1.1 Buddhism: Section 1 – Beliefs and teachings

Page 27

5 Give two of the five skandhas. [2]

Awareness and consciousness

Commentary: These are the same skandha – vijnana – so only 1 mark would be awarded. It would be fine to write quite simple terms as well as the technical ones – but examiners are impressed when you use the correct technical language.

6 Explain two ways in which belief in the Pure Land might influence Buddhists today. [4]

Believing in Pure Land might encourage a person to chant sutras about Amitabha Buddha as much as they can. This way they keep him in mind, and hope he hears them to take them to the Pure Land. They might also believe they can go to his Western heaven and skip a lifetime.

Commentary: The first point is well-made, giving the practice which comes from belief and what they hope to gain from it.

The second way is simplistically put – it is saying another belief comes from this belief, but not how that actually impacts on them. 2 marks.

11 Explain two Buddhist teachings about enlightenment. Refer to scripture or sacred writing in your answer. Refer to Buddhist teachings in your answer. [5]

Mahayana Buddhists believe that everyone can become enlightened because the Buddha said his teaching was for everyone.

Theravada Buddhists believe that you have to be a monk first, so women cannot get enlightened. They believe in arhats.

Commentary: There is no clear teaching stated, so the answer could not reach full marks.

The first point is a simply explained statement – no detail here. A teaching should have been named here.

The second is a simply developed idea (you have to be a monk to be enlightened and therefore women cannot be enlightened) with an extra idea tagged on which is not applied.

This would get 2 marks only.

13 ‘The enlightenment of the Buddha was the most important event in his life.’ Evaluate this statement. [12]

I agree that this was the most important. This is when he understood everything, and the point at which he could then teach others. The Buddhist religion begins when he begins teaching the things he realised when he became enlightened. So it is the defining moment really in his life – he changed completely after it.

However, I can see that other times in his life were also important. You could say his birth was the most – without being born, nothing else could happen. Or that seeing the Four Sights was the most important, as this is what triggered him into trying to find a solution to the suffering he had just learnt about. If he hadn’t seen this, he would have been a great king – so the holy man said when he was born.

In conclusion, I think the enlightenment is the most important because of the reasons I gave earlier.

Commentary: This has the potential to be good. It gives two sides, and is clearly answering the statement, by providing several reasons which are developed. It would have been better with a little more on the agree side – perhaps another developed reason. While it is about the Buddha’s life, there is no reference to Buddhist teachings – the agree side is begging for a reference to what he learnt (Three marks, Noble Truths, etc.).

The second hints at teachings but these are unclear. Quite often the attempt at development is a somewhat obvious statement. Also, the conclusion is not worth any credit – conclusions need to say something new, not just repeat what has already been said (you can’t be credited twice for saying the same thing).

This is likely to get to the top of Level 2, 5 or 6 marks.
1.1 Buddhism: Section 2 – Practices

Page 39

3 Give two of the Five Precepts. [2]
Dukkha and Magga

Commentary: Oops! The answer gives two of the Four Noble Truth elements – no marks.

Be sure to know your stuff well, and read questions carefully.

7 Explain two contrasting ways in which a Buddhist might meditate. [4]
A Buddhist might meditate by concentrating on their breathing (samatha).
Another Buddhist might meditate by visualising, for example Pure Land Buddhists visualise Amitabha Buddha.

Commentary: This answer gives two ways which are different, showing knowledge of different forms of Buddhism as well as different types of meditation. However, the development is simple (an idea and a bit of information or an example), rather than detailed (an idea, developed by more than one bit of explanation, or idea + development + example).

It gets 2 marks.

10 Explain two ways in which Wesak is important in the life of a Buddhist. Refer to Buddhist teachings in your answer. [5]
Wesak is really important to Buddhist children because it is like our Christmas. They get loads of gifts and money, and everyone is happy and they have feasts.
For Buddhist monks it is important because it remembers the birth and enlightenment and death of the Buddha. They can learn from his life, and achieve enlightenment. ‘Suffering I teach, and the way out of it’ said the Buddha, and they will try to understand his teachings so they can be enlightened themselves.

Commentary: This answer has a weak start as it basically gives a bland description of what children may experience. The second part is much stronger as it focuses on monks and what they do, but also uses a teaching to back that up.

This would get 4 marks altogether.

13 ‘Buddhists should always attend a temple for worship.’ Evaluate this statement. [12]

I completely disagree with this. It is nice to go to a temple – you get to see the big statue, and you can have a chat with a monk maybe. However, the Buddha said we have to sort ourselves out, not seek outside help (hence no God in Buddhism). This fits with meditating, which you do on your own and is central to Buddhism – part of the Noble Eightfold Path and the Threefold Way. Meditation is worship because you are trying to understand the truth of the Buddha’s teachings through vipassana meditation, or to visualise yourself in the western heaven of Amitabha. Many people can’t get to a temple (no time, not near enough etc), so it isn’t an option for them, but they still manage to worship at a home shrine in front of their own Buddha rupa.

Commentary: This is a really good first side to the answer, giving lots of developed reasons and showing a very broad knowledge of Buddhist practice. Unfortunately, it never gives a creditable opposite view – which is a requirement. So it is stuck at the top of Level 2, 6 marks.

Sometimes we agree or disagree with a statement so strongly that it is difficult to see another point of view – if this is you, a good trick is to ask yourself what someone who usually disagrees with you might say. This often helps your brain to think a little differently!

1.2 Christianity: Section 1 – Beliefs and teachings

Page 47

4 Give two ideas about heaven for Christians. [2]
Heaven is a state of being not a physical place. It is perfection – beautiful like a garden.

Commentary: 2 marks – probably the first sentence would be enough though so, while doing no harm to the answer, the second sentence is wasting valuable time.

6 Explain two ways in which the resurrection of Jesus influences Christians today. [4]

One way it would influence Christians is that they could believe that they could also be resurrected.
The second way would be that there is no need for them to fear death.
Commentary: Each of these parts would gain 1 mark. They are correct but only very simple. When reading both, the reader is left with the question ‘why?’. The explanation, which would be the ‘development’, is missing. This is a good way to see if an answer is developed. If you are left asking ‘why?’, then there probably isn’t enough development for that second mark. 2 marks.

10 Explain two Christian teachings about salvation. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer.

In Jesus’ parable of the prodigal son the son is welcomed back by his father even though he does not deserve this welcome which shows that God gives salvation through grace – His unconditional love even though we may not deserve it.

Paul says ‘by the grace of God I am what I am’ referring to the fact that he didn’t deserve to even be an apostle as he had persecuted the church but even so by God’s salvation through grace salvation could be his.

Commentary: 5 marks – both parts are about salvation through ‘grace’ but both are correctly developed. The second has a specific teaching and the first references the correct parable so the fifth mark is available. Without the quote from Paul, the answer would be more generalised so would not gain the fifth mark.

Salvation though works could also have been referred to as an alternative.

14 ‘God cannot be all-loving because evil and suffering exist.’ Evaluate this statement.

Christians would say that in fact it is absolutely true that God is loving as a core belief but also that evil and suffering exist as well. The problem is explaining the two together.

Some would say that God is all loving as there are plenty of examples from the Bible showing God’s all-loving nature. The word agape was used to show God’s love – a self-giving and self-sacrificing love; ‘for God so loved the world that he gave His only son’. They believe that suffering and evil allow them to become closer to God as they believe God may not have prevented the suffering but that he shares in that suffering and helps them to get through it. Others would say that God cannot be all-loving as if he was, then the suffering they have faced would not have happened in the first place.

Some would say that evil exists either through the actions of the devil and humans being so easily led down the wrong path, or through free-will and human emotions like greed and selfishness making them commit evil acts – so neither has anything to do with God. God being all loving helps the sufferer to cope with the evil in the world. Others would say God’s love should stop the evil in the first place rather than it helping us to cope with it.

With suffering some see that God is all loving in that he is being just by punishing wrong, or by testing our faith or by trying to teach us something or helping us to appreciate what is good. This shows God wants the best for us – harsh love can be good love. In response others would say much suffering is undeserved – like a child dying – there is no loving purpose to that so God is not all loving. It is often the case too that it is the nice people who seem to suffer the most and the horrible people don’t seem to. Like a murderer living in prison till they are 90 when a father of three, a good man dies of cancer at 40. If God is all loving, he certainly isn’t fair.

Overall Christians have been trying to explain these two ideas for centuries. All responses have a counter argument as we see from the evaluation above. Perhaps we just have to accept that both God is loving and evil and suffering exist and that as humans we either come closer to God or lose faith in him.

Commentary: This would be a Level 4 answer. It is superbly structured – dove-tailing the ideas with the counter ideas for each point made. This is better than writing one paragraph agreeing and then another paragraph disagreeing – as then the answer looks more like AO1 than AO2.

It is a high level response because it shows evaluation of each point, sets the answer up and finishes with a thoughtful conclusion.

12 marks. SPaG (spelling, punctuation and grammar) 5/5.

1.2 Christianity: Section 2 – Practices

Page 61

4 Give two reasons why Christians believe they should evangelise.

It would follow Jesus’ example and it would be acting out ‘love your neighbour’.
Example answers and commentary to selected exam practice questions

9 Explain two contrasting beliefs about whether baptism is necessary or not. [4]

Most Christians believe baptism is necessary but it is more about when it is done that is the debate. Some believe it is necessary for a baby to welcome it into the religion and wash away original sin.

Others see that the person should understand for themselves and make promises that they understand and so baptism should be a believer’s baptism when they are older and feel ready.

Commentary: This is a very simple way of answering the question. The answer is directed to the knowledge that the student has. It avoids the more complicated debate as to whether baptism is necessary or not by stating that it is necessary, but it is more about when it should happen. Both ways are explained so 4 marks.

10 Explain two ways in which the Eucharist is important to Christians. Refer to Christian teachings in your answer. [5]

Jesus at his last supper said ‘take eat do this in remembrance of me’ so Christians by eating bread and drinking wine are following an actual instruction of Jesus himself.

To other Christians they are sharing in the actual body and blood of Jesus.

Commentary: The first part includes a teaching, clearly correct, and applies it, but only in a simple way. The teaching is the identified way but the development remains simple. Also, the answer would be better if it was structured as follows: One way in which the Eucharist is important is …

The second way in which it is important is …

The second part would only be worth 1 mark as it is clearly not developed.

The overall mark would be 3 (1+1+1) out of 5 marks for each part the student got 1 mark instead of two (as the answers are not developed) but then picked up the fifth mark because the teaching referred to in the first answer is ‘a specific teaching’.

13 ‘Worship should always be liturgical.’ Evaluate this statement. [12]

- It is the same in every church.
- On the other hand –
- It can be boring and lifeless.
- Charismatic shows a lot more feeling from the heart.
- There is more variety in both non-liturgical and charismatic worship.

Overall I disagree as new forms of worship seem more popular and so Christianity is more relevant for people of today.

Commentary: Using bullet points is not the best structure as evaluations need to flow and read well.

This answer is a series of points each lacking in development of any kind – but they are correct ideas.

The conclusion is simple but makes sense.

The answer can only be limited at Level 2 as no religious teachings are referred to. It is more than Level 1 as there are two sides. However, there is no ‘reasoned consideration’ so Level 2, 4 marks.

SPaG 3/5.

1.3 Islam: Section 1 – Beliefs and teachings

Page 73

4 Name two angels of Allah. [2]

Jibril and Mikail

Commentary: Two correct responses so 2 marks. Only two words needed. A common mistake is to give more detail which is not required.

6 Explain two ways in which belief in Risalah influences Muslims today. [4]

Muslims believe that Muhammad was the perfect example of a Prophet and so this influences them to live by his teachings found in the Sunnah.

Risalah is the way Allah communicates with Muslims and so they are influenced to read the Holy Books, follow the example of great Prophets like Adam and Ibrahim and live a good life so the Angels record of what they do is a good one.

Commentary: This is clearly worth 4 marks – two paragraphs make it easy to see two developed answers. A simple reason is developed in each part. Some more able students might be tempted to write more, as there is far more that could be written, but this is not necessary.
10 Explain two Muslim teachings about the Day of Judgement. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. [5]

Muslims believe that the Qur’an says ‘The Day for Sorting has been appointed, the day when the trumpet shall be blown’ showing that Allah has already decided when the Day of judgement will be.

Muslims believe that heaven will be for the good and hell for the bad and that those who manage to cross the as sirat bridge to heaven will be few as it is ‘narrower than a human hair’.

Commentary: There are two good, developed parts to this answer, both relevant and containing specific teachings, so 5 marks.

13 ‘The Qur’an is not more important than other Muslim holy books.’ Evaluate this statement. [12]

I think all Muslims would disagree with this because the Qur’an is the actual word of God that was dictated to Muhammad that has never been changed. It is infallible ‘falsehood shall never come from it’. The Qur’an contains all a Muslims needs to know. Also it contains the basis of the religion, Shari’ah, worship and explains many questions like creation.

Some would say that it is only more important because it is still intact whereas the others like the Tawrat or Zabur have been lost. Also the Qur’an is difficult to understand and so the hadith and Sunnah are more important as they are actual example and teachings that can be understood and followed.

I believe that all holy books are of great value but each may have a different importance.

Commentary: This answer is two sided and quite well balanced and has a conclusion, though this needs to be better reasoned and supported.

Only one teaching is included.

It is more than a series of points so is somewhere in Level 3. The points could be better developed, so 7 or 8 marks.

SPaG 4/5.

1.3 Islam: Section 2 – Practices

Page 84

4 Give two reasons why Muslims fast. [2]

To know what it is like to be poor and as a good way to diet.

Commentary: Only one valid point (the first one), so 1 mark.

6 Explain two similar ways in which all Muslims observe Hajj. [4]

All Muslims go to Makkah dressed in ihram – the white clothing so there is no difference between nationalities or rich or poor as there won’t be when they stand before God. All Muslims stand on Mt Arafat asking for forgiveness for 6 hours.

Commentary: The first part is a developed idea but the second is only a simple point. An explanation of why they visit Mt Arafat or the purpose of asking for forgiveness could have been used to gain the second mark, so 3 marks.

Always use two paragraphs to separate the points so that the examiner can clearly see where one idea ends and another starts.

12 Explain two ways in which maroof and munkar are important to Shi’a Muslims. Refer to Muslim teachings in your answer. [5]

Maroof is important because it is living towards what is good, meaning that all Muslims should do what is good because their future afterlife depends upon it.

Allah does not forget and so that is good for their judgement.

Commentary: This is a difficult question on which to find teachings. Haram would be seen as a teaching though, so even without the quote 5 marks would still be available. Both points are explained, so 5 marks.

14 ‘Jihad should not be understood in terms of holy war.’ Evaluate this statement. [12]

Jihad is really about doing the best to keep the laws and beliefs of the religion. It is about a struggle or to make an effort.

Some disagree with the statement because they see lesser jihad as Holy War to follow Muhammad’s teaching that ‘the best jihad is where your horse is slain and your blood spilled’ Muslims have a duty to fight oppression where their beliefs are at risk from others. However for it to be jihad there are rules to follow so these people who act as terrorists and claim holy war are wrong because the acts they carry out are outside of the rules.
Others would say that jihad is more about duty to God. Worship of God and to strive for peace and cooperation rather than Holy War. So jihad is more of a personal struggle to live in the right way and to have faith in Allah.

**Commentary:** The first part of the answer is like a definition so needs to be applied more closely to the statement if it is to be worthy of credit.

Both sides of the argument are presented with supporting ideas and a teaching is included. It is not a complex answer but it is reasoned in places.

There is no conclusion to bring the answer together.

Level 3, 7 or 8 marks.

SPaG 4/5.

1.4 Judaism: Section 1 – Beliefs and teachings

**Page 95**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Marks</th>
<th>Commentary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3  Name two Prophets G-d made covenants with.</td>
<td>[2]</td>
<td><strong>Commentary:</strong> You only study two covenants for the course – learn them with the name of the key person (Moses’ law covenant; Abraham’s circumcision covenant). 2 marks achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8  Explain two ways in which a belief in pikuach nefesh influences Jews today.</td>
<td>[4]</td>
<td><strong>Commentary:</strong> This would gain 2 marks only. The first part, although correct is not actually answering the question – a common mistake is to give correct information but pick up no marks because the information is unnecessary for the question type. 4 marks achieved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Explain two Jewish teachings about G-d as law-giver and judge. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer.</td>
<td>[5]</td>
<td><strong>Commentary:</strong> The mark would be 3 (1+1+1). Two excellent quotes but the development is only simple in both parts, so one mark out of two for both answers. The fifth mark available would be awarded because the teachings used are specific rather than general.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 ‘It is impossible to repair the world so the Messianic Age will never happen.’ Evaluate this statement.</td>
<td>[12]</td>
<td><strong>Commentary:</strong> This is a difficult question which has been well managed. The answer contains two developed arguments on the first side. The second side has only one idea but it is supported by a good, appropriate teaching from Isaiah. The conclusion is a good example to follow, as it contains different arguments – the common mistake is...</td>
</tr>
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</table>
for conclusions to simply repeat an idea stated earlier. Reference to the Talmud is also linked well.

Level 4, 10 or 11 marks – the answer is reasoned well, logical and flows nicely.

SPaG 5/5 – good use of paragraphs, spelling, key terms used, etc.

### 1.4 Judaism: Section 2 – Practices

### Page 107

4. Give two things that Jews do on the Friday Shabbat.

   **Eat food and go to the synagogue.**

**Commentary:** While technically ‘eat food’ is right, it needs to show the religious aspect (‘eat a special family meal’ would be better). A mark is given for the second point but not the first so 1 mark only for this answer.

7. Explain two contrasting ways in which a boy’s bar mitzvah and a girl’s bat mitzvah are carried out.

   **A boy’s bar mitzvah takes place on the Shabbat after his 13th birthday in the synagogue whereas for a girl it is at 12 years of age and takes place in the home. This is because a boy is now a son of the commandment and an adult male in the congregation. The boy will read from the Torah on the Shabbat service whilst a girl will recite a blessing and talk about the importance of the day. She has more of a role in the home and does not read from the Torah as she is female.**

**Commentary:** This would get 4 marks. You can clearly see two differences – notice the word ‘whereas’ – a good word to use in a direct comparison question.

6. Explain two contrasting religious beliefs about contraception in contemporary British society. In your answer you should refer to the main religious tradition of Great Britain and one or more other religious traditions.

**Commentary:** Three simple paragraphs here. There are two sides and a conclusion though all are at a simple level and there is no religious content. The reader learns little about Jewish mourning from reading the answer.

It would make Level 2 but only at the bottom end so 4 marks – two sides but lacks depth with simple non-specific reasoning.

SPaG 2/5.

### Theme A: Relationships and families

### Page 123

5. Name two types of family.

   **Big family – mum, dad, lots of children and grandparents, and mum living on her own with her children.**

**Commentary:** Unfortunately, though we know what is being referred to – extended and single parent – these are definitions/ explanations of, rather than the names of the types of family, so no marks. You must know your key terms! 0 marks.

6. Explain two contrasting religious beliefs about contraception in contemporary British society. In your answer you should refer to the main religious tradition of Great Britain and one or more other religious traditions.

**Secondly the Talmud is important as it helps Jews understand G-d’s law as some bits are unclear and so the Talmud gives more details and clarifies exactly what Jews should be doing for example with dietary laws.**

**Commentary:** 5 marks – clear, concise and shows importance in each part. The teaching is also applied.

13. ‘Jewish mourning is more about supporting the living than remembering the dead.’ Evaluate this statement.

   I agree because the person is buried as soon as possible, and no time is given to it. Most time is given to the relatives and making sure they are supported and ok. But then again they are mourning for someone who has died, so thinking about them all the time. They wouldn’t do anything if they weren’t dead. So it is all about the dead, just done by the living.

**Commentary:** Three simple paragraphs here. There are two sides and a conclusion though all are at a simple level and there is no religious content. The reader learns little about Jewish mourning from reading the answer.

It would make Level 2 but only at the bottom end so 4 marks – two sides but lacks depth with simple non-specific reasoning.

SPaG 2/5.
The Pope said that any action which prevents precreation is evil. So a couple using contraception would be seen as deliberately trying to avoid pregnancy yet still having sex and as the only reason for having sex it to have children contraception is wrong. The Church of England would have a slightly different view believing that sexual love in itself is a good thing and to delay or limit having children can be sensible so as long as both the couple agree with its use then it can be used.

Commentary: Both answers come from the Christian tradition, which fits with the requirement, and what is stated is correct, so 4 marks.

8 Explain two contrasting religious beliefs about divorce. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer.

Muslims allow divorce but only as a last resort because Allah hates it. Sikhs have a similar position – everything must be tried and they don’t like it but it is accepted by the faith.

Commentary: This answer lacks real teachings – when actually there are many easy teachings on this topic. Both are simple responses and so would get 1 mark each. Allah does hate divorce but this is more generalised rather than a specific teaching so that fifth mark would not be accessed. 2 marks overall.

14 ‘Women as well as men should be able to be leaders in their religion.’ Evaluate this statement.

Some religions like Islam and the Roman Catholic branch of Christianity would disagree with this statement. Traditionally it has always been men – in Islam women would distract men from prayer, that’s why they pray separately in the first place and secondly a priest is representing Jesus and the priestly line can be traced back to St Peter so a woman would be in inappropriate. Also they have families to look after and so the time commitment would be an issue. Women and men are equal just have different roles – it’s not about discrimination.

Others would say that actually this position is discriminatory in the modern world and that if a woman wants to serve God by being a leader than she should be given that chance. Often many jobs a priest does are seen as ‘caring actions’ and as such many women would be just as good as men at this. Women are as clever so why not. In the Church of England, there are women vicars and a bishop now so they have shown that given the chance they can do a good job. In the Bible some of the first people baptised were women and Priscilla was the leader in Ephesus.

All religions condemn discrimination in general society and so if they are not to be hypocritical they should allow women to be leaders. St Paul said ‘there is neither male or female – we are all one in Christ’. There is no excuse – anyone should be able to lead if they wish and are qualified and committed enough.

Commentary: This is a good two-sided response with ideas being used and supported with examples and reasoning. There is regular reference to religion throughout in quotes and examples.

Level 4, 11 or 12 marks – the answer flows, though it may not have that wow factor and there will be better 12-mark responses, which are more concisely written, but this should not detract from this answer.

Theme B: Religion and life

Page 139

4 Give two reasons a person may be vegetarian. [2]

Health reasons and they don’t like the taste of meat.

Commentary: 2 marks – two correct reasons identified.

6 Explain two contrasting religious beliefs about abortion in contemporary British society. In your answer you should refer to the main religious tradition of Great Britain and one or more other religious traditions.

Roman Catholics don’t allow it as they believe that life begins at conception so it’s murder. For Jews it is ok as the mother’s life is the priority.

Commentary: Even though the answer is a repeat of the same idea, both are worthy of credit. 2 marks.

10 Explain two religious beliefs about caring for the world. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer.

Christians believe in ‘stewardship’ – God gave them the responsibility to look after all his creation. Muslims believe their duty is to be ‘khalifah’ – Allah gave them this responsibility at the creation.

Commentary: Again there is no real attempt at development which means 2 marks are being lost in
each part of the answer. 3 marks (1+1) plus there is reference to specific teaching so gaining that fifth mark available (1+1+1) = 3.

12 ‘Pollution can never be stopped.’ Evaluate this statement.

Well if we look at the history of the world humans have always polluted it as they develop like in the industrial revolution. Now places like Africa, India and China also are developing, so pollution will continue. It stop hard to stop as there are so many types now and people just want an easy life so will travel and use their cars etc.

It could be stopped if the world got together and made it stop. Developed countries could pass on their knowledge to developing countries. Also humans might grow a conscience or start listening to God and realise the world is more important than them – doubt it but we can’t say never.

This is a question we can never answer because we have no idea what might happen in the future – I suppose given the history we could say probably it never will, but never say never eh!

Commentary: This has potential to be a good answer as it raises some good points but fails to develop any of them fully.

I get the feeling the students knows far more but seems reluctant to waste ink. Bright, capable but little effort.

The answer cannot be Level 3 as there is no religious content; ‘start listening to God’ is not enough. So Level 2, 6 marks.

The first part is stronger but each idea leaves too many questions for the reader, such as ‘how?’ and ‘why?’, and the conclusion is factual but simplistic.

SPaG 4/5 – technically fairly correct.

Theme C: The existence of God and revelation

Page 149

3 Give two alternative explanations to the claim that a person has met God. [2]

They could be accused of lying because they are religious and want to convert others, so use this as a tool to do exactly that. Or they could be very ill and delirious. In their state they aren’t seeing things properly or hearing properly and are irrational. So their illness makes them think they see God – who they want to end this illness, but really they didn’t.

Commentary: This is easily worth 2 marks – but it is not necessary to write so much, and this will take time from bigger questions. Try to keep this 2-mark question as brief as possible – for example, by just writing ‘telling lies or unwell so hallucinating’.

7 Explain two similar religious beliefs about the divine. In your answer you should refer to at least one religious tradition. [4]

Christians believe that God is One God but three parts – the Trinity. Muslims believe there is only One God as well.

Commentary: The first idea is very briefly explained. The second is a statement only, with no explanation. This means 1 mark would be awarded for the Christian idea, but none for the Muslim one.

12 ‘It is impossible to know what God is like.’ Evaluate this statement. [12]

I agree completely because God does not exist, so there is no way to describe something that doesn’t exist. Any description would be in the imagination – so could be anything, and everyone would have a different idea.

I suppose religions would say they can describe God – their holy books do that for them. They say God is kind, powerful, watching us, judging us etc.

Commentary: This gives two sides, including religious and non-religious arguments. However, it is not really a reasoned argument – the explanation/development is lacking.

The first side dismisses any description because of God’s non-existence, and develops this to say it is imaginary so no fixed definition. The second says that holy books describe God, and then gives a list of characteristics.

It would be in Level 2, probably 4 marks.

SPaG 3/5.

Theme D: Religion, peace and conflict

Page 162

5 Name two reasons for a country to keep nuclear weapons. [2]

To defend themselves and put others off attacking them.
Example answers and commentary to selected exam practice questions

Commentary: This would get the 2 marks. On first reading, the two reasons might seem to be the same thing and some examiners may judge them to be the same, but the first might be for actual attack and the second as a warning not to attack. Always make sure your points are clearly different.

7 Explain two similar religious beliefs about peace. In your answer you should refer to one or more religious traditions.

Christianity teaches ‘Blessed are the peacemakers’ so this Bible teaching suggests that God sees it a better action to look to find peaceful solution in conflict than to fight a war. Go will bless those actions.

Buddhists believe in ahimsa as a core principle and so would want to see peace rather than war.

Commentary: The first part would get the 2 marks available, but the second part, although correct, would only be seen as a simple explanation.

Although this answer does not require religious teachings you can see how they make it easier to form an answer – much more concise and therefore time favourable!

10 Explain two religious beliefs about helping victims of war. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer.

All wars have victims both soldiers and civilians. Islam teaches in the Hadith to ‘hate your enemy mildly, for he might become your friend one day’ suggesting that if the victim is an enemy soldier then they should be looked after rather than further injured. If this happens after the war they might actually see through the action that friendship is possible.

Buddhism teaches right action and so all victims of war should be helped. Life in all religions is sacred/important so the right thing to do would be to provide the victim both soldier and civilian with the help needed.

Commentary: 5 marks – two religious teachings included and explained in a developed way.

11 Explain two religious beliefs about people who break the law because of mental health. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer.

Commentary: This is a well written answer but can only gain 2 marks as it only refers to one religious traditions – Islam.

14 ‘Greed is the greatest cause of war.’ Evaluate this statement.

Over the years many wars have taken place for greed over land, power and resources. In fact most wars will come down to a need for one of these at some point, be it a key reason or an under-lying reason. However from a religious perspective none would agree with this as a good reason as greed is an emotion that is selfish and lacks thoughts about others. Greed is undoubtedly a cause but there are many other causes.

In conclusion I feel it is really difficult to pin any war down to one reason but it is usually a combination of factors. However if greed was never acted upon it is probably true there would be fewer wars.

Commentary: This is a good answer but no matter how good it is, it is only one sided with a conclusion and no real reference to religious teachings. It is a reasoned consideration of one point of view so this would put it into Level 2. Some examples and more development are required. A second side with other reasons (either several, or a couple better developed) are also necessary.

Level 2, 5 marks.

SPaG 5/5.

Theme E: Religion, crime and punishment

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4 Give two reasons for the use of community service as a punishment.

It was only a minor crime. Better form of reformation than prison.

Commentary: two reasons identified so 2 marks.

8 Explain two contrasting religious beliefs about the aims of punishment. In your answer you should refer to one or more religious traditions.

Islam believes that above all deterrence should be the main aim of punishment as if the punishment is harsh enough it will put offender off committing another crime and also potential criminals. This keeps the crime rate low and protects the general public. The death penalty is used for the worst crimes as a deterrent. It’s like tough love – you have to be cruel in the long term to be kind to everyone.

Commentary: This is a well written answer but it only gains 2 marks as it only refers to one religious traditions – Islam.
Christians would say that mental illness is something people need help with but it can lead to anything from mass murder to youth crime and so for someone who has no conscience or sense of right and wrong who carries out a serious crime then being locked up in a high security mental institution where treatment can be received and assessments done would be more favourable than prison as it still protects everyone and is an example of love your neighbour.

Judaism would agree within Christianity here.

Commentary: This would gain 3 marks – 2 for the Christian view and 1 for the accurate teaching.

The Jewish response would get nothing – if the answer had been written out in full (rather than saying Jews believe the same), full marks could have been accessed.

12 ‘Opposition to an unjust law is the only reason to commit a crime.’ Evaluate this statement. [12]

Some would agree with the statement because if a law is unjust then it is wrong and needs changing. Perhaps the only way to get a government to listen is to break the law. The law should benefit everyone so if it does not then it has to be changed like using protests which could turn violent. God stands for justice so it is right to fight for justice in changing an unjust law. Amos says let justice roll like a river. A river has no barriers in its way – it just flows and constantly changes so if the law is a barrier to justice then crime might be justified here.

However there might be other reasons to break the law for example in self-defence or to help another person. It might be that a person is in poverty and needs to steal food – although there are other ways to get food. Some might have had a terrible upbringing and crime is to survive – not right but understandable.

The problem here is that people will have different views upon what is a just or unjust law and what actions can be justified and which cannot. For the person committing the crime they could probably justify any of their actions – it’s just others would not agree.

Commentary: Level 4, 10 marks.

Both sides are covered and reasoned, and the religion is applied well.

It might be useful practice to start a conclusion with: ‘In conclusion …’ so that it is clear it is the conclusion. Some examiners might see this last paragraph as another point. To get full marks, include a clear and obvious conclusion in its own paragraph and which does not simply repeat arguments already made.

SPaG 5/5.

Theme F: Religion, human rights and social justice

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5 Give two ways the poor may be exploited. [2]

Loans from the bank, and loan sharks.

Commentary: These are the same type of way – loans – so only 1 mark would be awarded. Always make sure your points are different enough.

8 Explain two contrasting religious beliefs about why people should help the poor. In your answer you should refer to one or more religious traditions. [4]

Muslims should help the poor because firstly it is part of one of the five pillars – Zakah and they are expected to give Sadaqah and Muhammad said he would eats and drinks whilst his brother goes hungry is not one of us – so you cannot be a Muslim with money ad see other go hungry. Hindus believe that they should act as servants in the world and what better way to build up good karma than to help the poor.

Commentary: Great answer especially the Islam part – maybe even too much – but as both parts are clearly developed it would gain 4 marks.

11 Explain two religious beliefs about prejudice. Refer to scripture or sacred writings in your answer. [5]

The Adi Granth tells Sikhs that using the same mud the creator has created many shapes in many ways so if Sikhs are prejudice it is as if they are judging God’s design in a negative way which would be wrong.

Christianity teaches to treat other as you wish to be treated and so most people would not want others to be prejudice and think
badly of them without really knowing them
so why should that person have prejudice
thought about others? It's wrong to do so.

**Commentary:** Good answer. Excellent that the answer refers specifically to prejudice and not discrimination as the answer is about thoughts and not actions – so technically very correct.

Two good specific teachings used, both applied, explained and developed and so 5 marks.

14 ‘There is no good reason to be poor in the UK today.’ Evaluate this statement.

This would depend on what is meant by the word poor actually. There are those who have a lot less than others but they are not poor as in poor like in developing countries.

Many people are poor because in the UK through their own fault – they messed around at school so no qualifications, they can’t be bothered working, they could have an addiction, or be an immigrant – but all this is about bad choices so none of these are good reasons really and in the UK in all these situation there is the benefits system to keep people out of poverty. The government, charities all help so although they are reasons but not good ones.

However others might say that things like unfair pay, exploitation, and people trafficking are no real fault of the person and so these are more genuine reasons for poverty. They all deserve help though in that religious people should be more interested in helping rather than judging what is a ‘good reason’ and what isn’t. The fact is they are poor and need help. This can be done with food banks, training, having jobs available and yes in some case cutting benefits so people have to work – as it can be too easy to rely on benefits. The Bible tells not to judge others, to love your neighbour, to help others like Jesus did whilst Buddhism teaches Karuna to show compassion, and that to bring lasting happiness to help others as the Dalai Lama teaches.

The issue for religious people then to conclude is that whether it’s a good or not so good reason for being poor the response should be not whether it’s a good reason but rather to help that person out of poverty. You cannot love God and see others in need.

**Commentary:** This is a very good answer – it addresses the question clearly, analyses the statement and uses teachings to show the religious response.

With a question like this it is very easy to get tied up in a very social answer – almost forgetting the religious angle. It would also be easy not to focus on the key word in the statement ‘good’, as obviously there are reasons to be poor, but good reasons are a different issue.

Overall, the answer may be slightly long but excellent religious content is applied, the arguments are logical and the answer flows well.

Level 4, 12 marks.

SPaG 5/5.