



# **Examiners' Report**

## **June 2022**

**GCSE Religious Studies A 1RA0 3A**

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June 2022

Publications Code 1RA0\_3A\_2206\_ER

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## Introduction

Introduction GCSE (9-1) Religious Studies Religious Studies A Paper 3A: Area of Study 3 – Catholic Christianity (Paper code: 1RA0/3A)

The paper contributes to 25% of the overall award.

This area of study comprises a study in depth of aspects of Philosophy and Ethics in the context of Catholic Christianity as a lived religion within the United Kingdom and throughout the world.

There are two sections:

- Arguments for the Existence of God
- Religious Teachings on Relationships and Families in the 21st Century

The assessment consists of two questions and candidates must answer all questions. The details of the assessment content are provided in the specification. Centres are to use this, rather than other published resources when planning the course content.

Please note:

AO stands for 'Assessment Objective'

SPaG stands for 'Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar'

## Question 1 (a)

**Candidates were assessed on Section One:** Arguments for the Existence of God

### **Bullet point.** 1.6

Cosmological argument: **the cosmological argument for the existence of God** and its use by Catholics as a philosophical argument for the existence of God, including reference to Thomas Aquinas' First Three Ways of showing God's existence; understandings of the nature and importance of what the cosmological argument shows about the nature of God for Catholics; Catholic responses to non-religious (including atheist and Humanist) arguments against the cosmological argument as evidence for the existence of God... *(Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.)*

The question asked was: 'Outline **three** features of the cosmological argument.'

Candidates are asked to 'Outline' on (a) items. Therefore, lists can reach a maximum of one mark.

### **GENERIC advice for centres to what constitutes a list.**

- An example: Outline 3 characteristics of God:
- God is creator (1 mark)
- God is creator, judge and lawgiver (1 mark for list or sentence)
- God is creator, busy and distant. (1 mark for the sentence identifying one correct piece of information)
- Busy, distant and God is creator, (1 mark for the sentence identifying one correct piece of information)
- Creator, judge, lawgiver (1 mark for list)
- Creator, busy, distant (0 Marks) (all three elements need to be correct for 1 mark)
- Creator, judge, distant (0 marks)

Most candidates were awarded at least 2 marks. They were able to outline features such as notion and many used technical terms such as 'unmoved mover' and 'contingency'

Some candidates confused the cosmological argument with the argument from design, as a result rendering their answer incorrect.

1 (a) Outline **three** features of the cosmological argument.

(3)

God is the only designer.

~~If a watch has~~ Everything has  
a designer.

If a watch has a ~~design~~ watch maker  
then the universe has a universe  
maker.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate writes answers that relate to the design argument, and not the cosmological argument.

There is no relevant information that answers the question.

Total: 0 Marks

Candidates should write three sentences containing one piece of information in each.

There is no need for development: it will not receive credit.

1 (a) Outline **three** features of the cosmological argument.

(3)

One feature of the cosmological argument is Motion. This is the argument that there must be force for something to be caused. Another feature of the cosmological argument is that there must be something caused, for ~~or created~~ <sup>something</sup> to exist. Another feature of the cosmological argument is contingency. This is where something doesn't need to rely on something else to exist.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

The candidates gives three correct outlines:

- Way of motion (1)
- Something caused for something to exist (1)
- Way of contingency (1)

Total: 3 Marks

## Question 1 (b)

Candidates were assessed on Section One: Arguments for the Existence of God

### Bullet point 1.5

Design argument: the classical design argument for the existence of God and its use by Catholics as a philosophical argument for the existence of God; understandings of **what the design argument shows about the nature of God for Catholics** including Romans 1:18 – 24; Catholic responses to non-religious (including atheist and Humanist) arguments against the design argument as evidence for the existence of God. *(Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.)*

The question asked candidates to: ' Explain **two** characteristics about God shown by the design argument.'

Most candidates answered this confidently.

Candidates were aware that the design argument shows many of God's characteristics. Most referred to God being omnipotent and omnibenevolent and used the design argument to support the characteristics given.

(b) Explain **two** characteristics about God shown by the design argument.

(4)

One characteristic of God shown by the design argument is that God has the power to create things and have them fulfill a purpose meaning God created Earth for a purpose

Another characteristic of God shown by the design argument is that he is the only person powerful enough to be able to create something as complex as the earth.



The candidate gives two reasons in this answer.

However, the second reason is a repetition of the first – power and powerful enough. The same characteristics cannot be credited twice.

- Characteristic 1: God has the power (1) developed with created earth for a purpose (1)

Total: 2 Marks



Candidates should be taught to develop points given on (b) and (c) questions.

(b) Explain **two** characteristics about God shown by the design argument.

(4)

One characteristic God shown by the design argument is that ~~He showed~~ ~~to~~ ~~He~~ He is omniscient. The design argument suggests that the world would be too ~~long~~ complex if there wasn't a designer, this means that God must be omniscient ~~to be able~~ all-knowing, to be able to create different laws, our DNA and nature.

Another characteristic about God is that He is omnipotent. For instance ~~the world~~ ~~+~~ ~~universe~~ it would take alot of energy to create the universe and if God was the designer He must have also created it Himself revealing his all power.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

The candidate gives two developed reasons that detail how the design arguments show the characteristics of God.

- Characteristic 1: God is omniscient (1) *developed with* God must be all knowing to develop laws, DNA and nature (1)
- Characteristic 2: God is omnipotent (1) *developed with...*a lot of energy to create the universe. (1)

Total: 4 Marks

## Question 1 (c)

**Candidates were assessed on Section One:** Arguments for the Existence of God

### Bullet point 1.3

Miracles as proof of the existence of God: the nature and importance of miracles for Catholics; biblical and non-biblical examples of miracles, including those at Lourdes and John 4:43 – 54; **reasons why they might lead to belief in God** and Catholic responses to non-religious arguments (including atheist and Humanist) which maintain that miracles can be scientifically explained and provide no proof that God exists

The question asked was: 'Explain **two** ways miracles can lead to belief in God.

In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority'.

Candidates are asked to 'Explain two' on (c) items. Therefore, two reasons are required, and both need to be developed for 4 marks. Development consists of a piece of extra information, a reference to a source of wisdom a quotes or examples. The development must be of the reason given and to the question asked. The reasons then should be supported with a 'reference to a source of wisdom', this must support the reason given and cannot be awarded twice. Therefore, if it is used as development, it does not gain a second mark for the source.

GENERIC advice for centres to what constitutes a source of wisdom

- The candidates do not have to reference a quote or quote it word for word.
- If markers of candidate work in centres are unsure if the quote will be accepted, use a search engine. Enter the gist of the paraphrase and 'Bible' or 'Catholic teaching'.
- If the candidate states that it is in John 1:18 and then states another verse from John – then this can be awarded. We are not holding candidate to 'verses' but it must be the correct book.
- If the candidate gives the paraphrase and then puts (John 1:18) in brackets the paraphrase can have the mark and the bracketed reference is ignored.
- If a candidate quotes Jesus and it was Paul or vice versa; and the quote is not accredited to them, it is not awarded.

Most candidates could identify the impact of miracles. Many candidates used a combination of Biblical miracles supporting belief in God and how the effect that a personal modern day miracle would lead to belief in God.

Less-able candidates simply detailed a miracle, without linking it into the question asked. Some also confused visions with miracles.

(c) Explain **two** ways miracles can lead to belief in God.

In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

(5)

<sup>M</sup>  
The ~~way~~ miracles lead to belief in God as because miracles cannot be explained by science, therefore it must be God as God is the only powerful enough being to do such things. Also, Jesus states that "if you people do not see wonders and signs, you will not believe". This shows that miracles are a way of God revealing his existence to humanity.

Finally, miracles can lead to belief in God because it shows that God is still working in the world today and that he is concerned about humanity. For example, through healing people it shows that God wants to remove evil and suffering from the world.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This candidate gives two developed ways, with a source of wisdom and authority.

- 1<sup>st</sup> way: miracles cannot be explained by science (1) God is the only person powerful enough to do this (1) 'if you people do not see wonders and signs you will not believe' (1)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> way: shows God is still working in the world (1) God wants to remove suffering (1)

Total: 5 Marks



Sources of wisdom and authority do not need to be exact: a paraphrase is acceptable

## Question 1 (d)

The focus of the marking changes from AO1 to AO2 on the (d) items. The candidates are assessed on AO2, Analyse and evaluate aspects of religion and belief. This constitutes 50% of the overall mark.

The question is '**Evaluate**' this statement **considering the arguments for and against and reach a justified conclusion** – there must be some consideration of the arguments (appraise, judge the value of, the arguments to reach the higher levels).

Many candidates gave excellent answers citing reasons for and against, but not considering the value of them or analysing/evaluating them. Formulas and writing frames restricted the flow of the arguments limiting candidates' progression to the higher levels.

Many centres had attempted to introduce a writing frame to encouraged appraisal, but the candidates did not appear to understand the demands of the skill required.

Some candidates wrote 'This is a strong argument because ...' and repeated the previous point or giving another point, or reason referring to the statement not the argument given.

In other examples, candidates wrote 'This is a weak argument because...' and gave generic statements such as: 'it's not in the Bible'.

The majority of answers did not address the reasons for the diversity within the beliefs of Christianity.

In some cases, candidates focussed on the strength/weakness of an argument but had not demonstrated any understanding of religion and belief.

Centres should refer to training materials online. Candidates require the religious understanding of the diversity within the religious tradition, and the arguments for and against, before they can begin to evaluate.

**Candidates were assessed on Section One:** Arguments for the Existence of God

### Bullet point 1.2

Visions as proof of the existence of God: the nature and importance of visions for Catholics; biblical and non-biblical examples of visions, including Joan of Arc and Genesis 15 and Matthew 17:1 – 13; **reasons why they might lead to belief in God and Catholic responses to non-religious arguments (including atheist and Humanist) which maintain that visions are hallucinations and provide no proof that God exists.** *(Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.)*

The question asked was \*(d): "Visions can be explained as hallucinations."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Catholic teachings
- refer to non-religious points of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

This question was accessible for all abilities, with candidates giving good reasons to support the belief in visions and some good reasons why Biblical visions could not have been visions.

Many candidates used the visions of Abraham, Moses and Bernadette at Lourdes. Some less-able candidates confused visions with miracles.

Some Catholics would disagree with this because visions are supported by faith. If the vision aligns with scripture then it is Biblically correct. Also, it can increase the faith of someone which is proof of the vision being from God. It ~~also~~ is true if the vision comes to pass. For example if someone has a vision of something that is to happen in the future and it happens the vision has to be true. If it has an impact on the person's life that means it must have been a vision from God. In the Bible ~~Paul~~ St Paul on the road to ~~the~~ Damascus had a vision: which not only blinded him but led to his conversion; <sup>and</sup> everything that Jesus said to Paul in the vision came to pass and he became blind.

This is a strong argument because some visions have an effect that cannot be explained by science. ~~It is~~ It is subjective and miraculous ~~and~~ as well as some happening for other reasons such as mind tricks, the ~~of~~ Denial or imagination meaning it doesn't always have to be a hallucination.

However, non-religious people would agree with this statement. Hallucinations due to substance abuse could be a factor. It is subjective meaning there is no proof that it wasn't a hallucination. Many visions happen that can only be explained by hallucination as it may not be Biblically accurate. And even if it was Biblically accurate how do we the Bible's correct meaning it could simply be a hallucination.

This is a weak argument because even due to substance abuse "God could still give you a vision. If you receive a "hallucination" due to substance abuse and the things within it cannot be explained by science and come to pass it therefore could be best explained as a vision from God.

In conclusion, visions are not always from God and can be the ~~effect~~ cause of many things. Therefore a vision can be explained as a hallucination but doesn't mean it should. God can work in many ways and a limit or a specific standard shouldn't be put on a vision. If a vision is correct, only God knows, however by it coming to pass or being <sup>unable</sup> ~~was~~ to be explained by science is a clear proof of legitimacy. (Total for Question 1 = 27 marks)

many of a vision. so I partially agree.





This candidate reaches Level 3, because:

- The candidate gives two sides of the argument: non-religious and Catholic
- Some points do not address the question in relation to explaining visions through hallucinations
- Some reasoned judgments are given but are superficial in parts
- The candidate shows evaluation within the answer through the use of examples

SPaG is awarded 3 marks because the candidate:

- spells and punctuates with consistent accuracy
- uses rules of grammar with effective control of meaning overall
- uses a wide range of specialist terms as appropriately

Level 3

Response: 7 Marks

SPaG: 3 Marks

Total: 10 Marks



3 marks are available for SPaG: take care with spellings of key words, paragraphs, and punctuation

## Question 2 (a)

**Candidates were assessed on Section Two:** Religious Teachings on Relationships and Families in the 21st Century

### Bullet point 2.3

Catholic teaching about the purpose and importance of the family: **Catholic teaching about the purpose and importance of families** including: procreation; security and education of children; Catholic responses to the different types of family within 21st-century society (nuclear, single parent, same-sex parents, extended and blended families), including Familiaris Consortio, 36-85. *(Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.)*

The question asked was: 'Outline **three** reasons why the family is important for Catholics.'

This question was well-answered, with most answers referring to the family as being the basic unit of society and being responsible for religious upbringing.

2 (a) Outline **three** reasons why the family is important for Catholics.

(3)

One reason why family is important is because a way of living  
Another reason why family is important is because its where children are first educated.



The first reason does not answer the question set.

The second is credited:

- Where children are first educated (1)

Total: 1 Mark

Three correct reasons

2 (a) Outline **three** reasons why the family is important for Catholics.

(3)

One reason why the family is important for Catholics is because it was created by God.

Another reason is because it adds more people to the Christian faith.

A final reason is because it teaches children right from wrong and raises moral people.



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Examiner Comments

There are three correct reasons:

- Reason 1: ...was created by God (1)
- Reason 2: adds more people to faith (1)
- Reason 3: teaches children right from wrong (1)

Total: 3 Marks



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Tip

Using three separate sentences is a good idea

## Question 2 (b)

**Candidates were assessed on Section Two:** Religious Teachings on Relationships and Families in the 21st Century

### **Candidates were assessed on Bullet point 2.8**

Catholic teachings about gender prejudice and discrimination: **Catholic opposition to gender prejudice and discrimination**, including theology of the body; examples of Catholic opposition to gender prejudice and discrimination, including Catechism of the Catholic Church 1938; divergent Christian attitudes to gender differences, including the role of women in the Church, prejudice and discrimination and Catholic responses to them.

The question asked was: ' Explain **two** reasons why Catholics are against gender discrimination...'

Generally, this question was well-answered, with many references to the actions of Jesus and the creation account of both Adam and Eve being made in God's image. Some candidates did not understand the question and interpreted it incorrectly as referring to transgender and same-sex relationships.

A significant number of candidates stated that God made all humans equal. God made humans in his image. Candidates had merged the creation of Adam and Eve with St Paul's teaching that we are all equal in Christ.

Centres should refer to the specification bullet point and cover all the different parts of it. The bullet points are the basis of question setting.

(b) Explain **two** reasons why Catholics are against gender discrimination.

(4)

A reason why Catholics are against gender discrimination is because we are all created in the image of God <sup>(imago-dei)</sup> and therefore we are all equally important and people shouldn't discriminate others because of their gender.

Another reason is because the Church teaches how although men and women have different roles, we are all equally important. This means that ~~we~~ although we may share different qualities, in the eyes of God we are all as important and therefore humans shouldn't judge or discriminate others because of their gender.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate gives two developed reasons:

- Reason 1: we are all created in the image of God (1) therefore we are all equally important (1)
- Reason 2: The church teaches men and women have different roles (1) even though we share different qualities we are all important (1)

Total: 4 Marks

## Question 2 (c)

**Candidates were assessed on Section Two:** Religious Teachings on Relationships and Families in the 21st Century

**Bullet point 2.5** Catholic teaching on family planning and the regulation of births: **Catholic teaching about artificial contraception** and natural family planning, including reference to *Humanae Vitae*; divergent Christian, non-religious (including atheist and Humanist) attitudes to family planning, including acceptance of artificial methods of contraception by some Protestant Churches and the application of ethical theories, such as situation ethics, and Catholic responses to them. (*Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.*)

The question asked was: ' Explain **two** reasons why the Catholic Church opposes artificial contraception.

In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority'.

Candidates are asked to 'Explain two' on (c) items. Therefore, two reasons are required, and both need to be developed for 4 marks. Development consists of a piece of extra information, a reference to a source of wisdom, a quote or examples. The development must be of the reason given and to the question asked. The reasons then should be supported with a 'reference to a source of wisdom', this must support the reason given and cannot be awarded twice. Therefore, if it is used as development, it does not gain a second mark for the source.

Most candidates were able to achieve marks on this question and link artificial contraception to stopping a chance of pregnancy. Many responses were able to link the teaching to 'go forth and multiply'.

There was some confusion between contraception and abortion, and many examples of incorrect Catholic teaching that sex is only for procreation.

Centres need to be clear on Catholic teaching on sexual intercourse.

Candidates need to know that Catholic teaching states that sex is given to humans by God:

- for the joy, pleasure and bond of the married couple
- to be open to the procreation of children, not simply just for reproduction

(c) Explain **two** reasons why the Catholic Church opposes artificial contraception.

In your answer you must refer to a source of wisdom and authority.

one reason is because it prevents the procreative <sup>(5)</sup> purpose of sex. God said in Genesis to "go forth and multiply." Therefore by having this type of contraception, you are not producing and creating children going against God's teaching.

Another reason is because ~~it does not~~ some forms of artificial contraception are abortifacients. These forms stimulate ~~an~~ early abortion not giving the child enough to grow and develop. This goes against the teachings of the ten commandments to not commit abortion.



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Examiner Comments

The candidate give two developed reasons, with a relevant source of wisdom and authority:

- Reason 1: prevents the procreative purpose of sex (1) God said 'go forth and multiply' (1) ...going against God's wishes (1)
- Reason 2: some forms of artificial contraception are abortifacients (1) note giving the child time to develop (1)

Total: 5 Marks

## Question 2 (d)

- **Candidates were assessed on Section Two.** Religious Teachings on Relationships and Families in the 21st Century

### Bullet point 2.2

Catholic teaching about the importance of sexual relationships: Catholic teaching about sexual relationships as marital, unitive and procreative, including Catechism of the Catholic Church 2360 – 2365; **Catholic teaching** on sexual relationships outside of marriage and **homosexuality**; divergent Christian, **non-religious (including atheist and Humanist) attitudes to sexual relationships, including the acceptance of sexual relationships outside marriage and homosexuality and Catholic responses to them.** *(Bold indicates the part of the bullet assessed by the question.)*

The question asked was: “Same-sex relationships are now accepted in society.”

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Catholic teachings
- refer to non-religious points of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

Please note that in the question, candidates are NOT required divergent Christian views. The question asks about same 'sex relationships being accepted in society'.

Many responses gave a 'for and against' same sex relationships, arguing that they should or should not be allowed from different Christian perspectives, which is not fully answering the question.

More able-candidates were able to explain the difference in accepting homosexuality and not accepting homosexual sex.

A significant number of candidates detailed incorrect Catholic teaching.

The appraisal of evidence required for the higher marks may come at any point in the answer.

Those candidates who provide the best answers use one side of the argument and then use the opposing viewpoint to indicate the weaknesses of the first side.



(d) "Same-sex relationships are now accepted in society."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Catholic teachings
- refer to non-religious points of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

(12)

Some Catholics would agree that same-sex relationships are now accepted in society because they believe that it is better for them to follow their conscience and that /



The candidate gives a short answer from a Catholic perspective. However, the information given is incorrect and does not receive any marks.

Total: 0 Marks

(d) "Same-sex relationships are now accepted in society."

Evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

In your response you should:

- refer to Catholic teachings
- refer to non-religious points of view
- reach a justified conclusion.

(12)

"Same-sex relationships are now accepted in society" - I will evaluate this statement considering arguments for and against.

One argument for is that it has become increasingly accepted in the Church. For example, the Pope will not discriminate against same-sex relationships and magisterial support, even though it won't be accepted in to the Church.

Another argument for is people are becoming more accepting of others and will judge less, which makes it better for ~~se~~ LGBT.

However, an argument against this is many people are against same-sex relationships ~~are~~ as in the

Bible, relationships are between man and woman so people think that all relationships should follow this.

Another reason against ~~the~~ the statement is the ~~increasing~~ <sup>large</sup> amount of homophobia in which people dislike same-sex relationships which makes it worse for them.

Another reason for it is that some priests will help same-sex marriages and support them, showing how the Church ~~became~~ is being more supportive.

In conclusion, I partially agree with the statement as I think there is still a large amount of discrimination going on in the world.



This candidate gains Level 2 because:

- The candidate provides reasons for and against the statement, making brief (superficial) arguments on both sides.
- The candidate demonstrates a limited, rather than isolated as in Level 1, understanding of the beliefs surrounding this statement.
- The candidate does not attempt to appraise the arguments given, or evaluate the argument.
- The conclusion offers an attempt at making a judgment, but this is not fully justified and builds on a limited range of elements in the answer.
- The candidate meets the demands of the Level 1 descriptor but does not fully meet the Level 2 requirements and is therefore awarded a mark at the lower end of the mark range.

Total: 4 Marks

## Paper Summary

Based on their performance in this examination, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Answer (a) items in outlines need to be full sentences. Incorrect words or sentences should be crossed out with one neat line through
- Provide three sentences for (a) items, each on a separate line
- (b) items should have only **two**, developed, reasons
- (c) items are like (b) items but should also use a 'source of wisdom and authority' as a fifth mark
- (d) items should appraise the reasons given, for and against the statement
- Candidates need to understand the command words, particularly 'describe'
- Candidates need to read the questions carefully, to ensure that they are answering the question as set
- Candidates need to look at the bullet points in the (d) questions, to ensure that they are meeting all the demands of the question and to avoid adding alternative views that the question does not require

## **Grade boundaries**

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

