

PRINCIPAL EXAMINER'S REPORT



BOTSWANA
EXAMINATIONS
COUNCIL

JCE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION 2023



INTRODUCTION

This marking report constitutes feedback on candidates' performance from the 2023 JCE Religious Education examination for Paper 2 which was the component based on structured questions.

Component 2 for the 2023 marking session for JCE Religious Education was marked between the 11th December 2023 and the 22nd December 2023, held at Mogoditshane Senior Secondary School. The examining team consisted 1 Principal Examiner, 2 Assistant Principal Examiners, 11 Team leaders and 80 examiners.

As a quality assurance initiative, 15 examination checkers were engaged for the purposes of reviewing all clerical work for accuracy and error-free submissions of all candidate scores as marked by the different teams. All efforts were made to ensure that examiners worked under safe and secure conditions to enhance their productivity while keeping safe from COVID-19.

GENERAL COMMENTS

This paper was constructed to assess knowledge, understanding and application of Religious Education concepts, as well as assess the ability of candidates to analyze and evaluate religious issues. There were two sections in the paper, Sections A and B, where the former presented structured items assessing candidates' understanding of challenges arising from certain belief systems as well as different religions in the modern world, along with human relationships and the natural world.

Section B, however, assessed candidates' skills and competencies through essay type items. The section assessed the roles played by different religions and their impact on people's lives.



The performance of most candidates in this paper did not exhibit any significant changes. Candidates exhibited satisfactory work based on knowledge items while they struggled with content, especially where essay questions were concerned. Below are observations made from the marking of different items across the examination paper:

SECTION A

Question 1

a) Give two examples of vulnerable groups in the society. (2 marks)

This question was easily accessible to all candidates across levels. It was well answered as candidates provided responses such as Children, Elderly, Women and others.

b) Describe the following terms:

i) Charity (2 marks)

Candidates were able to define the term “*Charity*” and provide examples to score 2 marks. Those in the lower grade however went as far as giving examples that limited them to score a minimum of 1 mark. Those in the upper grades provided responses such as:

The act of giving help to the needy or poor such as money or food.

ii) Religious Tolerance (2 marks)

This question was easily accessed by a majority of candidates as it is the aim or goal of why Religious Education is taught in schools. Candidates stated that Religious tolerance is the ability to appreciate the existence of varied religious beliefs, values and practices or acceptance of the various faiths in the community. E.g. in Botswana Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Bahai Faith co-exist with each other.



c) Explain two ways in which caging of animals protects them. (4 marks)

Responses noted included the following:

- To save them from predators
- To protect them from diseases
- Avoid extinction of species. Together with the provision of examples to show understanding scored candidates a maximum of 2 marks for the two ways.

Candidates in the middle and lower level were able to provide the ways in some instances while others, interpreted the question caging to taming on the advantage of the farmer or owner, hence, bringing responses such as:

- To manage them easily. This led to candidates losing some of the four marks, especially in lower grade candidates.

Question 2

a) State any two Christian missionaries (2 marks)

This question was accessible to all candidates across all levels hence scoring the two marks by providing names such as:

- David Livingstone
- John Mackenzie
- Robert Moffat

b) Describe two roles Jesus Christ played in the establishment of Christianity. (4 marks)

Candidates in the upper grades were able to demonstrate a clear understanding of the question by focusing on the roles Jesus played which made his mission successful in starting Christianity. These were responses such as:

- Miracle worker
- Healer
- Defender of the Poor
- Teacher etc



However, those in the lower grade provided the description without the role which scored them a minimum of 1 mark for the limited understanding.

c) Examine the Golden Rule as presented in Christianity. "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you". Matthew 7:12 (4 marks)

Candidates were expected to provide a critical analysis of the Golden rule by showing a thorough understanding of the concept and in addition proving a positive and negative view on the teaching. This was a high order question, which discriminated the candidates as per the grade descriptors.

The analysis skill proved to be a challenge to majority of candidates across the key grades and across centres. They went as far as proving the positive view which scored them only 2 marks. This led to candidates losing 2 marks to get the 4 marks allocated.

Question 3

a) State two symbols of Bahai Faith (2 marks)

This is a recall question and knowledge of the symbols gathered two marks for those who were conversant with Bahai Faith. The most popular response was "The Nine Pointed Star". Candidates proved to recall only that symbol, hence, losing the second mark, this included even the high achievers or those in Grade A.

Other symbols of Bahai Faith are

- The Ring Stone
- The Greatest Name
- 5 pointed Star

b) Explain the principle of Botho in Bahai Faith (2 marks)

A fair understanding of Botho as a virtue was shown by a majority of candidates across all levels, hence using values such as respect, honesty, humility, living in

peace, harmony and living according to the principle of oneness. This scored them a maximum of 2 marks as the question demanded.

c) Describe how meditation is conducted in Bahai Faith (2 marks)

Bahai Faith by nature is an open religion to the various faith. Its beliefs, practices and teachings cut across all religions. This arrangement for this particular question led to all forms of meditation in different faiths acceptable. It was therefore, easy to score the 2 marks in describing the form of meditation stated.

d) Describe two ways which show the importance of oneness in Bahai Faith (4 marks)

Candidates overlooked the word importance and focused on the oneness by listing them and explaining them. The importance of the oneness as the question was demanding, led to a majority of candidates in the various grades scoring only 2 marks for stating the oneness, such as Oneness of religion, God and humility and losing the other 2 marks for the importance.

Question 4

a) State any two of the 8 Fold Path (2 marks)

Another recall / knowledge question. Those with a wide knowledge of Buddhism re-called two teachings and scored the 2 marks. Even the low achievers grappled with the question and scored easily here. There were a few who for the answer “Right speech,” wrote “Right of speech” which is applicable to Human Rights not the Eight Fold Path. The “**of**” led to loss of a mark.

b) Explain any two ways of worship in Buddhism (4 marks)

Candidates were to show a clear understanding of the ways through which Buddhist worship such as, Puja, Anjali, Chanting, Meditation and other and describe them with either an example, how or why.



The question discriminated the candidates very well, those in the upper grade demonstrated a wide knowledge and clear understanding of the forms of worship whereas those in the lower grades 'D and E's', managed to at least state the two forms.

Singing and dancing, pray to get the two marks. The latter is applicable in all religions, hence it helped them in a way. Candidates however across all levels did not show an understanding of Buddhism as a religion which does not have the Supreme Being or God but believes in the supreme power or ultimate which led them losing one or two marks.

c) Describe two ways in which monks are expected to live in Buddhism (4 marks)

For candidates to adequately describe the expected conduct, they needed to have knowledge of who monks are and the understanding of their life or rules. This demanded them to describe:

- The wearing of robes
- The shaving of hair
- The monastery life
- Sleeping on low beds
- Living a life of chastity etc.

It was a fair question as it managed to discriminate the candidates very well. Those in the upper grade stated a way and fully described it while those in the lower grades, went as far as stating the way without the description to score 2 marks out of the 4 marks.



SECTION B (ESSAYS)

Question 5

Discuss the impact of Christian denominations in modern Society. (10 Marks)

Generally, most of the candidates were unable to demonstrate a thorough balanced assessment of the impact of Christianity on modern society and bring in their judgements or own opinion.

To arrive to this, the question demanded that they:

- State what Christians denominations are e.g. Types of denomination such as Pentecostal, Mainline, African Independent Churches and examples to show a comprehensive understanding
- Their discussion should also show the impact these denominations have brought such as Education, Health, Political, Social, Economic, Spiritual and Personal impact. This, they were to do either in the negative or positive stand.
- They were then, to present a critical analysis of the impact, hence, bringing the positive and negative discussion together with relevant examples of how these denominations have influenced the lives of the people.



Question 6

Assess ways in which religions have prepared modern society for any form of pandemic in Botswana (10 marks)

This is a critical analysis question. It required candidates to discuss pandemic that has befallen Botswana and the extent to which religions prepare for such scourge. The depth of their discussion should draw them to a point where their own opinions surface, or their judgements on the issue of preparedness of religions.

Generally, most of the candidates were unable to thoroughly present a discussion depicting all the skills required, especially when it came to the analytic skill. They would provide the positive part and fail to bring in the negative analysis. This led to a majority of them, high achievers included, losing a lot of marks or scoring 5 or 6 marks, depending on the depth of their discussion. The low achievers were shallow and in some instances, did not even know what pandemics are, hence, scoring 0 marks on the essay. The word pandemic was misconstrued to mean natural disasters by a majority of candidates.

CONCLUSION

- Expose candidates to more practice on essays which are at critical analysis level.
- Expose candidates to all religions. Do not limit them to favourite or the teacher's preferred religions, as this lead them to really struggle in answering those questions derived from religions they have not been taught.
- Question with action verbs such as assess, evaluate, discuss and examine requires a presentation of both the positive and negative side.
- Candidates should be taught that in Buddhism believes in the existence of supreme power as opposed to the Supreme Being or God.
- Expose candidates to current affairs and global issues so that they improve their Application skill.