

GCSE



CCEA GCSE Exemplifying Examination Performance **Religious Studies**

Paper 8: Islam

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 8: Islam

Grade: A Exemplar

Section A

Answer **all** questions.

Q1a(i) Muslim Belief and Practice

How many Pillars of Islam are there? [1]

Student's response

5

Q1a(ii) Toward which city do Muslims face when they pray? [1]

Student's response

Mecca

Q1a(iii) How many times a day should a Muslim pray? [1]

Student's response

5

Q1a(iv) Fill in the missing words:

There is no God but (1) _____ and

(2) _____ is the messenger of God. [2]

Student's response

(1) *Allah*

(2) *Muhammad*

Examiner's comments

Marks are awarded for factual accuracy and a degree of tolerance is allowed for valid alternatives. 5/5 marks.

Q1b Explain what Muslims believe about the Qur'an. [5]

Student's response

Muslims believe that the Qu'ran is the book revealed to the last Prophet Muhammad. The word Qu'ran means "that which is recited" which relates to the idea the Qu'ran is God's word. Allah directly sent the words to the angel Jibrael who told them to Muhummad over the years of prophethood. The Qu'ran is a guide for a Muslim not only to know how to be a Muslim but to perfect his/her faith. The Quran is also infallible, unlike the other sacred books.

Examiner's comments

AO1 Level 3. This candidate has a clear knowledge and understanding of the Qur'an and it's origins. The response is detailed and shows very good development of key beliefs such as the Qur'an is the word of God. 5/5 marks.

Q1c "Religious belief is no longer relevant to young people."

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

Student's response

I disagree with this statement because the religion of Islam is one for everyone. It is relevant to young people because its an example of their roots. Its also relevant to young Muslims as once they grow older they're deeds are all accounted for. For a person not to believe in God or his prophets is to have no faith and therefore not be a Muslim. Also if young people don't accept this belief then they're unlikely to do so in the future.

Examiner's comments

AO2 Level 3. This candidate has produced some well-formed and reasoned arguments in support of the contemporary relevance of religious belief to young people. 4/5 marks.

Q2a(i) The Rightly Guided Caliphs

How many “rightly guided” Caliphs were there? [1]

Student’s response

4

Q2a(ii) Who succeeded Muhammad as the leader of the Muslim community? [1]

Student’s response

Abu Bakr

Q2a(iii) Name **two** of the Caliphs who suffered violent deaths and were assassinated.

1. [1] 2. [1]

Student’s response

1. *Uma*

2. *Uthman*

Q2a(iv) Who was the last of the “rightly guided” Caliphs? [1]

Student’s response

Ali

Examiner’s comments

Marks are awarded for factual accuracy and a degree of tolerance is allowed for valid alternatives. 5/5 marks.

Q2b What do you think are the most important characteristics of a good religious leader?

Give reasons for your answer. [5]

Student's response

Muhammad is the best example of a good leader. Firstly, he was very humble. From a young age, he faced many hardships, being orphaned at the age of six. Yet, he still tried to aid others in need, including the old and the orphans. Also, he was known for his Honesty and Trust. His fellow Meccans gave him such titles (Al-Amin and As Suddiq) furthermore, even before his call to prophethood he showed signs of a good leader as he was just and was often needed by others to be the judge to decide certain outcomes that would have led to conflict. For example, his just character was shown during the event of the Black Stone. In my opinion, the most important characteristics of a good religious leader are the ones that Muhammad was bountiful in.

Examiner's comments

AO2 Level 3. This candidate has produced well-formed and reasoned arguments in support of a personal response. The candidate provides characteristics of a good religious leader based on the example of the Prophet Muhammad. 5/5 marks.

Q2c "Muslim leaders should be more involved in politics."

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

Student's response

I understand why one would say this because in this way a Muslim leader can have a bigger influence and therefore give decisions. In the media, so many things influence non-muslims to think badly of Muslims (false thoughts on "Sharia"). But Islam teaches that when someone is quick to believe in such allegations then it isn't worth to persuade them otherwise. In this way, Muslim leaders really don't have the necessity to involve themselves more in politics as their influence is enough and also the media is often posing itself as a risk of history the key message of Muslim leaders.

Examiner's comments

AO2 Level 3. The candidate has given a well-argued response with evidence of informed insight. Reasoned arguments are given to evaluate whether or not Muslim leaders should be more involved in politics. 5/5 marks.

Q3a Eid-ul-Fitr



[http://www.thinkstockphotos.co.uk/
image/stock-illustration-ramadan-kareem-greeting-card-with/
666168846/popup?sq=Eid-ul-Fitr/f=CPIHVX/2=DynamicRank](http://www.thinkstockphotos.co.uk/image/stock-illustration-ramadan-kareem-greeting-card-with/666168846/popup?sq=Eid-ul-Fitr/f=CPIHVX/2=DynamicRank)

Describe the preparations for, and celebration of, Eid-ul-Fitr. [5]

Student's response

Eid-ul-Fitr is the celebration that marks the end of the fasting month of Ramadan. So once this hard test is passed, there is a lot of joy. Firstly, Muslims will wake up early on the first day of Eid, to attend the Eid Prayers. They're told in the mosques and are often repeated so everyone has a chance to go. Then, in various Muslim cultures, people will invite others to their homes like a party. Everyone should be joyful and have fun. Sometimes large parties are held. The father of the families will then pay the Zakat-al-Fitr. This is the compulsory zakat that's payed during this time.

Examiner's comments

AO1 Level 3. The candidate has given a number of relevant points with development. This is a reasonably accurate description of the preparations for, and celebration of, Eid-ul-Fitr. 4/5 marks.

Q3b Explain the religious significance of Eid-ul-Fitr. [5]

Student's response

This religious celebration means a lot to Muslims. It seems for some as a reminder of how lucky we are as we're finally able to eat. Islam stresses a lot on the unity of the Ummah. When every Muslim does the same thing (pray and celebrate) a sense of brotherhood is firmly evoked. Eid-ul-Fitr also allows Muslim families to get together as they'll seek forgiveness from each other. Once they do that they'll have an increased awareness for Allah and will remember their lord.

Examiner's comments

AO1 level 3. The candidate has produced a detailed answer showing good development of some reasons why Eid-ul-Fitr is important for Muslims. 4/5 marks.

Q3c "Followers of every religion ought to be granted time off work to celebrate religious festivals."

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

Student's response

Although it is the employers right to have this decision, I completely agree with this statement. In non-muslim countries, it wouldn't be fair if, for example, the Christians were only allowed to leave work for Christmas. Therefore every religion should be allowed time off work. Also, if all the religious believers get off work, it may serve as a holiday for the employers so they'll get a few benefits too.

Examiner's comments

AO2 Level 2. This candidate has produced some reasoned arguments in relation to the debate on religious believers getting time off work to celebrate religious festivals. There is some scope for further development of the response. 3/5 marks.

Q4a Sunni Islam

Describe some of the characteristics of Sunni Islam. [5]

Student's response

The Sunnis made up 90% of the Muslim population. They accept every single hadith or Sunnah (not just those that are transmitted by Ali). Sunnis would fast from dawn to the start of dusk (not the end). Sunnis believe in the 4 rightly guided Caliph and don't accept the Shia's taught that Ali received hidden Islam knowledge. In this way Sunnis do not take Ali as the "Friend of Allah". To the Sunni he is the Fourth Rightly guided Caliph.

Examiner's comments

AO1 Level 3. This response displays a good degree of accurate knowledge of the characteristics of Sunni Islam. Points are developed to a good standard and the answer is well-structured. 4/5 marks.

Q4b Do you think that the role of religion in causing conflict is exaggerated?

Give reasons for your answer. [5]

Student's response

I believe that religion only causes discrimination and prejudice which is the reason for conflict. But, I think that the trigger for conflict is much more exaggerated than the reason for conflict because no one could really say what the cause of every worldly conflict apart from God. Besides, the idea of religion causing conflict is only formed due to the secular society today and the media. Loads of people lose grips with such religions because they don't want to be seen as the cause of conflict. Perhaps that's how conflict is caused.

Examiner's comments

AO2 Level 3. This candidate has produced well-formed and reasoned arguments in relation to the role of religion in causing conflict. Some specific examples of conflict caused by religion could have been considered to fully develop the response. 4/5 marks.

Q4c “Islam should have one religious leader who speaks for all Muslims.” Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer. [5]

Student’s response

This would be advantageous in the sense that, in this way, the Muslims are all organised and have a sense of guidance. One religious leader leading all Muslims is able to have a good influence on them all (although this task could be difficult) However, there is a risk that with time Muslims will start to worship this leader instead of Allah which is Shirk, the worst sin you could commit. But overall I’d argue that Muslims should have a leader, not only because it keeps with the tradition of the appointment of Caliphs but also because the leader is able to establish firm grips on the teachings.

Examiner’s comments

AO2 Level 3. This candidate has produced well-formed and reasoned arguments and has considered both sides of the debate. The response could have a sharper focus on the advantages of having one religious leader e.g. it could put to an end any divisions and conflict between Muslims. 4/5 marks.

Section B

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

Q5a Sufi Islam

Describe the central beliefs of Sufism. [5]

The candidate did not select this question.

Q5b Explain how the practices of Sufism aim to help Muslims to feel closer to God. [5]

The candidate did not select this question.

Q5c “Religious experience is the most important part of religion.”

Do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answer showing that you have considered different points of view. You should refer to Islam in your answer. [10]

The candidate did not select this question.

Q6a Death and the After-life

Describe Muslim death and mourning rites. [5]

Student's response

Muslims believe and appreciate the idea that life is a gift, that isn't permanent. So when a Muslim dies, there are certain rites to consider. Firstly, before a Muslim dies or is knowingly approaching death they should constantly repeat the Shaludah (It signifies the idea of "live a Muslim, die a Muslim".) So, when a Muslim dies, he/she deserves a funeral that consists of a proper burial. The persons body is washed (by wudū) and wrapped in white clothes. The tombstone shouldn't be extravagant and a procession of the dead body is taken place from the home to the grave. After their death, the relatives are advised not to mourn for more than three days as they'll learn that everything that happens is part of God's plan.

Examiner's comments

AO1 Level 3. The candidate has produced a detailed answer showing a very good knowledge and understanding of Muslim funeral and mourning rites. 5/5 marks.

Q6b Explain what Muslims believe about life after death and judgement. [5]

Student's response

When Muslims die, our souls will live on in the grave. When we're in the grave two angels, Munka & Nahir question us to begin judgement. They'll ask us who is our lord, our religion and our leader. Then on the day of judgement, marked by Israfil trumpet horn, every human soul ascends again. The day of judgement is mentioned by Allah to not be dreaded but look forward to. When Allah judges us, the records formed of our deeds (accented by our two angels, on each shoulder) are placed on a scale. If our good deeds outweigh the bad deeds we go to heaven, a place of endless bliss. But if our bad deeds outweigh the good deeds we go to hellfire, a place of eternal punishment.

Examiner's comments

AO1 Level 3. A well-structured response with good development. The candidate has given a good explanation of what Muslims believe about life after death and judgement. 5/5 marks.

Q6c “This life is a preparation for life after death.”

Do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answer showing that you have considered different points of view. You should refer to Islam in your answer. [10]

Student's response

The people who'd disagree with this include atheists and agnostics. The idea of when there isn't proof of an afterlife leads them to this. But as a Muslim, I agree with this statement. Dunya (earthly life) is seen as a bridge to Akhirah (the Afterlife). Muslims believe that no one was created at separate times. Every single living soul was created already before the creation of Earth. So the lord used the earth in which the souls come into life in to test them and so the world is a big area in which we're constantly monitored by God, essentially. Life consists of many challenges which we are tested against. What influences are “success in the Hereafter (Qur'an) is how we react and learn from them. For example, a miser is less likely to go heaven than a person who gives money to the poor because “made compulsory to (him) is charity...” (Qur'an). But the biggest challenge in life, for Muslims, is Satan. God has told Muslim that he will use the likes of “intoxicating and gambling” to lead us astray from the right path. With this in mind, Muslims accept the fact that in order to reach heaven, or the highest level of heaven, they need to work for it. To do that we need to succeed in life as morally good Muslims.

Examiner's comments

AO2 level 5. This candidate has produced a well-argued response, with some consideration of different points of view, showing informed insight and ability to apply knowledge and understanding of religion effectively. The response has a very coherent structure and there is a highly accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar with a mature style of writing. 9/10 marks.

Q7a Sharia Law

Describe some of the ways in which Sharia Law covers all aspects of life.
[5]

Student's response

There are six maxims of life that Sharia covers. Sharia protects a persons property as stealing is haraam. It protects a persons intellect as Islam teaches that knowledge is important and often stresses on the youth being taught by their parents. Sharia also protects the life of a person. Sanctity of live is a very important ethic that leads to abortion (in most cases) and Murder to be haraam. Sharia also protects a persons lineage, religion and reputation.

Examiner's comments

AO1 Level 3. A detailed answer showing very good development. The response displays an accurate knowledge of Sharia Law and a description of the ways in which it covers all aspects of life. 4/5 marks.

Q7b Explain the relationship of the Prophet Muhammad to Sharia Law. [5]

Student's response

When the Qu'ran can't give clarification on an issue, Muslim scholars will look to the like of Muhammad. This is because the Sharia Law has teachings that originate from the Sunnah and hadith of the Prophet. The Sunnah teaches Muslims a lot of things, including how to pray. The hadith teaches how a Muslim could do things in a better way for example being patient with the disabled.

Examiner's comments

AO1 Level 2. The candidate has shown some clear knowledge and understanding of the relationship between the Prophet Muhammad and Sharia Law. The candidate could have developed another relevant point. 4/5 marks.

Q7c “Muslims should oppose capital punishment.”

Do you agree or disagree? Give reasons for your answer showing that you have considered different points of view. You should refer to Islam in your answer. [10]

Student’s response

Although the term “capital punishment” is more often used in the Western World, the death penalty has always been part of the Sharia Law. Islam key teachings that refer to fairness, for example, “Treat your brother the way you would like to be treated”. Therefore, on the basic grounds, taking the life of a murderer should be supported by Muslims (However, as the verse says, it should be the relatives of the victim who decide). When people are punished in accordance to Sharia Law, Muslims believe in this to be fair. This is because once you are punished in this world you won’t be punished, for the same sin, in the After Life. Muslims believe that no worldly punishment defeats Hell, therefore Muslims shouldn’t oppose capital punishment. On the other hand, many people, like pacifists, would argue that this form of punishment isn’t that effective. Although there is no chance of a murderer repeating a crime, the victim won’t be given back in return because they’re dead. In this way people would be much more compassionate and often ask that the murderer to take a life-long sentence. Although this reason is seemingly reasonable Muslims abide to the Sharia Law.

Examiner’s comments

AO2 Level 5. The candidate has given well-formed and reasoned arguments to analyse and evaluate the issue of capital punishment. There is evidence of reasoned consideration of differing points of view showing informed insight and knowledge and understanding of religion. The style of writing is relatively mature with an accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar. 9/10 marks.

