

Candidate Style Answers

GCSE Religious Studies A

OCR GCSE in Religious Studies: J620

Unit: B580 (Judaism)

These candidate style answers are designed to accompany the OCR GCSE Religious Studies A specification for teaching from September 2009.

GCSE Religious Studies A

B580 Judaism 2 (Worship, Community and Family, Sacred Writings)

OCR has produced these candidate style answers to support teachers in interpreting the assessment criteria for the new GCSE specifications and to bridge the gap between new specification release and availability of exemplar candidate work.

This content has been produced by senior OCR examiners, with the support of the Qualification Manager, to illustrate how the sample assessment questions might be answered and provide some commentary on what factors contribute to an overall grading. The candidate style answers are not written in a way that is intended to replicate student work but to demonstrate what a “good” or “excellent” response might include, supported by examiner commentary and conclusions.

As these responses have not been through full moderation and do not replicate student work, they have not been graded and are instead, banded “medium” or “high” to give an indication of the level of each response.

Please note that this resource is provided for advice and guidance only and does not in any way constitute an indication of grade boundaries or endorsed answers.

1e) ‘Jewish food laws are too complicated.’ Discuss this statement. You should include different, supported points of view and a personal viewpoint. You must refer to Judaism in your answer. (12)	
<i>Candidate style answer</i>	<i>Examiner’s commentary</i>
<p><i>There is no world religion with a larger, more complicated set of food laws than Judaism. Several religions have food laws, but they are either quite limited, such as the Muslim prohibition of pork and alcohol, or so widespread that they are simple, such as those religious bodies which prescribe vegetarianism and thus exclude all meat. But Judaism bans many foods according to a strange set of principles that are hard to comprehend. The question is whether they are too complicated.</i></p> <p><i>Orthodox Jews are quite clear. They say that G-d enacted these rules and mere humans may not criticize them. They may be complicated, but G-d has his</i></p>	<p>High level response</p> <p>This is a high level response, towards the upper end of the band. The candidate sets the issue of Jewish dietary laws in the broader context of world religions to show that Jewish laws are by far the most complex set of such rules. Setting the issue in a wider context shows some clear understanding of where Judaism fits into the general framework of world religions. It is not always necessary to do this, but if done it will be creditable.</p> <p>The orthodox Jewish view is stated quite well. The candidate shows that orthodox Judaism accepts that G-d’s rules are not to be criticized, but kept. The candidate takes a view diametrically opposite the modern view by saying that the rules only appear complex to the limited understanding of mortals, and that it</p>

reasons and if the rules are incomprehensible to humans then it is humans' responsibility to understand them. Searching for these reasons will help humans to deepen their knowledge.

In addition to this, the Jewish food laws are not for all races, for they are not included in the covenant of Noah, which includes all nations. The Jews are a consecrated people, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. For this reason they have a special set of dietary rules. Such a priestly people have to be specially marked out by a set of purity laws, and these laws must be decided by G-d, not by humans or mere intellectual and social fashions. God is the rule maker and so as he has not enacted a time limit for these rules, there is no time limit and so they do not change.

Yet other Jews argue that these rules come from an ancient and outmoded world-view. What made sense at an earlier time of history does not make sense now and seems complicated and nonsensical. What is the point of a set of laws which have become meaningless? Nowadays we do not share the world-view of ancient people, so their rules become unnecessary.

Some rules may have an origin in a time when there were no fridges. The rule against eating shellfish, for example, made sense at a time when shellfish would go off very easily and could carry infections. But now we have fridges and freezers, so this rule is not necessary. Many of the rules, such as the one against eating ravens, owls and bats are basically against poor quality, rank meats. Why do we need rules against eating such poor stuff anyway? People avoid them unless desperately hungry.

In my opinion most rules of this kind are unnecessary, so I agree with the second of the views above.. All religions must adapt to the times in which they live. The Jewish dietary laws arose at a

is our duty to understand them.

The next stage in the orthodox argument is to point out that the Jews are a sacred people and therefore need a special set of rules. This is a valid point. The candidate supports their case by demonstrating knowledge of key Jewish concepts, i.e. the covenant of Noah, and applying them to the argument. This is useful supporting evidence.

The alternative view now is given. The candidate points out that world views have changed and so what was meaningful once may not be meaningful now. This is a reasonable point.

The candidate then develops the idea that the food laws arose at a time when situations were not as they are now and so they cannot be applied now as they once were. This is a reasonable point, and he develops the argument further.

Both views have now been fairly given and we have a balanced response.

The candidate then comes to their own view, which is similar to the second of the two alternatives given. Note, this is not a mere summary of the other views or a restatement of one of them. It is a view which is supported by an extra argument that it is what you do that renders you clean or unclean. The candidate suggests that there may be a more modern set of dietary rules that are more appropriate for our age. Here we have a personal opinion that is a development of one of the alternative views given, and thus the argument is developed further. The candidate concludes with a recommendation that these new rules be adopted, and this recommendation is by implication a way of agreeing with the statement in the question.

All views have been thoroughly considered within the constraints of time and space. The response is balanced, fair and well-informed.

time when people had a very different understanding of what constituted holiness than they do now. We know nowadays that it is not what you eat that makes you clean or unclean, but what sort of actions that you do. For this reason people are puzzled by what seems to them to be a totally meaningless and complicated set of rules. Better to have a new set of rules that are simpler and easily comprehensible. To be holy might mean not eating animals raised and killed in a cruel way. This is far more meaningful than a list of bronze age prohibitions that arise in a world-view long dead.

1e) 'Jewish food laws are too complicated.'

Discuss this statement. You should include different, supported points of view and a personal viewpoint. You must refer to Judaism in your answer.

(12)

Candidate style answer	Examiner's commentary
<p><i>How many young Jewish people know their dietary laws and understand them? I do not know whether many Jews really understand them all, let alone know them.</i></p> <p><i>Take an example. Jews are allowed to eat any animal which has cloven hooves and is a ruminant, but not to eat any animal that has either cloven hooves or is a ruminant. You are allowed to eat anything that has fins and scales and lives in water, but not anything that lives in water and has neither. No one can make sense of these rules. They are hard to grasp and do not make sense to modern people. I am not sure that many ancient people understood them either. These rules are complicated because they make no sense.</i></p> <p><i>On the other hand, the Jews are a special people. Since the time of Moses they have been consecrated to G-d. No other nation has been set aside in this way. Being marked out as a sacred nation has implications for the Jews. They must have a set of rules that make them different.</i></p> <p><i>A set of rules like the Jewish dietary laws is ideal for marking Jews out. It is the fact that they do not have any clear, non-religious rationale that makes them so suitable. No other religion could invent these rules, so they make Jews special. It is their very complication that makes them so suitable.</i></p> <p><i>In my view the Jewish rules are not too complicated. Jews who keep them have to eat and socialize separately from Gentiles and so will stay together as a</i></p>	<p>Medium level response; This is medium level response towards the upper end of the band. The response gets straight to the point, but it addresses the issue in practical terms, rather than in terms of key religious principles. Practical considerations do matter, but they have not the force of points of principle. Young people are a legitimate consideration, but they are not the total of Judaism.</p> <p>The candidate demonstrates good knowledge of the dietary rules and uses it to show that they are difficult to understand. While facts are used they are not used in any depth and there is little development, though what development is given is valid.</p> <p>The candidate reaches the alternative view and makes it effectively. As in the first point we are dealing with an argument whose force is the practical implications of the dietary rules. This is a valid approach. The point is reasonably well-developed.</p> <p>The next paragraph continues to develop the argument in the previous one and concludes with a clear statement that the complicated character of the food laws is important.</p> <p>The personal view is brief and is a repetition of the second view. It has a single idea not present in the two earlier arguments, this view is not really well developed and is not well developed.</p> <p>This is a reasonably well written response, but it does not have the detail or depth of thought that would take it to the higher level.</p>

people where otherwise they might slowly merge into the Gentile world and their race and religion disappear.