



# **Examiners' Report**

## **June 2022**

**GCE Religious Studies 9RS0 01**

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## Introduction

This year there were some excellent responses that demonstrated a wide range of ability, with many showing a high level of skill in engaging with the material.

Candidates generally showed thorough knowledge and understanding across the paper, reflecting the ability to assess, analysis and evaluate. Notable recognition of the links to other papers in Q04 featured heavily and thus indicating an increasing competency in addressing this aspect of the paper.

Candidates that achieved high marks offered responses that were detailed, and they deconstructed the issues identified using clear and sustained reasoning and judgement in relation to the question. This was accomplished through reviewing and analysing the strengths and weaknesses of different views and presenting clearly justified judgements. Overall, there was a good range of subject specific vocabulary, with a range of scholarship employed effectively in many responses.

The perennial issue of time management for candidates was evident. In Q01 candidates needed to select relevant material from the topic to address the question. Many candidates are still writing more than the time and space permitted for and, consequently, ran out of time on other questions.

Whilst most candidates wrote well and engaged with the required AO2 skills, some candidates simply outlined content rather than offering assessment, or weighing up of differing positions. Therefore, they were unable to attain the top marks. This is an area candidates should be encouraged to focus on to attain the higher levels of the mark scheme.

A pleasing feature of this year's many responses were the excellent answers to the anthology extract in Q03(a). Candidates were able to 'clarify' well, and the tendency to paraphrase or repeat the passage, whilst still evident, was generally less obvious. Many candidates expanded and developed the ideas raised and set them in content of the wider topic. Similarly, Q03(b) revealed some outstanding responses of the highest quality.

The synoptic link element of Q04 continues to be managed well by the majority of candidates. However, a significant number of responses were self-penalising for not making links, thus limiting the levels of the mark scheme available. This link was effective when clearly signposted. Many of the better responses generated this link, which were embedded successfully throughout the candidates' essays.

## Question 1

In this question, candidate was asked to explore the contribution of symbol to debates about religious language.

There were some very excellent, full and concise responses to this question. Many of these responses were able to identify and accurately describe Tillich's understanding of the contribution of 'symbol' to religious language in a secure manner. Solid responses competently used technical vocabulary in relation to the question with confidence.

Weaker responses used up far too much time and space discussing the verification principle rather than focusing on 'symbol' and its contribution. Regrettably, some candidates simply offered an answer about analogy, which did not address the question set.

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

(8)

Symbol was first proposed as a form of Religious language by philosopher Paul Tillich. He argued that symbolic language is a gateway to the religious realm and helps us to develop and understand religious values and ideas.

Firstly Paul Tillich stated that there are 2 key types of symbolic language - signs and symbols. Tillich argued that signs are key objects or words that are slowly inferred to mean a certain thing over time, such as a blue flashing light, which is linked to a police force, however the colour ~~blue~~ <sup>blue</sup> means nothing of the sort on its own. Symbol is said to be something that has direct meaning with the thing/idea it refers to and is 'in itself part of the ~~thing~~ idea'. Tillich argued that symbol evokes emotion and feeling due to the idea it is linked to, for example a national flag prompts feeling of feeling proud of ones monarch or country.

Secondly Tillich develops the idea of symbol further by saying symbolic language is a gateway into the holy realm. This idea links to German philosopher Rudolph Otto who promoted idea <sup>of</sup> the 'numinous' and the 'holy'. Otto claimed that ~~many~~ <sup>all</sup> religious experiences are numinous - the evoked feelings of awe. Tillich adapted this belief to relate to his idea of symbolic language - claiming that the language and the feeling it evokes opens a pathway into a holy realm - bringing one to god. He claimed that symbolic language ~~was~~ <sup>is</sup> a key pathway to finding God and connecting oneself with the 'numinous' wholly realm of symbolic language.



This is a response that was awarded the full 8 marks. The candidate has given a detailed and wide-ranging response that is focused entirely on the demands of the question. The content accurately reflects Paul Tillich's thinking on symbol as a contribution to religious language.



Be direct and always explain key terms used.

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

(8)

Paul Tillich argued that symbols are a type of religious language as they convey and express beliefs within the religion. For example, The Christian Cross symbolises not only the resurrection of Jesus but it is also for Christians people who believe in him. Another example of a symbol used in religion is the Lotus evident in both Hinduism and Buddhism. The Lotus represents purity and the detachment from attachment, greed and Ignorance. Paul Tillich argued that there is a difference between signs and symbols. ~~Sign~~ Sign just state a meaning of an object, for example a stop sign however symbols identify and participate in the meaning of something as it also evoke feeling. Symbols have become universalised between religions meaning they are easy to interpret and have no room for extra misinterpretation. Another usefulness of symbols is that they become a mark for a religion and encompasses all the beliefs of the religion without anthropomorphising God.

(Total for Question 1 = 8 marks)



This is a response that was awarded 6 marks and achieved level 3. There is some terminology and scholarship along with relevant knowledge and understanding. The material on Tillich is good, although underdeveloped in terms of the manner in which symbols participate in what they potentially convey, for example, the cross participates in ideas of sacrifice, salvation, atonement and ransom etc.



Consider structuring your answer more clearly for maximum impact.



## Question 2

In this question, candidates were asked to assess the strengths and weaknesses of one critique of religious belief.

Overall, there were some very strong answers for this question with most candidates choosing from a range of critiques of religious belief, such as the sociological, psychological or moral critiques. For example, some candidates offered, successfully, the problem of evil as a critique and some others offered Westphal effectively.

Some of the better responses demonstrated the candidates' ability to explore their chosen critique by not merely describing it, but also by engaging with strengths and weaknesses and, consequently, coming to a reasoned judgement on whether the critique was successful or not.

Weaker responses offered a description of a critique, usually the popularist critique of Richard Dawkins, without developing the amount of 'assess' material, as demanded by the question.

2 Assess the strengths and weaknesses of **one** critique of religious belief.

(12)

Critiques of religious belief aim to analyse the role and function that religion plays in society and in the lives of individuals.

Durkheim presents a sociological critique of religious belief by suggesting that religion serves the purpose of uniting and preserving the community. The believer associates religious significance to the community that they belong to and this ensures that society is united through shared beliefs and values.

However, Durkheim's argument may be unconvincing because religious beliefs and values in society are everchanging and often in a modern world, a community can exist together, ~~what~~ with each individual having a different religious belief, this suggests that religion doesn't unite the community, but allows individuals to express their true selves with the support of the whole community.

Durkheim argues that a religious community likens one that is a primitive clan that worships a totem. He suggests that God is not a single, separate entity, but humanity is one and the same. Believers feel as though they owe their selves to God. This could be seen as a convincing argument because it doesn't create social structures and inequality in society, it reassures believers that their primary loyalty is

Society is to worship God, while simultaneously recognising the importance of the whole religious community.

Durkheim was concerned with religious activities and how this allowed ~~integration~~ integration in society and the strengthening of communal bonds. Durkheim suggested that "religion was a unified system of beliefs and values relative to sacred things." As believers in the community carry out and participate in religious ~~practices~~ activities, an example being Muslims fast every year in the month of Ramadan. This highlights ~~that~~ the fact that they are not only carrying out a ritual activity that is ~~see~~ sacred to them, but they are also strengthening communal bonds, in the way where all fasting people are undergoing the same situation, and food is shared between neighbours and communities at the time of breaking the fast. This is a convincing argument as ~~the~~ Durkheim points to the importance of society and how this can ~~also~~ elevate an individual's faith.

Durkheim also highlights the fact that beliefs and values in society are relative and constantly changing, as believers practice rituals that are sacred to them, they give the society in which they live in religious significance and therefore they also celebrate the power of society and how it has led to the diversity of religious ~~beliefs~~ beliefs in society. Recognising the diversity of beliefs within a society is a

Strength, because it allows the integration of many more individuals and also strengthens communal bonds between members of different communities and faiths. However, diversity of beliefs could also be negative because it would reject traditional religious views that have been upheld previously, this may marginalise minority groups in society that may not be as comfortable with change and accepting beliefs that are contradictory to their own beliefs. Therefore, Durkheim's argument could be considered as unconvincing as it doesn't recognise individuals who may be uncomfortable in changing their beliefs, he also doesn't recognise the fact that teachings of God and religion are timeless and ever-changing, as they have been written in scripture over many years.

Overall, Durkheim presents a balanced argument for religious belief. We can conclude that religious belief is significant for communities, but the idea of individual religious belief and its impact on an individual's life could still be explored.



This is a response that was awarded the full 12 marks. The candidate has given a wealth of material on Durkheim and his sociological critique. It is securely organised, covers a lot of ground, and is focused on the strengths and weaknesses of Durkheim's approach. The candidate, repeatedly throughout the response, offers reasoned judgements on whether the critique is convincing or not. It uses and explains key terms and it is impressive, in the time available, in its focus and range. The response undoubtedly earns full marks for a quality answer.



Ensure 'assessment' is explicitly evident throughout your answer.

Darwin believes religion is a mental illness and it is toxic. He thinks those who follow the Bible are 'mentally ill' and it is a 'terrible moral compass'.

A strength to support this is links to religion and morality and the Jonestown case. Jim Jones believed he was sending ~~peep~~ followers of his cult to Heaven when he was actually poisoning them. This shows the mental block from reality and the fixated belief of an eschatological reward he had which was influenced from religion and ~~is~~ is a strong argument for Darwin's point; for religion being 'terrible moral compass'.

Another strength is that the KKK believe from the Bible it is what God planned to racially segregate his people. They are white supremacists and they were influenced by the Tower of Babel in the Bible. This also is a strong point as it supports the fact that the Bible teachings of religion is influential and as Eckert says 'out of date'. It illustrates this because racism is relevant today and it ~~effects~~ <sup>has</sup> negative effects.

Furthermore, another strength <sup>is</sup> are the terrorists from the Ariana Grande-Manchester Bombing. This again effects many people because of the reason being that that

terrorist believed that God had demanded him to do that as part of his plan (HyperCalvinist view). This is strong because it shows the way the person doing the action is negatively affected by religion and possibly how religion can be used as an excuse to commit such crimes.

A weakness however is the question of psychological and mental disorder. Religion does positively affect so many compared to the minority. It suggests it is how the individual perceives it and how they fit it in to their lives.

In conclusion Danilyn's point is valid as the strengths are strong points & supporting his argument. As R.A. Sharpe says: 'the more religious a person is the more dangerous they are' and this further supports the strength of this argument because of the danger and death the examples caused.



This is a response that was awarded 7 marks and achieved a mid-level 2. The answer is a little brief, however the material is relevant and strengths are indicated, but the treatment is limited and lacks development. There is one main weakness mentioned but again this needed to be developed further. The answer could be improved by developing the amount of 'assess' material, and developing the detail for both strengths and weaknesses.



AO2 marks can be achieved by offering a reasoned judgement about the issue and this can be done by considering and assessing relevant counter-arguments.



### Question 3

Question 3(a) centred on the attempt by 'believers' in God to qualify their views in order to accommodate the lack of evidence to support their claim that a 'gardener tends the spot'. On the other hand, the sceptic attempts to build a cumulative case to demonstrate that those who 'believe' in God make claims that are false.

The question asked candidates to refer to (though not for long quotations or paraphrased material from), the passage. It is essential to note that question 3(a) is not about writing out lines from the extract and then putting them in your own words, which many students attempted.

The better responses identified key ideas from the set paragraph and then linked this to knowledge of, for example, Flew's falsification principle and its application for meaning in religious language. In addition, many of these responses confidently made use of other scholars to unpack and support their clarification of the ideas identified from the passage.

In the better responses, the AO1 knowledge was handled well and generally detailed. This resulted in good quality unpacking of the extract and development on the points it raised in relation to meaning and falsification, and to belief in God despite acknowledging that evidence may count against. The weaker responses quoted, but did not clarify and explain, the ideas in the passage. In addition, many candidates revealed that they did not understand the meaning of 'assertion'.

In question 3(b), responses were generally of a very high quality and led to candidates clearly exploring both Hare's and Mitchell's approaches by explicitly recognising the distinctive nature of their respective argument, ie, that believers do not allow anything to count conclusively against their claims.

The weaker responses reflected confusion about the respective positions of Flew, Hare and Mitchell. Whilst most weak responses handled the material on 'blik' with some success, a high number of confused, or very brief, responses simply presented developed versions of the parables of Mitchell's 'Partisan and the Stranger' and Hare's 'Lunatic and the Dons' with no attempt to develop these, or show how they countered Flew's use of Wisdom's parable of the gardener.

- 3 (a) Clarify the idea that the Believer's original assertion has 'died the death of a thousand qualifications'.

*You must refer to the passage in your response.*

(10)

In the passage Flew is asserting his 'falsification principle', which claims that religious language is meaningless due to the fact that it cannot be 'falsified'. He put forward his 'parable of the ~~invisible~~ invisible gardener' as a way in which to further explore this. This is used by Flew as an allegory for religious belief. The believer is shown to observe the positive elements of the garden, such as the 'many flowers' and subsequently make the assertion that 'Some gardener must tend this

plot'. This seemingly relates to FR Tennant's 'aesthetic principle' proposed through the design argument, as it explores the notion that the natural beauty of Earth, and humanity's unique ability to appreciate it, is in fact proof for some necessary, intelligent designer - God. However, Flew simultaneously implies that the believer is ignoring the 'many weeds' in the garden. This is a metaphor for the problem of evil and suffering in which many atheists propose as a counter-argument for religious belief. By presenting a plethora of examples in which the ~~religious~~ believer's faith should have been 'falsified', such as the 'no movements' ever detected by the barbed wire, Flew set up what he calls the tendency to 'qualify' one's own belief. ~~The~~ By this he asserts that a believer is unable to accept the counter-evidence which exists and makes up constant excuses until God becomes 'invisible, intangible, insensible' thereby, in his view ~~being~~ dying 'a death by a thousand <sup>qualifications</sup> ~~degrees~~', meaning the idea of God has become so vague that it ~~no~~ no longer exists at all. This can be related to Hich's 'invisible, intangible, weightless, odourless rabbit' in which he claims, once you have defined the rabbit with all of these characteristics, they cease to exist altogether. However one could state that if we have no issue accepting this, then the same logic should be applied to God, thereby

meaning that, in Flew's perspective, all language to describe God becomes meaningless. This need to 'qualify' can perhaps be seen in examples such as the theodicies for the problem of evil and suffering. Augustine responds to the notion by stating that God made the Earth 'ex nihilo' and that all evil and suffering is hence merely a 'privation of good'. This connects to what Flew is saying about the 'many needs' in which the believer conveniently ignores. However many disregard Flew's ideas as too absolute, with Frame providing a subversion of his parable so that it were the atheist whose views could not be falsified, ignoring the 'many flaws' just as the believer ignores the 'many needs'.

(b) Analyse the distinctive ideas contained in R M Hare's and Basil Mitchell's responses to Flew's use of the Parable of the Gardener.

(20)

Hare responds to Flew's 'falsification principle' with an anti-realist argument, claiming that religious language is indeed ~~falsifiable~~ unfalsifiable but meaningful. He employs another parable to elucidate these ideas, the parable of the 'Unhappy' at Oxford, who believes that all of the Oxford Don's are out to murder him. Despite all counter-evidence the 'Unhappy' maintains his view, and it is meaningful to him insofar as it impacts his life every day and the way in which he perceives the world. Through this, Hare puts forward his notion of 'blinks' in which he defines as an individual's inherent world views which are unfalsifiable and unverifiable but meaningful for that individual. He uses a perhaps more relatable example of ~~the~~ his own blink on the safety of driving, through this he successfully shows how everyone of us have our own 'blinks' however big or small and that these impact not only the way in which we view the world, but also the way in which we ~~behave~~ <sup>behave</sup> and what we do as a result. He states that his blink is 'consistent with a finite number of terms', thereby referencing Flew's falsification principle and yet maintaining that this does not equate religious language to meaningless.

However, Hare's notion of blinks is ~~not~~ perhaps a flawed response to Flew's criticism. While a success is that it accounts for the individual and personal nature of one's faith, it somewhat fails to truly prove how this makes religious language meaningful. Kant's idea that one can only experience the empirical realm through sense-experience, perhaps evokes the notion that ~~religious~~ <sup>blinks</sup> are unable to be confirmed as true or false, the requirement for language to be meaningful both for Flew as for Ayer in his 'verification principle'. However, for me, the main weakness is not the lack of empirical proof, but the fact that it does not seem to account for the struggle and faith so intrinsic to religious belief and, in turn, religious statements.

Therefore, I would argue that Mitchell's realist response to Flew is a far more successful validation of religious language and its meaning. Again, Mitchell employs a parable, this time of the 'stranger and the Partisan'. Through this, Mitchell shows a Partisan in war-time who meets a stranger who claims to be on the same side. They have many deep, meaningful conversations and spend time together and subsequently the Partisan commits to trust in the stranger. In this way, the Partisan is a symbol of a religious believer

and the Stranger is a symbol of God. This is a succinct parable to elucidate the meaning of religious statements as it ~~not only~~ presents the imperative fact that a believer develops a strong, personal and thereby meaningful relationship with God. Mitchell describes religion as a 'trial of faith' which can be falsified, but not easily abandoned. This in itself is a tribute to the highly meaningful nature of religious statements as a way in which to reaffirm one's faith and show one's commitment to trust in God, just as the Partisan commits to trust in the Stranger. This can be compared to many Old Testament stories in the Bible, such as the Story of Job, in which he wrestles with his faith, showing that religious statements are indeed falsifiable and the ability for them to be proven false is precisely what makes them so meaningful as the believer maintains their commitment regardless. However, Flew responds to Mitchell's ideas by stating that it is a false equivocation between a ~~stran~~ human stranger, who can indeed be bound by earthly commitments and difficulties which may cause him to ~~appe~~ <sup>act</sup> in an ambiguous manner, while God who is supposedly omnipotent and ~~omniscient~~ <sup>omnibenevolent</sup> is not bound by these same struggles. Through this, Flew attempts to claim that there is no ~~exp~~ logic to committing to one

faith in God and that they are simply 'groupings' their beliefs, just like the behavior in the parable. However, I would argue that one could adopt Aquinas' notion of analogy here, more specifically the analogy of proportion. Through this he states that we can make meaningful statements about God by making an 'upwards analogy' from human attributes to God's. In this way, one can state that Mitchell is making an upward analogy from the behavior of the stranger who occasionally appears on the same side and occasionally not, to the behavior of the God, who <sup>or of the world</sup> ~~is a parable~~ which may occasionally reaffirm God's existence as occasionally appear to count against it. CS Lewis reaffirms the effectiveness of Mitchell's parable argument as he states that religious ~~that~~ belief is a 'struggle' and that through the struggle its profound meaningfulness for the individual is revealed. This is empirically verifiable as one only needs to consider their own values and things in which they love to realize that if something is truly meaningful, then you will not easily give up on it, despite evidence which may appear to contradict it.

While I would argue that Mitchell's response is the more effective argument due to the way in which it



elucidates clearly how religious statements are meaningless, a huge strength of Hare's argument is how it subverts Flew's points back onto himself. Hare uses a quote by French scholar Laplace often used by atheists for as it explores the notion that the idea of God is redundant. However, by doing this, Hare alludes to the fact that it is perhaps the atheists who obtain this redundant view of God, while religious believers have progressed. This is further explored by Frame whose parody of Flew's parable portrays the non-believer as the one whose view dies 'a death by a thousand qualifications', who constantly 'qualifies his unbelief and ignoring all evidence for the existence of the gardener and hence for God. This ~~is~~ shows the hypocrisy of Flew's argument, as he himself is guilty of what he condemns religious believers of doing. Furthermore, I would agree that Mitchell successfully shows religious language as meaningful for the individuals.



This is a response that was awarded the full 30 marks and achieved at the top of level 3 for part (a) and the top of level 5 for part (b).

In part (a), the candidate has outlined the ideas in the text and explained the context using a wide range of knowledge of religious ideas. The response is fully developed as the ideas are linked to references from the extract and specialist language is used well throughout. The candidate displays a rigorous understanding of the key concepts and implications in this passage.

In part (b), the response is clearly structured and covers a wide range of knowledge and uses specialist, technical vocabulary throughout. The candidate makes connections between a range of ideas and deconstructs issues. The candidate also manages to present coherent and reasoned judgements with a full appraisal of the evidence.



Explain the technical terms clearly, where relevant, to demonstrate your understanding.

3 (a) Clarify the idea that the Believer's original assertion has 'died the death of a thousand qualifications'.

You must refer to the passage in your response.

(10)

The death of a thousand qualifications<sup>by Flew</sup> is when a religious believer will not let someone count against or falsify their belief. In the passage one of the explorers represents an atheist and the other a theist. The gardener represents God. For the theist, they believe God is gardening and upkeeping the world (garden) garden (world) and its beauty. The atheist doesn't agree. They try lots of methods to try and prove a gardener's (God's) existence but cannot do so. Even after lots of falsification the theist does not disbelieve that God is the reason of this maintenance of the garden.

The issue here is that not only is this death by a thousand qualifications as criticisms seem to be falling on deaf ears, but also it gets almost extreme when we ~~it~~<sup>say</sup> something that is intangible, eternally elusive and invisible to exist. A lot of people would disagree that these qualities of a real gardener could exist so why do we make an exception for God. ~~The~~

(b) Analyse the distinctive ideas contained in R M Hare's and Basil Mitchell's responses to Flew's use of the Parable of the Gardener.

(20)

The parable of the Gardener represents the Christians religious believers and some of their incapability to receive any criticisms or falsifications towards their beliefs. This is called death by a thousand qualifications. Basil Mitchell tried to counter against Flew's ideas and use the story of the stranger and the partisan. This is set within the war, and the stranger represents God and the partisan represents the believer. The stranger tells the partisan that he is on his side. However none of the partisans friends believe the stranger and constantly try to disprove and tell the partisan that the stranger isn't on their side. However, when asked when the partisan will admit he was wrong and the stranger isn't on their side, he doesn't reply. For Mitchell he is trying to say that religious believers must uphold and keep their faith in God no matter the criticisms as this is what creates such a strong bond within their relationship with him. No falsification should alter their beliefs if that is what they believe in their faith and so death by a thousand qualifications is misinterpreting religion.

Hare then uses the example of his 'celestial city'. This is the story of two men one once again, representing the atheist and the other the theist. They go on a journey with one (theist) believes to celestial city (heaven) and the

other (atheist) believes it will lead to nothing. At the end of the journey they arrive at the celestial city (heaven). Proving the theist was correct. Here says this is what will be the result of our journey of life too. Not only is Hve trying to prove his eschatological verification, but he says that even after all the various religious beliefs may encounter on their journey of life & they will still reach eternal life in heaven. \*

~~On the other hand for Hve's perspective of the~~ <sup>Mitchell's perspective of the position.</sup> ~~garden it is hard to say that God cannot hold these qualities and still exist because he is something we cannot fully comprehend and compare as humans. For Hve's celestial city, there is no empirical evidence of the after life and so this belief cannot be meaningful. Overall is to a hard point to counter.~~

\* overall Mitchell's point of holding faith is a hard point counter against as its what someone believes and is meaningful for them. There is no proven evidence that God does or doesn't exist and so for people who hold their belief that he does is not necessarily wrong.



This is a response that was awarded a total of 17 marks and achieved at level 2 for part (a) and level 3 for part (b).

In part (a), there is a limited range of material present. Some accurate knowledge of the context of the extract is evident in the response but this needed to have been developed further. Overall, a safe level 2 answer that incorporates some accurate use of technical vocabulary.

In part (b), Mitchell's parables of the 'Stranger and Partisan' is offered with some analysis as a counter to Flew's falsification principle. However, Hare is mistaken for Hick and therefore weakens the response as the material is not relevant to the question as set. Therefore, this is a level 3 response.



Answer the question as set and not what you think it should be. Do this by structuring your answer which helps focus on the question.

## Question 4

Many candidates made effective use of relevant material and developed answers that offered a generally accurate account of a range of arguments for the existence of God.

This was a well answered question with many candidates demonstrating secure understanding of the role of 'probability' that the question demanded, leading to conclusions on whether the probability of God existing, or not, might be the case.

Many candidates showed a good understanding of the main protagonists and their arguments together with sound analysis attacking the premise of 'probability' in the question. The use of clear signposting was welcomed to show what other components candidates were using to make their synoptic links.

Some candidates were unable to earn further marks and achieve at level 5 given they made no synoptic link, even though they had written an otherwise excellent answer. Some of the weaker responses attempted links but the quality of the essays was poor due to being vague or simply descriptive rather than evaluative, and failing to address all the elements of the question.

In the better, high quality responses, there were very full and detailed essays that used an excellent structure to analyse the success of the arguments for the existence of God being a probability rather than a certainty. This gave candidates an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge on Anselm, Aquinas, Paley, Tennant, Hume, Swinburne, Russell, Copleston, Craig, etc. Many candidates discussed Swinburne's cumulative argument well. The high scoring responses were those that were able to demonstrate this knowledge critically, and made judgements throughout.

Some of the weaker responses often gave opinions without any scholarly reference, or were unable to distinguish the different emphasises of the various arguments for God's existence. Many failed to address the issue of 'probability'.

The Design, Cosmological and Ontological arguments attempt to argue for the existence of God. Inductive arguments only show probability. A posteriori arguments try to find empirical evidence, yet this is limited for God. The A priori and deductive reasoning used in the ontological and kalam argument also fail to provide enough meaningful logic.

The Design argument is a posteriori and inductive. It relies on God showing intelligent design. The universe is too ordered and regular, to not be fit for a designed purpose. This is seen in Paley's watchmaker analogy. "The inference that we think is inevitable, the watch must've had a maker." suggests intelligent design leads to a designer, who is God. Paley argues, that if we see a stone on a heath, we'd assume it had



always been there. Whereas with a watch it must've been placed, as its purpose lies otherwise. David Hume argues the watch and the universe are too different to compare. One is an organic entity and one is a machine.

The anthropic principle suggests the universe was created for us humans, and we have a special status. This can be linked to Christianity, where in Genesis, we are "made in God's image". The Bible is the authoritative source for believers, as the design argument seems probable. This is further ~~seen~~ seen with the 'Goldilocks principle', where conditions were 'just right'. However, this could easily still be down to chance, as the argument is inductive.

Paley said animals were designed for their environment. Darwin's theory of evolution however suggest animals are designed to suit their environment, and they're adapted from previous, simpler organisms through process of natural selection. This logical approach overides Paley's thinking, and shows design was not pre-made. Despite

this, a christian may argue evolution was created to happen by God. K. Swinburne draws upon the rules of co-presence and succession. He says temporal order shows nature's predictable pattern, ~~Temporal~~<sup>Spatial</sup> order shows all parts must work together.

This is seen in animals and machines. However, this doesn't necessarily intend God designed it, infact it further highlights natural selection through evolution.

The cosmological argument uses the domino analogy to show there must be a first cause. For the domino's, this is the force of a hand. Whereas for the universe, God is the prime mover. Everything in the universe is contingent, and so God is a necessary, non-contingent being.

The problem with the Kalam argument, is that it doesn't identify the cause of the first cause. It questions why we have concluded straight to God as being the first cause. To deny probability, Bertrand Russell argues from 'brute fact' suggesting the universe needs no further explanation. This argument asks, why do we need a

first cause or an unmoved mover, when the universe can simply exist by itself. Many of these arguments face the danger of anthropomorphising God. Feurbach argues that we have often given God human attributes, to suit our internal, contingent universe. He gives a probable explanation, yet Hume argues from the 'fallacy of composition.'

The fallacy of composition shows things true in part don't necessarily reach a probable conclusion. For example, to say 'a diamond ring can't be broken' is only partially true. The diamond can't be, but the ring could be. This implies there is a probability of God, but not a conclusion.

Leibniz argues from 'sufficient reason', saying that God is a 'necessary-being.' However this total explanation only explains non-contingency. It doesn't show more than a probability of God. Aquinas' three ways are motion, causation and contingency. These supply only probable evidence. Things in motion are contingent.

and rely upon a secondary mover. Motion can also be changes in seasons or planets. But for some, this has little meaning. It explains nature but not God. Causation and contingency (new things) in the universe depend on something else, and need an uncaused cause, which must be the non-contingent God. This seems somewhat logical, yet what if you are an atheist, or you believe the Big Bang just happened by chance? There is evidence of these 3 ways, however to argue from the Christian God doesn't assert much more.

The ontological argument implies that God can be known by definition. It is a priori and conclusive. Anselm provides his first proof, by describing God as a 'necessary-being' who is non-contingent, and cannot not exist. He is defined into existence by necessity. This is questioned by Gaunilo's perfect island. He argues you can define anything into existence. For example, saying 'unicorns have a horn' doesn't mean they exist. There can be lack of probability with existence by defining something into it.

Kant rejects Descartes and Anselm's view that existence is a predicate. ~~They~~ Kant maintains it is not, as it tells nothing further about the concept. Hume agrees, and says predicates are intensions, and existence is an extension. He uses the example with a donkey.

P1: Donkeys exist

P2: Seyore is a donkey

C: Therefore, Seyore exists.

However, this is untrue. Existence is not a predicate, and you cannot deduce something into existence.

Probability of infinite regress is unlikely. Aquinas rejects it, stressing there must be a prime mover and an uncaused cause. However, modern maths shows infinite regress can be possible, through numbers. It makes logical sense to think there is a first cause, yet it could be chance or even infinite regression.

B. Russell further contributes to the idea of existence. He says "can exist" as things in the world correspond with our

concept of a cow. You could say "God exists" because things in the world relate to a probable concept of God. However, we have empirical evidence for cows, and not for God. Aquinas maintained statements about God should be synthetic, and use empirical, sense-experience. We can't all agree on one definition of God, as his essence is unknown. To analytically derive God would mean his existence is logical and factual. But we are lacking empirical evidence to ever confirm this.

The arguments for the existence of God show they can only suggest a probability. This is due to an insufficient amount of empirical observation in the inductive arguments. Intelligent design has been contradicted by science, and we have no experience of the world being made, so we cannot conclude to an intelligent designer. (Hume). The fallacy of composition demonstrates how probability is inconclusive. Defining God into existence without enough empirical evidence is logically flawed, and therefore also meaningless. Despite that,

there could be evidence of God behind science. God also could be the preponent of Aquinas' 3 ways. Perhaps, it shows off God's regularity and order in design. Infinite regression may be probable, but, the arguments are only inductive, and so there is no definite conclusion, due to the absence of such empirical evidence.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This is an example of a very strong response that was awarded the full 30 marks and reached the top end of level 5. The candidate has used a good range and variety of material. There is a clear structure and a good link made with Christianity. The candidate controls their material well making good, reasoned judgements throughout.



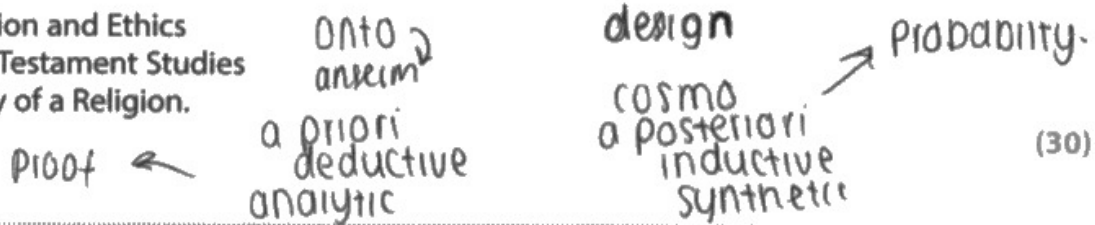
**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

A defined structure to the longer essays is very beneficial for maintaining clarity of thought. Signpost your synoptic link section to the examiner in a way that is clear to another component you are linking to.

- 4 Evaluate the view that arguments for the existence of God can do no more than increase the probability of God's existence.

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

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



there are a number of philosophical arguments which aim to prove God's existence as being more probable than not. the ontological argument for example aims to be a proof for the existence of God by committing to a priori, analytical stance. on the other hand the design and cosmological argument aim to increase the probability of God's existence through taking an a posteriori stance based on sense experience.

The design argument aims to prove God's existence through the design and regularity of the universe. As stated in Genesis in the Torah it states that God created the world ~~as a~~ as a perfect place for humans to dwell in. Tennant supports this argument with his aesthetic and anthropic principle. He states that in his aesthetic principle that the world was created with the intention of humanity.



to enjoy beauty. It is suggested by Tennant that it is more probable than not that the universe was created by God since it would be considered near impossible for this to occur by chance, considering humans have the ability to enjoy the beauty of art, literature and music etc it is unlikely this is the product of chance. Furthermore in the discussion of the well-known anthropic principle scholar Tennant argues that the universe could have easily been in a state of chaos and confusion, but the fact that it is not provides compelling evidence as to the design of the universe, and in which the universe is created by none other than God.

On the other hand, famous scholar David Hume has arguments to the contrary of scholar Tennant. Hume ~~suggests~~ that is right in suggesting that we as humans have no experience in the creation of worlds and universes. Stating that the world is so unique it would be impossible to make assumptions about the means in which it was created without jumping to conclusions, the conclusion of that being God as creator. In an effort to compromise with compelling evidence against his claims Hume ~~states~~ states that okay say the universe is a product of creation by a being of divinity, why doesn't it have to

be God. Hume presents the idea of the being multiple gods or even a deity in which we have not yet considered. ~~the universe~~ in conception it seems as though there is contradictory evidence as to the existence of God, enough to question the grounds in which our beliefs stem, this evidence suggests we cannot assume any more than a probability in Gods existence.

Furthermore, the cosmological argument also provides evidence in favour of the existence of God. Scholar Aquinas stated 3 ways of cosmology in his book Summa Theologica. His first way was motion, in which he claims nothing can move itself meaning there must be a unmoved mover in which can move itself to kickstart the chain. Secondly he states there must be a chain of cause and effect in which is begun by the unmoved mover otherwise known as the prime mover from whom all existence begun, and finally his 3<sup>rd</sup> way contingency, in which it is suggested that all humans are contingent beings which cannot cause themselves, from this he suggests there must be a necessary being which contains within itself the reason for its existence. Aquinas said this being had to be God. According to Aquinas this pro alone provides a undeniable proof of the

existence of God in which is the only possible explanation for the universe.

However, some suggest Aquinas is wrong in his suggestion of his first way motion, as according to Newton's law some things do have the ability to move themselves, contradicting the need of an unmoved mover.

further more, the Kalam cosmological argument as presented by Al Gauzi suggests that the universe just began to exist, although initially supporting the cosmological argument the Kalam argument says that the fact that the universe exists does not provide proof for the existence of God only probability. This is supported by scholar Ed Miller ~~what~~ who furthers this by saying it is only probable that God exists, it may make the most sense to a believer but it doesn't lead to proof of God.

In conclusion describe the contradictory evidence Aquinas makes strong arguments in the existence of God as a proof rather than a probability suggesting arguments for the existence of God can provide more than just probability.

finally, the ontological of whom stems on a different branch to both the design and cosmological argument stating that it has the

means within itself to prove God's existence.

Scholar Anselm is quick in suggesting that "God is that <sup>which</sup> which nothing greater can be conceived" according to Anselm this statement alone ~~has~~ has the necessary means to provide proof for God's existence. He claims that if one were to think of God within in the mind there would always be something greater in reality, because if you were to have an imaginary £1000 and a £1000 in reality the physical and realistic £1000 would obviously be better, and since God is that which nothing greater can be conceived it is only logical for him to exist in reality as well as the mind. On the contrary, Gaunilo is quick to attack Anselm's claims by saying that just because you can think of something in your mind it doesn't mean that it exists in reality too, he used the analogy of the perfect island to support his claims, that no one can prove the existence of God only provide a probability of the occurrence. However Anselm replies to Gaunilo and states that "I cannot think of God as not existing", furthermore he says that an island isn't a necessary being from which all existence depends, leaving an island as being incommensurable to a deity of maximal greatness.

like God out of the evidence presented so far  
It seems as though Gaunilo makes compelling  
points supported by scholar Kant<sup>1</sup> and Russell<sup>2</sup> that you  
cannot define something into existence, leaving God  
as a mere probability.

In conclusion of the arguments presented the  
evidence provided supports the claim that  
arguments for the existence of God can do no  
more than increase the probability of the existence  
of God



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This is a response that was awarded 24 marks and achieved at the top of level 4. The candidate made solid use of a range of relevant material. The response has coherent chains of reasoning and appraises the evidence effectively. However, the essay failed to reach level 5 because there was no identifiable synoptic link and, consequently, it was capped at the top of level 4.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Try to signpost your synoptic link early in the essay. This will ensure that you reach level 5, providing the rest of your answer is of sufficient quality.

## Paper Summary

Based on performance on this paper, candidates should:

- Ensure they choose relevant material specifically to address the question as set. For example, Q01 (8-mark) essay, candidates need to focus the structure of their response to the marks and space available.
- Remember to clearly identify the use of the command words (assess, analyse and evaluate), by offering an assessment of, or verdict on, a stance and not to merely present an alternative view, eg, '*some scholars disagree*', without demonstrating relevant reasoning why '*some scholars disagree*'.
- Read the question thoroughly and reference it throughout to sustain the focus within their answer.
- Ensure scholars are used accurately in respect of the ideas ascribed to them.
- For Q04, make the synoptic link explicitly clear. Sound synoptic links are usually more than a sentence or two in content and draw attention to the issues being linked.

## **Grade boundaries**

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html>

