



**General Certificate of Education
June 2010**

Religious Studies

RST4A

**Life, Death and Beyond or Perceptions of
Ultimate Reality or Religious Experience**

A2 Unit 4A

Final

Mark Scheme

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) A2 Level Descriptors

| Level | A2 Descriptor AO1 | Marks <i>Unit 4 italics</i> | A2 Descriptor AO2 | Marks <i>Unit 4 italics</i> | A2 Descriptors for Quality of Written Communication in AO1 and AO2 |
|----------|--|------------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|--|
| 7 | A thorough treatment of the topic, which may be in depth or breadth. Information is accurate and relevant. A thorough understanding is shown through good use of relevant evidence and examples. Where appropriate good knowledge and understanding of diversity of views and / or scholarly opinion is demonstrated. Knowledge and understanding of connections with other elements of the course of study are demonstrated convincingly. | 28-30 41-45 | A very well-focused response to the issue(s) raised. Different views, including where appropriate those of scholars or schools of thought, are discussed and evaluated perceptively. Effective use is made of evidence to sustain an argument. Systematic analysis and reasoning leads to appropriate conclusions. There may be evidence of independent thought. The argument is related perceptively and maturely to the broader context and to human experience. | 19-20 28-30 | Appropriate form and style of writing; clear and coherent organisation of information; appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; good legibility and high level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar. |
| 6 | A generally thorough treatment of the topic which may be in depth or breadth. Information is almost all accurate and mainly relevant. Clear understanding is demonstrated through use of relevant evidence and examples. Where appropriate, alternative views and / or scholarly opinion are satisfactorily explained. Knowledge and understanding of connections with other elements of the course of study are clearly demonstrated. | 24-27 36-40 | A well-focused response to the issue(s) raised. Different views, including where appropriate those of scholars or schools of thought, are discussed. A process of reasoning leads to an appropriate evaluation. There may be evidence of independent thought. The argument is related clearly to the broader context and to human experience. | 16-18 24-27 | |
| 5 | A satisfactory treatment of the topic. Information is mostly accurate and mainly relevant. A reasonable understanding is demonstrated through use of some evidence and examples. Where appropriate, some familiarity with diversity of views and / or scholarly opinion is shown. Some knowledge and understanding of connections with other elements of the course of study are demonstrated. | 20-23 29-35 | A satisfactory response to the issue(s) raised. Views are explained with some supporting evidence and arguments, and some critical analysis. A conclusion is drawn that follows from some of the reasoning. Some of the response is related satisfactorily to the broader context and to human experience. | 13-15 20-23 | Mainly appropriate form and style of writing; generally clear and coherent organisation of information; mainly appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; good legibility and fairly high level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar. |
| 4 | Key ideas and facts are included; demonstrates some understanding and coherence using some evidence and examples. Where appropriate, brief reference may be made to alternative views and / or scholarly opinion. Limited knowledge and understanding of connections with other elements of the course of study are demonstrated. | 15-19 22-28 | The main issue is addressed with some supporting evidence or argument, but the reasoning is faulty, or the analysis superficial or only one view is adequately considered. Little of the response is related to the broader context and to human experience. | 10-12 15-19 | Form and style of writing appropriate in some respects; some of the information is organised clearly and coherently; some appropriate and accurate use of specialist vocabulary; satisfactory legibility and level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar. |
| 3 | A summary of key points. Limited in depth or breadth. Answer may show limited understanding and limited relevance. Some coherence. | 10-14 15-21 | A basic attempt to justify a point of view relevant to the question. Some explanation of ideas and coherence. | 7-9 10-14 | |
| 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 8-14 | A superficial response to the question with some attempt at reasoning. | 4-6 5-9 | 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 1-7 | A few basic points, with no supporting argument or justification. | 1-3 1-4 | |
| 0 | Nothing of relevance. | 0 | No attempt to engage with the question or nothing of relevance | 0 | |

Section A *Life, Death and Beyond*

Question 1

| | | |
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| 0 | 1 | Examine ideas which can be found in both secular and religious thinking about the nature of human life. |
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There are two elements to this question and top levels must have addressed both.

Candidates may approach religion from **either** a broad perspective referring to a range of specific religions, **or** a narrow, in-depth approach where they refer to one specific religion. Watch for unfocused generalisations which will often be inaccurate.

Examination requires that candidates explore the ideas, that is, they should be able to state them and then to unpack what they mean with illustration / example. Thus, a simple statement of an idea with some example will only reach top of Level 4.

Secular ideas are more likely to be a little more general, but could refer to scholars such as Freud. They must show that the secular has ideas about human nature which are not derived from the religious; humans are controlled by their genes and there is nothing after death.

Nature: the religious, look for references to teaching / scripture from a religion / religions which illustrate ideas about nature of human life, for example, created by God, in his image.

Maximum of top of Level 5 if one of either secular or religious is addressed.

(45 marks)

AO1

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‘People today regard ideas about the nature of human life, whether religious or secular, as irrelevant.’ To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Note the question asks for an assessment of the value of the ideas for people by referring to the idea of irrelevance.

Candidates may approach religion from **either** a broad perspective referring to a range of specific religions **or** a narrow, in-depth approach where they refer to one specific religion. Watch for unfocused generalisations which will often be inaccurate.

Thus, there should be an attempt to evaluate the value of the religious and the secular ideas of human nature for both the religious and the secular.

Thus, how valuable for religious people is the idea, for example, that humans are made in God’s image? Or, how valuable for the secular world is the idea that all humans are equal, or is it an idea which is so remote from the way societies operate that in fact it has no real value at all?

There may be some consideration of the value of religious for the secular and vice versa.

Top level answers should demonstrate there is no simple answer, in most cases a total rejection of religious ideas is unlikely as many societies have values which are derived from the religious.

It is important to note that candidates may draw upon new material in their answer and this should be credited where it is relevant as support for their argument or debate.

Maximum of top of Level 5 if only one of religious or secular is tackled.

(30 marks)

AO2

Question 2

0

3

Examine religious beliefs about the importance of the present life and life beyond death.

There are two tasks to this question; an examination of religious beliefs about present life and life after death.

Candidates may approach religion from **either** a broad perspective referring to a range of specific religions, **or** a narrow in depth approach where they refer to one specific religion. Watch for unfocused generalisations which will often be inaccurate.

The **present life**, expect specific references; life is for establishing a relationship with God, or how a religious life should be conducted e.g. the Buddhist eight fold path.

For **life beyond death**, candidates will probably choose to illustrate their religious ideas from an eastern and a western perspective, the linear and the cyclical, although this is not required.

Examination requires that candidates explore the ideas and importance, that is, they should be able to state them and then to unpack what they mean with illustration / example. Thus, a simple statement of an idea with some example will only reach top of Level 4.

Top of Level 5 if only one aspect is addressed.

(45 marks)**AO1**

0

4

'In a largely secular society any beliefs about life beyond death are unacceptable.' Discuss how far you agree with this statement.

The two areas could be considered, the secular and the religious, as illustrated by the term 'largely'. Note the question is how far you agree and thus there must be an assessment of this generally demonstrating that there are different possibilities in accepting and rejecting the statement. Thus, a candidate might say that for many people in their younger years the beliefs have little effect, but later they do. There must be a clear illustration of how the beliefs do affect the life to support claims that this is the case.

Watch for broad generalisations which are simply not true, for example, all secular people reject beliefs about life after death because they reject religion.

It is important to note that candidates may well draw upon new material in their answer and this should be credited where it is relevant as support for their argument or debate.

(30 marks)**AO2**

Section B Perceptions of Ultimate Reality

Question 3

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| 0 | 5 |
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Examine definitions of, and ideas about, God / Ultimate Reality in the religion(s) you have studied.

It is expected that candidates will make a distinction between definitions and ideas. Thus, under **definitions** they should be able to refer to specific religions and to their attempts to define God, e.g. Judaism with its clear ideas about monotheism in the Shema.

The question is seeking an exploration of the **ideas** made about God, form, nature etc. Candidates may well take the definitions and then explore what these mean. Thus, if a religion believes that God is omnipotent, what exactly does this mean, what are the implications of such a claim?

Whilst it might be possible to answer this from a generalised perspective that is seeking to draw upon a multitude of religions, expect most candidates to use one or two specific religions. There will need to be a judgement about depth versus breadth, but in the case of the latter, watch the candidate who simply repeats the same belief across two or three religions, for example monotheism.

Buddhism is the most likely religion which will be chosen if a candidate deals with Ultimate Reality, but note that there is no requirement that they should do so.

Note that the question is focused tightly into religious definitions and ideas, thus references to religious philosophy, if they occur, must be related to religion / specific religion.

In this case, if only definitions are presented, because they are so limited, a maximum of top of Level 3 can be awarded. If only ideas and no definitions, then maximum of top of Level 6.

(45 marks)

AO1

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Consider how far these definitions and ideas help people understand why life is as it is.

Candidates should be able to take some of the definitions and ideas they have explored in part (a) and consider whether they help people today in their understanding of life or not. Note that it is focused upon understanding why life is as it is. Thus, for example, they might take the idea of God as creator and work through this. There is no requirement that candidates work through all the definitions and ideas they have explored in part (a). Whilst there will be some consideration that for the non-religious person they provide no help, indeed Marx might have argued the opposite – that they hinder, nevertheless an answer which does not then go on to explore the religious definitions and ideas of God / Ultimate Reality will only achieve maximum Level 5.

Thus there should be consideration for the religious person, for example, what does it mean to claim God is omnipotent?

It is important to note that candidates may well draw upon new material in their answer and this should be credited where it is relevant as support for their argument or debate.

Candidates may approach religion from either a broad perspective referring to a range of specific religions, or a narrow in depth approach where they refer to one specific religion. Watch unfocused generalisations which will often be inaccurate.

(30 marks)

AO2

Question 4

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| 0 | 7 |
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Examine religious language as a meaningful way of talking about God / Ultimate Reality.

Examination requires that candidates explore the ideas and importance, that is, they should be able to state them and then to unpack what they mean with illustration / example. Thus, a simple statement of an idea with some example will only reach top of Level 4.

The question is focused upon meaningful ways of talking about God / Ultimate Reality. Thus, candidates will consider the different ways there are for using religious language to do this. Therefore, expect an exploration of methods like negation, analogy or the different non-cognitive approaches. Top level answers should refer to specific scholars like Aquinas, Braithwaite and Wittgenstein. It will be necessary for candidates to support their answers with plenty of examples. Whilst there is no requirement for assessment, the question does require that candidates limit their illustrations to examples of meaningfulness and so examples should demonstrate this.

If material is only falsification max top of Level 3.

(45 marks) AO1

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'The nature of God / Ultimate Reality means that any attempt to talk about God / Ultimate Reality will fail.' Assess this view.

The assessment must be focused upon the claim, that is, the candidates need to refer to the religious ideas about the nature of God which often sets God outside human understanding and experience, and then relate this to the different types of religious language they have explored in part (a). The assessment is related to whether any talk about God is meaningless and candidates must tackle this. They might choose to say that it is not the nature of God which causes problems but more the whole nature of religion itself which requires, for example, faith. This might mean that language can adequately describe faith, and indeed other aspects of religion, as much of religion is so unique.

There should be a counterview which shows that for the religious there is meaning in language since almost all the ideas about any religion are expressed through language.

There is no requirement that candidates deal with both God and Ultimate Reality. It is important to note that candidates may well draw upon new material in their answer and this should be credited where it is relevant as support for their argument or debate.

(30 marks) AO2

Section C Religious Experience

Question 5

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| 0 | 9 | Examine the characteristics of, and processes involved in, conversion and mystical experiences. |
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There are four tasks in this question; characteristics and process, and two types of religious experience: conversion and mystical.

By **characteristics**, candidates should be able to demonstrate how scholars provide ideas about what characterises the two types of religious experience, for example, ideas about different types of conversion, the intellectual, the gradual etc. James provides four characteristics for a mystical experience, whereas there are others who speak about the **process** of a religious experience, for example, Rambo and Farhadian with conversion.

Again, **examination** requires more than a simple presentation of these. Thus in their exploration, candidates should be able to demonstrate what James means by noetic and provide examples to support the exploration. A simple statement will only achieve maximum of top of Level 4.

Maximum of Level 5 if only one of conversion or mystical.

(45 marks) AO1

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| 1 | 0 | Consider how far the work of scholars has helped an understanding of religious experience. |
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Note that the question has been broadened beyond just conversion and the mystical and thus if they wish candidates can equally broaden their answers, but this is not a requirement.

The focus of the question is upon an understanding of religious experience. Candidates might choose to look at the mystical and conversion and consider how far the work of scholars on these two types of religious experience has helped an understanding of these phenomena. Thus, it would be possible to maintain that since religious experience is such a personal thing, the work of scholars does not help at all because every religious experience has to be personally related to.

Equally, they might wish to show that when it comes to deciding whether someone has had a religious experience, then the work of scholars can be very valuable.

The 'how far' trigger expects candidates to be able to debate gradation.

It is important to note that candidates may well draw upon new material in their answer and this should be credited where it is relevant as support for their argument or debate.

(30 marks) AO2

Question 6

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Examine how religious experience has acted as a foundation for particular religion(s).

Examination requires that candidates explore the ideas and importance, that is, they should be able to state them and then to unpack what they mean with illustration / example. Thus a simple statement of an idea with some example will only reach top of Level 4.

Note that candidates can refer to specific instances of religious experience acting as a foundation.

Candidates must refer to a particular religious experience and then demonstrate how this plays a significant part in the foundation of the religion or the movement. Thus, Saul has a conversion experience, a recognised type of religious experience. This led to his mission work and to his writings, now in the New Testament, which clearly played a major role in the foundation since they are the first workings of Christian theology and Christian practices. The fact that it is conversion from Judaism is significant since so much of Christianity is based upon Judaism.

The question is about religion(s), not religious movements, if movement max top Level 2.

Answers will need to be either in depth or in breadth.

(45 marks)

AO1

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‘Religious experiences may have inspired the foundation of religions but have little to contribute to those religions today.’ Evaluate this claim.

There are a number of approaches which can be taken. Evaluation requires that the candidates are able to consider these approaches and then consider how accurate the claim is. Again, there may be answers which provide a gradation of accuracy.

There can be some consideration of the idea of religious experience inspiring as opposed to part (a) which suggests that religious experience acted as a foundation. This might mean some debate about whether it is really the individual who claimed to have the religious experience who really acted as the foundation, not the religious experience itself.

The contribution today can be the religious experience which inspired the foundation. However, candidates may choose to broaden the debate into religious experience and what contribution it may have to make today.

Candidates may approach religion from either a broad perspective referring to a range of specific religions, or a narrow, in-depth approach where they refer to one specific religion. Watch for unfocused generalisations which will often be inaccurate.

It is important to note that candidates may well draw upon new material in their answer and this should be credited where it is relevant as support for their argument or debate.

(30 marks)

AO2