This guide is for students, parents and carers. It outlines: Information about the GCSE course; the topics on each examination paper and where students can find revision resources; and ends with examination tips specific to this subject.

**Course Title and Exam Board**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Exam board | AQA |
| Course title | Religious Studies specification A |
| Course structure and assessment | Component 1 – the study of religions: beliefs, teachings and practices (Christianity and Buddhism)  Component 2 – thematic studies (ethics topics) |
| Key dates | N/A |

**GCSE Examinations**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Paper | Marks | Duration | Weighting | Topics on this paper |
| Paper 1 | 102 | 1 hour 45 mins | 50% | The life of the Buddha  The Four Noble Truths  The Dhamma (Buddha’s teachings)  Buddhist worship and festivals  Buddhist ethics  Key Christian beliefs  Jesus Christ and salvation  Christian worship and festivals  The role of the church in the local and worldwide community |
| Paper 2 | 102 | 1 hour 45 mins | 50% | Relationships and families  Religion and life  Religion, crime and punishment  Religion, peace and conflict |

**Course Components (a more detailed explanation of skills and topics)**

*Examination Paper 1 – The study of religions*

Students apply knowledge and understanding of Christian and Buddhist beliefs, teachings and practices. Students need to learn all keywords for the following topics: Christian Beliefs, Christian Practices, Buddhist Beliefs and Buddhist Practices. Students also need to be able to refer to scripture or sacred writings. Students will apply their knowledge and understanding to a discursive question related to the topics studied. Students will evaluate a statement, giving reasoned arguments for and against the statement, referring to religious teachings, and including a conclusion. Students will explain similarities and differences in beliefs, teachings and practices, and explain the influences of beliefs and teachings on Christians and Buddhists.

*Examination Paper 2 – Thematic Studies*

Students apply knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs and teachings within the themes of Crime and Punishment, Relationships and Families, Peace and Conflict and Religion and Life. Students need to learn the keywords for all four topics, and will need to be able to write about the beliefs and attitudes of the main religious tradition of Great Britain (ie Christianity) for some selected issues. Students also need to be able to refer to scripture or sacred writings. Students will apply their knowledge and understanding of the religions they have studied to the topics and moral issues. Students will be examined on all four topics, chosen from a total of six themes. Students need to make sure that they select the correct topics which have been studied, and only answer questions on four topics. Students will evaluate a statement related to the topic, giving reasoned arguments for and against the statement, referring to religious teachings, and including a conclusion. Students will explain similarities and differences between different religious beliefs and attitudes.

**Where are the revision resources?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Revision topics | What resources to use |
| **Paper 1** | Student P drive – Religion and Ethics / Paper 1 – Religions / Buddhism – Beliefs  Recommended book: AQA GCSE Religious Studies A: Christianity and Buddhism Revision Guide by Marianne Fleming, Nagapriya and Peter Smith. This covers all the topics below. See slide in General Revision folder for more information. |
| Buddhist beliefs and teachings |
| Buddhist practices | Student P drive – Religion and Ethics / Paper 1 – Religions / Buddhism - Practices |
| Christian beliefs | Student P drive – Religion and Ethics / Paper 1 – Religions / Christianity - Beliefs |
| Christian practices | Student P drive – Religion and Ethics / Paper 1 – Religions / Christianity - Practices |
|  | **NB: If you are studying Islam as your second religion, please see Student P drive – Religion and Ethics / Paper 1 – Religions / Islam** |
| **Paper 2** | Student P-drive – Religion and Ethics / Paper 2 – Ethics / Relationships and Families |
| Relationships and families |
| Religion and life | Student P-drive – Religion and Ethics / Paper 2 – Ethics / Religion and Life |
| Religion, peace and conflict | Student P-drive – Religion and Ethics / Paper 2 – Ethics / Religion, peace and conflict |
| Religion, crime and punishment | Student P-drive – Religion and Ethics / Paper 2 – Ethics / Religion, crime and punishment |

**Three Examination Tips Specific to this Subject**

For “explain” 4-mark questions, use POINT-EXPLAIN or POINT-EXAMPLE to develop points, and make sure that you are able to give TWO points for each topic.

For 5-mark questions, use the same method as 4-mark questions, but remember to include ONE reference to a sacred text, religious story or quotation from a religious teacher.

For 12-mark questions, write at least THREE paragraphs using FOR-AGAINST-CONCLUSION as a guide. The conclusion could include your own personal opinion. Use Point – Evidence – Explain – Link to develop your paragraphs. Tick off the bullet point criteria to ensure that you have included all of them in your answer.