



**General Certificate of Secondary Education
2023**

Religious Studies

Paper 7

An Introduction to Philosophy of Religion

[GRE71]

TUESDAY 6 JUNE, AFTERNOON

**MARK
SCHEME**

General Marking Instructions

Introduction

Mark schemes are intended to ensure that the GCSE examinations are marked consistently and fairly. The mark schemes provide markers with an indication of the nature and range of candidates' responses likely to be worthy of credit. They also set out the criteria which they should apply in allocating marks to candidates' responses.

Assessment objectives

Below are the assessment objectives for Religious Studies.

Candidates must:

- AO1** demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion, including beliefs, practices and sources of authority; and
- AO2** analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief, including their significance and influence.

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 16-year-old which is the age at which the majority of candidates sit their GCSE 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 16-year-old GCSE 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.

Types of mark schemes

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.

Other questions which require only short answers are marked on a point for point basis with marks awarded for each valid piece of information provided.

Levels of response

Tasks and questions requiring candidates to respond in extended writing are marked in terms of 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.

AO1 (5 mark responses):

Level 1: The candidate presents something relevant or worthy of credit; elementary knowledge and understanding.

Level 2: The candidate presents a clear knowledge and understanding with some development.

Level 3: The candidate presents a detailed answer showing very good development.

AO2 (5 mark responses):

Level 1: The candidate presents opinion supported by one simple reason.

Level 2: The candidate presents opinion supported by two simple reasons or one developed reason.

Level 3: The candidate presents a well-argued response with evidence of informed insights.

Quality of written communication

Quality of written communication is assessed in the extended writing questions worth 10 marks in Section B of each examination paper. These 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 which is provided on the next page:

AO2 (10 mark responses):

Level 1 (Basic): The candidate presents some information in a simple form. **Basic arguments** are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Inaccurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; inappropriate style of writing with no coherent structure. Basic use of specialist vocabulary.

Level 2 (Limited): The candidate presents one or two relevant points. **Limited arguments** are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights, some accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; style of writing just appropriate with limited coherent structure. Limited use of specialist vocabulary.

Level 3 (Good): A Level 3 response could be one-sided. One developed reason and one with slight development would reach this level. There must be relevance to religion, but this could be slight/general. **Good reasoned arguments** are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Mainly accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; a reasonably mature style of writing and some coherent structure evident. Good use of specialist vocabulary.

Level 4 (Very good): Different points of view must be considered, but the consideration does not need to be balanced i.e. one view could be much briefer than the other. **Well-formed and reasoned arguments** are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights, accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; a mature style of writing with a mainly coherent structure. Very good use of specialist vocabulary.

Level 5 (Excellent): The difference between Level 4 and Level 5 is the quality of the argument and the coherence of the response. There needs to be more than a passing reference to religion. However, the points of view may not be completely balanced, and a non-religious counter-argument is still acceptable. **Very well-formed and reasoned arguments** are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights, highly accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; a sophisticated style of writing set within a coherent structure. Excellent use of specialist vocabulary.

Section A

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

Candidates must answer **all** questions.

1 Experiencing God

(a) (i) Name two world religions.

Two from:
Christianity
Islam
Judaism
Hinduism
Accept valid alternatives
(AO1)

[2]

(ii) Name a sacred text from a religion you have studied.

One from:
The Bible
The Quran
Accept valid alternatives
(AO1)

[1]

(iii) What is meant by the term general revelation?

Knowledge of God is available to everyone
Accept valid alternatives
(AO1)

[1]

(iv) What is meant by the term special revelation?

Knowledge of God that is not available to everyone, but rather to an individual or group of people.
Accept valid alternatives
(AO1)

[1]

(b) Explain what is learned about God through religious leaders.

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

Target: Knowledge and understanding of what can be learned about God through religious leaders.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Nothing relevant or worthy of credit.		0
Level 1	Something relevant or worthy of credit; elementary knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One relevant and accurate point.	1
Level 2	A clear knowledge and understanding with some development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two relevant and accurate points.• Two or more relevant and accurate points with one developed.• A single point that is exceptionally well-developed may reach this level.	2–3
Level 3	A detailed answer showing very good development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two or three relevant and accurate points with development.• Level 3 answers will be well-structured with good development.	4–5

Answers may include:

- Religious leaders such as Mother Teresa help people to experience God’s love and care. She showed God’s love and mercy by helping the marginalised. She believed that God was immanent and would respond to suffering through answering prayers from the faithful.
- The Prophet Muhammad revealed that there was only one true God. Muhammad taught that it was God’s will for people to share with the poor and needy.
- Mahatma Gandhi acknowledged how Hindus worshipped different gods and goddesses, but all leading to the one God. He promoted the Hindu idea of ahimsa or non-violence and promoted justice for the oppressed. Gandhi’s example taught his followers that this was how God wanted them to live.

Accept valid alternatives
(AO1)

[5]

- (c) **“Prayer is always of great benefit.” Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer.**

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

Target: Evaluation of whether prayer is an effective way of experiencing God.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Unsupported opinion or no relevant evaluation.		0
Level 1	Opinion supported by one simple reason.	The candidate presents some relevant information.	1
Level 2	Opinion supported by two simple reasons or one developed reason.	Reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses.	2–3
Level 3	A well-argued response with evidence of informed insights.	Well-formed and reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses.	4–5

Answers may include:

- There are many examples of answered prayer where people have experienced God’s power in their lives. For example, Sister Marie Simon-Pierre and her community prayed to Pope John Paul for a miracle. The Catholic Church recognised that she was healed by the intercession of the Pope.
- Many Christians believe that prayer is beneficial because God hears their prayers and praying can bring them a feeling of inner peace. Even if prayers aren’t answered, people trust that God has a plan for their lives.
- Many religious believers feel that prayer is beneficial as it allows them to develop a deeper relationship with God and strengthens their faith.

On the other hand:

- Some people believe that prayer is a waste of time. Many prayers are unanswered, and this can have a negative impact on an individual’s faith if they think that God doesn’t care about them.
- Dawkins argued that prayer is of no benefit and used “The Great Prayer Experiment to illustrate that there was no difference in the health of hospital patients who were prayed for and those who weren’t.
- Atheists argue that prayer is of no benefit because there is no God. Some argue that time could be put to better use if people went out and helped people instead of spending time in prayer.

Accept valid alternatives
(AO2)

[5]

15

2 The existence of God

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

(a) (i) Name a philosopher associated with the First Cause argument for the existence of God.

Thomas Aquinas

Accept valid alternatives

(AO1)

[1]

(ii) Which philosopher is associated with the argument from design?

William Paley

Accept valid alternatives

(AO1)

[1]

(iii) What is meant by the following words?

Omnipotent

Omniscient

Omnipresent

- All powerful/unlimited power
- All knowing/knowing everything
- All present/present everywhere

Accept valid alternatives

(AO1)

[3]

(b) Do you think it is important for religious believers to have evidence for the existence of God? Give reasons for your answer.

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

Target: Analysis of the need for religious believers to provide evidence for the existence of God.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Unsupported opinion or no relevant evaluation.		0
Level 1	Opinion supported by one simple reason.	The candidate presents some relevant information.	1
Level 2	Opinion supported by two simple reasons or one developed reason.	Reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses.	2–3
Level 3	A well-argued response with evidence of informed insights.	Well-formed and reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses.	4–5

Answers may include:

- Evidence for the existence of God can sustain a believer's faith during times of questioning and doubt.
- Society is becoming increasingly secular, so evidence of God's existence is important to allow believers to counter challenges made by atheists.
- Religious experiences such as visions and miracles are being increasingly challenged today by people who are turning to scientific explanations. It is important to have evidence so that religious believers can be certain that God is still at work in the world.

On the other hand:

- Faith in God's existence should be more important for a religious believer and evidence to prove God exists should not be required.
- Trying to provide evidence for the existence of God is a waste of time. Science cannot provide empirical evidence to prove that there is or isn't a God.
- The arguments for the existence of God are only accepted by people who are already religious believers, and they won't convince atheists.

Accept valid alternatives
(AO2)

[5]

(c) “The First Cause argument would never convince an atheist that God exists.” Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer.

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Target: Evaluation of the First Cause argument.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Unsupported opinion or no relevant evaluation.		0
Level 1	Opinion supported by one simple reason.	The candidate presents some relevant information.	1
Level 2	Opinion supported by two simple reasons or one developed reason.	Reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses.	2–3
Level 3	A well-argued response with evidence of informed insights.	Well-formed and reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses.	4–5

Answers may include:

- Some atheists may argue that the First Cause argument is flawed. It states that everything that exists has a cause, except for God. How can God be unique and exempt from having a prior cause?
- There is no evidence of a First Cause. Empiricists such as Bertrand Russell argue that something can only be accepted as true if it is based on experiences derived from the senses. There is no empirical evidence that God caused the universe to exist.
- The Big Bang provides atheists with an alternative to the First Cause argument.

On the other hand:

- This is a logical argument. If everything has a cause, it follows that the universe needed a cause.
- It is easy to accept the explanation that something as powerful as God was needed to be the First Cause.
- Some atheists may be convinced that this argument is supported by the Big Bang theory. Some could accept that God was needed to cause the Big Bang as it couldn't have happened by chance.

Accept valid alternatives
(AO2)

[5]

15

3 Life after death

(a) Describe what one religion you have studied teaches about the afterlife.

Target: Knowledge of teaching on the afterlife from one religious tradition.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Nothing relevant or worthy of credit.		0
Level 1	Something relevant or worthy of credit; elementary knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One relevant and accurate point. 	1
Level 2	A clear knowledge and understanding with some development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two relevant and accurate points. Two or more relevant and accurate points with one developed. A single point that is exceptionally well-developed may reach this level. 	2–3
Level 3	A detailed answer showing very good development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two or three relevant and accurate points with development. Level 3 answers will be well-structured with good development. 	4–5

Answers may include:

Christianity

- Christians believe that Jesus' death and Resurrection are part of God's divine plan for humankind. Through his death on the cross, Jesus pays the penalty for mankind's sin. Mankind's relationship with God is therefore restored. This is called atonement.
- Christians believe that three days after the crucifixion, God raised Jesus from the dead and he once again appeared to his disciples. This is taken to mean that Jesus' sacrifice was a victory over sin and death. Although physical death still happens, those who believe in Christ and live good lives will be given eternal life in Heaven.
- Many Christians believe that after death they will be taken into the presence of God, and they will be judged for the deeds they have done or failed to do during their lifetime.
- Some of the guiding principles for what will happen upon death include the following.
- Some Christians believe that this judgement will happen when they die. Others believe that there will be a **Day of Judgement** at the end of time, when everybody will be judged. Some believe that judgement will happen in two stages – an initial personal judgement when you die, followed by the definitive judgement at the end of time.
- Since God has given human beings free will, there must be an opportunity for people to reject God. This is the basis of the idea of Hell.
- Hell has traditionally been depicted as a place of eternal fire that symbolises pain and suffering. This is seen as the result of the refusal to accept the happiness that God wants people to share with Him.

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Hinduism

- Most Hindus believe that humans are in a cycle of death and rebirth called **samsara**. When a person dies, their **atman** (soul) is reborn in a different body.
- Some believe rebirth happens directly at death, others believe that an atman may exist in other realms. Hindus believe that an atman may enter **swarg** (Hindu heavenly realm) or **narak** (Hindu hellish realm) for a period before rebirth.
- Hindus believe in karma. Many believe that good or bad actions in life – leading to positive or negative merit – determine the atman’s rebirth.
- Some Hindus believe that humans may be reborn in animal form, and that rebirth from human to animal form only occurs if an atman has repeatedly failed to learn lessons in human form.
- Living life according to teachings in the scriptures will eventually lead to moksha. Some Hindu scriptures describe moksha as the atman becoming absorbed with Brahman, from where each atman is believed to originate. Other Hindu scriptures describe moksha as living in the realm of a personal God.

Accept valid alternatives
(AO1)

[5]

AVAILABLE
MARKS

(b) Explain non-religious views of the soul and the afterlife.

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

Target: Knowledge and understanding of non-religious views on the soul and the afterlife.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Nothing relevant or worthy of credit.		0
Level 1	Something relevant or worthy of credit; elementary knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One relevant and accurate point.	1
Level 2	A clear knowledge and understanding with some development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two relevant and accurate points.• Two or more relevant and accurate points with one developed.• A single point that is exceptionally well-developed may reach this level.	2–3
Level 3	A detailed answer showing very good development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two or three relevant and accurate points with development.• Level 3 answers will be well-structured with good development.	4–5

Answers may include:

- The Greek philosopher Plato believed that people had souls. He argued that after death the body stayed in the physical world, but the soul lived on, it was eternal. He believed the soul was continually reborn.
- Atheists such as David Hume rejected any belief in a soul or afterlife because there was no evidence to prove it. For him and others like him, scientific evidence shows that when a person dies, the body simply decays.
- Some atheists believe that ideas about an afterlife evolved as a way for humans to combat fear of death and the unknown. Humanists believe that when a person dies, they simply cease to exist.

Accept valid alternatives
(AO1)

[5]

(c) “Belief in a final judgement causes nothing but fear.” Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer.

Target: Evaluation of whether belief in the afterlife causes nothing but fear.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Unsupported opinion or no relevant evaluation.		0
Level 1	Opinion supported by one simple reason.	The candidate presents some relevant information.	1
Level 2	Opinion supported by two simple reasons or one developed reason.	Reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses.	2–3
Level 3	A well-argued response with evidence of informed insights.	Well-formed and reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses.	4–5

Answers may include:

- Believers may fear the concept of judgement associated with afterlife.
- There is no certainty of the existence of any form of life after death.
- Humans are judged according to the greatest commands to love God and love neighbour they must practice this in life.
- Some Christians believe in the existence of purgatory, this can cause worry.
- Atheism rejects the idea of life after death as a false hope.

On the other hand:

- Life after death provides comfort to those who are dying or bereaved that there is a new and better life beyond death.
- The idea of life after death proves God’s power and benevolence.
- Humans will be rewarded in the Kingdom of God or punished in hell. This is not to be feared but used as a moral compass.
- The idea of life after death fulfils the promises within sacred texts and affirms belief in a deity.
- It encourages humans to feel that good moral choices will be justly rewarded.

Accept valid alternatives
(AO2)

[5]

15

AVAILABLE
MARKS

4 The nature of God

- (a) Describe, using examples from world religions, the difference between monotheism and polytheism.

Target: Knowledge of monotheism and polytheism.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Nothing relevant or worthy of credit.		0
Level 1	Something relevant or worthy of credit; elementary knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One relevant and accurate point. 	1
Level 2	A clear knowledge and understanding with some development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two relevant and accurate points. Two or more relevant and accurate points with one developed. A single point that is exceptionally well-developed may reach this level. 	2–3
Level 3	A detailed answer showing very good development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two or three relevant and accurate points with development. Level 3 answers will be well-structured with good development. 	4–5

Answers may include:

- Monotheistic religions such as Islam reject the concept of polytheism. They assert that there can only be one God, and this is reflected in the Shahada, the first of the Five Pillars of Islam. Tawhid (the oneness of God) is the central and most important concept in the Muslim faith.
- Hinduism can be described as a polytheistic religion. Hindus accept the Trimurti, the trinity of supreme divinity made up of the three gods Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu. There are also female deities linked to the Trimurti – Saraswati, Lakshmi and Parvati. Hindus have one central deity called Brahman who has many forms. The different Hindu gods and goddesses all display different characteristics of this supreme God.
- Christianity is a monotheistic faith. The idea of the Holy Trinity helps Christians think of God as being both transcendent (the creator of the universe) and immanent (human in the form of Jesus and active in the world through the Holy Spirit).

Accept valid alternatives
(AO1)

[5]

AVAILABLE
MARKS

(b) Do you think it is more difficult for young people today to know God? Give reasons for your answer.

AVAILABLE MARKS

Target: Analysis of whether it is more difficult for young people to know God today.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Unsupported opinion or no relevant evaluation.		0
Level 1	Opinion supported by one simple reason.	The candidate presents some relevant information.	1
Level 2	Opinion supported by two simple reasons or one developed reason.	Reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses.	2–3
Level 3	A well-argued response with evidence of informed insights.	Well-formed and reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses.	4–5

Answers may include:

- There are many distractions in a secular society for young people today that may detract from their belief in God.
- Religious belief is seen by many as an interest of the older generation.
- For young people today a transcendent God is unknowable and distant.
- The promotion of science in society today has made it more difficult for young people to learn and know about God.

On the other hand:

- Many young people are raised in families of faith and practice their faith.
- Young people can experience God through community outreach projects to live out their faith locally and globally.
- God’s spirit lives inside all young believers and guides them.
- Hinduism also teaches of an unknowable transcendent God (Brahman) which makes itself known and immanent through the many gods and goddesses worshipped by young Hindus.

Accept valid alternatives
(AO2)

[5]

- (c) “Sacred texts help believers understand the true nature of God.”
Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer.

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Target: Evaluation of the contribution of sacred texts to help believers understand the nature of God.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Unsupported opinion or no relevant evaluation.		0
Level 1	Opinion supported by one simple reason.	The candidate presents some relevant information.	1
Level 2	Opinion supported by two simple reasons or one developed reason.	Reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses.	2–3
Level 3	A well-argued response with evidence of informed insights.	Well-formed and reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses.	4–5

Answers may include:

- The Bible informs Christians about the true nature of God, e.g. that God is omnipotent and created the universe out of nothing;
- The Bible informs its readers that there is only one God but three persons within God. The Bible helps believers understand God’s immanence and transcendence. God the Father is the Creator. Jesus is the Son of God who died for the sins of humanity. The Holy Spirit shows that God is at work in the world today.
- The Bible allows Christians to know some of God’s characteristics, e.g. the parable of the forgiving father presents God as a merciful God. The Bible guides Christians on how God wants them to live, e.g. The Ten Commandments.

On the other hand:

- The Bible doesn’t always show a kind and merciful God. For example, in Deuteronomy 20:16–18, God sanctions genocide: *In the cities of the nations the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, do not leave alive anything that breathes.*
- Also, there are many contradictions about the nature of God in the Bible. Jesus’ teaching promotes inclusivity, that God treats everyone as equals. However, some teaching from scripture can be interpreted to support human rights abuses in society today, e.g. teaching on homosexuality.
- There are better ways of understanding the true nature of God, e.g. prayer, religious leaders, religious experience.

Accept valid alternatives
(AO2)

[5]

15

Section B

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

Candidates must answer **two** questions from this section.

5 Experiencing God

(a) Describe how some religious believers have experienced God through visions.

Target: Knowledge of how God can be experienced through visions.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Nothing relevant or worthy of credit.		0
Level 1	Something relevant or worthy of credit; elementary knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One relevant and accurate point. 	1
Level 2	A clear knowledge and understanding with some development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two relevant and accurate points. • Two or more relevant and accurate points with one developed. • A single point that is exceptionally well-developed may reach this level. 	2–3
Level 3	A detailed answer showing very good development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two or three relevant and accurate points with development. • Level 3 answers will be well-structured with good development. 	4–5

Answers may include:

- Many religious believers have experienced God through visions. For example, in the New Testament Peter had a vision telling him that Gentiles could be converted to Christianity. Mary had a vision of an angel telling her she would give birth to the Son of God.
- Many religious believers experience God by making pilgrimages to places where others have experienced visions. For example, in 1858 Bernadette Soubirous experienced visions of Mary at Lourdes. Lourdes has since become a place of pilgrimage where many people have experienced God through miracles.
- Individuals have experienced God’s power through visions. In 2011, Floribeth Mora Diaz experienced a vision of Pope John Paul II and claims, with the support of doctors, that she was healed of a brain aneurysm.

Accept valid alternatives
(AO1)

[5]

(b) Explain how miracles may support a believer’s faith.

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

Target: Knowledge and understanding of how God is revealed through miracles.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Nothing relevant or worthy of credit.		0
Level 1	Something relevant or worthy of credit; elementary knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One relevant and accurate point.	1
Level 2	A clear knowledge and understanding with some development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two relevant and accurate points.• Two or more relevant and accurate points with one developed.• A single point that is exceptionally well-developed may reach this level.	2–3
Level 3	A detailed answer showing very good development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two or three relevant and accurate points with development.• Level 3 answers will be well-structured with good development.	4–5

Answers may include:

- An exploration of how miracles reveal the nature of the Divine either directly or indirectly (Special Revelation).
- The miracle as revealing power over the laws of nature and the created world.
- Miracles reveal God’s power, compassion, and benevolence.
- Reference to related sacred texts, e.g. the Bible, the Qur’an.
- An exploration of the type of miracle, e.g. healings as revealing God’s power over pain and suffering, resurrection as revealing God’s power over death and nature miracles as revealing God’s control over nature/Creation.

Accept valid alternatives
(AO2)

[5]

- (c) **“Everyone should accept that religious experiences are real.”**
Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer showing that you have considered different points of view.

Target: Analysis and evaluation of the challenges to religious experiences.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Nothing relevant or worthy of credit		0
Level 1	Opinion supported which may be by one or two simple reasons.	The candidate presents some information in a simple form. Basic arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Inaccurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; inappropriate style of writing with no coherent structure. Basic use of specialist vocabulary.	1–2
Level 2	Opinion supported by two simple reasons with one developed.	The candidate presents one or two relevant points. Limited arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Some accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; style of writing just appropriate with limited coherent structure. Limited use of specialist vocabulary.	3–4
Level 3	Opinion supported by two developed reasons with reference to religion.	A Level 3 response could be one-sided. One developed reason and one with slight development would reach this level. There must be relevance to religion, but this could be slight/general. Good reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Mainly accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; a reasonably mature style of writing with some coherent structure evident. Good use of specialist vocabulary.	5–6

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

Level 4	Evidence of reasoned consideration of different points of view, showing informed insights and knowledge and understanding of religion.	Different points of view must be considered, but the consideration does not need to be balanced, i.e. one view could be much briefer than the other. Well-formed and reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; a mature style of writing with a mainly coherent structure. Very good use of specialist vocabulary.	7–8
Level 5	A well-argued response, with evidence of reasoned consideration of different points of view, showing informed insights and ability to apply knowledge and understanding of religion effectively.	The difference between Level 4 and Level 5 is the quality of the argument and the coherence of the response. There needs to be more than a passing reference to religion. However, the points of view may not be completely balanced, and a non-religious counter-argument is still acceptable. Very well-formed and reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Highly accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; a sophisticated style of writing set within a coherent structure. Excellent use of specialist vocabulary.	9–10

AVAILABLE MARKS

Answers may include:

- Theists would agree with this statement and argue that strong evidence for miracles and other types of religious experiences can be found in sacred texts. An immanent God has and will continue to intervene in human affairs.
- Many people have claimed to have experienced God throughout the history of the Christian faith. For example, Bernadette Soubirous at Lourdes (1858) and a group of people in Knock (1879) experienced visions of the Virgin Mary. Religious experiences often result in a completely changed life for the recipient so there must be something real behind them.
- There are physical signs of religious experiences today such as physical healing that cannot be explained medically, e.g. miracles at Lourdes. These experiences should be regarded as genuine and used as evidence to support God's intervention.

On the other hand:

- Atheists disagree with this statement as they reject all forms of divine intervention. If God is not real how can someone experience God?
- Many people argue that religious experiences such as visions are not real but illusions coming from their mind. According to Freud, visions are nothing more than dreams. He argued that wish-fulfilment could occur in dreams or daydreams, e.g. winning the lottery or meeting a celebrity.
- Religious experiences are subjective, and an individual could have

misunderstood what happened or simply made up the religious experience. Just because an event can't be explained doesn't mean that God was responsible for it.

Accept valid alternatives
(AO2)

[10]

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

20

6 The problem of evil and suffering

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

(a) Describe, using examples, what is meant by natural and moral evil.

Target: Knowledge of natural and moral evil with supporting examples.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Nothing relevant or worthy of credit.		0
Level 1	Something relevant or worthy of credit; elementary knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One relevant and accurate point. 	1
Level 2	A clear knowledge and understanding with some development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two relevant and accurate points. • Two or more relevant and accurate points with one developed. • A single point that is exceptionally well-developed may reach this level. 	2–3
Level 3	A detailed answer showing very good development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two or three relevant and accurate points with development. • Level 3 answers will be well-structured with good development. 	4–5

Answers may include:

- Natural evil is suffering in the world which is not under the control of humans.
- Examples include earthquakes, tsunamis, and volcanoes. Natural evil shows that the world is imperfect, e.g. an earthquake in Nepal killed almost 9000 people in 2015.
- Moral evil is the evil deliberately caused by the actions of humans.
- Examples include murder, stealing and lying, e.g. a white supremacist killed 51 people in New Zealand in 2019.
- Moral evil occurs when an individual uses their freedom to harm another person, or it can be the result of an individual not doing something, e.g. not helping a person in need when it is within their power to help.

Accept valid alternatives

(AO1)

[5]

(b) Explain some of the issues presented by innocent suffering and God’s providence.

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

Target: Knowledge and understanding of the issues presented by innocent suffering and God’s providence.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Nothing relevant or worthy of credit.		0
Level 1	Something relevant or worthy of credit; elementary knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One relevant and accurate point. 	1
Level 2	A clear knowledge and understanding with some development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two relevant and accurate points. • Two or more relevant and accurate points with one developed. • A single point that is exceptionally well-developed may reach this level. 	2–3
Level 3	A detailed answer showing very good development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two or three relevant and accurate points with development. • Level 3 answers will be well-structured with good development. 	4–5

Answers may include:

- Divine providence refers to God playing an active part in the world. God is believed to be omnipotent, omnibenevolent and omniscient but human suffering makes some people question God’s providence.
- Natural and moral evil present a challenge to religious believers – is God unfair or just uncaring? The suffering of innocents in the world makes some religious believers question whether God is all loving and all powerful.
- Examples of human experience of the suffering of the innocents include the Holocaust and the Rwandan genocide.

Accept valid alternatives
(AO1)

[5]

- (c) **“Religious believers should accept that suffering is unavoidable.”**
Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer showing that you have considered different points of view.

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

Target: Analysis and evaluation of the purpose of suffering.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Nothing relevant or worthy of credit		0
Level 1	Opinion supported which may be by one or two simple reasons.	The candidate presents some information in a simple form. Basic arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Inaccurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; inappropriate style of writing with no coherent structure. Basic use of specialist vocabulary.	1–2
Level 2	Opinion supported by two simple reasons with one developed.	The candidate presents one or two relevant points. Limited arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Some accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; style of writing just appropriate with limited coherent structure. Limited use of specialist vocabulary.	3–4
Level 3	Opinion supported by two developed reasons with reference to religion.	A Level 3 response could be one-sided. One developed reason and one with slight development would reach this level. There must be relevance to religion, but this could be slight/general. Good reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Mainly accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; a reasonably mature style of writing with some coherent structure evident. Good use of specialist vocabulary.	5–6

Level 4	Evidence of reasoned consideration of different points of view, showing informed insights and knowledge and understanding of religion.	Different points of view must be considered, but the consideration does not need to be balanced, i.e. one view could be much briefer than the other. Well-formed and reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; a mature style of writing with a mainly coherent structure. Very good use of specialist vocabulary.	7–8
Level 5	A well-argued response, with evidence of reasoned consideration of different points of view, showing informed insights and ability to apply knowledge and understanding of religion effectively.	The difference between Level 4 and Level 5 is the quality of the argument and the coherence of the response. There needs to be more than a passing reference to religion. However, the points of view may not be completely balanced, and a non-religious counter-argument is still acceptable. Very well-formed and reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Highly accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; a sophisticated style of writing set within a coherent structure. Excellent use of specialist vocabulary.	9–10

AVAILABLE MARKS

Answers may include:

- Many religious believers accept that suffering is unavoidable because if an omnipotent God intervened to stop or prevent human suffering, humans wouldn't be truly free.
- Natural evil is unavoidable. There's nothing humans can do to stop suffering resulting from hurricanes, floods, etc.
- Human suffering serves a purpose and may be unavoidable for a reason. Suffering can have a positive function, e.g. allow humans to understand right from wrong or to help believers grow and develop morally and spiritually.

On the other hand:

- Moral evil can be avoided if humans didn't abuse their free will and used their freedom to do good instead of evil. Religious believers have overcome suffering by working against it, e.g. Desmond Tutu and Martin Luther King devoted their lives to ending human suffering.
- An all-loving and all-powerful God could intervene and prevent this unnecessary suffering. Some people claim to have experienced God through miracles and as a result have avoided suffering.
- There is a saying attributed to Buddhism that "Pain is inevitable, but suffering is optional." This tells some believers that while pain is unavoidable, the extent to which a person actually suffers will vary depending on their mindset.

Accept valid alternatives
(AO2)

[10]

20

7 Creationism and science

(a) Outline the theory of evolution.

Target: Knowledge of the theory of evolution.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Nothing relevant or worthy of credit.		0
Level 1	Something relevant or worthy of credit; elementary knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One relevant and accurate point. 	1
Level 2	A clear knowledge and understanding with some development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two relevant and accurate points. Two or more relevant and accurate points with one developed. A single point that is exceptionally well-developed may reach this level. 	2–3
Level 3	A detailed answer showing very good development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two or three relevant and accurate points with development. Level 3 answers will be well-structured with good development. 	4–5

Answers may include:

- Darwin put forward the theory that all living creatures that exist today, including human beings, have evolved from primitive life forms over a period of millions of years.
- The theory states that evolution happens by natural selection.
- Some species came into existence but failed to adapt to suit their environment and failed to survive.
- The species that were best suited to their environment passed the qualities that were needed to survive to their offspring.

Accept valid alternatives
(AO1)

[5]

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

(b) Explain how scientific ideas about the origins of the universe do not challenge some religious believers.

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

Target: Knowledge and understanding of how religious and scientific views of creation can be compatible.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Nothing relevant or worthy of credit.		0
Level 1	Something relevant or worthy of credit; elementary knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One relevant and accurate point. 	1
Level 2	A clear knowledge and understanding with some development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two relevant and accurate points. Two or more relevant and accurate points with one developed. A single point that is exceptionally well-developed may reach this level. 	2–3
Level 3	A detailed answer showing very good development.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two or three relevant and accurate points with development. Level 3 answers will be well-structured with good development. 	4–5

Answers may include:

- Many religious believers accept that religious texts were written many years before the age of scientific discovery. Rather than see scientific discoveries as a threat to their religious beliefs, they view God as being in control of how the universe came to exist.
- Many religious believers can accept the Big Bang Theory because they believe that the Genesis account of creation is a myth and not a literal account of creation. The key message of the story is that God is involved in the process of creation and the Big Bang doesn't contradict this message.
- The Big Bang Theory is also acceptable to those who accept Aquinas' First Cause Argument for the existence of God. Many modern Christians accept that God could have initiated the Big Bang.

Accept valid alternatives
(AO1)

[5]

- (c) “Religious stories about creation are still relevant.” Do you agree with this statement? Give reasons for your answer showing that you have considered different points of view.

Target: Analysis and evaluation of the relevance of religious accounts of creation for believers today.

Levels	Criteria	Comments	Marks
0	Nothing relevant or worthy of credit		0
Level 1	Opinion supported which may be by one or two simple reasons.	The candidate presents some information in a simple form. Basic arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Inaccurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; inappropriate style of writing with no coherent structure. Basic use of specialist vocabulary.	1–2
Level 2	Opinion supported by two simple reasons with one developed.	The candidate presents one or two relevant points. Limited arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Some accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; style of writing just appropriate with limited coherent structure. Limited use of specialist vocabulary.	3–4
Level 3	Opinion supported by two developed reasons with reference to religion.	A Level 3 response could be one-sided. One developed reason and one with slight development would reach this level. There must be relevance to religion, but this could be slight/general. Good reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Mainly accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; a reasonably mature style of writing with some coherent structure evident. Good use of specialist vocabulary.	5–6

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Level 4	Evidence of reasoned consideration of different points of view, showing informed insights and knowledge and understanding of religion.	Different points of view must be considered, but the consideration does not need to be balanced, i.e. one view could be much briefer than the other. Well-formed and reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; a mature style of writing with a mainly coherent structure. Very good use of specialist vocabulary.	7–8
Level 5	A well-argued response, with evidence of reasoned consideration of different points of view, showing informed insights and ability to apply knowledge and understanding of religion effectively.	The difference between Level 4 and Level 5 is the quality of the argument and the coherence of the response. There needs to be more than a passing reference to religion. However, the points of view may not be completely balanced, and a non-religious counter-argument is still acceptable. Very well-formed and reasoned arguments are given to analyse and evaluate personal responses and informed insights. Highly accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar; a sophisticated style of writing set within a coherent structure. Excellent use of specialist vocabulary.	9–10

AVAILABLE MARKS

Answers may include:

- Religious accounts of creation from sacred texts such as the Bible or Quran are part of the Word of God and will always be relevant.
- The Genesis account of creation gives an outline of the role of humanity in the created order and is more relevant now than ever. Humans have been placed on earth as stewards of God’s creation and have a moral responsibility to protect their environment.
- The Genesis account of creation says that humans are created in the image of God meaning that humans have a unique relationship with God and are superior to the rest of the animal world. This message is still relevant and is a reminder that human life is sacred, and the lives of all human beings must be respected regardless of race, religion or gender.

On the other hand:

- Religious accounts of creation are myths and are no longer relevant in a secular world.
- In the past, God and religion was used to explain gaps in knowledge or things that people didn’t understand. Science is now filling these gaps, e.g. the Big Bang and evolutionary theories. Therefore, people no longer need religious accounts of creation.
- Some people are concerned that a literal interpretation of religious accounts of creation (that the Bible’s account of creation is true, and

that the world is 6000 years old) is damaging to society as it leads to the denial of scientific facts.

Accept valid alternatives
(AO2)

[10]

AVAILABLE
MARKS

20