

GCSE



CCEA GCSE Exemplifying Examination Performance **Religious Studies**

Paper 7: An Introduction to Philosophy of Religion

This is an exemplification of candidates' performance in GCSE examinations (Summer 2019) to support the teaching and learning of the Religious Studies specification.



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EXEMPLIFYING EXAMINATION PERFORMANCE

GCSE Religious Studies

Introduction

These materials illustrate aspects of performance from the 2019 summer GCSE examination series of CCEA's revised GCSE Specification in 2017.

Students' grade A responses are reproduced verbatim and accompanied by commentaries written by senior examiners. The commentaries draw attention to the strengths of the students' responses and indicate, where appropriate, deficiencies and how improvements could be made.

It is intended that the materials should provide a benchmark of candidate performance and help teachers and students to raise standards.

For further details of our support package, please visit our website at www.ccea.org.uk

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donna Finlay". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large 'D' and 'F'.

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GCSE: Religious Studies

Paper 7: An Introduction to Philosophy of Religion

Grade: A Exemplar

Section A

Answer **all** questions.

Q1a(i) Life after Death

What is meant by the term heaven? [1]

Student's response

A place where people who have lived a good life following God are rewarded by living eternally with him.

Q1a(ii) What is meant by the term hell? [1]

Student's response

A place where people who have sinned go to get punished for eternity.

Q1a(iii) Name **one** world religion that accepts belief in resurrection. [1]

Student's response

Christianity

Q1a(iv) Name **two** "proofs" of life after death.

1. [1] 2. [1]

Student's response

1. *Near death experiences*
2. *Jesus being reincarnated*

Examiner's comments

Marks are awarded for factual accuracy. Although 'Jesus being reincarnated' is not accurate in response to part (iv), a degree of tolerance is allowed for reference to Jesus as proof of life after death.

5/5 marks

Q1b Explain what **one** world religion teaches about reincarnation. [5]

Student's response

Hinduism teaches us that everybody has an Atman which is an eternal soul which cannot be destroyed. Hindu's believe that once you die your Karma, the good and bad deeds will be added up and you will either move up the ladder of reincarnation and reach Moksha. Moksha is when the atman is freed from the cycle of reincarnation. Hindus believe that their good deeds are rewarded later in life and their bad deeds are punished later in life. Hinduism is a monotheistic religion.

Examiner's comments

AO1 Level 3: The candidate provides a good response and is aware of key features of Hindu beliefs e.g. the eternal soul, karma and the concept of Moksha. While some aspects of the response could be better, there are three accurate and relevant points with development.

5/5 marks.

Q1c "The promise of a life after death provides humanity with hope."

Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer. [5]

Student's response

I agree, Many Christians believe that if they live a life close to God they will be rewarded after life and their souls will be able to live eternally with God. In Islam a monotheistic religion, muslims believe that after death they will be rewarded with fine foods and wines, along with eternal life with God. This makes both muslims and Christians look forward to life after death and hopeful for their future.

Examiner's comments

AO2 Level 3: The candidate demonstrates the ability to provide well-formed arguments in support of the statement. The key focus of the response is that belief in life after death gives humanity a reward to look forward to and this argument is well developed through consideration of two world religions. The candidate could consider one other relevant point e.g. life after death provides comfort to those who are dying or bereaved.

4/5 marks.

Q2a(i) The Existence of God

What is meant by the term evolution? [1]

Student's response

Species adapting to changes in their environment to have a better chance at survival.

Q2a(ii) Give **one** "proof" put forward for evolution. [1]

Student's response

The change of fossils over the years in comparison to current species.

Q2a(iii) Name **one** scholar who supported the theory of evolution. [1]

Student's response

Charles Lyell

Q2a(iv) What is meant by the term Creator? [1]

Student's response

The being who made the earth

Q2a(v) Name **one** group that challenges the theory of evolution. [1]

Student's response

Theists

Examiner's comments

Marks are awarded for factual accuracy. While some theists do challenge evolution, candidates were expected to be more specific in response to part (v).

4/5 marks.

Q2b Do you think there is evidence in favour of an Intelligent Designer?

Give reasons for your answer. [5]

Student's response

I agree, William Paley argued with the teleological design to state that the world is so well designed that there must be a designer and that designer must be God. For example a snowflake is so intricately designed that it must have a designer. Some disagreed with Paley stating that there are many things in the world that are not well designed such as volcanoes and earthquakes.

Examiner's comments

AO2 Level 3: The candidate provides a well-argued response with evidence of informed insights. Paley's argument is developed and a counter-argument is attempted.

4/5 marks.

Q2c "Religion is based on outdated ideas."

Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer. [5]

Student's response

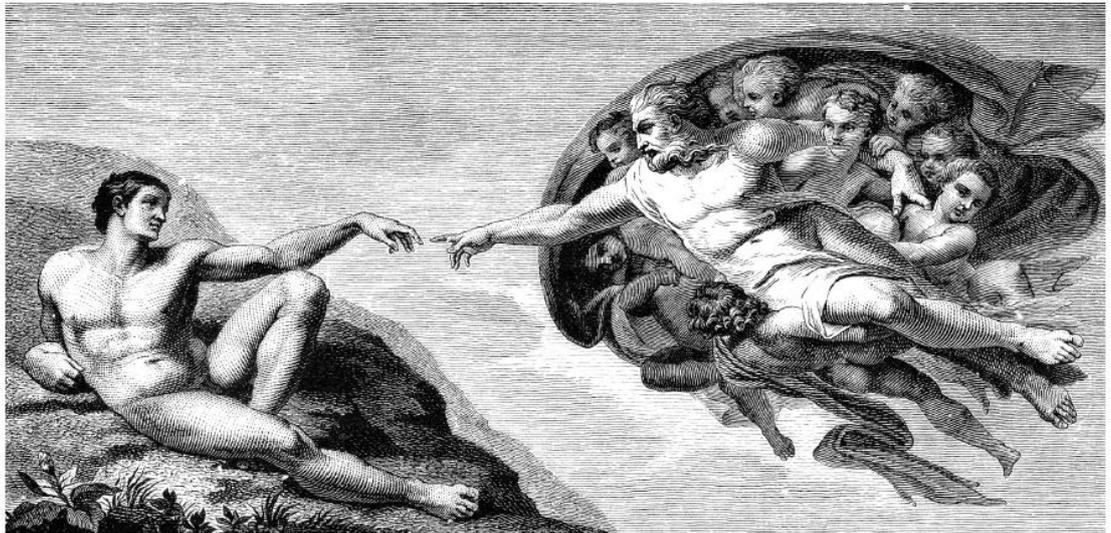
No I disagree, many religions have sacred texts which can be adapted and changed to suit the change of time. For example in Christianity the parables given by Jesus' are nowadays taken as out lines and ideas as to how to live your life in a happy and content way. Jesus taught his followers to love themselves and everyone around them.

Examiner's comments

AO2 Level 2: The candidate has attempted to consider some ideas from sacred texts that are still relevant. This response could have a sharper focus on the question and show evidence of greater development of relevant points.

3/5 marks.

Q3a The Nature of God



<http://www.thinkstockphotos.co.uk/image/474500796>

Outline what **one** religion teaches about a personal and immanent God. [5]

Student's response

In Hinduism a monotheistic religion. The trimurty are used to describe God as being both immanent and personal. Immanent and personal mean God is present in the world and can be understood by his followers. Hinduism teaches us that Brahman's avatars are personal and immanent, they are simpler forms of God which help Hindus understand God. Anamorphic language is used to describe God.

Examiner's comments

AO1 Level 2: The response reflects some relevant and accurate knowledge and understanding of Hindu teaching on God being personal and immanent. Some points could have been more fully developed.

3/5 marks.

Q3b Explain why some religions believe that God is unknowable. [5]

Student's response

Unknowable means God is not able to be understood as he is too powerful omnipotent and all knowing omniscient. In Christianity it is believed that God the father in the trinity is unknowable and too powerful for humans to comprehend or understand. Many religions feel that humans are inferior to God and are not able to comprehend Gods power or existence.

Examiner's comments

AO1 Level 2: This response demonstrates a clear understanding of how a powerful God is beyond human understanding. However, the candidate could develop the points more fully.

3/5 marks.

Q3c "It is better to focus on humanity's needs than on God."

Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer. [5]

Student's response

I disagree, many religions such as Christianity encourage it's religious followers to go out and help those in need for example after natural disasters Christians go out and help those in trouble. In this instant God is encouraging his followers to focus on humanitys needs. An example would be Mother Teresa who became a nurse and helped those suffering contagious illnesses in the slums of Calcutta. Muslims also have muslim aid.

Examiner's comments

AO2 Level 2: The response shows a good attempt to give a reasoned argument in support of the claim. The idea that religion encourages humanity to focus on helping the needy is a valid point and this point is well developed. However, the response requires sharper focus on the statement.

3/5 marks.

Q4a Experiencing God

Outline the purpose of sacred texts. [5]

Student's response

Sacred texts are the word of God in Islam. The prophet Muhammed was told to recite verses by the angel Jibril which are now the verses of the Qu'arn. Christians read passages from the bible to make God feel more immanent and knowable. 25% and 45% of Britians claim to feel closer to God when reading the bible and praying. Sacred texts help religious followers understand Gods words and purpose.

Examiner's comments

AO1 Level 2: The candidate is aware of some purposes of sacred texts e.g. to help know and understand God and to feel closer to God. Points could have been developed more fully.

3/5 marks.

Q4b Do you think the best way to experience God is through following good role models?

Give reasons for your answer. [5]

Student's response

In Islam muslims acknowledge Muhammed the prophet when they say "there is only one God and muhammed his messenger" Muhammed taught muslims that God treats everyone fairly by welcoming visitors into mecca. He also told them that there was only one God by disagreeing with the worship of idols. Muhammed also highlighted the fact that you should live an honest and trust worthy life which he represented by being an honest trader. Muhammed was a good role model who highlighted Gods ideas therefore I agree.

Examiner's comments

AO2 Level 2: The candidate is well informed on the Prophet Muhammad. However, this is an AO2 question and the response could be sharper on developing an argument in relation to 'the best way to experience God'.

3/5 marks.

Q4c “Strict obedience to religious texts can lead to conflict.”

Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer. [5]

Student’s response

I disagree, many Buddhist monks dedicate their lives to following the eightfold path and Buddhist teachings, they are not violent but content with life. In Islam, muslims believe in tawhid a oneness with God which they try to achieve through praying five times a day to Allah and following their religious texts strongly and strictly, however they do not feel conflicted but content once tawhid has been reached.

Examiner’s comments

AO2 Level 2: There is a good attempt to show how strict obedience to religious texts does not lead to conflict and the candidate provides reasoned arguments.

3/5 marks.

Section B

Answer **two** from **three** questions.

Q5a The Existence of God

Outline the argument for the existence of God from religious experience. [5]

The candidate did not select this question.

Q5b Explain how the argument from religious experience may be challenged. [5]

The candidate did not select this question.

Q5c “It is important to convince atheists of the existence of God.”

Do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answer showing that you have considered different points of view. [10]

The candidate did not select this question.

Q6a Miracles

Describe **one** miracle you have studied which reveals God. [5]

Student’s response

In Lourdes France, St. Bernadette saw a vision of the virgin Mary on the wall of a cave. Gods voice then told her to drink from the sacred spring, however there was no water in sight so Bernadette dug into the dirt until she found a spring of water. A chapel was later built at the sight and every year over 15 million pilgrims travel to Lourdes to be cured from their diseases in search of a similar miracles. Bernadette drank the water and was cured from her illness.

Examiner’s comments

AO1 Level 2: The response reflects clear knowledge and understanding with some development. While there are some accurate points, the account of the miracle could be more coherent.

3/5 marks.

Q6b Explain how miracles may support a believer's faith. [5]

Student's response

A miracle is a form of special revelation which is when God reveals himself directly to a religious follower. An miracle is an unusual incident which cannot be explained by science, this could be referred to as 'God of the Gaps' Many believers have their faith restarted after experiencing a miracle sometimes it could be getting cured from an illness. It restores faith as they feel God is directly communicating with them through a special revelation.

Examiner's comments

AO1 Level 2: The candidate has a clear knowledge of the significance of miracles and has attempted to develop some relevant points. To access Level 3, the response should have sharper focus on how miracles support a believer's faith.

3/5 marks.

Q6c "Miracles are the result of wishful thinking."

Do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answer showing that you have considered different points of view. [10]

Student's response

A miracle is something which cannot be explained by science therefore I disagree. In Christianity the most popular example of a miracle would be the resurrection of Jesus after being laid to rest in a tomb it would have been impossible for him to have survived three days after being crucified on a cross. Some atheists would disapprove this theory by saying that Jesus may have been in a coma and not have actually been dead.

Since miracles cannot be explained by science they cannot be down to wishful thinking as a person cannot have the power to control what happens only God who is omnipotent all-powerful.

Christianity describes God as being omniscient all-knowing and all knowledgable this means that God is able to hear peoples prayers and is able to answer them because he was omnipotent.

Many doctors may try and use science to say that those suffering from terminal illnesses that are cured recovered due to being on medication and treatment however some may claim that incurable ailments such as paralise will only be cured by a miracle.

In the bible Zechariah and his wife were both elderly and did not expect to have a child however God told him he would. Zechiriah was not thinking wishfully and disbelieved God however he still got a son. Therefore miracles can happen without wishful thinking.

Examiner's comments

AO2 Level 4: The candidate makes a very good attempt to assess the validity of miracles. Reasoned consideration of different points of view is evident from the response. Examples of specific miracles are used to develop key points. The response is coherent with accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

7/10 marks.

Q7a Evil and Suffering

Describe, using examples, what is meant by human evil. [5]

Student's response

Human evil is evil which is deliberately caused by the actions of human beings. Examples of human evil would be murder, lying or stealing. Human evil brings pain and suffering which is caused by the actions of a person. When a person murders someone they hurt the person who they have killed along with the family which suffers grief as a consequence. Many Christians argue that human evil is the result of free will as God does not want

Examiner's comments

AO1 Level 3: The response reflects clear knowledge and understanding of what is meant by human evil. Examples are considered and there is a very good attempt to develop the example of murder.

4/5 marks.

Q7b How might believers justify the existence of evil? [5]

Student's response

Christians may claim that suffering is a test of faith in God for example in the bible Abraham was told to sacrifice his son Isaac as a burnt offering to test his faith. Some may say suffering is a punishment for sin an example from the bible would be that God punished Zechiriah the father of John the baptist with the loss of his voice for not believing that God would give him a son. However both of these examples do not explain how evil entered the world.

Some Christians would say that suffering is a result of free will. That God wants us to be in charge of our thoughts. In Genesis Adam and Eve get told not to eat the fruit from a tree however they do this resulted in pain, suffering and evil entering the world.

Examiner's comments

AO1 Level 3: A detailed and well-structured response showing very good development of three clear and distinct points. This candidate is well informed of relevant scripture references that can help believers justify the existence of evil.

5/5 marks

Q7c “Religions focus too much on evil and fail to celebrate life.”

Do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answer showing that you have considered different points of view. [10]

Student's response

I disagree, Hindu's believe that suffering is caused by Karma. Hinduism is a monotheistic religion which believes in reincarnation they believe that every person has an eternal soul called an Atman which cannot be destroyed. Hindu's believe that all your good deeds will be rewarded and your bad deeds punished this is the law of karma. This means that any suffering or evil you endure is caused by you or a past life, therefore Hinduism does not focus on evil. Buddhism also holds a celebration for life. One day Buddha was walking when he saw the four sights a sick man, an old man, a dead man, and a content religious man. The first three made him wander why people looked for happiness if ultimately they will suffer. It was then he came up with the four noble truths, the first was that suffering is a fact of life, the second was that desire leads to suffering; the third that suffering can be reduced by removing desires and the fourth that following the eight fold path can prevent suffering. This is another example of a religion which does not focus on evil as they see it as a fact of life.

Examiner's comments

AO2 Level 3: The candidate gives an opinion, which is supported by some developed reasons. There is a good attempt to argue against the claim that 'religions focus too much on evil'. Additional relevant points could be explored on both sides of the debate.

5/10 marks.

