



GCE A LEVEL MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2024

**A LEVEL
RELIGIOUS STUDIES - COMPONENT 2
A STUDY OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION
A120U20-1**

About this marking scheme

The purpose of this marking scheme is to provide teachers, learners, and other interested parties, with an understanding of the assessment criteria used to assess this specific assessment.

This marking scheme reflects the criteria by which this assessment was marked in a live series and was finalised following detailed discussion at an examiners' conference. A team of qualified examiners were trained specifically in the application of this marking scheme. The aim of the conference was to ensure that the marking scheme was interpreted and applied in the same way by all examiners. It may not be possible, or appropriate, to capture every variation that a candidate may present in their responses within this marking scheme. However, during the training conference, examiners were guided in using their professional judgement to credit alternative valid responses as instructed by the document, and through reviewing exemplar responses.

Without the benefit of participation in the examiners' conference, teachers, learners and other users, may have different views on certain matters of detail or interpretation. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that this marking scheme is used alongside other guidance, such as published exemplar materials or Guidance for Teaching. This marking scheme is final and will not be changed, unless in the event that a clear error is identified, as it reflects the criteria used to assess candidate responses during the live series.

Marking guidance for examiners, please apply carefully and consistently:

Positive marking

It should be remembered that candidates are writing under examination conditions and credit should be given for what the candidate writes, rather than adopting the approach of penalising him/her for any omissions. It should be possible for a very good response to achieve full marks and a very poor one to achieve zero marks. Marks should not be deducted for a less than perfect answer if it satisfies the criteria of the mark scheme.

Exemplars in the mark scheme are only meant as helpful guides. Therefore, any other acceptable or suitable answers should be credited even though they are not actually stated in the mark scheme.

Two main phrases are deliberately placed throughout each mark scheme to remind examiners of this philosophy. They are:

- “Candidates could include some or all of the following, but other relevant points should be credited.”
- “This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.”

Rules for Marking

1. Differentiation will be achieved on the basis of candidates' response.
2. No mark scheme can ever anticipate or include every possible detail or interpretation; examiners should use their professional judgement to decide whether a candidate's particular response answers the question in relation to the particular assessment objective.
3. Candidates will often express their ideas in language different from that given in any mark scheme or outline. Positive marking therefore, on the part of examiners, will recognise and credit correct statements of ideas, valid points and reasoned arguments irrespective of the language employed.

Banded mark schemes

Banded mark schemes are divided so that each band has a relevant descriptor. The descriptor provides a description of the performance level for that band. Each band contains marks. Examiners should first read and annotate a candidate's answer to pick out the evidence that is being assessed in that question. Once the annotation is complete, the mark scheme can be applied. This is done as a two-stage process.

Banded mark schemes stage 1 – deciding on the band

When deciding on a band, the answer should be viewed holistically. Beginning at the lowest band, examiners should look at the candidate's answer and check whether it matches the descriptor for that band. Examiners should look at the descriptor for that band and see if it matches the qualities shown in the candidate's answer. If the descriptor at the lowest band is satisfied, examiners should move up to the next band and repeat this process for each band until the descriptor matches the answer.

If an answer covers different aspects of different bands within the mark scheme, a 'best fit' approach should be adopted to decide on the band and then the candidate's response should be used to decide on the mark within the band. For instance if a response is mainly in band 2 but with a limited amount of band 3 content, the answer would be placed in band 2, but the mark awarded would be close to the top of band 2 as a result of the band 3 content. Examiners should not seek to mark candidates down as a result of small omissions in minor areas of an answer.

Banded mark schemes stage 2 – deciding on the mark

Once the band has been decided, examiners can then assign a mark. During standardising (at the Examiners' marking conference), detailed advice from the Principal Examiner on the qualities of each mark band will be given. Examiners will then receive examples of answers in each mark band that have been awarded a mark by the Principal Examiner. Examiners should mark the examples and compare their marks with those of the Principal Examiner.

When marking, examiners can use these examples to decide whether a candidate's response is of a superior, inferior or comparable standard to the example. Examiners are reminded of the need to revisit the answer as they apply the mark scheme in order to confirm that the band and the mark allocated is appropriate to the response provided. Indicative content is also provided for banded mark schemes. Indicative content is not exhaustive, and any other valid points must be credited. In order to reach the highest bands of the mark scheme a learner need not cover all of the points mentioned in the indicative content, but must meet the requirements of the highest mark band.

Awarding no marks to a response

Where a response is not creditworthy, that is it contains nothing of any relevance to the question, or where no response has been provided, no marks should be awarded.

A Level Generic Band Descriptors

Band	<p style="text-align: center;">Assessment Objective AO1 – Part (a) questions 20 marks</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching</i> - <i>influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies</i> - <i>cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice</i> - <i>approaches to the study of religion and belief.</i>
5	<p style="text-align: center;">17-20 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thorough, accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. • An extensive and relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set. • The response demonstrates extensive depth and/or breadth. Excellent use of evidence and examples. • Thorough and accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Insightful connections are made between the various approaches studied. • An extensive range of views of scholars/schools of thought used accurately and effectively. • Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
4	<p style="text-align: center;">13-16 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. • A detailed, relevant response which answers the specific demands of the question set. • The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth. Good use of evidence and examples. • Accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Purposeful connections are made between the various approaches studied. • A range of scholarly views/schools of thought used largely accurately and effectively. • Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
3	<p style="text-align: center;">9-12 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mainly accurate and relevant knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. • A satisfactory response, which generally answers the main demands of the question set. • The response demonstrates depth and/or breadth in some areas. Satisfactory use of evidence and examples. • Mainly accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Sensible connections made between the various approaches studied. • A basic range of scholarly views/schools of thought used. • Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
2	<p style="text-align: center;">5-8 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Basic level of accuracy and relevance. • A basic response, addressing some of the demands of the question set. • The response demonstrates limited depth and/or breadth, including limited use of evidence and examples. • Some accurate reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Makes some basic connections between the various approaches studied. • A limited range of scholarly views/schools of thought used. • Some accurate use of some specialist language and vocabulary in context.
1	<p style="text-align: center;">1-4 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very limited knowledge and understanding of religion and belief. Low level of accuracy and relevance. • A very limited response, with little attempt to address the question. • The response demonstrates very limited depth and/or breadth. Very limited use of evidence and examples. • Little or no reference made to sacred texts and sources of wisdom, where appropriate. • Little or no use of scholarly views/schools of thought. • Very few or no connections made between the various approaches studied. • Some grasp of basic specialist language and vocabulary. <p>N.B. A maximum of 2 marks should be awarded for a response that only demonstrates 'knowledge in isolation'</p>
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No relevant information.

Band	Assessment Objective AO2- Part (b) questions 30 marks <i>Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.</i>
5	<p style="text-align: center;">25-30 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confident critical analysis and perceptive evaluation of the issue. • A response that successfully identifies and thoroughly addresses the issues raised by the question set. • Thorough, sustained and clear views are given, supported by extensive, detailed reasoning and/or evidence. • The views of scholars/schools of thought are used extensively, appropriately and in context. • Confident and perceptive analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied. • Thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
4	<p style="text-align: center;">19-24 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purposeful analysis and effective evaluation of the issue. • The main issues raised by the question are identified successfully and addressed. • The views given are clearly supported by detailed reasoning and/or evidence. • Views of scholars/schools of thought are used appropriately and in context. • Purposeful analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied. • Accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
3	<p style="text-align: center;">13-18 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Satisfactory analysis and relevant evaluation of the issue. • Most of the issues raised by the question are identified successfully and have generally been addressed. • Most of the views given are satisfactorily supported by reasoning and/or evidence. • Views of scholars/schools of thought are generally used appropriately and in context. • Sensible analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied. • Mainly accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
2	<p style="text-align: center;">7-12 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some valid analysis and inconsistent evaluation of the issue. • A limited number of issues raised by the question set are identified and partially addressed. • A basic attempt to justify the views given, but they are only partially supported with reason and/or evidence. • Basic use of the views of scholars/schools of thought appropriately and in context. • Makes some analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied. • Some accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
1	<p style="text-align: center;">1-6 marks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A basic analysis and limited evaluation of the issue. • An attempt has been made to identify and address the issues raised by the question set. • Little attempt to justify a view with reasoning or evidence. • Little or no use of the views of scholars/schools of thought. • Limited analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied. • Some use of basic specialist language and vocabulary.
0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No relevant analysis or evaluation.

GCE A LEVEL RELIGIOUS STUDIES – COMPONENT 2

A STUDY OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

SUMMER 2024 MARK SCHEME

To be read in conjunction with the generic level descriptors provided.

Section A

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 (a) Examine what is meant by Augustinian type theodicies. [AO1 20]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Augustinian type theodicy are based on the thought of St Augustine and is developed throughout his writings: it is a complex amalgam of Manichean influences, Neo-Platonism and biblical interpretation.
- The first premise is that of perfection: God created the universe as perfect; God created Adam and Eve as perfect beings and God created the Garden of Eden as perfect.
- Angels and human beings as part of the created order turned away from God their creator.
- Adam and Eve did this through the Fall: the use of their free will in disobeying God and eating the fruit of the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil.
- The choice and act of turning away from God and God's commands is what Augustine perceives to be sin: the ability to make this choice is provided by free will.
- Evil is the result of sin and through sin, evil enters into the natural world and the created order and also into the mind of human beings.
- Evil is not a thing created by God: evil is a lack of perfection, a lack of the good created by God. Evil is therefore a privation, an absence of good i.e., *privatio boni*.
- Adam and Eve are viewed as the progenitors of the whole human race and therefore their sin is inherited by all people; likewise, the natural order continues to lack the perfection with which it was created due to the Fall.
- The sin of Adam and Eve is a *felix culpa* (happy fault) because it leads to the incarnation and Christ being crucified on the cross in order to save human beings from their sin.
- As a result of the cross, through making their free decision to turn away from sin (soul-deciding), human beings can find restoration with God and return to perfection with God in heaven.
- Augustinian type theodicies therefore justify an omnipotent, omniscient and omnibenevolent God and the presence of evil and suffering in the natural world and in humankind, on the basis of the misuse of free will - the human ability to choose what is 'bad' and 'wrong'.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

(b) 'Augustinian type theodicies give a very successful defence of the God of Classical Theism.'

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- In agreement with the statement, it might be argued that Augustinian type theodicies give a very successful defence of the God of Classical Theism because it is able to reconcile God's omnibenevolence with evil and suffering through its focus on free will.
- That it is very successful is evident from the fact that it is accepted by most Christian Churches since it is philosophically coherent and biblically based.
- It is very successful because it separates God entirely from evil because evil is not a 'thing' or part of God's creation – instead evil is only the privation of good for which God is not responsible.
- The God of Classical Theism is above all the God who is the Creator and Augustinian type theodicies are able to reconcile the present imperfect and fallen natural world with God who originally created everything as perfect.
- God's omnibenevolence - which is part of God being the God of Classical Theism – can only be preserved if the existence of free will is accepted since otherwise human beings would be puppets. Augustinian type theodicies preserve free will.
- The God of Classical Theism becomes incarnate in Jesus Christ who dies on the Cross: Augustinian theodicies are very successful in defending this view because it gives a rationale as to why the incarnation took place.
- In disagreement with the statement, it might be argued that Augustinian type theodicies are not at all successful because it relies on an uncritical acceptance of the account of the Fall in Genesis either as factual or as representing what actually took place.
- Augustinian type theodicies are not successful because they are dependent on the belief in Adam and Eve as the ancestors of the whole human race; it is the original sin of Adam and Eve which is thus passed down and which causes continued evil and suffering. This is not genetically or biologically possible.
- Whilst Augustinian type theodicies might be very successful in using the Fall to explain moral evil and suffering as a result of human free will, they are less clear as to how they explain natural evil being present in the created world.
- Augustinian type theodicies are unsuccessful: they cannot reconcile an omnibenevolent God who justly punished Adam and Eve for their sin with the continuing punishment of their descendants who did not commit that original sin.
- The God of Classical Theism is not confined to Christianity and therefore is not successfully defended by Augustinian type theodicies because they rely on the Christian belief in the incarnation and the redemption brought about by the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross.
- An alternative approach might suggest that Augustinian type theodicies are partially successful but that other approaches are more successful.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.

0 2 (a) Explain the differences between atheism and agnosticism. [AO1 20]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Candidates may demonstrate knowledge and understanding through exemplification of a variety of sources of wisdom/scholarly views and schools of thought.
- Atheism may be defined as rejection of belief in deities or more explicitly as a belief system which rejects:
 1. creator God(s)
 2. God(s) involved in human existence
 3. God(s) 'out there' in a supernatural dimension
 4. rewarding and punishing God(s)
 5. God(s) in whose presence 'heaven' is experienced post mortem
 6. God(s) within a person or the created world.
- Atheism may be linked to Diagoras of Melos and Socrates in Greek philosophical thought.
- Reference may be made to the Age of Enlightenment and the questioning of the God of Classical Theism, and the French Revolution which embraced secularism.
- Flew defines positive atheism as the belief of 'someone who positively asserts the non-existence of God'.
- Flew defines negative atheism as the belief of 'someone who is simply not a theist'.
- Protest Atheism might be explained as rejection of belief in God even if God did exist on the grounds of the suffering of innocents.
- New Atheism might be referred to as antitheism - the belief that religion is a threat to human survival ('a virus' Dawkins).
- Atheism/New Atheism can be explained as the approach taken by Dawkins, Dennett, Hitchens and Harris rejecting theism on the grounds of it being an anti-rational, non-thinking, harmful and unscientific.
- Agnosticism can be distinguished from atheism in a variety of ways e.g., Flew's view based on Huxley that someone has a concept of God and 'claims not to know that either there is or is not such a being'.
- Weak agnosticism may be defined as withholding judgement about the existence of God until evidence becomes available.
- Strong agnosticism may be defined as withholding judgment about the existence of God because it is impossible to know one way or the other.
- Agnosticism may be linked to the understanding that knowledge of the existence of God or non-existence of God is not adequately supported by evidence and therefore judgment on the issue remains suspended.
- Agnosticism may be understood as the approach taken by Huxley as to suspending judgment due to lack of evidence in the face of what others 'dogmatise with the utmost confidence'.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

- (b) **‘Atheistic arguments against religious belief have been successful.’**
Evaluate this view. [AO2 30]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- In agreement with the statement, it could be argued that atheistic arguments against religious belief have been successful because younger people can access the arguments through social media etc.
- The rise of secular belief systems such as humanism is a clear indication of the success of atheistic arguments against religious belief.
- Examples of cruelty, abuse, violence, prejudice and discrimination are increasingly being found amongst those with religious belief which strengthens and supports atheistic arguments.
- Atheistic arguments are successful because in a multi-faith and pluralist society people recognise the contradictions between religions.
- They are successful because it is accepted now that people’s religious belief depends entirely on that of their parents and their upbringing rather than rational decision-making.
- Religious belief has been unsuccessful in standing up to atheistic arguments about science: as Dawkins argues the scientifically proven concept of evolution and survival of the fittest is incompatible with any belief in an omnibenevolent creator God.
- On the contrary, it might be argued that atheistic arguments have had to rely on caricatures and extreme examples – such as wars of religion – which are not representative of religious belief in general.
- Atheistic arguments tend to ignore positive teachings of religious belief - such as human dignity and loving kindness - in favour of examples of violence and abuse which are rejected by those with religious belief.
- That atheistic arguments have not been successful is evident from the fact that religion - in global terms - is still on the increase and that public discussion has led to some becoming more religious.
- Atheistic arguments have not been successful because they have been based on a reductionist and simplistic approach and have not allowed for the many nuances and shades of opinion within religious belief.
- The arguments have not been successful because they have presented a false monolithic and overly positive view of science as a single world view which has no limitations: scientism requires belief in the same way that religion does.
- Many of the arguments are based on a false polarisation between science and religion when in reality the two are not mutually exclusive as shown. by the Jesuit priest Abbe Lemaître who first formulated the Big Bang Theory and by the complementary view which sees God acting through natural selection and evolution of the species.
- Relevant arguments from Freud and Jung could be used to support the arguments given.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.

0 3 (a) Examine the views of Hume and Swinburne on the possibility of miracles. [AO1 20]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Hume defined a miracle as 'a transgression of a law of nature by a particular volition of the Deity or by the interposition of some invisible agent'. Hume concluded that the balance of probability was against the occurrence of miracles. He said that empirical evidence against miracles happening is far greater than the evidence in favour of them happening. As a 'wise man proportions his belief to the evidence' it should be more probable to believe that miracles do not happen.
- The laws of nature 'holding' have the weight of evidence behind them. Past experience has established them. The evidence in favour of miracles includes, for example, testimony that they did happen. Hume said that the weight of the quality of the testimony does not outweigh the evidence in favour of laws of nature 'holding'.
- The testimony for miracles is not of a great enough number nor does the testimony come from the sort of people that Hume would consider to be reliable. Witnesses he suggests will lie in order to 'promote a holy cause', they are 'ignorant' and experience from history suggests that all claims to miracles are from such people.
- Hume also said that the fact that all religions claim miracles brings with it a further problem; one faith tradition can contradict the miracle of another faith tradition meaning that all purported miracles are not miracles at all.
- Swinburne on the other hand defends the possibility of miracles and investigates whether there could be strong historical evidence for miracles, and he concludes that there could be. This investigation is split into two parts. The first is whether there is evidence that a non-repeatable counter-instance to the law of nature has occurred and second, if there is that evidence, whether it can be ascribed to a god. He responds with the affirmative in both cases.
- In essence he is in agreement with Hume's definition of miracle but chooses to use the phrase 'a non-repeatable counter-instance to a law of nature'. He adds that miracles also need to involve a significance that shows an aspect of divine plan.
- He rejects the idea that we should modify a law of nature to accommodate new findings that seem to be odd counter-instances to the laws of nature. Consider an event (E) and a law of nature (L). If we can reasonably believe that E has occurred contrary to what we know about L and we also can reasonably believe that E would not happen again in the same circumstances, then we have good reason to believe that E has been a non-repeatable counter-instance to the law of nature and is a miracle.
- Swinburne mentions an example of where there are two hundred witnesses who have no reason to want E as an event of non-repeatable counter-instance to occur. He suggests their testimony would be sufficient, but states that Hume would not agree stating Hume is 'bigoted, refusing to face facts'. He also wonders what Hume's response would be if Hume himself saw such an event.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

- (b) **‘Swinburne’s responses to Hume’s views on miracles are not valid.’**
Evaluate this view. [AO2 30]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- It may be pointed out that Hume’s views on miracles are still debated - some see an initial argument about logical impossibility and has some ‘a priori’ reasoning; others see it as empirical argument overall and suggesting improbability. Some see two arguments, modern understanding veers towards a single argument built up over two sections. Swinburne’s response attempts to iron out the difficulties of Hume’s initial definition and argument, but also questions Hume’s assumptions about the evidence for miracles.
- Swinburne’s reference to ‘an occurrence of a non-repeatable counter-instance to a law of nature’ validates the idea that the counter-instance is temporary and is not an event which is expected again from what we know about the laws of nature. The same applies to his suggestion that a miracle needs to have some religious significance in order to be deemed to be a miracle. This explains Biblical accounts of ‘signs’.
- Others would argue that Swinburne’s terminology makes matters no clearer in terms of deciding whether a miracle has taken place because ‘an event endowed with religious significance’ opens the floodgates for very many things to be classed as miraculous and contradicts the notion of a non-repeatable counter-instance to a law of nature’.
- One line of reasoning in favour of Hume’s standpoint is that it is reasonable to claim that the weight of evidence lies with the laws of nature ‘holding’. It would therefore seem likely that the weight of probability of a law being violated would have to be of such magnitude as to outweigh the evidence we have for the law of nature. The reliability of the sufficient amount of testimony for that is not strong.
- Swinburne argues what is ‘a sufficient number?’ Indeed, Hume cites examples of miracles in France which were witnessed by highly regarded people. His *a priori* rejection of miracles then shines through when he rejects the occurrence of miracles regardless of any testimony. As an empiricist it seems that Hume’s methodology is flawed, and Swinburne is right to question it.
- Hume does not credit any believers with any integrity when it comes to testimony; it may seem more in line with general human nature to agree with Swinburne’s Principle of Testimony, that people generally tell the truth.
- However, Hume may be right when he says that miracles within different religious traditions only serve to render them all as impossible and as subjective experiences only.
- Equally it could be argued with Swinburne that miracles are generally not of this conflicting nature. What miracles tend to transmit is the reality of God’s power and the omnibenevolent nature of God in relation to human beings.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.

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- (a) Explain how religious language is meaningful to people who participate in the same language game (Ludwig Wittgenstein). [AO1 20]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- The general context for language games is that it rejects a realist approach and the correspondence theory of truth – that something is true when it corresponds with an objective reality.
- Instead, it belongs within an anti-realist approach and conforms to the coherence theory of truth – that something is true when it coheres with the views of those within the community.
- The approach of language games is generally speaking non-cognitive: it does not express objectively knowable factual propositions which can be classified as true or false.
- Later Wittgenstein argued that problems in philosophy arise when 'language goes on holiday' i.e., language needs to be the focus for philosophers, but this should not be a focus on definition, clarification and analysis of language in itself: meaning is not in some object which is named.
- Wittgenstein's focus was on how and why language was uttered and spoken by people: it is the context that requires investigation because 'for a large number of cases...the meaning of word is its use in language': attention therefore needs to be paid to the 'form of life' (lebensform) from which language emerges.
- If language emerges from a 'form of life' then it is hard to define, clarify and analyse without reference to the 'form of life' itself: here there is a lack of clarity because 'forms of life' overlap and merge.
- Wittgenstein's example of 'Water!' which could be a spoiled boy's command, a teetotaler's request for a drink, the cry of those in the desert when they find an oasis etc.
- Each 'form of life' has its language game which cannot be fully understood by those outside of the 'form of life' who do not share the language game: language is only fully meaningful to those within the 'form of life'.
- Language games overlap because they have 'family resemblance' (Familienähnlichkeit) e.g. 'board games, card-games, ball-games' etc. have something not common to all but similarities, relationships, and thus family resemblance.
- All of this can be applied to religious language: it is fully meaningful to those who share the religious 'form of life' although others are not entirely excluded from the language game due to 'family resemblance' of words.
- Religious language communicates religious beliefs and concepts between people who share the same religious language game: words spoken are not true or false, they simply cohere with the views of the religious community which speaks religious language is therefore meaningful to people who participate in the same language game.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

- (b) **‘Language games provide the best way of resolving the problems of religious language.’**

Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- In agreement with the statement, it might be argued that they provide the best way of resolving the problems because they avoid the problem of tying language to being true or false as suggested by Logical Positivism.
- They provide the best way because they give a clear understanding of how on the one hand religious language is fully understood by those sharing the same ‘form of life’ but also understood – if only partially – by others because of the ‘family resemblance’ of language.
- The problems are resolved by language games because they fit in with the coherence theory of truth – that the truth of religion coheres with the views of those within the religious community.
- They provide the best way because they are able to contradict the view that religious language is meaningless or nonsense by pointing to a lack of understanding of the ‘form of life’ and the language game being played.
- One of the problems of religious language is concerned with the change in interpretation and meaning of terms: Wittgenstein’s focus on ‘ordinary language’ - which changes in the context of time and place – is the best way of resolving this issue.
- In disagreement with the statement, it might be argued that language games do not provide the best way of resolving the problems of religious language because they do not allow for religious beliefs to be verifiable which is what religious believers accept and expect of others.
- They are not the best way of resolving the problems of religious language because they do not belong to the realist and correspondence theory of truth approach which is essential for many religious believers.
- The lack of clarity of language games means that they are not the best way: complete meaningfulness is impossible since those sharing the same ‘form of life’ and language game may have very different understandings of concepts such as ‘the omnipotent creator’ or ‘the immortal soul’.
- They are not the best way because they are exclusivist i.e., meaning is reserved only for those who share or join the ‘form of life’ or who have the time and effort to learn the complete language game being used.
- The approach taken by language games makes everything in religious language entirely relative and contextual: thus, sacred texts which might be revered by those sharing the same ‘form of life’ have no real lasting authority or claims to be the truth or the ultimate divine revelation.
- An alternative approach might focus on the word ‘best’ or suggest different ‘best ways’ of resolving the problems such as myth, symbol, analogy etc.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.

0 5 (a) Examine Rudolf Otto's understanding of mystical experience. [AO1 20]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- Rudolf Otto's explanation is found in his 'The Idea of the Holy' (1923). He writes about the numinous: 'there is no religion in which it does not live as the innermost core and without it no religion would be worthy of the name'.
- Otto wanted a non-rational approach to religion and an alternative to the word 'holy' because 'holy' contained the idea of 'morally good': therefore, he coined the term numinous from the Latin 'numen' – which has been defined as 'divine presence'.
- Otto argued that only those who had 'a deeply felt religious experience' were able to understand what he meant by the numinous because such people understood themselves as a creature, overwhelmed 'by its own nothingness in contrast to that which is supreme above all creatures.'
- The numinous was felt as objective and outside of the self: in the face of it the person is aware of the *mysterium tremendum*: 'that which is beyond conception or understanding, extraordinary and unfamiliar.'
- The *mysterium tremendum* is:
 1. full of awe;
 2. overpowering and majestic;
 3. full of energy and urgency;
 4. the wholly other because 'a God comprehended is no God'; its 'kind and character are incommensurable with our own, and before which we therefore recoil in wonder';
 5. fascinating and daunting which attracts 'the ultimate and highest part of our nature, which can find no satisfaction in the mere allaying of the needs of our sensuous, psychical, or intellectual impulses and cravings. The mystics called it the ground of the soul'.
- In the face of 'the wholly other' the person recognises their own sinfulness and lack of worth but then moves on to seek forgiveness and atonement.
- For Otto, no religion has developed this concept of the numinous in 'so profound, or so powerful expression as Christianity. And in this, too, it shows its superiority over others. It is a more perfect religion and more perfectly religion than they....'
- The numinous expresses itself in:
 1. direct means 'speaking to the spirit in the heart of the believer which has an inborn capacity to respond;
 2. indirect means arousing a sense of the *mysterium tremendum* in those who pray and worship in a whole variety of religions;
 3. art, architecture and music such as Stonehenge, Gothic cathedrals and religious buildings, Bach's Mass in B Minor;
 4. the writings of the Old and New Testament and Martin Luther
- According to Otto, the history of religion shows that everyone is capable of divination - having knowledge of the numinous - but only figures such as prophets actually have it and it finds its fullest form in Jesus of Nazareth.

This is not a checklist, please remember to credit any valid alternatives.

- (b) **‘Otto’s definition of ‘numinous’ is inadequate.’**
Evaluate this view.

[AO2 30]

Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.

- In agreement with the statement, it might be argued that in fact Otto does not provide a clear definition of the numinous as he states that only someone who has had a religious experience can understand the concept.
- Otto’s lack of objectivity makes his definition inadequate because he approaches religious experience from the background of being a religious believer – a Lutheran – who believes that Christianity is the best form of religion.
- His definition is inadequate because it is too vague and general: he talks about the numinous as being this ‘unnamed Something’ which is ‘wholly other’ and which is the source of ‘mysterium tremendum et fascinans’: this could equally be applied to seeing a beautiful sunset or witnessing the birth of a baby as to religious experience.
- Despite his attempts to analyse various responses, Otto simply appears to be restating the point that religious experience of the numinous is nothing more than a feeling, sentiment or emotion.
- Otto’s a priori assumption is that everyone is capable of having a religious experience and thus able to encounter the numinous: there is no empirical evidence to support this point of view.
- In describing religious experience, Otto’s definition of the numinous is inadequate because the ‘mysterium tremendum et fascinans’ is an impersonal concept rather than a being with whom a person can relate.
- In disagreement with the statement, it might be argued that Otto’s definition is adequate because he recognises that religion cannot be confined to ‘rational attributions’ but must have something ‘wholly other’.
- Otto’s definition is adequate because he builds it on a great deal of evidence from the history of religions in general and on biblical texts; in addition, he uses evidence from William James.
- The adequacy of his definition is evident from the fact that over time and place people have experienced and responded to the numinous through art, architecture and music suggesting that a sense of the numinous is an a priori found in all people.
- In a more coherent way than William James, Otto gives a clear pathway to understanding religious experience through examples and terms which are accessible such as the tremendous and fascinating mystery.
- Otto’s definition is adequate in describing religious experience because he is able to maintain the idea that God is both knowable and attracting (fascinans) but is also transcendent (wholly other/mysterium).
- The definition of the numinous is adequate in explaining some theistic religious experiences – particularly those of figures in the Old Testament such as the prophet Job – but it is inadequate in explaining religious experiences of others - for example, Buddhists who meditate and focus on calmness and peace rather than fascination.

Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised.