



Rewarding Learning

ADVANCED
General Certificate of Education
2019

Religious Studies

Assessment Unit A2 1

assessing

Themes in the Synoptic Gospels

[ARE11]

TUESDAY 4 JUNE, MORNING

MARK
SCHEME

General Marking Instructions

Introduction

The main purpose of a mark scheme is to ensure that examinations are marked accurately, consistently and fairly. The mark scheme provides examiners with an indication of the nature and range of candidates' responses likely to be worthy of credit. It also sets out the criteria which they should apply in allocating marks to candidates' responses.

Assessment objectives

Below are the assessment objectives for **GCE Religious Studies**

Candidates should be able to:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion, including:
 - religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching;
 - influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies;
 - cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice; and
 - approaches to the study of religion and belief (AO1); and
- analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study (AO2).

Quality of candidates' responses

In marking the examination papers, examiners should be looking for a quality of response reflecting the level of maturity which may reasonably be expected of a 17 or 18-year-old which is the age at which the majority of candidates sit their GCE examinations.

Flexibility in marking

Mark schemes are not intended to be totally prescriptive. No mark scheme can cover all the responses which candidates may produce. In the event of unanticipated answers, examiners are expected to use their professional judgement to assess the validity of answers. If an answer is particularly problematic, then examiners should seek the guidance of the Supervising Examiner.

Positive marking

Examiners are encouraged to be positive in their marking, giving appropriate credit for what candidates know, understand and can do rather than penalising candidates for errors or omissions. Examiners should make use of the whole of the available mark range for any particular question and be prepared to award full marks for a response which is as good as might reasonably be expected of a 17 or 18-year-old GCE candidate.

Awarding zero marks

Marks should only be awarded for valid responses and no marks should be awarded for an answer which is completely incorrect or inappropriate.

Mark schemes for tasks or questions which require candidates to respond in extended written form are marked on the basis of levels of response which take account of the quality of written communication.

Levels of response

In deciding which level of response to award, examiners should look for the 'best fit' bearing in mind that weakness in one area may be compensated for by strength in another. In deciding which mark within a particular level to award to any response, examiners are expected to use their professional judgement.

The following guidance is provided to assist examiners.

- **Threshold performance:** Response which just merits inclusion in the level and should be awarded a mark at or near the bottom of the range.
- **Intermediate performance:** Response which clearly merits inclusion in the level and should be awarded a mark at or near the middle of the range.
- **High performance:** Response which fully satisfies the level description and should be awarded a mark at or near the top of the range.

Each of the two assessment objectives have been categorised into five levels of performance relating to the respective abilities of the candidates. Having identified, for each assessment objective, the band in which the candidate has performed, the examiner should then decide on the appropriate mark within the range for the band.

Other Aspects of Human Experience at AS Level

Candidates must engage with other aspects of human experience, when required, to access Bands 3–5.

Synoptic Assessment at A2 Level

Candidates must support their answer with reference to at least one other unit of study to access Bands 4–5.

Candidates must engage with other aspects of human experience in their AO2 response to access Bands 3–5.

Quality of written communication

Quality of written communication is taken into account in assessing candidates' responses to all tasks and questions that require them to respond in extended written form. These tasks and questions are marked on the basis of levels of response. The description for each level of response includes reference to the quality of written communication.

For conciseness, quality of written communication is distinguished within levels of response as follows:

- Level 1: Quality of written communication is basic.
- Level 2: Quality of written communication is limited.
- Level 3: Quality of written communication is good.
- Level 4: Quality of written communication is very good.
- Level 5: Quality of written communication is excellent.

In interpreting these level descriptions, examiners should refer to the more detailed guidance provided below:

Level 1 (Basic): The candidate makes only a basic selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. The organisation of material lacks clarity and coherence. There is little or no use of specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are basic and the intended meaning is not clear.

Level 2 (Limited): The candidate makes a limited selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. The organisation of material may lack clarity and coherence. There is limited use of specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar may be such that intended meaning is not clear.

Level 3 (Good): The candidate makes a reasonable selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. Relevant material is organised with some clarity and coherence. There is good use of appropriate specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are sufficiently competent to make meaning clear.

Level 4 (Very Good): The candidate makes a very good selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. Relevant material is organised with clarity and coherence. There is very good use of appropriate specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a very good standard to make meaning clear.

Level 5 (Excellent): The candidate successfully selects and uses the most appropriate form and style of writing. Relevant material is organised with a high degree of clarity and coherence. There is widespread and accurate use of appropriate specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a sufficiently high standard to make meaning clear.

Band	AO1 Performance Descriptors	Marks
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An excellent response to the question asked. • Demonstrates comprehensive understanding and knowledge. • Demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies. • A very high degree of relevant evidence, examples and scholarship. • A sophisticated answer with a clear and coherent structure. • An extensive range of technical language and vocabulary with accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar. 	[17]–[20]
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very good response to the question asked. • Demonstrates a high degree of understanding and almost totally accurate knowledge. • Demonstrates a high degree of understanding of the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies. • A very good range of relevant evidence, examples and scholarship. • A mature answer with a mainly clear and coherent structure. • A very good use of technical language and vocabulary with a mainly accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar. 	[13]–[16]
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good response to the question asked. • Demonstrates a reasonable degree of understanding and mainly accurate knowledge. • Demonstrates a reasonable degree of understanding of the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies. • A good range of relevant evidence, examples and scholarship. • A reasonably mature answer with some evidence of structure and coherence. • A good use of technical language and vocabulary with a reasonably accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar. 	[9]–[12]
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A limited response to the question asked. • Demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding. • Demonstrates limited understanding of the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies. • A limited range of evidence, examples and scholarship. • A limited answer with limited evidence of structure and coherence. • A limited use of technical language and vocabulary with a limited command of spelling, punctuation and grammar. 	[5]–[8]
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A basic response to the question asked. • Demonstrates minimal knowledge and understanding. • Demonstrates minimal understanding of the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies. • Little, if any, use of evidence, examples and scholarship. • A basic answer with basic structure and coherence. • A basic use of technical language and vocabulary with a poor grasp of spelling, punctuation and grammar. 	[1]–[4]

Band	AO2 Performance Descriptors	Marks
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive and coherent response demonstrating an excellent attempt at critical analysis. • An excellent attempt to evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief. • An excellent attempt using evidence, reasoning and scholarship to construct well informed and balanced arguments. • An excellent attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought. • A sophisticated answer with a clear and coherent structure. • An extensive range of technical language and vocabulary with accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar. 	[25]–[30]
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very good response demonstrating a very good attempt at critical analysis. • A very good attempt to evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief. • A very good attempt using evidence, reasoning and scholarship to construct well informed and balanced arguments. • A very good attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought. • A mature answer with a mainly clear and coherent structure. • A very good use of technical language and vocabulary with a mainly accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar. 	[19]–[24]
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reasonable response demonstrating a good attempt at critical analysis. • A good attempt to evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief. • A good attempt using evidence, reasoning and scholarship to construct well informed and balanced arguments. • A good attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought. • A reasonably mature answer with some evidence of structure and coherence. • A good use of technical language and vocabulary with a reasonably accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar. 	[13]–[18]
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A limited response demonstrating a modest attempt at critical analysis. • A limited attempt to evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief. • A limited attempt using evidence, reasoning and scholarship to construct well informed and balanced arguments. • A limited attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought. • A limited answer with limited evidence of structure and coherence. • A limited use of technical language and vocabulary with a limited command of spelling, punctuation and grammar. 	[7]–[12]
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A basic response demonstrating little attempt at critical analysis. • A basic attempt to evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief. • A basic attempt using evidence, reasoning and scholarship to construct well informed and balanced arguments. • A basic attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought. • A basic answer with basic structure and coherence. • A basic use of technical language and vocabulary with a poor grasp of spelling, punctuation and grammar. 	[1]–[6]

Section A

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Answer **two** questions from this section

- 1 (a) “Narrative Criticism is an important tool in developing our understanding of the Gospels.”

Present a case for this statement.

Answers may include:

- Possible case that Narrative Criticism leads to greater understanding of the Gospels as its aim is to understand the text in its final form.
- Reflection on the relationship between Source, Form, Redaction and Narrative Criticism.
- Consideration of the work of Rhoads and Michie and their view of the Gospels as narratives with a plot, characters and story; Culpepper and Kingsbury as other proponents of Narrative Criticism.
- Discussion of the value of Narrative Criticism in understanding the Gospels, their writers and audience.

Discussion of the methodology of Narrative Criticism and how it develops understanding of the Gospels such as:

- Exploration of the implied author and implied reader.
- The plot – the way in which the story develops within the text. Characteristics of a good plot, U-Shaped plots and examples of such.
- Narrative patterns –which includes repetition, comparison and contrast, cause and effect.
- Sequence of events – what is highlighted and what is passed over.
- Frequency – how often events are mentioned and are reported.
- Conflict – either between characters, their environment or even with themselves as inner confusion.
- Setting – which provides structure for a story.
- Characterisation – how the characters are portrayed.
- Symbolism – symbols such as light and darkness or the significance of certain numbers such as the number twelve.
- Point of View –the way the story is told through the narrator’s perspective.
- Possible working examples of the methodology taken from the Synoptic Gospels.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[20]

(b) With reference to the text of the Gospels, critically evaluate the view that Biblical Criticism provides the clearest understanding of the life and message of Jesus.

Answers may include:

- Consideration of the value of Biblical criticism. Source Criticism identifies the earliest sources of the Gospels, Form Criticism sheds light on the oral period, Redaction Criticism looks at the evangelists as authors in their own right and Narrative Criticism looks at the text as a whole and its impact on the life of the reader.
- Exploration of the view that Christians today overall, welcome examination of the Bible, but some biblical critics started off with unreasonable predispositions. Some wanted to deliberately undermine the credibility of the Bible and this led to a distrust of biblical criticism generally.
- Examination of the use of Biblical Criticism in bringing about a greater understanding of the life and ministry of Jesus, e.g. Form Criticism can unravel the setting where Jesus taught a message therefore leading to clarity and understanding of Jesus' teaching by knowing the exact setting in which he used a parable, e.g. The Good Samaritan in reply to a question on who is my neighbour?
- Consideration of the incidental information that can be gleaned about the life of Jesus and the political, social and religious background at the time through the work of Biblical Criticism shedding light and providing greater understanding, e.g. The Centurion's Servant – attitude towards Romans and the place of slaves.
- Exploration of the opinion that the dangers of biblical criticism outweigh its benefits.
- Deliberation of the view that questioning the Bible can undermine faith as it challenges the concept of divine inspiration and the authenticity of sources judging the evangelists as biased in their choice of material.
- Exploration of the view of the Pre-Critical period where the Bible was the inspired "Word of God", without error and apostolic.
- Reflection on the various interpretations of the Bible today and how literalists still consider the Bible to be the exact word of God therefore Biblical Criticism has not helped some people, as some Christians still have a pre-critical view of the Bible.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO2)

[30]

50

AVAILABLE
MARKS

2 (a) Discuss Jesus' attitude to the poor in the Synoptic Gospels.

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Answers may include:

- Definition of the poor and the contrast between being economically poor and spiritually poor.
- Exploration of Jesus' teachings on treatment of the poor as presented by the Synoptic evangelists referencing specific examples from the texts.
- Consideration of the parable of the Rich Fool (Lk. 12:13–21) and its clear message that wealth should be used for the benefit of others as it is of no use when one dies.
- Exploration of the concept of greed such as: greed for acquisition and the issue of status and privilege.
- The concept of storing up riches in Heaven (Mt. 6:19–21, Lk. 12:32–34) and the teaching of Jesus that our actions on earth will be judged in heaven.
- Discussion of the warnings on wealth in the Rich Young Man (Mt. 19:16–30, Mk. 10:17–31, Lk. 18:18–30), the inability of some to give up the standing and source of pride that goes with possession of wealth; materialism and the danger of becoming dependent on money to gain respect.
- Discussion of the Widow's mite (Mk. 12:38–44, Lk 20:45–21:4) and how Jesus praises the widow for her selfless attitude and total dependence on God; the anawim.
- Exploration of the warnings given by Jesus on treatment of the poor in general such as Jesus' teaching in the Beatitudes (Lk. 6:20) where he blesses the poor. "You cannot serve both God and money" (Mt. 6:24, Lk. 16:13). The rich man and Lazarus and the teaching, that ignoring the plight of the poor is as bad as treating the poor with contempt.
- Jesus' exhortation on who should be invited to the table (the poor) (Lk. 14:12–14).
- Consideration of the concept of renunciation in relation to discipleship, negative and positive examples of treatment of the poor in the Synoptic Gospels and Luke's complex attitude towards wealth.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[20]

(b) “It is not possession of wealth, but one’s attitude towards it that is important”
To what extent is this statement true today?

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Answers may include:

- Consideration of the view that for some religious believers amassing extreme affluence is unacceptable as it can get in the way of belief in God and religious worship, can blind one to the needs of others.
- Exploration of the concept of greed in modern society and how it is increasingly acceptable to amass possessions, the influence of the media on consumerism and the dangers of materialism, the popularity of lotteries and gambling; a claim culture.
- The demands of modern living and how wealth and ambition are encouraged; some people are defined by their wealth and possessions; the idea that if wealth is accrued legally and through hard work, then it is deserved.
- Consideration of the possession of wealth in other religions and how prosperity is viewed.
- Discussion of the vow of poverty that religious orders take and how possession of wealth is seen as a barrier to devotion to God.
- Agreement that it is one’s attitude to wealth that is key as many people see wealth as an opportunity to help others, both in the past and in modern society, such as Elizabeth Fry, Bill and Melinda Gates, other Christian and non-Christian Philanthropists who have used their wealth to help others.
- Consideration of renunciation of wealth; does it mean we must give everything away to be saved or is it the position wealth resides in our hearts? Can one be physically poor and spiritually rich and vice versa?
- Prosperity theology believes that financial blessing and physical well-being are the will of God, therefore possession of wealth is a gift from God.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO2)

[30]

50

3 (a) In what ways are the Synoptic Gospel accounts of the burial of Jesus different from one another?

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Answers may include:

- Comparison of the burial accounts in Matthew, Mark and Luke including details such as:
- The rush to bury the body of Jesus as the Sabbath was fast approaching, Luke explains the reason for the haste for his Gentile readers, agreement that Joseph of Arimathea asked to bury the body of Jesus. Matthew says he was a rich man and a disciple of Jesus. Mark describes him as a member of the Council. Luke says he was waiting for the Kingdom. Consideration of the reasons why Joseph may have wanted to bury the body of Jesus.
- Mark records that Pilate wondered if Jesus could be dead so soon and beckoned a Centurion to check if Jesus was dead. Consideration of this in light of the empty tomb.
- Jesus was buried in a rock tomb outside the city walls. Both Matthew and Luke mention it was a new tomb. Matthew and Mark say they rolled a stone to the door.
- Matthew has Mary Magdalene and the other Mary as witnesses. Mark has Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses while Luke leaves the women unnamed. Mark emphasises the women saw where Jesus was buried. Possible discussion of the historicity of the witnesses.
- Matthew includes the exclusive detail that the Chief Priests and Pharisees go to Pilate concerned that Jesus' body will be stolen by the Disciples. Pilate tells them to put a guard on the tomb and seal it. The guard at the tomb and the bribing of the soldiers (Mt. 28:11–15) is unique to Matthew.
- The burial closes the passion narrative for all the evangelists.
- Exploration of the theological significance of the contrasting details such as Luke's explanations of Jewish customs for his Gentile audience, Mark's insistence that Jesus was dead as one of the charges levelled at the Early Church was that Jesus survived crucifixion and Matthew's Guard at the Tomb to emphasise that the body of Jesus had not been stolen.
- How for the evangelists the empty tomb story balances the horrors of the crucifixion in that Jesus receives a dignified burial.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[20]

(b) “There is every reason to believe that the accounts of the empty tomb story are true.”

Critically assess the validity of this claim.

Answers may include:

- Consideration of the fact that the empty tomb story is agreed upon by all the evangelists, therefore there is no reason to doubt that it happened as there is multiple attestation that it occurred.
- Discussion of the empty tomb story and its acceptance as a historical fact; the connection of the empty tomb to the resurrection of Jesus; how the resurrection of Jesus gives credence to the story.
- Deliberation on the idea of faith and acceptance; literal and fundamentalist interpretation of the text.
- Agreement with the claim that there is no reason to assume the empty tomb and therefore, the resurrection is false; the two facts are inextricably linked.
- Exploration of the witness of the women; if the empty tomb story was made up then the evangelists would have chosen male witnesses whose testimony would have been accepted, not women. The truth does not always make a good story and therefore this unhelpful detail makes the truth of the empty tomb account more factual.
- Possible counter claim that the empty tomb is not proof of the resurrection; there are many reasons to doubt the empty tomb such as the accounts differ.
- Exploration of the view that after the resurrection, people did doubt the empty tomb story, challenging the Disciples with stealing the body or suggesting the women went to the wrong tomb; therefore there are sound reasons to doubt the story and they have existed from an early stage of the history of Christianity.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO2)

[30]

50

Section A

100

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

Synoptic Bands
Total Marks: [20]

Band	AO1 Performance Descriptors	Marks
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An excellent attempt at analysis with a full and highly informed response to the question. • Demonstrates comprehensive understanding and accurate knowledge of the themes considering the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies. • A very high degree of relevant evidence, scholarship and exemplification with particular reference to at least one other unit of study. • A sophisticated answer with a clear and coherent structure. • An extensive range of technical language and vocabulary with accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar. 	[17]–[20]
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very good attempt at analysis with a well informed response to the question. • Demonstrates a high degree of understanding and almost totally accurate knowledge of the themes considering the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies. • A very good range of relevant evidence, scholarship and exemplification with particular reference to at least one other unit of study. • A mature answer with a mainly clear and coherent structure. • A very good use of technical language and vocabulary with a mainly accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar. 	[13]–[16]
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good attempt at analysis with a reasonably well informed response to the question. • Demonstrates a good understanding and mainly accurate knowledge of the themes considering the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies. • A good range of relevant evidence, scholarship and exemplification with particular reference to at least one other unit of study. • A reasonably mature answer with some evidence of structure and coherence. • A good use of technical language and vocabulary with a reasonably accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar. 	[9]–[12]
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A limited attempt at analysis with a limited response to the question. • Demonstrates a limited understanding and limited knowledge of the themes considering the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies. • A limited range of relevant evidence, scholarship and exemplification with particular reference to at least one other unit of study. • A limited answer with limited evidence of structure and coherence. • A limited use of technical language and vocabulary with a limited command of spelling, punctuation and grammar. 	[5]–[8]
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A basic attempt at analysis with a basic response to the question. • Demonstrates a basic understanding and basic knowledge of the themes considering the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies. • A basic range of evidence, scholarship and exemplification with particular reference to at least one other unit of study. • A basic answer with basic structure and coherence. • A basic use of technical language and vocabulary with a poor grasp of spelling, punctuation and grammar. 	[1]–[4]

Candidates must refer to at least one other unit of study in their AO1 response to access Bands 4–5.

Band	AO2 Performance Descriptors	Marks
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive and coherent response demonstrating an excellent attempt at critical analysis in relation to other aspects of human experience. • An excellent attempt to evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief. • An excellent attempt using evidence, reasoning and scholarship to construct well informed and balanced arguments. • An excellent attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought. • A sophisticated answer with a clear and coherent structure. • An extensive range of technical language and vocabulary with accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar. 	[25]–[30]
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very good response demonstrating a very good attempt at critical analysis in relation to other aspects of human experience. • A very good attempt to evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief. • A very good attempt using evidence, reasoning and scholarship to construct well informed and balanced arguments. • A very good attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought. • A mature answer with a mainly clear and coherent structure. • A very good use of technical language and vocabulary with a mainly accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar. 	[19]–[24]
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reasonable response demonstrating a good attempt at critical analysis in relation to other aspects of human experience. • A good attempt to evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief. • A good attempt using evidence, reasoning and scholarship to construct well informed and balanced arguments. • A good attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought. • A reasonably mature answer with some evidence of structure and coherence. • A good use of technical language and vocabulary with a reasonably accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar. 	[13]–[18]
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A limited response demonstrating a modest attempt at critical analysis which struggles to relate to other aspects of human experience. • A limited attempt to evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief. • A limited attempt using evidence, reasoning and scholarship to construct well informed and balanced arguments. • A limited attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought. • A limited answer with limited evidence of structure and coherence. • A limited use of technical language and vocabulary with a limited command of spelling, punctuation and grammar. 	[7]–[12]
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A basic response demonstrating little attempt at critical analysis which fails to relate to other aspects of human experience. • A basic attempt to evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief. • A basic attempt using evidence, reasoning and scholarship to construct well informed and balanced arguments. • A basic attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought. • A basic answer with basic structure and coherence. • A basic use of technical language and vocabulary with a poor grasp of spelling, punctuation and grammar. 	[1]–[6]

Candidates must engage with other aspects of human experience in their AO2 response to access Bands 3–5.

Section B

AVAILABLE
MARKS

You **must** answer this question

- 4 (a) “Religious texts have failed to resolve the problem of evil and suffering.”
Present a case for this statement. You must support your answer with reference to at least one other unit of study.

Answers may include:

- Specific reference to a case for the statement.
- Possible agreement that religious texts leave questions about evil and suffering unanswered and have failed to resolve the problem of evil and suffering as they offer no definitive answer to the problem. Some believe the explanation of God’s plan for humanity is an unsatisfactory response which relies on blind faith.
- Understanding of the problem of suffering and what religious texts teach about the problem of evil and suffering – part of God’s plan, Genesis 3, joining with Christ’s suffering on the Cross, freewill, individual conscience, fitrah in Islam.
- Definition of a religious text with possible examples from various world religions – Qur’an in Islam, Bible in Christianity, Old Testament in Judaism, Vedas in Hinduism.
- Possible disagreement that religious texts offer comfort and hope and for people of faith, no explanation is necessary.
- Consideration of the importance of religious texts, their use in worship and practice, historical documents containing information about leaders and their significant teachings and instructions, their place as religious guidebooks, moral and ethical wisdom and the different emphasis placed on religious texts in various religions and within denominations.
- Discussion of the various interpretations of religious texts and how this can influence what one can learn from a text; literal and spiritual truths; literal and liberal interpretations, infallibility and change and development.
- Exploration of the teaching of authoritative texts and other sources of authority such as individual conscience and how they can also be a source of information and direction.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

Candidates must support their answer with reference to at least one other unit of study to access Bands 4–5

(AO1)

[20]

- (b) With reference to other aspects of human experience, critically assess the view that evil and suffering are still a major problem for religious belief.

Answers may include:

- Candidates must refer to other aspects of human experience.
- Agreement with the view that evil and suffering present a challenge to religious belief both past and present – possible historical and/or contemporary examples to clarify this argument.
- Reflection on the issue of why innocent people suffer: the challenge to believe in a God who would allow genocide, cancer in children, natural disasters.
- Consideration of the views of agnostics/atheists and how they view suffering as an inevitable part of being human and views such as science and medicine exist to help people endure suffering.
- Discussion of the views of philosophers and theologians on the problem of suffering – the existence of suffering seems inconsistent with the existence of a God; if God is disinclined to prevent suffering, God is not good or all powerful.
- The development of theodicies to explain the mystery of evil and suffering, e.g. Augustine, Irenaeus.
- Exploration of the concept of psychological suffering; suffering comes from emotions, people believe in God as they want hope that death is not the end and suffering is not in vain; teaching on enduring suffering in a religious context enables religious believers to cope with some of their most basic fears.
- Alternate view that evil and suffering is not a challenge to belief as it is part of God's plan and therefore can be a trial to overcome as humanity cannot comprehend full knowledge of evil and suffering.
- Consideration of the views of psychologists like S. Freud who believed religion was a "mass-delusion" that offered the certainty of contentment and protection from suffering.
- Evil and suffering as a mystery rather than as a problem to be solved.
- References to historical and/or contemporaneous examples to support claims.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

Candidates must engage with other aspects of human experience to access Bands 3–5

(AO2)

[30]

Section B

Total

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

50

50

150