



General Certificate of Education

Religious Studies 1061

RSS02 Religion and Ethics 2

Mark Scheme

2010 examination - January series

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Examination Levels of Response

Religious Studies (Advanced Subsidiary) AS Level Descriptors

Level	AS Descriptor AO1	Marks	AS Descriptor AO2	Marks	AS Descriptors for Quality of Written Communication in AO1 and AO2
7	A thorough treatment of the topic within the time available. Information is accurate and relevant, and good understanding is demonstrated through use of appropriate evidence / examples	28-30	A well-focused, reasoned response to the issues raised. Different views are clearly explained with supporting evidence and argument. There is some critical analysis. An appropriate evaluation is supported by reasoned argument.	14-15	Appropriate form and style of writing; clear and coherent organisation of information; appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; good legibility; high level of accuracy in spelling punctuation and grammar.
6	A fairly thorough treatment within the time available; information is mostly accurate and relevant. Understanding is demonstrated through the use of appropriate evidence / example(s)	24-27	A mostly relevant, reasoned response to the issues raised. Different views are explained with some supporting evidence and argument. There is some analysis. An evaluation is made which is consistent with some of the reasoning.	12-13	
5	A satisfactory treatment of the topic within the time available. Key ideas and facts are included, with some development, showing reasonable understanding through use of relevant evidence / example(s).	20-23	A partially successful attempt to sustain a reasoned argument. Some attempt at analysis or comment and recognition of more than one point of view. Ideas adequately explained.	10-11	Mainly appropriate form and style of writing; some of the information is organised clearly and coherently; there may be some appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; satisfactory legibility and level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
4	A generally satisfactory treatment of the topic within the time available. Key ideas and facts are included, showing some understanding and coherence.	15-19	A limited attempt to sustain an argument, which may be one-sided or show little ability to see more than one point of view. Most ideas are explained.	7-9	Form and style of writing appropriate in some respects; some clarity and coherence in organisation; there may be some appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; legibility and level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar adequate to convey meaning.
3	A summary of key points. Limited in depth or breadth. Answer may show limited understanding and limited relevance. Some coherence.	10-14	A basic attempt to justify a point of view relevant to the question. Some explanation of ideas and coherence.	5-6	
2	A superficial outline account, with little relevant material and slight signs of partial understanding, or an informed answer that misses the point of the question.	5-9	A superficial response to the question with some attempt at reasoning.	3-4	
1	Isolated elements of partly accurate information little related to the question.	1-4	A few basic points, with no supporting argument or justification.	1-2	Little clarity and organisation; little appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; legibility and level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar barely adequate to make meaning clear.
0	Nothing of relevance.	0	No attempt to engage with the question or nothing of relevance.	0	

RSS02 Religion and Ethics 2

1 (a) Explain how Kant's theory of the categorical imperative might be applied to an ethical issue of your choice. (Do not choose an environmental issue.)

- Candidates are likely to begin with an overview of the categorical imperative, e.g. that it is distinguishable by comparison with the conditional force of the hypothetical imperative (such as, 'If you want to be happy, earn lots of money'). The Categorical Imperative is a command which cannot be denied, hence it is articulated in simple forms such as: *do not steal*, *do not murder*, *do not commit adultery*, etc. The Categorical Imperative is accessed through reason, and is to be described through universalizable rules which spell out moral duty – the categorical ought.
- The theory could be applied to any moral issue, although in practice, candidates are likely to select issues such as: war, abortion, euthanasia, and so on.
- Whichever issue is selected, candidates should show how the Categorical Imperative operates. With euthanasia, for example, that practice might be said to be a contradiction, since one could not logically universalize a principle which advocated death when the universal tendency of life is to live.

(30 marks) AO1

1 (b) With reference to the ethical issue you have chosen, assess the strengths and weaknesses of Kant's approach.

Strengths

- The principle of universalizability. Whatever issue is selected, the universal application of Kantian principles is an undeniable strength.
- Another is justice: whatever is universalized with regard to the issue selected, Kant's theory would ensure a just application of the rule.
- Candidates might refer to the fact that a society run on Kantian principles would feel safer. With regard to euthanasia, for example, people could be sure that the rules would be applied with equal justice.

Weaknesses

- Candidates are likely to highlight, for example, the alleged inflexibility of Kant's Categorical Imperative. Some cases of euthanasia, or abortion, etc., might demand differentiated treatment
- Kant is accused of ignoring the moral consequences of our actions. With euthanasia, for example, if the practice is ignored in favour of an inflexible rule, the result will often be a prolonged and painful death.
- It might be possible to show, with some issues, that the Categorical Imperative can support conflicting rules. One might want to universalize a rule allowing euthanasia as an act of compassion, yet others might want to universalize another rule banning it as a contradiction.

(15 marks) AO2

2 (a) Examine how the theory of Natural Law works in practice.

- Candidates are likely to use examples from a range of issues, such as nuclear war, suicide, abortion, euthanasia, and sexual ethics.
- The Specification support material contains examples of two kinds of approach, and candidates could follow one or both of these. For example, they might compare the work of two scholars on one issue, showing how reason might arrive at different conclusions about a major issue, such as war. Alternatively, they could contrast natural law thinking on an issue with utilitarian or Kantian ethics, for example, showing the workings of natural law.
- Probabilism and Equiprobabilism are not on the Specification, but may be credited. Candidates could illustrate the principle that, in the absence of certainty, questions of natural law are dealt with in different ways by church authorities.

(30 marks) AO1

2 (b) 'There is no such thing as natural good.'

Discuss how far you agree.

This might be approached from a variety of angles.

In favour of the suggestion

- Candidates might seek to establish the idea of a *telos* / goal in life perhaps using the Aristotelian concept of cause, with the distinction between the immediate and final end of an action.
- Some might argue, for example, that something like health is a natural good, since it has intrinsic rather than instrumental value.
- They might take the view that natural good can be established by reason, or by what scripture shows to be the will of God.

Other views

- Might compare the lists of natural goods prepared by Aquinas and Finnis, asking whether such lists are arbitrary.
- Natural good implies that goodness derives from function or purpose, but where there is disagreement over that function or purpose, the idea of natural good is much harder to define, e.g. if the natural function of life is to be lived, then suicide and euthanasia must be wrong; but if the natural function of a body is to die at some point, then suicide and euthanasia might be appropriate on some occasions.

(15 marks) AO2

3 (a) Examine religious teachings about the status and duty of humankind in the created world.

- Candidates are likely to focus on the tradition of God as the omnipotent Creator who produces the universe *ex nihilo*, since this governs much of the modern tradition about the duties of humans
- Hence the theistic religions describe humans as the pinnacle of God's creation whose powers exceed those of other creatures, for example Adam names the animals, and in Islamic teaching humanity becomes the *khalifa(h)* / vice-regent.
- In Judaism and Christianity, humans are created in God's image, and this is taken to mean that they have a responsibility to be moral beings and to care for the rest of creation.
- This is defined further by the concept of 'stewardship', which can be interpreted in two ways: either to mean 'dominion' in the sense of 'power over' / 'domination over', or else 'dominion' in the sense of stewardship. The difference of interpretation is shown by differences of approach within the religious tradition, and different practices with regard to diet, treatment of other species, and so on.
- Candidates may refer either to one religion or more without advantage or disadvantage.

(30 marks)

AO1

3 (b) Assess the strengths and weaknesses of religious views about the status and duty of humankind in the created world.

Strengths

- These will depend on the understanding given in part (a). Where candidates have referred to Buddhism, for example, where there is no real concept of a Creator, belief in karma and rebirth moulds ideas about duties to the world. The Buddha, for example, insisted that his followers should not eat meat or fish. For someone who complies with this requirement, then, Buddhist views offer strong protection for the created world, particularly with the Buddhist reverence for the world in general.
- Other religious views that have an 'intrinsicist' view about the value of the created world as a whole also have a strong tradition of respect for the created order, since they stress (for example) the interdependence of all species and organisms. Organic and inorganic life must therefore be cared for.

Weaknesses

- Much depends on the general approach taken, but in point of contrast to the strengths selected, candidates are likely to focus on religious traditions that lead to exploitation of the created world.
- Some might criticise the lack of consistency in religious arguments.
- Religious arguments tend to have an anthropomorphic focus, where the created order as a whole is subject to human values (as in the Stewardship v. 'dominion' debate).

(15 marks)

AO2

4 (a) Explain the ethical issues involved in the protection and preservation of the environment.

- Candidates might begin by identifying particular practical issues about protection and preservation: the need to limit global warming through emission treaties; the drive for fuel efficiency and the reduction of reliance on fossil fuels; the need to safeguard the environment from toxic chemicals; the need to recycle and recover waste; the need to control disease; the obligation to protect animal species, and so on.
- Ethical considerations could include aesthetic considerations, for example the issue of the loss of / the need to preserve areas of outstanding natural beauty.
- Moral considerations that require protection include for example: the wholesale destruction of species and their habitats; the pain and distress inflicted on other sentient species, not least the apes, who are genetically very close to humans; the moral welfare of future generations; the moral issue of eating meat; experimentation on animals.
- Religious issues will include, for example, moral responsibility to the Creator, who requires Stewardship of the environment as a whole.

(30 marks) AO1

4 (b) 'Humans should be forced to be environmentally responsible.'

How far do you agree with this claim?

In favour of enforcement

- Candidates are likely to refer to the religious traditions of stewardship, since these require an active assumption of responsibility for the environment. If humans really are *khalifa(h)s* / stewards, then they will be answerable to God for any dereliction of duty.
- In practical terms, leaving responsibility for the environment up to the conscience of individuals or groups within society is likely to lead to dismal failure, since economic interests operate by *self-interest*: protection of the environment will operate only where there is a financial incentive, such as the increased market for free-range / organic products.
- Candidates could discuss a range of moral and aesthetic considerations based on religious, utilitarian or Kantian presuppositions.

Other views

- These might centre on the value of free will: responsibility cannot be forced, otherwise the value of the act is reduced.
- Compulsion is not effective as a motivator of human action.
- Speciesism is strongly rooted in the human psyche. Some would argue that, as the dominant species, humans have a right to control the environment as they see fit.
- The issue might be seen to boil down to planetary survival, in which case some might make a baseline case for environmental control that achieves this, without compelling any particular form of environmental responsibility towards particular species.

(15 marks) AO2