



A-LEVEL

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

7062/1 Philosophy of Religion and Ethics
Report on the Examination

7062
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General comments:

- The questions showed complete parity with those of previous series.
- The paper proved accessible to all but a very small number of students, and there was a good range of student responses covering the full mark range.
- It was clear that the majority of students had responded well to the guided information sent to centres by AQA prior to the start of the exam season, about which areas of the specification were to be examined in this series.
- All AO1 questions required students to focus on more than one aspect. The mark scheme required both aspects of these questions to be addressed for the upper levels to be awarded. A cap of 'Maximum Level 3 if only one aspect is covered', was clearly stated in the mark scheme and this proved a limiting factor for marks in some student responses. (See comments on individual AO1 questions below)

Section A: Philosophy of religion questions:**1.1 Examine how Paley's design argument encourages belief in God.**

This question was usually well done, and proved to be a question which allowed students to make a confident start to the paper. Most students could write clearly and accurately about Paley's design argument, and were able to attempt some explanation of how this argument encouraged belief in God. However, weaker candidates merely focused on reciting the argument without tackling any examination of how the argument might encourage belief in God and were thus capped at a maximum of Level 3.

1.2 'Religious experiences can be verified.'**Evaluate this claim.**

This question was well attempted by most students. There was a wide range of answers in evidence. Top level answers provided very well focused answers to the issue raised, and provided perceptive discussion of different views about the verification of Religious experiences, coupled with good critical analysis. Good use of scholarship was made to substantiate their answers. At the lower end of the mark range weaker students attempted to focus on 'Near Death Experiences' rather than 'Religious Experiences' as demanded by the question. In such cases, there was little creditable material in evidence.

2.1 Examine both realist and anti-realist understandings of miracles.

Virtually all students could explain the difference between realist and anti-realist views about miracles accurately. Responses gaining the upper levels of response were able to make reference to a wide range of scholarship and did not merely confine their answers to Hume and Wiles and could provide good exemplification of realist and anti-realist views. Weaker students attaining the lower levels (levels 1 & 2) tended to write in limited terms with little reference to scholars, or provide much by way of exemplification. However, they were able to provide a basic understanding of realist and anti-realist views. At the lowest extreme, there were a number of weak students who, again, rather than focussing on a clear examination of differing understandings about miracles, focussed on 'Near Death Experiences'.

2.2 The falsification principle shows that religious language is meaningless.

Evaluate this claim.

This question required students to focus on an evaluation of the falsification principle approach specifically. Several student responses produced answers that began by briefly addressing the falsification principle as demanded by the question, but then morphed into an evaluation of the verification and the meaningfulness of religious language, rather than evaluating the falsification principle in any greater detail. Good quality answers showed a tight focus on the question asked and were able to offer good critical analysis and were supported by reference to an appropriate range of scholars and scholarship.

Section B: Ethics and religion questions.

3.1 Examine the approach to moral decision making taken by situation ethics.

You must illustrate your answer with reference to the issue of theft.

By far the most significant issue students had with this question was a failure to address **both** aspects of the question. There was a high percentage of answers where students examined the approach taken by situation ethics in great and accurate detail, but failed to illustrate their answer with reference to any moral issue. Others referred to another moral issue completely and made no reference to the issue of theft as directed by the question. Such responses were, in accordance with the mark scheme, capped at a maximum of Level 3.

3.2 'Situation ethics cannot justify the use of animals in blood sports.'

Evaluate this claim

The thrust of the question asked students to evaluate the approach of situation ethics to the issue of 'blood sports'. A considerable number of answers revealed an erroneous understanding of the term. There were several attempts at this question where students merely discussed the application of situation ethics to issues such as animal experimentation and intensive farming, rather than the issue of blood sports- even in its widest sense. Again a full range of student responses was evident, and the majority of students who clearly understood the term blood sports wrote answers which got into the higher levels.

4.1 Examine the approaches of libertarianism and hard determinism to free will.

Of all the AO1 questions on the paper, this question drew the largest number of 'non attempted' responses. In responding to the two approaches highlighted in the question the majority of students who did attempt the question, produced answers at all levels. Most were better informed about the approach taken by 'hard determinism' than the approach taken by 'libertarianism'. There were several answers, which still gained the upper levels, that provided detailed and expansive examination of the approach taken by 'hard determinism', but were less detailed or confident in their examination about the approach taken by libertarianism.

4.2 Virtue ethics is not a good way of making moral decisions.

Evaluate this claim.

Of all the AO2 questions, this question appeared to be the one which produced the most one-sided answers. Such answers were typified by an evaluation agreeing with the question and wrote often extensively on why other ethical systems provided better ways of making moral decisions, particularly natural moral law., Most seemed to find it hard to provide an alternative view as to why virtue ethics might be considered a good way of making moral decisions in any developed way.

Being the

last question on the paper it was also the question which revealed the greatest number of incomplete answers, and it was clear several students had time management issues.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.