

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2011

GCSE Religious Studies (5RS12)
Paper 01 Judaism

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GCSE Religious Studies 5RS12/01 Judaism

This was the second examination of this unit and candidates mainly achieved good results. There were some strong candidates who performed well, showing high standards of knowledge, understanding and personal opinions. Some candidates struggled with the key words especially terms such as Ashkenazi and Sephardim.

Candidates were able to respond well to (b) and (d) questions, giving their own developed reasons as well as taking into consideration alternative views in (d) questions. It is important to note in the new part (b) questions that candidates must state their opinions and reasons for their point of view in order to gain marks. Where appropriate candidates should use examples. In the new (d) questions candidates must give reasons to support their point of view and reasons why others may disagree with their opinion, including a reference to Judaism to gain the highest marks.

Generally, stronger candidates were aware of the new key words and could give their meaning accurately, although some specific terms were difficult for some candidates.

In section one most candidates were able to say why the Tenakh is relevant today and why all Jewish people should follow the mishnah. Some candidates did not link the Ten Commandments with the nature of the Almighty. There were some good responses to the question about Abraham's covenant but some candidates confused the Mosaic and Abrahamic covenants.

In section two most candidates could explain why it is hard to forget the Holocaust and why some Jewish people might want to live in Israel and some might not. There was an interesting range of responses to the features of the Orthodox synagogue and candidates generally scored high levels.

In section three the majority of candidates knew the key words but there was confusion among some candidates about the different Jewish festivals, their meaning and importance. Most candidates could give good reasons to support Bar Mitzvah and circumcision.

In section four there was some confusion about the key words. Some candidates struggled answering question 8(b) about why community cohesion is important for Jewish people. There were some very detailed responses regarding the difficulties in following kosher food laws. Candidates responded in many different ways as to why it is easy to live the Jewish life today.

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