



*Rewarding Learning*

**ADVANCED  
General Certificate of Education  
2024**

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## **Religious Studies**

**Assessment Unit A2 3**

*assessing*

Themes in the Old Testament

**[ARE31]**

**THURSDAY 30 MAY, 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) Explain the significance of the struggle within the heart of God (Hosea 11:1–11).

Answers may include:

- Observe how Hosea presents his oracle in the form of a traditional prophetic condemnation of Israel for covenantal unfaithfulness, including making sacrifices to Baal and burning incense to images (Hosea 11:2), allied with a refusal to repent (Hosea 11:5).
- Discussion of how in these circumstances, God would be entirely justified in rejecting God's elect people, (Hosea 11:7), subjecting them to invasion, destruction and violence (Hosea 11:6).
- Exploration of the tender and poignant parent-child imagery deployed by Hosea, including how God loved Israel, bringing healing, sustenance and liberation; yet, despite carrying Israel and leading him with cords of human kindness (Hosea 11:3–4), the more God called Israel to follow God's ways, the further Israel went from God (Hosea 11:1).
- Reflection on the intensity of the struggle within the heart of God between forgiving and punishing impulses; note the questions God asks, intimating the impossibility of giving Israel up or treating Israel like Sodom and Gomorrah; how this results in a seismic change in God's attitude, rooted in an arousal of immense compassion and a rejection of fierce anger, accompanied by devastation (Hosea 11:8–9).
- Note that the struggle within the heart of God may be taken as a significant turning point in understanding the nature of the divine: God does not act like a vengeful human character, but renounces wrath; this renunciation may be understood as an attribute of holiness (Hosea 11:9); though also reference that God retains the capacity for forcefulness (Hosea 11:10–11).

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[20]

(b) “It has been argued that the portrayal of God’s violence in the Old Testament makes sense and can be explained.”

Critically assess this statement, with reference to the texts studied.

Answers may include:

- Acknowledge how the Bible is steeped in violence, raising significant moral issues in the modern world; but note that a concept like ‘herem,’ which may be understood as analogous to ethnic cleansing, makes sense and can be explained in terms of the thought world it comes from.
- Consideration of the conquest tradition in the book of Joshua as an instance of extreme violence, but with the observation that in its original context, this was a necessary requirement to remain pure and faithful to God and is therefore explicable; violence was directed to the closest neighbouring nations, which posed the greatest threat of undermining Israel’s religious status and relationship with God.
- Consideration of the idea that as a small, weak embryonic nation in the process of being formed, Israel needed the protection of a powerful, interventionist God because it was surrounded by aggressive empires and states; further, it may be argued that Old Testament accounts of warfare contain a degree of exaggeration and hyperbole.
- Exploration of the complexity of God’s character, including its compassionate dimensions (Exodus 22:21–22), and how this places divine violence in a more nuanced context; the view that God moves from more to less violent as the Bible develops.
- Alternatively, an exploration of whether it is ever valid to engage in ruthless violence, even when directed to do so by the divine; this may be termed the ‘just following orders’ rationale; related to it and in tension with it is the concept of human beings as moral agents, who must act according to conscience.
- An evaluation of the danger inherent in understanding that God is on a particular side, endorsing violence (Numbers 21:1–3; Deuteronomy 2:31–34; 3:1–7; 7:1–6); note how, when conservative scholars justify divinely inspired ethnic cleansing without wrestling with the implications of this, they can contribute to the legitimizing of violence in other situations; how this may not be an appropriate or responsible way to interpret the biblical text.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO2)

[30]

50

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

- 2 (a) With reference to **one** textual example, clarify Jeremiah's understanding of the sheer stubbornness and intractability of human nature.

Answers may include:

- Identify and introduce the example of intractability to be dealt with, possibly including: the inability of the ruling elite to free their slaves, even to save themselves (Jeremiah 34:8–22); the complacency of an inadequate type of Temple worship, unable to reform itself (Jeremiah 7:1–29); the monarchy's lack of capacity to address social injustice arising from its policies (Jeremiah 21:1–14; 22:13–17).
- Discussion of the chosen manifestation of intractability, noting how Jeremiah's understanding of reality is governed by the conditionality of the Mosaic Covenant, in which falling short of divine standards necessitates divine punishment: intractability will not be countenanced.
- Reference Psalm 44 for the way it presents a more complex and nuanced picture: the psalmist proposes that some remained faithful to their covenant with God, and therefore were not completely intractable.
- Examination of how the concept of intractability is a constituent element by which the book of Jeremiah explains the need for punishment, and conforms to a pattern of judgment and hope.
- Consideration of the importance of the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:1–40), which envisions a time when the faithful will be able to fulfil what God requires without the structures or apparatus of formal religion: intractability will not prevail.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[20]

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

(b) “The Book of Jeremiah is important because it addresses problems that are still relevant in the modern world.”

How far do you agree with this view?

Answers may include:

- Exploration of the biblical idea of prophetic voices confronting unjust power encapsulates an idea that is still relevant today, with examples and exemplification of this, e.g. MLK, Jr. and his struggle for Civil Rights; Oscar Romero in his defence of social justice.
- Examine how Jeremiah’s concept of authentic religion is still relevant today; noting how false religion (as in the Temple) was condemned because of greed, abuse and exploitation, with reference to parallels in the modern world, e.g. the prosperity gospel and the phenomena of tele-evangelists.
- Consideration of Jeremiah’s emphasis on not oppressing aliens, orphans and widows (Jeremiah 7:4–8), including how this may be related to the treatment of migrants and refugees in the modern world; consideration of why Ukrainian refugees have been treated more generously and compassionately than others in this category.
- Reference the relevance of Jeremiah’s broader perspective that the failure to maintain justice (Jeremiah 7:12–15) leads to a deterioration in standards and ultimately the collapse of society; note particularly the significance of Jeremiah 4:23-28 in connection to climate change, species loss and the looming environmental crisis, even if not originally intended in this perspective.
- Alternatively, observe that Jeremiah’s oracles are rooted in an ancient Hebraic religious consciousness that is alien to the modern world and therefore not directly relevant, especially in its focus on doom and divine punishment rather than science, politics and human capacity to problem solve.
- Reflect on the argument that Jeremiah was composed over a period of time to address a specific set of historical circumstances in an explicitly theological way, and to have any relevance today needs to be reinterpreted for a completely different pluralistic, secular, democratic world.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO2)

[30]

50

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

3 (a) Discuss the meaning of **one** of Ezekiel’s visions of future hope.

AVAILABLE  
MARKS

Answers may include:

- Observe how the book of Ezekiel is structured so that the predicted exile comes to pass (Ezekiel 33:21–22), inaugurating a new prophetic phase (Ezekiel 33:23–26); this marks a decisive turning point from unremitting doom and condemnation to the possibility of hope and renewal (Ezekiel 33:27–33).
- Note the vision of future hope to be explored from the options Ezekiel presents: the promise of a new heart (Ezekiel 36:16–32); the valley of dry bones coming back to life (Ezekiel 37:1–28); the restored temple (Ezekiel 40:1–42:20); the renewal of creation (Ezekiel 47:1–12).
- Discussion of the identified vision, including: the return to a state of purity and the removal of hard-heartedness prior to receiving a new heart of flesh; the importance of the Spirit/breath of God as the agency for delivering new life to dry bones after national trauma; the new temple as integral to the promise of God’s presence and blessing, rooted in the re-establishment of cultic apparatus; the significance of the restored temple as the source of a revived and flourishing creation.
- Consideration that the broader context of Ezekiel’s visions of future hope is defined by those who had been scattered among the nations being regathered from exile in order to primarily bring glory to God.
- Reference the deeply symbolic nature of the visions and how they cumulatively indicate that future hope consists of a restored relationship rather than a new one, including renewal of the heart, as well as renewal of relationships among people, to the temple and creation.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[20]

- (b) “Ezekiel has a serious religious message for every age, but his unusual behaviour undermines it.”  
Critically evaluate this view.

Answers may include:

- Consideration of how ancient religious texts still speak to people in the modern world, even though they were produced by people with very different understandings of the world; possible hermeneutical explanations of this, including the divine inspiration of scripture; the argument of universal human truth irrespective of what era it comes from.
- Exploration of Ezekiel 34 as an important text about the universal themes of good governance and justice, noting how the ruling elite exploit the poor; examples of where this resonates with examples drawn from history and the contemporary world.
- Consideration of the concept of where God is experienced: initially Ezekiel believed that God could only be truly experienced in worship in the Jerusalem temple, but through the displacement of exile learnt that God could also be encountered in a variety of settings; this may be related to how the church once dominated understandings of the holy, but now, in an increasingly secular age there is greater plurality, e.g. impromptu religious type shrines set up when a celebrity dies and questions of how legitimate these are.
- Reference to how Ezekiel’s emphasis on purity, without understanding the worldview it was part of, might be used by some in the modern world to identify LGBTQI people as ‘impure’ and consequently part of the basis for excluding them from full participation in church.
- Alternatively, examine the idea that Ezekiel is too strange and distant from the standards of the modern world to have significant religious message, even for some Christians: he lacks sensitivity, love and compassion; he may be regarded as obscene and demeaning to women; note how he might be accused of deploying extreme religious language, raising the issue of the limits of free speech.
- Comment that while Ezekiel’s message is taken seriously by some, his strange behaviour is off-putting, problematic and alien for many; though observe his enduring attraction to poets, artists and those interested in mental health, precisely on account of the bizarre aspects of his behaviour.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO2)

[30]

**Section A**

**AVAILABLE  
MARKS**

50

**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 give people a purpose in life.”  
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 how religious texts, especially the Bible in the Christian tradition, have been central to the formation of character, helping people to understand their lives and play a role in wider society; an argument can be made for the importance of the Decalogue and the Beatitudes as a primary guide to correct living; texts from other religious traditions may be referenced.
- Discussion of how foundational religious texts are generally pre-modern, containing aspects that are little/no help in determining how to live in the modern world, and indeed may be dangerous if taken literally: the view that religious texts always need to be interpreted and engaged with through a process of editing and selection; the danger of developing a canon within the canon.
- Examine the perspective that being told what is important in order to create a purpose in life, does not take people seriously enough as participants in their learning; reference the concept of innate morality but acknowledge that this may be reinforced and affirmed by religious texts.
- Reflect on how a specific text has inspired movements to, e.g. seek justice, end slavery, protect the planet, enhance and preserve human life, thus creating purpose, focus and orientation in life.
- Exploration of the multiple interfaces between religious texts and living in the modern world, including issues such as: absolutism and relativism; the role of individual rights; the influence of science; how an understanding of purpose is socially conditioned, changing over time; consideration of the part religious texts should play in this process.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

Candidates must refer to another unit of study to access Bands 4–5 (AO1)

[20]

- (b) Consider critically the relevance of religious leaders in an increasingly secular and atheistic age. You must refer to other aspects of human experience in your answer.

Answers may include:

- Clear engagement with other aspects of human experience, citing relevant historical and/or contemporary examples.
- Consideration of how religious leaders can act as the moral conscience of a nation and a voice for the voiceless, e.g. as in the role played by Archbishop Desmond Tutu in both apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa; note also the importance of Bishop Trevor Huddleston in the anti-apartheid movement.
- Exploration of the relevance of religious leaders in political life in positive and negative perspective: reference divisive religious figures; but note also the role of bishops in the British parliamentary system, sitting in the House of Lords in order to take a meaningful part in revising legislation sent from the House of Commons, e.g. in trying to moderate the proposal to send asylum seekers to Rwanda as a step in their process of eligibility assessment; the impact of Rev Peter McVerry in addressing homelessness and poverty in Ireland.
- Examination of the role of religious leaders in a local community: meeting need at a grassroots level through charitable activities such as food banks, and the Sikh practice of serving food; enhancing societal cohesion and understanding by fostering good ecumenical/inter-faith relations, dialogue and co-operation, e.g. the Four Corners Festival in Belfast.
- Reflect on how in some contexts, religious leaders find ways to oppose inappropriate/evil state activity, e.g. Dietrich Bonhoeffer in Nazi Germany; counterpointed by the acquiescence of the leader of the Orthodox church, Patriarch Kirill, with Russian policy towards Ukraine; the question of whether/how far anti-abortion campaigners may be considered as opposing illegitimate state power; the concept of martyrdom.
- Alternatively, the view that religious leaders are increasingly irrelevant as secularism and atheism come to predominate, especially in modern Western societies, including statistics indicating declining church attendance and observation of faith.
- Reflection on how religious leaders may have exercised too much power and sometimes abused it, creating the circumstances in which many ordinary people felt able to reject religion as hypocritical and irrelevant.

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**