



**ADVANCED**  
**General Certificate of Education**  
**2023**

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**Religious Studies**  
**Assessment Unit A2 3**

*assessing*

Themes in the Old Testament

**[ARE31]**

**FRIDAY 9 JUNE, AFTERNOON**

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

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

## Section A

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

Answer **two** questions from this section

- 1 (a) Examine the importance of God's self-revelation in Exodus 34:1–9.

Answers may include:

- Awareness of the centrality of Exodus 34:1–9 as an alternative creedal statement to Deuteronomy 26:5–9, with reference to the context in which it is delivered and how this is a crucial point in the formation of the people of Israel.
- Discussion of how this is an important self-declaration of God, articulated in a series of adjectives/adjectival phrases (Exodus 34:6–7), but underlining that Moses may not see God's glory, only God's back, indicating that there is still a high degree of mystery/alterity associated with the divine.
- Exploration of the key adjectival terms used, including compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, steadfast love, faithfulness, noting that these positive characteristics culminate in emphasizing God's forgiving nature.
- Reflection on how the terms used in Exodus 34:1–9 in connection with God's self-revelation can be traced throughout scripture, in a variety of different forms and settings, with exemplification of this.
- Observe that the second half of God's self-revelation contains an ominous tone (Exodus 34:7b), insisting that God will continue to take the issue of sin seriously, with examination of how this may be interpreted.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[20]

- (b) “The nature of God is never made clear in the Old Testament.”  
With reference to the texts studied, critically assess this claim.

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

Answers may include:

- Consideration of the issue that while God’s nature in the Old Testament contains several well accented loving/caring/compassionate aspects, it also contains violent/disturbing/worrying dimensions; the problem is whether the character of the divine is sufficiently clarified and can be interpreted in a coherent fashion.
- Discussion of the widows, orphans, aliens motif in the Old Testament as how God’s character finds expression in ethical concern for the weak and vulnerable (e.g. Exodus 22:22; Deuteronomy 14:29; 24:17–21; Isaiah 1:17, 23; Jeremiah 7:6); note that the inclusion of the foreigner/ alien indicates that Israel has some responsibility towards those beyond its own nation; this could be part of the discussion of violence towards aliens/foreigners.
- Acknowledgement of God as a warrior constituting a core element of the divine nature (Exodus 15:1–21), with the possible argument that God fights as liberator and protector of the weak and oppressed against more powerful nations.
- Exploration of how the narratives about the conquest of the land are saturated with violence (e.g. Joshua 6–11), with reference to the concept of *herem* (Deuteronomy 20:10–20) as a particular challenge for understanding the nature of God in the modern world.
- Consideration of texts in the prophetic tradition that poetically demonstrate God as potentially out of control (Isaiah 59:1–12; 63:1–6), in light of the struggle within the heart of God (Hosea 11:1–11), as a possible divine renunciation of violence, and the implications of this for interpreting the character of God.
- Reflection on the various options for dealing with violence in the nature of God, and whether the different dimensions of the divine character are successfully clarified/handled/incorporated in the Old Testament presentation, including theological perspectives/factors.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO2)

[30]

50

2 (a) Outline the main reasons for Jeremiah's prophecies against Judah.

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

Answers may include:

- Relevant contextual information, including how Jeremiah is: an outsider to elite circles of power; implacably opposed to the Jerusalem Temple/ Davidic order; a prophet rooted in the Mosaic Covenant rather than the Davidic Covenant.
- Reference to Jeremiah as a prophet of doom, with how he primarily indicts Israel for extensively breaking the terms of the Mosaic Covenant (Jeremiah 7:21–26).
- Discussion of Jeremiah's condemnation of inappropriate temple worship, including how it was divorced from core ethical requirements (Jeremiah 7:4–11), and had incorporated foreign/alien elements (Jeremiah 7:16–20).
- Examination of how social injustice (Jeremiah 21:11–14; 22:17), rooted in a self-interested, acquisitive monarchy (Jeremiah 22:13–16), is the key focus of Jeremiah's prophetic denouncement of Israel's sin.
- Consideration of how, after initially agreeing, Israel fails to proclaim freedom for the Hebrew slaves held by powerful ruling families, supportive of the socio-religious Jerusalem establishment, thereby ensuring destruction and deportation.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[20]

- (b) “Jeremiah’s struggles with God are also true for people today.”  
How far do you agree with this statement?

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

Answers may include:

- Exploration of how God’s knowledge of Jeremiah before he was born (Jeremiah 1:15), could/should have given him extensive and unquestioning confidence in his prophetic calling to pluck up and tear down (Jeremiah 1:9–10); but note that from the outset, he was reluctant/uncertain (Jeremiah 1:6–7), indicative of a significant inner tension and struggle.
- Examine how, supported by God’s promise, including significantly, an implied threat (Jeremiah 1:17–19), in public Jeremiah forcefully discharges his prophetic commission, with exemplification of this.
- But consider how in private, by contrast, as expressed in a series of poems of lament, Jeremiah struggles intensely with God, with discussion of the issues which concern him, including serious allegations he makes against the moral probity of the divine (Jeremiah 15:18; 20:7).
- Exploration of the view that faith is always a journey, with struggles precipitated by questions, crises and trauma, as well as theological certitude, conviction and belief; how the relationship between these aspects is exemplified in the lives of people of faith both ancient and modern (e.g. Job, Mother Teresa, St. John of the Cross); the idea of the dark night of the soul; tragic human experience in the life of an ordinary person.
- Reflect on the concept of the alterity of God and the inevitability of inner struggle, including how, textually, theologically and philosophically, it may be understood that the divine has a dark, problematic side; how this approach initiates debates about the source and nature of evil, and convincing/unconvincing theodicies, sometimes leading to the loss of faith in the modern world, e.g., Elie Wiesel, Primo Levi, Richard Holloway, Julie Nicholson.
- Alternatively, it may be proposed that an obsession with inner struggle and turmoil is evidence of a lack of spiritual development/growth/maturity, indicative of inadequate faith in the assurance of God and the teaching of Scripture; God will always be beyond human comprehension and how this underlines the need for trust in divine ways.
- Possible awareness of the contextual nature of Jeremiah’s struggles, making them lack relevance for people today.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels  
(AO2)

[30]

50

3 (a) Explain how Ezekiel presents the fall of Jerusalem.

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

Answers may include:

- Awareness that Ezekiel was a priestly prophet, with a focus on the purity code and the Jerusalem Temple as the primary locus of holiness/purity; therefore, condemnation for sins of impurity would have severe implications for the temple and Jerusalem, subsequently affecting/polluting all parts of the land.
- Discussion of the manner in which Ezekiel condemns Jerusalem, the temple and the entire country (Ezekiel 7:1–27), with detail and exemplification of the envisaged disaster.
- Exploration of the phrase ‘delight of your eyes’ as a way of stressing the central importance of Jerusalem and the temple in Ezekiel’s thought world: their fall is compared to the death of Ezekiel’s wife (Ezekiel 24:15–19); he is to remain silent through both the catastrophe of his wife’s death and Jerusalem’s fall (Ezekiel 24:20–24); but he will speak when news of the end of Jerusalem to the initial exiles confirms his prophecy (Ezekiel 24:25–27).
- Consideration of how this is presented as coming to pass (Ezekiel 33:21–22), and its importance as the start of a new prophetic phase for Ezekiel (Ezekiel 33:23–26).
- Note how this phase is characterized by a turn from unremitting doom and condemnation to the possibility of hope and renewal (Ezekiel 33:27–33), with reference to the theme of newness.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[20]

(b) “The Spirit played an important role in Ezekiel’s life, but this is less true for people today.”

Critically evaluate this view.

Answers may include:

- Discussion of how, from Ezekiel’s call (Ezekiel 2:2), the Spirit is involved in his life in important ways, including: the function of the Spirit in apparently transporting Ezekiel to different locations, thus providing him with an enhanced/preferential perspective on reality; how this is a thread throughout the Book of Ezekiel.
- Exploration of how the Spirit is the originator of exceptional manifestations of newness and hope beyond the trauma of exile, including the significance of the new heart concept in enabling the reconstituted people to keep God’s laws in a social context comparable to a return to Eden (Ezekiel 36:24–36).
- Consideration, with exemplification and detail, of the role of the Spirit in the vision of dry bones (Ezekiel 37:1–14), including: how the Spirit brings life beyond death; how this should be interpreted in light of the extended vision (Ezekiel 37:15–28); adjudication about whether what is seen to happen to the bones should be understood literally or symbolically; on the basis of this, more general implications for interpretation of the activity of the Spirit in the lives of people today.
- Reference to how: in the modern world, emphasis on the activity of the Spirit is often related to the Pentecostal Movement, with its charismatic dimensions, such as individual prophecy and speaking in tongues; this can create a sense of inferiority/inadequacy in other branches of the church and superiority among those claiming special gifts; this can foster division and uncertainty about the nature, purpose and necessary components of the Christian life.
- Acknowledgement of the importance of spirituality in faith specifically and life generally, with a possible examination of a secular spirituality; how spirituality takes form in different denominations and faith traditions (e.g. Celtic Spirituality and why it is attractive to some in the contemporary world; particular charisms associated with particular religious orders; Reformed spiritual practices; meditation in Buddhism; Native American spirituality, with its concern for nature; the activist spirituality of Liberation Theology).
- Comment and evaluate how the Spirit is often the overlooked/undervalued aspect of the activity of God/Trinity; from the start of the Bible in Genesis, the Spirit is depicted as creating order from chaos, with the implications that can be drawn from this; an assessment of what constitutes helpful/positive spirituality and what constitutes negative/harmful spirituality.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO2)

[30]

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

50

**Section A**

**100**

**Synoptic Bands**

**Total Marks: [20]**

Band	AO1 Performance Descriptors	Marks
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An excellent attempt at analysis with a full and highly informed response to the question.</li> <li>• Demonstrates comprehensive understanding and accurate knowledge of the themes considering the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies.</li> <li>• A very high degree of relevant evidence, scholarship and exemplification with particular reference to at least one other unit of study.</li> <li>• A sophisticated answer with a clear and coherent structure.</li> <li>• An extensive range of technical language and vocabulary with accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>	[17]–[20]
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A very good attempt at analysis with a well informed response to the question.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• A very good range of relevant evidence, scholarship and exemplification with particular reference to at least one other unit of study.</li> <li>• A mature answer with a mainly clear and coherent structure.</li> <li>• A very good use of technical language and vocabulary with a mainly accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>	[13]–[16]
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A good attempt at analysis with a reasonably well informed response to the question.</li> <li>• Demonstrates a good understanding and mainly accurate knowledge of the themes considering the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies.</li> <li>• A good range of relevant evidence, scholarship and exemplification with particular reference to at least one other unit of study.</li> <li>• A reasonably mature answer with some evidence of structure and coherence.</li> <li>• A good use of technical language and vocabulary with a reasonably accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>	[9]–[12]
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A limited attempt at analysis with a limited response to the question.</li> <li>• Demonstrates a limited understanding and limited knowledge of the themes considering the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies.</li> <li>• A limited range of relevant evidence, scholarship and exemplification with particular reference to at least one other unit of study.</li> <li>• A limited answer with limited evidence of structure and coherence.</li> <li>• A limited use of technical language and vocabulary with a limited command of spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>	[5]–[8]
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A basic attempt at analysis with a basic response to the question.</li> <li>• Demonstrates a basic understanding and basic knowledge of the themes considering the influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies.</li> <li>• A basic range of evidence, scholarship and exemplification with particular reference to at least one other unit of study.</li> <li>• A basic answer with basic structure and coherence.</li> <li>• A basic use of technical language and vocabulary with a poor grasp of spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>	[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"> <li>• A comprehensive and coherent response demonstrating an excellent attempt at critical analysis in relation to other aspects of human experience.</li> <li>• An excellent attempt to evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief.</li> <li>• An excellent attempt using evidence, reasoning and scholarship to construct well informed and balanced arguments.</li> <li>• An excellent attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought.</li> <li>• A sophisticated answer with a clear and coherent structure.</li> <li>• An extensive range of technical language and vocabulary with accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>	[25]–[30]
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A very good response demonstrating a very good attempt at critical analysis in relation to other aspects of human experience.</li> <li>• A very good attempt to evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief.</li> <li>• A very good attempt using evidence, reasoning and scholarship to construct well informed and balanced arguments.</li> <li>• A very good attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought.</li> <li>• A mature answer with a mainly clear and coherent structure.</li> <li>• A very good use of technical language and vocabulary with a mainly accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>	[19]–[24]
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A reasonable response demonstrating a good attempt at critical analysis in relation to other aspects of human experience.</li> <li>• A good attempt to evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief.</li> <li>• A good attempt using evidence, reasoning and scholarship to construct well informed and balanced arguments.</li> <li>• A good attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought.</li> <li>• A reasonably mature answer with some evidence of structure and coherence.</li> <li>• A good use of technical language and vocabulary with a reasonably accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>	[13]–[18]
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A limited response demonstrating a modest attempt at critical analysis which struggles to relate to other aspects of human experience.</li> <li>• A limited attempt to evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief.</li> <li>• A limited attempt using evidence, reasoning and scholarship to construct well informed and balanced arguments.</li> <li>• A limited attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought.</li> <li>• A limited answer with limited evidence of structure and coherence.</li> <li>• A limited use of technical language and vocabulary with a limited command of spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>	[7]–[12]
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A basic response demonstrating little attempt at critical analysis which fails to relate to other aspects of human experience.</li> <li>• A basic attempt to evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief.</li> <li>• A basic attempt using evidence, reasoning and scholarship to construct well informed and balanced arguments.</li> <li>• A basic attempt at providing personal insight and independent thought.</li> <li>• A basic answer with basic structure and coherence.</li> <li>• A basic use of technical language and vocabulary with a poor grasp of spelling, punctuation and grammar.</li> </ul>	[1]–[6]

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

Section B

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

Synoptic Assessment

Theme: Leadership, Text and Alienation

You **must** answer this question

- 4 (a) “Religious texts provide a sound foundation for morality.”  
With reference to one example, present a case for this statement. You must support your answer with reference to at least one other unit of study.

Answers may include:

- Observe that it has been argued that the Bible is the foundation of ethics in the western world, with a particular focus on the Decalogue to differentiate between right and wrong, and the Beatitudes as a primary guide to correct living.
- Discussion of how even though religious texts tend to be pre-modern, they are still of help in providing a sound foundation for morality; understanding that some religious texts are inappropriate and all have been subject to editing and selection.
- Reflect on the perspective that a sense of morality is innate in human beings, but acknowledging that this may be reinforced and affirmed by religious texts.
- Consider the view that a moral case against religious texts being determinative in defining right and wrong may be developed: if morality is imposed by external criteria rather than inner belief/conviction/judgment it may be regarded as inferior and inauthentic.
- Exploration of the multiple interfaces between morality and religion in the modern world, including: ethical absolutism and relativism; the role of individual rights in assessing appropriate behaviour; the role of science; how an understanding of ethics is socially conditioned, changing over time; commenting on the importance of religious texts.

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) “Sin is inescapable, but the world today has no agreed concept of it.”  
To what extent do you agree with this claim? You must refer to other aspects of human experience in your answer.

Answers may include:

- Awareness of the standard/conservative model of the ubiquity of sin; that all participate in it and fall short; that simply put, sin is everything that separates and alienates humanity from God; that the solution is some variation/form of propitiation/substitutionary atonement, provided by the death/blood of Jesus; how there has been long consensus in the West about this, but that is now breaking down.
- Consideration that in the Bible, however: it appears that sin can be mastered (Genesis 4:7); sin is conceived in multiple categories (e.g. as deficit, failure, mistake, recalcitrance, rebellion, moral violation, impurity, Torah infraction) and different faith traditions ritualize access to forgiveness in a variety of ways, with a range of religious-institutional methods for providing reconciliation, rehabilitation, assurance and forgiveness.
- Exploration of the view that while the Hebrew Bible takes sin seriously (Psalm 51), its primary focus is on the sovereign graciousness of God to engender a new future; by contrast, it may be observed that since Augustine’s doctrine of original sin, the western tradition has elevated the importance of sin; note how the rich theological propositions of Aquinas, Luther and Calvin illustrate that sin is not a simple matter, nor its solutions precisely the same.
- Alternatively, examine the idea that the concept of what constitutes sin can change, depending on the hermeneutic applied to biblical texts, in light of changing/evolving social norms, as in, e.g. differing positions taken on matters of human sexuality, including reference to how Pope Francis has refrained from condemning homosexual couples.
- Reflect on the philosophical issue that if every manifestation of sin merits equal condemnation and punishment, then the question of inherent/proportionate/natural justice is raised: in a certain theological perspective a murderer is treated the same by God as a child stealing sweets.
- Note how: Liberation Theology, with its emphasis on the systemic reasons for poverty, oppression and exploitation has introduced the concept of structural sin; this problematizes sin understood exclusively in personal terms, rendering it more complex; this approach can be extended to, e.g. consumerism and climate/ecological justice.
- Possible reference to Konrad Lorenz and Civilised Man’s Eight Deadly Sins (e.g. build up of nuclear weapons); the Vatican’s updating of types of sin (e.g. becoming obscenely wealthy, pollution).
- The understanding of ‘alienation’ in the modern age and the degree of equivalence with the religious concept of sin.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

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

(AO2)

[30]

50

**Section B**

**50**

**Total**

**150**

**AVAILABLE  
MARKS**