

Teacher Resource Bank

GCE Religious Studies

Unit A (RSS01) *Religion and Ethics 1*

June 2009 Examination Candidate Exemplar Work:

- Candidate B



2009 (June) Unit A Religion and Ethics 1

Example of Candidate's Work from the Examination

Candidate B

3 (a) Examine religious ideas about the human condition.

(30 marks)

AO1

Candidate Response

3a	Examine Religious Ideas about the human Condition.
	A Religious person can view life in one of two ways; teleological believing that life has extrinsic value, meaning that we must make our lives good ourselves, or teleological thinkers take on board the quality of life argument, believing that to live a good life, the consequences of actions are important and valuable to how good our life is. Christians can accept this view as Jesus can be viewed as teleological, he didn't believe that something was right or wrong and he looked at each situation differently.
	In comparison to this a Christian could take a deontological view, believing that all life is sacred, as the bible teaches; 'there is jew nor gentile, slave nor free' this is known as extrin intrinsic value, believing that all life has quality no matter who it is. Christians may be more willing to accept this idea about humans as the understanding is that all life is sacred and has value.
	Jesus would be viewed as taking a deontological approach as he cared for minorities, and therefore believed all life was sacred, for example the God Good Samaritan shows us that a human life is sacred no matter what religion, gender etc, the bible teaches that we are all 'made in God's image and likeness' therefore humans are all equal. Christians in society today can

show that they accept the importance of human condition and by being open to treating all humans equal and ignoring a factor

that makes a minority, by showing that they are willing to treat everyone equally.

Hindus however do not believe in the ~~quality of life they believe~~ intrinsic value of life they believe that Humans are judged by actions carried out in past lives. ~~know as~~

These actions are what give Hindus their place in society, the lowest form known as the Untouchables are completely outcast from society, this is because karma has made them an outcast because of bad judgements and decisions in a previous life.

Although many Christians accept that all life is sacred, there are some Christians who believe that minorities should still exist, there is biblical evidence which shows inequality towards slaves, 'Slaves bow down to your masters' but religious views have been adapted to fit in to society, therefore a lot of Christians accept that all human life is sacred, and all Humans should be treated equally.

Commentary

AO1 (30 marks)

The trigger word 'examine' is often used where the subject has several facets. It requires both knowledge and understanding, some unpacking of concepts and explanation, with reasons, examples or illustrations.

This was deliberately a very open question. The term 'human condition' is open to a variety of interpretations, and the reference to 'religious ideas' allows candidates to refer to one religion or more.

The candidate opens with a range of ideas, some of which are almost lost in the rush. 'Life has extrinsic value', 'we must make our lives good ourselves', when we live a 'good' life, the consequences of our actions are important, the 'quality of life argument'.

The point that Jesus can be viewed as having this attitude is accurate; however, the final sentence is stated as a fact when it should have been reported as an interpretation. These points may have applied more directly to a question about the meaning of a 'good life' or the 'value of life', but they are clearly relevant here.

The second paragraph giving an alternative view (here labelled deontological rather than teleological) runs through 'all life is sacred', 'intrinsic value of life', 'all life has quality' regardless of who the person is.

This view is attributed to Jesus – believed all life is sacred, cared for minorities, religion and gender irrelevant to worth (illustrated using the Good Samaritan), 'all made in God's image', human beings all equal.

This is a complex answer. These are not the easiest ideas to handle in dealing with 'the human condition' and the way the ideas are developed leaves the reader uncertain of the candidate's grasp of teleological and deontological. Many other candidates would have focused on creation and fall, free will, sin and redemption instead. However, the answer is to be assessed at AS standard, not at A2 where the expectations are higher. There was, however, a real danger that the candidate would overstretch her/himself and produce something incoherent.

The section on Hinduism helps to clarify the candidate's thinking. Hindus are said not to accept the intrinsic value of life and the situation of any human is shown to depend on actions in past lives. There is reference to Karma, but understanding of it is implied rather than being made explicit. The example of the untouchables is useful.

The final paragraph starts badly – but the general point, that the Christian commitment to equality is perhaps not universal, is clear.

Summary

The quality of the answer has to be judged:

- according to the level descriptors,
- in the light of the novelty of the demand on the candidates in this first June sitting for the new AS award,
- always bearing in mind that the answer is produced under examination conditions.

Much about the human condition is implied in this answer, but there is more focus on value. Many ideas are stated rather than developed. This could reflect a time-management problem and/or the stress of the exam situation. There is a mixture of effective use of technical terms and superficially impressive, but less secure, use of terminology. Key ideas are included and there is some breadth. There is some, but limited, use of examples, and some evidence of understanding.

Level 5 – just. 20/30

Level 5 (20 marks)

(b) 'Human life must always take priority over non-human life.'

How far would religious believers accept this view?

(15 marks)

AO2

Candidate Response

3b) "Human life must always take priority over non-human life"

The bible tells Christians that they are 'to rule over the land and sea' this is known as being and having dominion over non-human forms. Christians that accept this view believe that animals belong to humans, therefore we can do what we want with them. Because of the biblical evidence a Christian can believe this view to a far extent, however Genesis also tells us that the Earth does not belong to us and that we must protect the Earth as Adam + Eve did

this is called stewardship, and this is the view that Christians must look after and protect the ~~Earth~~ that non-human forms. Peter Singer, believes in Specieism, in contrast to the dominion view he believes that animals have a soul, therefore have equality with humans, and must not be treated as a lesser ~~priority~~ priority.

A Christian may examine the view that when God flooded the Earth and built the Ark, it was the animals that God chose to protect, in this instance animals took priority over humans, therefore a religious believer could not accept the view very far, as there is evidence to show that God favoured non-human life over human.

Finally the term 'non-human' is an open-ended term, arguments about what a human is could be raised, is a person who is severely disabled not human, or a foetus? I feel that all life both human should be treated equally, as to take

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		* and non-human. Priority (over something
		else is unfair, and I don't think that it was
		God's intention, for everyone to be treated differently,
		as it would cause a split and unequal
		world.

Commentary

AO2 (15 marks)

A 'How far' question requires an answer of the kind 'mostly', 'completely', 'not at all'. This is an open question and good candidates defined their terms in the answer as well as indicating which religion(s) they would consider.

The answer opens with the Christian idea of dominion which is clearly, if rather baldly, explained. 'Animals belong to humans, therefore we can do what we want with them.' It is balanced with the idea of stewardship. This is good use of technical terms.

The part of the answer relating to Peter Singer is neither accurate nor clear. As a humanist he would not place himself in a debate about religious attitudes to non-human animals, and he cannot be described as believing in Specieism.

The section that draws conclusions from the biblical story of the ark is clear. The final paragraph, which tackles the definition of 'non-human', is on the right lines, but rhetorical questions are rarely useful and there is no debate. It would have been much better to have started a debate with, for example, 'if by non-human life is meant severely mentally handicapped children, then..' The actual conclusion is weak and does not follow from the rest of the answer.

The quality of the answer has to be judged:

- according to the level descriptors,
- in the light of the novelty of the demand on the candidates in this first June sitting for the new AS award,
- always bearing in mind that the answer is produced under examination conditions.

The answer is a reasonable length for the time available. The strongest parts of the answer are the opening paragraph, which presents contrasting ideas, and the section on the story of the ark, which draws a conclusion from the material it presents.

The level 5 descriptor reads:

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 are adequately explained.

The answer matches the descriptor for level 5 and can be awarded 11/15.

The total mark for the question is 31/45 – the standard required for a grade B in the summer 2009 examination.

Level 5 (11 marks)

4 (a) Explain the ethical issues involved in legislation about euthanasia.

(30 marks)

AO1

Candidate Response

4a) Explain the ethical issues involved in legislation about Euthanasia

Perhaps the most prominent argument for Euthanasia is the belief that we have a right to death, however this issue is something which must be examined more closely before legislation in this country is passed regarding any type of Euthanasia.

The bible teaches 'Thou shalt not kill', yet Euthanasia, sometimes known by Liberal Christians as 'mercy killing' goes against both the biblical teaching, and the law which states that 'murder is wrong'. If the issue is the taking of a life then Euthanasia should simply not be passed as a law, but questions are being raised about the right we should have to 'die with dignity', terminal illness can be undignifying an example is a woman named Diane Pretty who suffered from MS, she fought with courts to have the right to die with dignity, yet courts disagreed with her case, a strong ethical argument would consider whether it is right that an animal can be 'put to sleep' and yet a human must suffer.

Christians may feel that as Jesus suffered on the cross it is only right that God who is omnipotent (all powerful) decides when we should die.

Another issue is that if legislation was passed to allow Euthanasia, it would result in a 'slippery slope' effect, meaning anyone would have the right to be Euthanised, also how do Doctors take a Hippocratic oath promising to preserve life knowing they have the power to carry out both active (Euthanasia by removing food supplies from someone in a permanent vegetative state) ~~and~~ Active and

Involuntary Euthanasia (decided by family).
 When assessing if Euthanasia should become legal the main ethical issue is whether or not humans should have the power to take another life, and who would choose it if a patient was unable to decide, for example, could the idea be put forward by someone who wants a will or inheritance. However what must also be addressed is what measures are put in place for those who are terminally ill.
 The Catholic Hospice movement is an alternative patients are given all the medical care needed and not only Catholics have access to them, a lot of people want to die at home, and Euthanasia seems to cater this, however in a hospice families can move in, and spend time wisely, as oppose to sorrowful times at home.
 People think we should be able to choose when we die, but legislation is so much more taking a life is something that has to be greatly considered by the Government before they decide what to allow. And ethically it is wrong.

L6

Commentary

AO1 (30 marks)

This question could be answered with reference to existing legislation, in the UK or elsewhere, or to attempts to legislate about euthanasia, or both. This candidate takes the approach of issues to be considered when debating whether euthanasia should be legalised.

The introductory paragraph mentions the 'right to death' but does not develop it as this stage. Candidates should be wary of writing introductory paragraphs which add little or nothing to the answer.

The commandment is quoted as 'Thou shalt not kill' – it causes less confusion in debate if candidates qualify this in the light of other teaching to 'Do not murder.' 'Mercy killing' is said to go against both biblical teaching and the law against murder. There is a lack of precision here which would not be acceptable at A2 level but the general idea is clear and the conclusion unambiguous, if simplistic: 'If the issue is the taking of life, then euthanasia should simply not be passed as a law'.

The idea of the right to die with dignity is raised and discussed, with a named example. The human situation is then contrasted with the situation of animals who are not made to suffer. The candidate uses a rhetorical question here, which is not the best device for explaining the issue.

The point about Jesus suffering on the cross is aligned to the idea that God decides when we should die. This seems to be a conflation of a couple of ideas and moves away from strictly ethical considerations. What part should religious beliefs play in a public debate about euthanasia when many, if not the majority, do not share those beliefs?

The slippery slope argument is stated but not developed. The reference to the doctor's dilemma as a professional committed to not harming the patient is relevant, but needed re-phrasing to bring out the ethical issue more clearly. The candidate identifies in passing two different forms of euthanasia. These could have been profitably explored since they raise different issues.

This candidate's style is to raise a wide range of points but to develop very little. This is a risky strategy when it comes to assessing the quality of the answer.

Two main issues identified in the next paragraph are: should humans have the power (presumably meaning the right) to take the life of another human being, and who has the right to make the decision when the dying person cannot. The candidate recognises in passing that there may be unethical reasons for wanting to hasten someone's death.

Alternatives to euthanasia are also mentioned. This is relevant in a debate about euthanasia because any argument justifying euthanasia that refers to its outcome would have to show that the same outcome could not be achieved by an alternative means which did not raise the same ethical issues. The candidate does not follow this through.

The conclusion adds little, but highlights the difference between having the right to die and a situation in which someone else has the right, or duty, to kill.

The quality of the answer has to be judged:

- according to the level descriptors,
- in the light of the novelty of the demand on the candidates in this first June sitting for the new AS award,
- always bearing in mind that the answer is produced under examination conditions.

There are a lot of ideas in this answer. The candidate is clearly aware of arguments in favour of, and against legalising euthanasia, and has used an example. The information is mostly accurate and relevant, although not all of it is applied. Some of the ideas have been developed.

This matches the descriptor for level 6 and the answer was awarded 26 / 30.

The AS AO1 descriptor for grade A reads:

Candidates characteristically:

- a) Select accurate and relevant material.
- b) Explain clearly relevant features or key ideas, supported by examples and/or sources of evidence.
- c) Use accurately a range of technical language and terminology.
- d) Show evidence of being familiar with issues raised by relevant scholars, or a variety of views, where appropriate.

Ideally this would be represented by a mark of 24 /30, but note that that this quality of work is to be seen over the paper as a whole, and not necessarily in both answers.

The mark awarded to this answer puts it on target for a grade A.

Level 6 (26 marks)

(b) Assess the view that euthanasia can never be good.

(15 marks)

AO2

Candidate Response

(b) Assess the view that Euthanasia can never be good.

Christians would adopt this view as they would believe that the 10 commandment 'Thou shalt not kill' is at the heart of the debate. They would believe that God is the only person who has the right to take a life therefore to die without

God taking when it is right, is almost like playing God.

A lot of non-religious people believe that humans have a right to die with dignity and that Euthanasia allows this to happen. Dr. Death, famously carried out Euthanasia on people, and was convicted because Euthanasia is viewed as murder.

Where family is concerned Euthanasia is seen to be bad, as family could selfishly attempt to persuade a dying relative that Euthanasia is the best option, resulting in a slippery slope effect, of people dying for the wrong reasons.

An argument which shows Euthanasia as being good would be for those people in a permanent vegetative state, for example a coma patient, however not enough is known about what we feel when we are in a coma, to say that active Euthanasia is humane.

Euthanasia could be viewed as good for a minority, however it is still going against fundamental ideas that taking a life is wrong. Personally I think that for people with terminal illnesses, and those who are going to suffer that Euthanasia is a fair option.

	However I accept the view that
	Euthanasia may be seen to be negative
	from religious religious points of view, as
	unless Euthanasia was properly allowed,
	with restrictions and guidelines it
	can never be a good thing.

Commentary

AO2 (15 marks)

The question allowed candidates to consider the meaning of the word 'Good' and / or to debate euthanasia itself.

The answer opens with a generalisation typical at this level: 'Christians would adopt this view'. Candidates should be wary of such sweeping statements, which are rarely completely accurate. The presentation of the commandment also lacks precision but the point is clear as is the view that the right to take life belongs to God alone.

The right to die with dignity is reported, as is the prosecution of Dr Death 'because euthanasia is seen as murder'. The connection with the question here is implicit rather than explicit, but clear. Candidates should be advised to draw conclusions from all the material they present, or use the material to support a point of view. Just reporting it can lose the point.

The next paragraph states and supports the view that euthanasia 'is seen to be bad' because of possible abuse.

The next explicitly supports euthanasia and then qualifies the argument. The tendency to report the view, rather than argue the case, is still there, but this is a good paragraph.

The dilemma between going against 'fundamental ideas' that killing is wrong, and the desire to end suffering is acknowledged in the next paragraph and there is a final conclusion which hints at other ways in which the argument could have been developed. 'Unless euthanasia was properly allowed with restrictions and guidelines, it can never be a good thing.'

Were this a prepared answer, not offered under exam conditions, more focus would be expected. If it were an A2 answer rather than an AS answer, the lack of precision would lose marks. However, in the short time candidates have to answer this question the candidate could not be expected to write much more, and a range of ideas has been used.

The quality of the answer has to be judged:

- according to the level descriptors,
- in the light of the novelty of the demand on the candidates in this first June sitting for the new AS award,
- always bearing in mind that the answer is produced under examination conditions.

The level 6 descriptor reads:

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.

The level 7 descriptor reads:

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.

This answer has more features in common with the level 7 descriptor and was awarded 14/15. Note that 15 is not reserved for 'perfect' answers, but for those which, under exam conditions in the time available, display the skills required. Many answers are off the scale.

The AS AO2 descriptor for grade A achievement reads:

Candidates characteristically:

- a) Construct a coherent and well-organised argument supported by examples and/or sources of evidence.
- b) Identify strengths and weaknesses of the argument.
- c) Use accurate and fluent expression.

Ideally this would be represented by the 80% mark of 12/15.

The total marks for this answer were 40/45 – a grade A.

Level 7 (14 marks)