

Edexcel GCSE Religious Studies

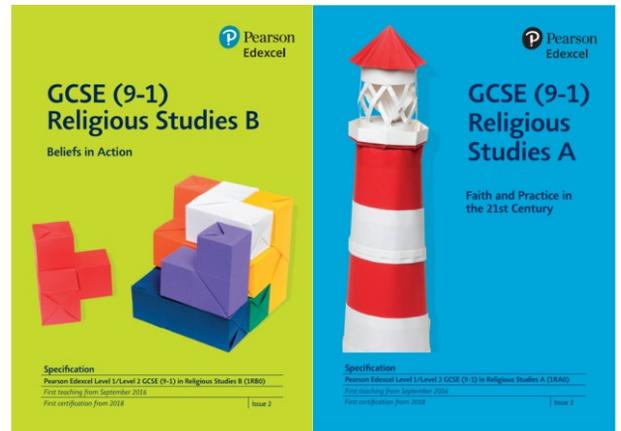
(d) 'Evaluation' exemplar answers: Judaism

About this resource

The exemplars within this pack include answers which focus on Judaism as the chosen religion.

All were taken from the 2023 exam series with marks awarded spanning the mark and level range*

All exemplars were marked against the amended level descriptors.

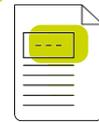


Contents

Level descriptors



Level 1



Level 2



Level 3



Level 4

Further support for Edexcel Studies

**Please note: Additional Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar marks have not been included within this pack, to maintain a focus on the amended level descriptors.*

Edexcel GCSE Religious Studies

(d) 'Evaluation' exemplar answers: Judaism

Level Descriptors

Our extended evaluation questions are level-marked rather than point-marked. This involves the examiner reading through the whole answer before awarding a level using a best-fit approach. A mark is then decided based on how well it meets the descriptors within that level.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
N/A	0	No rewardable response.
1	1-3	A superficial analysis of the statement that uses undeveloped arguments, underpinned by isolated elements of understanding of religion and belief. Judgements are asserted without clear links to the analysis.
2	4-6	A basic analysis of the statement that uses some developed arguments to discuss different points of view, underpinned by limited understanding of religion and belief. This leads to simple judgements which have some links to the analysis, leading to a conclusion with limited justification.
3	7-9	A good analysis of the statement that uses logical chains of reasoning to discuss different points of view, underpinned by a sound understanding of religion and belief. This leads to reasoned judgements which are clearly linked to the analysis, leading to a partially justified conclusion.
4	10-12	A sustained and coherent analysis of the statement that uses logical chains of reasoning to discuss different points of view, underpinned by thorough understanding of religion and belief. This leads to reasoned judgements supported by the appraisal of arguments, leading to a justified conclusion that is consistent with the analysis.

'Point(s) of view' always means arguments for and against the statement. Where specified in the bullet points under the question, it may also include one of the following:

- different views within the religion
- non-religious views
- philosophical arguments
- ethical arguments.

Edexcel GCSE Religious Studies

(d) 'Evaluation' exemplar answers: Judaism

Example 1: Level 1 – 2 Marks

'The most important Covenant for the Jews was the one at Sinai.'

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response, you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- reach a justified conclusion

Student Answer (Page 1 of 1):

*(d) "The most important Covenant for the Jews was the one at Sinai." מוסר

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

Some ~~Jews~~ Jews would agree with this statement as it is a covenant in which ~~gives~~ which gives Jews the 613 Mitzvot. This is beneficial for Jews as it demonstrates how to present yourself in society through the Almighty's image. Furthermore ^{El shaddai} ~~God~~ ~~helps~~ ~~helps~~ help Jews understand how to worship El shaddai and what is seen as right or wrong in ~~the~~ the Almighty's image.

Best-fit level descriptor:

A superficial analysis of the statement that uses undeveloped arguments, underpinned by isolated elements of understanding of religion and belief.

Judgements are asserted without clear links to the analysis.

Edexcel GCSE Religious Studies

(d) 'Evaluation' exemplar answers: Judaism

Example 2: Level 2 – 4 Marks

'Jewish festivals have less religious importance now.'

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response, you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- refer to different Jewish points of view
- reach a justified conclusion

Student Answer (Page 1 of 2):

(d) "Jewish festivals have less religious importance now."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- refer to different Jewish points of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

shavot
Shabbat
yom kippur = fast for 25 hours!
Yom Kippur = Moses freed the Jews

An orthodox Jew would disagree with this statement because the Jewish festivals are important and it is religious for example the Yom Kippur is when Jewish people fast for 25 hours to reflect on themselves and for God.

A Reform Jew would disagree with this statement because the Jewish festivals are important and it is religious because the Jewish need to know about their history and the importance of it for example Yom Kippur when Moses freed the Jews from slavery from the Israelites.

In conclusion both an Orthodox Jew and Reform Jew will disagree with this statement because it is important for Jews to celebrate and know the importance of their history and what each

Best-fit level descriptor:

A basic analysis of the statement that uses some developed arguments to discuss different points of view, underpinned by limited understanding of religion and belief.

This leads to simple judgements which have some links to the analysis, leading to a conclusion with limited justification.

Edexcel GCSE Religious Studies

(d) 'Evaluation' exemplar answers: Judaism

Example 2: Level 2 – 4 Marks

'Jewish festivals have less religious importance now.'

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response, you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- refer to different Jewish points of view
- reach a justified conclusion

Student Answer (Page 2 of 2):

festivals means to each other and also why they celebrate it.

Best-fit level descriptor:

A basic analysis of the statement that uses some developed arguments to discuss different points of view, underpinned by limited understanding of religion and belief.

This leads to simple judgements which have some links to the analysis, leading to a conclusion with limited justification.

Edexcel GCSE Religious Studies

(d) 'Evaluation' exemplar answers: Judaism

Example 3: Level 2 – 5 Marks

'Jewish festivals have less religious importance now.'

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response, you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- refer to different Jewish points of view
- reach a justified conclusion

Student Answer (Page 1 of 2):

(d) "Jewish festivals have less religious importance now."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- refer to different Jewish points of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

Some people may disagree with this statement, as they still have religious importance. They are a time to get together with family and friends and also be with God and praise him. This is a strong argument, as they still have religious significance.

Some people may agree; ~~as~~ as they think that the rituals and ceremonies have more religious significance. For example, there is Brit Milah, which is about the circumcision and an important part for a Jewish boy's life. This is a strong argument, as Jewish festivals have less religious importance.

some people may ~~disagree~~ ^{agree}, as they

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A basic analysis of the statement that uses some developed arguments to discuss different points of view, underpinned by limited understanding of religion and belief.

This leads to simple judgements which have some links to the analysis, leading to a conclusion with limited justification.

Edexcel GCSE Religious Studies

(d) 'Evaluation' exemplar answers: Judaism

Example 3: Level 2 – 5 Marks

'Jewish festivals have less religious importance now.'

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response, you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- refer to different Jewish points of view
- reach a justified conclusion

Student Answer (Page 2 of 2):

think that Shabbat has more religious significance. For example, it reminds Jews of the creation and to keep it holy. This is a strong argument, as ~~the~~ festivals ~~are~~ have less significance.

Some people may ~~disagree~~ ^{agree} as they think that the synagogue services have more significance than festivals. For example, it is a place, where people come frequently to pray and worship and a time to get along with the community. This is a strong argument, as festivals have lost ~~it~~ its religious significance.

To conclude, I think festivals didn't lose its religious significance, as people still do them and it is a way to get together and be with God and loved ones.

Best-fit level descriptor:

A basic analysis of the statement that uses some developed arguments to discuss different points of view, underpinned by limited understanding of religion and belief.

This leads to simple judgements which have some links to the analysis, leading to a conclusion with limited justification.

Edexcel GCSE Religious Studies

(d) 'Evaluation' exemplar answers: Judaism

Example 4: Level 2 – 6 Marks

'The most important Covenant for the Jews was the one at Sinai.'

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response, you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- reach a justified conclusion

Student Answer (Page 1 of 2):

*(d) "The most important Covenant for the Jews was the one at Sinai."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

Exodus 20
Genesis 5

Jews agree with this as this is where the Mitzvot were given. In Exodus 20, the Almighty gave Moses the 613 Mitzvot at Mount Sinai as a guide for Jews to live by. Even in the modern day many of the Mitzvot are used today this therefore depicts the significance of the Covenant at Sinai.

However, some Jews believe that the Abrahamic covenant is the most important covenant. This is because this is when God marked the Jews as his holy and chosen people through circumcision creating the ritual Brit Milah. Due to the constant use in the modern day many Jews believe that the Abrahamic covenant is more important.

Conversely, the Covenant at Mount Sinai brought the Jews to the Holy Land, the Promised Land. The Promised Land is the land the Almighty promised the Jews if they follow him. Through this many Jews see the Covenant at Mount

Best-fit level descriptor:

A basic analysis of the statement that uses some developed arguments to discuss different points of view, underpinned by limited understanding of religion and belief.

This leads to simple judgements which have some links to the analysis, leading to a conclusion with limited justification.

Edexcel GCSE Religious Studies

(d) 'Evaluation' exemplar answers: Judaism

Example 4: Level 2 – 6 Marks

'The most important Covenant for the Jews was the one at Sinai.'
Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response, you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- reach a justified conclusion

Student Answer (Page 2 of 2):

Sinai is important.

~~Yet, the state some Jews see the covenant at Mount Sinai as less important as~~

Yet, some Jews see the Almighty's covenant with Noah as more important. This is because it shows the Almighty as omnipotent as he has the ability to flood the world. It also allows Jews to see what can happen if they do not follow the Lord therefore making it more important.

Overall, Jews see all covenants as equally important as they all promise different things and show different characteristics of the Almighty.

Best-fit level descriptor:

A basic analysis of the statement that uses some developed arguments to discuss different points of view, underpinned by limited understanding of religion and belief.

This leads to simple judgements which have some links to the analysis, leading to a conclusion with limited justification.

Edexcel GCSE Religious Studies

(d) 'Evaluation' exemplar answers: Judaism

Example 5: Level 3 – 8 Marks

'Jewish festivals have less religious importance now.'

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response, you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- refer to different Jewish points of view
- reach a justified conclusion

Student Answer (Page 1 of 2):

(d) "Jewish festivals have less religious importance now."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- refer to different Jewish points of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

- Yom Kippur
- Hanukkah
-

Firstly, Jews might disagree with this statement as some Jewish festivals are still highly respected. For example, Yom Kippur is the Jewish new year and Jews fast for 25 hours for this festival. This is a strong argument as some Jews such as Orthodox Jews will still take this event seriously in a modern day setting and this is evidence through the day of fasting the Jews undergo. Secondly, Jews would also disagree with this statement because in the creation in the Tenakh, God is said to have "made man in my image. Let him have dominion over the fish in the sea, and birds in the air and all the animals". To explain further, there is a Jewish festival that makes the anniversary of Jewish creation. This is a strong argument because it shows that some Jewish festivals are certainly old but still have not lost their importance in our modern day.

Best-fit level descriptor:

A good analysis of the statement that uses logical chains of reasoning to discuss different points of view, underpinned by a sound understanding of religion and belief.

This leads to reasoned judgements which are clearly linked to the analysis, leading to a partially justified conclusion.

Edexcel GCSE Religious Studies

(d) 'Evaluation' exemplar answers: Judaism

Example 5: Level 3 – 8 Marks

'Jewish festivals have less religious importance now.'

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response, you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- refer to different Jewish points of view
- reach a justified conclusion

Student Answer (Page 2 of 2):

society.

On the other hand, Reform Jews might agree with this statement in saying that some Jewish festivals are outdated and don't hold the values and beliefs of modern Judaism. ~~This~~ This is a weak argument because many Reform Jews still celebrate festivals like Yom Kippur or Hanukkah even though they might find them outdated and this is because they are a huge part of Jewish life.

In conclusion I highly disagree with this statement and believe the festivals are a key and vital part of the culture and religion of Judaism and that ~~there~~ there are a wide range of examples across the globe of Jews celebrating festivals because they uphold ~~such~~ so many crucial parts of the religion.

Best-fit level descriptor:

A good analysis of the statement that uses logical chains of reasoning to discuss different points of view, underpinned by a sound understanding of religion and belief.

This leads to reasoned judgements which are clearly linked to the analysis, leading to a partially justified conclusion.

Edexcel GCSE Religious Studies

(d) 'Evaluation' exemplar answers: Judaism

Example 6: Level 3 – 8 Marks

'The most important Covenant for the Jews was the one at Sinai.'

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response, you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- reach a justified conclusion

Student Answer (Page 1 of 2):

* (d) "The most important Covenant for the Jews was the one at Sinai."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

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showing from

strength

A Jewish person may agree with this statement that the most important covenant is the one at Sinai because this covenant proves God's characteristics as the law-giver and essentially teaches Jews the best way to live. In Exodus we learn the story of how Moses freed the Israelites from slavery. This covenant is important for Jews as it shows God's love for Jewish people as he instructed Moses to free them. This helps Jews in their everyday life as this covenant is a constant reminder of why they should follow the laws. However another Jew may counteract this and say that Abraham's covenant is more important. This is because this covenant it marks Jewish people as the chosen ones. God tested Abraham's faith in him to see if he would sacrifice his life for him which Abraham was ready to do. Therefore this covenant is very important in remembering how to keep faith in Judaism no matter how you're tested. This is the most important covenant as Jews feel special to the rest of the world and will live to honour Abraham and God.

Best-fit level descriptor:

A good analysis of the statement that uses logical chains of reasoning to discuss different points of view, underpinned by a sound understanding of religion and belief.

This leads to reasoned judgements which are clearly linked to the analysis, leading to a partially justified conclusion.

Edexcel GCSE Religious Studies

(d) 'Evaluation' exemplar answers: Judaism

Example 6: Level 3 – 8 Marks

'The most important Covenant for the Jews was the one at Sinai.'
Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response, you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- reach a justified conclusion

Student Answer (Page 2 of 2):

An Orthodox Jew may say that the covenant at Sinai is more important as the laws were given directly from God to Moses which make them very important. This makes it important as the laws are still strictly followed today and guide Jews everyday lives. For example one of the 10 commandments is "thou shall not commit adultery." These mitzvot laws help Jews as they are receiving the direct word of God so they know maybe doing the right thing. However another Jew may argue that Abraham's covenant with God is more important as it is still yet to be fulfilled. Jews are still waiting for the promise land so they circumcise their son after 8 days of being born to commemorate Mor-
aham circumcising himself and his sons to seal the covenant. This makes the covenant with Mor-
aham more important as it is still remembered today.

In conclusion, the most important covenant is the one at Sinai as the covenant remembers the laws directly given by God.

Best-fit level descriptor:

A good analysis of the statement that uses logical chains of reasoning to discuss different points of view, underpinned by a sound understanding of religion and belief.

This leads to reasoned judgements which are clearly linked to the analysis, leading to a partially justified conclusion.

Example 7: Level 3 – 9 Marks

'Free will means that people can behave however they want.'

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response, you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- reach a justified conclusion

Student Answer (Page 1 of 3):

d. Free will does not mean that people can behave however they want to, as even though we have free will as humans, we still must obey God's mitzvot and commandments. Therefore, we do not have complete free will over ourselves, as we are obliged to obey God's laws.

Some Jews would argue that free will does not mean that people can behave however they want to, as God is a law giver, and therefore we have to abide by God's laws. Jews who believe in life after death in Gan Eden and Gehinnom will argue that we should live by God's mitzvot as if you obey God's commandments and laws, then you will have a good afterlife in Gan Eden. They would argue that we do have free will as humans, however we are obliged to live by God's mitzvot if we want to go to Gan Eden, so therefore we don't have total free will as we must abide by the laws we were given by God. Furthermore, more Orthodox Jews would argue that since the mitzvot are direct, divine commandments from God they are therefore are not optional, as shown in the Torah 'Obey carefully all the words of this law. They are not just idle words for you, they are your whole life.' In summary, people do have free will as any human does, however God commanded us to obey his mitzvot, and therefore they have to live by the laws that they were given by God.

This is a strong argument as the mitzvot are rules that Jews have to follow, so therefore they have a level of free will as they are humans, however they still have to obey the mitzvot as they are from God, and so therefore people do not have complete free will.

Best-fit level descriptor:

A good analysis of the statement that uses logical chains of reasoning to discuss different points of view, underpinned by a sound understanding of religion and belief.

This leads to reasoned judgements which are clearly linked to the analysis, leading to a partially justified conclusion.

Example 7: Level 3 – 9 Marks

'Free will means that people can behave however they want.'

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response, you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- reach a justified conclusion

Student Answer (Page 2 of 3):

On the other hand, other Jews may argue that free will does mean that people can behave however they want to. Reform Jews argue that the mitzvot are not divine themselves, but are divinely inspired, and therefore, Jews do not have to obey them. Reform Jews may argue that the ritual laws are binding, but the ethical laws are not. Therefore, Reform Jews would argue that they do have free will and can behave how they want to, as the mitzvot are not all binding, and therefore they can act however they would like to. However, this argument is weak as even if the mitzvot are divinely inspired, they are still laws in Judaism, which should be respected and followed.

Another argument for free will not meaning that people can behave however they want to is that we were all made in God's image, as shown in the Torah, 'God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them'. Therefore, some Jews may argue that humans don't have complete free will as we were made in God's image and therefore we have a certain level of ethics and morals in us that stop us from behaving however we would like to. Some may argue that this is a weak point as we are created in God's image and God has free will and is all-powerful, therefore if we were created in God's image, surely we would also have this high level of free will and power over our actions and what we do. This is true, however there are many people in the world who do not have power over their actions and what they do, so therefore surely if we did have complete Godly power over ourselves, nobody would be oppressed.

Best-fit level descriptor:

A good analysis of the statement that uses logical chains of reasoning to discuss different points of view, underpinned by a sound understanding of religion and belief.

This leads to reasoned judgements which are clearly linked to the analysis, leading to a partially justified conclusion.

Example 7: Level 3 – 9 Marks

'Free will means that people can behave however they want.'

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response, you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- reach a justified conclusion

Student Answer (Page 3 of 3):

On the other hand, some Jews may argue that we do have complete free will over ourselves as they may argue that this world is a test to determine the goodness of our souls, and determine the afterlife of our souls. Therefore, they would argue that we do have complete free will over how we behave as it is a test from God to see what we do, and whether we are worthy of having a good afterlife. Some Jews believe that evil souls are destroyed, however other Jews believe in an approach more similar to heaven and hell; Gan Eden and Gehinnom. Therefore, it is up to us in this world to decide how we want to live, and we have complete free will to live a sinful life, however, our decisions now will reflect in our afterlife.

In conclusion, we do have a level of free will over how we act, however we were given the mitzvot by God, and so many Jews may argue that we do not have much free will, as we must live a life as similar to how God intended for us to live as we can. This is also shown in the Torah, 'be holy as I am holy', emphasises that as humans we must live a holy life to be holy like God. Therefore, we do have free will, however as we are obliged to follow God's commandments, we do not have complete and total free will in this life.

Best-fit level descriptor:

A good analysis of the statement that uses logical chains of reasoning to discuss different points of view, underpinned by a sound understanding of religion and belief.

This leads to reasoned judgements which are clearly linked to the analysis, leading to a partially justified conclusion.

Edexcel GCSE Religious Studies

(d) 'Evaluation' exemplar answers: Judaism

Example 8: Level 4 – 10 Marks

'The most important Covenant for the Jews was the one at Sinai.'
Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response, you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- reach a justified conclusion

Student Answer (Page 1 of 2):

* (d) 'The most important Covenant for the Jews was the one at Sinai.'

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

I present before you a blessing and a curse
Disagree: Abrahamic covenant
Circumcision
mitzvot: G-d's will
obligatory

Lets suppose the statement is true, the
Strongest argument would be that the
~~Mosaic~~ Mosaic covenant is the most important
as it showed Jews how they need to live their
lives. This is because on mount Sinai
Moses was given the full 613 mitzvot which
guide Jews on how to live by the Almighty's
will. In the Torah it says that I present
before you and blessing and a curse. This shows
that by following the mitzvot Jews will fulfil
the Almighty's will and may be blessed in the
afterlife by going to Gan Eden. However
some Jews may disagree and say that
the Abrahamic Covenant is the most important.
This is because it is still lived out today
where all Jewish baby boys are circumcised
by a mohel as a sign of the Abrahamic
Covenant. As in the Torah it says that
when Isaac was 8 days old Abraham
circumcised him as he was following God's

Best-fit level descriptor:

A sustained and coherent analysis of the statement that uses logical chains of reasoning to discuss different points of view, underpinned by thorough understanding of religion and belief.

This leads to reasoned judgements supported by the appraisal of arguments, leading to a justified conclusion that is consistent with the analysis.

Edexcel GCSE Religious Studies

(d) 'Evaluation' exemplar answers: Judaism

Example 8: Level 4 – 10 Marks

'The most important Covenant for the Jews was the one at Sinai.'
Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response, you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- reach a justified conclusion

Student Answer (Page 2 of 2):

Command. Despite this, there is a weakness to this argument as the Mosaic covenant is also being fulfilled today through the mitzvot which is read during festivals to remind Jews on how to live their lives.

Another strong argument for the statement would be that Jews believe every Jewish soul was present at Sinai and agreed to the Covenant. This is important as it shows that Jews are the chosen people of God. As we see in Exodus that he sent 10 plagues to free them. This shows the special relationship of God has with the Jewish people. But other Jews may disagree and say that the Abrahamic Covenant was the same. As we see in the Torah that God will ratify the Covenant by being an everlasting God to Abraham and the offspring after him. This ~~can~~ may also show how Jews are God's chosen people and it is not only shown by the Mosaic Covenant. However, it is different as every ^{Jew} soul was present at the Mosaic ~~covenant~~ Covenant but not all at the Abrahamic covenant.

In conclusion, I believe the Mosaic Covenant is the most important as it guides Jews on how to live their lives up to today and how to live out the Almighty's will.

Best-fit level descriptor:

A sustained and coherent analysis of the statement that uses logical chains of reasoning to discuss different points of view, underpinned by thorough understanding of religion and belief.

This leads to reasoned judgements supported by the appraisal of arguments, leading to a justified conclusion that is consistent with the analysis.

Edexcel GCSE Religious Studies

(d) 'Evaluation' exemplar answers: Judaism

Example 9: Level 4 – 10 Marks

'Everyone should have a belief in an afterlife.'

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response, you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- non-religious points of view
- reach a justified conclusion

Student Answer (Page 1 of 2):

(d) "Everyone should have a belief in an afterlife."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- refer to non-religious points of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

✓ Maimonides

✓ Good works

X No proof -

X matters what we do now -

MEANING OF LIFE

The afterlife in Judaism has lots of views, but the overwhelming majority believe in either resurrection or soul immortality. I agree.

Some orthodox Jews believe that everyone should have a belief in the afterlife. Maimonides says in his 13 principles of faith "I believe with perfect faith in the resurrection of the dead". He is a highly regarded philosopher and this shows that it is a principle of Judaism. It is present in the Torah many times and says " ~~the~~ your dead shall live and their bodies shall live". Although some Jews argue that an afterlife is not a main belief of Judaism, we can see that it is present in the Torah, and is necessary as God's word is the Torah, so is a strong argument.

Some people such as atheists would argue that there is no proof towards an afterlife, and for example, you can't locate a soul or heaven. However, the Jews may argue that they aren't physical things just as God isn't. They would also say that life after death is not just believed by religious people, and would say that many non-religious people have claimed to have contact with an after world such as ouija boards and near death experiences, so this is a weak argument.

Best-fit level descriptor:

A sustained and coherent analysis of the statement that uses logical chains of reasoning to discuss different points of view, underpinned by thorough understanding of religion and belief.

This leads to reasoned judgements supported by the appraisal of arguments, leading to a justified conclusion that is consistent with the analysis.

Example 9: Level 4 – 10 Marks

'Everyone should have a belief in an afterlife.'

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response, you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- non-religious points of view
- reach a justified conclusion

Student Answer (Page 2 of 2):

Some orthodox Jews would agree with the statement as it creates a meaning for our life. They would say that the mitzvot have worth due to being able to give guidance on our life, which helps how we are judged in the next life. Belief in an afterlife gives structure to how to live this life and creates better relationships. This is a strong argument, and as well as a meaning it also can create hope, even to non-religious people or secular Jews as they can believe dead family members are in a better place and also that if they are suffering, there is a better place for them if they do good here.

Some Jews would say that belief in one afterlife is pointless as in the Torah "these are not just idle words for they are your life". This shows that the commandments are to better our lives, and not on afterlife. The view that good works leads to heaven is weak as it may make people do good mitzvot for the wrong reason but some Jews may say this a weak argument as whatever their motives, they are still actively doing good, so belief in an afterlife is a positive thing as it brings on good works, no matter the reason for doing so, and is a weak argument as earth is important in Judaism.

Overall, I agree that everyone should believe in an afterlife as the strongest argument states that it creates meaning and balance in a busy world, and can also cause people to act less selfless and although some argue that there is no proof of one, the Torah talks precisely

Best-fit level descriptor:

A sustained and coherent analysis of the statement that uses logical chains of reasoning to discuss different points of view, underpinned by thorough understanding of religion and belief.

This leads to reasoned judgements supported by the appraisal of arguments, leading to a justified conclusion that is consistent with the analysis.

Edexcel GCSE Religious Studies

(d) 'Evaluation' exemplar answers: Judaism

Example 10: Level 4 – 12 Marks

'Celebrating Shabbat at home is more important than celebrating it in the synagogue.'

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response, you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- reach a justified conclusion

Student Answer (Page 1 of 3):

For - law is to observe the Sabbath because it is holy to you' not to go to synagogue -
in home, Shabbat is perfect way to pass on traditions to children

(d) "Celebrating Shabbat at home is more important than celebrating it in the synagogue."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

Against -
Torah portion important as G-d's words said with Minyan
- Community - time to come together - prayer is louder and social time

On the one hand, many Jews would argue that celebrating Shabbat at home is more important than celebrating it in the synagogue because the law outlined in the Exodus and the 10 commandments is to 'observe the Sabbath, because it is holy to you'. This law requires Jews to observe Sabbath because it is holy and also because 'G-d rested on the seventh day' of creation, so ~~we~~ ^{Jews} do the same. The law itself is not to celebrate in the synagogue, but to observe it and keep it holy. Many Jews argue this is a strong argument towards celebrating Shabbat in the home being more important than celebrating in the synagogue because observing the Sabbath does not require the synagogue. The rituals of not using technology, observing the 39 Melachot of things that can't be done, and having festive meals are all things specifically done at home.

On the other hand, some Jews argue that celebrating Shabbat in the synagogue is the most important, because it is only in the synagogue in the presence of a Minyan of 10 men over the age of Bar Mitzvah that the weekly Torah portion can be read out loud. The Sedra - the Torah portion - is a chapter of the Torah - 5 books of the Torah, that takes one

Best-fit level descriptor:

A sustained and coherent analysis of the statement that uses logical chains of reasoning to discuss different points of view, underpinned by thorough understanding of religion and belief.

This leads to reasoned judgements supported by the appraisal of arguments, leading to a justified conclusion that is consistent with the analysis.

Edexcel GCSE Religious Studies

(d) 'Evaluation' exemplar answers: Judaism

Example 10: Level 4 – 12 Marks

'Celebrating Shabbat at home is more important than celebrating it in the synagogue.'

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response, you should:

- refer to Jewish teachings
- reach a justified conclusion

Student Answer (Page 2 of 3):

year to complete. Many Jews argue this is extremely important to hear because it is a mitzvah to 'acquire the words of the Torah' in order to 'attain afterlife' and gain 'moral excellence' (as seen in Pirkei Avot). However, ~~this~~ the Torah can be studied and read quietly at home, and therefore celebrating Shabbat in the synagogue is not crucial.

Many Jews believe that celebrating Shabbat in the home is the most important because the traditions and rituals are the perfect way of fulfilling the mitzvah from the Shema of 'teach them ^{thoroughly} to your children' - in regards to traditions and mitzvot. ~~The~~ Passing on Jewish traditions is crucial in Jewish families, and the rituals, such as lighting the candles, saying a blessing over and drinking the wine and eating Challah are rituals that are a perfect way to teach children about Judaism, the Torah stories behind certain rituals like putting salt over the Challah and traditions. This is a very strong argument as tradition and passing on Judaism is very important in the Jewish family.

However, some Jews argue that celebrating ~~Sabbat~~ Shabbat in the synagogue is more important than in the home because it is thought that praying in a community with many people creates a louder voice, making it more likely for Hashem to listen. This would make praying in the synagogue on Shabbat more important as Hashem answering prayers is very important to most Jews. However this is not the strongest argument because arguably

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private prayer is just as special in creating a connection and building a relationship with Hashem, particularly on Shabbat.

In conclusion, celebrating Shabbat at home is more important than celebrating it in the synagogue, the strongest argument being that the rituals and traditions of Shabbat observed in the family home is quintessential in Jewish family life.

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Further Support for Edexcel Religious Studies



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