



Examiners' Report

June 2023

GCSE Religious Studies A 1RA0 3B

Edexcel and BTEC Qualifications

Edexcel and BTEC qualifications come from 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.



Giving you insight to inform next steps

ResultsPlus is Pearson's free online service giving instant and detailed analysis of your students' exam results.

- See students' scores for every exam question.
- Understand how your students' performance compares with class and national averages.
- Identify potential topics, skills and types of question where students may need to develop their learning further.

For more information on ResultsPlus, or to log in, visit www.edexcel.com/resultsplus. Your exams officer will be able to set up your ResultsPlus account in minutes via Edexcel Online.

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 2023

Publications Code 1RA0_3B_2306_ER

All the material in this publication is copyright

© Pearson Education Ltd 2023

Introduction

The paper contributes to 25% of the overall award.

The assessment consists of two questions, candidates must answer both questions. There are two sections: Arguments for the Existence of God; Religious Teachings on Relationships and Families in the 21st Century.

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 paper allows an in-depth study of Christianity within the United Kingdom, focussing on its beliefs and teachings. The unit engages the interest of candidates, as it addresses many Christian beliefs and teachings in addition to some issues affecting young people today.

The standard of candidate responses was similar to last year. Candidates' knowledge and understanding of the specification content was demonstrated well, however, candidates need to be fully-prepared to evaluate and appraise arguments on the (d) questions.

Question 1 (a)

The candidate was assessed on bullet point 1.3

Miracles as proof of the existence of God: the nature and importance of miracles for Christians; **biblical examples of miracles**, including John 4:43-54; reasons why they might lead to belief in the existence of God and Christian responses to nonreligious arguments (including atheist and Humanist) which maintain that miracles can be scientifically explained and provide no proof that God exists; divergent understandings of what miracles show about the nature of God for Christians.

The question asked was 'Outline three miracles recorded in the Bible.'

Lists gain a maximum of 1 mark.

Candidates need to provide an outline and, therefore, should write in full sentences.

1 (a) Outline three miracles recorded in the Bible.

(3)

One miracle recorded in the Bible is Jesus feeding the ~~50~~ five thousand.
Another miracle in the Bible is Jesus walking on water.
A third miracle in the Bible is Jesus' resurrection.



This candidate gains marks for:

- feeding of the five thousand (1)
- walking on water (1)
- resurrection (1)

Total: 3 marks

Question 1 (b)

The candidate was assessed on 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.

Candidates are asked to 'explain two' on (b) items. Therefore, two points are required and both need to be fully developed in order to attain 4 marks. Development consists of a piece of extra information, a reference to a source of wisdom, quotes or examples. The development must be of the point given and be relevant to the question asked.

The question asked was 'Explain two ways answered prayers might lead to belief in God.'

Candidates should provide two ways.

Separating them into two paragraphs helps with their confidence that they have answered the question fully.

(b) Explain **two** ways answered prayers might lead to belief in God.

(4)

One way an answered prayer may lead to belief in God is because it shows God's omnipotent nature. The fact that someone could pray to God and get an answer back would prove his existence.

Another way an answered prayer may lead to the belief in God is because it shows that there is someone listening and therefore it must be God. This is because it is direct communication with him and no other being could do the same.



The candidate gives two developed reasons and gains marks for:

- 'it shows God's omnipotent nature' (1)
- developed by '...would prove his existence' (1)
- 'there is someone listening' (1)
- developed by 'it must be God' (1)

Total: 4 marks

Question 1 (c)

The candidate was assessed on bullet point 1.6

Design argument: the classical design 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 design argument may show about the nature of God for Christians**, including Romans 1:18 – 24; Christian responses to nonreligious (including atheist and Humanist) arguments against the design argument as evidence for the existence of God.

Candidates are asked to 'explain two' on (c) items. Therefore, two reasons were required and both needed to be fully developed in order to attain 4 marks. Development consists of a piece of extra information, a reference to a source of wisdom, quotes or examples. The development must relate to the reason given and be relevant to the question asked. This question required one of the reasons to be supported with a 'reference to a source of wisdom', this should have added to the reason given and could not be awarded twice. Therefore, if it was used as development it did not gain a second mark for being the source.

Advice for centres regarding what constitutes a source of wisdom: Candidates do not have to reference a quote or quote it word for word.

- If examiners are unsure they might use a search engine for clarification. 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 candidates 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 will gain 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.

The question asked was 'Explain two things the design argument shows about the nature of God.'

~~The world was not created by an all powerful being~~
~~Nothing just appears.~~
(c) Explain **two** things the design argument may show about the nature of God.

In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority. — William Paley
Everything was made (s) by design

William Paley created the design argument, also known as the watch theory, to show the existence and nature of God. William states in his theory that everything has a created creator; that nothing just appears until it's made. For example, a watch has a creator; so why wouldn't a rock have some form of creator. He also states how if something as intricate as a watch can be made, why wouldn't a universe that works in perfect harmony do the same.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

Many candidates, like this candidate, describe the design argument but do not link it to the nature of God. Therefore, they gain no marks.

Total: 0 marks



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Candidates must read the question carefully.

Question 1 (d)

The candidate was assessed on bullet point 1.4

Christian attitudes towards religious experiences and its use as a philosophical argument for the existence of God: the nature of a religious experience and why it might be regarded as revelation, including reference to Exodus 3; Christian responses to non-religious (including atheist and Humanist) arguments that religious experiences do not provide proof that God exists.

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 provided excellent responses giving reasons for and against but did not then analyse or evaluate them. Formulas and writing frames restricted the flow of the arguments, often restricting candidates' progression to the higher levels. The (d) responses must not be point marked, in live marking they are marked using levels and awarding is carried out using 'best fit' according to the level descriptors.

The question asked was "God offers proof of his existence through religious experiences."

In your answer you should:

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

Candidates should give reasons for the points of view and appraise these – comment on their validity, consider them and evaluate them in relation to the statement, to gain the higher levels.

*(d) "God offers proof of his existence through religious experiences."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

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

For
Strengthens belief
No human could
do miracles

Against
Natural
instances
People taking
drugs (15)

I believe that God does offer proof of existence through religious experiences because how could a normal human being make miracles happen, only God could be able to do things like the Noah's ark covenant. Normal humans could not. An argument against this would be the fact that a lot of the time science or nature could have an explanation ~~to~~ for some of the visions or revelations. For example the weather.

Another way I believe God offers proof of existence will be because he would want more people to believe that he is all powerful. People who have gone through religious experiences are very likely to tell their friends and family. This means the word gets out and more and more people ~~with~~ will strengthen their belief and relationship

with God, or maybe even start believing from being an Atheist. An opposing view to this would be there is no actual proof that God ^{is behind} ~~has done~~ any of the experiences and a lot of people were taking a lot of Drugs, this could mean a few of the religious experiences are not necessarily authentic.

To conclude I still believe that God does offer proof of his existence because no human would be able to be in control of any of the visions, or revelations. Even though science can possibly back up some of ~~these~~ these revelations as false I still do not believe God isn't behind some of them.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

There is limited understanding and judgement.

The answer lacks the appraisal of evidence to go to Level 3.

Total: 6 marks

Level 2

Question 2 (a)

Introduction

The candidate was assessed on bullet point 2.6

Christian teachings and attitudes towards divorce and remarriage: Christian teachings about divorce and remarriage, including Matthew 19:1 – 12; divergent Christian, non-religious (including atheist and Humanist) attitudes to divorce and remarriage, including the application of ethical theories, such as situation ethics, and Christian responses to them.

The question asked was 'Outline three reasons why some Christians would allow divorce.'

In an 'outline' question no marks are given for development.

2 (a) Outline **three** reasons why some Christians would allow divorce.

(3)

One reason why some Christians would allow divorce is because the relationship could be abusive.

A second reason is because the husband or wife could of committed adultery therefore they would ~~break~~ ~~with~~ which is in the ten comandments.

A third reason is because the wife and husband wouldn't be happy with each other.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

The candidate outlines three reasons:

- relationship could be abusive (1)
- adultery (1)
- wouldn't be happy with each other (1)

Total: 3 marks

Question 2 (b)

The candidate was assessed on bullet point 2.6

Christian teachings and attitudes towards divorce and remarriage: Christian teachings about divorce and remarriage, including Matthew 19:1 – 12; divergent Christian, non-religious (including atheist and Humanist) attitudes to divorce and remarriage, including the application of ethical theories, such as situation ethics, and Christian responses to them.

The question asked was 'Explain two teachings about the equality of men and women in a Christian family.'

Where candidates did well they knew bible verses to support the information given.

(b) Explain **two** teachings about the equality of men and women in a Christian family.

(4)

- One teaching is that the man and woman should have different roles in the family and the woman should have more responsibility of the children compared to the father. Mainly stated in the old testament.

- Another teaching is that the ~~man~~^{man} and woman should be equal within the family and because they are seen as equal in Jesus' eyes it should be no different than in the family. Mainly stated in the new testament.



This candidate gains marks for:

- '...different roles' (1)
- developed by '..more responsibility for the children' (1)
- '..they should be equal' (1)
- developed by '...seen as equal in Jesus eyes' (1)

Total: 4 marks

Question 2 (c)

The candidate was assessed on bullet point 2.3

Christian teachings about the purpose and **importance of the family** including: 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)

The question asked was 'Explain two teachings about the importance of raising children within a Christian family.'

When asked for teachings its best to use bible verses or formal Christian teachings in the answer.

(c) Explain **two** teachings about the importance of raising children within a Christian family.

Marks

In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

(5)

One teaching about the importance of raising children within a Christian family is that by raising children in a Christian household, they are more likely to be religious and follow through with the family Christian teachings. Additionally, ~~they~~ this will strengthen their faith and their relationship with God.

Another teaching about the importance of raising children in a Christian family is that they will be taught how to be a good Christian. In Exodus 20, are the 10 commandments that will guide children to be good and "honour your father and mother". ~~Additionally~~ This is significant because they will be taught their morals and will go to heaven.



This candidate gains marks for two developed reasons and a source of wisdom.

- '...they are more likely to be religious' (1)
- developed by '...and follow through with the family Christian teachings' (1)
- '...they will be taught how to be good Christians' (1)
- developed by the source of wisdom 'honour your father and mother' (1)
- '...developed by '...taught their morals' (1)

Total: 5 marks

Question 2 (d)

The candidate was assessed on bullet point 2.3

Christian teachings about the purpose and importance of the family including: **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)

The bullet points are to tell candidates what is required and what will gain marks.

Many candidates did not link family planning to contraception and gave answers relating to planning holidays and schools for children. These responses could not be given marks.

(d) "Christians should not use family planning." contraception?

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Christian teachings
- refer to relevant ethical arguments
- reach a justified conclusion.

(12)

Some Christians would agree with this statement and argue that the bible condemns the use of contraception, therefore you should not use it as you are then going against your faith. This is a good argument because if the bible teaches not to, then realistically you shouldn't use it as then you wouldn't be following the teachings of God. Another reason why Christians would agree with this statement is because the bible teaches that sex should only occur in the hope of starting a family, not for your own enjoyment and pleasure. Therefore using contraception goes against the idea of making babies as it is used to prevent pregnancy. This would mean you aren't living ~~a~~ a good christian life as you are going against the teachings in the bible.

Other Christians would disagree with

this statement and argue that sometimes contraception is needed if people aren't in the right financial position to bring up children. They still want to have sex as an act of love but can't look after children as of that time.* Another reason why Christians would disagree with this statement is if situation ethics had been used of, "what is the most loving action?" and the ~~the only option~~ only option left is the use of contraception. Some Christians would also argue that using natural methods is allowed as you are taught that ~~only~~ only using artificial methods isn't allowed.

* They know that in the future when the timing is right, they will aim to have children.

Overall, I disagree with this statement because in some cases, the use of contraception is needed. For example, if the woman's health conditions aren't stable enough to give birth healthily.



The candidate gives a 'for and against' and begins to make judgements and appraise the arguments given.

They demonstrate a limited understanding of religion and belief.

There are no marks for SPaG on this question.

Total: 7 marks

Level 2

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- When answering the (a) questions use three full sentences and ideally write these on three separate lines
- The source of wisdom offered to support answers in (c) questions must be relevant to the question and support the reasons given
- The (d) questions ask for an evaluation after considering the evidence. Higher marks are achieved if the evidence/reasons given is/are 'considered' or appraised for their value as an argument
- On (d) questions the bullet points indicate the viewpoints that will be credited in the answer, so candidates must respond to all aspects of the question
- Candidates should read the questions carefully, in order to ensure that their answer responds fully to the question being asked

Grade boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html>

