



General Certificate of Education

# **Religious Studies 1061**

RSS04 Religion, Philosophy and Science

## **Mark Scheme**

*2010 examination - January series*

Mark schemes are prepared by the Principal Examiner and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation meeting attended by all examiners and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation meeting ensures that the mark scheme covers the candidates' responses to questions and that every examiner understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for the standardisation meeting each examiner analyses a number of candidates' scripts: alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed at the meeting and legislated for. If, after this meeting, examiners encounter unusual answers which have not been discussed at the meeting they are required to refer these to the Principal Examiner.

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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	

## RSS04 Religion, Philosophy and Science

### 1 (a) Examine two understandings of miracle.

Many different approaches are possible. Candidates may refer to the split between those who see miracles as interventions in the laws of nature (following Hume's arguments) and those who see miracles as events with religious significance (with Holland's train story or Hick's Nebraska story or Swinburne's toys in the cupboard example). Candidates may refer to a biblical understanding of miracles either separately or as part of the above.

Maximum Level 5 for only one understanding.

**(30 marks)**

**AO1**

### 1 (b) 'Science proves that miracles do not happen.'

**Assess this claim.**

#### **Does not prove**

Science is not prescriptive but descriptive: miracles can be part of a scientific understanding, therefore. Believers argue that miracles have religious and spiritual significance. This is not undermined by science.

Many examples of miracles which leave physical traces unexplained by science and medicine (Lourdes' miracles may be used as an example).

#### **Does prove**

Science is about empirical data, repeatability, experimentation, etc. Scientific views promote the idea that nature runs along well-established observable laws. The success of this view can be seen in the way science offers an explanation of reality which clearly works.

Miracles are about the supernatural, non-empirical and non-repeatable. Scientific understandings of 'supposed' miracles have alternative explanations – naturalistic or rationalistic forces which were not understood certainly in biblical times.

Miracles only appear to present a 'God-of-the-gaps' solution but science is increasingly closing the gaps with more and more understanding.

**(15 marks)**

**AO2**

**2 (a) 'God is the Creator.'**

**Explain how a creationist would understand this statement.**

Expect to see detail of the variety of creationist positions including young Earth and progressive varieties.

Focus on the words of the biblical texts in Genesis – candidates may give some detail from Genesis – and how these words carry literal truth.

Any candidate who also mentions Intelligent Design (ID) should be credited since many scholars argue that Intelligent Design is simply an extension of creationism.

**(30 marks) AO1**

**2 (b) 'Creationism is not a reasonable understanding of creation.'**

**Assess this claim.**

**Is not reasonable**

Many other religious views of creation which argue that a more liberal view of the biblical texts help to make religious faith more relevant and flexible in the modern age.

Long history of not seeing the texts as literally true going back to the earliest times of the Church – this is more reasonable than seeing the texts as literally true.

Liberal view of creation more in tune with Big Bang and evolution.

**Is reasonable**

Understanding of the texts as literally true provides certainty in a changing world.

Focus on the word of God provides believers with insight into the work of God.

Scientific views about creation are not conclusive / complete but a creationist view provides a complete explanation.

**(15 marks) AO2**

**3 (a) Examine the scientific arguments against the design argument.**

Expect Dawkins.

No design in the universe because there is an alternative naturalistic explanation, i.e. evolution.

Plenty of naturalistic evidence such as extinction of species and nature 'red in tooth and claw' to show that there is no Designer at work.

Dawkins' argument that all nature demonstrates is the 'desire' of DNA to replicate itself. Design arguments often refer to purpose and conclude from this that there must be a Designer. Dawkins' argument is that the 'purpose' of nature is the replication of DNA.

Dawkins contrasts with Darwin: the latter sees evolution as providing an explanation for how things are as they are whilst Dawkins believes that evolution provides the 'why?' of things as well.

**(30 marks) AO1**

**3 (b) 'Modern scientific arguments do not require us to abandon the design argument.'**

**Assess this claim.**

**Do not require us to abandon**

May be reference to modern versions of the design argument – perhaps, the Anthropic Principle which states the case, scientifically, for design.

Even though evolutionary theory undermines Paley, it does not lead to atheism as such. Swinburne's version of design takes evolutionary theory into account.

**Do require us to abandon**

May be reference to the 'God-of-the-gaps' notion.

Candidates may state that the extraordinary features of design might be coincidence, the result of multiple universes, etc.

**(15 marks) AO2**

**4 (a) Explain how quantum mechanics might have parallels with mystical insights into the nature of reality.**

Variety of mystical traditions may be used. Key features of mysticism include:

- sense of underlying unity in reality;
- dissolution of subject and object;
- difficulty of description (ineffability).

Link with some key ideas of quantum mechanics:

- indeterminacy (uncertainty);
- effect of observer on what is observed.

**(30 marks) AO1**

**4 (b) 'Attempts to match quantum mechanics with religion are of no value.'**

**Assess this view.**

**No value**

Quantum mechanics is science and offers no support or otherwise to religious faith.

Differences between science and religion may be offered:

- Science uses empirical data and experimentation to draw empirical conclusions; religion uses faith and deals with metaphysical conclusions.
- Science looks at how things work; religion considers the purpose of things.
- Diluting science with religious / mystical concepts undermines it.

**Are of value**

Both science and religious faith deal with things which are difficult to describe. Scientists have no firm empirical basis for quantum mechanics so have to use a degree of faith.

This way of looking at reality is in accord with religious faith. Both scientists and believers can learn from each other, therefore.

Quantum mechanics also appears to place a limit on what can be known (the Uncertainty Principle). Faith can be seen to be the bridge across the divide between what is known and what is unknown.

**(15 marks) AO2**