
AS

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Component 2: Study of Religion

2E Judaism

Report on the Examination

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General comments

There were many well-informed, relevant, answers that showed both an excellent grasp of the material studied and good examination technique. There were some full-mark answers to all of the questions set and some excellent scripts. There was very little evidence that answers were rushed and most answers were of a good length, although a little shorter than expected: many answers of around 300 words achieved the highest levels of the mark scheme. This was very impressive for the first examination of a new specification when teachers, as well as students, were unfamiliar with the demands.

Where there were weaknesses, they were often those commonly seen in work produced under examination conditions: a failure to focus on the question; a lack of support for, or development of, points made, and a failure to engage in debate in AO2 answers. Some AO2 answers were limited to a maximum of Level 2 because they only presented and explained one point of view and did not in any way recognise that others would disagree with the reasoning and the view expressed.

There was some impressive use of technical terms and specialist vocabulary; however, there was also some confusion when terms were used without any apparent understanding of their meaning.

Question 01

1.01 Explain why there are different Jewish beliefs about the authority of the Tenakh and why the differences between them are significant.

There were some very impressive answers and these often showed knowledge and understanding of why there are both Orthodox and Reform traditions within Judaism and of how their different beliefs about the revelation of the material in the Tenakh have led to different beliefs about its authority. In contrast there were answers that simply explained what the different beliefs were without giving any explanation of reasons for these differences; some of these answers achieved high marks on the second part of the question by showing the significance of the different views. Some answers also drew on information about the Conservative and mystical traditions. Almost all answers dealt with both parts of the question.

1.02 'From a Jewish point of view, God cannot be clearly described.' Assess this view.

There were some excellent responses that drew on the material specified for study about the way God is described in the Tenakh. In contrast some made little reference to that material and produced much less focused answers. Some made impressive use of technical and specialist vocabulary, in some cases more than was necessary to answer the question. Many drew heavily on the idea that God is incorporeal, therefore indescribable, and explored the way God is described in the Tenakh in this context. Many also offered the argument that God could be described as omnipotent, omniscient and creator but that his form or appearance is unknown.

Question 2

2.01 Explain why good moral conduct is important in Judaism.

Excellent answers included a range of ideas about the importance of good moral conduct and many drew on ideas about the covenant, the purpose of life to 'repair the world', the imperative of

obeying God's commands and the link between moral conduct and the Messianic age and/or the experience of the life beyond. Some also explored the priority of ethical conduct over observance of ritual or Law, often with reference to the principle of pikuach nephesh. A few weaker answers focused mostly on what good moral conduct is, rather than on why it is important.

2.02 'Keeping Shabbat is essential for Jews today.' Assess this view.

Good answers explored what may be meant by 'keeping Shabbat' and many argued that other things, including pikuach nephesh, took priority and/or that where keeping Shabbat interfered with an individual's relationship with God, it should be set aside. There is no requirement for different points of view to be given the same attention in an answer, but it is essential that students approach AO2 answers as debates in which different points of view should be weighed up one against another and/or arguments evaluated. There were a number of one-sided answers to this question.

Use of statistics

Statistics used in this report may be taken from incomplete processing data. However, this data still gives a true account on how students have performed for each question.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.