



GCSE

RELIGIOUS STUDIES B

8063/2X: Perspectives on Faith (Islam)

Report on the Examination

8063

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General comments

Although the entry for this paper was much smaller than that for Judaism, there was a similarly wide range in performance. The more able students wrote perceptive and mature answers to the questions set. It was pleasing to see so many less able students attempting every question and giving more than one viewpoint in the AO2 questions. The standard of spelling, punctuation and grammar and the use of specialist terms continues to improve.

One major weakness in many scripts was the failure to refer to a source of authority in the 5 mark questions. There were some very detailed answers that could be awarded no more than 4 marks because of this. In contrast, textual reference was often used effectively in response to the 12 mark questions.

Another issue was the reference to the New Testament and Christian beliefs and teachings in some of the answers. This was seen quite often in answers to 1.3 and 1.5. Equally inappropriate in the 12 mark answers were non-religious views. There were a significant number of references in 1.5 to Richard Dawkins. Students should restrict themselves in the religions papers to the views of the religion that they are studying.

One final general point concerns the use of additional pages. Some students who used these wrote their answers to both papers, ie Islam and either Themes or Textual Studies, on the same sheet. Please would centres remind students not to do this. They should use separate additional pages for the two papers they take.

Question 1: Beliefs

The majority of students knew the correct term in 1.1, though some chose 'omnipotence' or 'beneficence'.

1.2 was answered very well and most students answered at an appropriate length.

The word 'contrasting' in 1.3 did not necessarily require opposing views, though many interpreted it in this way. Many contrasted the belief in God's transcendence with God's immanence. There was very sound understanding of these two terms. Some students contrasted Sunni and Shi'a understandings of God's omniscience. On the whole, this question was well answered, though some students did not read the question with sufficient care. They wrote about Muslim responses to God rather than about God's relationship with the world. Some students developed their points with Christian references, which limited the credit they could receive.

There were many very detailed answers to 1.4, showing excellent understanding of the roles of Jibril and Mika'il in particular. It was just a pity that a reference to the scriptures or another source of belief was so often lacking. Most students did take note of the word 'role' and even if they did digress into the nature of angels, they generally pulled the focus back.

Responses to 1.5 varied considerably in quality. Those students who attempted the question were able to support the view that the Qur'an is a sufficient source of guidance for Muslims, though some answers were limited to the view that the Qur'an is the word of God. More effective responses included reference to the revelation to Muhammad, the Night of Power, and the belief that the Qur'an has never been amended or distorted. More able students then argued for the significance of other sources, such as the Gospels, the Psalms, the Hadith, the Sunnah and the teaching of imams. Some students pointed to the antiquity of the Qur'an as an issue, in view of

today's very different society. Many gave as an alternative view one of the Five Pillars (usually salah) as a better form of guidance; this was typical of the more pedestrian answers. Arguments from secular perspectives were not creditable.

Question 2: Practices

The multi-choice question in this section of the paper (2.1) was not answered as successfully as 1.1. Many students opted for wudu or jihad instead of Ashura.

Most students gained one of the two marks available for 2.2. Many lost the second mark through giving Shahadah as one of the Ten Obligatory Acts. Over 7% of students did not attempt this question.

The question on Zakat (2.3) was very well answered by over 60% of students. Various influences were commented on, eg the purifying effects of paying Zakat and the discouragement of materialism and greed. Most students noted the focus of the question, which was on those who pay the tax.

Although many students explained two religious actions associated with Hajj (2.4), relatively few included a reference to a source of authority. The most commonly explained actions were the circumambulation of the Ka'aba and throwing pebbles at Mina. Almost 8% did not attempt this question. This may have been largely due to timing problems as a similar number did not attempt 2.5.

There were many thoughtful responses to 2.5, although it was not always clear that students knew the significance of the Shahadah, perhaps because they were unsure of its content. Alternative views were often more secure than arguments in support of the statement. Most considered some of the other Pillars; some considered attendance at the mosque or celebration of festivals. Those who did examine the significance of the Shahadah produced responses that were often very insightful. They wrote about the importance of the Tawhid and the significance of Muhammad. Some considered also the additional wording in Shi'a Islam.

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.