

Teacher Resource Bank

GCE Religious Studies
Unit B (RSS02) *Religion and Ethics 2*June 2009 Examination Candidate Exemplar Work:

Candidate B



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2009 (June) Unit B Religion and Ethics 2

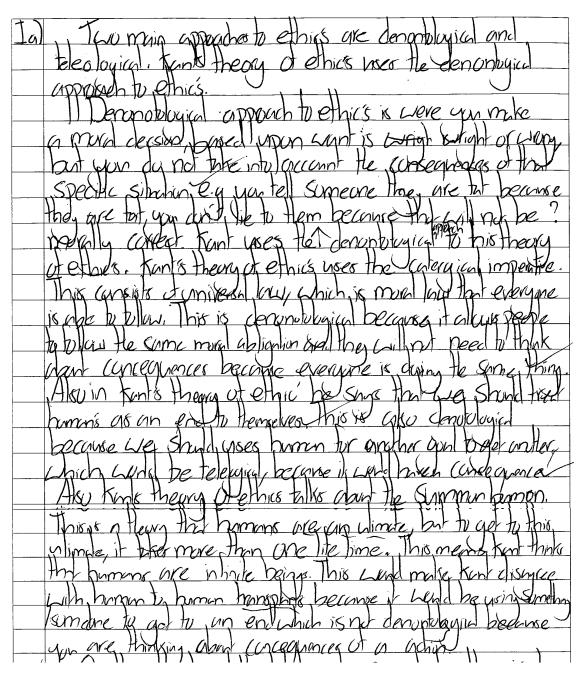
Example of Candidate's Work from the Examination

Candidate B

1 (a) Explain the key differences between deontological and teleological approaches to ethics. Refer to Kant's theory of ethics in your answer.

(30 marks) AO1

Candidate Response



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Commentary

AO1 (30 marks)

The quality of this candidate's written communication is such that legibility and level of accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar are adequate to convey meaning. With technical words such as 'categorical', and 'summum bonum', every attempt should be made to memorize these formulations. The answer throughout shows the limited understanding that is characteristic of a Level 3 response. For example in paragraph 1, the deontological approach is described as making a moral decision based upon what is "right and wrong", which is incorrect, whereas the statements that consequences are held to be irrelevant, that deontologists tell the truth, and that deontologists follow universal laws, are generally correct.

Paragraph 2 combines an accurate statement that Kant requires us to treat humans as an end in themselves with an unintelligible statement about consequences. The paragraph about the *summum bonum* is likewise a combination of half-explained ideas, e.g. that "humans are an ultimate". The suggestion that Kant would disallow human to human transplants is arguably untrue, and some would maintain than Kantian ethics would regard many transplants as an enforceable duty.

The penultimate paragraph uses "telling somebody that they look nice" as an example of a moral decision, whereas doing that is really not a moral issue in itself: the moral issue would be *whether or not one should lie* about a person's appearance in order to save their feelings. The candidate does seem to understand this point however, since the opening paragraph includes the rather blunt statement that "you tell someone they are fat because they are fat you don't literally lie to them". Similarly the statement that "if everyone thought about consequences then moral decision [*sic*] would be done properly" is wrong, but again, the candidate seems to be making errors through muddled thinking or through time constraint, because the mistake is corrected in the final paragraph.

On the whole, as a response to the question set, this response centres mainly on the suggestion that deontological responses are universal whereas teleological ones take consequences into consideration. The fact that there is some attempt to expand on these ideas by the use of examples, and by the reference to the *summum bonum*, for example, indicates that this is a low Level 4 response – key ideas showing some understanding and coherence.

Level 4 (16 marks)

AO2

(15 marks)

(b) 'Kant's deontological theory of ethics fails because it ignores the consequences of our moral choices.' Assess this claim.

Candidate Response

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Commentary

AO2 (15 marks)

This evaluation contains two main points. The first is that using Kant's criteria, his deontological theory cannot fail, because it deliberately excludes taking consequences into account. One might reply, 'Well ok, but all assumptions have to be justified, and that includes Kant's assumptions'. The second point is contained in paragraph 3, and is a stronger point: consequences do indeed seem to be important in everyday life, and even if you (as a deontological thinker) don't worry about consequences, the simple fact is that your decisions may well affect somebody else.

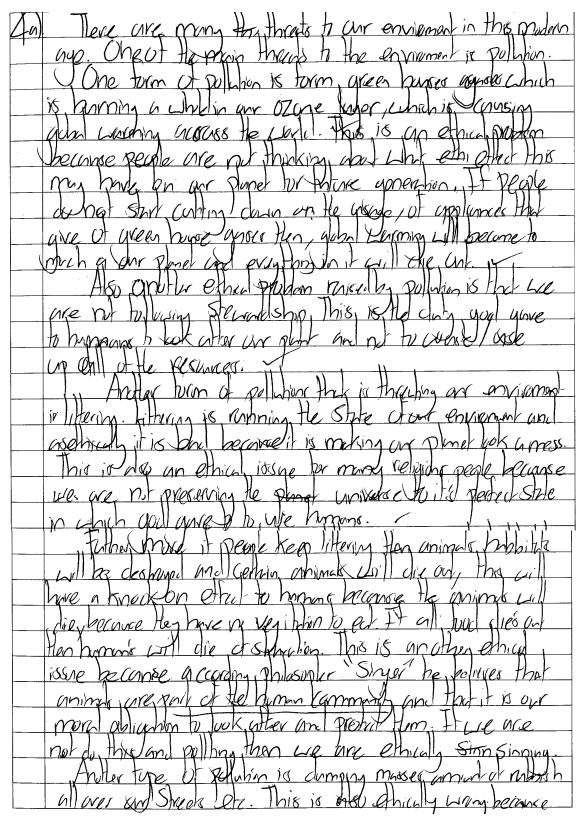
In essence, this amounts to a basic attempt to justify a point of view – that consequences do matter, and is a Level 3 answer.

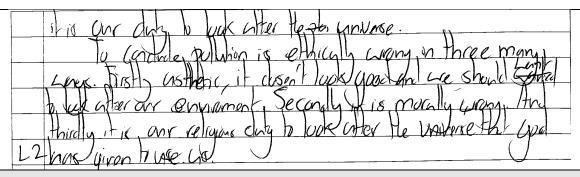
Level 3 (6 marks)

4 (a) Outline how pollution threatens the environment, and explain the ethical problems raised by pollution.

(30 marks) AO1

Candidate Response





Commentary

AO1 (30 marks)

This essay is limited, particularly in breadth. It shows limited understanding, although generally speaking it is relevant. It has some coherence, although it is no more than a summary of the key points. For example it refers to green houses gases (unfortunately omitting the third of those words in its first mention of them), to the idea of stewardship, to the effects of littering, and to aesthetic considerations.

The essay makes basic assumptions without justification. For example it assumes that considerations about God and stewardship are automatically relevant to environmental ethics – a position which many would deny. In paragraph 3, issues about the environment of this world are gratuitously expanded to include this *universe*, and again, the catchword of the creation account in Genesis 1-3, that the world was created 'perfect', and that it was created for human use, are accepted without justification.

The candidate moves towards a reasonable point concerning whether or not animals should be considered as part of the moral community, but this gets translated into a suggestion that Singer includes animals as members of the *human* community. The issue about littering is repeated in connection with dumping rubbish in the streets, and the whole question of littering and dumping is phrased in non-technical language.

The essay concludes by again expanding concerns about humans and their environment to concerns about humans and the whole universe. Also, ethical mistreatment is described as 'sinning', which again begs the question.

The essay fits into the descriptors for a low Level 3 response.

Level 3 (11 marks)

4 (b) 'The protection of the environment should be only for the good of humankind.' Assess this claim.

(15 marks) AO2

Candidate Response

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Commentary

AO2 (15 marks)

This essay is clearly limited by its lack of reasoned support for its arguments. The first sentence does not challenge the view that "everything in the *universe* is for mankind", and in the second sentence, it seems rather obvious that "humankind is not the only species".

In paragraph 2, the claim that "animals are not part of the moral community" is neither explained nor justified. Neither is the riposte from Singer that "we should protect the environment for everyone not just humankind".

The conclusion does at least follow from the line of argument taken, despite its general lack of justification. There is some attempt to see more than one point of view, but the lack of explanation given means that the essay does not score higher than a low Level 4 – "a limited attempt to sustain an argument."

Level 4 (7 marks)