



Pearson
Edexcel

Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

Summer 2024

Pearson Edexcel GCSE

In Religious Studies A

Paper 4 Textual Studies

4B The Qur'an

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Introduction

Religious Studies A

Paper 4B: Area of Study 4 – Textual Studies – The Qur’an (Paper code: 1RA0/4B).

The paper contributes to 25% of the overall award.

The assessment consists of two questions and candidates must answer both 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.

There are two sections:

- Beliefs and Teachings of Islam;
- Lives of the Prophets and Others

Candidates have studied Islam within the context of the wider British society, the religious traditions of which are, in the main, Christian. The textual studies section for Islam refers specifically to the Qur’an. The themes and teachings of the Qur’an are explored in depth; the references within the specification should be used as a starting point in a candidate’s textual studies and candidates may use other texts from the Qur’an, Hadith and other holy books within Islam to help contextualise, understand and compare the teachings and examples. Candidates compare and contrast the areas of belief and practice within Islam with non-religious views.

Please note:

AO stands for 'Assessment Objective'

SPaG stands for 'Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar'

The standard of candidate responses was comparatively similar to the previous series, with candidates able to use the advice from previous years. None of the questions posed any specific challenges and candidates were able to access and interpret all the questions.

1RA0_4B_Q01a

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings of Islam

Bullet point 1.5 Creation (Surah 45: 3–5; 21: 30; 41: 11; 21: 33; 51: 47; 7: 54; 57: 4; 50: 38; 57: 4; 71: 13–17; 21: 30; 24: 45): the events of creation; the role of Allah and humanity in the narrative; the role of humanity as vicegerent/khalifah (Surah 2: 30–39); as being above the angels; **the significance of these beliefs for Muslims today.**

The question asked was: ‘Outline three ways that beliefs about creation are important for Muslims today’

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)

1RA0_4B_Q01b

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings of Islam

Bullet point 1.2 The oneness of Allah in Surah Al-Anaam (6: 13-24): **what this means to an understanding of Allah**, how this reflected in worship; its significance for Muslims today.

The question asked was: 'Explain two ways the oneness of Allah affects the way Muslims understand Allah.'

Candidates are asked to 'Explain two' on (b) 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.

1RA0_4B_Q01c

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings of Islam

Bullet point 1.7 Shirk: **teachings about shirk in the Qur'an** and their significance; the ascribing of partners to Allah; the worship of idols including Surah 7: 148–150; divergent ways in which this belief will affect a Muslim today and their relationship to other religions.

The question asked was: 'Explain two Muslim beliefs about shirk in the Qur'an. In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.'

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.

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 the candidate states that it is in Qur'an 2:18 and then states another verse from Qur'an – then this can be awarded. We are not holding candidate to 'verses' but it must be the correct source.
- If the candidate gives the paraphrase and then puts (Qur'an 2:18) in brackets the paraphrase can have the mark and the bracketed reference is ignored.
- If a candidate quotes Qur'an and it was hadith or vice versa; and the quote is not accredited to them, it is not awarded.

1RA0_4B_Q01d

The focus of the marking changes from AO1 to AO2 on the d items. The candidates are being assessed on AO2 Analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief.

This constitutes 50% of the overall mark.

The question is 'Evaluate' this statement considering the arguments for and against and reach a justified conclusion – there must some consideration of the arguments (appraise the arguments to gain the higher grades).

Many candidates do excellent answers giving reasons for and against but not analysing or evaluating them. Formulas and writing frames restricted the flow of the arguments restricting student's progression to the highest level.

'D' items are marked using levels and awarded a best fit according to the level descriptors.

There are 3 marks for spelling, punctuation and grammar on 1(d).

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Beliefs and Teachings of Islam

Bullet point 1.3 The 99 beautiful names of Allah found in the Qur'an: what they teach Muslims about Allah; individual names, including Ar-Rahman (the All-Merciful), including Surah 55: 1, Ar-Rahim (the All-Merciful), including Surah 3: 31, As-Salam (the Source of Peace), including Surah 59: 23, Al-Khaliq (the Creator), including Surah 6: 102, Al-Ghaffar (the All-Forgiving), including Surah 2: 173, Ar-Razzaq, (the Sustainer), including Surah 51: 58 and **their importance should be used to illustrate understanding Allah and his relationship to humanity**; and their importance for Muslim living and worship today.

The question asked was: "The 99 beautiful names of Allah show Allah's relationship to humanity is rooted in forgiveness."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you must:

- refer to the Qur'an
- reach a justified conclusion.

Please note that, neither in the bullet point, nor on the question are candidates required to give a non-religious response. Candidates must respond to the question asked. Candidates must refer to the Qur'an to achieve beyond Level Two.

1RA0_4B_Q02a

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Lives of Prophets and Others

Bullet point 2.7 The Prophet Isa: the events of his life and teachings in the Qur'an; his birth; his mission; his life, including preaching, miracles, knowledge and disciples; his ascension, including views of his death (Surah 4: 157–158); his foretelling of Muhammad (Surah 61: 6); **his importance as a messenger of Allah especially in the Injil**; the significance of his example for Muslims today.

The question asked was: 'Outline three reasons Prophet Isa is important.'

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

1RA0_4B_Q02b

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Lives of Prophets and Others

Bullet point 2.3 The Prophet Ismail: the events of his life and teachings in the Qur'an, including Surah 21: 5–86; his importance as a messenger of Allah; **his building of the Ka'ba (Surah 2: 127–129)**; his relationship with his parents; and the command of Allah for him to be sacrificed and comparison of this story with the Tawrat; the significance of his example for Muslims today.

The question asked was: 'Explain two teachings about Ismail building the Ka'ba.'

Candidates are asked to 'Explain two' on (b) 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.

1RA0_4B_Q02c

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Lives of Prophets and Others

Bullet point 2.6 Maryam: the events of her life in the Qur'an and in the Hadith, including Surah 19 (Maryam); her importance as one who submits her will to Allah; her birth; childhood; the annunciation of her pregnancy; and **the birth of Isa**; the significance of her example for Muslims today; Muslim responses to non-religious arguments (including atheist and Humanist) which maintain that visions, such as the visitation of Jibril to Maryam, are not real and provide no proof that Allah exists

The question asked was: 'Explain two teachings in the Qur'an about when Maryam gave birth. In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.'

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.

1RA0_4B_Q02d

The focus of the marking changes from AO1 to AO2 on the d items. The candidates are being assessed on AO2 Analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief.

This constitutes 50% of the overall mark. The question is 'Evaluate' this statement considering the arguments for and against and reach a justified conclusion – there must be some consideration of the arguments (appraise the arguments to gain the higher grades).

Many candidates gave excellent answers giving reasons for and against but not analysing or evaluating them. Formulas and writing frames restricted the flow of the arguments restricting students' progression to the highest level. 'D' items are marked using levels and awarded a best fit according to the level descriptors.

Candidates were assessed on Section Two: Lives of Prophets and Others

Bullet point 2.1 The Prophet Nuh: the events of his life and teachings in the Qur'an, including Surah 71; his importance as one of the first messengers of Allah; his preaching; his thankfulness (Surah 17: 3); his challenges; the Ark and the destruction of his people; **the significance of his example for Muslims today.**

The question asked was: "Prophet Nuh is a good example for Muslims to follow today."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you must:

- refer to the Qur'an
- reach a justified conclusion.

Please note that, neither in the bullet point, nor on the question are candidates required to give a non-religious response. Candidates must respond to the question asked. Candidates must refer to the Qur'an to achieve beyond Level Two.

Summary

- Candidates should write three sentences in 'outline' (a) questions. Each sentence should contain one piece of information. There is no need for development. Incorrect words or sentences should be crossed out
- The 'explain' questions (b) and (c) require two developed points. For (c) items an additional mark is given for a reference to a source of wisdom, which does not need to be referenced and can be paraphrased
- Candidates should be directed to the specification and other published resources to learn key terms and sources of wisdom
- The (d) items need an understanding of religion and belief, as well as the ability to evaluate the validity of arguments in order to reach a conclusion. They should appraise the reasons given, for and against the statement.
- Considering the validity of the evidence is one way to appraise arguments
- Capitalise proper nouns and use subject specific terminology appropriately.