



**General Certificate of Education
January 2011**

Religious Studies

RSS02

Religion and Ethics 2

AS Unit B

Final

Mark Scheme

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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	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.
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	
0	Nothing of relevance.	0	No attempt to engage with the question or nothing of relevance.	0	

RSS02: Religion and Ethics 2

Question 1

01 Explain the main features of Kant's theory of ethics.

The main features of Kantian ethics include:

- a deontological emphasis
- ethical objectivity
- moral law as autonomous
- absolutism / absolute good
- an emphasis on the rightness/wrongness of the act
- the categorical imperative, accessed by reason
- universal and universalizable laws
- the good will as the only intrinsically good thing
- emphasis on duty, obligation, motive, intention
- appeal to the *summum bonum*
- morality as *synthetic a priori*

Candidates do not have to explain all these features in order to access Level 7. Marks will be awarded on the coherence of the justification of the main features selected.

(30 marks) AO1

02 'Kant's theory of ethics does not work.' How far do you agree?

Agree

- It does not work well in practice because, for example, it allows unjust consequences, including the death of the innocent.
- Most ethicists would claim that an ethical theory that does not consider consequences directly is inadequate.
- Its claim to autonomy for moral law does not sit well with Kant's emphasis on the *summum bonum*, because the latter is justified by the probable existence of God. If the logic is not consistent, then the theory cannot work.
- It might be said not to work for a number of further reasons, such as its inability to deal with exceptions, its absolute stance, and so on.

Other views

- Others insist that Kant's theory works because it is consistent, and therefore it hangs together.
- It combines absolutist features in a coherent way, linking intention, obligation, motive and duty.
- If followed, it would lead, arguably, to a better world.
- The categorical imperative, once understood, provides a recognisably fair principle.
- Universalisability is also a clear principle, so much so that Hare incorporated it into his prescriptivist theory.
- Some might argue that Kant's theory works if it is modified in some way, e.g. by Ross's concept of *prima facie* duties.

(15 marks) AO2

Question 2
03 Explain Aquinas' development of the idea of natural good.

- Candidates are likely to discuss the background of Aquinas' idea of natural good in the philosophy of Aristotle (e.g. his concept of natural justice, and his ideas about causality), but this is not a requirement of the question, and candidates can gain up to full marks through explaining Aquinas' ideas alone.
- Aquinas replaced Aristotle's First Efficient Cause with the Christian God - fellowship with God being the only final cause available to all humans. Natural law is an eternal law based in God.
- The central point in Aquinas is the belief in a common human nature, so that 'good' actions are those which help us become 'fully human'. These acts are accessible through reason and free will.
- Reference perhaps to general points, such as the absolutist/deontological status of Natural Law / the natural law of doing good and avoiding evil.
- Reference is likely to Aquinas' 5 main principles: the role of reason, the confusion between real and apparent goods, the necessity to develop habitual virtues in support of reason, the emphasis on intrinsic as opposed to instrumental good, and the establishment of primary and secondary principles. Some might expand on these, for example the secondary precepts governing sexual ethics; possibly the principle of Double Effect.
- All in all, natural good is based in an understanding of the universe as caused by and cared for by God. Natural law is not made by humans: it is part of the fabric of reality itself.

(30 marks)**AO1****04 'Natural good cannot exist, otherwise everybody would be good.'
Assess this claim.****Agree**

If something is natural / a natural property, then everybody would presumably understand and follow it. Its goodness would be obvious, in the same way that most natural facts about the world are obvious to most people. People do not generally disagree about their perceptions of the world, so if good was perceivable in the natural world, then people would have little option but to follow it. Candidates might take any number of lines over this issue. Rejection of 'natural good' can take several forms. Some reject Aquinas' version of it because it is dogmatic, and appears to be based in revealed theology, otherwise how does he know about the involvement of God? Others reject all forms of 'natural good' on the grounds that 'natural' and 'good' become a tautology, whereas natural forces may be threatening to humans. Many reject Aquinas' assumption that we share a common human nature. Most question his use of Aristotle's doctrine of causation, by which he arrives at an understanding of natural good. Specific rejections of the idea of natural good might include a rejection of the concept of a common human nature; a rejection of any identification of 'natural' with 'good'; the non-pragmatic nature of Natural Law Ethics; relativistic ethics in general; and so on.

Other views

Candidates might opt to defend aspects of Aquinas' Natural Law theory specifically, which would be legitimate in view of the wording of the question. Some might argue that the natural good is indeed obvious to all sane people, and that most criminals will recognise that their actions are not good even though they still perform them. As Aquinas said, people can be deceived over their perception of natural good by mistaking apparent goods for real goods. The apparent good of adultery masks its long-term ills. Even here, it could be argued that adulterers (for example) will eventually understand that fidelity in marriage is a natural good, since the consequences of adultery are very obvious if we look at marriage and relationships generally.

Candidates who do not address the final clause of the question are not likely to achieve higher than Level 4.

(15 marks) AO2

Question 3

05 'This world is the best possible world God could have created.' Explain the reasons why some people make this claim.

- The idea that this is the best possible world can be explained with reference to religious systems or philosophical/ethical arguments, or both.
- For the former, for example, the Judaeo-Christian system describes the creation of the world/universe in a specific order that follows God's purpose. Each separate act of creation is described as '*tam*' (perfect), as a reflection of God's perfection. Humans are described as being made 'in God's image', so later theology envisaged this as the creation, therefore, of a perfect species reflecting the God-given virtues of reason and morality. Similarly in Islam, God creates a universe of perfect proportion without flaw.
- For philosophical/ethical arguments: God's omnibenevolence might be said to produce the best possible world as a reflection of perfect goodness.
- That this is 'the best possible world' might be asserted in connection with the totality of God's attributes, since an omnipotent, omniscient, perfect creator might be supposed to produce the best possible world.
- Leibniz introduced the concept of this as the best possible world, being one in which there is the perfect balance of good over evil, whatever that is. The world is fit for purpose.
- Some might refer to Swinburne's view that this is 'a' best possible world, i.e. one of several 'best possible' arrangements. Accept relevant views from quantum physics about the optimisation of God's plan through multiple universes.

(30 marks) AO1

06 'This world is perfect.' Assess this claim.**Agree**

Candidates might ask, 'Perfect for what?', since that will define the answers to the question. In best possible world theory, perfection generally means 'perfect for purpose' – a state of affairs that can encompass all manner of evils if it can be supposed that a world with those evils is in measurable ways superior to a world without them. For example a world with death allows the ultimate good of self-sacrifice, and so is arguably more perfect than a world of immortal beings. A world with reproduction is arguably more perfect than a world without children. Some might argue that perfection is possible for God, but not for a physical system, so God could have created this as the best possible world containing unavoidable evil.

Other views

Most are likely to consider the problem of evil in relation to God's omnipotence and omnibenevolence: e.g. the view that God created the world perfect, but perfection was lost, either through the intervention of satanic powers or of human free will, or both; or the view that perfection might be seen as the goal of creation, and not as the starting point. There are many possible lines of argument.

(15 marks) AO2**Question 4****07 Outline attempts that have been made to conserve the living environment, and explain why some people believe that these have become necessary.**

Conservation efforts could include some of the following:

- conservation of wetlands, forests and seas
- projects fuel efficiency; alternatives to fossil fuels; improved energy efficiency
- safeguarding from toxic chemicals / poor air quality
- recycling / recovery of waste
- animal protection aimed at halting and reversing destruction of the natural environment
- specific reference to the work of bodies like the European Environment Agency; the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change; the UN Environment Programme; Friends of the Earth; Greenpeace

These have become necessary through the effects of pollution / global warming, etc. These could be explained in two ways, either or both of which would be appropriate:

- aesthetic, moral, religious, scientific reasons, particularly prudential ones of ensuring the survival of the earth and its species
- specific reasons based in climate change, deforestation, loss of biodiversity, loss of habitat, and so on.

Candidates who refer only to one part of the question will not achieve higher than Level 4, 19 marks.

(30 marks) AO1

08 **'The only point in conserving the living environment is to preserve humans.'**
How far do you agree?

Agree

Candidates might argue a case for this on the basis of religious / scriptural claims about the status of human beings, for example. They might argue that humans have dominion over the world, so environmental conservation should be for the human good. Other arguments could include, for example: humans are the only species capable of conserving the living environment, so they should profit from it / there would be no point in such conservation if humans were not the focus, since there would be no clear motive for conservation.

Other views

Alternative views could be scriptural, for example the broader interpretation of stewardship to mean that God requires humans to conserve the whole environment for its own sake. The living environment was created by God, and was judged by God to be perfect, so it has intrinsic value. Humans have no right to damage it, and have a responsibility to conserve it as a whole. Other arguments are likely to be practical, for example those from Deep Ecology, pointing out that an appreciation of the whole living environment for its own sake is the most productive approach to environmental issues generally.

(15 marks)

AO2