

Examiners' Report/
Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2016

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
in Religious Studies (5RS12)
Paper 01 - Judaism

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Unit 12 Judaism

This unit was sat by a reasonably good number of candidates who generally achieved good results. There were some very 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 some strong candidates showing sophisticated levels of knowledge in question 'c'. Some however had pre learnt general answers which did not always answer the question asked. Most candidates were able to respond well to question b and d, giving their own developed reasons as well as taking into consideration alternative views in question d. In question 'd', 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.

In section one, question 2 was significantly more popular than question 1 and this may be due to confusion over the key word 'teshuva'. However, generally stronger candidates were aware of the key words and could give their meaning accurately. Some candidates confused the covenant with Moses and the covenant with Abraham and some specific Judaism terms were confused, e.g. Mishnah with Mitzvot.

In section two, the question 4 was more popular than question 3. Question 3b was done well by the majority of candidates but in 3c some candidates were unsure of what Hasidic Judaism is all about. Question 3c and 4c were done equally well by the majority of candidates. In question 4d almost all the candidates were able to give reflective and sensitive answers as to why the Holocaust is impossible to forgive but some answered last year's question about reasons to forget the Holocaust.

In section three, question 6 was very much more popular than question 5. The stronger candidates knew the key words but in other questions there was some confusion generally about the different Jewish festivals, their meaning and importance, and some were very vague only giving generic answers but not really explaining or detailing anything specific about the festivals of Hanukkah or the for and against reasons for girls celebrating a Bat Mitzvah.

In section four, question 7 was more popular than question 8. In question 7b, there was some confusion over the term Mitzvot. In question 7d, some candidates were not really familiar with the Noachide Laws. In 8c, several candidates only explained why Jewish people help to relieve poverty and suffering and some only talked about the relief of international problems rather than in the UK. There were some excellent answers to 8d.

