

# A Level Religious Studies

Summer 2023 Feedback

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# Course Description

This pre-recorded training is designed for teachers wishing to take an in depth look at feedback relating to our A LEVEL in Religious Studies, (Advanced GCE in Religious Studies (9RS0) summer 2023 exam series.

It will provide better understanding to centres with regards to the performance of key questions and advice provided will inform preparation for the 2024 series.



# During This Event

You will:

- take a focused look at the national performance of candidates
- learn about the variation in candidate performance in different questions
- review feedback taken from the Examiners' Report.

# Session Agenda

- Welcome and introduction
- 2023 Grade boundaries and outcomes for both AS & AL
- Aims and objectives
- Paper comparison: Notable strengths and weaknesses
- Overall performance
- Student performance in 'Explore' questions (Qu 1)
- Student performance in 'Assess' questions (Qu 2)
- Student performance in 'Clarify' questions (Qu 3a)
- Student performance in 'Analyse' questions (Qu 3b)
- Student performance in 'Evaluate' questions (Qu 4)
- Preparation for future examinations
- Key messages in the Principal Examiners reports

# 2023 Grade boundaries and outcomes



# Paper Comparison

A level notional component grade boundaries			Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
9RS0	A Level Religious Studies Paper 1	Raw	80	72	67	56	46	36	26	0
9RS0	A Level Religious Studies Paper 2	Raw	80	71	65	55	45	35	25	0
9RS0	A Level Religious Studies Paper 3	Raw	80	70	64	54	44	34	24	0
9RS0	A Level Religious Studies Paper 4A	Raw	80	68	62	52	42	32	23	0
9RS0	A Level Religious Studies Paper 4B	Raw	80	72	66	55	44	33	22	0
9RS0	A Level Religious Studies Paper 4C	Raw	80	70	64	54	44	34	24	0
9RS0	A Level Religious Studies Paper 4D	Raw	80	75	69	58	47	36	26	0
9RS0	A Level Religious Studies Paper 4E	Raw	80	73	67	57	47	37	28	0
9RS0	A Level Religious Studies Paper 4F	Raw	80	73	67	56	46	36	26	0

# Paper Comparison

Religious Studies											
AS overall grade boundaries				Max Mark	A	B	C	D	E	U	
8RS0	AS Religious Studies	Subject	162	122	106	90	74	58	0		
	01 02 03										
8RS0	AS Religious Studies	Subject	162	123	106	89	72	56	0		
	01 02 4A										
8RS0	AS Religious Studies	Subject	162	119	103	87	71	56	0		
	01 02 4B										
8RS0	AS Religious Studies	Subject	162	123	106	89	72	56	0		
	01 02 4D										
8RS0	AS Religious Studies	Subject	162	123	106	89	72	56	0		
	01 02 4E										
A level overall grade boundaries				Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
9RS0	A Level Religious Studies	Subject	240	213	196	165	135	105	75	0	
	01 02 03										
9RS0	A Level Religious Studies	Subject	240	211	194	164	134	104	74	0	
	01 02 4A										
9RS0	A Level Religious Studies	Subject	240	215	198	166	135	104	73	0	
	01 02 4B										
9RS0	A Level Religious Studies	Subject	240	213	196	165	135	105	75	0	
	01 02 4C										
9RS0	A Level Religious Studies	Subject	240	218	201	170	139	108	77	0	
	01 02 4D										
9RS0	A Level Religious Studies	Subject	240	216	199	169	139	109	79	0	
	01 02 4E										
9RS0	A Level Religious Studies	Subject	240	216	199	168	137	107	77	0	
	01 02 4F										
9RS0	A Level Religious Studies	Subject	240	208	191	161	131	101	72	0	
	02 03 4A										
9RS0	A Level Religious Studies	Subject	240	215	198	167	136	105	75	0	
	02 03 4D										

# Aims and Objectives







# Aims and Objectives

1. Receive feedback on national performance of candidates on papers from 9RS0 of the June 2023 examination series.
2. Consider the variation of candidates' performance on different questions and possible reasons why.
3. Discuss the Examiner's Report.
4. Address common issues.

# Paper Comparison



# Paper Comparison

Strengths	Weaknesses
Knowledge and understanding of the topic/question is detailed and wide ranging evidenced through the skills of critical thinking	Limited knowledge and understanding of the subject/topic
Answers that demonstrate well-executed control of the material	No organisational structure in the answers;
Answers are crafted well and reflect thoughtful structure resulting in reasoned and justified conclusions along with a precise use of vocabulary which is specific to the subject	Limited ability to establish links between the elements of a question
Differing points of view, where relevant, are made in a competent and confident manner including referencing of scholars (although these need not be named)	Inappropriate or inadequate use of subject specific vocabulary
Better candidates offer answers that explicitly and effectively reflect the criteria of the highest-level band	Poor grammar, spelling etc that sometimes hinders the intent of a candidate

# Overall Performance





# Overall Performance

This year there were some excellent responses that were a joy to read and clearly some centres have enabled candidates to explore a wide range of contextually relevant material across all the topics on all the papers.

The majority of candidates were able to respond to the various question types and to the demands of the papers overall.

Candidates had been well prepared, and most understood and met the different demands of AO1 and AO2.

# 'Explore' Questions (Question 1)



# AO1 Performance

- 40% of the A level assessment
- Assessed in all questions to some extent

## **AO1 – Assessment Objective One** (p.71 of the Specification)

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including:

- religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching
- influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies
- cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice
- approaches to the study of religion and belief.

# 'Explore' Questions

This example contains marking guidance and can be used to explain to students why they may not get all 8 marks:

This question required candidates to:

*'Explore key features of the ummah as an expression of Islamic identity'.*

Better performing candidates were able to discuss key features asked for by the question through identifying, in detail, relevant material demonstrating knowledge and understanding and offering developed engagement that reflected sound understanding.

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



# 'Explore' Questions

Candidates are required to

<b>Explore</b>	Demonstrate understanding by investigating different reasons, concepts and ideas.
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In this year's examinations the overall performance in 'Explore' questions was better than in 2022. This is due, in part, to centres encouraging candidates to be concise and ensuring they did not inadvertently offer AO2 material which cannot be credited unless it also contains AO1 material. Candidates have become better at identifying relevant features or ideas and unpacking them.

'Explore' questions allow students to select relevant points to show ***a wide range of*** knowledge; accurate and relevant points made in relation to the focus of the question; include a wide range of points; use specialist language, key terms and key vocabulary correctly; remain focused on the demands of the question and develop each point to show depth of understanding.

# Where Candidates Did Well

Candidates who achieved full marks:

- used the key terms thus addressed the question
- wrote a detailed response
- showed understanding of the demands of the question

This question required candidates to **Explore key features of the ummah as an expression of Islamic identity.**

8 marks were awarded to this candidate for a focused, detailed response that identified relevant material reflecting a sound and solid L3 answer.

Q1 from DocID: 0524004959717 in 9RS0/4D: Available in delegate pack

1:33 - 1:43

SECTION A

Answer ALL questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

1 Explore key features of the ummah as an expression of Islamic identity. (8)

P1: est. 622, prophet + a need. P2: allows for correct practice, e.g. Shukrah

To begin with, one ~~potent~~ key feature of the ummah as an expression of Islamic identity is the history of which it was formed, due to a need to establish a community. This can be seen as the prophet established the ummah in 622, after the Hira to Yathrib, now known as Madinah, following the persecution of Muslims by the Meccans (614-618), and even after this was lifted there were clear limitations on the spread of Islam, including that the prophet could only preach on the outskirts of Mecca. This led to the local saint pledges of Aqaba (621, 622) leading to the Hira. This was a key feature of the ummah as it was a need to be able to freely express thanks, allowing the ummah to be established in Madinah and the community to grow.

Another key feature of the ummah as an expression of identity is the idea that the ummah allows for correct practice due to the support from other Muslims. This can be seen in relation to Salah as to pray five times a day is very hard and can be difficult to execute, linking into ideas behind that life is a test. However, the ummah existing allows for this struggle to be shared and therefore embraced, knowing that you're not alone. This means that the ummah helps to craft Islamic identity due to shared struggles and being able to have support by those aiming for the same thing (greater Jihad).

(Total for Question 1 = 8 marks)

# Where Candidates Did Not Do Well

Candidates who failed to achieve full marks:

- lacked knowledge and understanding
- managed to only write a short and limited amount
- did not use the key terms

This question required candidates to ***Explore key features of the ummah as an expression of Islamic identity.***

4 marks were awarded to this candidate for as it reflected L2 with a range of knowledge but lacked depth and sustained development.

Q1 from DocID: 0524004959726 in 9RS0/4D: Available in delegate pack

SECTION A

Answer ALL questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

1 Explore key features of the ummah as an expression of Islamic identity. Salah (8)

↑ Ramadan.

The ummah is the Islamic community which is very important to Muslims and their Islamic identities.

Through acts such as Salah (praying five times a day) and Ramadan (annual period of fasting) the ummah is brought together and bonds through their shared love and worship of Allah. Community is a large part of Islamic community in these acts.

In the eyes of Allah, all members of the ummah are equal. This is an important element of the ummah, Muslims know that despite their wealth or gender within the ummah they have equality and community.

(Total for Question 1 = 8 marks)



# Examiner Advice to Teachers

Candidates should:

- not give unnecessary background material
- be focussed on the demands of the question
- define key terms carefully and precisely
- develop each point clearly
- structure the answer clearly, for maximum impact.

# 'Assess' Questions (Question 2)



# AO2 Performance

- 60% of the A level assessment
- Assessed in questions 2,3 and 4 to some extent

## AO2 – Assessment Objective Two (p.71 of the Specification)

It requires candidates to:

- analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.
- For Q2 the trigger word is '**assess**' and includes 4 marks of AO1 and 8 marks of AO2.

<b>Assess</b>	Requires reasoned argument of factors to reach a judgement regarding their importance/relevance to the question context.
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# 'Assess' Questions

This example contains marking guidance and can be used to explain to students why they may not get all 12 marks:

This question required candidates to:

***Assess differing views about the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel.***

Better performing candidates were able to select relevant concepts to show *a wide range of knowledge* – accurate and appropriate; judge something with respect to its significance and provide a greater understanding or interpretation of the subject; critically deconstruct information by discussing different arguments.

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



# 'Assess' Questions

Candidates are required to '**assess**' and so they need to know the material in order to assess and judge where the argument/perspective sits in relation to the topic of the question. In 'assess' questions candidates are not asked, and therefore do not need, to evaluate.

In this year's examinations the overall performance in 'Assess' questions was generally better than in 2022.

'Assess' questions allow students to offer coherent and reasoned judgements.



# Where Candidates Did Well

Candidates who achieved full marks on 'assess' questions have:

- sound knowledge and understanding of the subject using subject-specific terminology
- answers which are logically structured and coherent
- the ability to present and develop contrasting points of view.

This question required candidates to **Assess differing views about the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel.**

12 marks were awarded to this candidate for a fully focused response that made effective use of scholarly opinion.

Q2 in DocID: 0524004535266 from 9RS0/03: Available in delegate pack

Gentile - Logos - Dead Sea Scrolls, Judaism - Logos - the word of God  
Children of Light  
2 Assess differing views about the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel  
Manna Bread - Suffering Servant  
Key to the Gospel (12)  
Manna Bread & (12)  
The Prologue is a short introduction to John's Gospel.  
It outlines key themes in the life of Jesus, such as eternal life. This is different to other gospels such as Matthew and Luke which begin with a birth narrative or genealogy. Manna Hooker says the Prologue is the 'Key' to the Fourth Gospel.

Some of the ideas in the Prologue seem to appeal to Gentiles. Firstly, they would have been familiar with the idea of the Logos, the word of God, which would help Gentiles to better understand Jesus' mission and teachings. To add to this, there is ideas of Gnosticism - flesh and spirit as separate and themes of light and darkness. This could perhaps help Gentiles to understand themes such as Jesus' spirit living on after his death. This is important as many describe the Fourth Gospel as a Spiritual Gospel. John has great knowledge of the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, which guides the disciples to carry on the work of Jesus. The Gentiles could therefore understand that the Bible is the word of God. Furthermore, the themes of light and darkness. How it ~~is~~ Jesus who <sup>will bring</sup> brought the 'light into the world' helps Gentiles understand later in the Gospels when Jesus says 'I am the light of the world' as it \*In the beginning was the word and the word was with God\*

# Where Candidates Did Well

Candidates who achieved full marks on 'assess' questions have:

- sound knowledge and understanding of the subject using subject-specific terminology
- answers which are logically structured and coherent
- the ability to present and develop contrasting points of view.

This question required candidates to **Assess differing views about the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel.**

12 marks were awarded to this candidate for a fully focused response that made effective use of scholarly opinion.

Q2 in DocID: 0524004535266 from 9RS0/03: Available in delegate pack

uses themes that they are familiar with. This therefore seems to be a strong argument. However, the Gentiles do not view the Logos as a physical reality but more as a way of life which might impair their understanding of Jesus as the Word or God. To add to this, it is believed that Christian Gnosticism did not come until much later than when John's Gospel was written. This may suggest that the Prologue was a later addition to the Fourth Gospel. This is also supported by the idea that themes such as Logos, are mentioned in the Prologue, but not mentioned in the main part of the Gospel itself.

Some would argue that the supposedly 'Gentile' themes do not suggest a Gentile but a Jewish audience. This is supported by Raymond Brown who points to the existence of the Dead Sea Scrolls. These scrolls were Jewish scrolls that spoke of themes such as light and darkness. Therefore, it suggests that these themes are not solely for Gentiles but Jews would have also understood them. This may mean that the Prologue was included to help Jews understand the person of Jesus. This is a strong argument as it is supported by various references to Jewish ideas in the Gospel. Firstly, the Prologue begins with 'In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God and the Word was God'. The Jews would have

# Where Candidates Did Well

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- sound knowledge and understanding of the subject using subject-specific terminology
- answers which are logically structured and coherent
- the ability to present and develop contrasting points of view.

This question required candidates to **Assess differing views about the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel**.

12 marks were awarded to this candidate for a fully focused response that made effective use of scholarly opinion.

Q2 in DocID: 0524004535266 from 9RS0/03: Available in delegate pack

understood this as it is a direct reference to Genesis, the first book in Genesis. Secondly, John references the manna bread and eternal life in the Prologue. This will help the Jews understand Jesus' I am saying in the Gospel itself, 'I am the Bread of life'. This is because it suggests that though the manna bread the Jews had in the desert spoiled and was not eternal, the bread Jesus provides is eternal - his teachings provide eternal life. Finally, he references the Jews as the children of God in the prologue, which Jews are familiar with, as they believe they are God's children innately from birth, but Jesus strays from the traditional sense - the only way one can become a child of God and receive eternal life is by believing, not about, but in Jesus. There it is, are slightly weakened by the fact Jews would not believe that God is one, so would view Jesus being the human word of God as blasphemous so they would reject the ideas in the prologue.

To conclude, the Prologue does <sup>illustrate</sup> ~~show~~ both Gentile and Jewish themes but it is likely that it is a later addition. This is because it seems to explain ideas of the Gospel, but also add in extra such as Logos, so may have been edited at a later date by a redactor.

(Total for Question 2 = 12 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION A = 20 MARKS

HA066403620

# Where Candidates Did Not Do Well

Candidates who failed to achieve full marks:

- lacked knowledge and understanding
- managed to only write a short and limited amount
- did not develop AO1 material.

This question required candidates to **Assess differing views about the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel**.

3 marks were awarded to this candidate for brevity and lack of development of the material offered.

Q2 in DocID: 0524004565453 from 9RS0/03: Available in delegate pack

John Baptist

Hooker → key to Gospels

2 Assess differing views about the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel. (12)

Morna Hooker argues that the Prologue is "a key to opening up the gospels", providing the view that the Prologue is important and is needed. As the prologue has divisive themes of hellenism as well as not explicitly referring Jesus at the beginning, Hooker argues that we are given the key and have a deeper understanding of what the Gospels exactly say. They provide us with prophecies from Isaiah and Jeremiah and Micah, such as "The messiah will be born of a virgin" in the Old Testament, with Mary being told she is pregnant by God even though she is a virgin. Another example can be seen through the story of a drunken in Bethlehem.



# Examiner Advice to Teachers

Candidates should:

- provide a comprehensive assessment of the right material to achieve a higher outcome
- stay on topic because guesswork does not replace knowledge of the topic.
- offer clear identification of differing views
- ensure AO2 material is offered as well as AO1 material.

# 'Clarify' Questions (Question 3a)



# 'Clarify' Questions

This example contains marking guidance and can be used to explain to students why they may not get all 10 marks:

- The aim of a 'clarify' question is to offer further information so that the identified point in the 'extract' is fully understood.
- It is important to:
  - link identified key ideas/concepts to references from the extract
  - demonstrate knowledge and understanding in relation to the material in the extract
  - use subject specific vocabulary
  - offer detailed and developed answers.

# 'Clarify' Questions

Candidates are required to:

<b>Clarify</b>	Identify key ideas and explain key concepts.
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In this year's examinations the overall performance in 'Clarify' questions was similar to that of 2022. This is due, in part, to the fact that a sizable number of candidates are still not fully engaging with the 'clarify' aspect of the question but instead either regurgitating or paraphrasing the extract. Centres need to focus on this because there are 10 AO1 marks readily available to those candidates who deliver a response that clearly does what the question asks and 'clarifies'.

'Clarify' questions allow students to select relevant information and unpack it to demonstrate good knowledge and understanding.

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



# Where Candidates Did Well

Candidates who achieved full marks on 3a) questions:

- identified key ideas/concepts
- selected relevant quotes from the passage and applied them to the clarification offered
- provided detailed and developed answers.

This question required candidates to ***Clarify the ideas about Hick's views illustrated in this passage.***

10 marks were awarded to this candidate for demonstrating concise and succinct engagement with the extract and effectively using quotes from the extract to unpack identified ideas.

**Q3a in DocID: 0524005292447 from 9RS0/4B (Samos): Available in delegate pack**

In this extract by John Hick from his work in his book 'The Metaphor God Incarnate' John Hick details his beliefs about atonement theory, and the sacrifice of Jesus to deliver humanity from sin. Hick's atonement theory is based off of his other work around his belief that God allows evil to exist in order for people to close the epistemic distance between God and humanity through soul making, following the moral exemplar of Jesus in order to become as close as possible to the perfect child of God. Therefore Hick's atonement theory sees Jesus as a moral exemplar and thus Jesus did not free humanity from sin because this would make humanity morally irresponsible. Hick first shows this view where he raises the question, whether 'repentance, apology, reparation and penance – can be carried over unchanged into our relationship with God' this shows that Hick questions whether it is worth repenting, apologising, pay reparations and penance if one is already atoned from original sin. This is because Hick's belief is that sin still exists and thus repenting, apologising, pay reparations and penance is somewhat pointless because evil and suffering is vital in order for one to do good to close the epistemic distance. This leads Hick to continue this point where he states that 'I suggest that when we have offered reparation-plus-penance to human beings whom we have injured, there is no further reparation-plus-penance to be made solely for God's benefit', this shows that Hick believes that once evil and suffering has occurred one must do good and repent but not solely to God in order to win over God, but pay reparation-plus-penance to those harmed in order to follow Jesus' example as the moral exemplar, and 'love thy neighbour'. This is because God does not require an apology but rather sees one do a good deed through making amends and doing good deeds on earth, thus showing the need for evil in order to permit soulmaking. Hick's next idea in the passage is his narrow atonement model which shows a transactional idea of atonement theory, where one repents for their sin as a transaction for a seat in heaven and the transaction of the death of Jesus to save humanity from sin. Hick states 'God cannot be benefitted, and thus recompensed and atoned to...' this shows to those who believe in the

# Where Candidates Did Well

Candidates who achieved full marks on 3a) questions:

- identified key ideas/concepts
- selected relevant quotes from the passage and applied them to the clarification offered
- provided detailed and developed answers.

This question required candidates to ***Clarify the ideas about Hick's views illustrated in this passage.***

10 marks were awarded to this candidate for demonstrating concise and succinct engagement with the extract and effectively using quotes from the extract to unpack identified ideas.

**Q3a in DocID: 0524005292447 from 9RS0/4B (Samos): Available in delegate pack**

transactional view of atonement such as the ransom theory cannot work because God cannot benefit from being atoned to, but instead the person who is atoning must atone through transformational atonement theory, such as John Hick's soul making theodicy following Jesus as the moral exemplar.

Hick goes on to develop this point and end the passage by stating 'But it is not... appropriate to express that fact by depicting his death as an atoning sacrifice that benefits God and so enables God to forgive humanity', this shows that it is wrong to believe in the narrow idea of atonement theory because just because Jesus' sacrificed humanity from original sin does not mean that God should have forgiven humanity, instead God forgave humanity out of love, for no benefit of his own, and allowed us free will and evils in the world to learn from and become as close to Jesus' moral exemplar as possible in order to close the epistemic distance each person has between themselves and God and thus earn a seat in heaven from being the most virtuous person they can possibly be.

# Where Candidates Did Not Do Well

Candidates who failed to achieve full marks:

- regurgitated or paraphrased parts of the extract
- offered quotes or referencing of the extract but failed to explain or apply them
- lacked sustained development.

This question required candidates to **Clarify the ideas about Hick's views illustrated in this passage.**

5 marks were awarded to this candidate for some relevant knowledge and understating but little development of a narrow range of ideas/concepts.

Q3a in DocID: 0524005348771 from 9RS0/4B: Available in delegate pack

**SECTION B**

Answer ALL questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

Read the following passage before answering the questions.

The question that has to be asked is whether... repentance, apology, reparation and penance – can be carried over unchanged into our relationship with God... Repentance, and apology as an expression of repentance, still apply; the sinner should truly and deeply repent and ask God's forgiveness... I suggest that when we have offered reparation-plus-penance to the human beings whom we have injured, there is no further reparation-plus-penance to be made solely for God's benefit. In doing all we can to repair matters with our wronged neighbour we are doing what genuine repentance requires. For God cannot be benefitted, and thus recompensed and atoned to... In relation to God the truly penitent person... can only accept forgiveness as a free gift of grace, undeserved and unearned. It may well be Jesus' life and teaching that prompt someone to do this. But it is not... appropriate to express that fact by depicting his death as an atoning sacrifice that benefits God and so enables God to forgive humanity.

(Source: extract adapted from 'The Metaphor of God Incarnate', Hick, J., Edexcel Anthology)

3 (a) Clarify the ideas about Hick's views illustrated in this passage.

(10)

You must refer to the passage in your response.

This passage is written by Hick who argues that atonement is needed by humans. Firstly, Hick argues that when we do bad / sinful things in our lives we try to 'repent / apologise...' for what we have done. However, this affects our relationship with God as we are going against him. Therefore we ask for God's 'forgiveness' so we can spend eternity with him in heaven. However, Hick argues that we should also apologise to the person we have hurt, not just God for the sake of getting into heaven and for God's benefit. Thus we should be civil to the 'wronged neighbour' (the person we have hurt) because then we are truly sorry for what we have done. Jesus lived a perfect and

# Where Candidates Did Not Do Well

Candidates who failed to achieve full marks:

- regurgitated or paraphrased parts of the extract
- offered quotes or referencing of the extract but failed to explain or apply them
- lacked sustained development.

This question required candidates to ***Clarify the ideas about Hick's views illustrated in this passage.***

5 marks were awarded to this candidate for some relevant knowledge and understating but little development of a narrow range of ideas/concepts.

Q3a in DocID: 0524005348771 from 9RS0/4B: Available in delegate pack

A photograph of a handwritten response on lined paper. The handwriting is in cursive and somewhat slanted. The text is written on the first few lines of the paper. The rest of the paper is blank with horizontal lines.

sin free life (moral exemplar) which will properly inspire  
us as Christians to follow his example of life and the sin  
free. However, Hick argues that just because Jesus died  
to take away our sins, it does not mean that God has  
to forgive us straight away. We have to be truly  
apologetic for our sinful behavior rather than the  
point of living an immoral life if we know we will  
go to heaven regardless.



# Examiner Advice to Teachers

Candidates should:

- aim to clarify cogently and concisely
- not 'waffle'
- not be tempted to regurgitate the extract but instead 'clarify' relevant aspects of the passage
- explain the terms clearly when needed to show your understanding
- use technical language where appropriate.

# 'Analyse' Questions (Question 3b)



# 'Analyse' Questions

This example contains marking guidance and can be used to explain to students why they may not get all 20 marks.

- 'Analyse' means to break down in order to bring out the essential elements or structure.
- Similarly, to analyse means to break down the content of a topic, or issue, into its constituent elements in order to provide an in-depth account and convey an understanding of it.
- In order to analyse you can ask questions and offer an interpretation of the topic.
- Candidates need to deconstruct information and/or issues to find connections and provide logical chains of reasoning so they can make judgements regarding their importance/relevance.

# 'Analyse' Questions

Candidates are required to

<b>Analyse</b>	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.
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In this year's examinations the overall performance in 'Analyse' questions was better than in 2022. This is due, in part, to less candidates repeating the material word for word from their response to part 3a.

'Analyse' questions allow students to 'construct coherent and reasoned judgements of the full range of elements in the question, which are fully supported by the comprehensive appraisal of evidence'.



# 'Analyse' 3b generic mark scheme

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

Level 4	13–16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are carefully selected, most of which are used appropriately and accurately throughout (AO1).</li> <li>Deconstructs religious information/issues leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning (AO2).</li> <li>Makes connections between a wide range of elements in the question (AO2).</li> <li>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).</li> </ul>
Level 5	17–20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A wide range of knowledge, specialist language and terminology are carefully selected and used appropriately, accurately and sustained throughout (AO1).</li> <li>Critically deconstructs religious information/issues leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning (AO2).</li> <li>Makes connections between the full range of elements in the question (AO2).</li> <li>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).</li> </ul>

# Where Candidates Did Well

Candidates who achieved full marks on 3b) questions:

- unpacked the question and include a wide relevant knowledge
- applied analysis and thought about how the analysis added meaning to the topic
- kept the answer sustained and focused throughout.

This question required candidates to **Analyse the view that Situation Ethics fails to offer a convincing morality.**

20 marks were awarded to this candidate for a focussed and sustained attempt to analyse the topic and reasoned judgements emerged from a comprehensive appraisal of the evidence.

**Q3b in DocID: 0524005169745 (SAMOS) from 9RS0/02: Available in delegate pack**

1:10 - 1:30 - 1:45 - 2:15 = 2:55

(b) Analyse the view that Situation Ethics fails to offer a convincing morality. (20)

Situation Ethics (SE) refers to the relativist ethic based on 'agape' unconditional love to decide the morality of an action. It was developed by Joseph Fletcher following the 1966 study on sex and morality which highlighted the fact that individuals were moving away from legalism (established laws and rules) towards anti-nomianism which is the abandonment of all rules. SE was devised by Fletcher to bring individuals back to the teachings of Jesus through adoptive normative standards.

SE is an ethic based on moral relativism which is the belief in anti-realism. Morality is deemed to be created rather than discovered. Relativism within SE is a strength of the ethic as it means individual circumstances are accounted for as there is no fixed basis for rules which absolutism poses. Moral relativism also ensures there is no moral rigidity which allows individuals to practice morality through their personal evaluations. This means that the individual is considered the centre of SE which is a strength to the ethic as individual autonomy

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**Q3b in DocID: 0524005169745 (SAMOS) from 9RS0/02: Available in delegate pack**

is a natural right.  
However, there are also fundamental issues within SE's moral relativism as there is no clear basis for which decisions to make. Therefore, it is convoluted and can produce harmful decisions. Furthermore, the ethic is weakened by its optimistic belief that all humans have the capacity to reason which decision produces the most agree. Lastly, the subjective nature of SE means there is no standard for morality and any individual can argue that their decision was out of love even for business actions.

Fletcher devised the four working principles to clarify SE. Personalism, ensured strengthened the ethic by ensuring the individual was at the center of their decision. Positivism, strengthened the ethic by asserting that love is the best calculus for morality which ensures individuals act out of love on all their decisions. Pragmatism, strengthened the ethic by producing a practical approach to moral decision making rather than being bound by fixed rules. Finally, relativism ensured circumstances and context was accounted for when one made their decision.

# Where Candidates Did Well

Candidates who achieved full marks on 3b) questions:

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- applied analysis and thought about how the analysis added meaning to the topic
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constitutes a loving action. ~~the~~ Lastly, Bordy highlighted the likelihood of individuals to be swayed by factors such as fear or emotion.

However, SE can be considered an effective ethic as Robinson highlights that it brings biblical teachings towards a growing secular society. Furthermore, agape was the fundamental proponent of Jesus' message to "love thy neighbour." The moral relativity of SE also allows it to be implemented in any society whilst respecting cultural norms. Therefore, ~~there~~ no normative ethic has a monopoly on moral truth.

In conclusion, SE does indeed fail to offer a convincing morality as it is based on subjective principles which have no fixed standard. Any individual can interpret agape whichever way they see fit which reduces SE to moral absurdity.



# Where Candidates Did Not Do Well

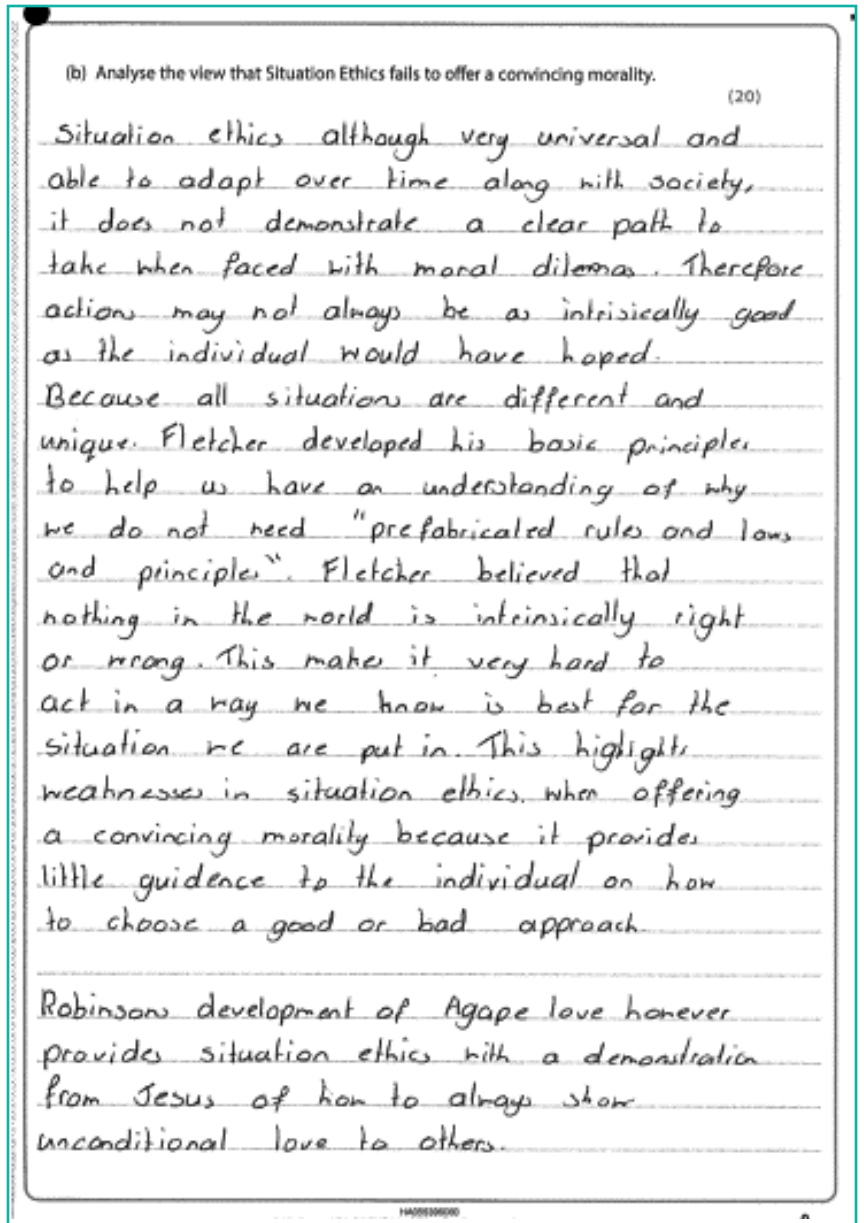
Candidates who failed to achieve full marks:

- little knowledge and understanding evident
- analysis drifted into descriptive narrative
- limited chains of reasoning evident.

This question required candidates to **Analyse the view that Situation Ethics fails to offer a convincing morality.**

6 marks were awarded to this candidate for some relevant AO1 material and a limited attempt to analyse without offering detailed development.

Q3b in Doc ID:0524005168450 p.7 from 9RS0/02: Available in delegate pack



# Examiner Advice to Teachers

Candidates should:

- ensure they demonstrate a high level of AO2 content with very good reasoned judgements
- ensure material that is linked to the extract does not simply repeat material from the answer to 3a but build on the 3a response
- ensure that the answer is well developed and sustained
- provide a well-balanced and structured argument that applies ethical theories and relevant scholarship.

# 'Evaluate' Questions (Question 4)



# 'Evaluate' Questions

This example contains marking guidance and can be used to explain to students why they may not get all 30 marks.

- 'Evaluate' means to consider several options, ideas or arguments and come to a conclusion about their importance/value/significance.
- 'Evaluate' is about *critical* appraisal.
- Reasoned judgements that are fully supported by comprehensive appraisal of evidence.
- Draw together arguments in a convincing conclusion which brings the answer together.



# 'Evaluate' Questions

Candidates are required

<b>Evaluate</b>	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.
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In this year's examinations the overall performance in 'Evaluate' questions was better than in 2022. This is due, in part, to the fact that the synoptic link is much more in explicit evidence across all the papers resulting in L5 being achieved more widely.

'Evaluate' questions allow students to offer arguments that are clear, coherent and effectively supported by specific examples. The implications of arguments are considered. There is clear awareness and evaluation of material offered.

# Where Candidates Did Well

Candidates who achieved full marks on Q4 questions:

- provide organised and structured answers
- make explicit synoptic links
- demonstrate excellent control of the material
- give answers that are erudite and well crafted.

This question required candidates to ***Evaluate the claim that critiques of religious belief provide decisive challenges to religion.***

In your response to this question, you must include how developments in Philosophy of Religion have been influenced by one of the following: • Religion and Ethics • New Testament Studies • Study of a Religion.

30 marks were awarded to this candidate for an answer that reflected all the L5 criteria.

Q4 in DocID: 0524002970097 p.15-22 from 9RS0/01: Available in delegate pack

SECTION C  
Write your answer in the space provided.

→ strengths & religious critiques.

4 Evaluate the claim that critiques of religious belief provide decisive challenges to religion.

In your response to this question, you must include how developments in Philosophy of Religion have been influenced by **one** of the following:

- Religion and Ethics
- New Testament Studies
- Study of a Religion.

(30)

(Plan =)

Agree (challenges) =	Disagree =
1) creation challenges = science v teleological, Par. of causation, Hume, Dawkins.	1) strengths of religious views of creation = Paley, teleological, a posteriori, gravity.
2) morality challenge = (links to ethics) opposed of Dawkins, Russell debate VS NMC.	2) rectification of lang. games = (ethics) intuition, Wittgenstein lang. games, Titch 'symbol'.
3) Russell's superior arguments in debate = existence not precreate, illogical causation, i.e. subjective.	3) strengths of Cop. = logical 'necessary being', reasonable in causation + i.e., 'totality of objects'.
4) i.e. = Frank - Davis, Freud, Vardy.	4) i.e. = Saul - Kane.

Answer =

The critiques of religious beliefs have significantly challenged religion in many

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Q4 in DocID: 0524002970097 p.15-22 from 9RS0/01: Available in delegate pack

areas. A few of these are clear in: the debate about creation, the question of morality and religious experiences. Whilst these critiques to religion have sparked debate, I would ultimately argue that they have failed to sufficiently challenge religious belief, on the grounds that these questions still haven't been solved.

One reason why you could agree that critiques of religious belief have provided decisive challenges to religion, is due to their strengths of demystifying creation. For example, this was clear in the Copernicus-Russell debate, during which Russell convincingly put down many religious arguments; one example of this was his critique that existence is not a predicate, as Copernicus assumes in his ontological argument, and that the concepts of 'causation' and 'contingency' can't be applied to a transcendent being. This strongly criticised religion through the 'fallacy of composition', showing it to make assumptions about nature. This

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Q4 in DocID: 0524002970097 p.15-22 from 9RS0/01: Available in delegate pack

can be similarly observed in Hume's strong critiques of the teleological argument, suggesting that 'the universe may contain the spring or order within itself as well as the mind does', using the evidence that some particles can come in and out of existence independently as proof. This was a convincing critique of religious beliefs about creation, as it highlighted their inherent inconsistencies, and how the universe may be its own cause for existence.

On the contrary, one could argue that critiques of religious beliefs haven't been challenged enough, as religious creationist beliefs are still prevalent and logical. For example, this is clear in the reason of Copleston's 'causation' argument for God's existence, that, using Leibniz's principle of sufficient reason, it would be logical to assume the existence of an uncaused cause to prevent infinite regress. This shows how Copleston draws upon logic in his religious assertions against Russell. This argument can be extended to the 'a



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Q4 in DocID: 0524002970097 p.15-22 from 9RS0/01: Available in delegate pack

posterior' nature of the teleological argument, drawing upon experience to show God's existence, such as the universe being 'providential in nature' (Summers), with the force of gravity, and how the earth would be sterile and lifeless if it was different. This convincingly shows how religious beliefs are logical and continue to be argued, which suggests that critique hasn't been strong enough to render their claims weak. Therefore, decisive challenges have not been made to religious beliefs about creation, as they continue to be upheld by parallel religions such as Christianity, and fiercely debated.

Another reason why you might argue that critiques of religious beliefs have decisively challenged religion, is due to their challenges to morality. For example, this links to the ethical study of 'religion and morality', where Rawls and sharp materialistically criticise

# Where Candidates Did Well

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Q4 in DocID: 0524002970097 p.15-22 from 9RS0/01: Available in delegate pack

the relationship between religion and morality in natural moral law, suggesting that the two concepts are actually opposed than united; Rawls says that 'science is deeply corrosive to religion', and draws upon religious terror, such as the 9/11 Islamic terrorist attacks, to show how religion motivates evil. Further, Russell criticized this relationship in his debate with Copleston, maintaining that they are independent concepts (good and evil), using the analogy of 'blue and yellow' to show how they can be distinguished. This strongly suggests that the relationship between religion and morality has come under major scrutiny in recent times, showing how critiques to religious beliefs have shown religion to be weak.

However, you could argue that challenges to religious belief have not been decisive, as religious language theories have been strong in proving the meaningfulness of language. For example, this was clear in Wittgenstein's language games theory, which suggests

# Where Candidates Did Well

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Q4 in DocID: 0524002970097 p.15-22 from 9RS0/01: Available in delegate pack

that religious people and scientists are playing two different games of language with completely separate rules, showing why there are conflicts in science and religion. This can be made more convincing when Wittgenstein said, 'whereof we cannot know, thereof we cannot speak'. This shows how language games has solved the conflict of science and religion. The argument can be made stronger, in the limitation of verification in showing religious language as meaningful; this is largely because Ayer's verification principle is self-contradictory, and can't be verified itself. Therefore, this coherently displays how challenges to religion have largely failed, due to the continued use of religious language, and stronger theory of Wittgenstein compared to Ayer.

A third reason why you could agree that critiques of religious belief have decisively challenged religion, is due to the criticisms of religious experience. For

# Where Candidates Did Well

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- make explicit synoptic links
- demonstrate excellent control of the material
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In your response to this question, you must include how developments in Philosophy of Religion have been influenced by one of the following: • Religion and Ethics • New Testament Studies • Study of a Religion.

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Q4 in DocID: 0524002970097 p.15-22 from 9RS0/01: Available in delegate pack

example, Vardy highlights the subjective nature of religious experiences, and how they can't be used as conclusive evidence. More, Caroline Franks-Rees provides a strong critique in her 'description-related problems' with religious experience, and how the experience tends to be inconsistent in their recollection of events; this was clear with St Teresa of Avila, who claimed Jesus was physically at her side, but later said it was merely symbolic. This shows how critique of religious experience has been strong in determining the existence of God. Moreover, Freud provides a psychological explanation, suggesting humans have an innate need for a God in their lives that they can depend on, and therefore we mis-interpret events as a religious experience. This clearly demonstrates the issues posed by religious experiences, and how they have been strongly critiqued. On the other hand, you could suggest that the argument from religious experience is stronger in its nature than its critiques. For example, Copleston convincingly shows how it's logical to



# Where Candidates Did Well

Candidates who achieved full marks on Q4 questions:

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- make explicit synoptic links
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In your response to this question, you must include how developments in Philosophy of Religion have been influenced by one of the following: • Religion and Ethics • New Testament Studies • Study of a Religion.

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Q4 in DocID: 0524002970097 p.15-22 from 9RS0/01: Available in delegate pack

assume that there is 'some objective cause of that experience', being God. Moreover, <sup>William</sup> James highlights the 'ineffable' and 'transient' nature of religious experiences, which make them more convincing. An example is the story of Saul on the Road to Damascus, who converted from a Christian persecutor, to a loyal follower of Jesus after a mystical, vision experience. This strongly exhibits the notion that religious experiences must have a reason other than Freud's psychological explanation, and that attempts of critique have failed to show their existence. Therefore, challenges to religious belief have failed to decisively discount religious experiences.

In conclusion, I disagree with the view that critiques of religious beliefs have decisively challenged religion. This is largely because debates surrounding religious experience and God's existence continue, and how critics have failed to discount religious claims.

(Total for Question 4 = 30 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION C = 30 MARKS  
TOTAL FOR PAPER = 80 MARKS

# Where Candidates Did Not Do Well

Candidates who did not do well in Q4:

- provided no synoptic link
- described rather than evaluated
- had a lack of detailed development
- gave brief answers that could not do justice to the Q as set.

This question required candidates to ***Evaluate the claim that critiques of religious belief provide decisive challenges to religion.***

In your response to this question, you must include how developments in Philosophy of Religion have been influenced by one of the following: • Religion and Ethics • New Testament Studies • Study of a Religion.

8 marks were awarded to this candidate for an answer that reflected lower L2.

Q4 in DocID: 0524003378411 p15-16 from 9RS0/01: Available in delegate pack

**SECTION C**

Write your answer in the space provided.

4 Evaluate the claim that critiques of religious belief provide decisive challenges to religion.

In your response to this question, you must include how developments in Philosophy of Religion have been influenced by **one** of the following:

- Religion and Ethics
- New Testament Studies
- Study of a Religion.

(30)

Within this essay one will be evaluating the positives and negatives of critiques of religious beliefs including works from a range of scholars such as Aquinas and Hume.

One may agree with the statement that "critiques of religious belief provide decisive challenges to religion" as it allows for religious belief to be argued and critiqued. Within philosophy there are a range of beliefs that go against the existence of God and the idea of a faith being contradicted and one of the main contributors to this is David Hume who believed that religious belief is pointless as "if there is no evidence to prove there ~~being~~ a God existing, then why should there be any reason for God a faith existing as it is unreasonable to assume it exists without any sort of evidence backing it up to prove it actually existing."

# Where Candidates Did Not Do Well

Candidates who did not do well in Q4:

- provided no synoptic link
- described rather than evaluated
- had a lack of detailed development
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This question required candidates to ***Evaluate the claim that critiques of religious belief provide decisive challenges to religion.***

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Q4 in DocID: 0524003378411 p15-16 from 9RS0/01: Available in delegate pack

On the otherhand, some scholars may argue that there is more than one way to experience God and that God can be experienced via analogy and by the use of symbols. A key scholar and philosopher Paul Tillich argues that objects can be a way of experiencing a Godly figure and a way of experiencing faith whether that be a rosary with a cross for Christians or going to observing the crucifix of Christ; these symbols can be used to identify a <sup>wholly</sup> ~~completely~~ good experience of God. Within Sikhism there is a concept of taking amrit (ambrosial nectar) to become closer with God and in this way it creates a way in which Sikhs can be apart of one congregation and experience the true power of God through coming together in a sangat or (congregation).

Overall, one reason why there has been critiques of religious belief is because of ideas from scholars such as ~~such as~~.

# Examiner Advice to Teachers

Candidates should:

- note that synoptic links or connections do not have to be extensive, but they do have to be clear
- be prepared to write at length for the 30-mark question
- make careful coherent and reasoned judgements of the full range of elements of the question
- sustain their focus on the question as set and not give irrelevant material.

# Preparation for Future Examinations



# Preparation for Future Examinations

Centres/teachers should:

- ensure that candidates have access to the whole specification so they can answer all questions set
- teach to the specification first and foremost
- encourage their candidates not to over-write for the 8- and 12-mark questions, which consequently reduces the time available for the 30-mark question.

# Key Messages





# Key Messages

Candidates should:

- be encouraged to focus closely on the question and its particular requirements. Where a question is solely AO1, the focus should be on very specific, accurate and relevant information
- note that where a question has an AO2 element, that should be a major focus and will consist of the majority of marks for that question. Reasoned judgements should be made, which are justified with accurate information
- note that for the longer final question (worth 30 marks), they must carefully select accurate information that ties in closely to the question. They should ensure that there is enough depth and breadth within their answer, to allow for reaching the higher levels of the mark scheme. Critical deconstruction of ideas is incredibly important for this question.



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