



Assessment and marking

Course Title:

Pearson Edexcel A level Religious Studies: New to Edexcel

Command words

Command word	Definition
Analyse	Deconstruct information and/or issues to find connections and provide logical chains of reasoning in order to make judgements regarding their importance/relevance to the question context.
Assess	Requires reasoned argument of factors to reach a judgement regarding their importance/relevance to the question context.
Clarify	Identify key ideas and explain key concepts.
Evaluate	Review/analyse information, bringing it together to form a conclusion/judgement based on strengths/weaknesses, alternatives, relevant data or information. Come to a supported judgement of a subject's qualities and relation to its context.
Explore	Demonstrate understanding by investigating different reasons, concepts and ideas.



8-mark 'Explore' Questions

Level criteria

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A narrow range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology is selected but is unlikely to be used appropriately or accurately (AO1).• Knowledge and understanding addresses a narrow range of key religious ideas and beliefs with some inaccuracies (AO1).• Provides a superficial understanding of key religious ideas and beliefs (AO1).
Level 2	3–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology is selected, most of which is used appropriately with some inaccuracies (AO1).• Knowledge and understanding addresses a narrow range of key religious ideas and beliefs (AO1).• Develops key religious ideas and beliefs to show a depth of understanding (AO1).
Level 3	6–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology is carefully selected and used appropriately, accurately and sustained throughout (AO1).• Knowledge and understanding addresses a broad range of key religious ideas and beliefs (AO1).• Comprehensively develops key religious ideas and beliefs to show a depth of understanding (AO1).



Example question and indicative content

Explore the key ideas associated with the problem of suffering.

Indicative content
8 marks AO1
AO1 will be used by candidates to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and specialist language and terminology when responding to the question.
Candidates may refer to the following.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some suffering may be related to responsible agents who cause suffering, including God.• Some instances of natural suffering are not man-made, such as earthquakes, and God seems to lack the power to alleviate the suffering.• These types of suffering raise issues about the attributes of God of omniscience, omnipotence and omnibenevolence.• The inconsistent triad highlights the idea that the attributes of God are inconsistent with suffering.• The combination of moral and non-moral suffering highlights the problem of the scale of suffering.

Example answer

Explore the key ideas associated with the problem of suffering.

Evil and Suffering come in two forms. Natural evil, which is caused due to natural events e.g. earthquakes or disease, whilst moral evil is caused by humans e.g. ISIS. St Irenaeus believed that Suffering helped us grow and develop into the likeness of God, therefore Evil and Suffering are necessary. As this has been criticised as to why Soul making involves Suffering? Surely an omnipotent God could develop this without pain?



Example question and indicative content

Explore how the Qur'an is understood as the revelation of Allah.

Indicative content
<p>8 marks AO1</p> <p>AO1 will be used by candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding using specialist language and terminology when responding to the question.</p> <p>Candidates may refer to the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is seen as the final and complete revelation of Allah, which helps humanity to understand the importance of submission to Allah.• It is seen as the direct word of Allah, which was delivered to his messenger by the angel Jibril.• It was revealed to the 'seal of the prophets' Muhammad over a number of years.• It is a guide for life and a basis of Shari'ah law, which ensures that Muslims can live in accordance with the revelation of Allah.• The Qur'an brings together the messages of all of the prior prophets and confirms their messages.

Example answer

Explore how the Qur'an is understood as the revelation of Allah.

The Qur'an was revealed to Muhammad over a period that began during the Night of Power. It is understood to be the revelation of Allah delivered to Muhammad by the Angel Jibril. It has unique status because it is believed to be the actual words of Allah giving the eternal, true, final and complete message of Allah. It is seen to confirm and follow on from Allah's original message to earlier prophets; putting right the corruption that had occurred to this original message and is showing humans the importance of submitting to Allah.

Rippin argues that the Qur'an is at the focal point of the Islamic faith, playing a major role in devotion, worship and prayer whilst providing legal and social guidance with religious laws (Shariah). In the Qur'an Allah also lays down and commands adherence to rituals such as the five pillars to provide the spiritual focus that will enable Muslims to fully submit themselves to Allah and reflect this in their daily lives.

David Waines claims that the revelation has been reflected orally in a Muslim's daily routine and this also exists to the present day. Parts of the Qur'an are included in daily prayers and recited at night during rituals that take place during Ramadan as well as during other festivals and formal events. Its importance can be noted in the fact that the bismillah is spoken at the beginning and end of life: in the ear of the new born baby and person who is dying. The Qur'an is regarded as the final revelation of Allah and hence Muhammad is known as the Seal of the Prophets. There will be no other revelatory words from Allah to further Prophets.



12-mark 'Assess' Questions

Level criteria

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A narrow range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected but are unlikely to be used appropriately or accurately (AO1).• Information/issues are identified (AO2).• Judgements are supported by generalised arguments (AO2).
Level 2	5–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected, most of which are used appropriately with some inaccuracies (AO1).• Deconstructs religious information/issues, which lead to a simplistic chain of reasoning (AO2).• Judgements of a limited range of elements in the question are made (AO2).
Level 3	9–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are carefully selected and used appropriately, accurately and sustained throughout (AO1).• Critically deconstructs religious information/issues leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning (AO2).• Constructs coherent and reasoned judgements of the full range of elements in the question (AO2).



Example question and indicative content

Assess the claim that religious approaches to same-sex relationships have been influenced by social and cultural changes.

Indicative content

4 marks AO1, 8 marks AO2

AO1 will be used by candidates to underpin their analysis and evaluation. Candidates will be required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding using specialist language and terminology when responding to the question, and in meeting AO2 descriptors described below.

Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO1.

- There have been changes in approaches to same-sex relationships such as decriminalisation of homosexuality, civil partnerships, same-sex marriages.
- Since World War II, there have been social and cultural changes in family structures and moral perspectives, as well as advances in biology and psychology.
- There have also been changes in religious approaches, such as blessing of same-sex marriages or employment of openly homosexual clergy.

AO2 requires candidates to develop their answers showing analytical and evaluative skills to address the question. Such responses will be underpinned by their use of knowledge and understanding.

Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO2.

- The 1967 decriminalisation of homosexuality did not lead to immediate change in religious thinking, which suggests that not all religious approaches change in tandem with social and cultural changes.
- Many religious approaches continue to be based on teaching of sacred texts, which are deemed immutable, which may be thought to prevent religious approaches from keeping pace with social and cultural changes.
- Religious teaching in sacred texts has great authority, however it has always been influenced by social and cultural factors, so it is not just a modern phenomenon.
- There has been religious re-evaluation of the teaching on same-sex relationships, which suggests religions believe it is essential for the emotional and spiritual wellbeing of individuals and communities and not simply paying lip service to social trends.

Candidates who show achievement only against AO1 will not be able to gain marks beyond the top of Level 1.



Example answer

Assess the claim that religious approaches to same-sex relationships have been influenced by social and cultural changes.

Modern society is generally more open and accepting with regards to homosexuality and same-sex relations. Contrasting to this open and ^{have always} ~~are~~ the religious approaches which ~~still remain quite~~ ^{it is} ~~have~~ been quite rigid in ~~their~~ ^{its} understanding of same-sex relationships, however ~~the~~ one could argue the extent to which modern society has influenced the traditional religious approach.

In Western society, there is a growing opinion that there is no ~~more~~ moral issue regarding same-sex relationships, yet, there is still a stigma attached to homosexuality within the Christian and religious communities. ~~The~~ Christianity, for example, ~~the~~ Catholicism, is clear in its attitude towards homosexual acts. ~~The~~ Bible states 'you shall not lie with a man as a woman'; that is an abomination". This language is straight forward ~~that~~ many Christians interpret ~~is~~ directly and so many will disagree with same-sex relationships completely.

Furthermore, Catholic church teachings lean towards the natural law theory, which suggests that sex that doesn't allow for procreation is wrong and unnatural. Same-sex does not allow for procreation and thus could be considered wrong.

Contrastingly, liberal churches have shown support for homosexuality and that the quality of the relationship is what determines the ~~good~~ moral value.

In conclusion, despite the more relaxed liberal Christian approach, the more strict religions have barely been influenced by modern society.



Example question and indicative content

Assess the view that vipassana is the most effective form of meditation.

Indicative content
<p>4 marks AO1, 8 marks AO2</p> <p>AO1 will be used by candidates to underpin their analysis and evaluation. Candidates will be required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding using specialist language and terminology when responding to the question, and in meeting AO2 descriptors described below.</p> <p>Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO1.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vipassana meditation is a deeper form of meditation undertaken by devotees who are advanced in or on the path to enlightenment.• Insight meditation is a profound focused concentration of the mind with its associated detachment from the immediate world around us.• There are other forms of meditation such as samatha, which may be seen as effective. <p>AO2 requires candidates to develop their answers showing analytical and evaluative skills to address the question. Such responses will be underpinned by their use of knowledge and understanding.</p> <p>Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It can be argued that samatha is more accessible, which therefore might be more effective as a pathway to vipassana, as it is practised by more people.• Vipassana is insight meditation, which is an integral part of the middle way and the search for enlightenment, and the concentration necessary for vipassana indicates that only those who are on the path to enlightenment can begin to understand it.• Vipassana meditation is the meditation for which most other types are only preparation, therefore it is most effective as all other types find their fulfilment in the practice of vipassana.• Insight meditation requires far more concentration than any other form of meditation, and the almost exclusive practice of vipassana suggests its aspirational value for achieving enlightenment. <p>Candidates who show achievement only against AO1 will not be able to gain marks beyond the top of Level 1.</p>



Example answer

Assess the view that vipassana is the most effective form of meditation.

Vipassana is one of two types of meditation carried out by Buddhists the other more simple is samatha meditation. It could be argued that vipassana is the most effective form of meditation because it is within vipassana that a Buddhist applies and understands the Dharma in their own life. Vipassana or insight meditation is when Buddhists analyse topics such as the four noble truths and see how this implicates them directly. It is when they look at the Buddha's teachings and personalise them. This is what the Buddha taught to do as he didn't agree with blind faith as ignorance is one of the three poisons and vipassana meditation helps overcome ignorance.

However samatha meditation could be seen as more effective as it combats two out of the three poisons. Both hatred and greed are subdued in samatha meditation when the focus is on metta (loving kindness) or karuna (compassion). Samatha is the more simple of the two as it can just be breathing meditation. Its focus is on mindfulness and expressing good meaningful emotions instead of desires and by doing that you overcome negative unhelpful emotions.

On the other hand, vipassana may still be the most effective as it is through vipassana meditation that the Buddha Gautama reached nirvana. He while thinking about experiences in his own life and what he had learnt saw flashes of past lives and the truth of the world. As enlightenment and nirvana are the main aims of Buddhism the meditation that leads directly to it must be the most effective.

To conclude, while samatha meditation is helpful in mindfulness practice and overcoming greed and desire vipassana is the most effective. This is because it is personal to everyone it overcomes ignorance and most importantly it is through vipassana meditation the Buddha reached nirvana.



10-mark 'Clarify' Questions

Level criteria

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A narrow range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected but are unlikely to be used appropriately or accurately (AO1).• Knowledge and understanding of key religious ideas and beliefs is superficial (AO1).• Knowledge and understanding addresses a narrow range of key religious ideas and beliefs with some inaccuracies that are not directly linked to the extract (AO1).
Level 2	4–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected, most of which are used appropriately with some inaccuracies (AO1).• Knowledge and understanding of key religious ideas and beliefs is detailed, however it is not fully developed (AO1).• Knowledge and understanding addresses a narrow range of key religious ideas and beliefs and are linked in most cases to reference from the extract (AO1).
Level 3	7–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are carefully selected and used appropriately, accurately and sustained throughout (AO1).• Knowledge and understanding of key religious ideas and beliefs is detailed and fully developed (AO1).• Knowledge and understanding addresses a broad range of key religious ideas and beliefs and are fully linked to references from the extract (AO1).



Example question and indicative content

²⁰ Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, ²¹ nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is in your midst."

²² Then he said to his disciples, "The time is coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it. ²³ People will tell you, 'There he is!' or 'Here he is!' Do not go running off after them. ²⁴ For the Son of Man in his day will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other. ²⁵ But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation..."

³¹ On that day no one who is on the housetop, with possessions inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything...

(Source: Quote from New International Translation, Luke 17:20–35)

- 3 (a) Clarify the ideas illustrated in this passage about the nature of the arrival of the Kingdom of God as expressed in this passage.

You must refer to the passage in your response.

(10)

Question number	Indicative content
3(a)	<p>10 marks AO1</p> <p>AO1 will be used by candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding and specialist language and terminology when responding to the question.</p> <p>Candidates may refer to the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In this passage Jesus suggests the Kingdom of God is in some sense already 'in your midst'.• He explains 'it is not something that can be observed' with normal signs.• Jesus also warns that there will be false claims about the impending arrival of the Kingdom when he says 'People will tell you, 'There he is!' or 'Here he is!' Do not go running off after them.'• The coming days of the Son of Man will have an apocalyptic nature according to this description as it says 'For the Son of Man in his day will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other'.• Jesus alludes to the suffering of the Son of Man that is required first, to usher in the Kingdom of God – 'he must suffer many things'.• The response to the arrival of the Kingdom will need to be instant, there is no time for procrastination and as Jesus is giving advice on what will happen and how to respond it suggests it is imminent.



Example answer

²⁰ Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, "The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, ²¹ nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is in your midst."

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²⁵ But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation...

³¹ On that day no one who is on the housetop, with possessions inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything...

(Source: Quote from New International Translation, Luke 17:20–35)

- 3 (a) Clarify the ideas illustrated in this passage about the nature of the arrival of the Kingdom of God as expressed in this passage.

You must refer to the passage in your response.

(10)

This passage asks the question about the empty tomb indirectly by looking at how Joseph of Arimathea might fit in with what we know from the narratives. He might have been a secret follower of Jesus and maybe wanted to take this last opportunity to perform the burial rites for Jesus because he had not openly followed him when he was alive.

Joseph may also have been a member of the Sanhedrin – Luke's gospel says he belonged to the council – and to follow Jewish law wanted to bury the dead before sunset. There is no evidence this was carried out for all three bodies and if this was Joseph's concern then he would have asked for all three bodies.



Example question and indicative content

O ye people! Adore your Guardian-Lord, who created you and those who came before you, that ye may have the chance to learn righteousness; Who has made the earth your couch, and the heavens your canopy; and sent down rain from the heavens; and brought forth therewith Fruits for your sustenance; then set not up rivals unto Allah when ye know [the truth]... We said: "Get ye down all from here; and if, as is sure, there comes to you Guidance from me, whosoever follows My guidance, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve. O Children of Israel! call to mind the [special] favour which I bestowed upon you, and fulfil your covenant with Me as I fulfil My Covenant with you, and fear none but Me.

(Source: Quote from Surah2: 21-47, The Holy Qur'an, Abdullah Yusuf Ali © 2000 Wordsworth Editions)

- 3 (a) Clarify the ideas illustrated in this passage about Muslim teachings about Allah.

You must refer to the passage in your response.

(10)

Question number	Indicative content
3(a)	<p>10 marks AO1</p> <p>AO1 will be used by candidates to demonstrate knowledge and understanding and specialist language and terminology when responding to the question.</p> <p>Candidates may refer to the following.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• As well as being the creator of the world, Allah sustains the world and all things in it – Allah continues to sustain humanity by providing everything to meet human needs suggested by 'Who has made the earth your couch'.• Allah is especially characterised by his mercy and compassion towards all his creation.• The appropriate response to the characteristics of Allah is overwhelming gratitude and worship suggested by 'Adore your Guardian-Lord'.• The most important concept about Allah for Muslims is tawhid, or oneness, which means only Allah should be worshipped.• Allah can be known and experienced through the natural world as he has 'sent down rain from the heavens; and brought forth therewith Fruits for your sustenance'.• All forms of idolatry, which means associating anything or anyone with Allah are rejected, as Allah is the only God and has no equal and Muslims are to 'set not up rivals unto Allah when ye know [the truth].'



Example answer

O ye people! Adore your Guardian-Lord, who created you and those who came before you, that ye may have the chance to learn righteousness; Who has made the earth your couch, and the heavens your canopy; and sent down rain from the heavens; and brought forth therewith Fruits for your sustenance; then set not up rivals unto Allah when ye know [the truth]... We said: "Get ye down all from here; and if, as is sure, there comes to you Guidance from me, whosoever follows My guidance, on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve. O Children of Israel! call to mind the [special] favour which I bestowed upon you, and fulfil your covenant with Me as I fulfil My Covenant with you, and fear none but Me.

(Source: Quote from Surah2: 21-47, The Holy Qur'an, Abdullah Yusuf Ali © 2000 Wordsworth Editions)

- 3 (a) Clarify the ideas illustrated in this passage about Muslim teachings about Allah.

You must refer to the passage in your response.

(10)

The idea that God is All-Loving is evident from it saying "Your Guardian lord" showing that God loves you enough to actually look after and protect you if something was to happen. Then it goes on to talk about God being the provider as He "has made the earth your couch and the heavens your canopy; and sent down rain from the heavens; and brought forth therewith fruit for your sustenance", and this idea is one of the central messages that we get from this passage, because it also strengthens the idea that God is All – Loving because the only reason that God would do all this for us is because he loves us, as all he does is for our benefit as He is sustaining life. Then we see the ideas of life and death, and Gods mastery over all as he "created you and those who came before you", as He is telling us that with him looking over us we will flourish and be sustained and as life goes on the provisions that God gives us in this world starts to diminish and we die. Both points are then strengthened by the ideas that we take from surah Rahman, where God says "And how can you deny the favours of your lord?" telling us that everything that we see and have is by his whims.

We are also given one of the most central messages in Islam when God says "the set not up rivals unto Allah when ye know the truth", this idea of shirk (associating partners with God) is something that is a big sin, especially if you know that he is one. God also tells us that these people are not within his guidance, and only those with his guidance will have no fear.

Part of the passage also talks about, Ihsaan, that worshiping Allah as if you see if and if you don't see him to know that he is there, you would then have the hadith of Jibrael to then back this up as these ideas are said there to be the fundamental structure of the religion.

Most of the passage can be taken back to one idea of remembrance, as God is trying to get you to remember the favours that he has done for you and by extension to remember him. Where it says "and fulfil your covenant with me as I fulfil my covenant with you" this is talking about Raz-e-alast the covenant that was taken between the souls and God, where God asked us "Am I not your lord" and we replied with "Yes, we testify you are our lord". This is not the only place that God is telling us to remember, he also uses the section where it says "who created you and those who came before you" to remind us that people have come and gone and that we are not in this dunya (world) for a long time as we need to take "the chance to learn righteousness". God also reminds us of all the favours that he has done for us in order to make our lives easier and make it easier for us to remember him, for example when He talks about the favours bestowed upon the children of Israel, He is talking about the Manna was salwah (the food from the heavens) that was given to the children of Israel to make it easy for them. This is also shown from "who had made the earth your couch... Fruits for your sustenance" telling us that God doesn't want us to be in a position where we can't remember him because everything that we have is something that He gave us so we should be able to remember Him in something.



20-mark 'Analysis' Questions

Level criteria

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A narrow range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected but are unlikely to be used appropriately or accurately (AO1). Information/issues are selected (AO2). Makes basic connections between a limited range of elements in the question (AO2). Judgements are supported by generic arguments (AO2).
Level 2	5–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A limited range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected, some of which are used appropriately with some inaccuracies (AO1). Deconstructs religious information/issues (AO2). Makes connections between a limited range of elements in the question (AO2). Judgements of a limited range of elements in the question are made with little or no attempt to appraise evidence (AO2).
Level 3	9–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected, most of which are used appropriately with some inaccuracies (AO1). Deconstructs religious information/issues, which lead to a simple chain of reasoning (AO2). Makes connections between many but not all of the elements in the question (AO2). Judgements of a limited range of elements in the question are made, which are supported by an attempt to appraise evidence (AO2).
Level 4	13–16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are carefully selected, most of which are used appropriately and accurately throughout (AO1). Deconstructs religious information/issues leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning (AO2). Makes connections between a wide range of elements in the question (AO2). Constructs coherent and reasoned judgements of many but not all of elements in the question, which are supported by the appraisal of some evidence (AO2).
Level 5	17–20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are carefully selected and used appropriately, accurately and sustained throughout (AO1). Critically deconstructs religious information/issues leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning (AO2). Makes connections between the full range of elements in the question (AO2). Constructs coherent and reasoned judgements of the full range of elements in the question, which are fully supported by the comprehensive appraisal of evidence (AO2).



Example question and indicative content

Analyse the claim that there is no historical evidence for the resurrection of Jesus.

Indicative content
<p>5 marks AO1, 15 marks AO2</p> <p>AO1 will be used by candidates to underpin their analysis and evaluation. Candidates will be required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding when responding to the question, and in meeting AO2 descriptors described below.</p> <p>Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO1.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Historical questions about the burial of Jesus and the discovery of the empty tomb demand an adequate explanation.• The post mortem appearances of Jesus experienced by different individuals and groups indicate a resurrection event.• The disciples' belief in the resurrection of Jesus is contrary to some Jewish beliefs about the general resurrection at the end of the world. <p>AO2 requires candidates to develop their answers showing analytical and evaluative skills to address the question. Such responses will be underpinned by their use of knowledge and understanding.</p> <p>AO2 requires candidates to develop their answers showing analytical and evaluative skills to address the question. Such responses will be underpinned by their use of knowledge and understanding.</p> <p>Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO2.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The burial of Jesus is noted by early independent sources and scholars concur that Jesus was buried by Joseph of Arimathea; therefore the empty tomb adds weight to the hypothesis that Jesus had risen from the dead.• The evidence for Jesus' bodily resurrection is difficult to ignore because of the empty tomb 'where the grave clothes were left behind' which presents evidence against the claim there is no historical evidence for this event.• The historicity of the resurrection of Jesus depends on the quality of the evidence and the account of the bodily resurrection of Jesus in Luke strongly supports Jesus' bodily resurrection: 'a Ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have'.• Although scholars differ in their analysis of the resurrection narrative, the fact that New Testament accounts very clearly deny that the resurrected Jesus was a ghost or resuscitated corpse, strongly supports the view of an historical resurrection.• Sanders' view, that the reported experiences of encounters with a living but transformed Jesus who had actually died is strong evidence for belief that the resurrection event actually happened, is valid because there is no reported contrary evidence.• Some scholars have critically deconstructed the New Testament narrative. Alternative explanations for the resurrection belief can be offered due to the conflicting accounts which can only undermine any historical credibility.• Candidates who show achievement only against AO1 will not be able to gain marks beyond the bottom of Level 1.



Example answer (part 1 of 2)

Analyse the claim that there is no historical evidence for the resurrection of Jesus.

Historians widely accept four facts and can support these to some extent with what is known from gospel narratives. After his crucifixion Jesus was buried by Joseph of Arimathea in a tomb and this is established because the burial of Jesus is identified in early independent sources such as four biographies of Jesus in the four gospels and also that Joseph of Arimathea, known to be a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin, was not a Christian invention. On the Sunday after the crucifixion, Jesus' tomb was found empty by a group of women and scholars agree the tomb is identified as empty from independent early sources. Mark's Gospel ends with the story of the empty tomb so this seems to be a fact. So it is weakening the claim there is no historical evidence for at least an empty tomb.

As for the resurrection of Jesus; on different occasions and under different circumstances different individuals and groups experienced appearances of Jesus alive from the dead - which suggests he resurrected. This fact is acknowledged by scholars because Paul's list of eyewitnesses guarantee that such appearances occurred. Paul tells us that Jesus appeared to his chief disciple Peter; again to the inner circle of disciples and also to a large group of 500 disciples at once.

Other appearances are recorded but as appearances to



Example answer (part 2 of 2)

500 at once cannot be dismissed as legend. The appearances in the Gospels provide multiple, independent evidence of Jesus after death and scholars agree that the breadth of sources naming these appearances make it difficult to deny.

The original disciples suddenly came to believe that Jesus was risen from the dead even though they had every reason to think otherwise as they had seen him die on the cross. They saw their leader dead and the execution of their Messiah as a criminal did not fit in with Jewish expectations of a Messiah who would triumph over Israel's enemies. So they must have changed their view on this for some good reason and the accounts of Jesus' appearances after death, as the risen Jesus goes a long way towards providing the evidence that Jesus had resurrected from the dead. A scholar, Wright, concludes that as an historian 'I cannot explain the rise of early Christianity unless Jesus rose again, leaving an empty tomb behind him'.

In order to dismiss the claim that there is no historical evidence for the resurrection of Jesus then the facts (agreed on by the majority of scholars) such as the discovery of the empty tomb, post-mortem appearances and the origin of the disciples' belief in the Resurrect all require concrete rebuttal if we are not to be left with a paranormal ghost that rose from the dead.

There is overwhelming narrative claiming appearances of Jesus and the best explanation of these facts is that Jesus rose from the dead.



30-mark 'Evaluate' Questions

Level criteria

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A narrow range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected but are unlikely to be used appropriately or accurately (AO1). Information/issues are identified (AO2). Makes basic connections between a limited range of elements in the question (AO2). Judgements are supported by generic arguments (AO2). Judgements made with no attempt to appraise evidence (AO2). Conclusions are provided but are simplistic and/or generic (AO2).
Level 2	7–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A limited range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected, some of which are used appropriately with some inaccuracies (AO1). Deconstructs religious information/issues (AO2). Makes connections between a limited range of elements in the question (AO2). Judgements of a limited range of elements in the question are made (AO2). Judgements made with little or no attempt to appraise evidence (AO2). Conclusions are provided, which loosely draw together ideas but with little or no attempt to justify (AO2).
Level 3	13–18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are selected, most of which are used appropriately with some inaccuracies (AO1). Deconstructs religious information/issues, which lead to a simplistic chain of reasoning (AO2). Makes connections between many but not all of the elements in the question (AO2). Judgements of a limited range of elements in the question are made (AO2). Judgements are supported by an attempt to appraise evidence (AO2). Conclusions are provided, which logically draw together ideas and are partially justified (AO2).
Level 4	19–24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are carefully selected, most of which are used appropriately and accurately throughout (AO1). Deconstructs religious information/issues leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning (AO2). Makes connections between a wide range of elements in the question (AO2). Constructs coherent and reasoned judgements of many but not all of elements in the question (AO2). Reasoned judgements are supported by the appraisal of some evidence (AO2). Convincing conclusions are provided, which fully and logically draw together ideas and are partially justified (AO2).
Level 5	25–30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are carefully selected and used appropriately, accurately and sustained throughout (AO1). Critically deconstructs religious information/issues leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning (AO2). Makes connections between the full range of elements in the question (AO2). Constructs coherent and reasoned judgements of the full range of elements in the question (AO2). Reasoned judgements are fully supported by the comprehensive appraisal of evidence (AO2). Convincing conclusions are provided, which fully and logically draw together ideas and are fully justified (AO2).



Example question and indicative content

Evaluate the view that Utilitarianism continues to offer a useful way of resolving moral dilemmas. Use knowledge and understanding from across your course of study to answer this question.

Indicative content

5 marks AO1, 25 marks AO2

AO1 will be used by candidates to underpin their analysis and evaluation. Candidates will be required to demonstrate knowledge and understanding using specialist language and terminology when responding to the question, and in meeting AO2 descriptors described below.

Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO1.

- Utilitarianism is based on principles of utility and hedonism, which place the wishes of the majority in a position of key importance when making moral decisions.
- Utilitarianism has developed into several forms, including preference and negative Utilitarianism, allowing its flexible use over many decades.
- Adaptations of Utilitarianism have given it a cultural and intellectual relevance, meeting the challenge of religious moral theories with a valid alternative.

AO2 requires candidates to develop their answers showing analytical and evaluative skills to address the question. Such responses will be underpinned by their use of knowledge and understanding.

Candidates may refer to the following in relation to AO2.

- Utilitarianism is based on principles that never become irrelevant, this makes it continually valid in the moral world.
- The pressure of the majority on moral agents to make reliable and popular moral decisions is reflected in social and political structures, as well as in personal/private moral situations, therefore Utilitarianism has perennial value as an intuitive means of making moral decisions.
- Utilitarianism is a single factor theory that does not take into account other valuable ethical approaches, such as concerns for duty, love or compassion, therefore moral agents may feel that it fails to take into consideration equally and conceivably, more important issues that need to be part of moral decision making.
- Applications of Utilitarianism, such as Strong Rule Utilitarianism, cannot be distinguished from other theoretical approaches such as deontology, and this therefore weakens the integrity of teleological principles of Utilitarianism.
- Utilitarianism was devised as a way of dealing with large-scale moral issues, therefore it fails entirely to offer guidance in moral dilemmas, which essentially are of concern only to the individual.
- In a study of sacred texts, the application of key principles to a believing community is central, therefore parallels can be drawn with Utilitarianism as the moral imperative to work for the good of the majority, not the glamour or convenience of the individuals (this shows links with New Testament Studies).
- Utilitarianism emerged at a time when there was a great emphasis on the role of reason, however debates in Philosophy of Religion in the 20th century about religious and ethical language pose significant challenge to this and other ethical theories (this shows links with Philosophy of Religion).
- Utilitarianism represents a secular theoretical approach to moral decision making, however this deliberately refutes religious perspectives of the world and morality, for example divine command ethics, which is of great importance in world religions (this shows links with the Study of Religion).

Candidates who show achievement only against AO1 will not be able to gain marks beyond the top of Level 1.

Candidates who do not show links with another area of their course of study will not be able to gain marks beyond the top of Level 4.



Example answer (part 1 of 4)

Evaluate the view that Utilitarianism continues to offer a useful way of resolving moral dilemmas. Use knowledge and understanding from across your course of study to answer this question.

Utilitarianism a widely used idea that teleological theories are based on purpose, end, function and goals; whether an action is right or wrong depends of the outcome. This consequentialist ethical theory is accredited to Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, both leading figures, and reformers, in intellectual thought of politics and sociology.

Bentham established the principle of utility, influenced by intellectual and social factors such as the Enlightenment and Industrial Revolution; it began the move away from a religious way of thinking to a scientific paradigm. The principle of utility is the idea that where a decision is to be made the right action is the one that produces the greatest good for the greatest number; such has the undertone of ‘is this moral action useful?’, as opposed to ‘is this moral action [inherently] good?’. Most people generally aspire to this means of living, but it is often not possible to do so; assessing the usefulness of every decision would take too long. It did, however, influence important 19th century social reforms, like the factory acts and prison conditions. It is now considered as a practical and pragmatic ethical theory which continues to evolve in contemporary ethical decision making situations. It has been an approach taken in recent events, such as throughout the pinnacle of the refugee crisis. This shows the universability of the theory – it is timeless.

There have been references of utilitarianism for centuries, dating back to before the ministry of Jesus Christ. John 15:13 sees Jesus telling his disciples that, ‘No greater love has any man than this, to lay down his life for his friends’. In this way, he is telling them they were his friends, whom he is willing to lay his life down for (as he also confesses of his sheep (John 10:15)). This is the whole basis of John’s Gospel – that Jesus, who is free of sin, is crucified for the greater good of the world. The theme continues in John 11:50. Caiaphas, the high priest, states that, ‘you do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish’. This is utilitarianism at its most explicit. He is teaching that the death of one man is better for the majority, bringing the greatest happiness to the greatest number. Depending on whether or not this verse is taken in context of the surrounding verses can hugely affect how it is



Example answer (part 2 of 4)

received. On its own it seems to be a justification for a morally wrong act to commit, yet when taken in context it is seen that Caiaphas made the statement prophetically, meaning that he simply expressed God's view and plan that Jesus must die for the greater good of the people.

Despite utilitarianism's ability to be appreciated across different religions and cultures as it doesn't need prior beliefs about religion or nature of the world, Christians, paradoxically, often disregard utilitarianism as it does not involve divine revelation. This does not seem logical as utilitarianism effectively underpins the whole religion and what it stands for: bringing the greatest happiness to the greatest number. There are various troubles with their compatibility, however. Many Christians still live by the principle of Sanctity of Life (SOL) (the idea that all life is sacred, precious and invaluable). This means that, even if something were to bring a greater good, it may undermine SOL. For example, the concept of saviour siblings. From a utilitarian perspective, if it would benefit multiple people, it is acceptable. But from a SOL perspective, the saviour sibling would have reduced dignity and happiness, undermining their SOL. For this reason, some Christians may not favour a utilitarian approach when attempting to resolve moral dilemmas, as will have been the way for hundreds of years.

Jeremy Bentham established universal ethical hedonism. He postulated that if an action increases pleasure, in a way that satisfies the majority, then it is right. Despite this being a subjective ideology, as what each person perceives as pleasurable varies, it suits large-scale decision making (e.g. the formation of laws). In an attempt to find a measure, or criteria, of projected happiness, Bentham produced the Hedonic Calculus. This is a purely quantitative means of measuring seven factors: intensity, duration, certainty, propinquity, fecundity, extent, and purity. Peter Vardy and Paul Grosch propose an example to help understand the use of the calculus: a young married woman is planning a ski trip when she discovers she is pregnant. She must use the hedonic calculus to decide what is the right decision to make – choosing to abort the pregnancy in order to go skiing would provide the woman with minor, temporary pleasure, whereas the long-lasting intense pleasure of having the child would outweigh any initial disappointments.

Despite it being natural and usual to consider consequences of outcome, there are, inevitably, flaws with the calculus. It is suggested that it is too simplistic to believe that our drive is solely for pleasure and happiness; there are things that we rate as more important. For example, Joan of Arc did not aggressively rid France of the English for pleasure, but for something that she valued more highly. Equally, what one may perceive as 'right' or 'good', may, in fact, be universally bad (for example, in the case of sadists or rapists). Therefore, the calculus leaves room for various horrific, immoral acts to be justified. Philip Pettit identified this when stating that, 'so long as



Example answer (part 3 of 4)

they promised the best consequences...It would forbid absolutely nothing: not rape, not torture, not even murder'. The calculus can, therefore, appear to justify such terrible acts, as long as it can be argued that it maximise the pleasure of the majority. Despite this apparent justification causing, potentially, 'bad' decisions to be made, for the individual committing the act, their moral dilemma has been resolved. Such was seen, as previously mentioned, in John 11:50, where Caiaphas suggests that it is better for one man to die as it would be beneficial for the majority. This does not seem to be as a common of a use of the Hedonic Calculus, yet its use remains open to possibilities.

Since utilitarianism's first establishment, though, there have been alterations to make it more accessible for modern decision making. Mill made various adaptations, after expressing his belief that Bentham had made a fundamental error in his assessment of what human beings found desirable, suggesting that, 'human beings are not governed in all their actions by their worldly interests'. Firstly, he proposed that people should be 'competently acquainted' with different types of pleasure (i.e. higher pleasures and lower pleasures). Only once this has been done can an individual make an informed judgement. In the same way, he strongly encouraged the pursuit of higher pleasures, like poetry and music. He highlighted the emphasis on this point when postulating that, 'it is better to be a human dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied. And if the fool, or the pig, is of a different opinion, it is because they only know their own side of the question. The other party to the comparison knows both sides'. Effectively, Mill is stating here that a 'higher' person (as Socrates in, in comparison to a fool) will live a more satisfied life. Even though the 'lower' person may think they are living a better life, but that is merely because they are unaware of anything better. This can be applied to humans having a grasp on the difference between higher pleasures and lower pleasures; those that appreciate the higher pleasures will have greater satisfaction than those that do not. Such can encourage individuals to make decisions based on what would bring higher pleasures, as opposed to temporary, minor pleasures (as illustrated in Vardy and Grosch's example).

Utilitarianism is classically able to adapt to each new situation because it does not rely on fixed and inflexible rules; its principles are always applicable. Yet, Mill introduced the idea of rule utilitarianism, where moral actions should be guided by rules that everyone follows. These rules have been established through trial and error of humans and, if followed, lead to the greatest overall happiness. These rules were then split in to either 'strong rule' or 'weak rule' utilitarianism. Strong rule refers to rules that are have instrumental, universal value e.g. do not murder, whereas weak rule refers to rules that, under some circumstances, can be broken e.g. do



Example answer (part 4 of 4)

not kill. Both of these rule types are necessary, especially in today's society. Leniency is essential in order to allow for free, autonomous decisions to be made, but stringent regulations must be in place to keep a degree of control. In this way, rule utilitarianism is clearly applicable to real-life situations because it doesn't generalise and recognises the complexity of life. Strong rule utilitarianism, however, has a very similar ideology to deontology; this creates issues with distinguishing differences, undermining the integrity and veracity of doctrine's principles.

Additionally, it is often not possible and impractical for one to calculate whether a decision is good, using the Hedonic Calculus, in everyday life situations. This means that whether a decision impact the greatest number with the greatest pleasure and/or happiness cannot always be worked out in advance to an action being done. As well as this, not everybody is motivated by pleasure and/or happiness. This theory supposes that every individual would *want* to use such a calculation to receive the greatest pleasure, whereas this may well not be true. Proposing that every person will consider the impact of their actions on the greatest number is a naïve, 'blissfully unaware' approach to life and the society surrounding it. Regardless of this, however, utilitarianism does promote democracy. In instances of social policy making, it can be an ideal way to establish answers (for example, referenda).

Overall, it seems that utilitarianism remains a vital ideology in modern societal decision-making. Despite various weaknesses of the theory, it is a logical and reasonable way of life, which appeals to common sense. Bentham built the theory on idea that, 'nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do as well as to determine what we shall do.' This has not, and will never, change, and so the principles of utilitarianism will always remain the same, leaving it to be accessed by anyone, regardless of time.