# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 1, Exemplar 1: AO1 Level 3 - 9 marks AO2 Level 3 - 9 marks</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commentary</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 1, Exemplar 2: AO1 Level 5 - 14 marks AO2 Level 5 - 14 marks</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commentary</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

These exemplar answers have been chosen from the summer 2017 examination series.

OCR is open to a wide variety of approaches and all answers are considered on their merits. These exemplars, therefore, should not be seen as the only way to answer questions but do illustrate how the mark scheme has been applied.

Please always refer to the specification (http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/as-a-level-gce-religious-studies-h173-h573-from-2016/) for full details of the assessment for this qualification. These exemplar answers should also be read in conjunction with the sample assessment materials and the June 2017 Examiners’ Report to Centres available on the OCR website http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/.

The question paper, mark scheme and any resource booklet(s) will be available on the OCR website from summer 2018. Until then, they are available on OCR Interchange (school exams officers will have a login for this).

It is important to note that approaches to question setting and marking will remain consistent. At the same time OCR reviews all its qualifications annually and may make small adjustments to improve the performance of its assessments. We will let you know of any substantive changes.
Question 1

‘The Buddha’s enlightenment was the most significant part of his life.’ Discuss.

AO1 Level 3 - 9 marks  AO2 Level 3 - 9 marks

Some philosophers agree that the Buddha's enlightenment was the most significant part of his life, however some philosophers disagree with this.

Enlightenment, otherwise known as Nirvana, is a concept that is extremely impossible to explain accurately. You have to experience Nirvana to understand it. Some of the closest explanations we get are that it is like being 'unbound', as if you were a flame on a candle but now you’ve been Nirvanaed as you become free from the candle and are now an unbound flame. Another less metaphorical explanation is that you have extinguish the 3 Fires, greed, hatred and suffering removed from your life then you can be enlightened. Altogether Nirvana is the escape from suffering (and also Samsara, the cycle of being reborn).

This is important because the Buddha’s enlightenment let him fully understand how the world and everything worked. Without his enlightenment he could never have taught others how to become enlightened like him, and therefore restart Buddhism, which was
after all his purpose — it was entering his enlightenment which made him truly a Buddha.

However, focusing just on his enlightenment within his whole life shouldn’t be most significant, especially since we cannot relate to even understood enlightenment. Some say the Buddha’s life leading up to his enlightenment is significant. Born and raised in an extremely wealthy family, he gave all of that up to become a wandering monk, feeling living a "perfect" life locked away in his palace wasn’t good. After wandering around and spending most of his time meditating for 7 years, the Buddha returned because he also felt being poor was not a good life either. So after living in two extreme versions of life, which both contrast each other, he decided to live in the middle way. Not being rich enough to own everything but also not being that poor to own nothing, he felt this middle ground was how to live a good life, which is completely relatable which is significant because if we are living the life the Buddha intended that means our next steps could be ones towards enlightenment.
Examiner commentary

Paragraph 1: (Which starts ‘Some Philosophers agree that…’) A short introduction that just restates the question. A simple way to start which shows that the candidate has read the question and does not waste time giving context or saying things that would be said again later.

Paragraph 2: (Which starts ‘Enlightenment otherwise known as…’) This is a good explanation of Nirvana and shows that the candidate understands the concept. There is good use of key terms and examples which demonstrate this understanding. However, this is not explicitly linked to the question and therefore looks like that candidate is not addressing the question.

Paragraph 3: (Which starts ‘This is important because…’) The candidate now links their paragraph on Nirvana to the life of the Buddha. The candidate shows, if somewhat briefly, why the Buddha’s enlightenment is the most important aspect of his life. This shows an understanding of the question but the lack of supporting explanation does have a negative effect on the overall mark.

Paragraph 4: (Which starts ‘However, focusing just on…’) The candidate presents a good argument here, showing (with examples) how the events leading up to the Buddha’s enlightenment are just as important as the enlightenment itself. This shows a good understanding of the nature of the question.

A large number of candidates just gave a description of the Buddha’s life and added onto the end of each event if it was important.

Paragraph 5: (Which starts ‘However, to gain enlightenment…’) The candidate follows the previous paragraph up well by suggesting that it is the legacy of the Buddha’s teaching that are the most important aspect of his life. The candidate then links this to the development of Buddhism as a religion and suggests that if the Buddhas had not taught we would not have Buddhism, therefore addressing the question.

There is no conclusion to bring this essay to a satisfactory end which means that the candidate has lost the opportunity to link all of his ideas together into a holistic argument. This response was at the top of Level 3 for both AO1 and AO2 because there were large areas where the candidate had described events in the Buddha’s life rather than explaining them in relation to the question. Also paragraph 3 needed to be better explained, analysed and evaluated - and it is this evaluation and analysis which is lacking throughout. There is a presentation of the different views but the candidate has not fully developed this argument so that one view is used to evaluate and analyse another. On a more simplistic level the candidate could have given a strength and a weakness of each view and this would have moved their response into the next level.
Question 1

‘The Buddha’s enlightenment was the most significant part of his life.’ Discuss.

AO1 Level 5 - 14 marks  AO2 Level 5 - 14 marks

For some Buddhists the enlightenment was the most significant part of his life, however other Buddhists may argue that it isn’t important and that another event may be more important.

The Buddha’s enlightenment happened under a Bodhi tree after several days meditating. For Gotama this enlightenment enabled him to determine the root of all suffering as craving. This event was significant because it gave him the tools he needed to go on and teach Buddhism to the world. This enlightenment also meant that the Buddha was able to understand the idea of craving and the Three Fives (Greed, Hatred, and Ignorance) which these things helped the Buddha throughout his entire life, teaching Buddhism. The enlightenment was an event in which Siddartha Gautama gained knowledge and an understanding about key Buddhist concepts which equipped him to go forward and to fulfil his duty as Buddha. Concepts such as Karma so he could teach that a person’s volitional thoughts and actions have consequences and affect how you travel through life. It is claimed in the Tibetan Wheel of Life. This could be considered the most important event in the Buddha’s life because it allowed him to get the tools he needed to teach the people a
the world Buddhism. Without understanding men
have
risen to himself he would not have been in a suitable
position to teach Buddhism, as the God
Brahma asked him to do.

However, the Buddha's enlightenment may not be
the most important because it took many years
and events to build up to a point where he
could become enlightened, so it must be compared
a chain of events rather than a completely
separate thing. The Buddha lived a life
of luxury in which he was not ever exposed to any
suffering. He had everything he could ever want or
need in order to be, noise, to what suffering was.
This is significant in the Buddha's life because
because it allowed him to see one way
of life, one that not many people had but
later on this was useful because it enabled
him to find a balance between lifestyles.
The also the Buddha saw the four sights on
a trip out of his palace: these things started
the idea in his head about suffering and
that there needed to be a way to stop it. He
saw a sick person, an elderly person, a dead
body and a holy person. It could be argued
that without being exposed to these things
he may not have lead a life which entailed
Buddhist ways or become enlightened. Finally

Before his enlightenment, the Buddha left
his palace and spent 6 years living as an
ascetic in which he was taught how to
meditate as well as another way of life in which
you have no belongings. This is significant in
the enlightenment because it taught me.
Exemplar Candidate Work

AS Level Religious Studies

Buddha the skills he needed in order to become enlightened as he meditated to reach this point. This was also significant to Gātamp, because it meant that he could find a middle way that worked to become enlightened, thus helped him to fulfill his duty. This can show how the enlightenment isn’t a single event because there was many things that happened in order to achieve this state of mind. For some Mahayana Buddhists, the enlightenment isn’t significant at all as they believe he was already enlightened.

The first sermon may be more important than the enlightenment itself in the Buddha’s life. The first sermon is when the Buddha fulfilled his duty within Buddhism. A Buddha is sent to Earth when the people have forgotten Buddhism, so teaching and sharing his knowledge is crucially significant to the Buddha in fulfilling his purpose. In his first sermon, the Buddha taught the Four Noble Truths and his realization that craving is the root of suffering immediately so his former ascetics became enlightened. Showing the Buddha’s natural gift of being a teacher were being put to good use within teaching Buddhism on Earth. This first sermon set the Dharma wheel into action, which meant the Buddha was successful in his teaching and also shows that his sermons were crucial within Buddhism and thus extremely significant in his life.
Examiner commentary

This response achieved a Level 5 but not full marks. The response clearly addresses the question and demonstrates a high level of knowledge and understanding; and some good analysis and evaluation of the views are presented. If this is compared to exemplar 1 the difference can clearly be seen. In exemplar 1 the candidate has a similar structure and gives a similar response in that they show the enlightenment is an important event in the Buddha’s life and why other events might be more important. However, exemplar 2 has included more explanation and used this explanation to both justify why an event is important and show why other events are less important. This demonstrates a higher level of critical analysis.

Critical analysis is more than just the analysis of views, it is the explanation of why a criticism is made, or a justification for the strength of a particular view. In this case the candidate has made good use of critical analysis to justify the strengths of particular views. It is this level of understanding and analysis that makes it a better response compared to exemplar 1. The links to the Mahayana beliefs help demonstrate this higher level of knowledge and analysis as well.

However, the response does not get full marks because the candidate has not quite shown enough knowledge of technical terms. Therefore the response (although excellent) does have a descriptive or narrative quality to some areas. Exemplification of ideas would have addressed this. In both the AO1 and AO2 level descriptors there is a requirement to show the views of scholars or to show source of wisdom or authority. Whilst this is easy to do with Buddhism (just quote the Buddha), the candidate has not shown enough of this to get full marks. This is where the use of technical terms is important; they demonstrate that a candidate is using concepts from sources of wisdom and authority.

To get full marks, therefore, this candidate will have needed to include more technical terms, quotes from the Buddha and references to the thinking of scholars such as Rupert Gethin. The candidate could also have exemplified their response just to fully demonstrate the true level of their understanding.

In conclusion whilst the Buddha's enlightenment was significant in his life, it could only have been possible with the events occurring before it. Every Buddha’s job is to teach Buddhism when the world has forgotten it. Therefore that made his teachings more significant because it was fulfilling his duty.
We'd like to know your view on the resources we produce. By clicking on the 'Like' or 'Dislike' button you can help us to ensure that our resources work for you. When the email template pops up please add additional comments if you wish and then just click 'Send'. Thank you.

Whether you already offer OCR qualifications, are new to OCR, or are considering switching from your current provider/awarding organisation, you can request more information by completing the Expression of Interest form which can be found here:  
www.ocr.org.uk/expression-of-interest

OCR Resources: the small print
OCR’s resources are provided to support the delivery of OCR qualifications, but in no way constitute an endorsed teaching method that is required by OCR. Whilst every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the content, OCR cannot be held responsible for any errors or omissions within these resources. We update our resources on a regular basis, so please check the OCR website to ensure you have the most up to date version.

This resource may be freely copied and distributed, as long as the OCR logo and this small print remain intact and OCR is acknowledged as the originator of this work.

OCR acknowledges the use of the following content:
Square down and Square up: alexwhite/Shutterstock.com

Please get in touch if you want to discuss the accessibility of resources we offer to support delivery of our qualifications: resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk

Looking for a resource?
There is now a quick and easy search tool to help find free resources for your qualification:
www.ocr.org.uk/i-want-to/find-resources/