

# GCSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES A

Insight report: 2018 results at a glance

Published: October 2018





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# Series analysis

Conduct your own analysis using data relevant to you. Watch short [tutorials](#) on using Enhanced Results Analysis (ERA) for school, subject, group or student performance; or log straight in through [aqa.org.uk/log-in](http://aqa.org.uk/log-in)

## Grade summary

This shows the percentage of students achieving each grade.



\*The yellow figures represent the remaining grade levels 3–U.

AQA GCSE Religious Studies A

## Grade summary

98.77% achieved a grade.

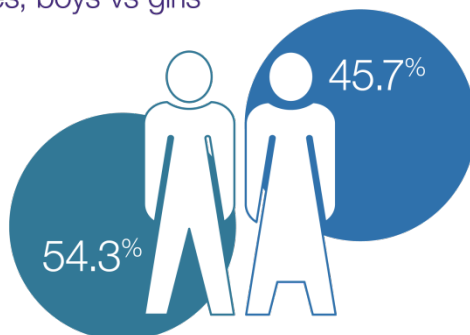
73.11% achieved at least Grade 4.

31.36% achieved at least Grade 7.

7.79% achieved Grade 9.

## Entry volumes, boys vs girls

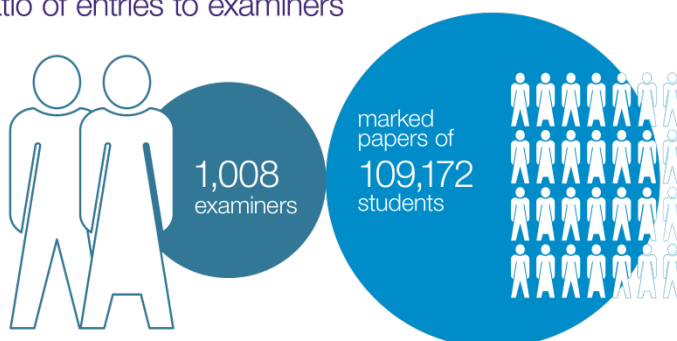
109,172 entries



AQA GCSE Religious Studies A

## Entry volumes, boys vs girls

## Ratio of entries to examiners



AQA GCSE Religious Studies A

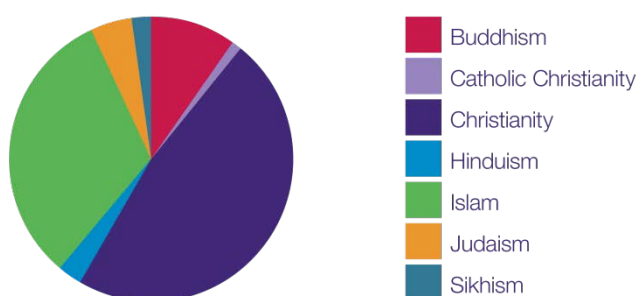
## Ratio of entries to examiners

1,008 examiners marked papers for 109,172 students.

# Series analysis cont.

Conduct your own analysis using data relevant to you. Watch short [tutorials](#) on using Enhanced Results Analysis (ERA) for school, subject, group or student performance; or log straight in through [aqa.org.uk/log-in](http://aqa.org.uk/log-in)

Religions studied on Religious Studies A

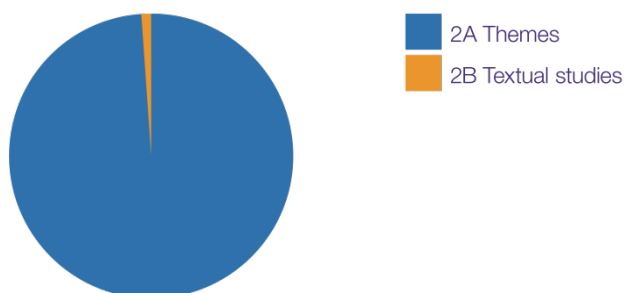


Religions picked for study on this specification

Remember, all students take two of these options.

AQA GCSE Religious Studies A

Paper 2 option popularity



Paper 2, option popularity

- 2A Themes
- 2B Textual Studies.

AQA GCSE Religious Studies A

**Watch tutorials on using ERA for results analysis, or log straight in via e-AQA.**

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# Grade boundaries

## How to interpret grade boundaries

GCSE Religious Studies A is a reformed qualification for 2018; the final grade is based on marks from both religions studied and the Themes paper. You will be able to find the grade boundaries for each route through the qualification on our [grade boundaries](#) page. There is no need to convert this mark to the uniform mark scale (UMS).

### Grade boundaries are set using a mix of statistics and expert judgement

Our Centre for Education Research and Practice (CERP) uses a range of statistics to make predictions that suggest the most appropriate grade boundaries. The statistical evidence considers the prior attainment of the given cohort as well as the distribution of marks. Senior examiners then review a script sample to confirm the statistically recommended marks are sensible for the grade.

Boundary setting is overseen by Ofqual. To find more grade boundaries and learn how they are set, visit [aqa.org.uk/exams-administration/results-days/grade-boundaries-and-ums](http://aqa.org.uk/exams-administration/results-days/grade-boundaries-and-ums)

## Qualification summary

Overall for the first year of a very different specification, the examinations appeared to provide opportunities for students of all abilities to display their cognitive ability, evaluative skills and understanding of the required content. The quality of some answers demonstrated that teachers had effectively prepared students for the requirements of the new specification and credit must be given to them for this.

Paper 1 appeared to be appropriate for the ability range of students and achieved widespread differentiation. Where some marks were not gained it was often as a result of basic skills requirements and generic use of information, such as not addressing the focus of AO1.2 'influences' in 01.3 questions. Timing did not appear to be a significant issue with the majority of students completing the required questions in the given time, however there was a minority who seemed to run out of time on their second religion which impacted their ability to answer the final 12 mark question fully. Overall, the Beliefs questions were answered more effectively than the Practices questions across the religion options.

Paper 2 again appeared to be broadly accessible, where answers from across the ability range of students were produced and made effective use of a wide range of marks, differentiating between students successfully. The best responses were seen where students showed knowledge of specific religions rather than referring generically to 'religious believers', and where they clearly understood the assessment objectives and were prepared for those different types of questions, for example in AO1.3 4 mark questions.

**Feedback on the exam courses use student responses to explore what happened in each exam series. Visit [aqa.org.uk/rsa-cpd](http://aqa.org.uk/rsa-cpd)**

# Paper 1

This is a snapshot. Learn more about every question from the summer 2018 series in our reports on the exam. Visit [aqa.org.uk/log-in](http://aqa.org.uk/log-in) and follow:

e-AQA > Secure Key Materials > GCSE > History/Religious Studies > Religious Studies A (new specification) > Reports on the exam.

“What worked well”	“Even better if”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In general, higher marks were achieved across the Beliefs questions (Questions 01.1–01.5) from the religion options.</li> <li>The best approach to answering 2-mark questions was to use short sentences (eg Christianity 01.2) as this avoided wasting time with long responses, but meant the points made were clear. Where asked to ‘name’ (eg Islam 01.2) single word answers were ideal.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In general, the Practices questions (Questions 02.1–02.5) were often not as well answered as the Beliefs section of the papers.</li> <li>Some students did not gain full marks due to not fully addressing the question and therefore not meeting the Assessment Objective, particularly in AO1.2 ‘influences’ questions (Question 01.3).</li> <li>In the 12-mark questions, students could in some cases be more successful if they referred to the bullet point instructions in the question. This may help remind students that non-religious beliefs are not creditable in Paper 1 responses.</li> </ul>

## Highlights from summer 2018

### 8062/11 Buddhism

The Beliefs section (01.1-01.5) of this paper was well answered, with a highlight being 01.5. This evaluation question was particularly well answered by many students as they showed a pleasing range of sophisticated responses to this question which reflects great credit on teachers. Students who had been taught to read the question carefully before responding gained some benefit as they were the ones that could make strong, salient points to support what they were saying. The Practices section of the paper (02.1–02.5) generally was less well answered by students, for example 02.2 due to a lack of knowledge of which teachings the Six Perfections are. Many students appeared to find 02.5 the most difficult question on the paper and it was overall less well answered than 01.5, however those who identified the words ‘impossible’ and ‘always’ in the question title were able to use these to good effect.

### 8062/12 Catholic Christianity

In question 02.4 the vast majority of students chose Pax Christi, although many were unable to be very specific about the work of that community, which was required for the full 4 marks. Due to students often generalising about aid agencies, this question appeared challenging to many



students in terms of being able to achieve full marks. In both 12-mark questions, although there were some excellent responses, a lack of 'logical chains of reasoning leading to judgement(s)' meant that many were awarded Level 3.

### 8062/13 Christianity

In some questions there was evidence that students limited their access to marks by not being sufficiently careful in reading the question, for example in question 01.3, where some students did not address 'influences'. Question 02.4 seemed to be the question that students found most challenging, because just under a tenth of students did not give an answer, and in other responses students appeared to be unsure of the meaning of 'reconciliation'. As with 01.4, the strongest responses to 02.4 illustrated two ways with explicit reference to appropriate sacred writings or a clear source of Christian belief and teaching.

Both 12-mark questions showed an impressive range of arguments given by students. However 02.5 was the less well answered of the two as often responses didn't go beyond basic arguments surrounding 'choice' vs 'no choice' in terms of baptism.

### 8062/14 Hinduism

Generally the variety of beliefs and teachings used were clearly relevant and specific. It was also the case that good quotations were frequently used rather than more general concepts/beliefs which was impressive. The strongest responses to the 12 mark questions demonstrated a more holistic understanding of the religion, as these answers used different elements of the specification effectively which resulted in wider analysis of the issues.

Question 02.3 was left blank by more students than any other question on the paper. The issue of diversity within the faith was the central focus here, and is one of the principles of the new specification. Hinduism should be seen as a diverse religion, not one single mass – it may help students for this to be a constant reference throughout coverage of the specification content.

### 7062/15 Islam

On the whole in this paper, the 'Beliefs' questions were much better answered than the 'Practices' questions. Questions 01.3 and 01.4 were answered well by many students, with those who didn't gain high marks often being due to a lack of focus on key words in the questions such as 'influences' or 'roles.'

There was lots of good use of key vocabulary and religious teaching, however some students did not attempt questions and it appeared that some did not know the meaning of terms such as 'alms' which is part of the specification content and therefore required knowledge.

### 8062/16 Judaism

The quality and accuracy of textual references was very marked across questions 01.4 and 02.4. At times, some students tended to confuse Christian and Jewish teachings and beliefs throughout the paper. For example, some students thought that Jews celebrated Pesach because Jesus did at the Last Supper, and some students also described Jewish ideas using Christian terminology, such as references to heaven, hell and purgatory. Some responses demonstrated superb breadth of knowledge, and correctly employed textual references and quotes throughout. Although, just over

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10% of students did not attempt question 02.4 which may suggest that some students didn't understand the term Pesach.

### 8062/17 Sikhism

The strongest responses to the 12 mark questions demonstrated a more holistic understanding of the religion, as questions were answered by drawing upon different elements of the specification which resulted in wider analysis.

02.4 was generally well-answered, with many responses gaining three or more marks. However, some appeared to find it more challenging to provide a reference to sacred writing or another source of Sikh belief or teaching and this meant that just over a third of responses received full marks (compared to half of responses to question 01.4). Question 02.2 had the highest number of students providing no response (4%), which perhaps reflected an issue with a key term; this highlights the importance of studying all subject vocabulary from the specification.

**Reports on the exam are written by senior examiners who see more responses than anyone else. Access full reports via [aqa.org.uk/log-in](https://aqa.org.uk/log-in)**

# Paper 2A

This is a snapshot. Learn more about every question from the summer 2018 series in our reports on the exam. Visit [aqa.org.uk/log-in](http://aqa.org.uk/log-in) and follow:

e-AQA > Secure Key Materials > GCSE > History/Religious Studies > Religious Studies A (new specification) > Reports on the exam.

“What worked well”	“Even better if”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overall the standard was generally very good.</li> <li>Examiners reported that most students were well prepared and were able to demonstrate good knowledge and use a wide range of quotations from sources of authority.</li> <li>Those who named the specific religions they were writing about in the 12 mark questions invariably provided stronger responses than those who just generalised by saying ‘religious believers.’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some took some of the quotations used out of context and tried to use them inappropriately. For example, using ‘Love thy neighbour’ where it doesn’t clearly apply.</li> <li>A minority wrote far too much for the 2- mark questions and consequently too little for their final 12-mark question. For example, justifying the views of religions on 01.2 which is not required.</li> <li>A minority of responses explained beliefs for the four or five mark questions that do not qualify as religious beliefs.</li> </ul>

## Highlights from summer 2018

### Themes – highlights

**Theme A: Relationships and Families** - This was a popular theme which was answered by about three quarters of the students who entered this exam. Generally, students achieved well on this topic with some excellent answers produced particularly for 01.4 and 01.5. Where students fared less well was 01.3 where some did not address ‘roles of men and women’ which limited the mark which could be awarded.

**Theme B: Religion and Life** - This was the most popular theme on the paper and was generally very well answered. Question 01.4 was the most well answered of the five mark questions across the themes, although some did not fully relate the beliefs to actions in this life.

**Theme C: The Existence of God and Revelation** - This was the least popular theme on the paper and it was generally answered either extremely successfully or not very successfully. 03.4 was the least well answered of the 5-mark questions across the paper because some students appeared confused by the concept of ‘the divine’, despite a number of references to it in the specification under the heading ‘The nature of the divine and revelation’.

**Theme E: Religion, Crime and Punishment** – This was the second most popular theme and many students achieved high marks. Question 05.5 about the death penalty was the best answered of

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the 12-mark questions on the paper, with just under a quarter of students being awarded 10-12 marks. Students were able to use a plethora of arguments and teachings to support and challenge the statement and also good references were made to sacred writings and religious beliefs.

### Spelling, punctuation and grammar (SPaG)

The quality of the spelling, punctuation and grammar was generally very good this year. Many students were able to spell and use technical terms appropriately. However, 'believe' was often spelt as 'belive' and some students were unable to spell 'conclusion'. Some wrote incredibly long sentences, and commas and capital letters were sometimes left out and/or put in the wrong places which at times obscured meaning.

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# Paper 2B

This is a snapshot. Learn more about every question from the summer 2018 series in our reports on the exam. Visit [aga.org.uk/log-in](http://aga.org.uk/log-in) and follow:

e-AQA > Secure Key Materials > GCSE > History/Religious Studies > Religious Studies A (new specification) > Reports on the exam.

“What worked well”	“Even better if”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It was very good to see that the questions proved to be accessible to the vast majority of students and some of the answers were outstanding.</li> <li>• Examiners reported that most were well prepared and were able to demonstrate good knowledge and use a wide range of quotations from sources of authority.</li> <li>• Those who named the specific religions they were writing about in the 12 mark questions on themes A-F invariably provided stronger responses than those who just generalised by saying ‘religious believers.’</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some students when answering themes G and H brought in material which is found in one of the other gospels and not in Mark. As these themes are based on St Mark’s Gospel, where students did this, the references could not gain credit.</li> <li>• A minority wrote far too much for the 2-mark questions and consequently too little for their final 12-mark question. For example, justifying the views of religions on 01.2 which was not required.</li> <li>• A minority of responses explained beliefs for the four or five mark questions that do not qualify as religious beliefs. Non-religious arguments are valid for all the 12-mark AO2 themes questions.</li> </ul>

## Highlights from summer 2018

### Theme G: St Mark’s Gospel: the life of Jesus

07.2 and 07.3 were generally well answered with most able to give contrasting explanations for the empty tomb of Jesus in 07.3. In 07.4 the strongest answers referred closely to the text and explained **why** the conversation which took place is important to Christians which was the focus of the question. There were some excellent answers to 07.5 which provided an opportunity to discuss whether the miracles proved that Jesus was Messiah. The strongest answers looked also at what else in Mark’s Gospel pointed towards Jesus’ messianic nature.

### Theme H: St Mark’s Gospel as a source of religious, moral and spiritual truths

This theme was not as well answered as theme G which was possibly the result of students running out of time. Question 08.4 was a good example of where responses which focused on the key word in the question, ‘cost’, did well. Credit could not be awarded to points which instead identified the **rewards** of discipleship. Question 08.5 really differentiated between students; some just wrote everything they knew about the Kingdom of God, whereas the strongest answers were

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those which identified that the Kingdom of God was potentially present and future. References to key parables from Mark helped many answers reach the top levels.

Themes A-F highlights and SPaG  
[See Paper 2A.](#)

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