



Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

June 2025

Pearson Edexcel GCSE
In Religious Studies A
Paper 3: Area of Study 3 – Philosophy and
Ethics
Option 3B – Christianity

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications are awarded by Pearson, the UK's largest awarding body. We provide a wide range of qualifications including academic, vocational, occupational and specific programmes for employers. For further information visit our qualifications websites at www.edexcel.com or www.btec.co.uk. Alternatively, you can get in touch with us using the details on our contact us page at www.edexcel.com/contactus.

Pearson: helping people progress, everywhere

Pearson aspires to be the world's leading learning company. Our aim is to help everyone progress in their lives through education. We believe in every kind of learning, for all kinds of people, wherever they are in the world. We've been involved in education for over 150 years, and by working across 70 countries, in 100 languages, we have built an international reputation for our commitment to high standards and raising achievement through innovation in education. Find out more about how we can help you and your students at: www.pearson.com/uk

June 2025

Publications Code 1RA0_3B_2506_ER

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2025

Introduction

GCSE (9-1) Religious Studies Religious Studies A Paper 3B: Area of Study 3 –Philosophy and Ethics - Study of Christianity (Paper code: 1RA0/3B)

The paper contributes to 25% of the overall award.

The assessment consists of two questions and candidates must answer all questions. The details of the assessment content are provided in the specification. Centres are to use this, rather than other published resources when planning the course content.

This area of study comprises a study in-depth of Christianity as a lived religion in the United Kingdom and throughout the world.

There are two sections:

- Arguments for the Existence of God
- Religious Teachings on Relationships and Families in the 21st Century

Candidates had studied Christianity within the context of the wider British society.

Please note: AO stands for 'Assessment Objective' SPaG stands for 'Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar'

Question 1 (a)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Arguments for the Existence of God

Bullet point. 1.2 Visions as proof of the existence of God: the nature and importance of visions for Christians; **biblical** and non-biblical **examples of visions**, including Genesis 15 and Matthew 17:1–13; reasons why they might lead to belief in the existence of God and Christian responses to non-religious arguments (including atheist and Humanist) which maintain that visions are hallucinations and provide no proof that God exists; divergent understandings of what visions show about the nature of God for Christians. *(Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.)*

The question asked was: 'Outline three biblical visions.'

Examiner comment This question was answered well by candidates. There was a wide range of biblical visions outlined. Where candidates were not as successful was when they referred to non-biblical examples such as St Bernadette.

Candidates are asked to 'Outline' on (a) items. Therefore, lists can reach a maximum of one mark.

GENERIC advice for centres to what constitutes a list.

- An example: Outline 3 characteristics of God:
- God is creator (1 mark)
- God is creator, judge and lawgiver (1 mark for list or sentence)
- God is creator, busy and distant. (1 mark for the sentence identifying one correct piece of information)
- Busy, distant and God is creator, (1 mark for the sentence identifying one correct piece of information)
- Creator, judge, lawgiver (1 mark for list)
- Creator, busy, distant (0 Marks) (all three elements need to be correct for 1 mark)

- Creator, judge, distant (0 marks)

Most candidates were awarded 3 marks. Candidates who answered the question by giving examples of a religious experience were not awarded marks.

Examiner advice: Candidates should write three sentences containing one piece of information in each. There is no need for development: it will not receive credit.

Question 1b

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Arguments for the Existence of God

Bullet point 1.1 Revelation as proof of the existence of God; revelation as shown in the Bible, including in the covenants with Noah and Abraham and through Jesus, including Hebrews 1:1–4; divergent understandings of what revelation shows about the nature of God for Christians. (*Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.*)

The question asked candidates to 'Explain two ways revelation can be seen as proof of the existence of God.'

Examiner comment Most candidates answered this confidently. Candidates had been well prepared to identify examples of revelations, however in some cases this did not link to the existence of God.

Question 1c

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Arguments for the Existence of God

Bullet point 1.5 Christian teaching about prayers: Christian teachings about the nature and importance of prayers; Christian teachings about **reasons prayers that are answered in the way the person expects might lead to belief in God**, including 1 John 5:13–17.

The question asked was: 'Explain two reasons Christians believe that prayers which are answered in the way the person expects might lead to belief in God.' In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.'

Examiner comment Candidates are asked to 'Explain two' on (c) items. Therefore, two reasons are required, and both need to be developed for 4 marks. Development consists of a piece of extra information, a reference to a source of wisdom a quotes or examples. The development must be of the reason given and to the question asked. The reasons then should be supported with a 'reference to a source of wisdom', this must support the reason given and cannot be awarded twice. Therefore, if it is used as development, it does not gain a second mark for the source.

GENERIC advice for centres to what constitutes a source of wisdom

- The candidates do not have to reference a quote or quote it word for word.
- If markers of candidate work in centres are unsure if the quote will be accepted, use a search engine. Enter the gist of the paraphrase and 'Bible' or 'Christian teaching'.
- If the candidate states that it is in John 1:18 and then states another verse from John – then this can be awarded. We are not holding candidate to 'verses' but it must be the correct book.

- If the candidate gives the paraphrase and then puts (John 1:18) in brackets the paraphrase can have the mark and the bracketed reference is ignored.
- If a candidate quotes Jesus and it was Paul or vice versa; and the quote is not accredited to them, it is not awarded.

Most candidates answered this question well. Candidates identified and explained many different examples of prayer requests that could be answered and how this might lead to belief in God.

Question 1d

The focus of the marking changes from AO1 to AO2 on the (d) items. The candidates are assessed on AO2, Analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief. This constitutes 50% of the overall mark.

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Arguments for the Existence of God

Bullet point 1.7 Cosmological argument: the cosmological argument for the existence of God and its use by Christians as a philosophical argument for the existence of God; divergent understandings about what the cosmological argument shows about the nature of God for Christians, including Thomas Aquinas' First Three Ways of showing God's existence; Christian responses to non-religious (including atheist and Humanist) arguments against the cosmological argument as evidence for the existence of God. (***Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.***)

The question asked was "The cosmological argument is proof of the existence of God."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you must:

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

Examiner comment In response to this question many candidates could give a detailed description of the cosmological argument and how this was proof of the existence of God. Candidates were weaker at the non-religious arguments against it. A minority of candidates talked about the design argument which could not be credited.

Question 2a

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Religious Teachings on Relationships and Families in the 21st Century

Bullet point 2.2 Christian teachings about the nature and importance of sexual relationships: divergent Christian teachings about sexual relationships; **Christian attitudes towards sexual relationships** outside of marriage and same-sex sexual relationships, including interpretations of 1 Corinthians 6:7–20; divergent Christian and nonreligious (including atheist and Humanist) attitudes to sexual relationships, including the acceptance of sexual relationships outside marriage and same-sex sexual relationships and Christian responses to them.. (***Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.***)

The question asked was 'Outline three Christian attitudes towards sexual relationships.'

Examiner comment Candidates answered this question well; they had knowledge of the reasons why some Christians would accept or would not accept sex outside of marriage. The majority of candidates gained 3 marks.

Question 2b

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Religious Teachings on Relationships and Families in the 21st Century

Bullet point 2.3 Christian teachings about the purpose and **importance of the family:** procreation, security and education of children, with reference to Ephesians 6:1–4; divergent Christian responses to different types of family within 21st-century society (nuclear, single parent, same-sex parents, extended and blended families). (*bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.*)

The question asked was 'Explain two Christian attitudes to the importance of the family.'

Examiner comment In some responses students were able identify why family was important and develop this. However, a number of candidates referred to marriage rather than family.

Examiner advice: Refer to the specification bullet point and cover all the different parts of it. These bullet points are the basis of question setting.

Question 2c

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Religious Teachings on Relationships and Families in the 21st Century

Bullet point 2.7 The importance and **purpose of marriage for Christians:** Christian teachings about the significance of marriage in Christian life; the purpose of marriage for Christians, including Mark 10:6–9; divergent Christian and non-religious (including atheist and Humanist) attitudes to the importance of marriage in society, including the sanctity of marriage, a lack of importance, cohabitation and Christian responses to these attitudes. (*Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.*)

The question asked was: 'Explain two Christian teachings about the purpose of marriage'

Examiner comment Candidates are asked to 'Explain two' on (c) items. Therefore, two reasons are required, and both need to be developed for 4 marks. Development consists of a piece of extra information, a reference to a source of wisdom, a quote or examples. The development must be of the reason given and to the question asked. The reasons then should be supported with a 'reference to a source of wisdom', this must support the reason given and cannot be awarded twice. Therefore, if it is used as development, it does not gain a second mark for the source.

Most candidates responded well to this question. Candidates were well prepared for this question and referred to sources of wisdom with confidence.

Examiner advice: Centres struggling to find sources of wisdom should refer to the specification and/or previous mark schemes.

Question 2d

Candidates were assessed on Section Two. Religious Teachings on Relationships and Families in the 21st Century

Bullet point 2.2 Christian teachings about gender prejudice and discrimination: Christian opposition to gender prejudice and discrimination, including Galatians 3:23–29; examples of Christian opposition to gender prejudice and discrimination; divergent Christian attitudes to gender differences, including the role of women in the Church, prejudice and discrimination and Christian responses to them. (*Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.*)

The question asked was “Christians should work against gender discrimination.”

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you must:

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

Examiner comment This question engaged candidates of all abilities and produced a wide range of marks. All candidates should be encouraged to answer every question because every mark is important.

There were some candidates who argued for the rights of transgender people and did not address the question in terms of Christian teachings or attitudes.

Key advice from the examiner.

- Centres must teach to the specification, making sure candidates are prepared for all parts of the bullet points in preparation for the questions
- When tackling a) questions, candidates should write three sentences containing one piece of information in each. There is no need for development: it will not receive credit.
- The explain questions require two developed points, however, students should also be prepared to describe where indicated on the specification.
- The (d) items need an understanding of religion and belief, as well as the ability to evaluate the arguments in order to reach a conclusion. Centres may wish to consider the differentiation of teaching to enable some students of different abilities to concentrate on learning the information needed before embarking on the evaluation.
- Candidates should be directed to read the bullet points in the (d) question and understand that they guide them to which viewpoints they should be providing. Centres may wish to consider identifying on the specification the different traditions/viewpoints within Christianity identified that could be used to answer these questions. The diversity within the religion is the key factor in appraising the arguments. Why do they not all agree?