reasons to support your opinion and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer.

[5]

This showed a rather mercenary streak on the part of some but there was a good deal of argument and consideration of the merits of poverty plus faith or creature comforts and possible damnation.

TOPIC 10 – RELIGION, PEACE AND JUSTICE

- 17 (a) Describe Christian teachings about the use of violence. [8]

There were some very good responses which dealt with the Ten Commandments and the teachings of Jesus as well as Just War theory and general views about pacifism.

- (b) Explain how Christians might act during a war. [7]

A number of candidates produced very thoughtful responses to this question. There was discussion of the need to fight to protect a country or religion versus a generally pacifist view.

- (c) 'Violence is always wrong.'

Do you agree? Give reasons to support your opinion and show that you have thought about different points of view. You must refer to Christianity in your answer.

[5]

Candidates were able to access this although there were some who made no reference to the teaching of Jesus or other Christian teachings.

1931 – Religious Studies B - Coursework

General Comments

Work for this component continues to be of a very high standard.

Also the standard of marking and administration by Centres was generally very good, however, some of the new procedures for this year i.e. the new system for the return of Centre marks and the introduction of the Centre Authentication statements clearly caused problems for some.

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Again, the increasing maturity of the candidates' responses should be noted as should the degree of humanity which so often appears in the work submitted.

**General Certificate of Secondary Education Religious Studies (Philosophy and Ethics)
(1031)
June 2006 Assessment Series**

Component Threshold Marks

Component	Max Mark	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Paper 1	84	72	63	55	44	33	23	13
Paper 2	63	55	49	43	34	26	18	10
Paper 3	63	51	45	39	31	23	16	9

Syllabus Options

Paper 1

	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Overall Threshold Marks	84	82	72	63	55	44	33	23	13
Percentage in Grade		5.2	15.5	16.6	16.0	20.1	14.5	7.0	3.1
Cumulative Percentage in Grade		5.2	20.7	37.3	53.2	73.3	87.8	94.8	98.5

The total entry for the examination was 50,568.

Paper 2, 3

	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Overall Threshold Marks	80	77	68	61	54	44	34	25	16
Percentage in Grade		4.6	17.5	15.6	15.3	20.1	14.6	6.7	3.3
Cumulative Percentage in Grade		4.6	22.1	37.7	53.0	73.1	87.7	94.4	97.7

The total entry for the examination was 4,699.

Overall

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Percentage in Grade	5.2	15.6	16.5	15.9	20.1	14.5	6.9	3.7
Cumulative Percentage in Grade	5.2	20.8	37.3	53.2	73.3	87.8	94.7	98.4

The total entry for the examination was 55,267.

**General Certificate of Secondary Education Religious Studies (Philosophy and Ethics)
(1931)
June 2006 Assessment Series**

Component Threshold Marks

Component	Max Mark	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Paper 1	84	72	63	55	44	33	23	13
Paper 2	84	69	61	53	41	29	17	5
Paper 3	63	57	52	47	37	28	19	10
Paper 4	63	56	51	47	36	25	15	5
Paper 5	126	102	90	78	62	47	32	17

Syllabus Options

Paper 1, 2

	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Overall Threshold Marks	168	160	140	124	108	87	66	46	26
Percentage in Grade		20.3	30.1	17.5	12.1	9.6	5.6	2.8	1.3
Cumulative Percentage in Grade		20.3	50.3	67.8	79.9	89.5	95.2	97.9	99.3

The total entry for the examination was 15,258.

Paper 3, 4, 5

	Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Overall Threshold Marks	315	300	277	254	232	189	146	104	62
Percentage in Grade		18.4	25.8	19.6	13.2	12.3	6.2	2.8	1.4
Cumulative Percentage in Grade		18.4	44.2	63.7	76.9	89.2	95.3	98.1	99.5

The total entry for the examination was 4,473.

Overall

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Percentage in Grade	19.9	29.1	18.0	12.4	10.2	5.7	2.8	1.4
Cumulative Percentage in Grade	19.9	48.9	66.9	79.3	89.5	95.2	98.0	99.3

The total entry for the examination was 19,731.

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