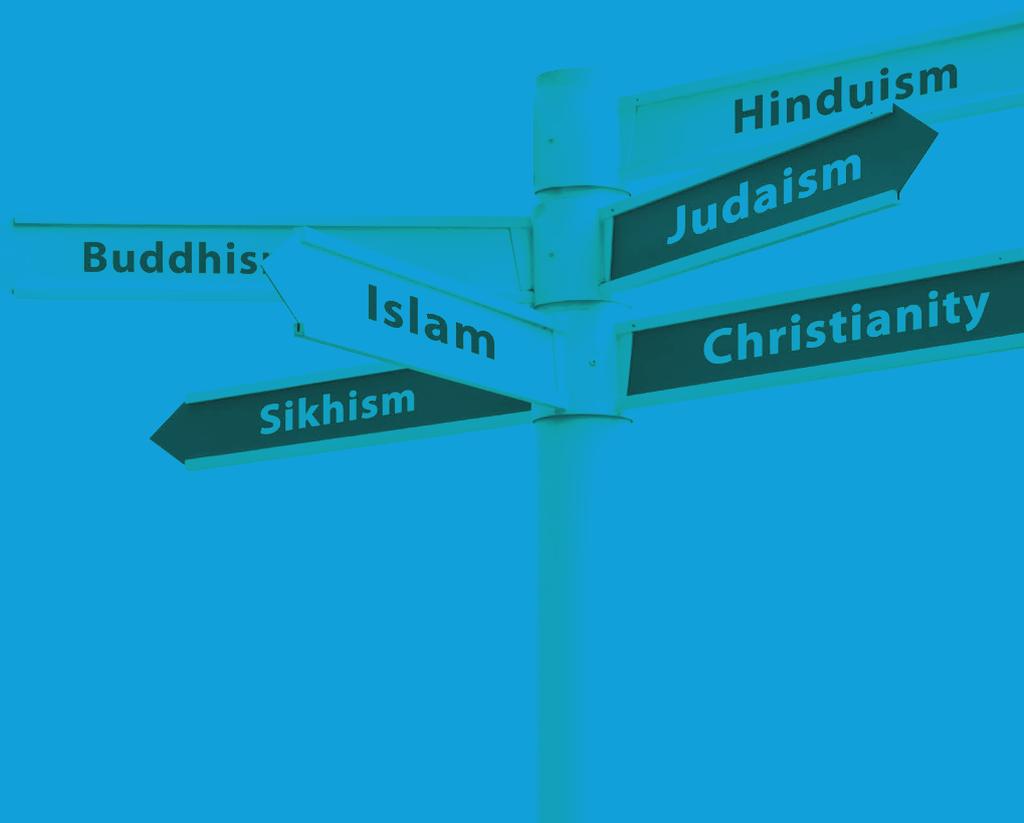


2019 SUMMER EXAMINATION SUMMARY REPORT

A HELPFUL GUIDE TO INFORM
YOUR TEACHING FOR

RELIGIOUS STUDIES GCSE



SUPPORTING YOUR TEACHING IN THE NEW ACADEMIC YEAR

Utilising results from the 2019 summer assessment, our Religious Studies Team and Examiners have analysed the performance of candidates to provide a summary to aid your teaching.

This booklet provides:

- A general summary of candidates' strengths
- Identifies areas where candidates require additional support/guidance
- Suggestions of areas to consider further in the new academic year

In addition to this booklet, we recommend that centres review the performance of their centre, by utilising our free Online Exam Review tool. This online portal brings together several elements including general data, exam questions, mark schemes and examiner comments to lead you through examination performance.

Access this via oer.wjec.co.uk

Centres are also encouraged to review their item level data (provided on our Secure Website www.wjecservices.co.uk) and the Principal Examiners' reports which are available on your subject page of our website www.wjec.co.uk/qualifications.

ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

In addition to this booklet, we continue to provide a comprehensive package of support to aid you in the delivery of GCSE Religious Studies which includes:

- Expert advice and guidance from our subject specialists to support your teaching
- Free teaching and learning resources to be used in the classroom
www.wjec.co.uk/resources
- Face-to-face and online training, to book your place visit
www.wjec.co.uk/training

To ensure you receive the latest subject news, training opportunities and resources updates, subscribe to our mailing list today www.wjec.co.uk/subscribe

Disclaimer

This resource aims to support your teaching, but in no way constitutes an endorsed teaching method that is required by WJEC.

AREAS OF STRENGTH OF THE 2019 SUMMER ASSESSMENT

Following a review of the summer assessment, our Religious Studies Team and Examiners have identified that candidates generally performed well in the following areas:

- Some candidates appeared to understand the different skills requirements of each question and respond accordingly e.g. describing in a b. question.
- Some candidates showed confidence and maturity with tackling the demands of d. questions i.e. including lines of argument (not just description or explanation) and formulating judgements. The best d. responses were those that broke away from a simple assessment of the pros and cons, to a more analytical discussion.
- Some candidates were able to think synoptically i.e. to connect different parts of the specification in their responses.
- Specific religious language was a feature of better answers.
- Some candidates really 'knew their stuff' and gave detailed, religious, philosophical/ethical answers rather than general, socio-secular responses e.g. the question on the death penalty often suffered from a very general approach that failed to demonstrate religious/ethical considerations.



AREAS FOR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Our Religious Studies team and Examiners felt that, following the performance in the recent assessment, candidates found the following areas particularly challenging:

- There remains a need for some candidates to remember that the questions are assessing four different skills; define, describe, explain and discuss. They must demonstrate the relevant skill in the appropriate question and avoid, for example, describing in a c. question.
- Having learned key terminology for the a. questions, candidates must now extend their religious literacy by using religious language in all questions. Some did not seem to recognise some of the key concepts.
- As the d. questions are worth half the marks, it might be wise to tackle the d questions first. Some candidates clearly ran out of time.
- Some candidates are failing to draw on their knowledge of their second religion to enhance their d. answers. This is not a specific requirement of this question, but knowledge of another religion can often serve to provide alternative or different viewpoints to evaluate.
- Some frameworks/formulaic structures and acronyms spoil a response to a d. question and do not generate critical thinking. Candidates spend time trying to fit their answer in to a learned structure, rather than concentrating on the discussion and argument.
- B. questions are not 'penny-point' marked and do not necessarily need 5 points. Some candidates struggled to think of 5 points and this led to repetition and a 'bullet-pointed' answer. Far better to just use the criteria of the marking band and aim for an 'excellent description' regardless of the number of points included.
- Some candidates' responses were very brief. Whilst it is always quality, not quantity, that matters (and lines do not have to be filled), offering brief answers runs the risk of failing to include enough detail. Some candidates did not appear to have enough religious/philosophical/ethical knowledge to respond at anything more than a basic level.
- It is likely that the d. questions of Part A questions 1 and 2 will be religion specific and, if so, including content from other religions (or non-religious beliefs) will be irrelevant to the questions and will gain no credit.
- Including non-religious content where it is not required will not gain credit whilst failing to include non-religious content where it is required (Unit 1 Life and Death) will lose credit.
- Candidates are not paying close enough attention to the wording of the questions. They must read the questions carefully and candidates may underline the 'trigger' words e.g. 'Euthanasia is always wrong.' 'What is meant by relative poverty?' '.....is more/most important.....'
- Candidates should avoid mis-representing the non-religious beliefs of Atheists and Humanists; some seemed to think that not believing in God meant they had no principles or ethical views on anything.

ENHANCING THE DELIVERY OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES GCSE FOR 2019/20

Based on the performance of candidates in the 2019 summer assessment, the following areas have been identified as potential areas for teachers to consider providing additional support to their candidates:

- Focus on the skill demands of each question and ensure candidates notice if the question asks for 'or' or 'and'. Some candidates are giving two religions for b questions and one for c questions; the exact opposite of what they are meant to do.
- Ensure candidates fully understand the demands of certain questions e.g. when non-religious beliefs are required (and when they are not), when SPaG is credited etc.
- A good SPaG mark can often rescue a mediocre answer. Candidates must write in full sentences and take care with spellings, punctuation and grammar.
- Encourage the use of appropriate religious language across all questions
- Encourage the use of appropriate sources of wisdom (not only Scripture). Avoid 'parachuting' quotes in with no attempt to explain why they are relevant to what is being said.
- Ensure that candidates understand that Part B c. questions require two RELIGIOUS views and that non-religious views are not appropriate for this question. Credit will also be lost if only one view is given.
- Practise free responses to d. questions, especially for candidates who may be constrained by a 'formula'. Avoid a 'four paragraph' approach; 'Christians believe.... Muslims believe..... Humanists believe... I believe'. This is an overly structured, explanatory response and sometimes leads to irrelevant material being included and a lack of discussion.
- Encourage candidates to draw on their knowledge from right across the specification in their answers, especially the d. responses.
- Encourage candidates to attempt all questions – it is always worth a go. Too many wrote nothing at all or left many questions blank.
- Suggest completing d. questions first, or a. and d. questions.
- Suggest underlining trigger words to focus candidates on the exact requirements of the question.

TAILORED SUPPORTING RESOURCES

We have produced a comprehensive package of resources to support you in the delivery of GCSE Religious Studies. These resources are available for free from our Digital Resources Website www.wjec.co.uk/Resources.

Centres may wish to pay particular attention to the following resources which have proved extremely popular:

<https://resources.wjec.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rliid=2774>

<https://resources.wjec.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rliid=2694>

<https://resources.wjec.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rliid=2963>

<https://resources.wjec.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rliid=2431>

<https://resources.wjec.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rliid=2842>

<https://resources.wjec.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rliid=2266>

<https://resources.wjec.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rliid=2610> (Catholic Centres)

<https://resources.wjec.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rliid=2643> (Catholic Centres)

<https://resources.wjec.co.uk/Pages/ResourceSingle.aspx?rliid=2300> (Non-religious Beliefs)

