

**Advanced GCE  
GCE RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

Unit G581: A2 Philosophy of Religion

**Specimen Paper**

Additional Materials: Answer Booklet (...pages)

**G581 QP**

Morning/Afternoon

Time: 1 hour 30  
minutes



**INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

- Answer **two** questions.

**INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES**

- The number of marks for each question is given in brackets [ ] at the end of each question or part of question.
- The total number of marks for this paper is **70**.

**ADVICE TO CANDIDATES**

- Read each question carefully and make sure you know what you have to do before starting your answer.

This document consists of **2** printed pages.

Answer **two** questions.

- 1 Evaluate the claim that corporate religious experience is no more than an illusion. [35]
- 2 Critically assess Dawkins claim that since life is no more that DNA reproducing itself there can be no life after death. [35]
- 3 'If God knows what we are going to do he has no right to reward the good and punish the wicked.' Discuss. [35]
- 4 Critically compare the use of symbol with the use of analogy to express human understanding of God. [35]

**Paper Total [70]**

SPECIMEN

The maximum mark for this paper is 70.

SPECIMEN

Band	Mark / 21	AO1	Mark / 14	AO2
0	0	absent / no relevant material	0	absent / no argument
1	1-5	almost completely ignores the question <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• little relevant material</li> <li>• some concepts inaccurate</li> <li>• shows little knowledge of technical terms</li> </ul> Communication: often unclear or disorganised	1-3	very little argument or justification of viewpoint <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• little or no successful analysis</li> </ul> Communication: often unclear or disorganised
2	6-9	focuses on the general topic rather than directly on the question <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• knowledge limited and partially accurate</li> <li>• limited understanding</li> <li>• selection often inappropriate</li> <li>• limited use of technical terms</li> </ul> Communication: some clarity and organisation	4-6	an attempt to sustain an argument and justify a viewpoint <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some analysis, but not successful</li> <li>• views asserted but not successfully justified</li> </ul> Communication: some clarity and organisation
3	10-13	satisfactory attempt to address the question <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some accurate knowledge</li> <li>• appropriate understanding</li> <li>• some successful selection of material</li> <li>• some accurate use of technical terms</li> </ul> Communication: some clarity and organisation	7-8	the argument is sustained and justified <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some successful analysis which may be implicit</li> </ul> Communication: some clarity and organisation
4	14-17	a good attempt to address the question <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• accurate knowledge</li> <li>• good understanding</li> <li>• good selection of material</li> <li>• technical terms mostly accurate</li> </ul> Communication: generally clear and organised	9-11	a good attempt at using evidence to sustain an argument <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some successful and clear analysis</li> <li>• might put more than one point of view</li> </ul> Communication: generally clear and organised
5	18-21	an excellent attempt to address the question showing understanding and engagement with the material <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• very high level of ability to select and deploy relevant information</li> <li>• accurate use of technical terms</li> </ul> Communication: answer is well constructed and organised	12-14	an excellent attempt which uses a range of evidence to sustain an argument <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• comprehends the demands of the question</li> <li>• shows understanding and critical analysis of different viewpoints</li> </ul> Communication: answer is well constructed and organised

Question Number	Answer	Max Mark
1	<p><b>Evaluate the claim that corporate religious experience is no more than an illusion.</b></p> <p><b>AO1</b> Candidates may begin by explaining what is meant by religious experience, probably using William James, in general, before focusing in on corporate religious experience specifically.</p> <p>Candidates must focus on corporate religious experience if they are to achieve higher levels.</p> <p>Candidates may want to define the limits of the corporate experience they wish to discuss; are they for example looking at liturgical experiences, conversions happening to groups or experiences such as Lourdes?</p> <p>Candidates may then go on to explain different views on the extent to which any religious experience could be an illusion. They may explain these views from a philosophical or psychological perspective.</p> <p><b>AO2</b> Candidates may analyse the number of issues raised by this question from a variety of angles. They may for example evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of reported conversion experiences and explore the types of things believers would allow to count as evidence of such experiences.</p> <p>They may compare the evidence of reported conversion experiences with empirical evidence a scientist may demand and then address the question of the extent to which any religious experience is illusory.</p> <p>Good responses need to be able to demonstrate their relevance to a philosophical answer to the question.</p>	[35]
2	<p><b>Critically assess Dawkins claim that since life is no more than DNA reproducing itself there can be no life after death.</b></p> <p><b>AO1</b> Candidates may begin this question by considering the main point itself, whether or not Life really is no more than DNA reproducing itself.</p> <p>While some scientific definitions may be useful here, it is important that the main focus of the question is philosophical, candidates are unlikely to achieve well without this philosophical focus.</p> <p>Some candidates are likely to use the work of Richard Dawkins and may compare it to the views of scientists such as Michael Behe.</p> <p>For good responses, It is also important that candidates consider the extent to which ideas about 'life after death' can be held philosophically.</p>	

Question Number	Answer	Max Mark
2 cont'd	<p><b>AO2</b> Having outlined the various components of this discussion candidates should be able to analyse in a critical manner the positions held by the various scholars they have studied.</p> <p>For example how far is Dawkins position on DNA reproducing itself philosophically defensible? Do the positions held by intelligent design scholars challenge those held by Dawkins and his supporters?</p> <p>Having analysed the validity of different academic positions, candidates may come to some conclusion as to whether or not we can hold views which justify belief in a life after death.</p>	[35]
3	<p><b>'If God knows what we are going to do he has no right to reward the good and punish the wicked.'</b> Discuss.</p> <p><b>AO1</b> Candidates may begin this answer by outlining the parts of the problem of evil relevant to this question; namely the effect of God's omniscience on his responsibility.</p> <p>Candidates are likely to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the views of Boethius on eternity and God's foreknowledge.</p> <p>They may then explain how Boethius attempts to answer this question while arguing that God justly rewards and punishes.</p> <p>Good responses may focus their attention on the meaning of eternity and how different understandings of this concept would lead to different solutions to the problem in the question</p> <p><b>AO2</b> Depending on the candidates approach to the AO1 material a number of different critiques of this issue may be given.</p> <p>For example candidates could answer that Boethius never justifies his view of eternity and therefore fails to show that God judges justly.</p> <p>Alternatively, if they accept the Boethian view of the universe, they may argue that he has a strong argument for God knowing what we are doing but still being able to reward and punish with justice.</p>	[35]

Question Number	Answer	Max Mark
4	<p><b>Critically compare the use of symbol with the use of analogy to express human understanding of God.</b></p> <p><b>AO1</b> Candidates may begin by defining what is meant by describing religious language as symbolic.</p> <p>Many candidates will show knowledge and understanding of the work of existentialist Paul Tillich, explaining the distinction between signs and symbols and explaining how a sign becomes a symbol when it becomes associated with the thing it represents, participating in its meaning and power.</p> <p>Candidates are likely to explain analogy as used by Thomas Aquinas, describing his use of the analogy of attribution and the analogy of proportion.</p> <p>In order to achieve well, it is important that candidates focus their discussion on how these different kinds of religious language are useful in expressing the human understanding of God.</p> <p><b>AO2</b> Candidates may use any relevant criteria to assess the extent to which either of these forms of religious language is a useful route to expressing the nature of God.</p> <p>The may for example argue that Thomas Aquinas, through analogy, gives us a concrete way to express a cognitive understanding of God's nature.</p> <p>Alternatively they may argue that any words are inadequate when attempting to talk about God and that symbols are the only way we can begin to express the nature of God.</p>	[35]
<b>Paper Total</b>		<b>[70]</b>

**Assessment Objectives Grid (includes QWC)**

<b>Question</b>	<b>AO1</b>	<b>AO2</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1</b>	21	14	<b>35</b>
<b>2</b>	21	14	<b>35</b>
<b>3</b>	21	14	<b>35</b>
<b>4</b>	21	14	<b>35</b>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>70</b>

SPECIMEN