

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

Unit 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 GSCE 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2e) ‘The Tenakh is out of date.’ 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>Some people suggest that the Tenakh is outdated. Even the youngest books of the prophets date from the second half of the first millennium B.C. and the books of Moses go back to the mid second millennium. They were written in the bronze age at a time when people thought the Earth was flat and believed that evil spirits caused mental illness.</i></p> <p><i>Even a reasonably educated teenager now knows more about the world than Moses did. So how can they have much to teach us today?</i></p> <p><i>We would not use a science book that is more than few years old because it soon becomes outmoded as its theories are superseded by newer information. This</i></p>	<p>High level answer</p> <p>The essay comes quickly to the point by dealing with a reasonably common argument against the enduring relevance of the Tenakh and religious Scriptures in general. The argument is effectively developed in this paragraph.</p>
	<p>The candidate develops his/her point by comparing the relevance of religious books to the relevance of scientific books. The comparison has some apparent strength, and</p>

goes for other subjects, such as history, too. Old books of history soon become obsolete as new facts are and discovered. So why rely on an ancient religion book? Religion has to grow and develop over the years. We have to evolve our religious ideas, so why rely on ancient books and treat them as authoritative. Preserve them by all means, but only as sources of information to be used when necessary.

New technologies have brought new problems. We do not find any guidance in the Tenakh to help us with in-vitro fertilisation, genetic engineering and so on. The material in the Tenakh is good as far as it goes, but the pressing problems of the modern day are not addressed in the book, so it is outdated.

However, others might argue that religion is not like science and so it runs by its own rules. In religion ,books do not become obsolete as quickly as science books do. Some books may have enduring value, and some would say that the Tenakh falls into this category. It may not be up to date with technology, but the moral principles contained in it may be applied in modern situations.

While scientific theories have their day and are soon replaced, human experiences are significant forever. If a person from the bronze age were to have had a profound experience and have reported it in some form, it would still be powerful for those who read it today. The theories which they use to explain their experiences may well be replaced with better ones, but the experience will be powerful for those who read of it. This is the case with the great experiences of the Bible. The Exodus of the Israelites under Moses is a great story that still inspires, so the Tenakh is not outdated.

Furthermore, religious experiences never lose their value. Encounters with G-d are so significant that they speak to all people of all times. We still are in awe of

the candidate ties his/her ideas in with the necessity of evolution / progress in religious thought. However, he/she does not overstate the case, but accepts that the Scriptures should be preserved. The candidate shows some maturity of thought here and also avoids bias.

The case is strengthened by the the use of examples of how the Tenakh lacks guidance on modern issues.

The case at present is strongly made.

However, we run into a counter argument that challenges the comparison of religious and scientific texts. The concept of enduring value is significant in this counter – argument and the candidate rightly points out that while modern situations are not present in Scripture, the moral principles by which we make judgments are. This is a significant and effective response to some of the arguments in previous paragraphs.

The candidate's theory of enduring relevance continues in this paragraph, where it is applied to the difference between experiences and theories. The rebuttal of the statement is effectively done.

The special case of religious experiences is cited in support of the enduring relevance thesis. The argument is now strongly made

the great theophany of Sinai, and the messages of the prophets talk not just of the past, but of the future. If they give us an insight into the ultimate future of the world how can they have lost their relevance?

In my opinion just as in history we have to use primary sources, which must be preserved, so in religion we must preserve our primary sources. The Tenakh is the primary source for great religious experiences, which are at the foundation of our religious traditions. Thus the Tenakh never loses its relevance and therefore cannot be outdated.

and the essay is well-balanced between the two points of view.

We conclude with a personal opinion, which introduces the concept that the Tenakh is a primary source of information on religious experiences. This is a new argument not merely a restatement of one of the other views and is backed up by reference to the importance of primary sources in the study of History. The candidate maintains his/her focus on the question by concluding with a statement that answers the question.

2e) 'The Tenakh is out of date.'

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>Many people think that the Tenakh is out of date. The books of the law were written by Moses and he lived more than three thousand years ago. Times have changed since Moses lived, and as times change so do moral laws. Nowadays we have developed technologies unheard of in the biblical period. We have in vitro fertilisation, contraceptives, and genetic engineering. We cannot rely on the Tenakh for advice on how to deal with these problems. It is better to turn to more modern books.</i></p> <p><i>Furthermore, Books do not take long to become outdated these days. In earlier times when thought and situations changed slowly books might be relevant for a long time, but nowadays we have a fast changing society in which a book might become outdated very quickly. Textbooks soon lose their relevance, and as the Tenakh is a textbook of religion, it cannot be relevant for times for which it was not written.</i></p>	<p>Medium level answer</p> <p>The candidate begins with an argument that agrees with the statement in the question. It argues along standard secular and humanist lines that times have changed and books become outdated. It makes appropriate reference to the issues which are not dealt with in the Tenakh and concludes that we should turn to more modern books.</p> <p>The standard humanist line is continued. The argument is logically sound and the case is credible. Note the words and phrases "fast-changing society" and "cannot be relevant." These are the vocabulary of the kind of argument that the student is citing. The candidate keeps the argument on track by providing a conclusion at the end of the paragraph.</p>
<p><i>However, the statement in the question is too broad to be useful. There are beautiful psalms in the Tenakh. They may be still relevant, though the moral laws may be outdated</i></p>	<p>The counter-argument begins by the candidate pointing out that the statement in the question is too broad to be useful. Critically examining the statement and identifying its weaknesses is a very useful skill.</p>
<p><i>The Tenakh is a primary source. We preserve primary sources and use them in history, so we need to preserve the Tenakh. It is the root of the Jewish faith and the Jewish identity.</i></p>	<p>The candidate takes the idea used by the argument for the statement that the Tenakh is a primary source for religious ideas and turns it against the argument, pointing out that it is the primary source at the root of Jewishness and that therefore it is still relevant. However, while this argument is credible and worthwhile, it is not developed.</p>
<p><i>In my view the Jews are a special community who are both a nation and a religion. Without the material contained in the Tenakh the roots of Judaism would perish and the community disappear.</i></p>	<p>The candidate concludes with a personal point of view. The points are valid and slightly supported, but the view is not greatly developed from the previous argument.</p> <p>There are no errors in this latter argument, but</p>

	<p>it is limited and could have been better made with more evidence and argument.</p> <p>.</p>
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