

Exemplar Candidate Responses

GCSE (9-1) Religious Studies A and B

**GCSE (9-1) Religious Studies A and B
(Short Course)**

For first teaching September 2017

Preface

The following set of exemplars have been produced using actual candidates' responses to questions from the 2018 summer examination series. The exemplars are responses from our 12 mark (d) questions. Please note that this also applies to our 15 mark (d) questions, as three of those marks are for spelling punctuation and grammar.

All examples shown would have been awarded full marks.

The commentaries that go with the exemplars have been written by the senior examining team. The exemplars can be applied to **all** of our GCSE/GCSE Short Course Religious Studies A and B qualifications regardless of the religion studied. They all assess the same assessment objectives and have the same levels-based mark schemes, with a slight variance for the Textual Studies Papers in our GCSE Specification A qualification.

The senior examiners have been very careful to draw out guidance on how to answer these questions in order to be as explicit as possible about how the marks are awarded. Text marked in ***italics and bold*** refers to direct quotations from the levels-based mark scheme.

Please note, for the sake of accuracy and ease of reference, candidates' responses have been typed up but they are the transcripts of real answers.

Introduction

It is important to realise that there is no magical formula for the answering of (d) questions. Teachers often ask how many arguments on either side of the question should be given. Apart from using both sides in the discussion, there is no hard and fast answer.

In this sense an answer that has one point on either side may achieve a higher level than another that has three on each side. It is not quantity, rather what the candidate does with the information they provide.

In our legacy qualification we had points-based mark schemes for our extended writing questions; however, now these are marked according to the levels of response outlined in the levels-based mark scheme.

In the 2018 summer examination series, a large number of candidates gave arguments for and against, and then a simple conclusion at the end. This was limited in the level it could be awarded because of the demands of the higher levels.

Marking Guidance for Levels-Based Mark Schemes

The assessment objective for **A02** is:

- **Analyse and evaluate** aspects of religion and belief, including their significance and influence.

The indicative content provides information for the examiner to indicate possible responses to the question.

The level descriptors reflect the requirements for each level.

Finding the right level

To decide which level the answer should be placed in read the entire response.

Then use a 'best-fit' approach, deciding which level most closely describes the quality of the answer. Answers can display characteristics from more than one level, and where this happens markers must use the guidance below and their professional judgement to decide which level is most appropriate.

Statements relating to the treatment of candidates who do not fully meet the requirements of the question are also shown in the indicative content section of each levels-based mark scheme. These statements should be considered alongside the level descriptors.

If a candidate does not meet each of the requirements outlined in the question they will be capped at level 3. These requirements include:

- Considering arguments for and against

And the bullet points listed beneath the question. Which should always include the following:

In your response you should:

- refer to XXXX teachings*
- reach a justified conclusion.

*In the Textual Studies papers in the GCSE Religious Studies Specification A – papers 4A and 4B, this could be 'refer to Mark's Gospel' or 'refer to the Qur'an/Muslim teachings'.

Please note there is a slightly different levels-based mark scheme for these but they still assess the same assessment objective AO2, and the skills/traits we are looking for are the same.

The question may indicate one of the following, as allowed by the specification:

- refer to non-religious points of view
- refer to relevant ethical arguments
- refer to different XXXX points of view
- refer to relevant philosophical arguments

Remember that this question is assessing AO2; there should be appraisal of arguments and evidence and evaluation of the statement.

Placing a mark within a level

This is the levels-based mark scheme used for (d) part questions, with slight variance, as mentioned above, for Textual Studies papers in GCSE Religious Studies A.

Level	Marks	Descriptor
1	1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information/issues are identified and make superficial connections among a limited range of elements in the question, underpinned by isolated elements of understanding of religion and belief. Judgements are supported by generic arguments to produce a conclusion that is not fully justified.
2	4-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Superficial connections are made among many, but not all, of the elements in the question, underpinned by a limited understanding of religion and belief. Judgements of a limited range of elements in the question are made. Judgements are supported by an attempt to appraise evidence, much of which may be superficial, leading to a conclusion that is not fully justified.
3	7-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deconstructs religious information/issues, leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning that consider different viewpoints. These are underpinned by an accurate understanding of religion and belief. Connections are made among many, but not all, of the elements in the question. Constructs coherent and reasoned judgements of many, but not all, of the elements in the question. Judgements are supported by the appraisal of evidence, some of which may be superficial, leading to a partially justified conclusion.
4	10-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critically deconstructs religious information/issues, leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning that consider different viewpoints. These are underpinned by a sustained, accurate and thorough understanding of religion and belief. Connections are made among the full range of elements in the question. Constructs coherent and reasoned judgements of the full range of elements in the question. Judgements are fully supported by the comprehensive appraisal of evidence, leading to a fully justified conclusion.

After a level has been decided on, the next stage is to decide on the mark within the level. Markers will be prepared to award the full range of marks available in a level and not rely on the middle mark available.

The examiner will take into account how far the answer meets the requirements of the level, there are a number of bullets in each level and each must be addressed to get the highest levels:

- If it meets the requirements fully, markers should be prepared to award full marks within the level. The top mark in the level is used for answers that are as good as can realistically be expected within that level.
- If it only just meets the requirements of the level, markers should consider awarding marks at the bottom of the level. The bottom mark in the level is used for answers that are the weakest that can be expected within that level.
- The middle marks of the level are used for answers that have a reasonable match to the descriptor. This might represent a balance between some characteristics of the level that are fully met and others that are only barely met.

There have been different attempts to simplify these into 'candidate speak'; these are not official or used in marking in any way, rather the levels outlined above are what are used.

Below you will find examples of responses that were given 12 marks in the examination, with annotations taken from the level descriptors. All questions are designed to enable candidates of a wide range of abilities to achieve across all of the marks available.

Some of the responses may have too much information in them, but it is the skills being evidenced that enable the candidates to achieve 12 marks rather than the accumulation of knowledge.

These answers are illustrative of the variety of things that meet the requirements of level 4. The first three examples are from the 2018 summer examination series and the fourth example has been taken from the exemplar materials that were published before the first assessment in 2018, and was used in our mocks marking training.

It may be worth mentioning that sources add to the quality of the argument and the coherence of the chains; however, this is not a requirement of the assessment criteria in the levels-based mark scheme.

Exemplars

Example 1

“The sacraments are the best way to feel close to God.”

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Catholic teachings
- refer to different Christian points of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

d. It could be quite strongly argued that the Sacraments are the best way to feel close to God as they were decreed by God and Jesus in the Bible. When Jesus was at the last supper, he told his disciples to take the Eucharist 'in memory of me'. As a result, Catholics take the Eucharist, a sacrament, in order to remind themselves of Jesus and his sacrifices, and the beginnings of their faith, helping them to connect with God and Jesus, helping to bring them close to God, and because they believe it becomes the body and blood of Christ, allowing them to connect with God by taking in Jesus' blood and body, making the sacraments the best way to feel close to God. However, other denominations such as Protestants would believe it connected them to God based on the reminder of the faith, but as they do not believe in transubstantiation, would not believe it would become Christ's body and blood, and therefore might not think it was the best way to feel close to God. Furthermore, this argument can be significantly weakened by the argument that actually, the best way to be close to God is through popular piety, such as the rosary beads. Many Catholics might find it difficult at first to connect with God individually with the sacraments, as many others take them. However, they may find that a more private form of devotion, such as rosary beads, allows them to feel more connected with God on an individual basis, using Mary as an intermediary to feel close to God. This is a strong argument; as the CCC says, 'other forms of piety, such as the stations of the cross and the rosary beads, have often been inspired'. As a result, it could be argued that the sacraments are not always the best way to feel close to God, but popular piety such as rosary beads may be better for some. However, other denominations such as Protestants may not agree, as they do not show as much adoration to Mary as Catholics, and may therefore feel that rosary beads would not help bring people close to God.

It could also be quite strongly argued that actually, the best way to feel close to God is through individual prayer. Catholics may struggle to connect with God through the standard sacraments, as they do not provide much individual variance; the sacraments are set in stone and cannot be changed. While some Catholics may take comfort in this sense of timelessness, others may find that they do not cover their needs for God. As a result, some Catholics may find that prayer by themselves is a better way to connect with God, as it allows them to commune with God directly, and allows them to be more able to develop an individual relationship with Him. As a result, this is a strong argument, as individual prayer allows direct contact with God, unlike the sacraments, and therefore that the sacraments are not always the best way to feel close to God, but instead individual prayer can be sometimes. However, this argument can be quite significantly weakened by the argument that the sacraments do allow an individual relationship with God, while also providing a sense of timelessness and faith. Some sacraments, such as reconciliation and marriage, allow the Catholic involved to decide their own words

to a limited degree. As a result, this is a strong argument, as this allows Catholics to have an individual and special relationship with God, whilst also feeling part of the greater Church and God's design. Therefore, it could be quite strongly argued that the sacraments are the best way to feel close to God.

In conclusion, the strongest arguments suggest that generally, the best way to feel close to God is through the sacraments. Although there are other methods of feeling close to God which may work better for some, and other denominations such as Protestants may feel that some sacraments such as the Eucharist are less important, the sacraments provide an important way of deepening one's relationship with God while feeling part of the wider Church, and therefore, the sacraments are the best way of feeling close to God.

In marking this question, it is important to note first of all that the response met all the requirements of the question, in the sense that it:

- considered arguments for and against
- referred to Catholic teachings
- referred to different Christian points of view
- reached a justified conclusion.

As such the examiner was able to look at all four levels when considering what mark to give it. These things do not guarantee a level 4 by themselves but they do enable all marks to be awarded as appropriate.

Throughout this response, the candidate ***critically deconstructs religious information/issues, leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning.***

One example of such is that they were “*decreed by God and Jesus in the Bible*”. At this point it is important to consider that while it could be argued that not all were ‘decreed’, the answer develops this point with reference to the Eucharist: “*While Jesus was at the Last Supper he told his disciples to take the Eucharist ‘in memory of me’*”.

The chain of reasoning is extended as the candidate writes that “*As a result Catholics...*” and then further “*allowing them to connect...*” The idea of a logical chain of reasoning is that it links arguments that show ***they are underpinned by a sustained, accurate and thorough understanding of religion and belief.***

This answer shows that the candidate is able to do so.

Those candidates who were awarded levels 2 and 3 did not seem to do this in a sustained way throughout their answer. They often used the old ‘c’ style response rather than developing a chain of reasoning sufficiently.

The answer uses ***logical chains of reasoning that consider different viewpoints which*** is a key feature of a level four answer and this adds to the coherence and quality of the responses.

There are ***connections made*** among the full range of elements in the question. There is a coherence to the response, in the sense that all of the arguments are drawn together well.

The candidate is able to construct ***coherent and reasoned judgements of the full range of elements in the question.*** Some of these are found throughout the question in the sense that they are drawing tentative judgements based on the reasoning provided- for example but tying it into the question- *therefore they might not feel...*

These ***judgements are fully supported by the comprehensive appraisal of evidence, leading to a fully justified conclusion.***

This is an element that was often missed. Within this requirement candidates need to recognise whether their argument is logical, illogical, supported by valid or invalid evidence, whether it flows in its presentation or is stilted.

Providing a for-against-and-conclusion type of answer is indeed using knowledge and understanding, but it is not appraising. Examples in this particular answer that show appraisal of evidence include: “*as a result this is a strong argument, as individual prayer allows direct contact with God, unlike the sacraments, and therefore that the sacraments are not the best way to feel close to God, but instead individual prayer can be sometimes. However, this argument can be quite significantly weakened by the argument that sacraments do allow an individual relationship with God, while also providing a sense of timelessness and faith.*”

The candidate recognises and articulates the strengths of the arguments being made, and also use other arguments to suggest weaknesses and counter arguments. All of these feed into the judgements being made.

Care should be taken not to rely on a formula that says “These are the stronger arguments...” or “this argument is weak” because they have to be supported and flow from the points being made rather than a stilted and superficial attempt.

There are many ways to explore the strength of the arguments being made. Some candidates will tie their counter arguments specifically to the point just made (while maintaining a link to the statement).

This is then **supported by a justified conclusion** at the end; because of their judgements throughout this conclusion does not have to go over the same detail. Some conclusions may be longer and more evaluative. This candidate brings together all the points that they have been making throughout.

Example 2 and 3

The next two examples follow the same format though address different questions.

“Catholics must care for the world.”

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Catholic teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

Example 2

d. It could be strongly argued that Catholics should care for the world because Jesus told them that they should look after others in the world. In the Bible, Jesus says 'love thy neighbour', meaning that people should look after and treat all humans with equality and dignity. As a result, this means that Catholics should ensure their actions do not have an adverse impact on others. However, if people, and Catholic specifically, do not care for the world, and allow large problems such as global warming to continue, then many people's lives, especially people living in the poorest areas of the world, will be at risk. As a result, this is an extremely strong argument, as if Catholics do not care for the world, then other people will be put at risk, violating Jesus' commands. Therefore, Catholics must care for the world in order to help others, as Jesus commanded them to do. However, this argument could be slightly weakened by the argument that God gave humanity the earth to do as it pleased. In Genesis, God gives man 'dominion over the Earth' and its animals, and also gives them free will as to how to use this power. As a result, it could therefore be argued that Catholics, and humanity, should not care for the world, but should instead treat it how they please. However, this is a weak argument, although God gave man free will and dominion over the Earth, he also expected humanity to use it to follow His plan, and to care for the planet rather than to destroy it - although humanity has free will, they should use it to please God and care for the planet.

It could also be quite weakly argued that Catholics do not have to care for the world as God will save people from any damage to the planet. Catholics believe that God is omnipotent, omniscient and omnibenevolent, so He will know about any suffering, wish to stop any suffering and have the power to do so. As a result, it could be argued that Catholics do not need to care for the planet, as God will fix any problems that they cause. However, this is a weak argument as God gave humanity free will, so is unlikely to fix all problems caused by humanity, but instead allow them to feel the consequence and learn from them. Furthermore, this argument could be significantly weakened by the argument that Catholics should care for the planet because God created it, and it would be sacrilege for God's work to be destroyed. Catholics believe that God created the planet in a perfect state, and gave it to humans to live on. However, they also believe that therefore the planet is holy, as it was created by God, and that therefore the planet should not be damaged, as Pope Francis said when he told Catholics to 'take care of this world'. As a result, this is therefore a strong argument, as Catholics believe that God created the Earth and that therefore they must care for it.

In conclusion, the strongest arguments are that Catholics must care for the planet. Although it could be argued that free will allows Catholics to do as they like, it is a much stronger argument that they should use this to care for the planet as God would wish, and that they should do so to protect those more vulnerable to negative impacts. Therefore, Catholics must care for the world.

In marking this question, it is important to note first of all that the response met all the requirements of the question, in the sense that it:

- refer to Catholic teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

As such the examiner was able to look at all four levels when considering what mark to give it. These things do not guarantee a level 4 by themselves but they do enable all marks to be awarded as appropriate.

Throughout this response, the candidate ***critically deconstructs religious information/issues, leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning.***

One example of such is that "*In the Bible, Jesus says 'love thy neighbour', meaning that people should look after and treat all humans with equality and dignity. As a result, this means that Catholics should ensure their actions do not have an adverse impact on others.*" Interestingly the candidate contextualised what they were about to say by linking care for the world with caring for others before these sentences. The idea of a logical chain of reasoning is that it links arguments that ***show they are underpinned by a sustained, accurate and thorough understanding of religion and belief.***

This answer shows that the candidate is able to do so.

The answer uses ***logical chains of reasoning that consider different viewpoints which*** is a key feature of a level four answer and this adds to the coherence and quality of the responses. This done as they recognise that a minority of Catholics might see they do not have to care for the world. And, while, there is no doubt that the candidate thinks this is not a successful argument they are able to articulate it well and develop a coherent and logical chain of reasoning.

There are ***connections made*** among the full range of elements in the question. There is a coherence to the response, in the sense that all of the arguments are drawn together well. This is not something that can be summarised with an example but is evident when the answer is read as a whole.

The candidate is able to construct ***coherent and reasoned judgements of the full range of elements in the question.*** Some of these are found throughout the question for example, *...they must care for it...*

These ***judgements are fully supported by the comprehensive appraisal of evidence, leading to a fully justified conclusion.***

This is an element that was often missed. Within this requirement candidates need to recognise whether their argument is logical, illogical, supported by valid or invalid evidence, whether it flows in its presentation or is stilted.

Providing a for-against-and-conclusion type of answer is indeed using knowledge and understanding, but it is not appraising. Examples in this particular answer that show appraisal of evidence include: "*Furthermore, this argument could be significantly weakened by the argument that God created the planet in a perfect state, and gave it to humans to live on... As a result, this is therefore a strong argument as Catholics believe...*"

The candidate recognises and articulates the strengths of the arguments being made, and also use other arguments to suggest weaknesses and counter arguments. All of these feed into the judgements being made.

Care should be taken not to rely on a formula that says "These are the stronger arguments..." or "this argument is weak" because they have to be supported and flow from the points being made rather than a stilted and superficial attempt.

There are many ways to explore the strength of the arguments being made. Some candidates will tie their counter arguments specifically to the point just made (while maintaining a link to the statement).

This is then ***supported by a justified conclusion*** at the end; because of their judgements throughout this conclusion does not have to go over the same detail. Some conclusions may be longer and more evaluative. This candidate brings together all the points that they have been making throughout.

Example 3

d. It could be strongly argued that the Church is apostolic because it is descended from the authority given to St. Peter by Jesus. In the Bible, before Jesus' assumption, he gave St. Peter the 'keys to the kingdom of heaven' and told him to 'build my church upon this rock'. St. Peter became then the

Bishop of Rome and the first Pope, with the authority of Jesus himself. This authority has then been passed down through the line of Popes to the present day Pope, with the authority of Jesus given to each. This is a strong argument, as each Pope has been given the authority by the Pope before, allowing the apostolic succession to be preserved. As a result, it could therefore be argued that the Church is apostolic, as it is descended from the apostles, and retains Jesus' authority. However, this argument can be significantly weakened by the argument that Jesus did not give St. Peter supreme authority over the Church and its teachings; instead, He only gave Peter the keys to heaven and the task to build the Church. As a result, it could be argued that the notion of Papal infallibility, and the Pope's decrees of Catholic doctrine, are therefore not accurate, as they do not have the authority of Jesus, and that therefore the Church is not apostolic, as new teachings have been made, and the apostolic succession is not accurate. However, this is quite a weak argument, as if the keys to the entrance of heaven were given to St. Peter, so he could decide who should enter, it seems reasonable that he would decide the doctrine of the Church in Jesus' absence, especially since he was tasked with building the Church.

It could also be quite strongly argued that the Church is not apostolic, as other Christian denominations do not accept the authority of the Pope. Other denominations such as Protestants believe that only the Bible should be used as a guide for life, and that no man has the right to decide the doctrine of the Church but Jesus himself. As the Church should include all Christians, it could therefore be relatively strongly argued that the Church cannot be fully based off the Pope, as many Christians do not agree with the principle of the Apostolic succession, and that therefore the Church is not apostolic. However, this argument can be significantly weakened by the argument that the Church is based off Jesus' teachings. When Jesus was assumed into heaven, he told the apostles to 'go forth and make disciples of all nations'. As a result, it could be argued that all Catholics will have been taught the religion by someone else, and so on and so forth, back to the apostles themselves, who must have taught the religion to the original Catholics. Therefore, this is a relatively strong argument, as the teaching of the religion is ultimately descended from the apostles, making the Church apostolic.

In conclusion, the strongest arguments suggest that the Church is apostolic. Although other Christian denominations such as Protestants disagree with the Pope's authority, and it could be argued that Peter was not given complete authority over the Church, the apostolic succession to the current Pope, and the fact that every Catholic must have their teachings descended from the apostles, show that the Church must be apostolic.

In marking this question, it is important to note first of all that the response met all the requirements of the question, in the sense that it:

- refer to Catholic teachings
- refer to different Christian points of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

As such the examiner was able to look at all four levels when considering what mark to give it. These things do not guarantee a level 4 by themselves but they do enable all marks to be awarded as appropriate.

As we explore what makes this a Level 4 response you may find that the same things are repeated in the commentary. This is because the levels stay the same, and the examiner is looking for examples of the criteria outlined therein.

Throughout this response, the candidate ***critically deconstructs religious information/issues, leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning***

One example of such is the whole of the opening. The candidate is able to present the argument for the apostolic nature of the Church based on the conversation with Peter. The idea of a logical chain of reasoning is that it links arguments that ***show they are underpinned by a sustained, accurate and thorough understanding of religion and belief***. This is clearly shown as the candidate moves from a discussion of the authority given to Peter into an alternative understanding/interpretation of the events. In this sense they are able to use ***logical chains of reasoning that consider different viewpoints*** which is a key feature of a level four answer and this adds to the coherence and quality of the responses.

There are ***connections made*** among the full range of elements in the question. There is a coherence to the response, in the sense that all of the arguments are drawn together well. This is not something that can be summarised with an example but is evident when the answer is read as a whole.

The candidate is able to construct ***coherent and reasoned judgements of the full range of elements in the question***. Some of these are found throughout the question for example, “...As a result...”.

These ***judgements are fully supported by the comprehensive appraisal of evidence, leading to a fully justified conclusion***.

This is an element that was often missed. Within this requirement candidates need to recognise whether their argument is logical, illogical, supported by valid or invalid evidence, whether it flows in its presentation or is stilted.

Providing a for-against-and-conclusion type of answer is indeed using knowledge and understanding, but it is not appraising. Examples in this particular answer that show appraisal of evidence included: “*However this is quite a weak argument... it seems reasonable that...*”

The candidate recognises and articulates the strengths of the arguments being made, and also use other arguments to suggest weaknesses and counter arguments. All of these feed into the judgements being made.

There are many ways to explore the strength of the arguments being made. Some candidates will tie their counter arguments specifically to the point just made (while maintaining a link to the statement).

This is then ***supported by a justified conclusion*** at the end; because of their judgements throughout this conclusion does not have to go over the same detail. Some conclusions may be longer and more evaluative. This candidate brings together all the points that they have been making throughout.

Example 4

This example has been taken from the mocks marking training event that took place before the first assessment in 2018.

“The Qur’an is the only book a Muslim needs.”

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Muslim teachings
- reach a justified conclusion.

Some Muslims would agree with the statement because the Qur’an is the last holy book presented to the Prophet Muhammad who was the seal of the prophets and is the final revelation. This means that all the previous revelations, and all the teachings from the other books given to humanity by Allah are fully expressed in the Qur’an. The books such as the Tawrat and Injil have been replaced by the Quran. Their messages are helpful to Muslims but not needed, only the Quran is actually needed.

This is challenged by some Muslims who would argue that although the Qur’an was the last book it refers to the Tawrat, suggesting that although it has been interpreted and its message over time corrupted that it still contains important truths that can help Muslims today. Therefore, it is not the Qur’an is not the only book needed, all the books contribute to the understanding of Allah’s will.

In his final sermon, Muhammad said that these were the things he left behind, and as such the two greatest sources of truth in Islam. These were firstly the Qur’an and secondly the Prophet. The evidence from these two sources cannot be denied and should have greater weight than other sources. As Allah’s final message to humanity, the Qur’an contains every teaching required to live in submission to Allah. If the purpose of life is to live in submission to Allah’s will then the Qur’an is all that is needed.

There is also the argument that the Hadith, while not a Holy Book is a collection of books that helps a Muslim understand how to apply the principles of the Qur’an in their lives. This, again, links to the Final Sermon- surely if Muhammad wanted people to only use the Qur’an he would not have mentioned that he was leaving behind his example.

In conclusion it would seem that while in theory the only book a Muslim needs is the Qur’an, the Final Sermon and the practice of Muslims today indicate that their use of the Qur’an is supported by reference to the Hadith. Therefore the statement is correct but practically it does not reflect the lived reality of Islam.

In marking this question it is important to note, first of all, that the response met all the requirements of the question, in the sense that it:

- considered arguments for and against
- referred to Muslim teachings
- reached a justified conclusion.

As such, the response was able to look at all four levels when considering the mark.

These things do not guarantee a level 4 by themselves but they do enable all marks to be awarded as appropriate.

Throughout this, the candidate ***critically deconstructs religious information/issues, leading to coherent and logical chains of reasoning.***

One example of such is that “the Qur’an is the last holy book presented to the Prophet Muhammad who was the seal of the prophets and is the final revelation.” The chain of reasoning is extended, as the candidate writes that “This means that all the previous

revelations and all the teachings from the other books given to humanity by Allah are fully expressed in the Qur'an." And, then, further: "The books such as the Tawrat and Injil have been replaced by the Quran. Their messages are helpful to Muslims but not needed, only the Quran is actually needed."

The idea of a logical chain of reasoning is that it links arguments that show they are underpinned by a **sustained, accurate and thorough understanding of religion and belief**. This answer shows that the candidate is able to do so. Those candidates who were awarded levels 2 and 3 did not seem to do this in a sustained way throughout their answer. They often used the old 'c' style response rather than developing a chain of reasoning sufficiently.

The answer uses **logical chains of reasoning that consider different viewpoints** which is a key feature of a level four answer. This can be seen in: *"This is challenged by some Muslims who would argue that although the Qur'an was the last book it refers to the Tawrat, suggesting that although it has been interpreted and its message over time corrupted that it still contains important truths that can help Muslims today. Therefore, it is not the Qur'an is not the only book needed, all the books contribute to the understanding of Allah's will."*

There are **connections made** among the full range of elements in the question. There is a coherence to the response, in the sense that all of the arguments are drawn together well. This can be seen as you review the answer as a whole and how the various aspects link together.

The candidate is able to construct **coherent and reasoned judgements of the full range of elements in the question**. Some of these are found throughout the question in the sense that they are drawing tentative judgements based on the reasoning provided. At the end of the second paragraph, there is an example of this: *"Therefore, it is not the Qur'an is not the only book needed, all the books contribute to the understanding of Allah's will."*

These **judgements are fully supported by the comprehensive appraisal of evidence, leading to a fully justified conclusion**. Examples in this answer that show appraisal of evidence includes using further evidence to strengthen the points being made.

This candidate does not use the stronger/weaker approach that has been in evidence in the previous answers; rather they use phrases such as *"In his final sermon, Muhammad said that these were the things he left behind, and as such the two greatest sources of truth in Islam. These were firstly the Qur'an and secondly the Prophet."*

The evidence from these two sources cannot be denied and should have greater weight than other sources. As Allah's final message to humanity, the Qur'an contains every teaching required to live in submission to Allah. If the purpose of life is to live in submission to Allah's will then the Qur'an is all that is needed."

The candidate is appraising the evidence or suggesting their relative strength by evaluating and outlining the links to other aspects of teaching and practice. It is important to note that it is not just the accumulation of content; it is how the candidate uses the content to evaluate.

This approach may be less obvious but is an approach that is very effective.

There are many ways to explore the strength of the arguments being made. Some candidates will tie their counter arguments specifically to the point just made (while maintaining a link to the statement).

This is then **supported by a justified conclusion at the end**; because of their judgements throughout this conclusion does not have to go over the same detail. Some conclusions may be longer and more evaluative. This candidate brings together all the points that they have been making throughout.

