

Religious Studies C

General Certificate of Secondary Education **GCSE 1932**

Report on the Components

June 2007

1932/MS/R/07

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Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the Examination.

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GCSE Religious Studies C (1932)

REPORT ON THE COMPONENTS

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1932/01 Jewish Studies

General Comments:

The candidature for this specification increased again this year and the overall standard was once more very high. Written Communication was generally good and there were very few rubric errors. However, a number of candidates still disadvantaged themselves by running out of time and failing to complete a third question – this has become a persistent problem.

The many centres and teachers involved in the preparation of candidates for this examination are to be commended on the very high standard of most of the scripts submitted.

Comments on Individual Questions:

- 1 (a) Describe what happens at a Brit Milah. [8]

This question only caused problems for the few who managed to confuse Brit Milah with Bar Mitzvah or those who had somewhat outlandish ideas about what actually happens at the ceremony.

- (b) Explain the importance of the family in Judaism. [7]

This elicited far too many rather vague answers which were not clearly focussed on the family but rather were about Judaism in general.

- (c) 'Children should follow their parents' 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 Judaism in your answer. [5]

Some candidates were clearly shocked that this might not be the case. Others mused as to why parents might bring their children up in a different religion. On the whole, however, there were many very good answers which clearly looked at both sides of the argument.

- 2 (a) Describe how Jews celebrate Sukkot. [8]

There was some unfortunate but perhaps inevitable confusion between Sukkot and Shavuot. Whilst many students were able to write in detail about the various aspects of the celebration some simply knew so much that they were unable to organise their answers.

- (b) Explain how celebrating Sukkot might affect the lives of Jews today. [7]

Apart from those who confused the festival, answers to this section were generally good and offered several ways in which lives might be influenced.

- (c) 'Without the Temple, celebrating the Pilgrim Festivals is pointless.'

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

Many were able to argue in support of the statement and broadened their responses beyond Sukkot to cover all the Pilgrim Festivals. In opposing the statement most were able to suggest that although the physical observation of the festival in Jerusalem had inevitably changed, nevertheless its importance remained in the present day method of observation.

- 3 (a) Describe the main items of religious dress which a Jew might wear. [8]

There were some general issues in relation to this question as to what exactly constituted religious dress. Answers varied from specific aspects of men's dress such as yarmulkah, tzitzit and tallit to shaatnez and the rules of modesty. Generally, there were very good answers to this question.

- (b) Explain how wearing items of religious dress might affect the life and beliefs of a Jew. [7]

Responses to this part depended to a considerable extent on the approach taken in (a) but there were many good responses.

- (c) 'People should wear what they like, there is no need for special religious dress.'

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

Responses here were varied. Many candidates agreed with the statement in principle but argued that whilst this was fine *in extremis*, nevertheless, people should wear the special dress required.

- 4 (a) Describe what Jews believe about the Messianic hope. [8]

Not surprisingly this was the least popular question on the paper though, in general, those who attempted it produced excellent responses.

- (b) Explain why believing in G-d is important for a Jew. [7]

This was a straightforward question and was well-answered by the few who choose to do Q.4.

- (c) 'Believing in G-d is the most important part of Jewish life.'

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

As with (b) those who attempted this question generally produced some excellent responses.

- 5 (a) Describe the customs that are associated with Hannukah. [8]

This was a popular and straightforward question, however, many students wasted time and marks by writing about the stories associated with Hannukah rather than the customs.

- (b) Explain the importance of Hannukah. [7]

There were many good responses to this question and most were able to write confidently about the importance of the festival.

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- (c) 'The festivals which Jews are instructed to celebrate in the Torah are more important than other Jewish festivals.'

Do you agree? Give reasons to support your answer and show that you have thought about different points of view.

[5]

Most candidates seemed happy to address this question. There were some very good responses which attempted to weigh up the relative importance of the different groups of festivals.

1932/02 Jewish Texts

1 Exodus 20:12-14

- (a) Describe the teachings found in this passage. [8]

Most candidates were able to distinguish the main teachings in this passage and wrote competently about respect for parents and family as well as for others and for animals.

- (b) Explain how these teachings might affect a Jew's attitude towards marriage and family life. [7]

Again there were some good responses about family life, adultery, the sanctity of marriage as well as attitudes towards women.

- (c) 'All of the Ten Commandments are equally important.'

Some responses suggested that the first five commandments were the most important because they relate to G-d whilst the second five are mainly about human relationships. However, some commented, that, in effect, relationships with other people are really relationships with G-d through his creation.

2 Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Hear, O Israel: Hashem is our G-d, Hashem is the One and Only. You shall love Hashem, your G-d, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your resources. And these matters that I command you today shall be upon your heart. You shall teach them thoroughly to your children and you shall speak of them while you sit in your home, while you walk on the way, when you retire and when you arise. Bind them as a sign upon your arm and let them be ornaments between your eyes. And write them on the doorposts of your house, and upon your gates.

- (a) Describe the teachings found in this passage. [8]

Most candidates were able to identify the passage as the opening of the Shema and commented on this. There were many good responses which singled out ideas of a monotheistic G-d, the requirement to love G-d with every part of the body, to instruct future generations about G-d and to talk about G-d at all times, to wear tefillin and to place mezuzahs.

- (b) Explain the importance of these teachings. [7]

Those who produced a good response to (a) were generally able to build on this and produced some excellent responses to the (b) section.

- (c) 'The opening paragraph of the Shema is the most important part.'

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

Some of the best responses pointed out that there were another two parts to the Shema and were then able to consider whether the first paragraph was the most important or if much of the material is repetition.

3 Genesis 2:15-25

- (a) Describe the teachings found in this passage. [8]

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There were many excellent responses to this question. Almost all candidates were able to give a simple description of what it contains but there were some very insightful readings of the text which showed that it had been studied thoroughly.

- (b) Explain what Jews might learn from this passage about the relationship between men and women. [7]

In general candidates wrote about the creation of woman from man but there were some students who were able to go beyond the 'face value' of the translation and consider issues relating to the Hebrew text itself.

- (c) People today cannot be expected to take the creation story literally.'

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

As might be expected, this produced a number of responses which did not even consider whether it was possible for the creation story to be taken in any way other than literally. However, most were able to acknowledge that some people did find it difficult to accept the story as factual and there were a number who considered the nature of myth in relation to the account.

4 Jonah 1:1-2

- (a) Describe the main teachings found in the Book of Jonah. [8]

Questions on Jonah are always popular but a significant number of candidates appeared to misread (a) and instead of describing the main teachings, simply wrote out the story of Jonah and thus scored rather poorly.

- (b) Explain what the book of Jonah teaches about the role of the individual. [7]

This was a straightforward question for those who had studied Jonah thoroughly and there were some excellent responses.

- (c) 'The only purpose of the story of Jonah is to teach people to obey G-d's will.'

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

The majority agreed with the statement which is a common interpretation of the story. However, many were also able to comment on issues such as G-d's forgiveness, both of Jonah and the Ninevites, on the implicit teachings about Jewish / non-Jewish relationships, and the idea that no-one can hide from G-d.

5 Ethics of the Fathers 1:1, 1:14

- (a) Describe what is meant by the chain of tradition from the Sinai Covenant. [8]

This was the least popular question on the paper. However, in general, those who attempted the question produced excellent answers.

- (b) Explain the importance for Jews of the teachings in paragraph 1:14 of the Ethics of the Fathers. [7]

This was difficult to comment on but there were some excellent responses to this question.

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- (c) 'Reading texts such as the Ethics of the Fathers makes it more difficult to understand the Torah.'

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

[5]

Most answers naturally were opposed to the statement and explained that the purpose of the Oral Torah and other texts is to explain and clarify what is in the Torah. Alternative answers considered that the Written Torah has a higher status and is sufficient on its own.

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June 2007 Assessment Session**

Component Threshold Marks

Component	Max Mark	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
01	64	55	50	45	38	31	24	17
02	64	57	51	46	38	30	22	14

Overall

	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Overall Threshold Marks	125	111	101	91	76	61	46	31
Percentage in Grade	23.1	41.7	16.1	9.5	5.4	2.0	1.2	0.9
Cumulative Percentage in Grade	23.1	64.8	80.9	90.4	95.8	97.8	99.0	99.9

The total entry for the examination was 1109.

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