

Candidate Style Answers

GCSE Religious Studies A

OCR GCSE in Religious Studies: J620

Unit: B579 (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

B579 Judaism 1 (Beliefs, Special Days, Divisions and Interpretations)

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.

2e) ‘Yom Kippur is the most important day in the Jewish calendar.’ 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>Judaism is based on the covenant between G-d and Israel made at Sinai in which G-d and Israel made an agreement, the terms of which were that the people would keep G-d’s law and he would protect them. If the Jews keep G-d’s law they will be safe from harm.</i></p> <p><i>However, even a saint sins seven times a day, as a Jewish saying tells us, and many people sin far more than that, so the covenant is always being broken, so G-d’s protection is forfeit. The only way to gain this protection again is to make atonement for your sins. This is why Yom Kippur is so important. It is the Day of Atonement, when Jews make up for their sins. It is at the end of the ten</i></p>	<p>High level response.</p> <p>This is high level response reaching the upper end of the band. All parts of this response are about Judaism, so the requirement to make reference to Judaism is well met. There are no spelling and grammatical errors. There is excellent use of technical language.</p> <p>The response begins with a clear understanding of the central tenets of Jewish thought, which provide a strong foundation for the discussion.</p> <p>Paragraph 2 logically progresses from paragraph 1, taking the theological concept of covenant, applying it to Yom Kippur and drawing out implications relevant to the question. A clear, logical pathway through a response is important.</p>

penitential days, and on Yom Kippur the whole day is spent in prayer and fasting for forgiveness. Only when the shofar is blown at the end can penance cease. If you do not take part in Yom Kippur, you are saying that you don't want God's forgiveness, so you are cutting yourself off from the covenant. This makes Yom Kippur the most important day in the Jewish calendar.

Another reason for Yom Kippur being the most important day in the Jewish Calendar is that on this day you restore the communal and fraternal bonds with other Jews that have been broken through sin. Without this restoration of relationships Israel would break apart. The Jews are always under pressure as a minority in the world, and unless they maintain strong communal bonds their community would eventually disappear, so Yom Kippur is the most important day in the calendar.

Jews believe that on this day a person's destiny for the coming year is established, so it is vital that he gets things right on this day, and this makes it very important indeed.

On the other hand, many Jews would claim that Pesach is the most important day. It is Pesach that celebrates the deliverance of the Jews from Egypt, without which the Jewish nation simply would not exist. It is At Pesach that G-d's great miracles of deliverance are remembered and celebrated. In fact, Pesach is a reliving of the events of the Exodus, when a Jewish father reminds his son that he [not just his ancestors,] was saved from Egypt. It is at Pesach that the covenant is celebrated and renewed. As Pesach remembers the establishment of the covenant that defined and established Israel as a nation, it must be the most important day in the Jewish calendar.

I disagree with these arguments, as I do not think that picking out a particular feast as the most important is a useful

Note that the candidate is well-focused throughout on the question to be answered. This is also very important.

The candidate follows on with further support for the argument. Note that they are able to draw on knowledge of the meaning of Yom Kippur to make the argument. This means that the response is well-focused on answering the question and can make an effective argument. Logical progression is still maintained and this is the case throughout the essay

Another key theological idea is included here in support of the statement.

However, the counter-argument is effectively made. The candidate draws on his/her knowledge of Judaism to make a credible case for an alternative viewpoint. That there is detailed evidence used to support the counter-argument.

The candidate concludes with a personal view that is distinct from both views given. They again draw on knowledge of Judaism and appropriate terminology support the personal viewpoint. The response concludes with a clear statement of whether or not the candidate agrees with the statement in the question. Thus the examiner is left in no doubt that the argument has led to a clear conclusion.

At no point in this response is focus on the question lost and all material used is relevant to the question.

activity. We can say that there are some very important days, but once we have identified them, deciding which is the most important is a waste of time. If the Jewish faith rests on keeping God's law, every day should be equally important because the Torah can and must be kept every day. So I do not think that Yom Kippur is the most important day in the Jewish calendar.

2e) 'Yom Kippur is the most important day in the Jewish calendar.'

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

Many Jews think that Yom Kippur is the most important day in the Jewish calendar. They believe this because the Day of Atonement is one of their great national feasts and all Jews try to celebrate it.

On the Day of Atonement Jews spend their time asking G-d for forgiveness for the sins committed during the previous year. Unless G-d forgives your sins you cannot go to heaven or receive his blessings, so many Jews believe that Yom Kippur is vitally important to them. All sin breaks the covenant between G-d and the Jews and so if the covenant is to be maintained sin must be forgiven. Yom Kippur is also important for maintaining and restoring community relationships.

Some Jews might argue that other feasts are more important than Yom Kippur. They might say that Sabbath is the most important day and there are fifty two of them each year, all equally important. The Sabbath was built into creation right from the beginning, so the Bible tells us, so it must be the most important feast. Other Jews might think that Pesach is most important, because it remembers G-d's great deeds in saving the Jews from Egypt.

I believe that Yom Kippur is the most important day in the Jewish calendar because when God forgives our sins we are at rights with him again and so can receive his blessings. When Jews make put things right for the next year they are renewing Israel and making it ready to live the Jewish way of life in a harsh world.

Examiner's commentary

Medium level response

This is medium level response towards the middle of the band. At most points the response is clearly focused on Judaism and the response follows a logical order.

This response contains no mistakes, although it does not have the detail required by a high level answer. It begins with a statement that many Jews believe Yom Kippur to be the most important day. While this is correct, it does not have the depth of an answer that draws on religious concepts to support it.

Paragraph 2 is correct and the religious ideas relevant, but they are not developed well as they are in the high level answer. The ideas here would have benefitted from being developed in different paragraphs to do justice to each one. Thus covenant would be worth one paragraph and community relationships another. There is no mention of the ten pentennial days and there is no explanation of why community relationships are important

Two alternative views are contained in the third paragraph. The candidate mentions the Sabbath and Pesach. This material is relevant, but only developed to a medium level. Candidates need to ensure that evidence is detailed and explained as fully as possible.

The candidate opts for one of the two views as a personal viewpoint, and this is acceptable.

The personal viewpoint is a summary of one of them without adding anything to the content of the response, but it is made personal which mean it can gain some credit.