

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2012

GCSE Religious Studies (5RS12)
Judaism

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GCSE Religious Studies 5RS12/01 Judaism

This unit was sat by a reasonable number of candidates who 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 some of the key words, ideas and issues. There were several centres entering single candidates who performed well.

Generally, candidates were able to respond well to part (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 (b) questions, candidates must state their opinions and reasons for their point of view in order to gain marks. In the (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 religion and or Judaism to gain the highest marks.

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

Overall, candidates performed less well on section one questions, compared to other sections in this unit. This was due to confusion over terms and key words. Some candidates experienced difficulty in explaining why the halakah and the Mishnah are important for Jewish people. All candidates would benefit from having these key terms clearly understood. Most candidates could give their opinions about Jewish beliefs about the creation accounts to gain at least two marks. Some candidates struggled with the term teshuva.

In section two question 4 was more popular than question 3. Most candidates could explain why Jewish people want to live in Israel but struggled with the differences between Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jewish people. Most candidates were able to provide an explanation if they believed that the Bet Din helps Jewish couples with divorce.

In section three the majority of candidates knew the key words but there was confusion for some candidates about the different Jewish festivals, their meaning and importance. Some candidates confused the terms Pesach and Shabbat.

In section four there was some confusion about the meaning of social and community cohesion and what it means for Jewish people. Some candidates did not know the meaning of the key word teffillin. In addition, some struggled on question 7(d) about attitudes to the Noachide Laws.

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