

Candidate Style Answers

GCSE Religious Studies B

OCR GCSE in Religious Studies: J621

Unit: B602 (Buddhism)

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

GCSE Religious Studies B

B602 Philosophy 2 (Good and Evil, Revelation, Science)

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.

7e) ‘Sacred texts are too old to be useful.’

Discuss this statement. You should include different, supported points of view and a personal viewpoint. You must refer to Buddhism in your answer. (12)

Candidate style answer

Examiner’s commentary

The sacred texts used by many Buddhists are called the Tripitaka or the Pali Canon, they are also commonly known as the 'three baskets.' There are also other sacred written texts that exist. They were not written down by the Buddha himself but by his followers about four hundred years after he died. As a way of life, Buddhism is about 2.500 years old, therefore the sacred texts written after the Buddha's death were created in a time very different from today and some people could argue that the teachings recorded might not be relevant today.

Many Buddhists however would argue that the sacred texts are not too old to be useful because they form the basis of the path to 'enlightenment' which is the Buddhists main goal. The Tripitaka is divided into three main sections to show the separate parts of what the Buddha's followers felt should be remembered so that Buddhism would continue as the Buddha intended.

The first part contains the rules that the bhikku and bhikkhuni must follow. The second part contains the sayings of the Buddha and his teachings like the Four Noble truths and the Noble Eightfold Path. The third part explains the Buddha's teachings so that a Buddhist might follow them correctly.

Many Buddhists would suggest that without the sacred texts, Buddhism could not exist and this means that they cannot be too old to be useful.

Also the sacred texts record the teachings of the 'Dhamma' of the Buddha; this is one of the three refuges, the other being the Buddha and the sangha. The refuges are dependent on each other for the Buddhist faith to exist.

I think that it would be impossible for the Buddhist faith to exist without referring to the sacred texts even though some Buddhists may have different sacred texts to others depending on which tradition they belong to. The sacred texts contain the information required to be a good enough Buddhist to reach the goal of enlightenment and

High level response

This candidate has demonstrated a clear understanding of the question by giving an example of the main Buddhist sacred text and a brief history of its origin. In this way a there is a clear reference to the religion studied.

The candidate gives the Buddhist point of view which indicated not only the usefulness of the sacred Buddhist text but also its necessity if enlightenment is to be gained.

The evaluation is justified when the candidate describes each of the three parts of the sacred text they have named and links this to the way Buddhism may be explained. They also link the co-necessity of the sacred text which represents the Dhamma with the Buddha and the Sangha. [The three refuges]

The candidate responds with their own personal point of view, reaffirming the need for the sacred text as part of the path to enlightenment, the ultimate goal of a Buddhist. The candidate also acknowledges the existence of a diverse range of beliefs and opinions within the religion.

nirvana so they must be useful. A Buddhist would say that it does not matter that they are old.

The information is presented in a clear and organised way with the specialist terms used appropriately. This answer reflects the significance of the issues raised with few, if any errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation.

Candidate style answer	Examiner's commentary
<p><i>Different Buddhists have different sacred texts; the Pali canon is one text that is used by many Buddhists.</i></p> <p><i>The Pali canon must be useful to a follower of Buddhism because it contains the teachings and the thoughts of Buddha and it shows all Buddhists how they must live their lives.</i></p> <p><i>The Pali Canon has many different teachings; these include the Four Noble truths and the Noble Eightfold Path. The Noble Eightfold Path tells a Buddhist the 'right' ways to live, like 'right effort' and 'right livelihood.'</i></p> <p><i>It is like a guidebook for Buddhists so they would say that it is not too old to be useful to them because they need to follow it.</i></p> <p><i>I think that without the Pali Canon or any other sacred texts, a Buddhist would not know what the Buddha wanted them to do. They would not know how to meditate or how to live as a monk or nun. They would not know how to make the 'right effort' and would not be able to become enlightened.</i></p>	<p>Medium level response</p> <p>The candidate has demonstrated a satisfactory understanding of the question attempting to give a named example of at least one sacred text that may be useful to a Buddhist. They have therefore made an appropriate and clear reference to the religion studied.</p> <p>The candidate could have improved their understanding of the question by giving more details of what it is included in the sacred text and linking them to the ways in which a Buddhist should try to lead their life. They could have linked the ways in which the sacred text forms the basis of the Dhamma, one of the three refuges.</p> <p>There are some justified arguments and discussion demonstrating different points of view for example using the Noble Eightfold Path to describe the 'right' way to live and achieve the Buddhist goal.</p> <p>The candidate has given evidence of a personal response and linked it to how a sacred text may be useful to a Buddhist.</p> <p>The information is presented in a structured format with specialist terms used appropriately and for the most part correctly.</p> <p>This answer contains a selection of relevant material with appropriate development with specialist terms used appropriately and for the most part correctly. There may be occasional errors in spelling, grammar and punctuation.</p>