



GCSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES A 8062/16

Paper 1 Judaism

Mark scheme

June 2025

Version: 1.0 Final



Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

No student should be disadvantaged on the basis of their gender identity and/or how they refer to the gender identity of others in their exam responses.

A consistent use of 'they/them' as a singular and pronouns beyond 'she/her' or 'he/him' will be credited in exam responses in line with existing mark scheme criteria.

Further copies of this mark scheme are available from aqa.org.uk

Copyright information

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered schools/colleges for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to schools/colleges to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Copyright © 2025 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

Mark Schemes for GCSE Religious Studies

This paper requires expert markers who have wide knowledge and understanding of the particular subject content of the Specification. With the exception of the multiple-choice question, many of the questions asked have many different credible answers and students are able to bring to their answers their own knowledge, understanding and background. They will offer details, arguments and evidence which the examiner, with the help of the mark scheme, will need to judge as credible or not. It is therefore important that the examiner has a good understanding of the principles and spirit of the mark scheme in order to be fair and consistent when marking students' answers. The Content included is designed to be as helpful as possible but in many cases is not exhaustive. So Content sections are introduced by the sentence:

Students may include some of the following points, but all other relevant points must be credited:

this is to remind examiners that there may well be additional correct answers which, with their expertise, they will be able to allow. With all questions if an examiner has any doubt about answers being creditworthy they should consult their team leader.

Structure

The mark scheme for each question shows:

- the question; Each question is printed in full before its target and mark scheme. It is always important that examiners remind themselves of the exact question being asked. In particular, they will need to do this in instances where the answer appears to be 'straying' from the question set or perhaps offers a valid alternative not included in the mark scheme
- target; The target provides the specific assessment objective which the question is testing. It reminds examiners of the skills the question is designed to test, eg knowledge and understanding, evaluation
- the total marks available for the question and if Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar is assessed
- the typical answer(s) or content which are expected
- generic instructions related to the question target of how to award marks (ie levels of response grid).

Themes papers guidance (Specification A and Short Course)

In questions where students may choose religions from which to illustrate their answer, there may be some general Content, ie credible comments which students will make which could be applied to any religion or perhaps to a secular viewpoint as well. Where these are appropriate they are usually given first. The mark scheme will also include, under separate headings, Content sections for each of the six religions allowed within the Specifications.

General Guidance

.../. means that these are acceptable alternative answers in the mark scheme, eg Guru Har Krishan / Guru Tegh Bahadur / Guru Gobind Singh.

Answers may include specialist terms, in Hebrew or Arabic for example. If this is the case, the mark scheme will usually indicate this by providing in brackets the English as well, eg 'Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement)'. In such questions, answers will be credited whether provided in the original language or in English.

Some mark schemes use bullet points to separate content. Each bullet point refers to a different possible 'belief' or 'teaching' or 'way', depending on the question. Obliques (.../...) used within the bullet point indicate different ways in which the point may be expressed and points which may be made to give the further detail or development needed for the second mark.

Where a student has crossed out a complete answer, it should be marked if it remains legible, unless an alternative is provided in which case only the alternative should be marked. When part of an answer is crossed out, then only what remains should be considered.

In questions where credit can be given to the development of a point, those developments can take the form of:

- example or evidence
- reference to different views
- detailed information.

1-mark multiple-choice questions

Such questions have four alternatives and the one correct answer will be given together with the correct letter, eg 'Answer: D Trinity'.

2-mark short-answer questions

The principle here is provided in the mark scheme: 'One mark for each of two correct points.' Students may give **more than** the two answers required by the question. In such instances:

- **award for the first two answers only, wherever they appear**
- if a student gives more than one answer on the first line and another answer/other answers on the second line, the 'first two answers' will be the **first two** on the first line and **only these two** should be considered for marks. Other answers must be ignored
- if on the first line the first two answers given are correct, award two marks, regardless of what is written elsewhere in the answer
- if the first two answers can only be awarded one mark yet there is a third answer that is correct, this correct third answer must be ignored and no mark given for it
- however, if the student gives some **elaboration after the first answer**, which is clearly developing their first answer, (which they are not required to do), do not consider this elaboration to be their second answer (unless the elaboration happens to contain a second correct answer to the question asked), regardless of whether there are other answers provided. In this case, the second answer also, if correct, may be credited for the second mark.

4 and 5-mark answer questions

Examiners should take care to note the target of the question. Clear information is provided for these types of question on how to award marking points. Examiners should carefully read the additional instructions provided for each type of question (eg for influence questions the final sentence in the general guidance box reminds the examiner that the second mark (detailed explanation) awarded in each case must show clear 'influence').

12-mark answer questions

The 12-mark questions test Evaluation skills (AO2). The mark scheme for these answers is based on Levels of Response marking in which the examiner is required to make a judgement on the completed answer taken as a whole.

Level of response marking instructions

In GCSE Religious Studies, differentiation is largely achieved by outcome on the basis of students' responses. To facilitate this, level of response marking has been devised for many questions.

Level of response marking requires a quite different approach from the examiner than the traditional 'point for point' marking. It is essential that the **whole response is read** and then **allocated to the level** it best fits.

If a student demonstrates knowledge, understanding and/or evaluation at a certain level, he/she must be credited at that level. **Length** of response or **literary ability** should **not be confused with genuine religious studies skills**. For example, a short answer which shows a high level of conceptual ability must be credited at that level. (If there is a band of marks allocated to a level, discrimination should be made with reference to the development of the answer.)

Examiners should **refer to the stated assessment target** objective of a question (see mark scheme) when there is any doubt as to the relevance of a student's response.

Level of response mark schemes include either **examples** of possible students' responses or **material** which they might use. These are intended as a **guide** only. It is anticipated that students will produce a wide range of responses to each question.

It is a feature of levels of response mark schemes that examiners are prepared to reward fully responses which are obviously valid and of high ability but do not conform exactly to the requirements of a particular level. If examiners have any doubt about what level to award a response, they should consult their team leader.

Level of response mark schemes are broken down into levels, each of which has a descriptor. The descriptor for the level shows the average performance for the level. There are marks in each level.

Before examiners apply the mark scheme to a student's answer they should read through the answer and annotate it (as instructed) to show the qualities that are being looked for. They should then apply the mark scheme. It may be necessary to read the answer more than once to be sure of assigning the correct Level.

Step 1 Determine a level

Start at the lowest level of the mark scheme and use it as a ladder to see whether the answer meets the descriptor for that level. The descriptor for the level indicates the different qualities that might be seen in the student's answer for that level. If it meets the lowest level then go to the next one and decide if it meets this level, and so on, until you have a match between the level descriptor and the answer. With practice and familiarity you will find that for better answers you will be able to quickly skip through the lower levels of the mark scheme.

When assigning a level you should look at the overall quality of the answer and not look to pick holes in small and specific parts of the answer where the student has not performed quite as well as the rest. If the answer covers different aspects of different levels of the mark scheme you should use a best fit approach for defining the level and then use the variability of the response to help decide the mark within the level, ie if the response is predominantly level 3 with a small amount of level 4 material it would be placed in level 3 but be awarded a mark near the top of the level because of the level 4 content.

Step 2 Determine a mark

Once you have assigned a level you need to decide on the mark. The descriptors on how to allocate marks can help with this. The exemplar materials used during standardisation will help.

You may well need to read back through the answer as you apply the mark scheme to clarify points and assure yourself that the level and the mark are appropriate.

Indicative content in the mark scheme is provided as a guide for examiners. It is not intended to be exhaustive and you must credit other valid points. Students do not have to cover all of the points mentioned in the Indicative content to reach the highest level of the mark scheme.

An answer which contains nothing of relevance to the question must be awarded no marks.

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	• 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	• 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	• 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	• 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

0 1

Judaism: Beliefs

0 1 . 1

Which one of the following is the total number of mitzvot in the Jewish Law?

[1 mark]

A 248

B 365

C 613

D 752

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

Answer: **C 613**

0 1 . 2

Give two Jewish beliefs about the Covenant at Sinai.

[2 marks]

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

One mark for each of two correct points.

If students provide more than two responses only the first two responses should be considered for marking.

Students may include two of the following points, but all other relevant points must be credited:

Covenant made after God ensured the Jews escaped from slavery in Egypt / on Mount Sinai / between God and Moses / on behalf of the Jews / God would be the God of the Jews / the Jews would be God's people in return / as God's chosen people / receiving God's blessings / if they lived as God wants them to / Ten Commandments were given by God to Moses / as guidance on how to create a just and faithful society / that God requires from them/ the Torah was given by God to Moses / inscribed on the tablets of stone/ forms the foundation of the Jewish law/ credit examples of the 10 Commandments/celebration of Shavuot.

0 1 . 3

Explain two ways in which belief in the sanctity of human life influences Jews today.

[4 marks]

Target: AO1:2 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including influence on individuals, communities and societies.

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

To be a 'detailed explanation' the 'influence' of the way must be included.

Students may include some of the following points, but all other relevant points must be credited:

- As all life is precious and sacred, it should be prioritised over anything else / may influence Jews to decide to break all Jewish laws **except** adultery, idolatry and murder to preserve a human life (pikuach nefesh), etc.
- The concept of tikkun olam (healing the world) implies protecting human life.
- The sanctity of human life means that all life is sacred and precious to God / humans were created in the image of God / so human life should be protected.
- God is the giver of human life and only he has the right to take it away / humans should not take life because it could be seen as them putting themselves in God's place.
- It helps Jews to make moral decisions acceptable to God / influences Jews to think carefully about important decisions that may adversely affect their or other people's lives.
- Moral dilemmas may influence a Jew to question the acceptability of certain actions, such as war, abortion and euthanasia, however, interpretations may vary.
- Causing harm to another person breaches the sanctity of life / Jews are influenced to do nothing harmful to another person, even if it does not involve taking their life.
- Prolonging natural death may be seen as going against God's choice that a person's life should end / Jews may decide not to keep a person alive at all costs / e.g. use of a medical ventilator to prevent natural death.

0 1 . 4 Explain two Jewish beliefs about the key moral principle of ‘healing the world’.

Refer to sacred writings or another source of Jewish belief and teaching in your answer.

[5 marks]

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

First belief

Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate belief – 1 mark

Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate belief – 2 marks

Second belief

Simple explanation of a relevant and accurate belief – 1 mark

Detailed explanation of a relevant and accurate belief – 2 marks

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

Students may include some of the following points, but all other relevant points must be credited:

- Healing the world (tikkun olam) is responsibility humankind has to do good in the world / helping God’s work in sustaining the world.
- Make healing the world the underlying principle in whatever work they do (social justice, e.g. Amos).
- It is linked to God’s work at creation / protecting the environment e.g. stewardship / helping people in need / volunteering to work for charities / contributing to social justice
- Some believe it is more than just practical help / also involves obeying the mitzvot / to change the world so it is as God wants it to be / which heals it / getting closer to God.
- Shabbat should be properly observed / so Jews can make greater efforts to bring about a better world during the rest of the week.
- Working individually or collectively / setting a good example to others / instilling right thoughts and actions / and thereby healing the world.
- The greater the healing of the world / the closer the Messianic age may be to being established.

Sources of authority might include:

‘And then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth...”’ (Genesis 1:26).

‘The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as one of your citizens; you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt’ (Leviticus 19:34)

‘Not for desolation did He create it, He formed it to be settled’ (Isaiah 45:18)

‘They will beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation...’ (Isaiah 2:4)

‘Let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream’ (Amos 5:24)

‘Therefore we will hope to you (we will put our hope in you) Lord our God,’...to repair the world with the Kingship of the Almighty.’ (Aleinu Prayer)

Credit any reference to the mitzvot between man and man/ e.g. in Exodus 20 / the Pittsburgh Platform with focus on its adherence to the moral law within the Torah /

Accept all other sources of authority that correctly support the beliefs given.

0 1 . 5 ‘Jews should not fear God’s judgement after they die.’

Evaluate this statement.

In your answer you should:

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

[12 marks]
[SPaG 3 marks]

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

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

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

Level	Performance descriptor	Marks awarded
High performance	• 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	• 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	• 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	• 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

Students may include some of the following evidence and arguments, but all relevant evidence and arguments must be credited:

Arguments in support

- There is little about the afterlife in the Torah, but much about life at present (olam ha-ze) / the righteous souls will be resurrected and reunited with loved ones after death / being righteous removes fear, etc.
- God is a just and merciful judge / is forgiving / so his judgement cannot be questioned / living the sort of life God wants his people to live will guarantee a favourable judgement / removing an element of fear / because God can be trusted to get it right.
- Being God's chosen people carries the reward of a favourable judgement after death / as a result of his people being faithful to him / so no need to fear.
- No-one knows for sure when God's judgement will be carried out / some believe it is straight after death / some after the Messiah has come / the day of Judgement in the future / as so much is unknown, fearing God's judgement is unhelpful.
- Those who follow God may go straight to paradise (Gan Eden) / or spend some time being cleansed in Sheol (Gehenna) prior to entering paradise / as God is merciful and forgiving, paradise will be attained once cleansed.
- It is much better to live life following the Ten Commandments and mitzvot / doing as God requires / to create a better earth for God's people / than to live life fearful of the afterlife / God should be trusted.
- Some Jews believe in reincarnation / so they will have other chances to receive a favourable and merciful judgement.
- Some Jews reject any belief in life after death / so there is no judgement to fear.

Arguments in support of other views

- Being fearful may be a sign that people are not doing what God requires / so instead of fearing judgement, they should instead mend their ways / and return to God / which will remove fear
- As God is the true and fair judge, those who have not followed him should fear God's judgement / and it is their own fault if they are judged harshly but fairly.
- As there is much uncertainty about judgement and life after death, there is a natural fear of the unknown / Jews should trust that God will be fair / if that means life after death without God, that is their own fault.
- A better afterlife may be dependent on a longer period (a full 12 months) of cleansing in Sheol (Gehenna) / before trusting God's mercy and eventually reaching paradise / but God's mercy may not extend to the really wicked / some believe that the souls of the very wicked cease to exist / or continue in a state of remorse.
- Fearing God's judgment would be an appropriate response because of God's power and omniscience/ that such fear and respect would in fact aid a believer in maintaining a virtuous life.
- Although some Jews believe in reincarnation this may take a long time and involve suffering and other discomfort which may instil fear, etc.
- Credit Yom Kippur **if** candidates refer to the fact that the annual process of engagement with God Judgment and forgiveness allows them not to fear death
- Source of authority may include references to Maimonides (Rambam) / The Pittsburgh Platform

0 2

Judaism: Practices

0 2 . 1

Which one of the following do Jews consider to be the ‘written law’?

[1 mark]

A Amidah

B Kosher

C Talmud

D Tenakh

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

Answer: **D** Tenakh

0 2 . 2

Give two reasons why Jews pray.

[2 marks]

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

One mark for each of two correct points.

If students provide more than two responses only the first two responses should be considered for marking.

Students may include two of the following points but all other relevant points must be credited:

To communicate with God / prayer brings Jews closer to God / to focus their hearts, minds and souls on him / to show respect to God / because they believe God requires them to pray regularly / to reinforce their faith / to help them find new insights into their relationship with God / reminds them what their faith is all about / to strengthen the Jewish community by praying together / to build the relationship between God and the Jewish community / to praise and thank God / a time of reflection / to declare their faith regularly / a reminder that God’s rule is eternal / in order to ask God for help / to ask for peace in Israel / to ask God to help a sick relative / forgiveness/, etc.

0 2 . 3

Explain two contrasting Jewish practices that take place soon after the birth of a child.

[4 marks]

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

First contrasting practice

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

Second contrasting practice

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

Contrast may mean opposing or mean different views.

If similar practices are given, only **one** of them may be credited up to 2 marks max.

Students may include some of the following points, but all other relevant points must be credited:

- Orthodox boys and girls may have a naming ceremony (Brit Bat **for girls**) / being blessed in a synagogue on the first Shabbat after birth / father recites from the Torah / asks for blessings for the good health of both mother and baby / if a girl, the name is announced (boy at Brit Milah 8 days after birth) / Reform Jews may include both mother and father / not necessarily on the first Shabbat after birth, etc.
- Brit Milah is a ceremony for newly born boys / 8 days after birth / recalls the covenant made between God and Abraham / minyan should be present / candles are lit / close friend or relative places the boy on an empty chair / symbolises the presence of prophet Elijah / mohel places the boy on the knee of 'the companion of the child' – sandek / the father blesses his son / others present say a response / a blessing is said over wine / the baby's foreskin is removed / the boy is named / the family enjoy a meal of celebration, etc.
- Some Orthodox Jews give a small amount of money 31 days after the birth of the first son in redemption of the first-born son (Pidyon Haben) / this redeems him from Temple service / five silver coins are given to a kohen / a descendent of the priests who worked in the Temple / prayers said asking that the first-born boy 'enters into Torah, into marriage and into good deeds', etc.
- Shalom Zachar means welcoming a baby boy into Jewish community/ it is held on the first Friday after the birth
- The Shema prayer may be **whispered** into the ears of a newborn baby.

NB Answers may contrast two practices within one ceremony or come from two different ceremonies.

0 2 . 4 Explain two reasons why the festival of Pesach is important for Jews.

Refer to sacred writings or another source of Jewish belief and teaching in your answer.

[5 marks]

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

First reason

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

Second reason

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

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

Students may include some of the following points, but all other relevant points must be credited:

- It gives a regular reminder of the story of the escape from slavery in Egypt / suffering that their ancestors endured / the death of the first born / Moses' role in leading them towards freedom / and a new life in the Promised Land / God choosing them to be his people and saving them / showing the power of God in the miracles surrounding the Passover / the remembrance of the promise of land – referred to in the symbolism of 'next year in Jerusalem / the birth of a new Jewish nation / uses symbolism to link to the original events.
- It is a festival that Jews were commanded to celebrate / as recorded in Book of Exodus.
- It is a tradition that has existed for centuries / they have a responsibility to pass it on to future generations / so the past is not forgotten.
- The festival of Pesach is mainly a family celebration / all members of the family have a part to play in it and in preparations for it.
- There is an enjoyable element / especially for children / remembering the joy of being chosen by God to escape from the sadness of slavery / cleaning the house prior to the celebration is made fun for children by hiding some leaven and the middle matzo.
- The festival is an opportunity for all Jews to show their gratitude to God in the same way on the same day / an opportunity for Elijah to appear to announce the coming of the Messiah.
- Pesach reminds Jews that they have a responsibility to highlight the need for people to care for those who suffer / including feeding those who are in need / fighting injustice / promoting freedom for the oppressed.
- Jews retain optimism that their faith shows them they are blessed by God / who cares for them / who chose them and gave them responsibilities to others.
- Credit references of the **symbolism** of the objects on the Seder Plate as long the symbolism explains why the festival of Pesach is important for Jews.

Sources of authority might include:

'I am the Lord. I will free you from the labours of the Egyptians and deliver you from their bondage. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and through extraordinary chastisements. And I will take you to be My people and I will be your God.' (Exodus 6:6-7)

‘On that same night, I will pass through Egypt and strike down every firstborn – both men and animals – and I will bring judgement on all the gods of Egypt.’ (Exodus 12:12)

‘For seven days you are to eat bread made without yeast. On the first day, remove yeast from your houses.’ (Exodus 12:15)

‘Then Moses said to his people “Commemorate this day, the day you came out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery, because the Lord brought you out of it with a mighty hand. Eat nothing containing yeast.”’ (Exodus 13:3)

‘Celebrate the Feast of Unleavened Bread. For seven days, eat bread made without yeast as I commanded you.’ (Exodus 34:18)

Accept all other sources of authority that correctly support the beliefs given.

0 2 . 5

‘The Ark containing the Torah scrolls (Aron Hakodesh) is the most important feature of a synagogue.’

Evaluate this statement.

In your answer you should:

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

[12 marks]

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

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

Students may include some of the following evidence and arguments, but all relevant evidence and arguments must be credited:

Arguments in support

- The Aron Hakodesh is believed to be the holiest place in the synagogue / usually set in the wall facing Jerusalem and the site of the Temple / when worshippers face the ark, they are facing where the Temple stood.
- It contains the sacred scrolls of the Torah / represents the original ark of the covenant / where the Ten Commandments were stored / placed in the Holy of Holies in King Solomon’s original Temple / became a focal point for Jewish worship / the holiest place in the synagogue.
- It is raised above floor level up some steps / climbing the steps and opening the Aron Hakodesh is seen as an honour / reminds those who approach it that the Torah is above all humanity.

- The Aron Hakodesh is only opened during special prayers / and when Torah scrolls are taken out to be used in worship / at all other times, it is covered by a curtain (the Parochet) / as a reminder of the curtain in the Temple in Jerusalem.
- In some synagogues worshippers face the Aron Hakodesh as a focal point / all pray facing the same direction, etc.

Arguments in support of other views

- All parts of a synagogue are of similar importance / they all have their purpose and value in worship / show the importance of worshipping God, the importance of the Torah and symbolic reminders of past events.
- The bimah (reading platform) is most important / it is where the Torah is taken to be read from during a service / which makes it the focal point of worship / instead of just being a place where the Torah is kept / being raised, it is easy to see the reader of the Torah and hear what is being said / when being read, the scrolls are above the worshippers to emphasise their importance / the bimah represents the sanctuary and altar in the Temple / often in the centre of the synagogue to represent the Torah being read to the whole world / equally audible to all worshippers.
- The ner- tamid is an ever-burning light / usually in front of and slightly above the ark / it is a symbol of the eternal nature of God because it burns continuously / this symbolism makes it the most important feature of a synagogue / keeping a lamp burning continuously in the Tabernacle is instructed in the Torah / a valuable reminder of the menorah in the Temple that was lit every night.
- Patterns, symbols and extracts from scriptures are the most important feature / because they create a reminder of important teachings and beliefs / especially the Shema and Ten Commandments / inspire worship/ menorah/ mezuzah/ stain glass windows/ a memorial plaque/ the Star of David (Magen David)/ Jewish community / minyan
- Some might argue that seating arrangements in the synagogue represents the belief in the relationship between Jews and the Torah, etc.