

Exam skills

Religious Studies GCSE



1 and 2 mark questions

Target: AO1:1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including beliefs, practices and sources of authority

1 mark

Multiple choice

Testing knowledge

Choose from A, B, C or D

2 marks

The question will ask; Give two...

- ways
- of the
- types
- examples
- reasons
- causes
- religious beliefs

You only need to write a short sentence, no explanations or detail needed

4 mark questions

Target: AO1:3 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including similarities and differences within and/or between religions and beliefs

The question will ask; Explain two...

- ways in which
- contrasting
- similar religious beliefs

You will need to state and explain X 2

“Contemporary British society”

From the mark scheme

First way

- Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate influence – 1 mark
- Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate influence – 2 marks

Second way

- Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate influence – 1 mark
- Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate influence – 2 marks

5 mark questions

Target: AO1:1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including beliefs, practices and sources of authority.

From the mark scheme

First teaching

Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate teaching – 1 mark

Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate teaching – 2 marks

Second teaching

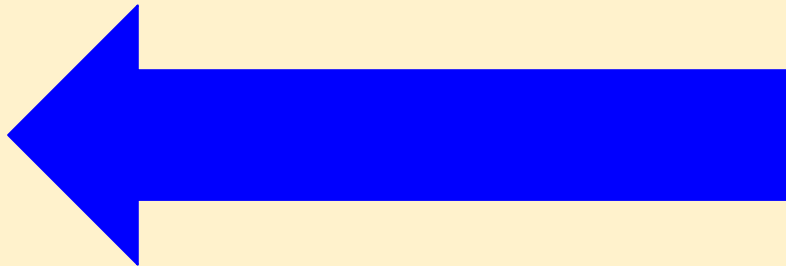
Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate teaching – 1 mark

Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate teaching – 2 marks

Relevant and accurate reference to sacred writing or another source of _____ belief and teaching – 1 mark

The question will ask; Explain two...

- Buddhist teachings
- Christian teachings
- religious beliefs (Paper 2, themes)
- stages
- ways
- reasons



5 mark questions

Target: AO1:1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including beliefs, practices and sources of authority.

From the mark scheme

First teaching

Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate teaching – 1 mark

Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate teaching – 2 marks

Second teaching

Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate teaching – 1 mark

Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate teaching – 2 marks

Relevant and accurate reference to sacred writing or another source of _____ belief and teaching – 1 mark

You must refer to sacred writing or another source of religious beliefs and teaching. Use this to support your point.

What does this mean?

- Consider what the Bible or Buddhist holy books say
- Could you include a quote?
- You do not need to provide a direct quote. You can paraphrase
- What do other religious leaders say? E.g. Dalai Lama/Pope...

“Contemporary British society”

Students should consider different beliefs and attitudes to religious and non-religious issues in contemporary British society.

They should be aware that the religious traditions of Great Britain are, in the main, Christian, and that religious traditions in Great Britain are diverse.

They include Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism, as well as other religious and non-religious beliefs such as atheism and humanism.

This knowledge may be applied throughout the assessment of the subject content.

Analyse

To carefully examining information in order to show understanding.

Break something down into its main parts/arguments

To interpret and explain something.

Evaluate

Consider how far the arguments or set of research findings is accurate.

To make a judgement

Provide your opinion or verdict about the statement

Provide information on both sides of the debate using evidence

State your position basing your arguments on the evidence that informed you in arriving at your position.

12 mark questions

Target: AO2 **Analyse** and **evaluate** aspects of religion and belief, including significance and influence.

You will be given a statement:

‘War is never right.’ Evaluate this statement

You will need to **evaluate** the statement

It will then give you some guidance on how to do this...

In your answer you should:

- refer to teaching
- give reasoned arguments to support this statement
- give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view
- reach a justified conclusion

In your answer you:

- should give reasoned arguments in support of this statement
- should give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view
- should refer to religious arguments
- may refer to non-religious arguments
- should reach a justified conclusion.

Sentence starters

- A point of view that agrees with the statement is...
- This point backs up the statement because...
- A _____ might say...
- A teaching to support this statement is...*Include scripture*
- ‘this argument/evidence is robust/strong/weak/inconclusive/insubstantial/convincing because...’
- Overall I agree/ disagree with this statement because...

Things to remember

- You MUST use terms like “some Christians believe...” or “most Buddhists think...”
- Be clear in your meaning, do not say “they” or “it”
- Answer should be around 250 words
- Religious teachings can be paraphrased - direct quotes not needed
- You can discuss any other religious views you know
- No need for an introduction

Level	Criteria	Marks
4	<p>A well-argued response, reasoned consideration of different points of view.</p> <p>Logical chains of reasoning leading to judgement(s) supported by knowledge and understanding of relevant evidence and information.</p> <p>References to religion applied to the issue.</p>	10-12
3	<p>Reasoned consideration of different points of view.</p> <p>Logical chains of reasoning that draw on knowledge and understanding of relevant evidence and information.</p> <p>Clear reference to religion.</p>	7-9
2	<p>Reasoned consideration of a point of view.</p> <p>A logical chain of reasoning drawing on knowledge and understanding of relevant evidence and information.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Recognition of different points of view, each supported by relevant reasons / evidence.</p> <p>Maximum of Level 2 if there is no reference to religion or the argument is one-sided.</p>	4-6
1	Point of view with reason(s) stated in support.	1-3
0	Nothing worthy of credit.	0

What does this mean for our example question? Let's do this together

'War is never right.' Evaluate this statement

In your answer you:

- should give reasoned arguments in support of this statement
- should give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view
- should refer to religious arguments
- may refer to non-religious arguments
- should reach a justified conclusion.

Spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG)

Spelling, punctuation and grammar will be assessed in 12-mark questions.

Spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG) will be assessed against the following criteria:

Level	Performance descriptor	Marks awarded
High performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learners spell and punctuate with consistent accuracy• Learners use rules of grammar with effective control of meaning overall• Learners use a wide range of specialist terms as appropriate	3
Intermediate performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learners spell and punctuate with considerable accuracy• Learners use rules of grammar with general control of meaning overall• Learners use a good range of specialist terms as appropriate	2
Threshold performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learners spell and punctuate with reasonable accuracy• Learners use rules of grammar with some control of meaning and any errors do not significantly hinder meaning overall• Learners use a limited range of specialist terms as appropriate	1
No marks awarded	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The learner writes nothing• The learner's response does not relate to the question• The learner's achievement in SPaG does not reach the threshold performance level, for example errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar severely hinder meaning	0

12 mark question (A02)

Example 1

0	1	.	5
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'The Four Noble Truths are the most important Buddhist teaching.'
Evaluate this statement.

[12 marks + 3 SPaG]

In your answer you should:

- refer to Buddhist teaching
- give reasoned arguments to support this statement
- give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view
- reach a justified conclusion

Answer A

In the second paragraph the student discusses the fourth Noble Truth as a 'however' point (as opposed to continuing the discussion as the Middle Way is the fourth Noble Truth). However, in the fourth paragraph, a second viewpoint is discussed. There is overall a reasonable discussion of different points of view, demonstration of understanding of key concepts and a fairly logical chain of reasoning. The answer also ends with judgements directly related to the statement, so this response meets the criteria for Level 4.

Level 4, 10 marks (251 words)

SPaG 3 – despite misspelling of 'enlightenment' throughout, other technical terms are correctly spelt. Grammar used with effective control of meaning overall, therefore meets the criteria for 'high performance'.

Answer B

The first paragraph is redundant as it does not add anything to the response, furthermore the student did not need to copy out the statement in their second paragraph. There is limited evaluation here, and some reasoned consideration of two points of view but the response is too generalised to meet the criteria for Level 3. There is some use of relevant teachings, and a good attempt at application of the chain of reasoning in the fifth and sixth paragraphs.

Level 2, 6 marks

SPaG – 2 marks. The answer is about the expected length (234 words) but there are several spelling mistakes and misuse of capital letters. Subject terms spelled correctly 'Buddha' and 'enlightenment' which could help push this to 3 marks. However, overall style and grammar means best fit is 2 marks.

Example 2

0	2	.	5
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'Infant baptism is not as important as believers' baptism.' Evaluate this statement.

[12 marks]

In your answer you should:

- refer to Christian teaching
- give reasoned arguments to support this statement
- give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

Example 2

Answer A

A very brief response (60 words) but it does include two relevant points which address the content of the question. Both include some development and explanation, therefore the response goes slightly beyond Level 1.

Level 2,4 marks

Example 2

Answer B

The response gives two points of view in the first two paragraphs, with reasons and evidence. The third paragraph makes use of scripture although contradicts itself in terms of the line of argument supported, the conclusion also contains a repeat of points made previously. As such the response does not demonstrate the logical chains of reasoning or development required to reach Level 3.

Level 2, 5 marks

Example 2

Answer E

This response is well argued, with well explained points on both sides of the argument. The student demonstrates logical chains of reasoning and applies religious beliefs to the issue at hand. There are some generalisations made such as in the conclusion that the Bible says all who are baptised with go to heaven, however at this level the nuances of such claims can be overlooked. Overall the response fully meets the criteria for Level 4 and deserves full marks.

Level 4, 12 marks

12 mark questions (A02)

Example 3

0	1	.	5
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'For religious believers, sexual relationships should take place only within marriage.' Evaluate this statement.

[12 marks + SPaG 3]

In your answer you:

- should give reasoned arguments in support of this statement
- should give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view
- should refer to religious arguments
- may refer to non-religious arguments
- should reach a justified conclusion.

Example 3

Answer A

This response drifts significantly from the focus of the statement in the question, which limits the mark that can be awarded. The first sentence is not relevant, and the rest of the first paragraph is more focussed on marriage and having children than sexual relationships. Again, paragraph three focusses on having children. There is reasonable religious content here, despite some inaccuracy of expression concerning Jesus birth, but the accompanying reasoning is limited. Therefore the response just meets the criteria for Level 3.

Level 3, 7 marks

SPaG 3 – good use of sentences and punctuation, high accuracy in spelling.

Answer B

This response is about the expected length (241 words) and is well-argued. The response is well focused on the question set, and makes reasonable use of religious teachings. As such, the response is firmly within Level 4, but does not quite reach the top mark. A tighter focus on the question of sexual relationships, rather than the purposes of marriage could have aided this.

Level 4, 11 marks

SPaG 3 – this response fully meets the criteria for high performance with a good level of accuracy throughout.

Example 4

0	4	.	5
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'War is the best way to solve problems between countries.'
Evaluate this statement.

[12 marks + 3 SPaG]

In your answer you:

- should give reasoned arguments in support of this statement
- should give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view
- should refer to religious arguments
- may refer to non-religious arguments
- should reach a justified conclusion.

Example 4

Answer A

This response gives points on both sides of the argument but lacks evaluations and development of the accurate and relevant points that are given. There are some inaccuracies and confusion, for example the second paragraph and the point about civilians in the third. Furthermore, the reference to holy war and Gandhi are not made relevant with reference to 'countries.' Due to some inaccuracies and lack of focus on the statement, this response does not meet the criteria for Level3.

Level 2, 6 marks

SPaG 3 – good use of spelling and grammar, which allows clarity of meaning throughout.

Example 4

Answer B

A well-argued response of the expected length (246 words). The religious arguments are used well, although throughout the answer there could have been more focus on the issue of 'between countries'. This clear focus on the exact statement at hand is required for a top mark.

Level 4, 10 marks

SPaG 3 – this response meets all the criteria for high performance. Good use of subject vocabulary, accuracy of spelling and clear communication of meaning.