

International GCSE

Religious Studies (4RS0)

Teacher's guide

First examination 2011

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Introduction

The Edexcel International General Certificate of Secondary Education (International GCSE) in Religious Studies is designed for schools and colleges. It is part of a suite of International GCSE qualifications offered by Edexcel.

About this guide

This guide is for teachers who are delivering, or planning to deliver, the Edexcel International GCSE in Religious Studies qualification. The guide supports you in delivering the course content and explains how to raise the achievement of your students.

The guide:

- expands on the information about course requirements given in the Edexcel International GCSE Religious Studies (4RS0) specification
- provides additional information about the relationship between the generic specification content and the religion-specific content in Parts 1 and 2 of the examination, and explains how this translates into the content, nature and style of the examination questions
- provides additional information about assessment procedures (the three Assessment Objectives (AO); the nature and style of the questions set for the three Assessment Objectives; the role of levels of response; and the relationship between the levels of response and suggested answers in the mark scheme)
- provides detailed discussion of specific examples from the sample assessment materials
- provides detailed discussion of sample student responses to International GCSE Religious Studies questions
- offers some suggestions about planning and teaching the course.

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Why choose this qualification?

The Edexcel International GCSE in Religious Studies is a rigorous and challenging traditional GCSE course, which is assessed through a single examination of 2 hours and 30 minutes. The qualification enables students to explore religious, philosophical and ethical issues in the context of a study of religious teachings and religious and non-religious beliefs and values (assessed in Part 1 of the examination), and aspects of the religious community (assessed in Part 2 of the examination). While most questions can be answered from the perspective of a religion (or religions) of students' choice, for Part 1 of the examination students also need knowledge and understanding of key religious ideas which are not specific to any one religion, and of non-religious beliefs and values.

This course offers teachers opportunities to explore a wide range of religious, philosophical and ethical issues with their students. It also offers students opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of these issues, and to express their ideas and opinions when evaluating the views of others.

Edexcel's International GCSE in Religious Studies:

- offers a choice of questions
- provides clear descriptions of areas of study
- has one route of assessment, a single examination
- has a single tier of entry assessing the whole ability range
- is open to students of any or no religious tradition
- is based primarily on study of at least one of the six major world religions, together with study of key religious ideas which are not specific to any one religion, and of non-religious beliefs and values
- provides some opportunity for study of local religious practice
- provides a solid basis for progression to Edexcel's AS and Advanced GCE in Religious Studies, or other equivalent qualifications, and in particular for study of the Philosophy of Religion and Ethics options in Edexcel AS/A2.

Go to www.edexcel.com for more information about this International GCSE and related resources.

Support from Edexcel

We are dedicated to giving you exceptional customer service. Details of our main support services are given below. They will all help you to keep up to date with International GCSE 2009.

Website

Our website www.edexcel.com is where you will find the resources and information you need to successfully deliver International GCSE qualifications. To stay ahead of all the latest developments visit the microsite and sign up for our email alerts.

Ask Edexcel

Ask Edexcel is our free, comprehensive online enquiry service. Use Ask Edexcel to get the answer to your queries about the administration of all Edexcel qualifications. To ask a question please go to www.edexcel.com/ask and fill out the online form.

Ask the Expert

This free service puts teachers in direct contact with over 200 senior examiners, moderators and external verifiers who will respond to subject-specific queries about International GCSE 2009 and other Edexcel qualifications.

You can contact our experts via email or by completing our online form. Visit www.edexcel.com/asktheexpert for contact details.

Regional offices

If you have any queries about the International GCSE 2009 qualifications, or if you are interested in offering other Edexcel qualifications your Regional Development Manager can help you. Go to www.edexcel.com/international for details of our regional offices.

Training

A programme of professional development and training courses, covering various aspects of the specification and examination is available. Go to www.edexcel.com for details.

Section A: Qualification content

Introduction

Aims

The aims of the specification are to enable students to:

- acquire knowledge and develop understanding of religious beliefs, values and traditions, through the study of one or more of the six major world religions
- acquire knowledge and develop understanding of key religious ideas which are not specific to any one religion, and of non-religious beliefs and values
- consider the influence of religious beliefs, values and traditions and of non-religious beliefs and values
- consider religious and non-religious responses to ethical issues
- identify, investigate and respond to fundamental questions of life raised by religion and human experience, including questions about the meaning and purpose of life
- develop skills relevant to the study of religion.

Significant features and benefits

The specification:

- is open to students of any or no religious tradition
- provides some opportunity for study of local religious practice
- provides a solid basis for progression to Edexcel's AS and Advanced GCE in Religious Studies, or other equivalent qualifications.

Assessment

The specification offers one examination paper lasting 2 hours and 30 minutes.

Part 1: Beliefs and Values comprises 62 per cent of the examination. Students answer one question from each of the four sections. There are 20 marks available for each question. Students should spend approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes on Part 1.

Part 2: The Religious Community comprises 38 per cent of the examination. Students answer any two questions from a choice of 18. There are 25 marks available for each question. Students should spend approximately 1 hour on Part 2.

The total mark for the paper is 130.

Specification content

There is separate content for Part 1 and Part 2.

Part 1: Beliefs and Values

For Part 1, students answer from the viewpoint, and in the context of:

- a at least one of the six major world religions:
 - Buddhism
 - Christianity
 - Hinduism
 - Islam
 - Judaism
 - Sikhism
- b key religious ideas which are not specific to any one religion, and which may not be found in all religions (these apply to *Section A: The universe, human beings and their destiny* and *Section B: Ultimate reality and the meaning of life* only)
- c non-religious beliefs and values (that is, the beliefs and values of those who do not believe in God or an ultimate reality, or who are uncertain whether or not to believe in God or an ultimate reality).

Generic and religion-specific content

Part 1 is divided into four sections:

- Section A: The universe, human beings and their destiny
- Section B: Ultimate reality and the meaning of life
- Section C: Relationships, families and children
- Section D: Rights, equality and responsibilities.

Students should study all four sections, as they have to answer one question from each section in the examination.

The approach in Part 1 is generic, and examination questions are based on the generic specification content, set out on pages 9-16 of the specification, which gives details of all the topics in generic form.

This generic approach in Part 1 is an important feature of International GCSE Religious Studies, which reflects the fact that all six major religions address the same fundamental questions of existence, however much their answers may differ.

Students are required to study the topics in each section from the perspective of at least **one** religion, and also to have knowledge and understanding of, and to be able to evaluate, key ideas which are not specific to any one religion (and which may not be found in all religions) and non-religious beliefs and values. Thus, students approaching Part 1 through a study of Christianity, for example, will need to be familiar with the idea of rebirth, while those approaching it through a study of Buddhism will need to be familiar with the idea of resurrection; in both cases they will need to be familiar with non-religious views about death.

Details of specific beliefs, teachings, values, attitudes and practices for each of the six major world religions, which are important for study of Part 1 of the examination, are given in the religion-specific content for Part 1 of the examination, on pages 17-33 of the specification. However, centres should note that the religion-specific content is for **guidance only**. It is not an exhaustive list of all the beliefs, teachings, values, attitudes and practices from these religions which students could study in order to meet the requirements of the specification for Part 1 of the examination.

The generic specification is the basis of teaching and study for Part 1 of the examination. Centres should base their teaching on it, and ensure that they have covered all the topics listed in it.

Key ideas which are not specific to any one religion and key words

The generic specification, on pages 9-16 of the specification, contains all the key ideas which are not specific to any one religion. Those which may not be found in all religions, but which all students need to know, understand, and be able to evaluate, are also marked with an asterisk in the list of key words for Sections A and B.

Students also need to be familiar with, and to be able to explain and use, all the key words for Sections A-D. Some of these are printed in bold type in the generic specification, and all the key words for each section are listed at the end of that section. The meanings of these words are given in the glossary of generic key words (see Appendix 1 of the specification, on pages 51-54).

Non-religious beliefs and values

The generic specification also indicates the topics where knowledge and understanding of non-religious beliefs and values is required. Centres should ensure that students are aware that non-religious beliefs and values are diverse, and include a range of responses to fundamental questions of life.

Questions in Part 1

While students study a specific religion, or religions, questions in Part 1 do not explicitly ask for knowledge or understanding of the religion(s) they have studied. Question content is taken from the generic specification, but students answer either:

- (a) from the standpoint of the religion(s) they have studied
- or
- (b) from the standpoint of key idea(s) which are not specific to any one religion
- or
- (c) from the standpoint of non-religious ideas.

The following examples illustrate the different approaches:

- (a)
 - *Explain why some religious people are opposed to genetic engineering as a means of supporting successful conception.*
 - *Explain why religious freedom is an important human right.*

These questions can be answered from the standpoint of whichever religion(s) students have studied.

- (b)
 - *Outline religious teachings about rebirth.*
 - *Outline religious teachings about resurrection.*

These questions relate to key religious ideas, which are not specific to any one religion, and which are not found in all religions. In order to answer the first, students who have studied Christianity, Islam or Judaism need to know about the key religious idea of rebirth. To answer the second, students who have studied Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism need to know about the key religious idea of resurrection.

(c)

- *Outline non-religious ideas about how far human beings can exercise free will.*
- *Explain how life can have meaning and purpose for non-religious people.*

These questions relate to non-religious beliefs and ideas, which students need to know about in addition to the beliefs, values and practices of the religion(s) they have studied.

However, Part 1 contains four part (b) questions which do ask students to answer from the standpoint of **one chosen** religion. These questions are always phrased:

‘Choose **one** religion. Outline ...’

or

‘Choose **one** religion. Describe ...’.

For example:

- *Choose **one** religion. Outline its beliefs about the origin and purpose of the universe.*
- *Choose **one** religion. Outline its teachings about the purposes of human sexuality.*
- *Choose **one** religion. Outline attitudes within this religion to proselytisation.*

Part 2: The Religious Community

In Part 2, students answer from the viewpoint, and in the context of, at least one of the six major world religions:

- Buddhism
- Christianity
- Hinduism
- Islam
- Judaism
- Sikhism.

Generic and religious-specific content

Questions relate specifically to each of the six major world religions. The religion-specific content for each religion is given on pages 35-40 of the specification.

The generic specification content for Part 2, on page 34 of the specification, is for guidance only. **The religion-specific content is the basis of teaching and study for Part 2 of the examination.** Centres should base their teaching on it, and ensure that they have covered all the topics listed there for the major world religion or religions that their students are studying.

Glossary of generic key words

Centres are reminded of the importance of studying and learning the glossary of generic key words (see Appendix 1 of the specification). This study is essential in order to answer questions in both Part 1 and Part 2.

Studying more than one religion

While students' knowledge and understanding of the religious dimension of human experience will be enriched by studying more than one of the six major world religions, it is important to emphasise that they can meet all the requirements of the course by studying no more than one.

Information for Edexcel centres

This information is for centres changing to this qualification (4RS0).

The information is divided into two sections:

- Centres using the Edexcel International GCSE Religious Studies legacy specification (4425)
- Centres using the Edexcel O Level Religious Studies specification (7560).

Centres using the Edexcel International GCSE Religious Studies legacy specification (4425)

What has not changed

- The key aims of the course remain essentially the same.
- Assessment still consists of a single tier, which targets the complete range of grades A*-G.
- The examination still requires students to study both *Beliefs and Values* and *The Religious Community*.
- Students still answer most questions from the viewpoint, and in the context of, one of the six major religions.
- Students still need to know about religious ideas which are not specific to any one religion and non-religious beliefs and values.
- Centres do not require any additional resources to teach this qualification (4RS0).

What has changed

- There is now a single examination, which all students sit.
- There is no longer a coursework option.
- The content has been reorganised and parts of it rewritten.
- There are revised definitions of some of the key words.

Why it has changed

- To enable all students to be assessed by 100 per cent examination, reflecting centres' clearly-expressed preferences.
- To make it absolutely clear which topics centres need to cover, and that this includes (for Part 1 Sections A and B) key religious ideas which are not specific to any one religion and non-religious beliefs and values.
- To make the relationship between the generic and religious-specific content of the course absolutely clear.
- To make the definitions of the key words more precise.
- To make the examination a better basis for further study of Religious Studies, and for progression to Edexcel's AS and Advanced Level Religious Studies courses.

How it has changed

The table below sets out the relationship between the legacy qualification (4425) and this qualification (4RS0).

Legacy Edexcel qualification content reference	This qualification content reference	New content/deleted content*
Paper 1 (Beliefs and Values)	Part 1: Beliefs and Values	
Section A: Human beings and their destiny	Section A: The universe, human beings and their destiny	
(a) Human nature and the human condition	(b) Human nature and the human condition	Content unchanged.
(b) Human beings and their world	(a) The universe and the place of human beings in it	Content unchanged.
(c) The problem of evil and ignorance	(c) Selfishness, greed, ignorance and sin	<i>Deleted content: religious beliefs and teachings about the origin and cause of evil in the world.</i> New content: inclusion of war and violence; issue of whether selfishness, greed, ignorance and sin can be overcome.
(d) Life after death	(e) Death and life after death	Content unchanged.
(e) Fate and free will	(d) Free will, determinism and predestination	New content: explicit reference to the implications of free will, determinism and predestination.
Section B: The meaning and purpose of life	Section B: Ultimate reality and the meaning of life	
(a) The goal of life	(b) The meaning and purpose of life	New content: issue of whether life can only have meaning and purpose for religious people; issue of whether concern with questions about the meaning and purpose of life can get in the way of living it to the full, and making the world a better place.
(b) The ultimate reality	(a) Ultimate reality	<i>Deleted content: agnosticism and atheism.</i> New content: non-religious attitudes to the idea of an ultimate reality.

* Any content that has been deleted from the legacy qualification is indicated by the text in italics.

Legacy Edexcel qualification content reference	This qualification content reference	New content/<i>deleted content</i>*
(c) Reasons for belief and unbelief	(c) Belief, uncertainty and unbelief	New content: atheism; agnosticism; God as first cause, designer, and only possible explanation of the world. This sub-section now covers the range of reasons/factors that may lead to, or support, belief in the existence of God/an ultimate reality, and the reasons/factors that may lead to, or support, being unsure of, or not believing in, the existence of God/an ultimate reality.
(d) Living with suffering	(d) The problem of evil and suffering	New content: explicit reference to natural and moral evil; attempts by religious people to explain why God created a world containing suffering and allows it to continue; religious and non-religious responses to, and attempts to cope with, evil and suffering.
(e) Abortion and euthanasia	(e) Sanctity of life, abortion and euthanasia	New content: explicit reference to sanctity of life; non-religious views about the value of life; the value of human life. Clarification that knowledge of legal arrangements for abortion relates to any named country.
Section C: Marriage, family life and human relationships	Section C: Relationships, families and children	
(a) Human relationships	(a) Human relationships	New content: explicit reference to non-religious beliefs about/attitudes to human sexuality and its purpose; heterosexuality and homosexuality.
(b) The purposes of marriage	(b) Marriage and partnership	New content: inclusion of cohabitation and civil partnership.
(c) Divorce and remarriage	(c) Divorce and remarriage	New content: reference to non-religious attitudes.

* Any content that has been deleted from the legacy qualification is indicated by the text in italics.

Legacy Edexcel qualification content reference	This qualification content reference	New content/<i>deleted content</i>*
(d) Family structures and responsibilities	(d) Family structures and responsibilities	New content: reference to non-religious attitudes; the consequences for individuals, religious communities and society when family life breaks down.
(e) Celibacy and childlessness	(e) Childlessness and celibacy	New content: reference to non-religious attitudes.
Section D: Relationships with other people	Section D: Rights, equality and responsibilities	
(a) Human rights	(a) Human rights	New content: reference to non-religious attitudes; specific human rights of liberty, equality before the law and freedom of opinion; examples of religious and non-religious people supporting human rights.
(b) Roles and status in society	(b) Equal rights and equal opportunities	New content: reference to non-religious beliefs/attitudes; equal opportunities for women; disability and disability bias.
(c) Racial harmony	(c) The multi-ethnic society and racial harmony	New content: reference to non-religious beliefs/attitudes; the responsibilities of those living in a multi-ethnic society.
(d) Interfaith relationships	(d) The multi-faith society and interfaith relationships	New content: reference to non-religious beliefs/attitudes; the responsibilities of religious and non-religious people living in a multi-faith society.
(e) Relationships between rich and poor	(e) Relationships between rich and poor	New content: reference to non-religious beliefs/teachings.

* Any content that has been deleted from the legacy qualification is indicated by the text in italics.

Legacy Edexcel qualification content reference	This qualification content reference	New content/ <i>deleted content</i> *
Paper 2 (The Religious Community)	Part 2: The Religious Community	
For each of the six major world religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism): (a) Worship and celebration	For each of the six major world religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism): (d) Worship and celebration	Content unchanged.
(b) Leadership and authority	(a) Religious texts and sources of authority	<i>Content deleted: founders, prophets and other significant historical figures; roles and authority of international, national and local contemporary leading figures and the impact of their teaching/lives on believers.</i> New content: role and authority of religious texts in the religion, including their use in worship, devotion/meditation and instruction/education.
(c) Rules for living	(c) Rules for living	Content unchanged.
(d) Founders, gurus, avatars and prophets	(b) Founders and leaders	New content: lives of the founders of the religion/tradition; their teachings and status/significance; their impact on believers/devotees.
(e) Places of worship and pilgrimage	(e) Places of worship and pilgrimage	New content: explicit reference to the external and internal appearance, design, significant features, purpose(s), use(s) and importance for believers/devotees, of local places of worship and buildings/venues of regional, national and international significance for the religion.

* Any content that has been deleted from the legacy qualification is indicated by the text in italics.

Centres using the Edexcel O Level Religious Studies specification (7560)

AS and Advanced GCE courses have undergone significant change and development since the introduction of GCSE 20 years ago. GCSE is now the established route for progression to study post-16, and is an essential part of the process of equipping students with the knowledge and skills they need to achieve success at AS and Advanced level.

The International GCSE in Religious Studies qualification is designed to make the changeover from O level to International GCSE as straightforward as possible for centres.

- Much of the content of the O level specification relates to the content of the International GCSE specification.
- Expertise and resources, developed for the teaching of O level, will support the teaching and learning of International GCSE Religious Studies.
- Centres teaching the Edexcel O level specification are already familiar with the three Assessment Objectives of Knowledge (AO1), Understanding (AO2) and Evaluation (AO3).
- Assessment for the revised International GCSE qualification is also by a single examination.

There is no coursework requirement.

Information for centres starting the Edexcel International GCSE for the first time

Centres contemplating a change from other GCSE Religious Studies courses to Edexcel International GCSE Religious Studies will find doing so uncomplicated and rewarding.

- Whether centres are currently following GCSE courses based on one religion, or on more than one religion, their existing knowledge and expertise will be relevant to the teaching of Edexcel International GCSE in Religious Studies.
- There will be no need to acquire new resources, as existing resources can be used to support teaching and learning.
- Edexcel's International GCSE Religious Studies specification makes it absolutely clear what centres need to teach and what students need to know and understand: there are no hidden or unexpected topics or areas of study.
- This Teacher's guide gives guidance about assessment, including detailed discussion of questions from the sample assessment materials, and of exemplar student responses to International GCSE Religious Studies questions.
- International GCSE Religious Studies is designed to provide a solid basis for progression to Edexcel's AS and Advanced GCE in Religious Studies, and in particular for study of Philosophy of Religion and Ethics, which are the most popular options at AS and Advanced level.
- Edexcel's International GCSE specification does not prescribe which religion, or combination of religions, centres should teach, or restrict study to a limited number of religions, but allows centres a free choice of one (or more) of the six major world religions.
- Assessment is through a single examination, so centres do not need to spend time considering alternative papers or coursework requirements.
- By enabling students to explore a wide range of religious philosophical and ethical issues, and offering them opportunities to express their ideas and opinions, Edexcel's International GCSE Religious Studies is designed to promote enthusiasm for further study of the subject.

Section B: Assessment

Assessment overview

Assessment is through a single examination, taken by all students, which is divided into two parts: *Part 1: Beliefs and Values* and *Part 2: The Religious Community*. The scheme of assessment consists of a single tier, in which all components target the complete range of grades A*-G (see grade descriptions for grades A, C and F on page 46 of the specification).

The table below gives an overview of the assessment for the revised specification. It is suggested that this information is made available to students to ensure that they are fully prepared and know what to expect in each assessment.

Paper	Percentage	Marks	Time	Availability
One paper consisting of two parts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part 1: Beliefs and Values Part 2: The Religious Community 	Part 1 comprises 62% of the examination. Part 2 comprises 38% of the examination.	The total mark for the paper is 130.	The duration of the whole paper is 2 hours and 30 minutes. Students should spend approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes on Part 1 (just over 20 minutes per question) and approximately 1 hour on Part 2 (30 minutes per question).	June First assessment June 2011

Assessment Objectives and weightings

	% in International GCSE
AO1: recall, select, organise, and deploy knowledge of the specification content (this Assessment Objective is often referred to as 'Knowledge')	37%
AO2: describe, analyse and explain the relevance and application of a religion or religions (this Assessment Objective is often referred to as 'Understanding')	40%
AO3: evaluate different responses to religious and moral issues, using relevant evidence and argument (this Assessment Objective is often referred to as 'Evaluation')	23%
TOTAL	100%

The percentages above are not intended to provide a precise statement of the number of marks allocated to particular Assessment Objectives.

Assessment summary

Paper	Description	Knowledge and skills
One paper consisting of two parts:		
Part 1: Beliefs and Values	<p>Four sections (A-D), containing two four-part questions.</p> <p>Students must answer all the parts of one question from each section.</p> <p>Each four-part question is worth a total of 20 marks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • part (a) short answer, 2 marks, target grade E • part (b) extended answer, 5 marks, target grade C • part (c) extended answer, 8 marks, target grade C • part (d) extended answer, 5 marks, target grade C. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • part (a) tests AO1 (Knowledge) • part (b) tests AO1 (Knowledge) • part (c) tests AO2 (Understanding) • part (d) tests AO3 (Evaluation) <p>Mark allocation per AO for each question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AO1 7 marks • AO2 8 marks • AO3 5 marks. <p>Mark allocation per AO for Part 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AO1 28 marks • AO2 32 marks • AO3 20 marks.

Paper	Description	Knowledge and skills
Part 2: The Religious Community	<p>Six sections (A-F: one section for each of the six major world religions, covered by the specification), containing three three-part questions.</p> <p>Students must answer all the parts of two questions, which may be taken from any part of the paper.</p> <p>Each three-part question is worth 25 marks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • part (a) extended answer, 10 marks, target grade A • part (b) extended answer, 10 marks, target grade A • part (c) extended answer, 5 marks, target grade C. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • part (a) tests AO1 (Knowledge) • part (b) tests AO2 (Understanding) • part (c) tests AO3 (Evaluation) <p>Mark allocation per AO for each question:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AO1 10 marks • AO2 10 marks • AO3 5 marks. <p>Mark allocation per AO for Part 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AO1 20 marks • AO2 20 marks • AO3 10 marks.
Total for Part 1 and Part 2		<p>Mark allocation per AO for examination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AO1 48 marks • AO2 52 marks • AO3 30 marks. <p>AOs as percentages for examination:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AO1 37% • AO2 40% • AO3 23%.

More details about the content and style of questions, the knowledge and skills students need to demonstrate, the Assessment Objectives, and how students' work is assessed are provided in *Examination questions* on page 18.

Examination questions

Assessment Objectives, question styles and levels of response

Part 1: Beliefs and Values

Questions in all the four sections of Part 1 assess **AO1** (Knowledge), **AO2** (Understanding) and **AO3** (Evaluation).

In each section, there are two four-part questions, of which students must answer **all** parts of **one** question.

Each question is worth a total of **20** marks, with **2** marks for part (a), **5** marks for part (b), **8** marks for part (c) and **5** marks for part (d).

Part (a) tests **AO1** and always relates to the key words for a particular section, which are listed in Appendix 1 of the specification (pages 51-54).

Students are required either to provide a definition of a key word, or to give an example of it.

For example:

- *What is religious **conversion**?*
- *What is **equality before the law**?*
- *Give **two** examples of the **rights of children**.*

Two marks are awarded for a correct answer or example, and **one** mark for a partially correct one.

Part (b) of each question also assesses **AO1**.

Usually, students are required to **outline** (that is, survey the main elements of) a religious (or non-religious) belief(s), teaching(s), or practice(s) from a particular section.

Occasionally, students are asked to **describe** (that is, give a more in-depth account of) a particular belief, teaching, or practice, or an aspect(s) of one of these.

For example:

- *Outline religious beliefs about the ultimate reality which do not include reference to God.*
- *Outline non-religious ideas about how far human beings can exercise free will.*
- *Choose **one** religion. Outline its beliefs about the origin and purpose of the universe.*
- *Describe **one** non-religious response to divorce.*

Answers are assessed against the following three levels of response, to a maximum of **five** marks:

- **Level 1** For an isolated example of relevant knowledge (1-2 marks)
- **Level 2** For basic relevant knowledge presented within a limited structure (3-4 marks)
- **Level 3** For an organised outline/description, deploying relevant knowledge with limited use of specialist vocabulary (5 marks).

Part (c) of each question assesses **AO2**.

Students are required to explain a religious (or non-religious) belief(s), teaching(s), or practice(s) from a particular section. Most of the questions will be of the ‘**explain why ...**’ type. However, there will be some ‘**explain how ...**’ questions.

For example:

- Explain why some people believe that ignorance is the root cause of human wrongdoing.
- Explain why religious freedom is an important human right.
- Explain how life can have meaning and purpose for non-religious people.

Answers are assessed against the following four levels of response, to a maximum of **8** marks:

- **Level 1** For a simple, appropriate and relevant idea (1-2 marks)
- **Level 2** For a basic explanation, showing understanding of a relevant idea (3-4 marks)
- **Level 3** For a developed explanation, showing understanding of the main idea(s), using some specialist vocabulary (5-6 marks)
- **Level 4** For a comprehensive explanation, showing a coherent understanding of the main idea(s) and using specialist language appropriately (7-8 marks).

It is important to emphasise that part (c) answers are assessed as **explanations**, not **descriptions**. Therefore, answers which describe, rather than explain, cannot go beyond Level 1.

Part (d) of each question assesses **AO3**.

The questions take the form of controversial statements relating to religious and non-religious beliefs, teachings and practices. Students are asked whether they agree with the statement, and to give reasons for their opinion.

For example:

- *Animals do not have rights.*
- *God is the only possible cause of the universe.*
- *There will always be conflict in a society which contains more than one religion.*

Answers are assessed against the following five levels of response, to a maximum of **5** marks:

- **Level 1** For a relevant opinion (1 mark)
- **Level 2** For an opinion supported by one relevant reason (2 marks)
- **Level 3** For a basic for and against, or a reasoned opinion supported by religious/moral evidence (3 marks)
- **Level 4** For a reasoned evaluation, using religious/moral argument, evidence or examples, referring to another point of view (4 marks)
- **Level 5** For a coherent and reasoned evaluation, based on religious/moral argument, evidence or examples, giving a balanced account of an alternative point(s) of view to reach a personal conclusion (5 marks).

It is important to emphasise that, in order to go beyond Level 3, answers must:

- give an opinion
- refer to another point of view
- refer to at least one named religion.

In order to go beyond Level 4, they must:

- give a balanced account of alternative points of view
- reach a personal conclusion.

The content of the questions set for Part 1 will be in line with the specification content, and will adhere to the way that content is worded on pages 9-16 of the specification.

Part 2: The Religious Community

Part 2 contains a total of **18** three-part questions on *The Religious Community*. Three questions will be set on each of the six religions covered in the specification. Students must answer **two** questions, which may be about **one** religion, or **two** different religions. Each question is worth a total of **25** marks, with **10** marks for parts (a) and (b), and **5** marks for part (c). Students must answer **all** parts of each question.

Part (a) of each question assesses **AO1 (Knowledge)**.

Students are required to **outline** (that is, survey the main elements of) or **describe** (that is, give a more in-depth account of) an aspect of *The Religious Community*, in the context of one of the six major world religions.

For example:

- *Outline ways in which Buddhists may follow the Five Precepts.*
- *Describe the external appearance and three significant internal features of a local place of Christian worship.*
- *Outline the influence of Ramanuja on the development of Hindu ideas.*

Answers are assessed against the following four levels of response, up to a maximum of **10** marks:

- **Level 1** For an isolated example of relevant knowledge (1-2 marks)
- **Level 2** For basic relevant knowledge, presented within a limited structure (3-5 marks)
- **Level 3** For an organised outline/description, deploying relevant knowledge with limited use of specialist vocabulary (6-8 marks)
- **Level 4** For a comprehensive outline/description, deploying specialist vocabulary appropriately within a coherent structure (9-10 marks).

Part (b) of each question assesses **AO2 (Understanding)**.

Students are required to **explain** an aspect of *The Religious Community*, in the context of one of the six major world religions.

Usually, questions will be of the ‘**explain why ...**’ type, but there may be some ‘**explain how ...**’ questions.

For example:

- *Explain why Shabbat is important in Judaism.*
- *Explain why one place of pilgrimage, other than Bethlehem or Jerusalem, is significant for Christians.*
- *Explain how the gurdwara plays an important role in the Sikh community.*

Answers are assessed against the following four levels of response, up to a maximum of **10** marks:

- **Level 1** For a simple, appropriate and relevant idea (1-2 marks)
- **Level 2** For a basic explanation, showing understanding of a relevant idea (3-5 marks)
- **Level 3** For a developed explanation, showing understanding of the main idea(s), using some specialist vocabulary (6-8 marks)
- **Level 4** For a comprehensive explanation, showing understanding of the main idea(s) and using specialist language appropriately (9-10 marks).

Again, it is important to emphasise that answers are assessed as **explanations, not descriptions**. Therefore, answers which describe, rather than explain, cannot go beyond Level 1.

Part (c) of each question assesses **AO3**.

The questions take the form of controversial statements relating to the beliefs, teachings and practices of the six major world religions. Students are asked whether they agree with the statement, and to give reasons for their opinion.

For example:

- *Worship is more important than meditation for most religious people* (Hinduism).
- *It is impossible to follow the example of a religious leader all the time* (Islam).
- *Dietary laws do not matter* (Judaism).

Answers are assessed against the following five levels of response, to a maximum of **5** marks:

- **Level 1** For a relevant opinion (1 mark)
- **Level 2** For an opinion supported by one relevant reason (2 marks)
- **Level 3** For a basic for and against, or a reasoned opinion supported by religious/moral evidence (3 marks)
- **Level 4** For a reasoned evaluation, using religious/moral argument, evidence or examples, referring to another point of view (4 marks)
- **Level 5** For a coherent and reasoned evaluation, based on religious/moral argument, evidence or examples, giving a balanced account of an alternative point(s) of view to reach a personal conclusion (5 marks).

It is important to emphasise that, in order to go beyond Level 3, answers must:

- give an opinion
- refer to another point of view
- refer to the religion named in the question.

In order to go beyond Level 4, they must:

- give a balanced account of alternative points of view
- reach a personal conclusion.

Examples from the sample assessment materials

Part 1: Beliefs and Values

This section is designed to provide guidance about how to answer questions in *Part 1: Beliefs and Values*, through discussion of a range of examples from the sample assessment materials.

It is important to keep in mind that the role of the mark schemes is to guide examiners in their marking.

The **mark schemes** (available via Edexcel Online) indicate a range of likely/expected answers to a question. They do not prescribe the only possible answer(s) to a question.

This is why, at the end of each suggested answer in the mark scheme, the following statement appears:

Other approaches are possible and must be rewarded according to the levels.

It is entirely possible that a student will interpret a question in a different way from the one anticipated, and provide an answer which, although it does not feature among the suggested answers in the mark scheme, nonetheless deserves credit. Such answers will be rewarded appropriately by the examiner, according to the levels of response.

The examples used below are **Question 5(a) and (b)** from Section C of Part 1 of the sample examination paper (see pages 18 and 59 of the sample assessment materials).

- *What is **celibacy**?*
- *Outline non-religious attitudes to adultery.*

and **Question 3(c) and (d)** from Section B of Part 1 of the sample examination paper (see pages 13 and 54-55 of the sample assessment materials).

- *Explain why the existence of suffering in the world may lead some people to reject belief in God.*
- *'A society which really cared about the terminally ill would permit euthanasia.'*
Do you agree? Give reasons for your opinion, showing that you have considered another point of view. In your answer, you should refer to at least one named religion.

Part 1 part (a) questions

These test **AO1** (Knowledge), and the maximum mark available is **2**.

Question 5(a):

*What is **celibacy**?*

The mark scheme gives the definition in Appendix 1 of the specification (page 53), 'Remaining unmarried and having no sexual relationships', which would receive the maximum of 2 marks. However, as the mark scheme states, any similar phrase would also receive full marks, while a partially correct one would receive 1 mark. The example of a partially correct answer given in the sample mark scheme is 'Not having sex', which would receive 1 mark.

As stated above, the Sections A-D part (a) questions relate to the key words in Appendix 1 of the specification (pages 51-54), and it is essential that students know and understand them.

Part 1 part (b) questions

These also test **AO1** (Knowledge), and the maximum mark available is **5** (Level 3).

Question 5(b):

Outline non-religious attitudes to adultery.

The sample mark scheme suggests four possibilities:

- some non-religious people believe that, although they did not make their marriage vows before God, they have entered freely into a lifelong union, and should not commit adultery
- some non-religious people believe that they should not break their marriage vows because doing so would make their marriage partner unhappy
- some non-religious people believe that, as they did not make their vows before God, there is no reason to give up the chance of happiness because of promises made in the past, even if this causes distress
- some non-religious people believe that, if one or other partner prefers somebody else, the marriage is over anyway.

As the mark scheme states, other approaches are possible. Students may be able to think of other **relevant** non-religious attitudes to adultery. However, in order to reach Level 3, an answer, whether using the non-religious attitudes to adultery mentioned in the mark scheme or other relevant ones, is likely to contain **at least two such attitudes** (as stated in the mark scheme), which are presented in the form of an **organised outline**, and show **limited use of specialist vocabulary** (see the AO1 Level 3 descriptors under Question 5 (b) on page 59 of the sample assessment materials).

Therefore, as well as containing at least two relevant non-religious attitudes to adultery, the answer must be structured, and contain at least some specialist vocabulary, in order to achieve the maximum marks available.

Examples of specialist vocabulary from the mark scheme for this question include ‘lifelong union’, ‘marriage vows’, ‘marriage partner’ and ‘vows before God’.

Part 1 Sections A-D part (c) questions

These questions test **AO2** (Understanding), and the maximum mark available is **8** (Level 4).

Question 3(c):

Explain why the existence of suffering in the world may lead some people to reject belief in God.

The sample mark scheme suggests four possible reasons:

- if God is benevolent, all-powerful and all-knowing, it is hard to see why he does not use his unlimited powers to stop suffering
- if such a God created the world, it is hard to see why he created one which he knew would contain suffering
- it is hard to see why God allows the good/innocent to suffer as well as the wicked
- the reasons that religious people give to explain the existence of suffering in the world are unconvincing.

As the mark scheme states, other approaches are possible. Students may be able to think of other appropriate reasons.

However, in order to reach Level 4, an answer (whether using the reasons mentioned in the mark scheme or other appropriate answers) is likely to contain at least two **developed reasons** (as stated in the mark scheme). This means that the explanation should be well structured, with detailed coverage of the **(at least) two reasons**.

The Level 4 descriptor expresses this as a **comprehensive explanation**, showing a **coherent understanding of the main idea(s)** and using specialist language appropriately.

Therefore, to answer this ‘**explain why...**’ question at Level 4 standard, students must provide a well-structured and detailed explanation, which makes it clear that they have a good understanding of the reasons they are giving, and which contains appropriate use of specialist language.

Examples of specialist language from the mark scheme include ‘benevolent’, ‘all-powerful’ ‘all-knowing’, ‘unlimited powers’ and ‘created’.

It must also be emphasised that what is being sought here is an **explanation**, so the answer must **give reasons** in response to the ‘explain why...’ question.

A simple test is whether the word **because** appears in, or could be inserted into, the answer. Answers may well begin: ‘The existence of suffering in the world leads some people to reject belief in God, because ...’

Where an outline or description (however good it may be) is given as an answer to a question requiring an explanation, this will be treated as being no more than a **simple idea** (see the Part 1 AO2 level descriptors on pages 6-7 of the sample mark scheme), and the answer will not go beyond Level 1.

Part 1 Sections A-D part (d) questions

These questions test **AO3** (Evaluation), and the maximum mark available is **5** (Level 4).

Question 3 (d):

‘A society which really cared about the terminally ill would permit euthanasia.’

Do you agree? Give reasons for your opinion, showing that you have considered another point of view. In your answer you should refer to at least one named religion.

The statement is a controversial opinion, with which students may agree or disagree. After each of the part (d) questions, students are asked whether they agree with the statement, and to give reasons for their opinion, showing that they have considered another point of view. No judgement is made about their opinion: **there is no ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ opinion**. In their answer, they must also refer to at least one named religion.

The mark scheme restates the issue with which the question is concerned, and indicates the way in which a Level 5 answer would be likely to deal with it.

This would be by contrasting the view that, to reduce suffering and/or in the interests of individual responsibility and freedom, euthanasia should be made available to the terminally ill or those whose quality of life is extremely poor, with such views as: euthanasia is against religious teachings that God gives life, and so God should decide when it ends; terminally ill people may feel pressurised to end their lives, against their true wishes; and, if terminally ill people are allowed to end their lives by euthanasia, they may miss out on life-saving treatment, resulting from medical advances.

The mark scheme makes it clear that other approaches are possible. Thus, students may use different reasons from those indicated as reasons for holding the view that a society which really cared about the terminally ill would permit euthanasia, or for rejecting it.

The important point is that, as the Level 5 descriptor makes clear (see page 55 of the sample assessment materials), in order to reach this level, students must give a **coherent and reasoned evaluation** of the statement, which is based on **religious/moral argument, evidence or examples**.

This involves giving a **balanced account of an alternative point, or points, of view**: so, whatever students' opinions about (in this case) euthanasia, and however powerful they consider their reasons for holding them to be, they must not confine their answer to a statement of their views and the reasons for holding them. They must also provide a fair account of the alternative view (there may be more than one) and of the reasons for holding it. They may totally disagree with the alternative view, but that is not the issue. They need to show that they are aware that other people have different views and of their reasons for holding them.

Further, to achieve Level 5, they must reach a **personal conclusion**: that is, having examined both sides of the argument, they must clearly state their own opinion, showing why, as far as they are concerned, the reasons on which their point of view is based outweigh those on which the alternative point(s) of view is based.

The difference between a Level 4 answer and one that reaches Level 5 is that the Level 4 answer, while it is a **reasoned evaluation**, which uses **religious/moral argument**, and refers to another point of view, does not give a **balanced account** of the alternative point(s) of view; and, while it gives an **opinion** for or against the statement, does not reach a clear, **personal conclusion**, as described above.

Thus, the **balanced account of an alternative point(s) of view** and the **personal conclusion** are the key criteria for distinguishing between a Level 4 and a Level 5 answer in part (d) answers.

For both levels, there must also be reference to **at least one named religion**.

Answers which do not give an opinion, do not refer to another point of view, and do not refer to at least one named religion, cannot go beyond Level 3 (see page 55 of the sample assessment materials).

It is important for all students to understand that these questions are not intended to test whether their opinions are right or wrong. **There are no 'right' or 'wrong' opinions**. For this reason, only 1 mark is awarded for the opinion itself, although students will lose marks if they do not give an opinion.

So, students may agree or disagree with the view that 'a society which really cared about the terminally ill would permit euthanasia'. They will gain only 1 mark for a relevant opinion. The other marks are awarded for the quality of the information, examples, arguments and reasons they use to support their opinion. However, if they give only the views of those who agree and/or disagree with the statement, without giving their own opinion, they will not gain marks beyond Level 3.

Part 2: The Religious Community

This section is designed to provide guidance about how to answer questions in Part 2, through discussion of a range of examples from the sample assessment materials. It is important to keep in mind all the points already made about the role of the mark scheme.

The examples used are:

Question 20(a) (see pages 31 and 93 of the sample assessment materials)

- *Outline what takes place at Makkah during the hajj.*

Question 13(b) (see pages 29 and 79 of the sample assessment materials)

- *Explain why the celebration of the Eucharist is important in Christianity.*

Question 16(c) (see pages 30 and 86 of the sample assessment materials)

- *'Ahimsa can never be more than an ideal.'*

Do you agree? Give reasons for your opinion, showing that you have considered another point of view.

Part 2 part (a) questions

These questions test **AO1** (Knowledge), and the maximum mark available is **10** (Level 4).

Question 20(a):

Outline what takes place at Makkah during the hajj.

The sample mark scheme suggests four activities:

- when pilgrims reach the outskirts of Makkah, they will purify their bodies by performing wudu, or having a full bath, before putting on the ihram
- they will perform the tawaf around the Ka'bah
- they will pray two rak'ahs at the Station of Ibrahim
- they will run seven times between As-Safar and Al-Marwa.

As the mark scheme states, other approaches are possible. Students may be able to think of other activities.

However, in order to reach Level 4, for which it must be a **comprehensive outline** (see the level descriptors on page 93 of the sample assessment materials), an answer, whether using the activities mentioned in the mark scheme or other relevant ones, is likely (as stated in the mark scheme) to outline **at least two**. An answer which outlines only one is unlikely to be sufficiently **comprehensive** to reach Level 4. A Level 4 answer also needs to have a **coherent structure**, and to use **specialist vocabulary** appropriately.

Examples of specialist vocabulary from the mark scheme include 'wudu', 'ihram', 'tawaf', and 'Ka'bah'.

Part 2 part (b) questions

These questions test **AO2** (Understanding), and the maximum mark available is **10** (Level 4).

Question 13(b):

Explain why the celebration of the Eucharist is important in Christianity.

The sample mark scheme suggests four reasons:

- the Eucharist reminds Christians of Jesus' sacrifice and resurrection, and enables Christians to commemorate them
- Jesus instructed his followers to celebrate the Eucharist
- it unites worshippers with God, and enables them to express their thanks to him
- for some Christians, the bread and the wine become, in a mystical way, the body and blood of Jesus.

As the mark scheme states, other approaches are possible. Students may be able to think of other appropriate reasons.

However, in order to reach Level 4, an answer, whether using the reasons mentioned in the mark scheme or other appropriate ones, is likely (as stated in the mark scheme) to contain **at least two reasons**, which **must be developed**. Unless it contains at least two reasons, the answer will not be a **comprehensive explanation** (see the level descriptors on page 79 of the sample assessment materials). A Level 4 answer must also show understanding of the main ideas, and use specialist language appropriately.

Examples of specialist vocabulary from the mark scheme include 'Jesus' sacrifice', 'resurrection', 'worshippers', 'bread and wine' and 'mystical'.

Therefore, to answer this '**explain why ...**' question at Level 4 standard, students need to provide an explanation which contains at least two developed reasons (to be comprehensive); which is well structured and detailed (to show understanding of the reasons they are giving); and which contains appropriately used specialist language.

As with Part 1 (c) questions, it must also be emphasised that what is being sought here is an **explanation**, so the answer must give reasons in response to this 'explain why ...' question. Again, a simple test is whether the word **because** appears, or could be inserted into, the answer. Answers may well begin: 'The celebration of the Eucharist is important in Christianity, because ...'.

Where an outline or description (however good it may be) is given as an answer to a question requiring an explanation, this will be treated as being **no more than a simple idea** (see the level descriptors on page 79 of the sample assessment materials), and the answer will not go beyond Level 1.

Part 2 part (c) questions

These questions test **AO2** (Understanding), and the maximum mark available is **10** (Level 4).

Question 16(c):

'Ahimsa can never be more than an ideal.'

Do you agree? Give reasons for your opinion, showing that you have considered another point of view.

As in Part 1, the statement is a controversial opinion, with which students may agree or disagree. Students are asked whether they agree with the statement, and to give reasons for their opinion, showing that they have considered another point of view. Again, no judgement is made about their opinion: **there is no 'right' or 'wrong' opinion**. In their answer, they must also refer to the religion named (or implied, in this case by the use of the word 'ahimsa') in the question.

The mark scheme restates the issue with which the question is concerned, and indicates the way in which a Level 5 answer would be likely to deal with it.

This would be by contrasting the view that ahimsa is a very difficult principle to practise consistently, even for those who are committed to it, with the view that it has been practised successfully, even in very testing circumstances.

The mark scheme makes it clear that other approaches are possible. Thus, students may use different reasons from those indicated as reasons for holding the view that ahimsa can never be more than an ideal, or for rejecting it.

The important point is that, as the Level 5 descriptor makes clear (see page 86 of the sample assessment materials), in order to reach this level, students must give a **coherent and reasoned evaluation** of the statement, which is based on **religious/moral argument, evidence or examples**.

This involves giving a **balanced account of an alternative point, or points, of view**: so, whatever students' opinions about (in this case) ahimsa, and however powerful they consider their reasons for holding them to be, they must not confine their answer to a statement of their views and the reasons for holding them. They must also provide a fair account of the alternative view(s) (there may be more than one) and of the reasons for holding it. They may totally disagree with the alternative view, but that is not the issue. They need to show that they are aware that other people have different views and of their reasons for holding them.

Further, to achieve Level 5, they must reach a **personal conclusion**: that is, having examined both sides of the argument, they must clearly state their own opinion, showing why, as far as they are concerned, the reasons on which their point of view is based outweigh those on which the alternative point(s) of view is based.

The difference between a Level 4 answer and one that reaches Level 5 is that the Level 4 answer, while it is a **reasoned evaluation**, which uses **religious/moral argument** and refers to another point of view, does not give a **balanced account** of the alternative point(s) of view; and, while it gives an **opinion** for or against the statement, it does not reach a clear, **personal conclusion**, as described above.

Thus, the **balanced account of an alternative point(s) of view** and the **personal conclusion** are the key criteria for distinguishing between a Level 4 and a Level 5 answer in part (d) answers.

For both levels, there must also be reference to the **religion named in the question**.

Answers which do not give an opinion, do not refer to another point of view, and do not refer to at least one named religion cannot go beyond Level 3 (see page 86 of the sample assessment materials).

It is important for all students to understand that these questions are not intended to test whether their opinions are right or wrong. **There are no right or wrong opinions.** For this reason, only 1 mark is awarded for the opinion itself, although students will lose marks if they do not give an opinion.

So, students may agree or disagree with the view that ‘ahimsa can never be more than an ideal’. They will gain only 1 mark for a relevant opinion. The other marks are awarded for the quality of the information, examples, arguments and reasons they use to support their opinion. However, if they give only the views of those who agree and disagree with the statement, but do not give their own opinion, they will not gain marks beyond Level 3.

Discussion of sample answers

These sample answers should be read in conjunction with the levels of response for answers in *Part 1: Beliefs and Values* and *Part 2: The Religious Community* on pages 18-21 of this guide. The answers appear with spelling and other errors, as they would in an examination script.

Part 1: Beliefs and Values

Sections A-D, part (a) questions, testing AO1 (Knowledge)

Question What does *benevolent* mean?

(2)

Answer *The belief that God has goodwill towards all beings*
(or a similar phrase).

Comment This is an example of a **correct** answer, and gains 2 marks.

See Appendix 1 of the specification (page 52).

Question What is *racial harmony*?

(2)

Answer *When there is no racism in the world.*

Comment This is an example of a **partially correct** answer, and gains 1 mark.

To gain full marks, the answer would need to give the definition in the glossary of key words, or a similar phrase:

People of different races/colours living together peacefully and happily.

See Appendix 1 of the specification (page 54).

Question What is *faithfulness* in marriage? (2)

Answer *Faithfulness is being truthful and honest in a marriage.*

Comment This is an example of an **incorrect answer**, and gains no marks.

The correct answer is:

Staying only with a partner and having sexual relations only with that partner
(or a similar phrase).

See Appendix 1 of the specification (page 53).

Sections A-D, part (b) questions, testing AO1 (Knowledge)

Question: Outline one argument for God's existence from the appearance of design in the world. (5)

Answer 1

If you found a watch on the ground, you would see that it was complex and intricately designed. This would lead you to believe that the watch had a designer, as such a complex machine could not just appear on its own. The world is much more complex than a watch, and it also is more intricately designed. It could not have appeared by chance. The only designer capable of creating something as fantastic as the world is God, so God must exist. This is the design/teleological argument created by William Paley.

Comment This is an example of a **Level 3** answer, and would receive the full 5 marks.

It gives an **organised outline** of an argument for God's existence, based on the appearance of design in the world, which deploys **relevant knowledge** and uses **limited specialist vocabulary**, for example 'complex and intricately designed', 'design/teleological argument', 'William Paley'.

Answer 2

Many people argue for the belief in God. Many religions say that God built the world in seven days but others believe in the 'Big Bang'. This causes many arguments in the belief in God.

Religions believe that the design and structure of the world was too intelligent for a big bang and must have been designed some how and by some one.

Comment This is a **Level 1** answer.

The content of the first paragraph is not relevant to the question. However, in the second paragraph, the student makes the point that the design and structure of the world are too complicated ('intelligent') just to be the result of a Big Bang. Therefore, it must have been designed by 'someone': that is, God. This is an **isolated example of relevant knowledge**, and would be awarded 2 marks.

Question: Choose one religion. Outline its teachings about racial harmony. (5)

Answer

Christians believe that everyone is equal and that it does not depend on race. When Jesus was on Earth he socialised with a black person and he wanted everyone to follow what he has done. God created us and created all races, and he would have wanted them to mix together and be united.

Comment This is an example of a Level 2 answer (3-4 marks) to a question testing **AO1**.

It gives **basic, relevant knowledge, presented within a limited structure**.

Sections A-D, part (c) questions, testing AO2 (Understanding)

Question: Explain why the existence of natural evil and suffering in the world may lead some people to reject belief in God. (8)

Answer 1

God is meant to be benevolent, omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent. If he is benevolent, he would not want the suffering caused by natural evil to occur. If he is omnipotent and omnipresent, he would be able to stop natural evil, such as natural disasters, and if he is omniscient, he would have known that creating the world would create the suffering it causes.

However, today there are natural disasters such as earthquakes and volcanoes in the world.

This leads some people to question God's personality – whether he is benevolent, omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient.

Questioning God's personality leads some people to question whether God exists at all. Therefore, some people find it hard to believe God exists, because of natural disasters such as these.

Comment This is an example of a **Level 4** answer (7-8 marks).

It gives a **comprehensive explanation** of why the existence of natural evil and suffering in the world may make it difficult to believe in God, which shows a **coherent understanding** of the main ideas (that it is difficult to reconcile belief in an omnipotent and benevolent God, who created the world, with the existence of suffering, caused by natural evil, in the world he created), and uses specialist language appropriately, for example 'benevolent', 'omnipotent', 'omniscient', 'natural disaster', 'creating'.

Answer 2

Natural disasters, like volcanoes, floods and earthquakes, kill and destroy many people's lives. This leads to extensive suffering e.g. in Bangladesh where floods occur frequently. Some people question, that if there is a God, why does he create all this suffering from these natural disasters and believe that if he is meant to be powerful then he should be able to stop them happening and therefore decrease the suffering which takes place. Religious people know that God creates this evil so they can help and show their kindness and loyalty. However a lot of people don't stand get this and feel that God should stop it all! Non-religious people, especially find it very hard to believe in God because they feel that if he exists he would do more to help and not have all this suffering in the world. They don't understand how he could let these bad things happen, if he was such a caring being. Therefore do not believe in him because they think he would prevent natural disasters taking place.

Comment This is a **Level 3** answer (5-6 marks).

If we compare it with the previous answer, we can see that, although it explains why moral evil and suffering make it difficult to believe in God, by **showing understanding of the main ideas** (that it is hard to understand why a powerful and caring God allows the suffering that is caused by natural disasters), the response lacks **coherence**. Whereas the Level 4 answer opens with a discussion of God's attributes (benevolence, omnipotence and omniscience), the sort of world we would expect such a God to create, and, therefore, the difficulties of reconciling belief in such a God with the presence of natural evil and suffering in the world, in this answer, God's attributes are not clearly stated (being 'powerful' is not the same as being omnipotent) and their implications are not fully discussed (the idea of God being 'caring' is not mentioned until the penultimate line). Thus, while the answer provides a **developed explanation** of why natural disasters may make it difficult to believe in God and contains **specialist vocabulary** (for example 'natural disasters', 'suffering', 'caring'), it **does not show a sufficiently coherent understanding of the main ideas** to reach Level 4.

Answer 3

Many people question whether there is a god/God. Such things as earthquakes, floods and volcanoes make people wonder why an all powerful, all loving God would let disasters and natural evils occur. It may be very hard for a religious person to continue their belief in God if a close relative for example gets killed in an earthquake. If God was all about love, people may ask why he does not prevent and eliminate all evils.

Comment This is a basic explanation (3-4 marks).

To go beyond **Level 2**, it would need to consider the attributes of God (omnipotence, omniscience, benevolence), which make it difficult to believe that such a being created the world. It also lacks explicit reference to creation, and although it refers to God's love, this idea and its implications are not developed.

Question: Explain why prejudice and discrimination cause problems in a multi-ethnic society.

(8)

Answer

Prejudice and discrimination cause problems in a multi-ethnic society. This is because many beliefs of one religion may offend those of another religion. For example, many Christians believe they should convert others to Christianity just as they were told to do. However, this could be a form of discrimination as trying to convert someone is suggesting that their religion is inferior to yours. Mis-understanding can lead to many of these problems.

Comment This answer does not receive any marks.

It does not answer the question set, which is about why prejudice and discrimination cause problems in a multi-ethnic society. However, the student has dealt with issues that may arise in a multi-faith society.

Sections A-D, part (d) questions, testing AO3 (Evaluation)

These answers also serve as examples for Part 2, Sections A-F part (c) questions (see below).

Question: Ideas like the ‘Big Bang’ make it impossible to believe in God. (5)

Answer 1

I disagree with this argument. According to Christian teaching God created everything, and he may have caused the big bang. The big bang may well be God creating more of the world. I believe God doesn't want us to know how the world was made, but to live a good life and to improve our souls. Perhaps one day, if we have prepared for paradise, we will find out many of God's secrets.

On the other hand some people may agree because there is supposedly scientific proof that the world was started by a big bang. Some people may comment that science is truth and religion is only faith.

Comment This response is an example of a **Level 4** answer (4 marks).

It is a **reasoned evaluation**, which uses **religious/moral argument/evidence** (that God may be responsible for the Big Bang; that perhaps God has reasons for not revealing how he made the world to human beings; and that there may be scientific evidence to support the theory that the world started as the result of a Big Bang), and refers to another point of view, as well as the student's own, which disagrees with the statement. However, although the answer gives an opinion, uses religious argument/evidence, and refers to another point of view, it does not reach a personal conclusion. This would involve a brief review of the arguments for and against the statement, to make it clear why, in the student's opinion, the reasons against the statement outweigh those for it. Thus, it does not reach Level 5.

Answer 2

Christians believe that God built the world in 7 days and that there is no such thing as the Big Bang. They also believe that the design and structure of the world is too clever for just a bang. Scientists believe that there is no such thing as God and that the world was created by a bang.

I believe that the world was formed by the Big Bang due to the evidence showing it was created by the big bang.

Comment This is a **reasoned opinion supported by religious/moral evidence**, and is, therefore, a **Level 3** answer (3 marks).

The answer considers both the Christian and scientific claims about the origin of the world (and the reasons why Christians believe that God made the world), which are seen as opposed to each other, and concludes that scientific evidence is in favour of the Big Bang explanation.

Answer 3

I disagree because such a bang could not have caused every human having its own DNA, the earth is too delicate to be caused by a big bang on the other hand people may disagree because science could explain the creation of the earth.

Comment This is a **Level 2** answer (2 marks).

It is an **opinion** (disagreement with the statement), **supported by one relevant reason** (that the Big Bang theory cannot explain the complexity – ‘delicacy’ – of the world or individual human identity). There is a hint of another point of view, but, to reach Level 2, this would need to be supported by a reason: for example, that scientific research into the origins of the universe had not identified God as a necessary part of the process.

Part 2: The Religious Community

Sections A-F, part (a) questions, testing AO1 (Knowledge)

Question: Outline the contribution of one human Guru to Sikhism. (10)

Answer

One human Guru who contributed to Sikhism was Guru Nanak. Guru Nanak was the first Guru and he founded Sikhism. He was the person who God chose to tell everyone about the way they should live their lives. Guru Nanak said that the most important thing for Sikhs was the way they live their lives and this is still believed by Sikhs even though the Guru has been dead for hundreds of years. Guru Nanak spent his life telling people about God, he travelled to many different places like Makkah and Sri Lanka. The people who listened to what Guru Nanak said to them were the first Sikhs, without him the religion wouldn't be here today. There were ten Gurus altogether and Guru Nanak started the chain off because he chose the man who would be the next Guru after him. As well as all this Guru Nanak wrote down many beautiful hymns which were put in the Guru Granth Sahib (this is the Holy Book for all Sikhs). As well as this Guru Nanak said many things that people hadn't heard before: he said God thought that everyone was equal and that people should share their food – Sikhs still do this today when they go to the Gurdwara.

Comment This is an example of a **Level 4** answer (9-10 marks).

The question asks for an **outline**, and therefore it is not necessary to describe any single contribution in great detail. However, the answer needs to show breadth of knowledge by outlining several different ways in which Guru Nanak contributed to Sikhism, and this is a **comprehensive** outline. The answer uses **specialist vocabulary appropriately**, for example 'Gurdwara' and 'Guru Granth Sahib', and the answer has a **coherent structure**.

Question: Outline how Sikhs worship in the Gurdwara.

(10)

Answer

When Sikhs go to the Gurdwara they go to pray with different other people and start meditating on God's name, when they meditate on God's name they have a clear thought and they become God centred. After they have prayed they will go to the langar and have food which is just vegetarian. Anybody is allowed in the Gurdwara and can eat as much as they like because Sikhs believe that all people are equal.

Comment This is a **Level 1** answer (1-2 marks).

It contains **isolated examples of relevant knowledge**, but is far from **comprehensive**. The task is to outline the ways in which Sikhs worship in the Gurdwara, but the answer refers to only one way in which this is done. The second part of the answer is not relevant to the question. Overall, it is far too short to deserve anything beyond 1 or 2 marks.

Sections A-F, part (b) questions, testing AO2 (Understanding)

Question: Explain why Muslims celebrate Id-ul-Fitr.

(10)

Answer

Muslims celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr because it comes after the month of Ramadan and on that day you can eat and drink. Muslims are not allowed to eat in the daytime during Ramadan and so when the month ends and everyone can stop feeling hungry it is a reason to celebrate. But this is not the only reason for celebrating. Although Ramadan is hard, muslims think that it is a good thing because it teaches you many things like respect for Allah (because you have shown that you can give things up for God), it also teaches Muslims to understand how others might feel who don't have enough to eat. These are important lessons and Muslims celebrate and thank Allah for teaching them to us. Ramadan is also celebrated because on that day muslims are expected to join in with family and friends and this makes us stronger as a community. Any muslims who are not very rich will be happy to celebrate at Eid-ul-Fitr because Muslims are expected to give to charity on this day and this means that the poorest people can celebrate with the richest. All Muslims have to give to charity and so Muslims should celebrate this chance to follow the Five Pillars. Lastly Muslims celebrate at Eid because it is a spiritual event and all Muslims feel closer to Allah at this time.

Comment This is a **Level 4** answer (9-10 marks).

The candidate has been asked to address **AO2** (explain why ...), and it is clear, from words/phrases such as 'because' and 'and so ...', that this is what they are doing. The candidate gives at least four different reasons in answer to the question, and this suggests a **comprehensive explanation**, which shows **understanding of the main ideas**. There are several examples of **specialist language**, used appropriately, for example 'Ramadan', 'Five Pillars'. The answer is clearly of Level 4 standard.

Question: Explain why the Shari'ah is important for Muslims.

(10)

Answer

The Shari'ah is important for Muslims because it tells a Muslim of how they should follow the rulings of Islam. According to Islam the Shari'ah is known as the Islamic Law or the Divine Law. Also in Islam there are four types of Shari'ah law for example the Qur'an, which is the words of God. The Qur'an teaches a Muslim how to live their life, it tells them what is permissible and what is prohibited. The second is known as the Sunnah, which has the teachings and practices of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The Sunnah is also known as the secondary source because it tells a Muslim how the Prophet lived his life. The third is the joint agreement of the companions of the point of the Islamic law. The best one is where the Muslims find information by using an analogy. Basically the Shari'ah tells us everything. If one source doesn't have enough evidence then Muslims can seek it from the other sources.

Comment This is a **Level 2** answer (3-5 marks).

It starts off well: 'The Shari'ah is important for Muslims because ...' However, the answer does not go further. After the initial response, the answer turns into a description, rather than an explanation. Although the candidate demonstrates a sound knowledge of the subject, this knowledge is not used to address the issue raised by the question: a **basic explanation, showing understanding of a relevant idea**.

For Part 2 A-F part (c), please refer to the examples for Part 1 A-D part (d) questions on pages 36-37.

Using the mark scheme

The mark scheme gives the responses we expect from students. Indicative answers are given but during the standardisation of examiners process the mark scheme is updated and expanded to cover unexpected, correct student responses.

Section C: Planning and teaching

There is no single model for the delivery of the International GCSE in Religious Studies qualification. Centres will adopt the approach most suited to their individual needs and circumstances, which will include whether their students are studying one major world religion or more than one.

However, it is important to stress the following points.

Specification coverage

It is essential to ensure coverage of the whole of the specification content. This can be done by checking that all the topics listed in the **generic specification content** for Part 1 (specification, pages 9-16), and in the **religion-specific content** for the chosen religion(s) for Part 2 (specification, pages 35-40), have been covered.

Generic key words

Students need to know and understand the generic key words in Appendix 1 of the specification (pages 51-54). Teachers could set aside time each week for discussion of a batch of key words, so that they are covered in a systematic way.

Key religious ideas and non-religious ideas and responses

In addition to the specific religion(s) they study, it is also essential to ensure that students know and understand the key religious ideas which are not specific to any one religion, and non-religious ideas about, and responses to, fundamental questions of life raised by human experience.

Monitoring progress

As they progress through the course, students will benefit from regular teacher-set tests and examinations, to help them prepare for the International GCSE examination itself. The sample assessment materials are a valuable source of test and examination questions, as are previous examination papers and mark schemes.

Teaching ideas

Every teacher has their own approach to the teaching of their subject, and techniques for stimulating their students' interest in it. However, Religious Studies can be a difficult subject to teach. At one level, it is an academic discipline, in which students' progress and performance are assessed in the same way as they are in any other school subject. But at another level, Religious Studies provides students with knowledge and understanding of beliefs, values and practices which are of supreme importance to millions of religious believers and worshippers around the world. From this perspective, Religious Studies is not just a subject like any other, but an essential part of the education of every citizen. International GCSE Religious Studies is designed to promote students' interest in religion, and to enable them to develop respect for, as well as knowledge and understanding of, religious beliefs, values and practices.

Therefore, in addition to classroom teaching, teachers are encouraged to give students opportunities to engage with religion and religious people, and to see places of worship for themselves.

Talks and visits

Talks by religious leaders, clergy, ministers or teachers, who belong to the major world religion(s) being studied, will give students first-hand information about beliefs, values and practices, and what they mean to followers in their daily lives. Visits to places of worship and pilgrimage are an invaluable resource for the study of Part 2 of the examination.

Use of religious texts

Although no specific passages from religious texts are prescribed for study in International GCSE Religious Studies, studying relevant passages from the principal religious text(s) of the major world religion(s) they are learning about will enrich students' understanding of the topics covered in both Part 1 and Part 2. It will also familiarise them with the content and use of religious texts.

For example, for sub-section (c) of Part 2 of the examination (*Rules for living*), it would be helpful for students of Christianity to study the Ten Commandments, as they appear in the Old Testament (Exodus 20), and Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount, as it appears in the New Testament (Matthew 5-7). Similarly, those studying Hinduism or Buddhism, for example, will benefit from reading selections in translation from *The Laws of Manu* or *The Dhammapada*.

Use of the internet

Appendix 2 in the specification contains a list of basic textbooks, and there is a wide range of books about religion/particular religions available. Teachers and students are encouraged to make full use of the internet as a learning resource. A list of general websites, websites relating to the six major world religions, and websites containing non-religious views is on the next page.

Students will also find the websites of organisations dealing with particular issues helpful for the study of Sections C and D of Part 1 of the examination, as they sum up and illustrate particular and differing points of view on the issue.

For example, with abortion or euthanasia, students can compare the views on the websites of religious organisations such as the Roman Catholic Church (www.catholic-church.org.uk) or the Church of England (www.cofe.anglican.org) with those on the websites of the *ProLife Alliance* (www.prolife.org.uk), *Education for Choice* (www.efc.org.uk) and *Dignity in Dying* (www.dignityindying.org.uk).

Resources

Suggested reading is given on page 55 of the specification.

Please note that while resources are correct at the time of publication, they may be updated or withdrawn from circulation. Website addresses may change at any time.

General

www.bbc.co.uk/ethics

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/rs

www.bbc.co.uk/religion

www.multifaithnet.org

<http://re-xs.ucsm.ac.uk/gcsere/index.html>

www.religiousresources.org

Buddhism

www.buddhanet.net/index.html

<http://buddhism.about.com>

www.thebuddhistsociety.org

<http://webpace.ship.edu/cgboer/buddhaintro.html>

Christianity

www.baptist.org.uk

<http://britishorthodox.org>

www.catholic-church.org.uk

www.cofe.anglican.org

www.methodist.org.uk

www.quaker.org.uk

www.salvationarmy.org.uk

www.urc.org.uk

Hinduism

www.hinduism.fsnet.co.uk

www.world-faiths.com/hinduism/hinduism.htm

Islam

www.al-islam.org

www.islam-guide.com

www.islamherald.com

www.islam101.com

Judaism

www.beingjewish.com/basics/beliefs.html

www.jewfaq.org

<http://judaism.about.com>

www.religionfacts.com/judaism

Sikhism

www.allaboutsikhs.com

www.sikhnet.com

www.sikhs.org/religion.htm

www.sikhs.org/topics4.htm

Non-religious perspectives

www.humanism.org.uk (British Humanist Association)

www.secularism.org.uk (National Secular Society)

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