

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.

1e) ‘Everyone should look forward to the coming of the Messiah’ 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>The question raises the question of who we mean by everyone. Do we mean all humans or all Jews? Clearly, the Jews are a nation which believes that the messiah is yet to come and that when he comes the world will be put to rights, but other people do not share this view. Christians believe that he has come already and will come again, whereas for many people the messiah forms no part of their faith.</i></p> <p><i>Jews believe that the messiah is G-d’s chosen one who will put the world to rights and save Israel. All people are subject to G-d and so have no choice about whether to welcome the messiah. They are obliged to welcome him. Who</i></p>	<p>High level response</p> <p>This is a high level response at the upper end of the band. The candidate reflects initially on the question. This is a good way to start as it shows a sound grasp of the issue in the stimulus statement. Paragraph 1 shows knowledge of Judaism and its relationship to other faiths which begins to meet the need for the essay to make reference to Judaism.</p> <p>In paragraph 2 there is a statement of an orthodox Jewish view. It is grounded in the general obligation of all people to honour G-d and be subject to his will. This is an appeal to non-Jews. It supports the claim that everyone should want the messiah to come. The argument is strengthened by its appeal to the universal values of peace and justice that all people of goodwill share.</p>

could fail to want a better world without injustices and war where people live in peace? Even if you are not a Jew you should accept that if the messiah really comes he will do G-d's will and so you should want him to come.

Of course, all Jews must want the messiah to come. Indeed, to be a Jew is to take seriously G-d's promises to Israel and to live in the hope that you will see their fulfilment. The messiah will fulfil these promises, so if you do not want him to come what is the point of being a Jew?

However, many Jews do not believe in a single person called the messiah. They believe that there will be a messianic time brought about by G-d. All people of goodwill should want there to be a world free of injustices and oppression which is ruled entirely according to righteousness. So while you may not look forward to the coming of the messiah you must look forward to the messianic age.

This view manages to reconcile the tensions between Jews and Gentiles. Clearly, most religions do not accept the messiah and Christians believe that he has already come and will return to bring the final judgment of all nations. So they will not look forward to the coming of the messiah as Jews do. On the other hand, Jews, Christians and Muslims and other faiths can agree that the messianic age is a good idea, even if they do not agree that a messiah will bring it, so they should look forward to it.

My personal view lies with those reformed Jews who believe that there may be a messiah for each generation. The word messiah means anointed one and the word suggests someone who provides leadership for G-d's people. There can be such Jewish leaders in each generation. They may be rabbis who guide people with wisdom or they may be politicians who lead the Jews

This argument continues the orthodox Jewish view. This view is now clearly given. It shows that to be a Jew requires belief in the coming of the messiah.

The candidate offers the alternative view that there will be not a messiah but a messianic age. This is a Jewish view found more among reform Jews than among the orthodox. The candidate is showing that they are aware of the diversity of opinion in Judaism. The candidate shows that all people of goodwill can unite in this messianic expectation.

The candidate then develops the fuller implications of the view that has just been given. The candidate shows that people of different religions can unite in accepting this understanding of messianism because of their common human values. There are now two views, well explained.

The candidate concludes with a personal viewpoint. This is a new viewpoint entirely and it is found among Jews of one strand of opinion in Judaism. The candidate adopts this view as their own and develops it. The candidate then draws out the full implications of this opinion not just for Jews but for people of other faiths and none. In this way the view that all people should look forward to the coming of the messiah receives justification in terms of the Jews mission to spread righteousness through the whole human race. The candidate is locating their opinion very much within reformed Judaism and is justifying the universalistic claims in the statement in terms of universal well being.

Judaism is clearly referred to throughout the response and the candidate finishes with a statement that responds fully to the question set by the examiner.

through trying times. Such messianic leaders may well make a positive contribution to the governance, culture and well being of the whole human race and thus fulfil the Jews' special role of bringing righteousness to the world. All people should welcome such messianic leaders. So yes, all people should look forward to the coming of the messiah.

1e) 'Everyone should look forward to the coming of the Messiah'

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

Everyone should look forward to the coming of the messiah. The messiah will bring about G-d's will in the world. For well over two thousand years the Jews have awaited their messiah who will save Israel and restore it to its true position in the world.

Israel has always known that the world is not run according to G-d's rules and evil seems often to get its own way. The messiah will change all this and so Jews should welcome the coming of the messiah.

People of other nations should look forward to the coming of the messiah because they will always benefit from the establishment of G-d's will in the world. Some people might say that as they do not believe in the coming of the messiah there is no reason why they should look forward to his coming. I can understand this viewpoint but Jews will say that these people are simply wrong in their religious beliefs and so, although they don't look forward to the coming of the messiah, they should do so.

But some people would say that a messiah is not necessary. Many Jews think not in terms of a messiah but in terms of a messianic age. We may not need an individual messiah. Maybe a lot of pious Jews could be messianic in the sense that they work as part of the nation to fulfil G-d's will.

Examiner's commentary

Medium level response

This is a medium level response towards the upper end of the band.

This answer maintains focus on Judaism. Throughout the essay the question is answered. The candidate comes to the point with relevant information. Unlike the high level answer the student does not reflect on who might be included in the term everyone and so is less reflective than the high level candidate.

The position taken in the first two paragraphs is orthodox Jewish and so is a clear statement of the opinion of many Jews. By this time in the answer the candidate has identified a significant viewpoint.

The candidate then identifies the problem of why non-Jews should look forward to the coming of the messiah by pointing out that while he/she understands their position they are wrong, according to Jewish opinion. It is acceptable to state that someone is wrong as long as you can back up your opinion to some degree. The candidate does not back it up very well but simply appeals to the opinion of Jews which weakens the response, but the candidate does keep to the focus of the question.

An alternative viewpoint is now given. This is a perfectly valid viewpoint that reflects opinion within Judaism. He/she links up this view with another one that Israel is a messianic people and that maybe the whole nation might fulfil a messianic role. Neither viewpoint is particularly well developed, but the candidate is adopting a valid and credible viewpoint that addresses the examiner's requirements. This response therefore is medium level not because of any errors but because the arguments are not supported with detailed evidence.

The candidate concludes by addressing the question. They have adopted one of the viewpoints argued in the main body of the essay. The argument is supported by some justification and it concludes with a statement addressing the question.

In my opinion all people should look forward to the coming of the messiah whether they are Jews or not because the messiah is G-d's representative on Earth and you are not entitled to a personal choice as to whether you accept G-d and his representatives or not. The messiah will do great good on Earth and you should always look forward to the coming of good people. So yes, all people should look forward to the coming of the messiah.