

GENERAL ADVICE ABOUT WJEC GCSE RS

What you have to do –

- Answer the question (sounds obvious doesn't it, but a surprising number of exam candidates don't do this)
- Have a go at all the questions – a guess is better than a blank space
- Write in sentences
- Spell key words correctly (religious, belief, Christianity, pilgrimage, etc)
- Use your skills appropriately for the different types of questions by understanding and applying the ***trigger*** words:

Trigger	What you have to do
EXPLAIN	Show you understand and can put it in writing to tell the reader; give the meaning
DESCRIBE	Give some details
GIVE TWO REASONS	Write about two different motives, causes, explanations for something
RELIGIOUS BELIEVER	A person who belongs to a religion (Christianity, Islam etc); religious tradition or faith group (Buddhism, C of E, RC etc); or a person with unspecified religious beliefs. When the question asks you to write about something from the stance of a religious believer you do not always have to state what they belong to but you can if you want and often it makes answering the question easier. Your answer will be stronger if you refer to the relevant belief. Sometimes the question will ask you to refer to religious beliefs rather than a religious believer.
TWO DIFFERENT RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS	This often causes confusion. It is a technical term you must get familiar with. It means a religion (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and Sikhism) or a group within a religion (Church of England, Roman Catholic, Quaker) or a faith group such as Jehovah's Witnesses. This is nothing to do with being <i>traditional</i> or <i>keeping traditions!</i>
FEATURES	As in 'explain the most important features of
EVIDENCE	This trigger word requires you to develop your explanation by providing examples. Your <i>evidence</i> might be when you give a short quotation from a holy book, refer to a story or event from a holy book, write about something a (religious) person has done or achieved, mention an organisation (religious), or you could refer to something in the news, from TV, a film, a book or the real life experience of yourself or someone you know or have heard of. Giving <i>evidence</i> is like giving proof .
DO YOU AGREE?	Your answers to the 'e' questions must contain a thoughtful, personal response. You can say something like 'I partly agree and partly disagree..' providing you go on to explain this and give evidence. You can also say 'I am not sure' providing you follow this up with 'because' outlining your reasons for being confused or unable to take sides.

THE (a) QUESTIONS [2 marks]

Examples for the typical format of (a) questions:

Explain what religious believers mean by 'authority'.

Explain what religious believers mean by 'dominion'.

Explain what religious believers mean by 'injustice'.

There are 24 of these for Option B – Religion and Human Experience

So, the format of the (a) questions is easy to understand. You have to write your answer to show that you understand the meaning of the key concept from the point of view of a religious person. It isn't necessarily what it means to you and the (a) question asks about a **key concept**. This means you have to show you can give the meaning for the religious idea as a whole not just the word. Forget the phrase key word and instead think key concept (belief or idea). This will help you to give a fuller answer. The (a) question answer space is FOUR lines so one word answers like you might see in a simple child's dictionary will not do. You are asked to give the meaning for the concept from a religious point of view. This requires you to use greater skill and be more precise about what you write.

Paper B Religion & Human Experience
Authority
Community
Conflict
Conscience
Duty
Evangelism
Faith
Free will
Hippocratic Oath
Human rights
Identity
Interfaith dialogue
Just war
Justice
Medical ethics
Non-violent protest
Pacifism
Personal conviction
Pilgrimage
punishment
Quality of life
Reconciliation
Sacred
Sanctity of life

Explain what **religious believers** mean by '**sanctity of life**'.

TRIGGER
Give the meaning and show you understand

CONTEXT
You may refer to specific religious believers...
Christians believe that.....

KEY RELIGIOUS CONCEPT
.....life is created by God and therefore all human life is sacred or holy and must be protected from harm or destruction.

THE (b) QUESTIONS [4 marks]

Examples for the typical format of (b) questions:

- Explain how having a religious faith **might influence** a view on human rights.
- Explain how having a religious faith **might support** the view that animals have rights.
- Explain how having religious faith **might encourage** a person to be socially responsible.
- Explain how a religious believer **might use** symbols to express beliefs about God.

So, you must engage with the two separate parts of the (b) question and link them together =

You have to explain **HOW faith operates** (influences, encourages) with reference to a **specific topic** (animal rights, symbols)

There are 5 marks for these answers – 0 1 2 3 4

0 = you make no link between beliefs and practices

1 = you make a simple link

2 = you make an explicit link (you state it clearly rather than imply it) and you use some limited specialist language

3 = you show you are aware of and understand how religious beliefs lead to practices and you use a range of religious words and terms.

4 = you give a clear analysis and explanation using religious words and terms extensively and accurately.

You will have an 8 line section on the examination paper for a (b) answer.

Experiment with question format to test your skill

Topic : Is it fair?

Set 1

Explain how a religious faith might help someone who is suffering.

Explain how a religious faith might help someone with the issue of abortion.

With a bit of luck you have got the idea that with (b) questions you have to show how a religious belief affects how a person lives. It's making the link between belief and practice (living) that counts.

THE (d) QUESTIONS [6 marks]

The typical format is like these examples –

Explain from two religious traditions the teachings on Just War

Explain from two religious traditions the teachings on IVF.

So, there are more things to consider – Explain + from two religious traditions + the relevant question topic. These answers require you to know and are able to write clearly about meanings of actions / teachings/ important aspects / examples of evidence.

The answers are marked as a whole – not 3 + 3. It is the quality of your whole answer that counts. You need :-

- Relevant information
- Explanation which shows your understanding and insight, not just description
- Religious language used and explained if necessary
- Accurate facts, ideas and practices – not muddled or vague
- Two clearly different sections or examples.

(c) and (e) QUESTIONS ARE A LITTLE DIFFERENT

They are called evaluative questions and require you to use different skills for your answer. Here you are asked to use evidence and reasoned argument to express and weigh up personal responses, thoughtful insights and other points of view. You are expected to justify (make a case for) something or show how justification is inappropriate.

The (c) questions are structured. [4 marks]

This means that you are asked for two reactions to a statement. You can give two **different** reasons for agreeing, two different reasons for disagreeing or one of each. Answers are marked as a whole, not 2 + 2 and you will have eight lines provided.

After a statement in a box, you will be asked to.....



Give two reasons why a religious believer might agree or disagree with this statement.

You have to :-

- know about the topic,
- understand why it is controversial,
- know what a religious believer's points of view would be
- be able to write those down clearly explaining the points of view
- give examples or evidence if possible, of religious teaching
- and incorporate moral aspects and what they mean for the person and society!!!!

Not easy but being able to make a case quickly, clearly and logically is very valuable skill.

For example

Forgiving your attacker shows weakness and is asking for trouble.

Give two reasons why a religious believer might agree or disagree with this statement.

What's the topic? = FORGIVENESS

What's the issue? = IS IT WEAK TO FORGIVE? IS IT LIKELY TO LEAD TO FURTHER ATTACKS?

What would a religious believer say? = AGREE / DISAGREE / BOTH/ WHAT ARE THE TEACHINGS? WHAT EXAMPLE? WHAT EVIDENCE? WHAT 2 DIFFERENT POINTS CAN BE MADE HERE? E.g. 1. The Christian way is to forgive - From the cross Jesus forgave his killers/ Dr John Sentamu forgave the racists who attacked him by sending hate mail 2. Revenge and retaliation harm society and cause violence to increase

What moral aspects? = REVENGE, CONSCIENCE, ROLE MODEL, ESCALATION, 2 WRONGS DON'T MAKE ONE RIGHT, FORGIVENESS CAN GO WITH PUNISHMENT etc

The (e) questions – worth 8 marks each.

These are the questions that allow your beliefs, opinions and ideas to shine through. By giving a personal thoughtful response which includes relevant information; examples and evidence to back up your points; reference to religious teachings, people and organisations; use of good specialist vocabulary; religious and moral reasoning and alternative views and beliefs you will be writing at a high level.

The questions follow a formula – there is a statement in quotation marks followed by – Do you agree? Give reasons or evidence for your answer, showing that you have thought about more than one point of view. You must include reference to religious beliefs in your answer.

For Example:

'If people can't have children, they should just accept it, not waste time with IVF'

Do you agree? Give reasons or evidence for your answer, showing that you have thought of more than one point of view . You must include reference to religious beliefs in your answer.

'Using violence is always wrong'

Do you agree? Give reasons or evidence for your answer, showing that you have thought of more than one point of view . You must include reference to religious beliefs in your answer.

