



GCE AS MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2019

**AS (NEW)
RELIGIOUS STUDIES
UNIT 1 - OPTION B
AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF ISLAM
2120UB0-1**

INTRODUCTION

This marking scheme was used by WJEC for the 2019 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.

AS RELIGIOUS STUDIES

MARKING INSTRUCTIONS

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

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

GCE AS RELIGIOUS STUDIES

SUMMER 2019 MARK SCHEME

Option B: An Introduction to Islam

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

Section A

1. (a) **Explain how different practices during Ashura express Shi'a identity.**
[AO1 15]

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

- Shi'a Islam identifies itself with the themes of unjust persecution and suffering that are expressed in a variety of ways during Ashura.
- The street procession as a re-enactment of the suffering of Karbala and the procession mirrors a funeral procession, moving on to the tomb-shrine of Husayn. Images of Husayn are displayed on the procession.
- Self-mutilation expresses their identity as followers of Ali and displays empathy with the suffering of Husayn. The chains used in self-flagellation symbolise the bondage of persecution and suffering of all tyrannical governments.
- The ta'ziyah is a dramatic re-enactment of the events of the battle of Karbala and in a different way expresses Shi'a identity by reflecting the significance for Islam as a whole. The ta'ziyah reminds them of the fight against the persecution and suffering of worldly political powers.
- The pilgrimage of mourners, especially to Husayn's tomb in Karbala, during Ashura is also a popular expression of the significance of Shi'a theology in contrast to Sunni beliefs.
- Underlying these different expressions of Shi'a identity there are also different beliefs about the purpose of suffering and persecution within the Islamic framework as a whole.
- Persecution and suffering cannot last in the face of truth and justice. All Shi'a need to stand up against tyranny. Persecution and suffering still exists for Shi'a today. However, persecution and suffering reminds Shi'a of the focus on liberation in the future.
- Shi'a Islam understands the blood of Husayn as a source of future healing: Husayn asked forgiveness for those who had acted unjustly towards him and his family. This serves as both a reminder, and an aid, to salvation on the Day of Final Judgment.

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

- (b) **‘A focus on suffering during Ashura misrepresents Shi’a identity.’**
Evaluate this view. [AO2 15]

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

- One line of argument is that to any outsider, the images of Ashura observances may appear very extreme and give the impression that Shi’a Islam is all about self-harm and a negative outlook.
- Indeed, this may be supported by the fact that suffering and persecution are the major themes and this is re-enacted through self-flagellation, weeping and mourning.
- In addition to this, Sunni Muslims do not use Ashura for this reason but remember births of prophets, the liberating step that Nuh took from the ark, and the triumph of Musa leading the Hebrews from Egyptian slavery. It could be argued that the focus on suffering misrepresents Ashura within Islam as a whole.
- However, in opposition to this view it could be argued that the focus on suffering and persecution during Ashura actually highlights their true identity in taking part in the tragedy and identifying themselves with the injustices associated with Husayn.
- Indeed, the ta’ziyah reminds them of the fight against the persecution and suffering of worldly political powers which is a strong part of Shi’a identity.
- Moreover, it reminds them of the healing powers of Husayn’s death and his attitude of forgiveness in the future when order is restored.
- However, here are more specific teachings within Shi’a Islam that represent Shi’a identity, such as the strong belief in the special leadership of the Imam etc.
- Arguments could all depend on how Shi’a identity itself is understood.
- The focus on suffering is not the ONLY focus but it arguably constitutes the main focus.
- There is also a clear message of forgiveness, hope and future peace, reconciliation and unity.

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

2. (a) Explain different benefits that Ramadan may bring for a Muslim.[AO1 15]

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

- *The benefits will be different for individual Muslims and a suitable answer can be presented that suggests this line of understanding but generally can be grouped into physical, spiritual, moral and social:*
- **Physical:** detoxification of the body and resting the stomach; however, in Ramadan there is also a focus on healthy eating. An awareness of the plight of the poor also encourages a Muslim not to be greedy with food. It also encourages physical discipline in managing life without food for prolonged periods.
- **Spiritual:** The focus therefore is always on Allah. Fasting, then, typifies obedience to Allah's will and it is also following the example of Muhammad and prophets before him, for example, Jesus. This brings spiritual benefits during Ramadan. Extra prayers are offered in an attempt to be more Allah conscious. Ramadan is a time of spiritual renewal. It is also a time to read Qur'an more and contemplate the religious life. In fact, the most significant night of the year is celebrated for Muslims during Ramadan as it leads up to the 'Night of Power' when the Qur'an was first revealed to Muhammad.
- **Moral:** Ramadan gives Muslims an opportunity to identify with the poor, while fasting, Muslims empathise with the needy in society. It encourages giving, one of the pillars of Islam as fasting evokes feelings for the plight of the starving. Ramadan is more than just fasting; it encourages self-control for Muslims in terms of behaviour and attitude - a control of bad thoughts that need to be banished and promotes moral behaviour. It leads to a renewal of moral obligations within Islam. There are also specific moral goals, such as a deliberate focus on not speaking ill of anyone, not lying or swearing and these are there to shift focus away from the 'self' towards a consideration of others.
- **Social:** it is a time of community and togetherness, a time for unity and submission as it is Allah's will that Muslim's fast. Muslim fast together, eat together and pray together more so than in any other month thus creating a specific social bond within the Muslim community.

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

- (b) **'Id-ul-Fitr is the most important part of Ramadan.'**
Evaluate this view.

[AO2 15]

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

- The first line of argument is that 'Id-ul-Fitr' is often the most significant element when considering the month of Ramadan because it is the climax: Id-ul-Fitr marks the end of the Ramadan and 'Id' means 'regular return' and conveys the idea of a fresh start or renewing.
- Therefore, as Muslims see the three day long celebrations as an opportunity for a fresh start morally and spiritually, and to apply the spiritual and moral benefits that fasting had brought them to the following year, then this means it can be seen as the most important part of Ramadan.
- The celebrations involved with 'Id-ul-Fitr' often spill out into the streets and local neighbourhood, greeting family, neighbours and certainly suggest that it is the most important aspect.
- However, an alternative line of argument can be developed from the fact that Muslims also give thanks to Allah for giving them taqat (strength and perseverance) to succeed during the month of Ramadan. Therefore, it is only because of the fasting done beforehand that 'Id' can be fully appreciated.
- Indeed, it could be argued that 'Id' is very much dependent on Ramadan and that the act of fasting and spiritual focus of the days prior to the celebrations are the most important aspects of Ramadan.
- It could also be said that 'Id' and Ramadan cannot be singled out, separated and evaluated as independent events: they share an integral identity and are mutually exclusive.
- Alternatively, it could be said that the most important part of Ramadan is always worship of, and obedience towards Allah.

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

Section B

3. (a) Examine the nature and purpose of prayer within Islam. [AO1 15]

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

- *Nature and purpose of prayer are essentially inter-connected and so examiners should NOT expect a clear division of the two in answers. Generally nature deals with what prayer is 'about' and purpose usually is exemplified through the different types of prayer, each with a specific purpose.*

Nature

- Prayer depicts the actions of obedience and submission and not an intimate spiritual experience with Allah.
- Prayer is a call to Allah and not a conversation with Allah for there cannot be a personal relationship with Allah.
- Prayer is obligatory. Prayer is the second pillar of Islam.
- Prayer brings the individual close to Allah in terms of focus, but also brings the community together in a form of closeness e.g. Friday prayers
- Prayer means that a Muslim is becoming more aware of Allah's greatness and hence gradually more spiritually aware.
- Prayer is simultaneously a public but private act. Niyat (intention) denotes a spiritual approach to religious ritual through the appropriate mental and emotional state of mind.
- 'Prayer is the pillar of religion; to neglect it is to prepare the downfall of religion.' (Hadith)

Purpose

- The purpose of prayer is to demonstrate obedience and submission, acknowledging a total dependence on Allah and confirming complete and absolute trust in Him.
- There are different types of prayer but the term salah (or salat) usually refers to the five prayers established by Muhammad involving rakahs, sometimes translated as 'movements' or 'units'.
- Tahajjud is an extra prayer during the night and is recommended for all Muslims, although not obligatory.
- Nafila (sometimes also called sunnat salah) usually performed just before, or after, the five obligatory prayers, but can by definition occur anytime.
- Literally, du'a means 'cry' or 'cry of the heart' and is in essence a very personal form of private devotion.
- Tasbeih is officially a practice that is a form of dhikr (Muslim meditation) associated with the use of tasbeih beads (also known as subhah).
- Wird is the Sufi form of dhikr and is reflective chanting and focus, either on the names of Allah or, on aspects of Qur'anic text.

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

- (b) **'Prayer for Muslims is more than an act of piety.'**
Evaluate this view.

[AO2 15]

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

- The first line of argument is that prayer 5 times a day for Muslims is very much a 'ritual' wherein a Muslim follows structured movements coinciding with structured liturgy.
- Indeed, absolute focus and concentration is required, or, intention. Without the correct procedures and attitudes prayer is not valid.
- Sura 2:227 says: 'Allah will not call you to account for thoughtlessness in your oaths, but for the intention in your hearts...'
- Therefore, prayer appears a very formal and serious procedure and on one level is a pious ritual.
- However, it is much more than just a ritualistic act of piety for many Muslims.
- Some may suggest that there is a danger for Muslims to simply 'go through the motions'. For example, not always be fully conscious of the true significance of the act as it is performed. It would appear, then, that the most dangerous thing to happen for a Muslim, is that the action of prayer becomes simply a ritualistic act of piety.
- Nevertheless, another argument is that some may see intention as a public statement of prayer, and hence, obedience. In this way it moves beyond the actual act of prayer and incorporates a statement and declaration of faith.
- Alternatively, it is only true that intention is the most important aspect of prayer if it is 'intention to focus solely on Allah' and not merely the intention to pray. There is a difference between a public declaration of intent to pray and a deeper level of intent to focus on all that prayer actually involves spiritually. This could be a deciding factor between a simple act of religious piety and one that has deeper meaning.
- In addition to this, it could be argued that there are many levels to prayer and there are concepts that are of equal importance such as purity, obedience and the personal will to worship Allah.
- Finally, there are different types of prayer such as du'a, tasbih and tahajjud and these can be very informal and non-ritualistic. Such prayers are spontaneous and so can by no means be considered as simply an act of religious piety.

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

4. (a) Explain the role of a rasul (messenger) in Islam.

[AO1 15]

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

- In Islamic theology, the term nabi (prophet) also incorporates the role of a rasul (messenger) or a nadir (warner) sent specifically by Allah to reveal instructions to humans, since humanity is in constant need of guidance from Allah. Humanity is incapable of working out the divine will of Allah through reason alone.
- A belief in risalah (the message) is an essential feature of Muslim life. It is through risalah the will of Allah is revealed to humans and has been done since the beginning of time. The unity and greatness of Allah means that he cannot communicate directly with humans. Messengers, however, allow humans to receive instructions on how to fulfil Allah's will.
- A rasul (messenger) has relevance throughout Islamic history also as a nadir (warner) according to Qur'an 46:9, due to the nature of the message brought.
- Sura 46:9 'I am no bringer of new-fangled doctrine among the apostles... I follow but that which is revealed to me by inspiration; I am but a Warner open and clear.'
- Technically, a rasul (messenger) is a nabi (prophet) that actually brings with him a written message to deliver and this is their particular mission. In this understanding, a nabi (prophet) is not necessarily a rasul (messenger), but a rasul (messenger) is also a nabi (prophet).
- There are five key **rusul** (pl. messengers) that brought the most important scriptures to humanity (the last of which being Muhammad and the Qur'an). Each messenger brought Allah's words for each generation to guide in the way of Islam, but these messages were forgotten, distorted or ignored.
- **Ibrahim** (Abraham): Ibrahim brought the Sahifa (Scrolls)
- **Musa** (Moses): Musa brought the (Torah)
- **Dawud** (David): Dawud brought the Zabur (Psalms)
- **Isa** (Jesus): Isa brought the Injil (Gospel).
- **Muhammad**: the final message in the form of the Qur'an

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

- (b) **'The concept of 'messenger' has not been successful in Islam.'**
Evaluate this view. [AO2 15]

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

- The first line of argument in support of the statement is that Islam teaches that previous messengers chosen and sent by Allah were the ones that brought the written scriptures such as the Torah (Musa) and the Gospel (Isa), but that these ended up being distorted and corrupted.
- Indeed, the 'People of the Book', Jews and Christians have not got the full and completed version of the message.
- This raises the question as to the level of success involved in using messengers. It appears a weak argument to suggest that after a few attempts God finally got it right!
- However, Islam clearly accepts the prophets of Judaism, and in Islam Jesus is respected as a prophet second only to Muhammad and therefore have a measure of success.
- In support of this line of thought, Muhammad brought the Qur'an, which is seen as the actual, uncorrupted word of Allah and the only complete guide for humanity. Therefore the concept of messenger suggests absolute success.
- However, it could be argued that Muhammad was much more than just a messenger in the previous sense of the word; he was unique because he brought Allah's final word to humanity. Muhammad is the 'Seal of the Prophets'.
- This point is very significant because it can support success in that Muhammad not only is the final messenger but that he has also delivered the ultimate and final message, but also the suggestion that Muhammad's success was because he was a unique or different type of messenger?
- It could be argued that it is not Allah that has failed; rather, it is humanity's failure to receive the message that is the key. There has always been enough of the message for human beings to live according to the will of Allah but the revelation to Muhammad was the time of optimum capacity for all of humanity.
- It is clear that the concept of messenger in the form of Muhammad had its greatest success. Muhammad brought the Qur'an, gave Muslims the perfect example of how to live (Qur'an 33:21) and was also a very competent leader. His remarkable achievements are unquestionable. However does this make the concept of messenger a success overall?

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

5. (a) **Explain how the use and treatment of the Qur'an by Muslims reflects its status as a source of authority in Islam.** [AO1 15]

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

- There are many ways in which the Qur'an is both treated and respected in daily life by Muslims.
- It is the 'focal point of the Islamic faith' (Rippin) and every way in which it is used reflects its status as such.
- Treatment of the Qur'an in a mosque demonstrates that it is the ultimate authority: raised above all other books, the focus of attention for ethical discourse, referred to in prayers and also quoted in prayers.
- Recited and read prayerfully with correct intention and ultimate respect as the words of Allah in Arabic.
- It is also used as the ultimate source for legal and social guidance. It is a guide to living. In everyday life reference may be made to teaching to implement the Sharia law. Examples can be given to exemplify its authoritative status.
- The Qur'an is used as a point of reference and guidance in ritual. It is used at rites of passage, with verses often read out in order to verify and authenticate what is happening.
- It is seen as a means of spiritual inspiration for celebrations and religious occasions, for example, during fasting it is read through and is a focus for worship.
- Although there are very many hadith that are used for moral guidance, the Qur'an is clearly seen as basis for hadith regarding moral conduct. It is treated as the ultimate source of truth.
- It is used as a key reference point for religious, social, moral, political and historical issues; indeed, in the Academy it is the one source of investigation.
- It is studied at madrassah. Its status is such that even if Arabic is not understood, to be able to recite the Qur'an in Arabic still has religious merit.
- Muslims remember the first event of the revelation during Ramadan on the night of power (lailat al-qadar). Indeed, this is the whole focus of Ramadan, Id and the accompanying celebrations.

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

5. (b) **‘The Qur’an’s authority has real relevance in a Muslim’s daily life.’**
Evaluate this view. [AO2 15]

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

- In terms of Islamic theology, the Qur’an’s message is timeless and therefore, in theory, can never be outdated. Therefore Muslims believe it will always be relevant.
- In support of the above line of argument, for Muslims, the Qur’an contains the message of how to live ‘the straight path’. Therefore, it is relevant to life today and forever in terms of guidance for living both religiously and morally.
- Indeed, one could also argue that the Qur’an is also relevant historically as a source of information for Muslims. It is also still relevant because it is used to educate, for example, in a madrasah at a very basic level, but also studied at Universities throughout the world.
- With reference to moral guidance, however, it could be argued it relates only to a particular historical context; it is therefore very much a book of its time and in some ways irrelevant to modern life and ‘out of date’.
- In support of this it could be suggested that much of society today is very different from 7th-century Arabia. This line of argument would not necessarily deny that it is relevant today, but it would question the uncritical application of Qur’anic rulings.
- Indeed, it is clear that some aspects found within the Qur’an need interpretation when considering issues in the modern world.
- This also raises the issues about who has the authority to interpret the Qur’an and whether or not it should be done.
- The traditional line of argument would be that the religious principles contained within the Qur’an must also be used alongside other sources of authority that have been established; others may suggest that in order to allow for moral development and change new interpretations should be allowed.
- It is clear that the Qur’an does have relevance today in terms of religion, history and morality but the extent of this varies within Islam and amongst different Muslims.

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