



Rewarding Learning

**ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY (AS)
General Certificate of Education
2024**

Religious Studies

Assessment Unit AS 3

assessing

An Introduction to Themes in the Old Testament

[SRE31]

THURSDAY 23 MAY, AFTERNOON

**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 and examples • 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 	[21]–[25]
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 and examples • 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 	[16]–[20]
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 and examples • 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 	[11]–[15]
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 and/or examples • 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 	[6]–[10]
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 and/or examples • 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 	[0]–[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 • An excellent attempt at the application of beliefs, values and teachings to the question asked • An excellent attempt using evidence and reasoning to construct well informed and balanced arguments which are set, where necessary, in the context of other aspects of human experience • 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 terminology with accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar 	[21]–[25]
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very good response demonstrating a very good attempt at critical analysis • A very good attempt at the application of beliefs, values and teachings to the question asked • A very good attempt using evidence and reasoning to construct well informed and balanced arguments which are set, where necessary, in the context of other aspects of human experience • 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 	[16]–[20]
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reasonable response demonstrating a good attempt at critical analysis • A good attempt at the application of beliefs, values and teachings to the question asked • A good attempt using evidence and reasoning to construct well informed and balanced arguments which are set, where necessary, in the context of other aspects of human experience • 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 	[11]–[15]
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A limited response demonstrating a modest attempt at critical analysis • A limited attempt at the application of beliefs, values and teachings to the question asked • A limited attempt using evidence and reasoning to construct well informed and balanced arguments which struggle to relate, where necessary, to other aspects of human experience • 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 	[6]–[10]

Band	AO2 Performance Descriptors	Marks
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A basic response demonstrating little attempt at critical analysis • A basic attempt at the application of beliefs, values and teachings to the question asked • A basic attempt using evidence and reasoning to construct well informed and balanced arguments which fail to relate, where necessary, to other aspects of human experience • 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 	[0]–[5]

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

Section A

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Answer **one** question from Section A

- 1 (a) Discuss the purpose of God's covenant with Moses and the Israelites after their freedom from slavery in Egypt.

Answers may include:

- Background information on the liberation of Israel from slavery in Egypt as the context of the Mosaic Covenant; reference to how disobedience is intrinsically part of the Exodus narrative.
- Discussion of the nature of the Mosaic Covenant as bilateral, in which Yahweh plays the role of King/Suzerain and Israel the inferior party; the purpose is to bind Israel to God and underline Israel's relationship to God.
- Exploration of the theophany on Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:1–15), including the fear of the people and how this helps establish Moses as the leader, with particular access to God.
- Understanding of the significance of Exodus 20:2, especially how the Mosaic Covenant is the template for a society that represents a strong contrast to the oppressive type of government exemplified by Egypt.
- Examination of how the 10 Commandments lay the foundation of a just/egalitarian society in the way they guard the well-being of the neighbour against exploitation (Exodus 20:13–17), acting as a mechanism to avoid social chaos.
- Reflect on how the ultimate purpose of the Mosaic Covenant was to bring the personal, public, civic and cultic life of Israel under God's sovereign rule, and came to represent the reference point for all Old Testament thinking about ethics.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]

(b) “God’s call is always different, depending on who is called and why.”
Assess this claim, with reference to the biblical texts you have studied.
Justify your answer.

Answers may include:

- Discussion of the nature of “call narrative” as a genre/type, including how in all cases God intervenes to commission an individual to carry out a particular task for God; reference to a number of possible call stories, i.e. Noah, Abraham, Isaiah, Amos, stressing common/shared aspects.
- Consideration of how the Noahic call (Genesis 9:1–17) is different from all the others, in that it concerns all creation; in some form, the others are about God’s relationship with Israel; possible arguments for how all the call narratives can be related and harmonized.
- Examination of a selection of call narratives to compare and contrast, including detail of the different purposes of call in relation to, e.g. Noah, Abraham, Isaiah, Amos.
- Reference to the calls of Isaiah and Amos, with a focus on how they are both commissioned by God to condemn Judah/Israel for covenant infraction and social injustice; but noting how Isaiah is called to criticize his home nation (Judah), whereas Amos (a native of Judah) is called to prophesy against the northern kingdom of Israel.
- Alternatively, arguments, with exemplification, about how every call is rooted in the theme of initiating or maintaining a relationship with God.
- Assessment/reflection on the extent to which the nature of call is about judgment or hope, exclusion or inclusion.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO2)

[25]

50

AVAILABLE
MARKS

2 (a) Examine the significance of David's affair with Bathsheba.

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Answers may include:

- David's affair with Bathsheba as a key turning point in the narrative of his reign, representing a watershed – everything prior is about his rise, everything after is about his decline.
- Discussion of how the affair demonstrates David's failure in his duties as a king (2nd Samuel 11:1) and as defender of the Mosaic Covenant, including the number of commandments he breaks in this one story (2nd Samuel 11:2–27).
- Examination of how the affair leads to Nathan's rebuke of David, including the terms of condemnation and how this prophecy causes a deep and enduring crisis for the unconditional nature of the Davidic Covenant (2nd Samuel 12:7–12).
- Exploration of how David "taking" Bathsheba is related to Nathan's prophecy against him (2nd Samuel 12:11–12): as it begins to come to pass, David's dynasty starts to degenerate and disintegrate; Amnon "takes" his half-sister, Tamar (2nd Samuel 13:1–22); Absalom then murders Amnon in revenge (2nd Samuel 13:23–39); the sword, as envisioned by Nathan, is now part of the affairs of David's family.
- Reflect on how David's affair with Bathsheba paves the way for the succession of Solomon, with his introduction of an exploitive centralized system (1st Kings 4:7–28); ultimately this causes the division of the kingdom; note how Bathsheba plays a central role in the Succession Narrative.
- Consider how David's affair with Bathsheba illustrates Israel's on-going ambivalence to kingship, with pro and anti-monarchical strata; note how David is remembered in Deuteronomistic thought (1st Kings 15:1–5).

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]

(b) Evaluate the view that the rise of kingship in Israel was inevitable and also a positive change. Justify your answer.

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Answers may include:

- Explore how external factors, including the need to have ongoing rather than occasional protection as in the time of Judges (1st Samuel 8:19b–20), Israel living in an era of transition, with settlers and new groups (like the Philistines, a section of the Sea Peoples) moving into the region with superior weapons made kingship inevitable.
- Consider how internal factors such as anarchy and barbarism at the end of the book of Judges, corruption at the beginning of the books of Samuel (reflected in the behaviour of Eli's sons), added to the sense of inevitability.
- Reflect on how social, political and religious arrangements in pre-monarchic Israel were unable to cope with a changing world, arguably making the rise of kingship inevitable; note how the people called for a king so that they could be like other nations.
- Observe how the rise of David, including reference to his achievements/deeds and the way he is remembered as the best king Israel ever had, creates the strong impression that kingship was regarded as a positive change.
- Awareness of how kingship was not immediately embraced; the failure of Saul as Israel's first king added to reservations and indicates that the rise of the monarchy was not viewed as a positive development by everyone.
- Discussion of Samuel's strong warning about the nature of kingship (1st Samuel 8:1–12), referencing that Israel's desire to have a king was the equivalent of the rejection of God as their leader/king; in this perspective, kingship was neither inevitable nor positive, but a concession to Israel.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO2)

[25]

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Section B

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Answer **one** question from Section B

- 3 (a) With reference to relevant texts studied, discuss how Elisha's activity was different from Elijah's.

Answers may include:

- Note how Elisha is a disciple and successor of Elijah; they are both part of a prophetic movement (1st Kings 19:19–21; 2nd Kings 2:1–18); given that Elisha asks for a double portion of Elijah's spirit (2nd Kings 2:9–10) and his cloak, the expectation is raised that their prophetic activity will be the same/similar.
- Discussion of how both Elisha and Elijah represent an alternative source of blessing and life affirming/creating/enhancing activity to the rise of royal theology, with its exploitation of peasant farmers.
- Exploration of how Elijah is predominantly in conflict with Ahab and Jezebel, with details of this, including the confrontation with the priests of Baal (1st Kings 18:16–46), concluding in slaughter; reference also Elijah's prophecy about the death of Ahab and how it comes to happen (1st Kings 21:17–28).
- Examination of how this strongly contrasts with 2nd Kings 6:8–23: when a foreign enemy is at Elisha's mercy, the impulse for vengeance and violence is replaced by a shared meal; this may be used as the basis for arguing that Elisha's activity is different from Elijah's.
- With reference to other stories in the Elisha cycle, such as the restoration of the Shunammite's son to life (2nd Kings 4:8–37) and the healing of Naaman (2nd Kings 5:1–19), the case may further be made that Elisha is more committed to healing and has less recourse to violence than Elijah.
- But consider how Elijah assists the widow of Zarephath, including raising her son to new life (1st Kings 17:7–24); it may be argued that there is significant continuity between the activity of Elijah and Elisha; whatever differences exist between them and however these may be explained, they share the same theological perspective.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]

(b) “The Bible is sometimes unreliable and it is the duty of religious leaders to offer more acceptable interpretations.”

With reference to other aspects of human experience, explore this view. Justify your answer.

Answers may include:

- Awareness of the opinion that the Bible was produced in pre-scientific eras, influenced by superstition and is therefore sometimes understandably unreliable to a modern mind; that this should be acknowledged by all religious leadership in modern faith traditions and incorporated into acceptable interpretations.
- Exploration of how in the world of the Bible and in the pre-enlightenment world, miracles were acceptable phenomena (as in the lives of the Celtic saints), with views on how they are understood today, and what constitutes acceptable interpretations; reference the idea that human reason should not be placed above the revealed Word of God and the implications of this.
- Discussion of how in the contemporary world, in order to create biblical literacy, religious leaders/biblical scholars should propose ways of interpreting sacred texts in appropriate ways to explicate their deeper meaning; the broader issue of hermeneutics, with reference, e.g. to scholars like Ricoeur and Bultmann.
- Examination of the strengths and weaknesses of a range of approaches to understanding/interpretation in attempting to ascertain the meaning of the Bible, e.g. the literalist/fundamentalist, liberal, liberationist, those which take cultural factors into consideration; note Ernesto Cardenal in *The Gospel in Solentiname*.
- Consider that theologically the story of the resurrection is foundational to Christian faith, but that it has been interpreted in a range of ways; reference to debates about whether any interpretation which dilutes, downgrades or disregards this central event can be acceptable.
- Comments bringing together biblical, theological and philosophical strands of thought concerning how religious leaders should best approach the biblical text to help it retain credibility in a time which is very different from when it was written.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

Candidates must engage with other aspects of human experience to access

Bands 3–5

(AO2)

[25]

50

AVAILABLE
MARKS

4 (a) Explain how Amos presented his message to the people of Israel.

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Answers may include:

- Awareness of relevant contextual information, including the call of Amos, noting how, as a southerner from Judah, he was sent to condemn the northern kingdom of Israel, and the implications this would have had for the presentation of his message.
- Examination of how Amos deploys the oracles against the nations motif (Amos 1:2–2:16); he underlines the failings and ethical shortcomings of countries surrounding Israel before turning attention to Israel itself; through strategic use of rhetoric Amos undermines Israel’s sense of superiority/smugness/complacency as judgment is delivered.
- Discussion of “justice and righteousness” as the key to Amos’ prophetic message, with examples and exemplification of social injustice in Israel and how this has occurred (Amos 5:12–15; 21–25; 6:1–7).
- Exploration of Amos’ visions and how he used them as an important way of delivering his message to the people of Israel, including, e.g. the summer fruit, locusts, and plumb line imagery; note how in the progression of these oracles, God moves from relenting in judgment to final, irreversible condemnation and doom.
- Consider how Amos’ presentation of his message involved intense confrontation with Israel: in the engagement between Amos and Amaziah at the royal shrine at Bethel (Amos 7:10–17); and in Amos’ development of the concept of the Day of the Lord to stress the intensity and inevitability of judgment (Amos 5:18–20).
- Consideration of how, as a completed work, the Book of Amos conforms to the classic prophetic pattern of judgment and hope (Amos 9:11–15), with reference to how this alters the original presentation of the message to the people of Israel, raising the issue of final redaction/editing to ameliorate unremitting doom and judgment.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

(AO1)

[25]

- (b) “The true prophetic voice is that which promotes human rights.”
With reference to other aspects of human experience, consider the truth of this statement. Justify your answer.

Answers may include:

- Observe how one of the deepest and most important biblical themes is a record of various prophetic voices confronting the injustice engendered by the exercise of entrenched, exploitive royal power; note that this creates an immensely strong link between the prophetic voice and human rights.
- Consider how the early church was viewed as a threat by the Roman Empire; although it started as a critic and challenge to the powers that be, through the policies of Constantine and the Constantinian settlement, it became the official religion of the Empire, supporting state power; the idea of the prophetic voice at the margin, with reference to Liberation Theology and its focus on human rights.
- Reflection on the role of the church/religious leadership as a prophetic voice through campaigning for social justice, including, e.g. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement in the USA, the part played by religious leaders such as Desmond Tutu in opposing apartheid in South Africa and standing up for human rights.
- Exploration of situations in which the church and state hold diametrically opposed views on basic questions of understanding and reality, as in communist regimes such as North Korea, China and Cuba; consequently the need for prophetic voices which value individual human rights.
- Discussion of Augustine’s concept of the two cities/realms/kingdoms/states, grounded in the idea that Christians should be good citizens, rendering unto Caesar and obeying civil authorities as legitimately constituted by God; the focus of people of faith should be on spiritual matters/heaven rather than worldly affairs/politics/human rights.
- Examination of occasions when the church not only failed to be a prophetic voice but actually materially undermined human rights (e.g. as in Mother and Baby Homes in the Republic of Ireland or arguably Reformed Churches in Northern Ireland not speaking out strongly enough against discrimination).
- The true prophetic voice as that which expounds the truth and justice.

Accept valid alternatives

Mark in levels

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

(AO2)

[25]

Total

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

50

100