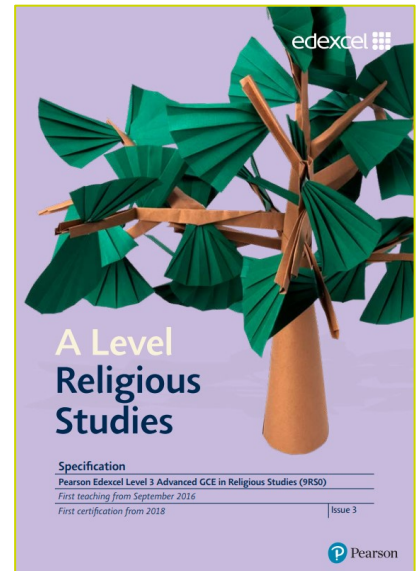


# Edexcel GCE Religious Studies 8-mark 'Explore' question exemplars

## About this resource

This pack includes A level exemplars for 8-mark 'Explore' questions. We have selected examples across the mark range from a variety of different papers, each including analysis against the level descriptors. These exemplars are taken from the 2022 exam series.

It should be noted that standardisation occurs to ensure consistency across series and the standard is set by the senior examining team.



## Contents:

### ► Level Descriptors:

- 8-mark 'Explore': Level Descriptors

### ► 'Explore' question exemplars:

#### Level 2 Exemplars

- 3 Marks: Paper 1 - Philosophy of Religion
- 4 Marks: Paper 4e - Judaism
- 4 Marks: Paper 2 - Ethics
- 5 Marks: Paper 3 - New Testament Studies

#### Level 3 Exemplars

- 6 Marks: Paper 4a - Buddhism
- 7 Marks: Paper 4f - Sikhism
- 8 Marks: Paper 4d - Islam
- 8 Marks: Paper 4b - Christianity
- 8 Marks: Paper 2 - Religion and Ethics
- 8 Marks: Paper 1 - Philosophy of Religion
- Further Support for Edexcel Religious Studies

# 8-mark 'Explore' guidance

## Level descriptors

The 8 marks available are for AO1 (knowledge and understanding). No marks are awarded for AO2 (evaluation and assessment). Questions are designed to target accessible exploration of the topic.

**Recommended time:** 10 minutes

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 are selected but are 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 are selected most of which are 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 are 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>

The 8-mark 'Explore' level descriptors are consistent across papers and exam series. It is important to recognise that there are many reasons why an answer may meet a level, as the level descriptors contain a mixture of elements that need to be fulfilled.

Generally, to achieve a Level 3, answers:

- select relevant points to show a wide range of knowledge
- are accurate and directly focus on the question throughout
- include a range of points which are expanded on to show understanding
- use relevant specialist language appropriate to the question.

# Example 1: 3 marks

## Paper 1: Philosophy of Religion

Q: Explore the contribution of symbol to debates about religious language.

Question number	Answer
1	<p>8 marks AO1</p> <p><b>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.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Symbols are a non-cognitive form of language, offering an anti-realist perspective.</li> <li>• Symbols offer insights which are not intended to be interpreted literally, but which convey spiritual and religious truths.</li> <li>• They are commonly used within narrative forms, such as creation myths, resurrection stories, accounts of the miraculous.</li> <li>• Symbols participate in that which they convey, going beyond signs which provide information. e.g. the cross participates in ideas of sacrifice, salvation, atonement and ransom.</li> <li>• Symbols cross cultural barriers and are accessible as a means of universal language although they may also be era dependent.</li> </ul>

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 are selected but are 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 are selected most of which are 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 are 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>

# Example 1: 3 marks

## Paper 1: Philosophy of Religion

Q: Explore the contribution of symbol to debates about religious language.

1 Explore the contribution of symbol to debates about religious language.

(8) 3 Q01

Symbols are used by Paul Tillich and can be shown as a deeper meaning to understanding religious language.

Symbols can be used to give meaning to religious language as when looking at language you have to consider the analytic and synthetic ideas.

religious language contributes through the use of univocal and equivocal language which is when it can have the same meaning of a word e.g. human and love of God is the same as if it has different meanings despite being the same word.

# Example 1: 3 marks

## Paper 1: Philosophy of Religion

**Q:** Explore the contribution of symbol to debates about religious language.

**Using a best-fit approach, this answer achieved Level 2: 3 marks.**

- This answer includes a limited **range of knowledge**, referring to some relevant scholars and some basic ideas, **most of which are used appropriately. Specialist language and terminology** appropriate to the question are included.
- This answer includes a **narrow range of ideas** in relation to the question. An attempt is made to cover different aspects of the question, referring to contribution but focused on the contribution of religious language generally rather than the contribution of symbol in particular.
- There is an attempt to **develop key religious ideas** using an example but most points made are undeveloped, so **depth of understanding** is unclear.

**To improve this answer, the candidate needed to:**

1. Develop the simple points made to show understanding through their explanation.
2. Refer more specifically to the use of symbols and what they achieve rather than to religious language generally.

# Example 2: 4 marks

## Paper 4e: Study of Judaism

**Q:** Explore key features of the Jewish values of love and justice.

Question number	Answer
1	<p>8 marks AO1</p> <p><b>AO1 will be used by candidates to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and specialist language and terminology when responding to the question.</b></p> <p><b>Candidates may refer to the following.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• God is believed to be the source of Jewish moral values.</li> <li>• 'Love your neighbour as yourself' is considered the most significant ethical commandment found in the Torah informing the Jewish value of love.</li> <li>• Specific examples of teaching on charity may include those of Maimonides and 'eight levels of giving' such as giving anonymously to an unknown recipient.</li> <li>• Justice is rooted in the belief that God is holy and knows all deeds and thoughts; justice is a key human moral value.</li> <li>• God rewards those who keep his commandments and punishes those who transgress them.</li> </ul>

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 are selected but are 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 are selected most of which are 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 are 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>

# Example 2: 4 marks

## Paper 4e: Study of Judaism

Q: Explore key features of the Jewish values of love and justice.

1 Explore key features of the Jewish values of love and justice.

(8) 4 Q01

Within Judaism and the ethics of the fathers, as part of that, there is an idea of kindness and this suggests that above all else you should be kind and, similarly to ideas of Christianity, there is also agape which is the idea of unconditional love. Within the ~~the~~ Nezikin, there is laws and rules mostly limited to the Jewish Criminal Justice System and Criminal laws. To contrast the idea of love, Jews believe that the experience of suffering can bring us closer to God and therefore ~~brings them closer to God~~ and this strengthens their religion.

# Example 2: 4 marks

## Paper 4e: Study of Judaism

**Q:** Explore key features of the Jewish values of love and justice.

**Using a best-fit approach, this answer achieved Level 2: 4 marks.**

- This answer shows a limited **range of knowledge**, referring to some ideas related to love and justice, **most of which they used appropriately**. They included **specialist language and terminology** appropriate to the question.
- There is a **range of ideas** in relation to the question such as 'agape', 'ethics of the Father', 'Neizikin', and 'criminal laws'.
- An attempt is made to **develop** the initial **idea** used but most points made are undeveloped, so **depth of understanding** is unclear.

**To improve this answer, the candidate needed to:**

1. Develop the values identified in more depth to show understanding through their explanation.
2. Explicitly link ideas to the concepts of 'love' and 'justice' as demanded by the question.

# Example 3: 4 marks

## Paper 2: Religion and Ethics

Q: Explore religious attitudes to childlessness.

Question number	Answer
1	<p>8 marks AO1</p> <p><b>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.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The notion that children are a blessing from God (Psalm 127:5) influences some believers to pursue fertility treatment if they are unable to conceive naturally.</li> <li>• Examples of biblical characters (e.g. Sarah, Hannah, Elizabeth) who overcame childlessness through God's intervention may be an encouragement for those who are childless.</li> <li>• Voluntary childlessness is considered an unacceptable choice in some religious traditions, although social and religious attitudes are changing.</li> <li>• Some religious believers accept or choose childlessness in order to remain devoted to a spiritual vocation.</li> <li>• Some religious groups, for example, Quiverful, face criticism for condemning childlessness and for putting pressure on women to have multiple children as an act of obedience to God or to the religious community.</li> </ul>

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 are selected but are 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 are selected most of which are 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 are 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>

# Example 3: 4 marks

## Paper 2: Religion and Ethics

Q: Explore religious attitudes to childlessness.

1 Explore religious attitudes to childlessness.

Religious attitudes to childlessness are in sexual ethics and this concerns the attitudes of Catholics, Church of England and other biblical views. (4 marks)

Attitudes are they Christians should have children and that marriage is the best environment for this to happen. As the Bible says that you should be fruitful and multiply which means that you should engage in sexual activity and reproduce.

However family planning is allowed as long as you intend to have children at some point, but ultimately Christians are expected to have children so that they can teach them Christian values.

Catholics are against contraception as it encourages sex for pleasure which further encourages sex for pleasure. Contraception results in childlessness as it stops the act of reproduction. As sex should be for intended purposes of children.

Natural law has a Christian ethos and a family that is educate offspring and reproduce and protect life. So you can't educate if you don't reproduce and abortion is wrong as it is taking life and not protecting life and therefore being childless.

# Example 3: 4 marks

## Paper 2: Religion and Ethics

**Q:** Explore religious attitudes to childlessness.

**Using a best-fit approach, this answer achieved Level 2: 4 marks.**

- This answer includes a limited **range of knowledge, most of which is used appropriately**, although deviates to focus on contraception rather than on childlessness throughout. Some **specialist language and terminology** appropriate to the question are used.
- There is a **narrow range of ideas** in relation to the question including reasons for having children rather than linking these ideas specifically to childlessness.
- There is simple **development** of relevant **key ideas** but these could be explored further to show **depth of understanding**.

**To improve this answer, the candidate needed to:**

1. Maintain focus on the question and ensure all points made address attitudes towards childlessness.
2. Ensure points made about the value of having children are used to return to attitudes to childlessness in particular.

# Example 4: 5 marks

## Paper 3: New Testament

**Q:** Explore key ideas used in Matthew's proof texts to prove Jesus is the Messiah.

Question number	Answer
1	<p>8 marks AO1</p> <p><b>AO1 will be used by candidates to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and specialist language and terminology when responding to the question.</b></p> <p><b>Candidates may refer to the following.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scholars agree that more than 90% of the content of Mark's gospel appears in Matthew but the beginnings of the two gospels are quite different; Matthew unlike Mark, begins with a description of Jesus' ancestry and birth.</li> <li>• Matthew recounts the birth of Jesus from Joseph's viewpoint and highlights that Jesus is of the line of David through five carefully chosen proof texts from the Old Testament.</li> <li>• In the genealogy which opens Matthew's gospel he makes reference to three titles: Messiah, Son of David and Son of Abraham to prove Jesus' identity.</li> <li>• Reference to the Exodus and Moses were deliberately included in the Story of the Magi, King Herod and the Flight into Egypt to prove Jesus is the new Moses who would lead the new Exodus.</li> <li>• Matthew, in addition to claiming Jesus to be of Davidic descent, reflects on the belief that God would send Israel a prophet like Moses; he draws parallels between the birth of Jesus and Moses and the Exodus to emphasise that God has sent a 'new Moses' in Jesus the Messiah.</li> </ul>

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 are selected but are 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 are selected most of which are 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 are 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>

# Example 4: 5 marks

## Paper 3: New Testament

Q: Explore key ideas used in Matthew's proof texts to prove Jesus is the Messiah.

Explore key ideas used in Matthew's proof texts to prove Jesus is the Messiah.

(8) 5 00

From the opening of the gospel of Matthew, a series of proof texts are given to prove that Jesus is the Messiah. In the birth narrative, it shows that Jesus was fulfilling the prophecy of the Messiah in two ways: that he descended from the line of David, and that he was born in Nazareth. Matthew's gospel may have been written for a more Jewish audience than a gentile one because it tries to fulfill the prophecies that would make him the Messiah and links this to the Old Testament. The proof text of the birth narrative states each person king from the line of David to prove that Jesus was the Messiah that the people had been waiting for. By doing this, and by showing how Jesus ended up being born in Nazareth, the gospel proves that Jesus is the Messiah. Joseph's dream about the angel also proves that Jesus is the Messiah as he is told that the baby that will be born is a chosen one from God.

# Example 4: 5 marks

## Paper 3: New Testament

**Q:** Explore key ideas used in Matthew's proof texts to prove Jesus is the Messiah.

**Using a best-fit approach, this answer achieved Level 2: 5 marks.**

- This answer includes a **range of knowledge** of Matthew's gospel and the proof texts in relation to Jesus as the Messiah. There is **specialist language and terminology** used properly. **Appropriate** material has been selected and used for this question.
- There are a **range of key ideas** in relation to the question, including Jesus' Davidic descent, the reference to Nazareth, the Jewish audience and Joseph's dream.
- There is basic **development of key religious ideas** but, often, pertinent points are not fully explored to show a **depth of understanding**.

**To improve this answer, the candidate needed to:**

1. Explicitly explain the significance of each proof and how it is used by Matthew to validate Jesus as the Messiah.
2. Ensure all points link directly to the question.

# Example 5: 6 marks

## Paper 4a: Study of Buddhism

**Q:** Explore the key emphases of ahimsa in the modern world.

Question number	Answer
1	<p>8 marks AO1</p> <p><b>AO1 will be used by candidates to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and specialist language and terminology when responding to the question.</b></p> <p><b>Candidates may refer to the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ahimsa is an ideal which can be practised in all societies.</li> <li>• Ahimsa can be seen to be an attitude of compassion embodied in how we treat every living being.</li> <li>• Ahimsa is the principle of non-violence and an expression of the First Precept.</li> <li>• Ahimsa may lead people to adopt a strictly vegan lifestyle to avoid harming living beings.</li> <li>• Ahimsa is often balanced with the choice of career and the demands of helping others, for example as a police officer.</li> </ul>

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 are selected but are 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 are selected, most of which are 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 are 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>

# Example 5: 6 marks

## Paper 4a: Study of Buddhism

Q: Explore the key emphases of ahimsa in the modern world.

1 Explore the key emphases of ahimsa in the modern world.

(8) 6 Q01

Ahimsa is the concept of non-violence — typical in Buddhism, two controversial topics arise in the modern world — vegetarianism and the armed forces. In the context of vegetarianism, differing stances stand out. Typically, Theravadin are not vegetarians, similar to Pure Land Buddhists as they believe that the consumption of meat and fish doesn't breach the principle as you're not directly doing the slaughtering and rather eating the product. Indeed, the Buddha explicitly said that its consumption doesn't produce bad karma — a stance supported by the majority. Even the Dalai Lama ate meat when needed due to health, instead believing that ones should be encouraged to be vegetarian. In the context of the armed forces, it's a misconception that Buddhists cannot be soldiers. The Pali Canon praises soldiers as it allows them to engage with their the dhama much more properly — teaching them discipline in particular, however, the Pali Canon also condemns soldiers: creating an obligation — by stating that all those who kill ones will find themselves in some sort of hell — the general consensus therefore is that the Pali Canon is against the armed forces. Overall, for both areas views are conflicted. (Total for Question 1 = 8 marks) **6**

# Example 5: 6 marks

## Paper 4a: Study of Buddhism

**Q:** Explore key emphases of ahimsa in the modern world.

**Using a best-fit approach, this answer achieved Level 3: 6 marks.**

- This answer shows a **range of knowledge** of how ahimsa is practised in the modern world, focusing specifically on vegetarianism and the armed forces (although at times they veer towards focusing on explaining why these are fine). It includes **specialist language and terminology** used appropriately. They select and use **appropriate** material for the question.
- There is a **range of key ideas** in relation to the question. Links to 'ahimsa' and 'the modern day' are included, showing an understanding of this aspect of Buddhist belief.
- **Development of key religious ideas** around ahimsa in the modern day shows a **depth of understanding** and is supported by relevant sources of authority.

**To improve this answer, the candidate needed to:**

1. Aim to explore ahimsa as a 'teaching' to enable understanding of how it is lived.
2. Focus on exploring ahimsa in the modern world, rather than introducing the debate about this. This is an 'Explore' question rather than an 'Assess' question.

# Example 6: 7 marks

## Paper 4f: Study of Sikhism

Q: Explore the key features of nam japna.

Question number	Answer
1	<p>8 marks AO1</p> <p><b>AO1 will be used by candidates to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and specialist language and terminology when responding to the question.</b></p> <p><b>Candidates may refer to the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nam japna is the meditation or contemplation on the names/characteristics of Waheguru.</li> <li>Contemplating God's names helps a Sikh to control and subjugate the Five Thieves.</li> <li>The purpose of nam japna is to receive union with Waheguru (become Gurmukh).</li> <li>The Rehat Maryada suggests that it is necessary for a Sikh to engage in nam japna as part of their daily routine.</li> <li>Nam japna is one of the three main aspects of Sikhism along with kirat karo and vand chakko.</li> </ul>

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 are selected but are 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 are selected, most of which are 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 are 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>

# Example 6: 7 marks

## Paper 4f: Study of Sikhism

Q: Explore the key features of nam japna.

1 Explore the key features of nam japna.

(8)

Nam japna is one of the ~~three~~ principles out of three created by GURU NANAK DEVJI along with vand ke shakna and kirat karna. Nam japna means recite the name of God. GURU NANAK DEVJI came up with Nam japna to feel sargun and ~~and~~ Nirgun <sup>with</sup> God; "Ik onkar" this portrays that there is only one God and Sikhism is montheistic. Nam japna can be done in many ways, this can be demonstrated through kirtan, raath, sangat and more - allowing the person to feel one with God. Nam japna is a way of living the Gurmukh life and being God centred, helping one achieve Mukti. GURU NANAK DEVJI'S principle allows the person to grow spiritually and morally ~~and~~ reciting the name of God, whether it be individually or in a sangat. This aids the person to feel as close to God as possible. GURU NANAK DEVJI in Kartarpur went around with his followers ~~and~~ doing Nam japna. Nam japna can link to sat nam meaning recite the name of God truthfully which is the second line of the Mool mantra.

# Example 6: 7 marks

## Paper 4f: Study of Sikhism

**Q:** Explore the key features of nam japna.

**Using a best-fit approach, this answer achieved Level 3: 7 marks.**

- This answer shows a **range of knowledge** discussing what nam japna is, how it is practised and the importance of it. It includes a wealth of **specialist language and terminology** used correctly. **Appropriate material** has been selected and used and the focus of the question is **sustained throughout**.
- There is a **range of key ideas** in relation to nam japna. Focus is maintained, showing a clear understanding of this Sikh practice.
- **Key religious ideas are developed** supported by relevant Sikh beliefs and appropriate sources of authority, which shows a **depth of understanding**.

**To improve this answer, the candidate needed to:**

1. Include more detail within examples of what nam japna is, in addition to where it is practised.

# Example 7: 8 marks

## Paper 4d: Study of Islam

Q: Explore beliefs and practices relating to hajj.

Question number	Answer
1	<p>8 marks AO1</p> <p><b>AO1 will be used by candidates to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and specialist language and terminology when responding to the question.</b></p> <p><b>Candidates may refer to the following.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Hajj is the fifth of the Muslim practices and institutions known as the five pillars of Islam and is the one that places the emphasis on the role of pilgrimage for worship.</li> <li>• All Muslims believe that Hajj is required of all physically and financially able Muslims at least once in their lifetime.</li> <li>• Muslims believe that Hajj has special status and those who die whilst doing the pilgrimage go straight to Jannah.</li> <li>• The Hajj serves as a penance for the ultimate forgiveness of sins and is an act of devotion which can illustrate intense spirituality.</li> <li>• All the pilgrims wear the same clothing on Hajj to demonstrate equality and unity.</li> </ul>

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 are selected but are 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 are selected most of which are 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 are 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>

# Example 7: 8 marks

## Paper 4d: Study of Islam

Q: Explore beliefs and practices relating to hajj.

1) Hajj is the fifth pillar of Islam, and encompasses a physical as well as spiritual journey for Muslims. Hajj is a pilgrimage to Mecca that every Muslim must make once in their lifetime if financially able.

It is not however available to everyone. Mecca is only open to Muslims as it is in high demand and is sacred to Muslims, furthermore Hajj has a specific time frame, being from the 8th to the 13th of Dul-Hijjah, the 12th month in the Islamic calendar. Thus, it is an extremely busy time of year with Muslims all over the world hoping to visit and complete their Hajj.

There are also requirements that depend on the individual. They must be physically and mentally healthy to withstand the physical exertion necessary for Hajj and to understand the importance of their actions. They must also be able to afford Hajj in a halal way, meaning the money they use must be earned honestly and morally. They must also be able to financially support any dependants back home whilst they are away as this continues to be their responsibility.

An important aspect of Hajj that is therefore continuously emphasized is one's Niyyah, intention. If one cannot meet such requirements, they are able to gain the reward of Hajj for their Niyyah. Alternatively they can pay someone else to go to Hajj for them or can donate the money to charity. The main belief regarding whether one's Hajj is accepted or not is the intentions and efforts they make. This means even if one is able to travel to Hajj, if their intentions are not pure they may not have their Hajj accepted, as this is the most important factor. If one's Hajj is accepted though, they are forgiven of their sins and their prayers may be answered.

Regarding practices, upon the Muslims travel to Mecca they engage in certain rituals such as changing into appropriate clothing depending on their gender, the men wearing a white cloth and the women covering with basic neutral clothing. Upon arrival they engage in rituals that enable them to feel connected to their religion such as Tawaf, which is circling the Ka'ba seven times, visiting Arafah, walking and running between Safa and Marwa in remembrance of Hajr and the miracle of Zam Zam. This experience not only unites the Muslim community, but allows them to feel connected to their history. The importance of Hajj is emphasized by Muslims who return multiple times, sometimes going on Umrah to feel closer to their religion without the resilience and maturity required for Hajj. Some Muslims even require a trip to Hajj as a dowry for them and their spouse to connect to each other and their religion.

# Example 7: 8 marks

## Paper 4d: Study of Islam

Q: Explore beliefs and practices relating to hajj.

Using a best-fit approach, this answer achieved Level 3: 8 marks.

- This answer shows a **wide range of knowledge** through the selection of relevant material. **Specialist language and terminology** is used appropriately. It includes and uses **appropriate** material and the focus of the question is **sustained throughout**.
- The answer addresses a very **broad range of key ideas** and practices relating to hajj. It maintains focus, showing a clear understanding.
- **Key religious ideas are developed**, consistently supported by relevant detail and further explanation which shows a **depth of understanding**.

# Example 8: 8 marks

## Paper 4b: Study of Christianity

Q: Explore key themes of Black theology.

Question number	Answer
1	<p>8 marks AO1</p> <p><b>AO1 will be used by candidates to demonstrate knowledge, understanding and specialist language and terminology when responding to the question.</b></p> <p><b>Candidates may refer to the following.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Black theology is seen as a form of Liberation theology.</li> <li>• Black theology was developed by James Cone in the 1960s as a reaction to religious indifference regarding racial injustice.</li> <li>• Black theology has emerged from the field of struggle and seeks to concern itself with issues of everyday challenge within both church and society.</li> <li>• Black theology seeks to affirm black people's identity.</li> <li>• Black theology explores a perspective of God which does not reflect traditional ideas, for example, that Jesus was black rather than white.</li> </ul>

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 are selected but are 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 are selected most of which are 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 are 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>

# Example 8: 8 marks

## Paper 4b: Study of Christianity

Q: Explore key themes of Black theology.

1 Explore key themes of Black theology.

(8) 8 Q01

Black theology is a theological perspective seeking to contextualise Christianity in light of black communities being oppressed, its main proponent is James Cone.

Cone defined black theology as being a "rational study which examines God as a being in light of the essential situation of oppressed communities". Black theology - through Cone - mainly views theology in their perspective of liberating black and African American communities in the US.

Another key theme of black theology is the identity of blackness. Cone argues that God is black, not due to ethnicity, but due to his work in liberation - ~~Cone~~ namely Cone's reference to Israel's liberation from Egypt in the Old Testament - commenting that God's blackness is much God making "the oppressed condition God's own condition" with the same applying to Jesus. ~~So~~ This is such that Cone applies it to the situation of black people in the US.

# Example 8: 8 marks

## Paper 4b: Study of Christianity

Q: Explore key themes of Black theology.

Using a best-fit approach, this answer achieved Level 3: 8 marks.

- This answer shows a **wide range of knowledge** through the selection of relevant material related to Black theology. It includes **specialist language and terminology** used appropriately. There is an **appropriate** selection and use of material and the focus of the question is **sustained throughout**.
- There is a **broad range of key ideas** which are clearly organised to address what Black theology is and how it was developed.
- **Key religious ideas are developed**, supported by relevant detail, key thinkers and examples which shows a **depth of understanding**.

# Example 9: 8 marks

## Paper 2: Religion and Ethics

Q: Explore religious attitudes to childlessness.

Question number	Answer
1	<p>8 marks AO1</p> <p><b>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.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The notion that children are a blessing from God (Psalm 127:5) influences some believers to pursue fertility treatment if they are unable to conceive naturally.</li> <li>• Examples of biblical characters (e.g. Sarah, Hannah, Elizabeth) who overcame childlessness through God's intervention may be an encouragement for those who are childless.</li> <li>• Voluntary childlessness is considered an unacceptable choice in some religious traditions, although social and religious attitudes are changing.</li> <li>• Some religious believers accept or choose childlessness in order to remain devoted to a spiritual vocation.</li> <li>• Some religious groups, for example, Quiverful, face criticism for condemning childlessness and for putting pressure on women to have multiple children as an act of obedience to God or to the religious community.</li> </ul>

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 are selected but are 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 are selected most of which are 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 are 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>

# Example 9: 8 marks

## Paper 2: Religion and Ethics

Q: Explore religious attitudes to childlessness.

1 Explore religious attitudes to childlessness.

(8) 8 Q01

The Catholic attitude to childlessness has two principle foundations: the natural law tradition, and biblical accounts. In the natural law tradition, one of the primary precepts is ~~procreation~~ reproduction, which leads Catholics to consider childlessness as something to be avoided for. This same precept discourages the avoidance of childlessness through use of contraception, and results in perceiving of sterilisation as inherently evil. Biblical foundations also inform other religious traditions on their attitudes to childlessness. For instance, many denominations have seen it necessary to obey the command to "Go forth and multiply," given to Abraham, and see God's condemnation of Onan as evidence that avoiding child conception is immoral. As a result most Christians agree that childlessness is not desirable, with God being an endorser of parenthood. <sup>Organisations such as PowerPlus endorse this</sup> In some more traditional denominations, childlessness can actually be viewed as a punishment from God, though this is not true of most <sup>large</sup> denominational churches. The Church of England also differs slightly from Catholicism since it does recognise the need for prudent family planning, and is more understanding in relation to childlessness as a result of lack of socioeconomic resources, or a recognition that children would not be in a suitable environment. (Total for Question 1 = 8 marks) **8**

# Example 9: 8 marks

## Paper 2: Religion and Ethics

Q: Explore religious attitudes to childlessness.

Using a best-fit approach, this answer achieved Level 3: 8 marks.

- This answer shows a **wide range of knowledge** through the selection of relevant material focused on childlessness and different attitudes within Christianity to this issue. It includes **specialist language and terminology**. **Appropriate** material has been selected and used and the focus of the question is **sustained throughout**.
- It includes a **broad range of key beliefs** around childlessness including Catholic, Anglican and the position of Quiverful.
- **Key religious beliefs are developed** with further explanation linked to the question and relevant examples, which shows a **depth of understanding**.

# Example 10: 8 marks

## Paper 1: Philosophy of Religion

**Q:** Explore the contribution of symbol to debates about religious language.

Question number	Answer
1	<p>8 marks AO1</p> <p><b>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.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Symbols are a non-cognitive form of language, offering an anti-realist perspective.</li> <li>• Symbols offer insights which are not intended to be interpreted literally, but which convey spiritual and religious truths.</li> <li>• They are commonly used within narrative forms, such as creation myths, resurrection stories, accounts of the miraculous.</li> <li>• Symbols participate in that which they convey, going beyond signs which provide information. e.g. the cross participates in ideas of sacrifice, salvation, atonement and ransom.</li> <li>• Symbols cross cultural barriers and are accessible as a means of universal language although they may also be era dependent.</li> </ul>

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 are selected but are 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 are selected most of which are 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 are 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>

# Example 10: 8 marks

## Paper 1: Philosophy of Religion

Q: Explore the contribution of symbol to debates about religious language.

1 Explore the contribution of symbol to debates about religious language.

(8) 8 Q01

The notion that religious language can be meaningfully understood through symbol, is a contribution to the debate from Tillich. His main claim is that verificationism is incorrect in treating religious language like 'signs', because these are fundamentally different to 'symbols'. This is because while 'signs' are arbitrary, and could mean anything (such as stop being red, and go-green on a traffic light), symbols are not arbitrary, because they are able to participate in that to which they point. For instance, the cross is a 'symbol', and as a result, it evokes emotional response. Symbols cannot be manufactured like signs can, but instead rise from the collective unconscious. As such, they are capable of opening up deeper levels of reality to the devout - and this gives such symbols meaning. Claims like 'Lamb of God', might no longer be understood as literal, but as a symbol (perhaps allowing comprehension of qualities of Jesus as the 'Lamb'). Randal is the other scholar who viewed symbols as important in debates about religious language. He sees symbols as having four primary functions which ~~are~~ enabled meaning: they are motivational, communicative, social (due to arising out of collective understanding), and clarify and disclose aspects of the divine, which would otherwise remain unreachable with use of 'normal' (univocal) language.

(Total for Question 1 = 8 marks) **8**

# Example 10: 8 marks

## Paper 1: Philosophy of Religion

**Q:** Explore the contribution of symbol to debates about religious language.

**Using a best-fit approach, this answer achieved Level 3: 8 marks.**

- This answer shows a **wide range of knowledge** through the selection of relevant material which unpacks Tillich's work on symbol. **Specialist language and terminology** relevant to the question are used. **Appropriate** material is selected and explored and the focus of the question is **sustained throughout**.
- There is a systematic approach which addresses a **broad range of key ideas** around symbol, using relevant examples and contrasting symbol to signs.
- **Key ideas are developed** using clear chains of explanation with pertinent examples which shows a **depth of understanding**.

# Further Support for Edexcel Religious Studies



## Contact the Religious Studies team:

Email: [teachingreligiousstudies@pearson.com](mailto:teachingreligiousstudies@pearson.com)

Phone: +44 (0) 344 463 2535 (Mon – Fri, 9am – 5pm GMT)

Contact online: <https://bit.ly/2KLSNT0>

Book a Teams meeting with the subject advisor:  
<https://bit.ly/3rEVLx8>

Follow us on LinkedIn: <https://bit.ly/3y1zQDx>



## Stay informed:

Sign up for subject updates: <https://bit.ly/2G6mmfe>

View the latest subject update online: <https://bit.ly/3zsnxjL>



## Access Course Materials:

Visit the Pearson Edexcel Religious Studies website for course materials:

- Specification and sample assessments: [\(GCSE\(A\)/GCSE\(B\)/GCE\)/Int GCSE](#)
- Exam materials: [\(GCSE\(A\)/GCSE\(B\)/GCE\)/Int GCSE](#)
- Teaching and learning materials: [\(GCSE\(A\)/GCSE\(B\)/GCE\)/Int GCSE](#)



## Access teaching support and training:

- [Learn more about our training events](#)

## Access published resources:

- [Learn more](#)

