A-LEVEL
PHILOSOPHY

A-level (7172)

Marked Papers

7172

See a range of responses and how different levels are achieved and understand how to interpret the mark scheme.

Version 1.0 January 2018

EXAMPLE RESPONSES

Specimen paper 1

Question 1

What is philosophical scepticism?

[3 marks]

Mark scheme

AO1 = 3

Level	Levels of response mark scheme
3	A full correct answer, given precisely, with little or no redundancy.
2	The substantive content of the answer is correct, but there may be some redundancy or minor imprecision.
1	Relevant, but fragmented, points.
0	Nothing written worthy of credit.

Indicative content
Students might respond by contrasting philosophical scepticism with normal incredulity, although this is not a requirement. Credit can be given as long as students use this approach to clarify the nature of philosophical scepticism. Full credit can be given for a response which focuses solely on the nature of philosophical scepticism.

Note: This indicative content is not exhaustive: other creditworthy responses should be awarded marks as appropriate.

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Student responses

Student response 1

Philosophical scepticism is used as an approach to testing the strength of knowledge claims and understanding more clearly the nature of knowledge and justification. Descartes' three waves of doubt are examples of philosophical scepticism.

Full and correct, with precision and no redundancy (the example is not necessary for full marks but in this case clearly instantiates the explanation). 3/3

Student response 2

Philosophical scepticism is used as an approach to seeing how strong our knowledge is. Descartes' three waves of doubt are examples of philosophical scepticism.

In this response the substantive content is correct, and the example instantiates the explanation. But the response is clearly not as full as the first, and it lacks the precision: the reference is to 'knowledge' rather than 'knowledge claims', and there is no recognition of how central the concept of 'justification' is to the method of philosophical scepticism explained here. 2/3

Student response 3

Philosophical scepticism is a way to think about what we can know. Descartes was famous for it.

Fragments of relevant knowledge which lack development and precision. 1/3

Student response 4

Philosophical scepticism is not believing things for philosophical reasons.

To conclude the directors should be concerned because cash flow is always important but it does seem to be improving. They are below the industry average for the liquid capital ratio so they need to be monitoring this.

This response begins and end by restating one of the key terms in the question. It may be tempting to award a mark for 'not believing things', but is too vague and generalised to be worthy of credit as a definition of philosophical scepticism. 0/3

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Question 6

What do eliminative materialists claim about mental states?

[3 marks]

Mark scheme

AO1 = 3

Level	Levels of response mark scheme
3	A full and correct answer, given precisely, with little or no redundancy.
2	The substantive content of the answer is correct, but there may be some redundancy or minor imprecision.
1	Relevant, but fragmented, points.
0	Nothing written worthy of credit.

Indicative content

- Some or all of those mental states (phenomena, properties, processes) that are supposed to exist according to a common-sense or folk-psychological theory of the mind do not exist.
- Some or all statements (claims, beliefs) about mental states (phenomena, properties, processes) are false given that the common-sense or folk-psychological theory of the mind is radically mistaken.
- Some students may, in addition, add that what we ought to talk about instead are physical/physiological states or states defined by scientific rather than folk psychology.

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Student responses

Student response 1

Eliminative materialists claim that some or all of those mental states that are supposed to exist according to folk-psychology, e.g. beliefs and intentions, do not exist.

> Full and correct, with precision and no redundancy. The examples fit the explanation. 3/3

Student response 2

Eliminative materialists claim that some or all 'common-sense' mental states, e.g. beliefs and desires, do not exist. This is in contrast to other physicalist theories of the mind such as the mind-brain type identity theory which claims that 'common sense' mental states do exist but they are identical to brain states.

> The first sentence of this response, taken on its own, would be enough for 3/3: 'common-sense' serves the same explanatory role here as 'folk psychology' in Response 1. But the rest of the response, which is actually longer, is not answering the question. Note that this answer is longer than the previous one, contains correct information, but because of redundancy it scores lower. 2/3

Student response 3

Eliminative materialists claim that some 'common-sense' mental states might not exist.

> The substantive content of this response is not correct: at the very least eliminative materialists claim that some 'common-sense' mental states do not exist (rather than 'might'); others insist that none of them do. But the focus of this response on the existential status of 'common-sense' mental states is a relevant point and worthy of credit. 1/3

Student response 4

Eliminative materialists claim that mental states are identical to brain states.

> Nothing worthy of credit. The response appears to confuse eliminative materialism with some form of mind-brain identity theory. 0/3

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Question 9

Explain how Kant's deontological ethics can be applied to the question of whether we should ever tell lies.

[12 marks]

Mark scheme

AO1 = 5

Marks	Levels of response mark scheme
10-12	The answer is set out in a precise, fully-integrated and logical form. The content is correct and demonstrates detailed understanding. Points are made clearly and precisely. Relevance is sustained, with very little or no redundancy. Philosophical language is used precisely throughout.
7-9	The answer is set out in a clear, integrated and logical form. The content of the answer is correct and demonstrates detailed understanding. The content is clearly relevant and points are made clearly and precisely. Any lack of clarity with respect to particular points is not sufficient to detract from the answer. Relevance is largely sustained. There may be some redundancy, though not sufficient to detract from the answer. Philosophical language is used correctly throughout.
4-6	The answer is clear and set out in a coherent form, with logical/causal links identified. The content of the answer is largely correct and most points are made clearly. Relevance is not always sustained and there is some redundancy. Philosophical language is used correctly, with any minor errors not detracting from the response.
1-3	There are some relevant points made, but no integration. Some points are clear, but there is a lack of precision – with possibly insufficient material that is relevant or too much that is irrelevant. Philosophical language is used, though not always consistently or appropriately.
0	Nothing written worthy of credit.

Indicative content
Students might give a brief outline of the full argument from illusion, though this is not a requirement and should not, in the absence of a direct realist response, receive credit. Students should, however, make clear which premise(s) in the argument are the focus for the direct realist's response.
Indicative content

- Kant argues that we have duties not to do certain things which are wrong in themselves and lying is one such thing.

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- Moral duties are categorical and not hypothetical, because they are your duty regardless of what you want and are not a means to a further end. This means that it is never morally permissible to lie, regardless of circumstances. Students may make reference to Kant's axe-murderer example.
- Kant argues that moral duties, including this one, are discoverable by reason.
- Only the good will is good without qualification and to have a good will is to do your duty because it is your duty (other motivations are irrelevant): eg, Kant's 'shopkeepers' example about overcharging his inexperienced customers.

- Application of the 1st formulation of the Categorical Imperative to lying:
  - 'Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.'
  - A universalised maxim of lying is incoherent/inconceivable since if there was no default practice of truth-telling then no-one would believe any lie, so there could not (in fact) be lying.
  - It leads to a contradiction in conception, and so not lying is a perfect (absolute) duty.
  - It shows that when we lie, we in fact want to make an exception of ourselves (because that is the only way that our lie will succeed).

- Application of 2nd formulation of Categorical Imperative to lying:
  - 'Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end'.
  - Lying to someone uses them *merely* as a means to an end, since it is not treating them with respect given that it undermines their power of making a rational choice themselves.
  - People cannot consent to a way of acting when they are given no chance to do so. The victim of a lie cannot consent to being lied to because he doesn't know he is being lied to.
  - It is a manipulation of someone (and their trusting nature) rather than a treatment of them as a rational subject.

Note: This indicative content is not exhaustive: other creditworthy responses should be awarded marks as appropriate.

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Student responses

Student response

Kant thought the only thing that is good in itself is a good will. And as a deontologist philosopher he thought that we demonstrate good will when we act according to what duty demands. Kant thought that we have duties not to do certain things which are wrong in themselves and lying is one of them.

Moral duties are categorical and not hypothetical, because they are your duty regardless of what you want and they are not a means to some other end you might have. This means that it is never morally allowed to lie, regardless of the circumstances. This would even be the case if an axe-murderer came to your door asking for the location of your friend (who is hiding in your basement). This is in contrast with utilitarianism which would argue that the consequences determine the morality of an action, and so lying to save your friend is the correct thing to do. One problem with utilitarianism is that you can never know for sure what consequences will come about. Because Kant argues that moral duties are discoverable by reason and examining our motives, we don't have to worry about guessing what consequences might be.

In Kant's ethics we reason by applying the 'categorical imperative'. One formulation of this states 'act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.' A universal law of lying is inconceivable because if there was no standard practice of truth-telling, then no-one would believe any lie as lying that would be the new norm, and there would be no gain for the one telling the lie. It leads to a contradiction, and so not lying is a perfect duty.

Another formulation is about 'respect for persons.' It states 'act in such a way that you always treat others never simply as a means, but always as an end'. Lying to someone uses them merely as a means to an end (usually the liars), and is not treating them with respect. A victim of a lie does not freely consent to being lied to. It is an abuse of someone (and their trusting nature) rather than a treatment of them as a free and rational being with their own ends.

The categorical imperative shows why lying is always morally wrong. We are duty bound not to do this.

> This response is set out in a clear, mostly integrated and logical form. There is imprecision in some of the language (Kant as a 'deontologist philosopher', for example). The content is correct, however, and demonstrates some detailed understanding, although the response does lack precise details in places: the penultimate paragraph could specify that we are dealing with a contradiction 'in conception', for example, distinguishing it from a 'conception in will'. The concept of a 'perfect duty' appears in that same paragraph for the first time, while in the penultimate paragraph 'freedom' is introduced. These important details are not fully integrated with the discussion as a whole. There is some redundancy in the second paragraph (the evaluative contrast with utilitarianism), but even here this is tied in with bringing out the distinctive character of Kantian ethics in relation to lying. The final sentence foregrounds the categorical imperative and duty, which coheres with the way the answer has development. Overall, the response contains features of the 7–9 and the 10–12 band, but it makes the top band: 10/12.

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Specimen paper 2

Question 3

Outline Aquinas' Third Way.

[5 marks]

Mark scheme

AO1 = 5

Level	Levels of response mark scheme
5	A full, clear and precise explanation. The student makes logical links between precisely identified points, with no redundancy.
4	A clear outline, with logical links, but some imprecision/redundancy.
3	The substantive content of the outline is present and there is an attempt at logical, But the outline is not full and/or precise.
2	One or two relevant points made, but not precisely. The logic is unclear.
1	Fragmented, points, with no logical structure.
0	Nothing written worthy of credit.

Indicative content

Students can articulate the argument in a number of ways. As long as the articulation is consistent with the Aquinas text (which is given below, for ease of reference), then credit should be given.

P1: Contingent beings exist in the universe.

P2: If everything were contingent there would be a time when nothing

existed.

P3: If this were so, there would be nothing now as nothing comes from

nothing.

P4: Since contingent things do exist now (P1), there must be something that exists necessarily.

C: Therefore there must be something that exists necessarily.

Students might continue this argument in the following way:

P5: Every necessary thing either has its necessity caused by another or not.

P6: An infinite regression of causes is impossible.

C: There must be a necessary being (ie a being that has, of itself, its own necessity) and this all people call God.

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Students might contextualise the argument, explaining that it is an a posteriori argument, in which Aquinas argues that the existence of contingent things in the universe is in need of explanation by a being that cannot be conceived not to exist. There is no requirement for them to do this but, if they do, this should not be counted as irrelevance or redundancy.

The Aquinas text: The third way is taken from possibility and necessity, and runs thus. We find in nature things that are possible to be and not to be, since they are found to be generated, and to corrupt, and consequently, they are possible to be and not to be. But it is impossible for these always to exist, for that which is possible not to be at some time is not. Therefore, if everything is possible not to be, then at one time there could have been nothing in existence. Now if this were true, even now there would be nothing in existence, because that which does not exist only begins to exist by something already existing. Therefore, if at one time nothing was in existence, it would have been impossible for anything to have begun to exist; and thus even now nothing would be in existence — which is absurd. Therefore, not all beings are merely possible, but there must exist something the existence of which is necessary. But every necessary thing either has its necessity caused by another, or not. Now it is impossible to go on to infinity in necessary things which have their necessity caused by another, as has been already proved in regard to efficient causes. Therefore we cannot but postulate the existence of some being having of itself its own necessity, and not receiving it from another, but rather causing in others their necessity. This all men speak of as God. (Summa Theologica, part 2, art 3).

Note: This indicative content is not exhaustive: other creditworthy responses should be awarded marks as appropriate.

Student responses

Student response 1

In his Third Way Aquinas presents a cosmological argument for the existence of God. He begins by pointing out that there are contingent beings in the universe. He then distinguished between beings that exist contingently and beings that exist necessarily. A contingent being is one that was brought into being and might not have existed, whereas a necessary being is one that has to exist. His next step is to say that if everything was contingent there would be a time when nothing existed. However, if this were so, there would be nothing now (as nothing comes from nothing). Therefore, since contingent beings do exist now (his first point), there must be something that exists necessarily, and this is what people call 'God'.

> This response is clear and precise, and it is as full as one could reasonably expect given the space provided in the answer booklet and the number of mark available. It also makes logical links between the premises and conclusion. 5/5

Student response 2

In the Summa Theologica Aquinas gives five a-posterior arguments, or 'Ways', to prove the existence of God (though not necessarily the Christian God that Aquinas believed in). The first three are versions of what have been called 'cosmological' arguments. The first way is an argument 'from motion' and the second is an argument 'from causation' (he also gives a version of the 'design' argument and one from 'gradations of being'). The 'Third Way' is 'from contingency':

1. Contingent things exist (things that have to be brought into existence by something else).
2. If everything was contingent there would be a time when nothing existed.
3. However, if this were so, there would be nothing in existence now (as nothing comes from nothing).
4. Therefore, since contingent things do exist, there must be something that exists necessarily, and whichexplains the existence of all contingent things, and this people call 'God'.

A problem with this argument is that it assumes that things (rather than propositions and statements) can be necessary, but philosophers such as Russell have argued against this.

> Points 1 – 4 are on target and by themselves would achieve 5/5. The problem is the redundancy at the outset and at the end. There is nothing wrong with providing minimal context (as in Response 1). But when responses contain almost as much background material as they do creditable material that directly answers the question, they are not fulfilling the demands of the mark scheme for a Level 5 answer. Not content with a lengthy introduction, this response also includes an objection for good measure. Either would constitute redundancy and impact the mark; this example simply illustrates both deficiencies. This response would suggest a student who knows a lot about the topic, but there is something missing in the overall skill set we are assessing. 4/5

Student response 3

Aquinas' 'Third Way' is one of his versions of the cosmological argument for the existence of God. In it Aquinas argues that the existence of contingent things in the universe is in need of an explanation by a being that cannot not exist (God). This is because if everything was contingent then nothing would exist now, but it obviously does, so a necessary being must too.

> The substantive content is present, but it is not full and the logical links in the argument are not precisely drawn. 3/5

Student response 4

Aquinas' 'Third Way' is a version of the cosmological argument and is a posteriori. In it Aquinas argues that God must exist because if he didn't exist it would be impossible for us to exist because we are only contingent.

> The logic isn't clear here, and the argument is certainly not full, However, the response is on the right track and worthy of credit. The second sentence taken with the reference to 'cosmological argument' and 'a posteriori' constitutes 'one or two relevant point'. 2/3.

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Student response 5

In the 'Third Way' Aquinas argues that God exists. The universe contains contingent things. Necessary things also exist, and that is God.

Fragmented points, some confusion, and no clear logical structure. Limited credit worthy knowledge and understanding is present, however. 1/5.

Student response 6

The 'Third Way' is Aquinas' design argument for existence of God which compared with the world and God to an arrow and an archer.

This is obviously the wrong argument. Nothing worthy of credit. 0/5.

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Question 5

Is religious language meaningful?

[25 marks]

Mark scheme

AO1 = 5

Marks	Levels of response mark scheme
21-25	The student argues with clear intent throughout and the logic of the argument is sustained. The student demonstrates detailed and precise understanding throughout. The conclusion is clear, with the arguments in support of it stated precisely, integrated coherently and robustly defended. Arguments and counter-arguments are stated in their strongest forms. Reasoned judgements are made, on an ongoing basis and overall, about the weight to be given to each argument. Crucial arguments are clearly identified against less crucial ones. Philosophical language is used precisely throughout.
16-20	The student argues with clear intent throughout and the logic of the argument is largely sustained. The content is correct and detailed – though not always consistently. The conclusion is clear, with a range of appropriate arguments supporting it. Arguments are generally stated in their strongest forms. There is a balancing of arguments, with weight being given to each – so crucial arguments are noted against less crucial ones. Arguments and counter-arguments are stated clearly, integrated coherently and defended. There may be trivial mistakes, as long as they do not detract from the argument. Philosophical language is used correctly throughout.
11-15	A clear response to the question, in the form of an argument, demonstrating intent. The content is detailed and correct and most of it is integrated. A conclusion and reasons are given and those reasons clearly support the conclusion. There might be a lack of clarity/precision about the logic of the argument as a whole. Arguments and counter-arguments are given, but there may be a lack of balance. Not all arguments are stated in their strongest forms. Stronger and weaker arguments are noted and there are attempts to identify the weight to be given to different arguments, but not necessarily those which are crucial to the conclusion. Philosophical language is used correctly, with any minor errors not detracting from the

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	argument.
6-10	The response to the question is given in the form of an argument, but not fully coherently. The content is largely correct, though there are some gaps and a lack of detail. Relevant points are recognised/identified, but not integrated. Alternative positions are identified, but not precisely. Counter-arguments might be stated in weak forms or even slightly misrepresented. Arguments and counter-arguments are juxtaposed, so similarities and contrasts identified, rather than their impact being clear. Philosophical language is used throughout, though not always fully correctly and/or consistently.
1-5	There is little evidence of an argument. There may be missing content, substantial gaps in the content or the content may be one-sided. There may be a conclusion and several reasonable points may be made. There may be some connections between the points, but there is no clear relationship between the points and the conclusion. There is some basic use of philosophical language.
0	Nothing written worthy of credit.

Indicative content

Students should respond in the form of an argument, to a clear conclusion. They might argue:

- Yes – religious language is meaningful
- No – religious language is not meaningful
- Or possibly a more nuanced response, such as 'Some religious language is and some is not meaningful' or 'It depends what you mean by meaningful …'

- Verificationists/Logical Positivists (such as Ayer): The Verification principle, either the weak or the strong form (as distinguished by Ayer); a proposition is only meaningful if **either**:
    - analytic: conceptual, tautological, logical **or**
    - (2a) its probable truth could be empirically verified potentially/in principle (the weak version) **or**
    - (2b) its truth could be conclusively empirically verified actually/in practice (strong version).
- Applying this to religious language, some have argued that religious claims such as 'God loves me' and 'God answers my prayers' would not be meaningful given that they do not meet either of the conditions above.

- Hick: religious language is meaningful. This is because religious claims are verifiable – they meet the requirements of the verification principle - but only eschatologically.
- But this might depend on the strength of the argument that eschatological verification is possible. Is the argument for continued post-mortem survival plausible? What if post-mortem experience is ambiguous with respect to the claims subject to verification?

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- Flew: religious language is not meaningful. Wisdom's parable of the gardener shows that the religious believer will not accept anything as falsifying their utterance. Rather than accept that their claims are false, the believer simply qualifies their claim – 'Death by a thousand qualifications.'

- Hare: religious language is meaningful, but not as assertions/claims about matters of fact, so the requirements of the verification principle do not need to be met. Bliks and the lunatic analogy – religious utterances do not assert propositions, but particular world-views/ways of seeing the world. As such, they are not the kinds of things which can be verified/falsified, because they determine what will (and will not) count as evidence.

- Mitchell: religious language can be interpreted as making claims that are verifiable given what Mitchell regards as a broader and better understanding of what constitutes verification. In the Parable of the Partisan Mitchell suggests that religious believers will allow falsification since they accept that there is evidence which counts against their claim, but not decisively/conclusively.

Students can also receive credit for reference to other approaches to religious language, such as:

- the via negativa (eg Pseudo-Dionysius and the apophatic tradition)
- analogy (eg Aquinas)
- myth/symbol (eg Bultmann, Smart, Tillich)
- other non-cognitive views (eg Wittgenstein, Braithwaite, DZ Phillips)
- our having innate ideas of God permitting us to talk meaningfully about him, despite him being beyond experience (eg Descartes)

As the focus of this question is primarily AO2 do not penalise students for misattributing arguments.

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Student responses

Student response

Religious language in theistic religions is primarily language used to talk about God and our relationship to him, e.g. 'Jesus is the Son of God', 'Allah is great' and 'God moves in mysterious ways'. This essay will explore the question of whether such language is meaningful and conclude that it is. Whether it is cognitive or non cognitive, religious language has the same kind of status as moral and aesthetic language, which is also meaningful.

Some philosophers argue that religious language is meaningless because it is non-cognitive. Cognitive language is that which attempts to express facts, e.g. 'today is sunny'. Even if today is not sunny, this sentence is at least attempting to describe the world. Non-cognitive language is language which does not attempt to express any facts about the world. Cognitive language is either true or false whilst non-cognitive language is neither true nor false.

On the face of it, religious language appears to be used in a cognitive, and therefore meaningful, way. It often appears to be attempting to state facts about reality, e.g. that there is an all-loving, all-powerful God who does particular things like create the universe and answer prayers. However, the logical positivist philosopher A J Ayer argued that religious language was non-cognitive and therefore meaningless.

Ayer claimed that for a statement to be meaningful it had to be either (a) in principle empirically verifiable, or (b) analytic. By 'empirically verifiable' Ayer meant that a statement could be proved to be true or false by some kind of present or future observation. For example, the statement 'John's philosophy folder contains at least two pages of notes on every single class this year' can be known to be true or false by looking at his folder. By 'analytic' Ayer meant a statement that was true *by definition* – for example 'a square is a shape with four sides'. Such statements are true (or false) in virtue of the meanings of the words used. The consequence of this theory of meaning, which Ayer called the Verification Principle, is that any statement that does not fall into either of these two categories is meaningless. Ayer argued that religious statements such as 'God exists' and 'Jesus is your Lord and Saviour' are neither empirically verifiable, nor analytic. Therefore, religious statements, argued Ayer, are meaningless.

One criticism of Ayer's claim is offered by the theist philosopher John Hick. Hick argues that even if Ayer's verification principle is correct, it does not follow that religious statements are meaningless. Hick argues that if religious statements are true then we will be able to verify them *after we die*, as many religious claims are about things which lay beyond the limits of human life. He calls this 'eschatological verification' ('Eschatology' – study of the end times). So according to Hick religious claims can be cognitive and meaningful even if we cannot verify them in the here and now.

I don't think that Hick's attempt to respond to Ayer is successful. For one thing, the sceptic can argue that there is no evidence for life after death. Moreover, whilst Hick does give a possible way in which religious language could be verified, it would only work if religious statements turned out to be true. If statements such as 'God loves us' were false (because there was no God) then there would, presumably, be no post-death life in which to experience and prove the falsity of this claim. Therefore, eschatological verification can only verify a statement positively, but it cannot *falsify* it.

However, I do think that Ayer's argument fails, but for another reason. This is because the verification principle itself is neither analytic nor open to empirical verification. Therefore, it is, by its own standards, meaningless and we cannot use it the pass judgement on the meaningless of other statements. Further, *if* Ayer was correct, then it would not only be religious language that was meaningless, but also moral and aesthetic claims, such as 'murder is bad' and 'the Mona Lisa is a beautiful painting'. They are not analytic or empirically provable, but we would not accept such a conclusion in the case of these moral and aesthetic statements, and therefore we should not therefore accept it in the case of religious language.

Another attempt to show that religious language was non-cognitive and therefore meaningless was presented by Anthony Flew. Flew proposed the 'falsification principle'. This stated that a statement

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was meaningful if it could be falsified, i.e. that we could at least imagine evidence that would count *against* the statement. E.g. the statement 'today is sunny' is meaningful because it could be falsified by lots of clouds in the sky. However, Flew claimed that religious language was not falsifiable. When faced with possible counter-evidence to a religious claim, such as needless suffering, the religious believer simply restates their claim, and says things like 'God loves us… but he sometimes tests our faith.' This process goes on and on until, as Flew says, 'God dies a death of a thousand qualifications'.

R. M. Hare argued against Flew. He claimed that Flew did not understand the nature of religious language. He agreed that such language might not be falsifiable, but disagreed that this meant it was meaningless. Hare argued that in using religious language what we are doing is taking an attitude towards the world which he called a *blik*. These non-cognitive attitudes often cannot be conclusively proved or disproved but they are meaningful and very important for directing our behaviour and determining how we interpret our experiences. Bliks are not effected by any evidence, rather they determine which evidence is considered important. Hare gave the example of the lunatic don to illustrate this.

In my opinion, Flew offers an interesting alternative to the question of meaning. However, I think that, as with Ayer, he offers a far too restrictive theory of meaning. His Falsification Principle assumes that all language works in the same way. However, as Hare has tried to show, language can operate in very different ways, e.g. as indicating principles that determine what evidence counts when making judgements about the things we value most. Further, as Basil Mitchell argues, it might not even be the case that religious language cannot be falsified. Mitchell gives the parable of the resistance leader to illustrate how evidence does count against religious belief (just as evidence might could against the belief that someone really is a resistance fighter, even if we can't say if, when and how much evidence it takes to overthrow that belief (e.g. just how much evil there would have to be in the world to show that a God does not exist).

In conclusion I have argued that the views of Ayer and Flew both fail to establish that religious language is meaningless. Hare and Mitchel demonstrate that. I think that their claim that it is non-cognitive is a stronger one. But the Logical Positivist principle of verification fails its own standard, and like the falsificationist theory of meaning, it is far too restrictive in its view of what makes language meaningful. They have counter intuitive implications for aesthetic and ethical language as well as that used by religious believers. Therefore, religious language like aesthetic and ethical language IS still meaningful.

In this response the student argues with clear intent throughout, and the logic of the argument is largely sustained (16-20 band). The response shows detailed and precise understanding in some areas but not others (16-20 band). The conclusion is clear (21-25 band) and was indicated at the outset, with a range of appropriate arguments supporting it (16-20 band). What is clearly missing is a 'robust defence' of the conclusion: possible replies from Ayer and Flew are not considered; evaluation of Hare and Mitchell is absent; and there is no critical and integrated consideration of whether the parallels with aesthetic and ethical language are persuasive in this context (the argument assumes rather than demonstrates that Ayer and Flew have the same issues with moral and aesthetic language). There is a balancing of arguments, with weight being given to each (16-20), but this could have been carried out in a more precise, coherent and integrated way: there was room in the conclusion for a more developed statement of why the arguments that religious language is non cognitive are 'stronger' (the relatively brief and non-decisive treatment of Hick and Mitchel do not make that judgement clear). Generally, this response shows a firm but not always detailed grasp of relevant philosophical material structured into a logical argument which answers the question. It is safely in the 16-20 band. 18/25.

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