

ISLAMIC STUDIES

Paper 2068/12
History and Scriptures 12

Key messages

- Candidates have to ensure that they read the questions carefully before answering them.
- Candidates should make themselves familiar with the rubric, so they know how many questions to answer and from which sections.
- While **Sections A** and **B** saw some good answers, responses for AO1 (Knowledge and understanding) could be improved. AO2 (Evaluation) responses tended to be better.
- Many candidates were able to provide an outline of the general points of an answer. With more detail and elaboration upon the points, candidates would improve their responses.

General comments

Overall, candidates made a good attempt to answer the questions they selected. Very few candidates answered questions from the wrong section.

For **Section A**, candidates showed good knowledge of early aspects of pre-Islamic Arabian life, but many responses were missing key details or were not focused on the aspect required in the question. **Question 2** was more popular than **Question 1**.

For **Section B**, candidates had the knowledge to answer their chosen question, particularly in **part (b)**. Very few candidates answered **Question 3**; most candidates chose to answer **Question 4**.

For **Section C**, candidates tended to know the teachings of the Sura or Hadith, though development of the second aspect of the questions tended to be missing. **Question 6** was only a slightly more popular choice than **Question 5**.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

- (a) Of the few candidates that attempted this question, most provided one or two points about the role of the shaykh.
- (b) All candidates identified some of the markets that were a part of the trade in pre-Islamic Arabia. They also identified other forms of revenue such as selling idols or taxes, etc. Where it was not well answered, the candidate focused on the markets and what they sold.
- (c) This question was quite well answered. Candidates were able to present a few different ways in which trade was improved.

Question 2

- (a) Most answers provided two points about the way children were raised.
- (b) This question was not very well answered. Many responses focused on the beliefs and rituals of the pagans instead of the practices or beliefs of the hanifs. It is important that candidates can

differentiate between the different beliefs that existed at that time, so they are able to write about them in some detail.

(c) Most candidates did not make evaluative points about the way that Islam may have been easier to accept for the hanifs. Most answers were basic and vague, providing general points about the Meccans accepting Islam.

Section B

Question 3

(a) All candidates were able to identify a few reasons for the boycott.

(b) This part of the question was answered reasonably well, with candidates describing a few of the main events of the boycott. Some more detail would have improved the responses.

(c) Most responses included some evaluation relating to the sorrow that the Prophet (pbuh) felt after his wife and uncle had passed away. Answers could have been improved by offering a different perspective or view.

Question 4

(a) Most candidates identified two reasons for the battle of Badr.

(b) Most candidates were able to provide some information about the battle, although many answers could have been improved by providing more detail. Candidates are reminded that they are not only required to provide an outline of the main events or focus on one or two main events, but that they should give as much detail as possible, with quotes where relevant.

(c) Answers to this question varied. Some candidates did not seem to have engaged with ways that the battle may have given the Muslims confidence, but others provided good answers that were thoughtful and insightful.

Section C

Question 5

(a) Candidates who answered this question provided a few of the main points relating to the teachings of the Sura. Fewer candidates seemed able to elaborate on the main points and write about God's security for the Quraish. Better responses identified the main themes in each of the verses and then explained the relationship of what God is saying about how he offers protection.

(b) Answers to this question were good, with candidates able to engage with the topic of being grateful and giving a few examples of ways they can show their gratitude, or explaining things that they can be grateful for.

Question 6

(a) Candidates who answered this question had some understanding of the teachings of the Hadith about caring and sharing with other people. Weaker responses did not elaborate on this theme, while better answers included examples of putting the Hadith into practice.

(b) Answers to this part were generally good. Candidates engaged well with the question and seemed to understand what was being asked. Some answers mentioned that competition should be healthy, and that people should not cheat or take advantage of others.

ISLAMIC STUDIES

Paper 2068/22
**Paper 2 Development, Sources, Beliefs
and Observances**

Key messages

- There was a small entry for this series and most candidates produced satisfactory answers to the set questions.
- AO1 responses could be improved by including more detailed exemplification of points made, such as providing quotations and examples.
- Where questions ask for a specific number of points, such as 'three features', candidates should ensure they do so and define them clearly, for example by writing in three paragraphs. Generalised answers cannot be fully credited.
- As in previous years, it is important for candidates to focus on the specific question set rather than write about a topic in general.

General comments

For **Section A**, most candidates chose **Question 2** about Abu Bakr.

For **Section B**, knowledge seemed weaker about detailed Hadith processes for checking the text and narrators. Knowledge of Qur'anic passages about Isa (AS) could be improved, and more quotations could be given to improve answers.

For **Section C**, knowledge was generally strong. Responses could be improved by adding more explanation and providing different perspectives.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

(a) This question was generally well answered. Both ancient and modern names to refer to countries or regions were acceptable, since countries with modern borders did not exist in the time period being referred to. Commonly referenced areas included the Hijaz and areas of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Arabia or Saudi Arabia, Oman, Yemen and the Gulf States were all acceptable. Many candidates referred to Syria, and less often mentioned but also acceptable were Jordan and Palestine. Parts of Iraq and Kuwait were held at this time, so any reference to these countries was also credited.

(b) All candidates referred to the achievement of the production of a standardised version of the Qur'an and the removal of unauthorised versions. This could be seen as a great achievement because it ensured the unity of the Muslims and the continuity of authentic teachings. It was a difficult task to achieve in the face of opposition. Fewer candidates referred to other achievements, and those who did referred to the expansion of the Caliphate during 'Uthman's reign', further into Syria and beyond, even into parts of Asia.

(c) Most candidates argued that in some ways, Muslims today could find guidance from the example of the Caliphs, and in other ways not because circumstances had changed, and the actions of the companions did not cover some modern issues such as what to do about the use of technology. Some candidates argued that guidance could be found in different ways. Justice and generosity

were two characteristics which helped guide the actions of the Caliphs, so these general guiding qualities in approach might help Muslims today. Some pointed out that the best guidance came from the examples of the Prophet (pbuh) and the Caliphs added to this by showing the Prophet's guidance at work in their actions.

Question 2

- (a) Most candidates knew the main outline of Abu Bakr's speech, although some responses could have been improved by providing more detail. Good responses mentioned that he said that he had been elected as the Ameer of the people; and that he gave his speech with words of humility, reflecting his character. Candidates only needed to mention four points, or group a few points together as one with exemplification. Most candidates were able to do so.
- (b) Answers to this question were best when focused on Abu Bakr's approach, exemplified with details. Some candidates described the details without focusing on the approach. The approach followed on from Abu Bakr's initial speech: following the Sunnah, with humility, and in the spirit of compassion.
- (c) There were wide ranging responses to this question. Candidates could choose any aspect of Abu Bakr's leadership, and many chose general qualities such as the way Abu Bakr ruled with compassion and empathy for the needs of the poor and ordinary people. They stated that Muslim communities today could learn from this and take these needs into account in their decision making. Muslim communities today might follow him by organising *zakat* to help the poor and pointing out to congregations in the mosques that this is a requirement, just as Abu Bakr did.

Section B

Question 3

- (a) This was a question to which specific points were required. Responses which made errors in a point, even in a small point of language, often could not be credited if they changed the meaning of the point as a result. Therefore, it is important for candidates to be exact in making their responses.
- (b) This question required candidates to write in more detail and focus on the narrators of Hadith. Those who had learned the technicalities of this, sometimes called a science of Hadith collection, performed well. This involved specifying the conditions laid down, mostly by Bukhari, for verifying Hadith, such as narrators being of sound mind; had known the next in the chain; it went back to Muhammad (pbuh) and information was known about the family and background of the narrator. Some candidates could have added more about the general characteristics expected of narrators in terms of moral character, such as the need to be trustworthy and known for telling the truth about all matters.
- (c) This was an open question which gave candidates the opportunity to define two ways themselves. Some did so, clearly writing two sentences or two short paragraphs, beginning with 'the first way...' and so on. Many did not clearly define two ways and just wrote in general about significance: these answers could not be fully successful as they did not clearly satisfy the demands of the question, although they could still achieve some evaluation. Hadith provide inspiration for good character. Muslims today might find this a model in their lives when facing bullying in school or discrimination in the workplace. There are many other modern-day situations which Muslims might find the Hadith significant in guiding them through, and good responses referred to these.

Question 4

- (a) This was a question that only required a list of four points; no further explanation was needed as no more than four marks were available. Nearly all candidates noted that Isa (AS) was a prophet and a miracle worker. Further adjectives used to describe Isa (AS) included humble, intelligent, wise and religious. It was acceptable to write that he was a messenger as a further point in addition to prophet, as he brought a holy book. According to a Hadith he was seen as similar to Muhammad (pbuh), so this was also credited.
- (b) This question was quite well answered, with the best responses giving a broad overview of one miracle and others. Some focused on one only, especially the raising of the dead. Many mentioned

the miracle of speech as a baby. Others referred to were making a clay figure become a bird by breathing life into it, as a sign of God's power for those who can see it and believe in God. Another was healing the lepers and those who were ill. A further one was the sharing of food amongst many, when there was little. Responses could have been improved by referring more to Qur'anic references of Isa's miracles.

(c) This question was reasonably answered. The best responses mentioned occasions when Isa (AS) was supported by God and then discussed what Muslims today can learn from this, offering different perspectives.

Section C

Question 5

(a) Good responses referred to *Yawm ad-Din*, the Day of Judgement, when God will decide where people will go to in their afterlife according to Islamic beliefs. Good responses added quotations, such as from the Qur'an 99:6-8, which considers the balance of deeds at judgement. Quotations about the qualities of paradise and hellfire, about the suffering and torments of sinners and the pleasures and rewards of those in the eternal garden were all relevant and part of beliefs. Good responses described events on the Day of Judgement itself, rather than writing broadly about the afterlife.

(b) Most candidates considered that the beliefs had an effect in encouraging Muslims to be well behaved and follow the straight path with regards to moral standards in their lives. Some wrote in terms of the thoughts of a Muslim in day-to-day life: would the angels be watching from over the shoulder, ready to report at judgement? This helps Muslims think twice before doing something wrong.

Question 6

(a) This question required candidates to define three features. Clear responses did so and wrote three clear paragraphs, each focusing on a feature. Features chosen included iftar meals to 'open' or end the fast from sunset time; *tarawih* prayers to recite the whole Qur'an during the month and the test to abstain from food and drink during daylight hours. Good responses described these features and explained the meaning and importance behind them. Many other features could be chosen, ranging from the pre-dawn meal to keeping high moral standards during the month. Weaker responses wrote about the observance of Ramadan in general, without defining three features or focusing on them. It was expected that with more marks available, responses to **5(a)** and **6(a)** should be a little longer than the other **part (a)** responses on the paper and most candidates did this.

(b) Some candidates discussed the position of Muslim communities today who are living amongst people of other faiths, and their experience of Ramadan. Ramadan was considered significant in strengthening the bonds of the Muslim community, such as through meeting for prayers and meals during Ramadan. It also helps to show what Ramadan and Islam is like to those of other faiths. Muslim communities today might be strengthened through acts of commitment such as this. Different responses took this answer in different ways but commonly, the best answers included three or more aspects of significance, and weaker responses wrote generally or only about one aspect.