

RELIGIOUS STUDIES GCSE - EXAM BOARD AQA – SPEC A

SPECIFICATION A – Components 1 and 2 (new specification for teaching from September 2016)

RS is a fascinating GCSE which is **conceptual** and **experience** based. It is conceptual because many of the ideas of God, perfection, the beginnings of time and an after-life are beyond our experience. This means that students will have to **use philosophical reasoning skills to analyse these concepts**. It is evidence based because students also learn how religious believers put their teachings into practice in their every day lives. The natural progression for students taking the RS GCSE is the Philosophy A Level. This GCSE will equip students for further study in many related A Level subjects including, Government and Politics, Sociology, History, English and Classical Civilisation.

Unit of study in year 10

Component 1 - The Study of Religions, beliefs, teachings and practices

- **Buddhism**
- **Christianity**

You will learn about the founders of the religion. You will learn about the teachings on how to live, the teachings on an after-life, the existence (or not) of God.

You will read scriptures from both religions. Once you have read these, you will analyse them, memorise them and then look at how these teachings can applied to **modern British Society**.

One exam at the end of year 11

Exam will be 1 hour and 45 minutes

There will be 2 questions on Christianity and 2 questions on Buddhism.

Unit of study in year 11

Component 2 - Thematic Studies - Religious, philosophical and ethical theme

These four themes are really the “ethics” side of this GCSE. These contemporary and often controversial topics will be studied in relation to modern British society. Students will learn how religious groups in the UK respond to these issues.

- **The Existence of God and Revelation** – philosophical arguments for and against the existence of God, the characteristics of God and knowledge of God.
- **Religion and Life** – the origins and value of the universe and the origins and value of human life. Religious teachings and beliefs about animals, the environment, abortion, euthanasia and death.
- **Religion Crime and Punishment** – the various causes of crime, the various aims and attitudes towards punishment. The prison reform movement.
- **Religion, human rights and social Justice** – Knowledge of Human Rights, justice, equality and freedom of expression. Religious attitudes towards Prejudice and Discrimination and Wealth and Poverty.

One exam at the end of year 11

Exam will be 1 hour and 45 minutes

When answering questions from this paper, students can make reference to **one** religion or **all** religions **and non-religious beliefs**, such as Humanism.

Sample exam questions

The exam is structured in such a way that each “question” consists of a 1 mark, 2, mark, 4 mark, 5 mark and 12 mark question.

Religion, Human Rights and social injustice one mark questions

1 - What is the term for the basic rights and freedoms to which all humans are entitled?

A: Wealth B: Poverty C: Human rights D: Social justice

2 - What word means holding biased opinions?

A: Freedom B: Equality C: Discrimination D: Prejudice

3 - Sexual discrimination means to be prejudice against someone for what?

A: Their religious belief B: Their race C: Their gender D: Their Age

2 mark questions

Give two religious beliefs about eating meat.

Give two examples of what religious people could do to protect the environment

Give two religious beliefs about how people might experience God's presence through the natural world.

4 mark questions

Explain two similar religious beliefs about the sanctity of life.

Explain two different religious beliefs about how the human race began.

Explain two similar religious beliefs about what happens after death.

Explain two ways in which the Buddha's enlightenment influences Buddhists today.

5 mark questions

Explain 2 Christian beliefs about salvation. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer

Explain 2 ways that Christian charities help the poor in less economically developed countries. Refer to Christian teachings in your answer.

Explain 2 of the Buddha's teachings about the three marks of existence

12 mark questions (essay question)

- 'Euthanasia can be the most compassionate way to help someone who is terminally ill'
- "Capital Punishment should never be used"
- "The Crucifixion is more important to Christians than the resurrection"
- 'Jesus' teaching about wealth has no relevance for Christians today.'
- Compassion is more important in Buddhism than meditation"
- The stories of the Buddha have no relevance for Buddhists today"

Evaluate this statement - Your answer should include the following:

religious arguments that support the statement

religious arguments that disagree with the statement

An evaluation of the best argument

your conclusion

You can also include non-religious points of view in your answer.