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# **GCE AS MARKING SCHEME**

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**SUMMER 2017**

**AS (NEW)  
RELIGIOUS STUDIES  
UNIT 1 - OPTION C - AN INTRODUCTION TO THE  
STUDY OF RELIGION JUDAISM  
2120UC0-1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This marking scheme was used by WJEC for the 2017 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	<b>Assessment Objective AO1 – Part (a) questions</b> 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"> <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>
<b>5</b>	<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>
<b>4</b>	<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>
<b>3</b>	<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>
<b>2</b>	<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>
<b>1</b>	<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>
<b>0</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No relevant information.</li> </ul>

<b>Band</b>	<b>Assessment Objective AO2- Part (b) questions 15 marks</b> <i>Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.</i>
<b>5</b>	<p><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><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><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><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><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>

## OPTION C: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF JUDAISM

### MARK SCHEME

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

#### Section A

1. (a) Explain the significance of the Mosaic covenant at the time of Moses. [AO1 15]

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

- The Mosaic covenant, a conditional covenant, is significant at the time of Moses because it is where God (Yahweh) promises to be the God of the Israelites only if they obey the set of divine laws contained within the covenant. The Mosaic covenant reinforces the first covenant God had previously made with Abraham. This new covenant gives instructions to the Jews as to what is required of them to maintain this special relationship with God.
- The Mosaic covenant is not, and will never be, a covenant of equals. It is not possible to be an equal contract. The Mosaic Covenant is given by God to the Jewish people. It is the second covenant established between God and the Israelites.
- Moses is promised by God that he will never abandon the Jews because they are a divinely chosen people. This is a unique relationship between God and the Jews and God promises that he will never abandon the Jews.
- In the Mosaic covenant God is telling the Jews within the covenant there are a number of significant responsibilities which the Jews must faithfully carry out as part of the covenant agreement. The Jews must dedicate themselves to serving the Lord forever and must attempt to make the world a better and more holy place by obeying all of God's laws.
- God identifies himself as the God Yahweh and the Decalogue of Exodus states his laws.
- God has delivered the Jews out of slavery in Egypt.
- The form of this covenant resembles the suzerainty treaty in the ancient Near East. Explanation of this form of covenant may be included as a response.

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

1. (b) 'The covenant is simply a means of religious control.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 15]

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

- It could be interpreted as a form of religious control, when the covenant was first established. The Israelites, freed from human slavery in Egypt, had been immersed in Egyptian culture and were ill-prepared for the religious and cultural changes of their new way of life.
- It is a form of religious control by creating a framework in order that they would not be tempted by the religion of the Canaanites, which they would encounter once they had settled in the Promised Land. It was important that the people had a structure upon which to establish the covenant community, and this structure encompassed more than just things which we would recognise as belonging to religious practice. Thus the 613 mitzvot covered all aspects of daily life, both practical as well as religious, and gave the Jews their special identity as the chosen people of God.
- This is not religious control but rather religious freedom to live in the way God commands; keeping the mitzvot faithfully is regarded more of a discipline rather than a form of religious control Jews follow the mitzvot to this day and Jewish communities and individuals follow God's laws to demonstrate their communal and personal loyalty.
- Not control but rather Jews living according to God's laws only to keep his promise of protection. In this relationship God is the suzerain.
- The covenant is not considered to be a form of religious control because some Jews live without keeping all of the mitzvot, e.g, in Reform Judaism. Thus it is not 'control'. Keeping the requirements of the covenant is a way of communicating with God, and underlines the Jews wanting to continue to show the responsibility they have as partners in the covenant which God made with the Mosaic covenant at Mount Sinai.

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



2. (a) Explain the significance of the Torah received at Mount Sinai. [AO1 15]

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

- The account of how the Torah was received at Mount Sinai is recorded in the Book of Exodus chapters 19–20. It is believed that the giving of the Torah was part of God's revelation as the giving of the Law and the making of the Mosaic covenant. The account in Exodus 19–20 describes the divine appearance of God on Sinai, and the giving of the laws to Moses. According to Exodus 19:3–6, God brought the people to Mount Sinai for the purpose of making them a 'holy nation.'
- Jews believe that God dictated the Torah to Moses during the forty days he was on Mount Sinai. When Moses descended from the mountain and returned to the Israelites, he had two tablets of stone. These were the Ten Commandments; a set of principles which set out the general expectations of the Mosaic covenant relationship.
- Moses was also learning all the other commandments which God required him to teach to the people. These were to become known as the Law. The Mosaic covenant is the foundation of the oral and written Law.
- The five books of Moses are of the greatest importance and significance to Jews as they contain the mitzvot (commandments) by which they are to live as the people chosen by God to enter in to this special relationship with God. The five books of Moses contain 613 commandments in which show Jews how God wants them to live their lives.
- They also set out the ethical ideals of the Jewish people, set in the context of an account of their historical background. The practices of Jews today may be seen as the development of laws into a lifestyle.

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

2. (b) 'The Torah has little relevance within Judaism today.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 15]

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

- Relevant today because the Jewish faith is centred upon the Torah; the way by which God communicates with people. The Torah contains all of the mitzvot required in order to practise the Jewish religion and because of this the Torah should be the main source of authority. The Torah sets out what God requires of the Jews.
- Relevant today because Orthodox Jews believe the Torah is the Word of God, which was revealed and dictated to Moses on Mount Sinai. Because of this they continue to accept the authority of the Torah as the direct revelation of Divine law. The Torah will always be the starting point as the sources of authority when a question or issue is raised in Judaism.
- The importance and authority of the Torah is emphasised by the way the Sefer Torah is written by hand, and copied letter by letter from an original by a sofer (scribe). Completed scrolls are kept in the Aron Kodesh at the synagogue. This demonstrated the importance of the Sefer Torah within Judaism.
- Religious and ethical discussions were passed on by word of mouth in Judaism until recorded in the form of the Mishnah, the Talmud and the Midrash. These are important sources of authority which continue to provide the basis for further discussion and interpretation.
- A rabbi is alternative important source of authority. A rabbi is a student of the Torah and will be able to give guidance to questions about how the Torah is to be interpreted in contemporary society. This is done by making reference to rabbinic tradition.
- Credit for different approaches observed by Orthodox and Reform Jews.

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

## Section B

3. (a) Explain Jewish beliefs about life as a divine gift **and** the sanctity of life. [AO1 15]

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

- Judaism's understanding of humanity is in the belief that people were created by God for a special purpose. This finds expression in the Genesis story of creation: 'So God created mankind in his own image'. Humanity is created with purpose.
- The Hebrew word for 'image' is 'tzelem' which refers to the nature or essence of being; it is the *essence* of humankind which is like that of God. Judaism teaches that human life is different to the rest of creation. Humans are expected to live holy lives.
- The Jewish concept of life as a divine gift is encapsulated in the Jewish concept of nefesh (meaning 'life'). Judaism teaches that the body and soul are separate, yet co-exist in human life. God has given humans a body in order to do God's sacred work, and the body needs to be cared for properly in order for this to take place effectively.
- Examples in Jewish law that emphasise the holiness of human life; the mitzvot cover a range of commandments concerning what to wear; what to eat; how to conduct sexual relationships, etc. These commandments demonstrate in a practical way the belief that caring for the body means that a Jew is caring for the soul.
- Judaism teaches that all life comes from God; therefore it is considered to be the gift of God, and to do anything which might take away or shorten that life is looked upon as murder.
- Pikuach nefesh is such a core precept within Judaism that it overrides any other religious teaching. The principle is that human life must be protected.

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

3. (b) 'The Shema contains the most important beliefs in Judaism.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 15]

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

- The Shema was developed as a way of 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: that there is One God who demands total obedience from the people.
- 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.
- 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 and it is recited at the moment of death.
- 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 prayer.

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

4. (a) Explain the structure of the Amidah **and** its use in daily prayers. [AO1 15]

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

- The Amidah is said while standing facing towards Jerusalem. On each day at the synagogue a Jew can attend one of three services that offer an opportunity for communal prayer. There is arvit (evening prayer), shacharit (morning prayer) and minchah (afternoon prayer). The Amidah is the central prayer of each of the three daily services.
- It is traditional, before reciting the Amidah, to take three steps backward and then forwards to symbolise entering into God's presence. The Amidah is first said quietly, with feet together, hands folded over heart and facing Jerusalem, and at four points one bows slightly.
- The 19 blessings of the Amidah are divided up into three sections that reflect the way in which a worshipper should approach God: first there should be words of praise; secondly bringing one's petitions; thirdly, concluding with thanksgiving: Shevach, Bakashah, Hoda'ah.
- The prayer concludes with three blessings of thanksgiving concerning acceptance of the worship, gratitude, and blessings of peace.
- On Shabbat and other Jewish festivals there is an amendment to the central section of the Amidah, whereby a single blessing, which focuses on the holiness of that particular day, is said instead of the usual 13 blessings.
- Following the conclusion of the Amidah, the worshipper recites the words 'May God who brings peace to the universe, bring peace to us and all of the people, Israel. Amen.' This is said while taking three steps backward, bowing to both sides and taking three steps forward again, formally retreating from God's presence.
- In daily prayers the Bakashah has a focus on petition for spiritual and physical needs; including such needs as repentance, forgiveness, redemption, healing, prosperity and freedom.

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

4. (b) 'Tzedakah (charity) is more important than prayer.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 15]

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

- Prayer is the most important aspect of the Jewish faith due to the belief that it is the means by which God communicates with human beings. Jews place great emphasis upon the importance and nature of prayer as the means by which they can reflect upon the nature of God and determine how to live as Jews.
- Praying with other Jews at the synagogue on a daily or weekly basis is more important than charity. Being with other like-minded believers can give them a sense of spiritual strength and unity and this sense of community and unity is gained through regular prayer.
- The Hebrew word tzedakah is usually translated as 'charity' but its literal meaning is 'justice' or 'righteousness'. When any Jewish person carries out a charitable act, they are undertaking one of the most basic requirements of the mitzvot and this is more important than prayer.
- For Jews, charitable acts are more than just showing a kindness by making a donation to a worthy cause; they are considered to be right actions which are just as important as any other mitzvot. Giving to charity on a regular basis, such as a tithe (which is the giving of a tenth of their income), allows Jews to act on redressing the balance between those who are fortunate and those who are not.
- The giving of tzedakah is not only about giving money to worthy causes. In the Talmud 'Just as God visits the sick, feeds the hungry and clothes the naked, so you do the same.' It is important to show kindness and mercy to those who are in difficulties and who need support. This can be done best by giving up one's time to help someone and living in such a way to help others.

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

5. (a) Explain the significance of the rituals observed during Yom Kippur. [AO1 15]

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

- In preparation for the celebration of Yom Kippur some families give money donations to charity. Men may also visit the mikveh as a symbol of spiritual cleansing. On the evening before Yom Kippur, there is a special festive meal before the fast.
- The following 25-hour fast includes abstention from food and drink, no bathing in a luxurious way, no use of perfumes, no wearing leather shoes, no sex. Before the evening prayers, many Jews change their clothing. They do not wear leather shoes as this is a symbol of luxury, and Jewish men may wear a kittel, as a symbol of purity and repentance. Women will often wear clothes that are predominantly white and all gold jewellery is taken off.
- The opening service of Yom Kippur in a synagogue is called Kol Nidrei. The morning service is followed by Musaf, an additional service that includes an account of the Temple procedures. The afternoon service includes the reading of the Book of Jonah with its powerful theme of repentance. The day's worship concludes with Neilah, or 'the closing of the gates'. During the service, the doors of the Ark stay open.
- At the end of the Neilah, each person makes three declarations of faith: 'Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One.' This is the daily declaration of God's oneness and it is said once. 'Blessed is the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever.' This is said three times. 'The Lord is God.' This is said seven times.
- When darkness arrives, there is a single blast on the Shofar to announce the fast is over. At home, an havdalah ceremony is performed and the fast is broken.

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

5. (b) 'Yom Kippur is the most important Jewish festival.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 15]

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

- The Yom Kippur fast is the most solemn day of the Jewish calendar and it is widely observed, with the vast majority of Jews marking Yom Kippur in some way. The day is spent almost entirely in a synagogue, making it unique amongst most Jewish events which are usually centred on the home.
- The prayer services on Yom Kippur focus Jews on repentance and atonement. Repentance and atonement are at the heart of Jewish spiritual life and this makes Yom Kippur the most special festival. It may be considered to be the most important festival because the main focus is on people and their relationship with God. It is an important festival because it is the day when each individual has the opportunity to make themselves right with God by repenting for all the bad things done, and making amends.
- Other festivals, such as Pesach, may be considered the most important festival because the escape from Egypt is an event of such importance and magnitude in the Jewish religion.
- It is not possible to say any festival is the most important festival in Judaism. Each festival has its own special significance and purpose. For example, the festivals of Rosh Hashanah (meaning 'the Head of the Year') and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) are both regarded as High Holy Days and they are both the most important and holiest days of the Jewish year. Although they are two separate festivals, rabbinic tradition has created a strong link between them for Jews.
- Yom Kippur may be considered to be the most important and holiest festival in the Jewish calendar; many Jews who do not regularly attend a synagogue at all will take part and attend the synagogue on this special day.

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