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# **GCE AS MARKING SCHEME**

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**SUMMER 2023**

**AS  
RELIGIOUS STUDIES - UNIT 1  
OPTION C: AN INTRODUCTION TO JUDAISM**

**2120UC0-1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This marking scheme was used by WJEC for the 2023 examination. It was finalised after detailed discussion at examiners' conferences by all the examiners involved in the assessment. The conference was held shortly after the paper was taken so that reference could be made to the full range of candidates' responses, with photocopied scripts forming the basis of discussion. The aim of the conference was to ensure that the marking scheme was interpreted and applied in the same way by all examiners.

It is hoped that this information will be of assistance to centres but it is recognised at the same time that, without the benefit of participation in the examiners' conference, teachers may have different views on certain matters of detail or interpretation.

WJEC regrets that it cannot enter into any discussion or correspondence about this marking scheme.

## **Marking guidance for examiners, please apply carefully and consistently:**

### **Positive marking**

It should be remembered that candidates are writing under examination conditions and credit should be given for what the candidate writes, rather than adopting the approach of penalising him/her for any omissions. It should be possible for a very good response to achieve full marks and a very poor one to achieve zero marks. Marks should not be deducted for a less than perfect answer if it satisfies the criteria of the mark scheme. Exemplars in the mark scheme are only meant as helpful guides. Therefore, any other acceptable or suitable answers should be credited even though they are not actually stated in the mark scheme.

Two main phrases are deliberately placed throughout each mark scheme to remind examiners of this philosophy. They are:

- “Candidates could include some or all of the following, but other relevant points should be credited.”
- “This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.”

### **Rules for Marking**

1. Differentiation will be achieved on the basis of candidates' response.
2. No mark scheme can ever anticipate or include every possible detail or interpretation; examiners should use their professional judgement to decide whether a candidate's particular response answers the question in relation to the particular assessment objective.
3. Candidates will often express their ideas in language different from that given in any mark scheme or outline. Positive marking therefore, on the part of examiners, will recognise and credit correct statements of ideas, valid points and reasoned arguments irrespective of the language employed.

### **Banded mark schemes**

Banded mark schemes are divided so that each band has a relevant descriptor. The descriptor provides a description of the performance level for that band. Each band contains marks. Examiners should first read and annotate a candidate's answer to pick out the evidence that is being assessed in that question. Once the annotation is complete, the mark scheme can be applied. This is done as a two-stage process.

#### **Banded mark schemes stage 1 – deciding on the band**

When deciding on a band, the answer should be viewed holistically. Beginning at the lowest band, examiners should look at the candidate's answer and check whether it matches the descriptor for that band. Examiners should look at the descriptor for that band and see if it matches the qualities shown in the candidate's answer. If the descriptor at the lowest band is satisfied, examiners should move up to the next band and repeat this process for each band until the descriptor matches the answer.

If an answer covers different aspects of different bands within the mark scheme, a 'best fit' approach should be adopted to decide on the band and then the candidate's response should be used to decide on the mark within the band. For instance, if a response is mainly in band 2 but with a limited amount of band 3 content, the answer would be placed in band 2, but the mark awarded would be close to the top of band 2 as a result of the band 3 content.

### **Banded mark schemes stage 2 – deciding on the mark**

Once the band has been decided, examiners can then assign a mark. During standardising (at the Examiners' marking conference), detailed advice from the Principal Examiner on the qualities of each mark band will be given. Examiners will then receive examples of answers in each mark band that have been awarded a mark by the Principal Examiner. Examiners should mark the examples and compare their marks with those of the Principal Examiner.

When marking, examiners can use these examples to decide whether a candidate's response is of a superior, inferior or comparable standard to the example. Examiners are reminded of the need to revisit the answer as they apply the mark scheme in order to confirm that the band and the mark allocated is appropriate to the response provided. Indicative content is also provided for banded mark schemes. Indicative content is not exhaustive, and any other valid points must be credited. In order to reach the highest bands of the mark scheme a learner need not cover all of the points mentioned in the indicative content, but must meet the requirements of the highest mark band.

### **Awarding no marks to a response**

Where a response is not creditworthy, that is it contains nothing of any relevance to the question, or where no response has been provided, no marks should be awarded.

## AS Generic Band Descriptors

Band	Assessment Objective AO1 – Part (a) questions 15 marks
	<p><i>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <i>religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching</i></li> <li>- <i>influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies</i></li> <li>- <i>cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice</i></li> <li>- <i>approaches to the study of religion and belief.</i></li> </ul>
5	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>13-15 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thorough, accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.</li> <li>• An extensive and relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set.</li> <li>• The response shows an excellent standard of coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates extensive depth and/or breadth. Excellent use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Thorough and accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Thorough and accurate use of specialist language /vocabulary in context.</li> <li>• Excellent spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
4	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>10-12 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.</li> <li>• A detailed, relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set.</li> <li>• The response shows a very good standard of coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth. Good use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> <li>• Very good spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
3	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>7-9 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mainly accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief.</li> <li>• A satisfactory response, which generally answers the main demands of the question set.</li> <li>• The response shows a satisfactory standard of coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth in some areas. Satisfactory use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Mainly accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> <li>• Satisfactory spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
2	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>4-6 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Basic level of accuracy and relevance.</li> <li>• A basic response, addressing some of the demands of the question set.</li> <li>• Partially accurate response, with some signs of coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates limited depth and/or breadth, including limited use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Some accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> <li>• Some minor, recurring errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
1	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1-3 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Low level of accuracy and relevance.</li> <li>• A very limited response, with little attempt to address the question.</li> <li>• Very limited accuracy within the response, with little coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• The response demonstrates very limited depth and/or breadth. Very limited use of evidence and examples.</li> <li>• Little or no reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate.</li> <li>• Some grasp of basic specialist language and vocabulary</li> <li>• Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar affect the meaning and clarity of communication.</li> </ul> <p><b>N.B. A maximum of 1 mark should be awarded for a response that only demonstrates 'knowledge in isolation'</b></p>
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No relevant information.</li> </ul>

<b>Band</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Assessment Objective AO2 - Part (b) questions 15 marks</b></p> <p><i>Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.</i></p>
<b>5</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>13-15 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confident critical analysis and perceptive evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• A response that successfully identifies and thoroughly addresses the issues raised by the question set.</li> <li>• The response shows an excellent standard of coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• Thorough, sustained and clear views are given, supported by extensive, detailed reasoning and/or evidence.</li> <li>• Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> <li>• Excellent spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>10-12 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purposeful analysis and effective evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• The main issues raised by the question are identified successfully and addressed.</li> <li>• The response shows a very good standard of coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• The views given are clearly supported by detailed reasoning and/or evidence.</li> <li>• Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> <li>• Very good spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>7-9 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Satisfactory analysis and relevant evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• Most of the issues raised by the question are identified successfully and have generally been addressed.</li> <li>• The response shows a satisfactory standard of coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• Most of the views given are satisfactorily supported by reasoning and/or evidence.</li> <li>• Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> <li>• Satisfactory spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>4-6 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some valid analysis and inconsistent evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• A limited number of issues raised by the question set are identified and partially addressed.</li> <li>• Partially accurate response, with some signs of coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• A basic attempt to justify the views given, but they are only partially supported with reason and/or evidence.</li> <li>• Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.</li> <li>• Some minor, recurring errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>
<b>1</b>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>1-3 marks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A basic analysis and limited evaluation of the issue.</li> <li>• Very limited accuracy within the response, with little coherence, clarity and organisation.</li> <li>• An attempt has been made to identify and address the issues raised by the question set.</li> <li>• Little attempt to justify a view with reasoning or evidence.</li> <li>• Some grasp of basic specialist language and vocabulary.</li> <li>• Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar affect the meaning and clarity of communication.</li> </ul>
<b>0</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No relevant analysis or evaluation.</li> </ul>

**GCE AS RELIGIOUS STUDIES – UNIT 1**

**OPTION C: AN INTRODUCTION TO JUDAISM**

**SUMMER 2023 MARK SCHEME**

To be read in conjunction with the generic level descriptors provided.

**Section A**

Either,

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 (a) Explain the importance of mitzvot (commandments) for Orthodox and Reform Jews today. [15]

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- Both Reform and Orthodox Jews regard the mitzvot as ‘commandments’ and are laws relating to the Jewish faith which are found within the Torah and the Talmud. These are ‘rules’ that God has commanded Jews to keep.
- Mitzvot are a major part of the Jewish faith and the obedience to these play a part in the lives of all Jews, albeit to a different level depending on the Jewish tradition.
- Orthodox Jews accept the Torah as a direct revelation from God and therefore obey the mitzvot contained within it and this belief is paramount within orthodoxy. By keeping the mitzvot, Jews demonstrate their belief in God and the acceptance of the requirements of the covenant.
- Orthodox Rabbis have continued to discuss the mitzvot and adapted accordingly for today’s world, but each modification remains true to the original 613.
- Reference could be made to the Halakhah and Chukim laws.
- Orthodox Jews believe they must continue to live according to the mitzvot as they will be judged on the way they have kept these laws in the afterlife.
- Reform Judaism, as displayed in many platforms including the Pittsburgh Platform has a different attitude towards the mitzvot compared to the Orthodox community.
- Reform Jews believe the Torah contains divine truths and therefore is the foundation of their faith, but they consider that it is a product of human minds. God did reveal the law to Moses but it was not dictated to him. God inspired him to write.
- It is important to evaluate the mitzvot when each new situation arises, as society changes, Reform Jews believe their adherence to certain mitzvot changes too. It is therefore possible to change some mitzvot according to changes in society.
- For Reform Jews, the emphasis is on personal choice e.g., some keep kosher, others do not.
- Reform Jews believe the original mitzvot intended for a particular time in history and may no longer be applicable today in the modern world; but they still believe that they should live a moral life.
- Reference could be made to how different branches of Judaism keep Kosher and Shabbat for example as a way of demonstrating differences in viewpoint.

**This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.**

- (b) **‘Mitzvot contribute effectively to spirituality in Judaism.’  
Evaluate this view.**

**[15]**

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- One line of argument is the importance of the mitzvot as an ethical guide and moral guide which helps Jews live their lives in correct relationship to God and in turn which leads to a more spiritual life
- It could be argued that the mitzvot are a foundation of the faith and their purpose is to offer guidance on how to live life in a way that God requires, and are more concerned with practical aspects of living rather than developing spiritually.
- In support of this argument is the understanding mitzvot give guidelines on all aspects of life, both ritualistic and moral, and therefore ensure Jews follow their faith appropriately and give Jews a greater understanding of their faith.
- A different process of reasoning is it can also be argued that the mitzvot offer a link to all Jews of the past and create a sense of community and belonging and are not necessarily focused on spiritual development.
- Another possible argument could include the idea that some Jews such as the Hasidim can gain great joy from keeping the mitzvot as it helps them to fulfil their duty to God through Devekut, with the mitzvot as a way of focusing on God.
- In contrast so many mitzvot could prove to be an inconvenience or a burden and the act of keeping some mitzvot could become routine rather than due to a commitment to faith.
- It could also be argued that reform Jews have adapted or disregarded many of the mitzvot in the modern world but they do not believe themselves to be lesser Jews and continue to express their spirituality but within other means.
- Another line of reasoning could include the idea that there are other ways to develop and show your spirituality, and not necessarily by following all mitzvot. Prayer, festivals, devotion to helping others and living a good life may be a more sincere and practical way of expressing faith.
- However, the mitzvot remain an important part of Judaism as shown since Biblical times, and fulfilling mitzvot remain a way in which to develop spiritually as shown within all sectors of the Jewish faith.

**Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.**

Or,

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 (a) Outline the importance of the Ten Sayings (Aseret ha-D'ibrot), within Judaism. [15]

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- The Ten Commandments or the The Ten Sayings (Aseret ha-Dibrot) are very important within Judaism because they originate from God and are given to Moses on Mount Sinai. They are a universal set of laws of divine origin and hold an important position as the first of the 613 commandments and the basis for a religious and moral life.
- The first four of the Ten Sayings (Ten Commandments) are very significant in terms of their scriptural basis and for the traditional rabbinical understanding of these sayings as defining categories for all other mitzvot. The Ten Sayings or 'Aseret ha-Dibrot' may be referred to as 'Aseret ha-D'varim' or the Ten Principles and this title is an indication of their importance; so much so they are recorded in the books of Exodus and Deuteronomy. The two versions presented are sometimes referred to as the 'Ethical Dialogue'.
- The first four commandments set out what is expected and required for a relationship with God and these 'religious' requirements are of equal importance as the expectations of how a person should behave in terms of the other six 'ethical' commandments in relation to other people.
- The Ten Sayings have a very special authority and are considered divine laws, because they are considered to be universally applicable and relevant in each age and are an immutable divine law.
- The Ten Sayings are important because they are regarded as the foundation of all other mitzvot of Jewish religious life and provide a template for all Jewish religious practices.
- The first commandment sets out the monotheistic nature of Judaism as the foundation of the faith; Jews are forbidden within this commandment to worship any other gods. The second commandment develops the first commandment by prohibiting worship in an improper fashion; Jews are not to make graven images and worship these. The third commandment forbids blasphemy and in using God's name for oaths; God's name is sacred. The fourth commandment is a command to observe the sacred times of religious practice; related specifically to the Sabbath and sacred times.
- The other commandments are a clear guide to ethical and moral life for Jews; prohibitions which help Jews live their life in correct relationship to God.

**This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.**

- (b) **‘The Ten Sayings are not the most important ethical guide for Jews.’**  
**Evaluate this view.** [15]

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- The Ten Sayings are the most important guide for ethical living for Jews because they are given to Moses directly by God on Mount Sinai. This elevates these commandments to a higher status than any other. They are divine laws applicable without amendment or change and relevant for Jews today.
- One line of argument is that the Ten Sayings are only a small part of the 613 mitzvot and the entire mitzvot must be considered in terms of an approach to ethical and practical living so it is not possible to say these Ten Sayings are the most important guide for ethical living alone. It is important to consider all of the mitzvot, particularly as the Ten Sayings are rather 'categories' than 'sayings' which may require further ethical deliberation.
- In support of this argument the Ten Sayings must be considered in the historical context in which they were set down for ethical living. The range of issues are still relevant but there are many ethical issues not covered by their content; people will need to look to other sources for ethical guidance; e.g. personal conscience.
- In contrast many people, including non-religious people, regard the Ten Sayings as the most important guide for ethical living because the ethical code forms the basis of laws of many societies in the world. In secular society they are still regarded as the basis of civilised society.
- It could be contested it is not possible to say they are the most important guide. Ethical living requires more than a simplistic guide of six sayings about ethical conduct. For many people ethical living is learnt from parents, family and peers, influenced by the wider society and discovered through life experiences. Many Jews may subscribe to this viewpoint.
- A different process of reasoning would identify the nature of the two separate parts of the Ten Sayings; the last six are indeed related to ethical behaviour but the first four relate more to religious beliefs and so the Ten Sayings are not just an ethical guide. In reality this might undermine the view they are the most important ethical guide.
- In contrast there are other many practical ways in which Jews chose to behave, based on the advice and example of parents and members of a Jewish community. It may be argued the most important ethical guide are parents, a rabbi, members of a Jewish community, by their example and advice.

**Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.**

## Section B

Either,

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 (a) Outline the role of the synagogue in Judaism. [15]

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- The role of the synagogue is fundamental to communal worship where members of a Jewish community are able to gather together to worship. At the minimum, the synagogue is a 'bet tefilah' [house of prayer] where Jews come together for community services in the 'bet k'neset' (house of meeting)
- One of the main purposes of the synagogue is a place of worship. During services the Torah is carried from the Ark and read at the Bimah and therefore plays a great role within the community. The Ark serves as a reminder of the sanctuary in the Temple in Jerusalem. The most important feature within all synagogues after the Torah scrolls is the Ark.
- The synagogue also plays a central role during festivals. The Torah readings during Shabbat, festivals and feast can only take place within the synagogue.
- Jews can fulfil the obligation to pray anywhere, however, there are some prayers require the presence of the minyan, and according to tradition, there is greater benefit to praying as a group and therefore the synagogue is best suited for this purpose.
- The sanctity of a synagogue is only second to the Temple. In rabbinical literature, the synagogue is sometimes referred to as the 'little Temple' and because of the sacred nature of this building it has a central role.
- The synagogue is also referred to as a 'bet midrash', a house of study. It is a place that Jews can experience lifelong learning. Many synagogues house a library for study and it is a place where children are able to receive their basic religious education.
- Most synagogues have a hall that is available for religious and community events. Within a Jewish community, the hall is also used as a community centre or town hall.
- The synagogue can also be used as a social welfare agency or charity centre that collects and dispenses money and other items for the aid of the poor and needy within the community and Jewish concerns.
- Synagogues do not collect money during services as carrying money during orthodox Shabbat services is not permitted. Tzedakah is therefore collected during weekday services through the pushke boxes.
- Synagogues are generally organised by a community of directors that maintain the synagogue and its activities where a Rabbi and chazzan is hired to work for the community and offer guidance on the law and socially related issues,
- It is also a place of rituals such as acts relating to ritual purity and the mikveh.
- The synagogues can also have the local rabbinical court [Bet Din] to make judgments on civil disputes using Jewish law and making rulings on Jewish matters.

**This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.**

- (b) **‘The synagogue should be the heart of a Jewish community.’**  
**Evaluate this view.** [15]

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- One line of reasoning could include the view that the synagogue provides the central location for all aspects of community life as well as a central place of worship.
- In support of this argument is the idea that the synagogue is a location for all key events of Jewish life, it is a place of prayer and worship as the title ‘bet k’nesset’ denotes, a social centre, a community centre that caters for all ages. It houses a bet midrash and shul and therefore educates the community. These aspects strengthen community ties, and ensure the continuation of tradition and beliefs.
- Another line of argument is that it could be suggested that the synagogue acts as a centre for ritual purification that cannot be achieved elsewhere which would pose a problem for the orthodox community if it was not accessible,
- In contrast many Jews believe the home has an essential role within Judaism and it is family life which is at the centre of Judaism. The children learn from their parents from an early age and receive their earliest Jewish education, how to keep Kashrut, observing Shabbat and other festivals. Shabbat is celebrated at home.
- In contrast one view is that even the least religious Jews visit the synagogue for major events such as Bar Mitzvah and major festivals showing the importance of the synagogue for the Jewish community as a whole.
- Another idea is that for Orthodox Jews especially, the synagogue is a modern replacement for the Temple in Jerusalem, with the Ark therefore as the central point within it. This shows the important role of the synagogue.
- It could be argued that the synagogue is central to the community as it brings all Jews together in a religious and social way of life, and it can also offer guidance and protection in times of need. Major events of life are celebrated there, therefore including all members of the faith.
- However, there is much more involved in being a Jew than simply attending the synagogue. Many Jews will not be able to attend a local synagogue.

**Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.**

Or,

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 (a) Outline the nature of the covenant between God and Abraham. [15]

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- God changed Abraham's name from Abram to Abraham, which means 'father of many' [Genesis 17] as God asks Abraham to fulfil certain tasks and in return for this God promises to take care of the Jewish nation. It is the basis for the fundamental idea of the Jews as the chosen people.
- The Torah mentions two previous covenants, one with Adam and one with Noah. Both covenants are with all humankind rather than the Jewish people. The Abrahamic covenant was initiated by the word of God; authoritative and including God's promise to protect his nation. Jews regard Abraham as the first Patriarch; although not the first covenant (Adam and Noah) the nature of the first covenant between God and Abraham is unique. The covenant between God and the Jews is a common theme running through the early sections of the Bible, and is one of the fundamental aspects of the Jewish religion.
- The sign of the covenant is the ritual of circumcision which was required of all male infants as a sign of the commitment to the covenant and to God. [Genesis 17]. It remains the physical sign of the covenant today.
- God promised to make a father of the Jewish nation and as a result Abraham and his descendants should obey God and in return God would protect them and give them Israel. The agreement was not only obedience to laws, but the following of a way of life.
- God ordered Abraham to leave his home and live in Canaan, which was difficult due to Abraham's age [Genesis 12]. The promise of becoming a great nation was seemingly impossible as Abraham was old and his wife Sarah was 90 but God caused Sarah to become pregnant with Isaac and by doing so, God showed his control over life and death. Abraham leaving was also a symbol of Abraham leaving the idolatrous practices of his family.
- God tested Abraham's faith again by ordering him to kill his son Isaac in an act of sacrifice. Abraham did not disagree with God and kept his side of the covenant by preparing to sacrifice his son. God stopped the sacrifice but the history is an example of the obedience God expected.
- It is known as the 'unconditional covenant' – it is an agreement between two people, but only one needs to act. It was also an everlasting covenant.
- It is eternal and God binds the covenant not Abraham.

**This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.**

**(b) 'The covenant between God and Abraham cannot be a universal covenant.'**

**Evaluate this view.**

**[15]**

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- One line of argument could include the historical and traditional perspective that the covenants established in the Torah are fundamentally an agreement which binds all Jews together through history and time; it may be regarded as a covenant for Jews alone.
- In support of this view, it the Abrahamic covenant establishes circumcision as a physical sign of the covenant, and because of the reference to 'father of many' it may be interpreted as a reference to Jews alone. This original covenant may be argued to be only for the Jews.
- In further support of this view it could be argued that during the time of the Mosaic covenant, the Jews had recently been released from ancient and polytheistic Egyptian culture and were immersed in a different lifestyle and so needed new guidelines and rules in order for them to commit to a monotheistic faith. The covenant was therefore a positive aspect of religious control that would ensure focus on their faith rather than being influenced by others and was for Jews alone.
- The mitzvot, a practical expression of the covenant agreement, covered all aspects of Jewish life and gave a unique identity. Continuation of adherence to the mitzvot remains in place today and therefore is a way of showing commitment and adherence to the faith and the covenant relationship between God and the Jews alone.
- It could be contested the covenants established with Adam and Noah in the first book of Genesis established a covenant with the whole of humanity and not just the Jews. Because God was the creator of all creation and humanity, God is in fact offering a covenant relationship with the whole of humanity. Indeed, the reference to Abraham as the 'father of many' may be interpreted as a reference to the many nations of the world.
- In support of this viewpoint is that the creation narrative in Genesis makes reference to the human race rather than Jews alone, in terms of an eternal covenant it cannot be linked to a specific group.
- Nicholas de Lange has the view God is a universal God and no single part of humanity has an exclusive claim to a covenant relationship with God; universalism means the whole of the human race is valued as a whole and the covenant must be extended to all.

**Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.**

Or,

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 (a) Explain the meaning and purpose of Jewish life with reference to beliefs about God and humanity. [15]

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- Belief in God gives meaning and purpose to Jewish life because Jews believe God has created humanity in the image of God; the Hebrew term tzelem (image) is a reference to the essence of God's being and this allows human beings uniquely to understand what God wants them to do. Human beings alone are able life has a meaning and a purpose. Jews believe human beings are given purpose by God.
- The concept of pikuach nefesh (sanctity of life) is at the heart of Judaism; life is God given and sacred and this idea of the sanctity of life helps provide meaning to life; all life is regarded as God given and this belief in God contributes to a sense of meaning. Because Jews believe the soul, nefesh, and body co-exist, the body is the physical means to do the work of God in their lives.
- There is a special relationship between God and humanity; especially the special role of Jews within this relationship. The example of Jews attempting to live a holy and moral life within this context is a clear demonstration of how human beings have purpose in living a moral and holy life.
- The Jewish concept of the nature of humanity is understood in the forms of yetzer hara (evil) yetzer hatov (good); human life depends on the existence of free will and part of the purpose of life is how a person uses this free will to reject evil and live a good life.
- Human beings have the gift of intellect; as part of this understanding human beings have an obligation to use this intellect to discern purpose in their lives.
- Jews believe in an afterlife or a world to come, Olam ha-ba, and the way in which a person lives has an impact on how a Jew will be judged at death. Jews do not believe death is the end of human existence; there is a clear idea of reward and punishment dependant on how a Jew lives.
- The mitzvot or commandments are a guide to how Jews should live daily lives. These commandments give meaning and purpose to everyday life and obedience to these rules will allow Jews to have meaning and purpose in their daily lives.

**This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.**

**(b) 'The Shema does not contain the most important beliefs within Judaism.'**

**Evaluate this view.**

**[15]**

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- It could be contested that the Shema is the most important Jewish prayer and that the Shema was developed as a way of encapsulating and summarising the whole of the Jewish law and is the central focus of Jewish worship. Its opening line 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is One' is as close as possible to a declaration of faith in what is central to Judaism: there is One God who demands total obedience from the people.
- It could also be contested that the Shema sums up the very essence of the covenant relationship between God and the Jewish people: for example, the second part of the Shema declares the Jews' acceptance of the commandments as well as undertaking to carry them out as evidence of their loyalty to God. The exodus from Egypt, which Jews are required to remember every day as a reminder of the commands which God gave to them, is also contained within the Shema. In this sense it may be perceived as containing the most important beliefs in Judaism.
- In support of this view the Shema is recited every morning and evening and, as such, is the central focus for Jewish worship reminding Jews of their responsibilities to God, indicates its importance as containing the most important beliefs within Judaism. As a summary of the most important beliefs in Judaism it is the first prayer a Jewish child will learn. It is taught by parents to their children. This emphasises the responsibility and obligation of parents to passing on the faith to children. Devout Jews wish it to be the last prayer which is recited at the moment of death.
- A different process of reasoning is that the interpretation of what are the most important beliefs within the religion is complex. The Shema is an affirmation of Judaism and a declaration of faith in one God but in order to encapsulate all of the beliefs in Judaism it is not possible to do this in one single prayer.
- In contrast many Jews would regard the Shema as a declaration of faith rather than a creedal statement of beliefs. The Shema is a fundamental prayer in all traditions of Judaism but not all Jews put into practice all of the content; there are differences in approach between Orthodox and Reform Jews although a shared belief in its importance.

**Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised**