



Revision Summaries for AS / A Level Year 1 AQA

Component 1A: Philosophy of Religion

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Contents

Thank You for Choosing ZigZag Education.....	ii
Teacher Feedback Opportunity.....	iii
Terms and Conditions of Use	iv
Teacher’s Introduction.....	1
Arguments for the existence of God	2
Exam-style Questions	9
The Problem of Evil and Suffering.....	13
Exam-style Questions	18
Religious Experience	22
Exam-style Question.....	26
Verifying Religious Experiences	30
Exam-style Question.....	33
True/false quiz.....	37
Answers to True/False Quiz	38
Bibliography.....	38

Teacher's Introduction

These revision summaries are designed to provide students with a detailed overview of everything they need to know for their AS / A Level Year 1 exam. It follows the AQA Religious Studies specification for Section A of Component 1, which focuses on Philosophy of Religion only. This resource covers the first four topics of the specification, which are usually taught in the first year of the A Level programme. The remaining three topics are covered in the Year 2 resource.

Remember!

Always check the exam board website for new information, including changes to the specification and sample assessment material.

This resource is designed to help students of all abilities. It provides a clear and concise account of what to revise. The best way to use these overviews is by providing students with a copy of a particular topic once it has been taught in class. It is also possible to give the entire pack to the students before they start their final revision for the exams.

Each topic follows a set structure detailed below:

- **Glossary:** A clear list of important terminology students need to know when studying the topic.
- **Overview:** A look at the major themes of the topic, with a brief introduction to the major points of discussion and disagreement.
- **Key Points:** The main body of the summaries for each topic, they are a clear and concise set of notes that help students support their own knowledge and understanding of the topic.
- **Key Texts/Scholars:** A set of notes around any important philosopher and their works students may require background information and understanding of.
- **Year 2 Advanced Considerations:** A brief look at how students may incorporate Year 2 knowledge and understanding into Year 1 topics, and vice versa.
- **Student Checklist:** A helpful guide to what students need to know by the end of the revision summary and a way to check their understanding and progress through a particular topic.
 - ! **Note:** The checklist is presented in question format and these questions would be ideal to set for homework or revision so that students can build the skills they need in order to progress to longer exam-style questions.
- **Exam-style Questions:** Practice essay questions consisting of part a and part b with helpful assessment objectives, complete with levelled mark schemes and indicative content at the end of each topic. There will be comments on what is expected for both AS and A Level. These are useful for students approaching their end-of-year exams or wishing to improve their essay technique on a particular topic.

At the end of the resource there is a true or false quiz which students can do as a quick test of their knowledge and understanding of the entire material.

This structure clearly ensures students have not only a grasp of the key themes of each topic, but also a way to understand their place within the specification as a whole. Students who may have missed lessons or not made detailed notes may benefit greatly from these revision summaries, especially in helping their recollection of key topics closer to their final exams.

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Arguments for the Existence

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Analogy:	This is where something is compared to something else, usually something familiar with.
Analytic:	This refers to statements where the predicate in the statement says something about the subject of the statement) and the subject of the statement. A subject in a statement is what the statement is about. Spiders are insects with eight legs.
Anthropomorphism:	This means to give human form to someone or something. It comes from ancient Greek <i>anthropo</i> (human) and <i>morph</i> (form).
A posteriori:	This literally means after experience. It refers to statements that are arrived at through having observed something or experiencing something.
A priori:	This literally means before experience. It refers to statements that are arrived at through reasoning and no experience was involved.
Atheism:	This is the position that believes that God or gods do not exist.
Belief in:	This is the idea of having faith. If you believe in something, you believe that that thing is true. For example, I believe in fairies. This is despite not having evidence.
Belief that:	This is the idea of having facts. If you believe that something is true, you have evidence that supports this. For example, I believe that water boils at 100°C. I have evidence in the form of having seen water boil at 100°C in a case from a reliable source.
Big Bang theory:	This is a popular scientific theory that claims that the universe began as a small, dense and hot suddenly exploded and expanded.
Classical theism:	This is the belief in the traditional idea of God from the Bible as an omnipotent, omniscient and omnibenevolent being.
Contingent:	This refers to beings that have a beginning and an end and their existence is dependent on something else.
Cosmology:	This refers to the study of the universe and what it is made of.
Darwinism:	This is the position first developed by Charles Darwin, that life exists through the process of evolution by natural selection. Creationists who believe that God created each and every part of Earth.
Deductive:	This refers to a type of argument that starts with a universal statement (definition) and then applies this to a specific instance of something. Conclusions to such arguments must be true if the premises are based on reasoning and do not involve having to use evidence. For example: All spiders have eight legs. (major premise) This insect has eight legs. (specific example) It is a spider. (conclusion)
Empirical:	This means to be based on observations gained through the senses.
Fallacy of composition:	This refers to a type of argument that makes the mistake of assuming that something has the same characteristics as the parts of that something. For example, a house is made of wood; therefore, the whole house is made of wood.

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Inductive:	This refers to a type of argument that starts with claims based on observation or observations. From these observation(s) a conclusion is formed. The more observations made, the stronger the conclusion is. However, as the conclusion is not an absolute certainty, it is only a prediction that will be experienced. Inductive arguments are based on experience. Uncle Sam is 60 and he has white hair. (observation one) Uncle Tom is 62 and he has white hair. (observation two) All men of 60 and above have white hair. (conclusion)
Monotheism:	This is a belief in one God.
Necessary being:	This refers to a being that does not rely on anything else for its existence or goes out of existence.
Ontology:	This refers to what exists. You may, for example, have in your mind fairies or UFOs. The ontological argument is, therefore, an argument that God exists.
Omnibenevolent:	This is an attribute of God. It describes God as being ultra-good.
Omnipotent:	This is an attribute of God. It describes God as being able to do anything.
Omniscient:	This is an attribute of God. It describes God as knowing everything.
Synthetic:	This refers to statements where the predicate in the statement (the part that says something about the subject of the statement) is not part of the subject of the statement that adds something to our understanding of the subject. A subject in a statement is what the statement is about. It is not part of the definition of a box that a synthetic statement has told us something extra about the box.
Teleological:	This word is derived from the Greek word for end, purpose or goal. A teleological theory or approach focuses on ends, purposes or goals.

Overview

This section examines one deductive argument (the ontological argument) and two inductive arguments (the design argument and the cosmological argument) for the existence of God. The ontological argument is a deductive argument that seeks to provide a logical proof that God exists and has been presented by famous philosophers over the ages. Each argument concludes that God exists. The ontological argument concludes that God exists as a necessary being. The design argument concludes that God exists as a designer. The issues with these two inductive arguments will be with their conclusions.

Key Points

The Design Argument

The argument:

- The design argument is an inductive argument, based on a posteriori evidence of things that appear to be designed. It is an empirical argument rather than one based on logic and reason.
- Characteristics of things in the world which appear to be designed include them being complex, having parts that fit together harmoniously and intelligence behind them. The example of a watch that has these characteristics.
- Things in the natural world and the designed object are compared, making it clear that the natural world has similar characteristics.
- The fact that the natural world has similar characteristics to the designed object means the world and the things in the world could also be designed.
- The conclusion is made about the world: the world also has the same characteristics as the designed object to a greater degree.
- The world must also be designed but by a designer of greater degree.
- The designer of the world is God.
- The design argument concludes that God exists as a designer.

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Criticisms:

- David Hume's criticisms of the design argument attack the analogy made between the world. 1. It is better to compare the world to something organic rather than mechanical. 2. Just because the world has characteristic effects do not mean similar causes. Just because the world has characteristic effects doesn't mean it is designed (cause).
- Hume considers the lack of experience with worlds being designed. We don't have any experience of worlds being designed.
- Hume also criticises the assumption made that the designer is the God of classical mythology or an apprentice god.
- Assuming God did design the world, we cannot tell from the designed object (the world) whether it was designed or not.
- Hume also argued that the design argument is anthropomorphic; it likens God to a human designer.
- Hume argued that the world came about as atoms slowly arranged themselves.

Further weaknesses:

- Darwin demonstrated that there is no order or purpose in the world. Organisms exist by chance through the process of evolution by natural selection.

Strengths:

- Richard Swinburne argued that the existence of a God who designed the world is more probable than the existence of a world that agreed that evolutionary theory could explain the existence of different species. Evolutionary theory, through natural laws, needs an explanation. God designed a world and evolution is a natural law.

Status of argument as proof:

- It is an inductive argument and the conclusions to inductive arguments do not guarantee truth. Inductive arguments are predictions. The more evidence there is, the stronger the conclusion, but there is no evidence.
- Most of the time we use inductive reasoning and it makes sense to prove it.

The value of this argument for religious faith:

- Religious believers are likely to appreciate this argument because it uses empirical evidence to show that the world is designed.
- There is a strong reference to the world being created in an orderly way (Genesis 1).
- Paley did not consider the problem of evil. God designed a world that has a good design.

The relationship between faith and reason:

- The design argument is a reasoned argument, through induction, and so it can support faith claims.
- The design argument uses inductive reasoning (that will result in belief through faith). There is the assumption that reason can support faith claims.

The Ontological Argument**The argument:**

- The ontological argument is a deductive argument based on a priori reasoning rather than empirical observations.
- It starts with a universal premise which defines God as a 'supremely perfect being'. Anselm defines God as 'that than which no greater can be conceived'.
- From this definition of God, a step is made to explain what it means to be perfectly conceivable being. In order to be perfect, God must exist. To be the greatest conceivable being, God must exist. Being in the mind only is not as great as actually existing.
- The argument concludes by stating that God must exist because he is defined as a 'supremely perfect being'.
- The ontological argument concludes that God, defined as the greatest conceivable being, must exist.

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Criticisms:

- Criticisms of the ontological argument focus on the logic of the argument. God can be applied to anything defined as perfect. He gives the example of a perfect island. The perfect island would have to exist. No such island can actually exist. The argument can add to improve it.
- Immanuel Kant argues that existence is not a perfection or a property of anything. You cannot add existence on to a list of properties of things such as blue eyes, long hair, etc.
- Kant used the example of thalers to illustrate his point. Imagining 100 thalers existing does not add to the number of thalers. 100 thalers existing is 100 thalers. Moving from being in the category of imagined things to existing things.

Further weaknesses:

- Not all religions believe in the one perfect God. Ancient Greek civilisation believed in many gods for example.
- The ontological argument assumes that God is the greatest conceivable being that you cannot describe God.

Strengths:

- It is true that most religious believers from most monotheistic traditions would accept that God is the greatest conceivable being.
- The ontological argument does not rely on any empirical observations which are subject to change.
- Anselm did have a response to Gaunilo's criticism when you read further in *Proslogium*. God is different from contingent things. God is necessary because he is the greatest conceivable being. Being the greatest conceivable being means he is necessary as this is more perfect than anything else. Everything else, apart from God, is contingent and so cannot be perfect.

Status of the argument as proof:

- As a piece of logic, the argument works. The conclusion must be true, if the premises are true.
- Deductive arguments do not prove anything outside of the mind. Things that are true through empirical observation. In the most that the ontological argument can be said to prove is that God would have to have necessary existence.
- The original argument relies on the belief in God as the greatest conceivable being as a faith rather than a reason.
- Anselm, being the Archbishop of Canterbury, would not have questioned the argument is not proof of God's existence as he did not need proof.
- On the other hand, Anselm does present the argument as a response to 'the philosopher' which suggests that he is defending his faith through rational means.

The value of this argument for religious faith:

- The ontological argument works for those who already believe God to be the greatest conceivable being. This is the view of most Christians.
- Most religious believers will prefer inductive arguments to prove God exists because evidence is what you can actually see as opposed to what you can think about.

The relationship between reason and faith:

- The ontological argument uses deductive reasoning as a way to support faith claims. This suggests that reason and faith are compatible.

The Cosmological Argument**The argument:**

- The cosmological argument is an inductive argument based on a posteriori evidence. It is based on the idea of the universe (cosmos) being caused by something else. It is an empirical argument based on logic and reasoning.
- Thomas Aquinas had five ways; the first three ways were different versions of the cosmological argument. (You need to know the third way.)

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- The third way: everything in the universe has a beginning and an end. This means the world is contingent.
- If things in the world came into existence, there must have been a time when not.
- This was a time when nothing contingent existed.
- Nothing comes from nothing.
- So, there must have been something that has always existed to bring other things into existence.
- That being is necessary and is God.
- The third cosmological argument of Aquinas concludes the existence of God.

Criticisms:

- Criticisms of the cosmological argument focus on the use of the word necessary. Bertrand Russell and David Hume argue that necessary is a concept only applicable to living beings in the world.
- Russell and Hume also argue that the cosmological argument makes a fallacy that, just because parts in the universe are caused, the whole universe is caused. Human individuals having mothers and jumping to the conclusion that the whole universe is caused.
- Hume argues that we have no experience of universes being caused. We can only see that parts of the universe are caused.
- Hume argued that the universe itself might be necessary.
- Russell believes the world 'just is'. It does not need an explanation for its existence.

Further weaknesses:

- Why can nothing come from nothing? The universe could just have appeared.
- Why is God the necessary being? Matter-energy could be the necessary ingredient. (Matter-energy has always existed and will never go out of existence, it just changed form (law of thermodynamics)).

Strengths:

- In response to the claim that the cosmological argument makes a fallacy of composition instances when the parts do not have the same characteristics as the whole. For example, the second floor of a library is on the second floor.
- Alternative theories explaining the existence of the universe do not explain why it exists. For example, what caused the singularity in the Big Bang theory to explode? It does not give an explanation about how it could have started.
- Claiming that the universe 'just is', as Russell did, is not an argument. It does not explain 'it just is'.
- God is metaphysically necessary, not logically necessary. This means God exists necessarily but not necessarily the physical world.

Status of the argument as proof:

- The cosmological argument is an inductive argument and inductive arguments are not proofs.
- Those who believe that the universe does not need an explanation and that they are convinced by the cosmological argument.

The value of this argument for religious faith:

- The universe being started by a necessary being is as plausible as the universe being eternal.
- There is scriptural support: the Bible (Genesis 1), describes God in a way that created the world and all its elements to come into existence.
- The cosmological argument is a popular argument for religious believers because it provides a reasoned basis for faith. Religious believers may respond to those who believe that the Big Bang, the universe was caused to happen.

The relationship between reason and faith:

- The cosmological argument is a reasoned argument, through induction, and is not a proof.
- The cosmological argument uses inductive reasoning (that will result in belief in God) (belief in). There is the assumption that reason can support faith claims.

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Key Texts/Scholars

Anselm of Canterbury (c.1033-1109):

Anselm was Archbishop of Canterbury and defended the existence of God in his work *Proslogium* to argue that 'the fool' from Psalm 14 and 53 in the Bible is making a mistake in logic. The idea of God is of a supremely perfect being and that means he must possess existence. When the fool says God does not exist, this is a contradiction, which is why the fool is wrong.

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274):

Aquinas was a very famous theologian and Dominican monk based in France. He adapted the philosopher Aristotle and applied his work to Christianity. Aquinas presents five ways to prove God must exist. The first three arguments are versions of the cosmological argument and the fourth way is his argument from degree and his fifth way is a version of the design argument.

David Hume (1711-1776):

Hume presents a version of the design argument in order to then present his criticism of it in *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*. Hume was an atheist. Hume is also known for his work on causality. He argues that you cannot combine the a priori with the synthetic. They belong to two different kinds of gaining knowledge. A priori relates to the analytic only, things you reason about that are true in all possible worlds. Synthetic is a necessary truth and is worked out through reasoning alone, according to Hume. A posteriori are the synthetic, a posteriori and contingent truths. These relate to the world as we know it. Hume does not believe God can be necessary or that a priori arguments can prove his existence.

Gaunilo of Marmoutiers (994-1083):

Gaunilo was a Benedictine monk in France and a contemporary of Anselm. He is famous for his criticism of the ontological argument. Gaunilo favoured empirical arguments for proving God exists rather than logical arguments.

Genesis:

This is the book at the very beginning of the Bible. It is the first book of the Old Testament. It describes how God brought the world into existence. It is the best text to reference in support of the existence of God.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804):

Kant is an important philosopher who argued that you can combine a priori with the synthetic when we are born with things, like concepts of time and space, and they help us form knowledge. In respect to his criticism of the ontological argument, Kant did not believe this work. He argued that the existence of God is a perfection and that the ontological argument's premise that existence is a perfection is false. If the premise is false in a deductive argument, the conclusion is false. Kant believed that the moral argument for the existence of God is the only valid argument.

William Paley (1743-1805):

Paley presented his design argument in his book *Natural Theology*. Paley starts his argument by describing how he was walking on the heath and coming across a stone. Nobody would question why the stone was there. He then asks the question why a watch was there because it shows clear signs of being designed. He argues that the world, such as a human eye, shows the same characteristics of being designed as the watch. Paley's design argument wasn't the first argument, but it is the most famous.

Bertrand Russell (1872-1970):

Lord Russell was a famous Cambridge scholar and sided with a movement known as logical positivism. He argued that only things that can be verified are worth considering. This is a later form of the design argument. Russell was an atheist and agreed with a lot of what Hume argued. He argued that the a priori and the synthetic are unrelated.

Richard Swinburne (1934-):

Swinburne is a contemporary British philosopher of religion. He has added to the traditional arguments for the existence of God, including evolutionary theory, and he also believes that the argument from religious experience should be taken into consideration when proving religious beliefs.

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Year 2 Advanced Considerations

In Year 2, you will look at the nature of religious language. One of the issues with this is how we describe beings (such as God) that do not exist in this world. Arguments for the existence of God are made by giving evidence and rational arguments for why God does exist. These arguments are used by religious scholars to try to verify God's existence. They rely on either evidence in the world that appears designed, evidence of all things in the world being caused and being caused by something, or that perfect things must exist. These arguments, however, do not prove God exists in the world we can see and meaningfully talk about.

Student Checklist



What Do I Know?	No Idea ☹️	Some Idea 😊
What kind of argument is the design argument?		
What are the steps to Paley's design argument?		
What are the criticisms of the design argument presented by Hume?		
What are the strengths of the design argument?		
What are the weaknesses of the design argument?		
What is the status of the design argument as proof?		
What is the value of the design argument for religious belief?		
What is the relationship between reason and faith in the design argument?		
What kind of argument is the ontological argument?		
What are the steps to Anselm's ontological argument?		
What is the criticism of the ontological argument presented by Gaunilo?		
What is the criticism of the ontological argument presented by Descartes?		
What are the strengths of the ontological argument?		
What are the weaknesses of the ontological argument?		
What is the status of the ontological argument as proof?		
What is the value of the ontological argument for religious belief?		
What is the relationship between reason and faith in the ontological argument?		
What kind of argument is Aquinas' third way?		
What are the steps to Aquinas' third version of the cosmological argument?		
What are the criticisms of the cosmological argument presented by Hume?		
What are the criticisms of the cosmological argument presented by Russell?		
What are the strengths of the cosmological argument?		
What are the weaknesses of the cosmological argument?		
What is the status of the cosmological argument as proof?		
What is the value of the cosmological argument for religious belief?		
What is the relationship between reason and faith in the cosmological argument?		

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Exam-style Questions

AS

A. Explain how Anselm proves the existence of God and how Gaunilo responds (15 marks)

HINTS

- This question is testing your knowledge and understanding (Assessment Objective 1) as recognised by the text (explanation).
- The examiner will be looking to place your answer in one of the following bands:

Band	Level	What type of answer
5	13–15	An answer that is completely correct, relevant and clear. There is a lot of detail with good examples and the answer is clear and has used specialist terminology throughout.
4	10–12	An answer that is predominantly correct, relevant and clear. There are lots of examples and references to texts to illustrate the answer is clear and specialist terminology is used.
3	7–9	An answer that has a lot that is correct, relevant and clear. There are some examples and references to texts to illustrate. The answer is quite clear and specialist terminology is used.
2	4–6	A limited answer which shows some knowledge and understanding. There are very few examples and references to texts to illustrate. The answer is relatively clear. Some specialist terminology is used.
1	1–3	The answer shows some basic knowledge and understanding. There are a few points that are general or inaccurate but most of the answer is developed. Specialist terminology is used.
0	0	An answer that is not worthy of credit.

Here is a suggestion of what you could put in each paragraph:

- In your first paragraph it is good to write some general points about the ontological argument. Explain what type of an argument the ontological argument is and why it is not inductive and deductive arguments mixed up. Make sure you explain why the ontological argument is deductive and what that means demonstrated.
- In your second paragraph focus on Anselm's version of the ontological argument. Explain every step of the argument. This demonstrates development. You can add context by explaining that Anselm presented this argument in response to Gaunilo. This is a reference to religious scripture.
- Your third paragraph explains Gaunilo's response to Anselm's ontological argument. Make sure that you explain his criticism thoroughly. It is the logic that Gaunilo's example of the perfect island is illustration.
- Make sure you read the question carefully and answer every part of the question. If you only answer about Gaunilo, you have only answered half the question.

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B. 'Gaunilo's response to Anselm's ontological argument is stronger than Anselm's' (15 marks)

HINTS

- This question is testing how well you can analyse, assess and evaluate the text (this is Objective 2 or AO2). This can be recognised by the term 'assess'. It usually uses inverted commas.
- The examiners will be looking to see your answer in one of the following bands:

Marks Band	Level	What type of answer
5	13-15	The answer is well-reasoned with detailed analysis and evaluation. There are good examples, evidence or textual references. The answer is clear and has used specialist terminology correctly.
4	10-12	Different sides to the argument are presented and there is some evaluation based on the points made. There are some textual references included to illustrate the points. The answer is clear and specialist terminology is used correctly.
3	7-9	Different sides to the argument are considered and there is some evidence or textual references. The answer has some relevant points. The answer is mainly clear and specialist terminology is used correctly.
2	4-6	A limited answer that is one-sided. There are some textual references to support the point and the answer is quite clear and uses some specialist terminology.
1	1-3	There is an answer to the question, but this is only a limited answer. The answer is inaccurate or irrelevant and specialist terminology is not mentioned.
0	0	Nothing worthy of a mark

Here is a suggestion of what you could put in each paragraph:

- In the first paragraph it is good to start off by explaining why Gaunilo's response is stronger than Anselm's. You could explain that defining something as perfect is different to an island. God has necessary existence whereas an island is contingent. This is the point that Anselm makes in a later chapter of his *Proslogion*.
- In the second paragraph you could explain that this could be resolved by Kant's argument. Existence is not a property or perfection. This makes sense. Kant's argument is stronger than Gaunilo's.
- In the third paragraph it is good to look at why Kant's argument might be stronger than Gaunilo's. You could explain that existence is not a property or perfection. This makes sense. Kant's argument is stronger than Gaunilo's.
- You must have a conclusion where you provide a final answer to the question. You must state that Kant's criticism is stronger than Gaunilo's. You then explain briefly why this is the case. You must respond to and it is true that existence is not a property of something. You must have a new argument in it.
- Alternatively, you might think that Gaunilo's argument is stronger because of his argument. Defining things as perfect, doesn't bring them into existence. You must state in your conclusion.

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A Level

- C. Examine how Anselm proves the existence of God and how Gaunilo responds (10 marks)

HINTS

- This question is testing your knowledge and understanding (Assessment Objective 1) recognised by the term 'examine'. Examining requires more depth in the following question word 'explain' which you could get at AS. At A Level the AO1 is worth 15.
- The examiner will be looking to place your answer in one of the following bands

Band	Level	What type of answer
5	9–10	An answer that is completely correct, relevant and includes critical analysis and different views are referred to with good examples and references to texts. The answer uses specialist terminology consistently and throughout.
4	7–8	An answer that is predominantly correct, relevant and includes critical analysis. There are lots of examples and references to the points made. Diverse views are acknowledged and specialist terminology is used correctly.
3	5–6	An answer that has a lot that is correct, relevant and includes some examples and references to texts to illustrate points. Some critical analysis and some knowledge of diverse views. Clear and specialist terminology is used correctly.
2	3–4	A limited answer which shows some knowledge and includes reference to alternative points of view but there are very few references to texts to illustrate points made. There are some critical points. Some specialist terminology is used.
1	0	The answer shows some basic knowledge and understanding but is not relevant or accurate and with some reference to texts. Most of the answer is incorrect, unclear or underdeveloped. Specialist terminology is very rarely mentioned.

Here is a suggestion of what you could put in each paragraph:

- In your first paragraph it is good to write some general points about the ontological argument. Explain what type of an argument the ontological argument is and why it is a deductive argument. Explaining that the ontological argument is deductive and the use of specialist terminology. In order to include critical analysis, you could compare Anselm's arguments provide conclusions that are certain if the premises are. They are inductive arguments.
- In your second paragraph focus on Anselm's version of the ontological argument. Explain every step of the argument. This demonstrates development. You can add context by explaining that Anselm presented this argument in response to a question. This is a reference to religious scripture. You could compare Anselm's ontological argument to Descartes. Although it is not in the specification, both demonstrate knowledge of the ontological argument. Descartes' ontological argument is similar. He defines 'being', which means he must prove existence to be supremely perfect. God's nature in the same way as the essence of a triangle is to have three sides.
- Your third paragraph should explain Gaunilo's response to Anselm's ontological argument. Explain his criticism thoroughly. It is the logic that Gaunilo uses. The perfect island is illustration. In order to include critical analysis, you could compare Gaunilo's premises to Anselm's argument, Gaunilo considers to be problematic.
- Make sure you read the question carefully and answer every part of the question. If you only answer about Gaunilo, you have only answered half the question.

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D. 'Gaunilo's response to Anselm's ontological argument is stronger than Anselm's' (15 marks)

HINTS

- This question is testing how well you can analyse, assess and evaluate the argument (Objective 2 or AO2). This can be recognised by the term 'evaluate'. It is often indicated by inverted commas.
- The examiners will be looking to place your answer in one of the following bands:

Marks band	Mark range	What type of answer
5	13–15	The answer is well-reasoned with detailed analysis and evaluation. There are good examples, evidence or textual references. The answer shows clarity and insightful discussion. There is consistent use of specialist terminology.
4	10–12	Different sides to the argument are presented with analysis and evaluation based on the points made. There are good textual references included to illustrate the point and contains some critical analysis. Specialist terminology is used.
3	7–9	Different sides to the argument are considered with analysis or textual references. The answer has a lot that is clear and specialist terminology is used.
2	4–6	A limited answer that is one-sided. There are some textual references to support the point and the answer is quite clear and uses some specialist terminology.
1	1–3	There is an answer to the question but this is one-sided, inaccurate or irrelevant and specialist terminology is not used.
0	0	Nothing worthy of credit.

Here is a suggestion of what you could write in each paragraph:

- In the first paragraph you could start off by explaining why Gaunilo's response is stronger than Anselm's. You could explain the logic of the ontological argument and that defining something as perfect doesn't bring it into existence. You could go further, that Gaunilo preferred the empirical approach, which is likely to be more successful in proving the actual existence of God.
- In the next paragraph you could explain that this could be resolved by defining God as 'the greatest conceivable being' which is different to an island. God has necessary existence whereas an island does not. This is similar to the argument that Anselm makes in a later chapter of his *Proslogion*. You could add further analysis of necessary existence that link to the cosmological argument.
- In the third paragraph it is good to look at why Kant's argument might be stronger than Gaunilo's. It is a fact that existence is not a property or perfection. This makes sense. Kant argues that existence is not a property or perfection, which makes it stronger than Gaunilo's.
- In the next paragraph, you could consider ways in which Kant's criticism is stronger than Gaunilo's. You could argue that existence should not be added to the concept of God, just that the concept of God implies God has to exist.
- In the next paragraph, you could then respond to this by stressing that while Kant's argument is stronger than Gaunilo's, by defining God as 'the greatest conceivable being', this does not mean that God was 'the greatest conceivable being', he would be necessary.
- You must have a conclusion where you provide a final answer to the question. You could argue that Kant's criticism is stronger than Gaunilo's. You then explain briefly why you think this and it is true that existence is not a property of something, so it cannot be added to the concept of God. You could have any new arguments if you wish.
- Alternatively, you might think that Gaunilo's argument is stronger because Anselm's argument that defining things as perfect doesn't bring them into existence. You could then explain your conclusion.

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Activity: Now have a go at writing your own responses to the question above OR using your own ideas.

The Problem of Evil and Suffering

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Counterfactual hypothesis: John Hick uses this as part of his defence of the existence of God and suffering. He argues that God could not achieve perfect beings if there were no evil and suffering as these are necessary for humans to develop their souls.

Epistemic distance: John Hick uses this as part of his defence of the existence of God and suffering. He argues that humans cannot know God and therefore must be distanced from him. If we did know God and his will, we would just obey him and not develop our souls on our own development of souls.



Eschatological justification: This is a term John Hick uses in his defence of the existence of God and suffering. It refers to the end of time. Eschatological justification allows God to forgive humans when they die. This allows God to be just and merciful.

Free will: This is a key concept that is used in most theodicies. It is the idea that we are entirely free to make our own choices and decisions we make that are not determined by anything else. We are fully responsible for the choices we make.

Inconsistent triad: This is an argument used to prove that the God of classical theism does not exist. It consists of three propositions: 1. God is all-powerful. 2. God is all-good. 3. Evil exists. If all three are true, then God would be able to eliminate evil. Therefore, at least one of these propositions must be false. The person who presents this argument is J L Mackie. He argues that if God is all-powerful and all-good, he would have the power to do anything. God is omniscient and knows all the evil he has created (humans and animals). Therefore, if God were omnibenevolent and omnipotent, he would have eliminated evil from the world. The existence of evil and suffering in the world is inconsistent with the existence of God.

Moral evil: This is suffering caused by a free agent. Someone's choice to do wrong is a moral evil.

Natural evil: This is suffering caused by natural events. A volcanic eruption is a natural evil.

Omnibenevolent: This is an attribute of God. It describes God as being all-good.



Omnipotent: This is an attribute of God. It describes God as being all-powerful.

Second-order goods: These are good feelings that arise out of evil and suffering. Second-order goods include compassion, courage and sympathy.

Soul-making: This describes a theodicy that argues that there is a purpose to evil and suffering. It is that humans can develop their souls. Irenaean theodicy is a soul-making theodicy.

Theodicy: This refers to a reply from a religious apologist (someone who defends the problem of evil). It explains why God and evil can co-exist.



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Overview

The presence of evil and suffering in the world is one of the biggest challenges to the existence of God. There is a logical inconsistency in the fact that an omnipotent and omnibenevolent God would allow evil to occur. There is also evidential proof that an omnipotent and omnibenevolent God is not looking at the sheer amount of evil and suffering that happens. Various theologians present, have defended the existence of God in the face of evil and suffering. Theodicies of God and of humans in a world where there is evil and suffering. Each theodicy attempts to explain moral and natural evil in the world. There are inevitable problems with these theodicies. The problem that there is just too much evil and suffering in the world to justify the existence of an omnipotent God.

Key Points**Natural and Moral Evil**

- Natural evil is suffering caused by natural events. These acts cause people to suffer. For example, the suffering of people who lost their loved ones in a tsunami.
- Moral evil is evil caused by deliberate human acts. These acts cause others to suffer. For example, someone stealing someone's identity online.

The Logical and Evidential Problem of Evil

Logical:

- It makes sense logically to question the existence of an omnibenevolent and omnipotent God in the presence of evil.
- The inconsistent triad is a version of the logical problem of evil.
- J L Mackie believes there is a logical problem of evil by arguing that the God of classical theism is omnipotent and so he has the power to do anything. God is also omnibenevolent and so he would prevent evil (humans and animals). There is evil in the world. If God were omnibenevolent and omnipotent he would intervene and stop evil that causes humans and animals to suffer. As he has not, God does not exist.

Evidential:

- There is no evidence to suggest that the omnipotent and omnibenevolent God of classical theism exists.
- William Rowe gives the example of a fawn trapped in a forest fire. There is no evidence that an omniscient and omnibenevolent God would prevent this from happening. An omniscient and omnibenevolent God would prevent this from happening. It probably doesn't exist.
- Gregory Paul gives the example of millions of innocent children who suffer and die. They don't have time to learn from natural and moral evil. An omniscient and omnibenevolent God would prevent this suffering from happening. It does happen and so the God of classical theism does not exist.

Hick's Vale of Soul-making, Its Strengths and Weaknesses

Hick's theodicy:

- One theodicy that defends the existence of the God of classical theism is theodicy presented originally by Irenaeus and defended more recently by John Hick.
- This theodicy argues that the world was made imperfect by God for the purpose of soul-making. Hick adds the counterfactual hypothesis which is the idea that it makes sense for God to create an imperfect world so we can develop our souls. This is God's purpose.
- Hick adds that we cannot know for certain that he exists because this would make an epistemic distance from God.
- God making an imperfect world means that natural evil will occur.
- God giving humans free will so they can choose to develop their souls.
- Having free will will also mean that some will make decisions that will cause other people to suffer. This is the presence of moral evil.
- The presence of evil and suffering in the world gives rise to second-order goods. Without evil and suffering, we wouldn't experience love and compassion.
- God is also forgiving and merciful allowing everyone to develop their souls even if they have committed evil. This is the possibility of development after life Hick calls eschatological justification.

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Strengths:

- Hick's theodicy explains why there is natural and moral evil. Natural evil is the result of an imperfect world and an imperfect world is necessary for humans to be able to perfect themselves through free will. God gave humans free will so they could develop themselves. With choices that help you learn and develop your soul.

Weaknesses:

- One weakness with Hick's soul-making theodicy is that animals and some humans do not develop their souls. Hick would counter this with the idea of eschatological justification.
- Eschatological justification does not seem fair. Forgiving someone like Hitler is not fair.
- It does not seem right for humans to be sacrificed so that others can develop their souls. Hick would counter this by stating that we do not know God's bigger picture.
- The sheer amount of suffering cannot be justified by stating that it is all so we can develop our souls.
- An omnibenevolent God would not use suffering as a means of development.

The Free Will Defence, Its Strengths and Weaknesses**The free will defence:**

- Free will is the central feature in the free will defence which attempts to explain the existence of evil.
- Alvin Plantinga uses the free will defence to argue that an omnipotent and omnibenevolent God would allow evil and suffering despite there being evil and suffering.
- Plantinga agrees that it does seem implausible for an omnipotent and omnibenevolent God to allow evil.
- Plantinga considers the fact that God could have taken away free will to stop evil. This would result in a world with no evil.
- This would mean that humans would be like robots and there would be no good.
- A world where there is more good than evil because humans have free will is a better world than a world where there is no evil.
- God exists as an omnipotent and omnibenevolent God who has made human life the best possible scenario.

Strengths:

- The free will defence explains why there is moral evil. It makes sense that God would give humans free will because this means they need to have free will.
- It makes sense that without free will and evil, we would not know what good is.

Weaknesses:

- A weakness of the free will defence is the fact that God could have made humans free but not evil. This is something that Anthony Flew argues. Limited free will would involve making humans free but not evil. Plantinga counters this by stating that this is not proper free will. It is like having a choice between vanilla and strawberry available.
- Another weakness is that God could have made humans free, but they never choose evil. This is what J L Mackie points out. Plantinga would respond by claiming that good is more valuable than evil.
- The free will defence does not account for why there is natural evil.

Griffin's Process Theodicy, Its Strengths and Weaknesses**The process theodicy:**

- The process theodicy is a theodicy that claims that God did not create the world but that the world is the result of an evolutionary process. God is not omnipotent. This is the view of David Griffin.
- As God is not omnipotent, he is not powerful enough to stop evil in the world. Humans who are free can commit evil acts. He is not responsible for moral evil.
- God is not transcendent but is part of the world and is restricted by natural laws just as we are. God is not omnibenevolent.
- God is not transcendent but is the soul of the universe. The universe is God.
- God suffers when we suffer because he is part of this world.

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Strengths:

- The process theodicy explains why there is both natural and moral evil. They world has come about through natural processes.
- The process theodicy is compatible with scientific theories about how the universe accepts that the universe is following its own course rather than being constantly created by God.
- It supports the idea of God as omnibenevolent as he is a fellow sufferer.

Weaknesses:

- A problem with the process theodicy is that it does not refer to the God of classical theism, who is omnipotent.
- As this is different to the God of classical theism, some will argue that God is not worshippable.
- Another criticism is that the process theodicy cannot be called a theodicy. A theodicy is a consistent triad. Theodicies keep all the elements of the inconsistent triad (omnipotence, omnibenevolence and evil) and explain their presence. The process theodicy does not keep all three elements from the inconsistent triad.
- A final criticism is that a lot of people will dislike the process theodicy because it says God has no control over what will happen.

Key Texts/Scholars**Anthony Flew (1923–2010):**

Flew was a British philosopher and atheist. Apart from arguing that God could not have free will, he also argued that you should assume God does not exist until there is evidence that he does. He argued that religion cannot be falsified (disproved). He argued this using the parable of the gardener. The point is that it does not matter how much evidence you show a religion does not exist, they will come up with a response to defend their faith. This parable is often used in religious language.

John Hick (1922–2012):

Hick was a theistic pluralist and is famous for his soul-making theodicy, his pluralism (the idea that there are many gods), his replica theory and his arguments that claim that religious experiences are real. If you are studying the full A Level, you will come across his theories in other topics in Philosophy.

David Griffin (1939–):

Griffin is an American theologian famous for proposing the process theodicy. He is a pantheist, a form of theology, which is the position that argues that God is part of the process; God is not separate from the world.

Irenaeus of Lyons (c.130– c.202):

Irenaeus is one of the Christian Church fathers – ancient influential Christian thinkers. He was a Gnostic Heresies in a time when there were competing religious groups emerging during the early Church, which was establishing itself. This is one of the reasons why Irenaeus is considered a Church Father. He proposed the eschatological upward theodicy, a theodicy that argues from imperfection to perfection, that is that God is perfect and that humans are to become perfect.

J L Mackie (1917–1981):

Mackie was an atheist philosopher and atheist. He put forward the inconsistent triad, which is the idea that free will, divine omnipotence and divine omnibenevolence cannot all be true.

Gregory S Paul (1954–):

Paul wrote a paper in *Philosophy and Theology* that talks about how God cannot be omnibenevolent because of the immense amount of child deaths.

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Alvin Plantinga (1932–):

Plantinga is an American philosopher whose main works focus on issues in the Philosophy of Religion. He is best known for putting forward the free will defence and also has his version of the ontological argument.

William Rowe (1931–2015):

Rowe was a professor of philosophy who is most famous for putting forward the evidential problem of evil. This argument uses the example of a fawn who is trapped by a fire. The question is: if God exists, why does he allow this? The purpose of God's does it serve for the fawn to suffer?

Bible, Old Testament (Isaiah 45:1-26):

'Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness'. Irenaeus relied on this making the world imperfect. Irenaeus argues that humans will become perfect and in God's perfect world.

Year 2 Advanced Considerations

In Year 2, you will look at the nature of religious language. One of the issues with religious language is that it cannot be falsified. It doesn't matter how much evidence you present to a religious person, they will still have a reason for their belief. Evidence against God existing in the world (the evidential problem of evil). Some of the scholars who argue against religious language do reference the existence of evil in the world.

Student Checklist

What Do I Know?	Bad Idea ☹️	Some Idea 😊	Good Idea 😄
What is natural evil? Give an example.			
What is moral evil? Give an example.			
What is the logical problem of evil?			
What is the evidential problem of evil?			
How does Hick defend the existence of God when there is evil?			
What are the strengths of Hick's soul-making theodicy?			
What are the problems with Hick's soul-making theodicy?			
How does the free will defence argue in favour of God existing when there is moral evil?			
What are the strengths of the free will defence?			
What are the problems with the free will defence?			
What does the process theodicy argue?			
What are the strengths of the process theodicy?			
What are the problems with the process theodicy?			

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Exam-style Questions

AS

- A. Explain Hick’s soul-making theodicy and the free will defence as possible solutions to the evidential problem of evil and suffering in the world. (15 marks)

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- This question is testing your knowledge and understanding (Assessment Objective 1) and your ability to ‘explain’ (Assessment Objective 2).
- The question may be looking to place your answer in one of the following bands:

MARKS band	Level	What type of answer
5	13–15	An answer that is completely correct, relevant and clear. It contains a lot of detail with good examples and references to texts to illustrate the answer. The answer is clear and specialist terminology is used consistently.
4	10–12	An answer that is predominantly correct, relevant and clear. It contains lots of examples and references to texts to illustrate the answer. Specialist terminology is used.
3	7–9	An answer that has a lot that is correct, relevant and clear. It contains some examples and references to texts to illustrate the answer. Specialist terminology is used.
2	4–6	A limited answer which shows some knowledge and understanding. There are very few examples and references to texts to illustrate the answer. Specialist terminology is used.
1	1–3	The answer shows some knowledge and understanding that are relevant to the question but most of the answer is underdeveloped. Specialist terminology is very rarely used.
0	0	No answer or no way of credit.

Here is a suggestion of what you could put in each paragraph:

- In the first paragraph you need to give the two theodicies some context. Explain the evidential problem of evil and theodicies – as responses to the evidential problem of evil and theodicies. In brief, don’t go into detail about the logical and evidential problems of evil. There is an inconsistency with God being omnipotent and omnibenevolent if children dying needlessly every day suggests a God doesn’t exist. This is the evidential problem of evil. Explain the need for theodicies.
- In the second paragraph you explain Hick’s soul-making theodicy as a response to the evidential problem of evil. Mention and explain as many details as possible (such as eschatology, the distance, among other things). These are classed as specialist terminology and explain your understanding. Explain also how this theodicy resolves the problem of evil. Your answer should answer the part of the question where it states ‘as possible solutions’. You could mention that God made man in his image and that we must pass through the trials and tests in this imperfect world of natural and moral evil.
- In the third paragraph explain the free will defence in detail. You could mention that choice not being free will, with the example of a person choosing out of only one other example.

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B. 'There are no convincing explanations for the problem of evil.' Assess

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- This question is testing how well you can analyse, assess and evaluate the Objective 2 or AO2). This can be recognised by the term 'assess'. It uses inverted commas.
- The examiners will be looking to place you a star in one of the following

Marks band	Level	What type of answer
5	13–15	The answer is well-reasoned with detailed analysis, good examples, evidence or textual references and has used specialist terminology consistently.
4	10–12	Different sides to the argument are presented with evaluation based on the points made. There are textual references included to illustrate the point and specialist terminology is used correctly.
3	7–9	Different sides to the argument are considered with or textual references. The answer has a lot that is clear and specialist terminology is used.
2	4–6	A limited answer that is one-sided. There are few textual references to support the point and the point is not quite clear and uses some specialist terminology.
1	1–3	There is an answer to the question, but this is one-sided, inaccurate or irrelevant and specialist terminology is not used.
0	0	Nothing worthy of credit.

Here is a suggestion of what you could put in your paragraph:

- In the first paragraph you could look at one of the theodicies that you could consider (the free will defence or the process theodicy) and explain its strengths/weaknesses.
- In the second paragraph you could look at another theodicy that you could consider and explain its strengths/weaknesses as well.
- In the third paragraph you could look at the final one which you consider and explain why it is successful or you might think it is equally unsuccessful.
- In your conclusion you then answer the question about whether any theodicy is successful or that none of them are. Explain briefly why this is the point you made in the main body of your answer).

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A Level


C. Examine Hick’s soul-making theodicy and the free will defence as possible responses to the evidential problem of evil and suffering in the world. (10 marks)

HINTS

- This question is testing your knowledge and understanding (Assessment Objective 1) and your ability to analyse (Assessment Objective 2) and evaluate (Assessment Objective 3) the responses to the evidential problem of evil and suffering. The question word ‘examine’ [‘examine’ requires more depth in the answer than ‘explain’ which you would get at AS. At A Level the AO1 is 15.
- The examiner will be looking to place your answer in one of the following bands:



Band	Level	What type of answer is expected
5	9-10	An answer that is completely correct, relevant and detailed. There is critical analysis and different views are presented in detail with good examples and references to texts. The answer has used specialist terminology consistently and correctly.
4	7-8	An answer that is predominantly correct, relevant and detailed. There is critical analysis. There are lots of examples and references to texts to illustrate the points made. Diverse views are addressed clearly and specialist terminology is used correctly.
3	5-6	An answer that has a lot that is correct, relevant and detailed. There are some examples and references to texts to illustrate the points made. There is some critical analysis and some knowledge of different views. Specialist terminology is used quite clearly.
2	3-4	A limited answer which shows some knowledge and understanding. There are some references to alternative views but there are no references to texts to illustrate points made. There is some specialist terminology.
1	0	The answer shows some basic knowledge and understanding. There are some relevant or accurate points but most of the answer is incorrect, unclear or unconvincing. Specialist terminology is very limited.



Here is a suggestion of what you could put in each paragraph:

- In your first paragraph you need to give the two theodicies some context. You need to explain what theodicies are – as responses to the evidential problem of evil and suffering. In brief, don't go into detail about the logical and evidential problems of evil and suffering. There is an inconsistency with God being omnipotent and omnibenevolent if evil and suffering exist. Children dying needlessly every day suggests a God doesn't exist. This is why we need theodicies.
- In the second paragraph you explain Hick's soul-making theodicy as a response to the evidential problem of evil and suffering. Mention and explain as many details as possible (such as eschatological distance, among other things). These are classed as specialist terminology and explain your understanding. Explain also how this theodicy resolves the problem of evil and suffering. It answers the part of the question where it states 'possible solutions'. You need to explain how Hick's theodicy is based on the idea that God is creating us in his image and that we must pass through trials and tests in this imperfect world (the problem of natural and moral evil). You need to explain how Hick originally proposed this theodicy and what he suggested as an alternative to soul-making.
- In your third paragraph explain the free will defence in detail. You could explain how the free will defence is based on the idea of free will, with the example of having choice out of only one option. You could include the criticisms that Mackie has of the free will defence and how these are responded to by Plantinga. This demonstrates critical analysis and evaluation.

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D. 'There are no convincing explanations for the problem of evil.' Evaluate

HINTS

- This question is testing how well you can analyse, assess and evaluate the Objective 2 or AO2). This can be recognised by the term 'evaluate'. It uses inverted commas.
- The examiners will be looking to place you a level in one of the following

Marks band	Level	What type of answer
5	13–15	The answer is well-reasoned with detailed analysis. There are good examples, evidence or textual references. The answer shows clarity and insightful discussion. The answer uses relevant and specialist terminology consistently and accurately.
4	10–12	Different sides to the argument are presented with a clear evaluation based on the points made. There are good textual references included to illustrate the point made. The answer is clear and contains some critical analysis. Specialist terminology is used correctly.
3	7–9	Different sides to the argument are considered with some evidence or textual references. The answer has a clear point. The answer is mainly clear and specialist terminology is used correctly.
2	4–6	A limited answer that is one-sided. There are some textual references to support the point and the answer is quite clear and uses some specialist terminology.
1	1–3	There is an answer to the question but this is one-sided. The answer is inaccurate and specialist terminology is rarely mentioned.
0	0	Nothing worthy of credit.

Here is a suggestion of what you could put in each paragraph:

- In the first paragraph you could look at one of the theodicies that you covered (the free will defence, the process theodicy) and explain its strengths/weaknesses. Remember, the more detailed analysis you show the better.
- In the second paragraph you could look at another theodicy that you covered and explain its strengths/weaknesses as well.
- In the third paragraph you could look at the final one which you considered most convincing. Then explain why it is successful or you might think it is equally unsuccessful.
- In your conclusion you then answer the question about whether any theodicy is successful or that none of them are. Explain briefly why this is the point you made in the main body of your answer).



Activity: Now have a go at writing your own responses to the question above OR using your own ideas.



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Religious Experience

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Corporeal:	When used in relation to a vision, this is a vision of a figure visible to some people.
Imaginative:	This is a type of vision (if produced by someone's imagination).
Intellectual:	This is a type of vision that gives the person knowledge.
Mystical experience:	In the context of this specification, a mystical experience is an experience that goes beyond the scope of what can be put into words. It is a religious experience because it is an experience that God or something beyond the physical exists. It is described as a union with the divine.
Numinous:	This is a term coined by Rudolph Otto. He thought that the term was adequate to describe a religious experience of God. He used the term numinous for the purpose of trying to describe what is numinous.
Religious experience:	This is an experience of a religious nature. There are different types of religious experiences, such as visions, voices, near-death experiences, conversion experiences, etc. Religious experience is used as personal proof for the existence of God. It is an experience that is generally considered to be a religious experience.
Visions:	These are a type of religious experience that involve the perception of something from within the mind).

Overview

Religious experiences are an important aspect of most religions. They are of a divine nature that allow the person experiencing them to have some proof of the existence of God. They are one of the most popular experiences and they come in different forms: corporeal, imaginative, intellectual. This topic explores Rudolph Otto's discussion of numinous experiences, mystical experiences and how different scholars have attempted to define them by looking at the evidence of the person having the experience. The next section looks at problems with religious experiences.

Key Points

Nature of Religious Experience

- Religious experiences are used as evidence for the existence of God. It is an argument based on the evidence of the person having the experience.
- The argument is as follows:
 - People say they experience X.
 - X exists.
 - People say they experience God.
 - God must exist.
- Religious experiences are subjective, mental, unverifiable by more than one person. As they are something divine instead of ordinary objects, difficult to describe, they provide a personal and changing.
- Religious experiences can provide evidence for the person having the experience but they cannot provide proof to others of their religious experience.

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Visions

- Visions are a type of religious experience. They are personal proof to those who claim that the vision they have seen exists.
- Corporeal visions are visions that involve a person seeing a religious figure in person, such as an angel, a saint or some other significant figure. An example of a corporeal vision is the vision of Mary in Lourdes, where she was living. She claimed to see the Virgin Mary and other people. It is likely that some other people (but not all) may see the same vision. An example of a group of people seeing a vision is the vision of the angel of Mons. This angel appeared to soldiers fighting during World War I.
- Imaginative visions are visions that are the product of someone's imagination. They are different from corporeal visions and other imaginative visions in that they are not seen by the person who has the vision. They appear to a person when they have been in deep contemplation and are not perceived from their senses. They can appear in dreams. An example of an imaginative vision is the angel who appears to Joseph telling him to marry Mary and to flee to Egypt (Matthew 1:20-23).
- Intellectual visions are visions that give the experiencer special knowledge and an important message as was the case with John who had visions of the end of the world described in the Book of Revelation, in particular Revelation 20:12-15.

Numinous Experiences

- The term 'numinous' was coined by Rudolph Otto, who thought that terms such as 'mystical' were not enough to describe a religious experience.
- Otto defines it as 'the deepest and most fundamental element in all strong religious experiences, an emotion'. It is an experience of the 'wholly other'.
- Numinous experiences are where the experiencer feels very separate from the world around them.
- Numinous experiences happen suddenly and depend on something external to the experiencer.
- Otto argues that humans can experience both the rational and the mundane (the ordinary, the irrational) and numinous.
- Otto analysed the numinous further as 'mysterium tremendum et fascinans' (mysterium = mysterious and fascinating). The tremendum has three aspects: awefulness, overpowering and fear. The mysterium has two aspects: the wholly other and fascination.

Mystical Experiences

- Mystical experiences differ from numinous experiences. Mystical experiences are direct experiences of the divine, whereas a numinous experience accentuates the fact that the experience is something other than the self. Mystical experiences are internal rather than external (as is the case for numinous experiences) and often involve preparation.
- Examples of famous mystics who wrote about their mystical experiences include Meister Eckhart in Christianity, Rumi in Islam or the practice of Kabbalah in Judaism. The Hindu concept of moksha is an experience where it is realised that the soul of a person (the individual) is part of the pervading macro-spirit (God or Brahman).
- Mystical experiences can be defined according to their characteristics. William James identified four characteristics: ineffability, noetic quality, passivity and transiency. Ineffability is about not being able to describe the experience. Noetic quality is the deeper knowledge that a mystical experience gives; this is not knowledge that can be gained from books. Transiency is about the fact that the experience does not last very long but is intense. It is that the mystical experience happens to the experiencer; they are taken over by the experience.
- Walter Stace explains that there are two types of mystical experience: extrovertive and introvertive. Extrovertive experiences are through the physical senses and show the world to be a different way than it appears. They are super-sensuous and non-intellectual. The experiencer of an extrovertive experience does not experience through the senses or reason but merges with the divine and loses their individual identity.

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Key Texts/Scholars

Teresa of Avila (1515–1582):

Teresa was a Spanish Christian mystic. She wrote about her mystical experiences and prayer that can lead to a spiritual marriage with the divine in her *Autobiography* and *Interior Castle*.

St Bernadette (1844–1879):

Bernadette Sobiros was a young girl when she had her first vision of Mary near Lourdes, France. These visions became renowned and have been pronounced authentic by the Catholic Church. A shrine was then built near this cave, which is visited by hundreds of people every year who believe in the water running from the spring in the cave.

William James (1842–1910):

James was an American philosopher and psychologist. His brother Henry James was a famous work for Religious Studies is *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. He discussed mystical experiences: Chapters 15 and 16. Chapter 15 discusses the characteristics of mystical experiences. James was a radical empiricist, studying both observable objects and the relations between them.

Rudolph Otto ((1869–1937):

Otto was a German theologian who belonged to the Lutheran (Protestant) Church. In his *Holy of 1917* that he talks about the numinous.

John of Patmos and the Book of Revelation:

John had visions of the end of the world and these form the contents of the last book of the Bible, the Book of Revelation.

Rumi (1207–1273):

Rumi was a Persian, Muslim poet and mystic. His works focus on the idea of *tawhid* (unity) with God. He predicted his own death and wrote about it in one of his ghazals (Persian poems).

Walter Stace (1886–1967):

Stace was a British philosopher who wrote about types of mystical experiences in *Philosophy*. He was an empiricist who believed that the empirical should not just be taken as verified.

Upanishads (c.800–c.500 BCE):

The Upanishads are a collection of short books on Hindu spiritual and philosophical teachings. 'upanishad' means to sit near. This refers to the fact that these texts are the words of a guru to his disciple sitting near or at the feet of the guru.

Year 2 Advanced Considerations

In Year 2, you will look at the topic of miracles. Miracles are different from religious experiences, usually defined as being a physical act that goes against the laws of nature (although there are many ways of defining miracles). Miracles do, however, face similar problems of verification as religious experiences: not enough witnesses.

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Student Checklist

What Do I Know?	No Idea 😞	Some Idea 😐	Good Idea 😊	
What is the argument from religious experience?				
How would you define religious experience in general terms?				
What is a vision?				
What types of visions are there?				
Give some examples of the types of vision.				
What are numinous experiences?				
What are mystical experiences?				
What is the difference between mystical and numinous experiences?				
Give some examples of mystics.				
How did William James define mystical experiences (what are the characteristics)?				
Describe the characteristics of a mystical experience. Which Stages are recognised?				

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Exam-style Questions

AS

A. Explain the different types of vision that religious people might experience.

HINTS

- This question is testing your knowledge and understanding (Assessment Objective 1) which is recognised by the term 'explain'.
- The examiners will be looking to place your answer in one of the following levels:

Mark band	Level	What type of answer is expected
5	13–15	An answer that is completely correct, relevant and detailed. There is a lot of detail with good examples. The answer is clear and has used specialist terminology throughout.
4	10–12	An answer that is predominantly correct, relevant and detailed. There are lots of examples and references to texts. The answer is clear and specialist terminology is used.
3	7–9	An answer that has a lot that is correct, relevant and detailed. There are some examples and references to texts. The answer is quite clear and specialist terminology is used.
2	4–6	A limited answer which shows some knowledge and understanding. There are very few examples and references made. The answer is relatively clear. Some specialist terminology is used.
1	1–3	The answer shows some basic knowledge and understanding. There are a few points that are relevant and accurate but more detail is needed. Specialist terminology is not used.
0		Nothing worthy of credit.

Here is a suggestion of what you could put in each paragraph:

- In the first paragraph it is good to write some general points about what visions are and how visions are a type of religious experience. Explain how they are used by religious people to understand God. This demonstrates understanding of the importance of religious experience.
- In the next paragraphs you need to write about the three types of vision that you have studied and illustrate them. The examples provide detail. The more accurate and detailed the examples, the higher the mark.

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B. 'Visions might have a scientific explanation that rules out any proof of marks)

HINTS

- This question is testing how well you can analyse, assess and evaluate the Objective 2 or AO2). This can be recognised by the term 'assess'. It uses inverted commas but not always.
- The examiners will be looking to place your answer in one of the following

Marks band	Score	What type of answer
5	13–15	The answer is well-reasoned with detailed analysis. There are good examples, evidence or textual references included and has used specialist terminology consistently.
4	10–12	Different sides to the argument are presented with evaluation based on the points made. There are textual references included to illustrate the point and specialist terminology is used correctly.
3	7–9	Different sides to the argument are considered with evidence or textual references. The answer has a clear point and is mainly clear and specialist terminology is used correctly.
2	4–6	A limited answer that is one-sided. There are some textual references to support the point and the point is clear and uses some specialist terminology.
1	1–3	There is an answer to the question, but this is one-sided and is inaccurate or irrelevant and specialist terminology is not mentioned.
0	0	Nothing worthy of a grade.

Here is a suggestion of what you could put in each paragraph:

- In your first paragraph, it is best to write about scientific reasons for visions. This could be the fact that the person is hallucinating. People suffer from hallucinations. Give an example to illustrate this. You might mention hallucinations such as mental illness, drugs or alcohol, sleep deprivation. This is covered in the next topic which you can integrate into this one.
- Science would find it difficult to explain how more than one person can have a corporeal vision. Give an example that illustrates this, such as the angel of Mons.
- Science might explain the reason for multiple people having the same vision as environmental factors. In the case of the angel of Mons, it could have been the pressure to agree that what they saw was an angel. The soldiers may have been tired and suffered from stress. Decide whether this is convincing enough as an explanation.
- The use of drugs or alcohol, or having sleep deprivation, as causes for visions is not convincing as there are many things beyond the physical that do exist.
- In your conclusion answer the question by taking a position and say why you think this.

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A Level

C. Examine the different types of vision that religious people might experience

HINTS

- This question is testing your knowledge and understanding (Assessment Objective 1) recognised by the term 'examine'. Examining requires more depth in the answer than the question word 'explain' which you would see at AS. At A Level the AO1 is worth 15 marks.
- The examiners will be looking to place your answer in one of the following categories:

Level	What type of answer
5	An answer that is completely correct, relevant and detailed. There is critical analysis and different views are presented. There are lots of detail with good examples and references to texts. Specialist terminology is used consistently and has used specialist terminology consistently.
4	An answer that is predominantly correct, relevant and detailed. There is some critical analysis. There are lots of examples and references to texts to illustrate the points made. Diverse views are presented. Specialist terminology is used correctly.
3	An answer that has a lot that is correct, relevant and detailed. There are some examples and references to texts to illustrate the points made. There is some critical analysis and some knowledge of different views. Specialist terminology is used.
2	A limited answer which shows some knowledge and understanding. There are some references to alternative positions but there are no references to texts to illustrate points made. There is some critical analysis. Some specialist terminology is used.
1	The answer shows some basic knowledge and understanding. There are some points that are relevant or accurate and with some references to texts, but most of the answer is incorrect, or lacks critical analysis. Specialist terminology is not used.
0	Nothing worthy of credit.

Here is a suggestion of what you could put in each paragraph:

- In your first paragraph it is good to write some general points about what visions are and how visions are a type of religious experience. Explain how they are used by religious people to connect with God. This demonstrates understanding of the importance of religious experience.
- In the next paragraphs you need to write about the three types of vision that you have illustrated. The examples provide detail. The more accurate and detailed the better. This will earn you a higher mark.
- To demonstrate critical analysis, you could explain how it is difficult to distinguish between imaginative visions because it could be argued that visions are entirely subjective.

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D. 'Visions might have a scientific explanation that rules out any proof of their existence' (15 marks)

HINTS

- This question is testing how well you can analyse, assess and evaluate the text (Objective 2 or AO2). This can be recognised by the term 'evaluate'. It is also indicated by the inverted commas.
- The examiners will be looking to place your answer in one of the following bands:

Marks band	Level	What type of answer
5	13–15	The answer is well-reasoned with detailed analysis and good examples, evidence or textual references in support of the points made. There is clarity and insightful discussion. There is critical analysis and specialist terminology is used consistently and throughout.
4	10–12	Different sides to the argument are presented with evaluation based on the points made. There are good textual references included to illustrate the points made and contains some critical analysis. Specialist terminology is used.
3	7–9	Different sides to the argument are considered with some textual references. The answer has a lot that is clear and specialist terminology is used.
2	4–6	A limited answer that is one-sided. There are some textual references to support the point and the point is made quite clear and uses some specialist terminology.
1	1–3	There is an answer to the question but this is one-sided, inaccurate or irrelevant and specialist terminology is not used.
0	0	Nothing worthy of credit.

Here is a suggestion of what you could write in each paragraph:

- In your first paragraph, you need to write about scientific reasons for visions. This could be the fact that the person is hallucinating. People suffer from hallucinations. Give an example to illustrate this. You might mention hallucinations such as mental illness, drugs or alcohol, sleep deprivation. You could refer to the next topic which you can integrate into this one.
- Science would find it difficult to explain how more than one person can have a corporeal vision. Give an example that illustrates this, such as the angel of Mons.
- Science might explain the reason for multiple people having the same vision as environmental factors. In the case of the angel of Mons, it could have been the pressure to agree that what they saw was an angel. The soldiers may have been tired and suffered from stress. Decide whether this is convincing enough as an explanation.
- The use of drugs or alcohol, or having sleep deprivation, as causes for visions are things beyond the physical that do exist.
- Another suggestion is to refer to Hick and his idea of 'experiencing as' to explain visions. In addition, Hick gave the example of hearing woodpeckers in a wood. Only woodpeckers will hear it. In the same way, only people tuned into religious experiences will hear it. Science could find this difficult to explain and yet the example of the angel of Mons is possible that there are other dimensions we are not tuned into or understand.
- In your conclusion answer the question by taking a position and say why you think this.

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Tip: You have a go at writing your own responses to the question OR using your own ideas.

Verifying Religious Experiences

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Collective neurosis:	A neurosis is, according to Freud, a traumatic experience suppressed in the unconscious. A collective neurosis is experienced by many people.
Credulity:	This is the idea that we should believe something to be true without evidence.
Empirical:	This means to be based on observations gained through the senses.
Falsification:	This means proving something to be false.
Ineffable:	This means it cannot be put into words. There are no words that can describe it.
Logical positivism:	This is a position taken by a group of philosophers in the 1920s and 30s who argued that only things that can be verified (proved to be true through logic) are meaningful.
Physiological:	This means relating to how the body functions.
Psychological:	This means relating to how the mind works.
Temporal lobe epilepsy:	This is a form of epilepsy that takes place in the temporal lobe which is at the front of the brain. It is believed to be related to language development. Epilepsy causes people to have strange experiences.
Testimony:	This is a statement made by someone.
Verification:	This means checking or proving. If I say: 'There is a green wall in my room', you can verify this by going to my room and seeing if there is a green wall.

Overview

Religious experiences are an invaluable part of most religions. The particular problem is that religious experiences are mental, subjective and very difficult to prove they actually happened or that they are an actual experience. Philosophers and scientists have looked at ways of proving and disproving religious experiences. In the 1920s and 30s, logical positivists argued that, for the day, religious experiences are evidence for the person who had the experience. Swinburne, on the other hand, argued that religious experiences should be taken into account and not just dismissed as delusional, argues Swinburne.

Key Points

The Challenges to Verifying Religious Experiences

- Religious experiences are mental and subjective and so they are not physical.
- Religious experiences, especially mystical experiences, are also ineffable. This means they cannot be expressed in language and so cannot be proved if they cannot be expressed in language.
- Language is a means of communication, expressing things that relate to the world (verified). Religious experiences are not in the world and so cannot be verified.
- Logical positivists claim that only language that relates to things that can be verified is meaningful. They argue that the language used by those trying to explain their religious experiences is meaningless.

The Challenges to Religious Experiences from Science

- Science relies on evidence obtained through empirical means. Scientists examine someone's brain when they are having a religious experience.
- There are psychological explanations for religious experiences: Freud believed they were either the result of immaturity or mental illness.

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- There are physiological explanations for religious experiences: the neuroscientist Vilayanur Ramachandran examined the subjects who suffered from temporal lobe epilepsy by constantly showing the subjects then had religious experiences. Ramachandran believed that religious experiences in people suffering from temporal lobe epilepsy. Saul, who had a vision on the road to Damascus, converted to Christianity and became known as Paul. He probably had temporal lobe epilepsy.
- Other causes of religious experiences are: mental illness, sleep deprivation, drug use, etc.

Religious Responses to These Challenges

- Carl Jung believed there were many religious people without mental illness who had religious experiences. The explanation was that these people were going through a process of self-realisation.
- The findings of Ramachandran do not rule out the existence of God. God may have caused certain individuals to have temporal lobe epilepsy in order to communicate to them. A scientific explanation does not make them unreal experiences.
- Religious experiences are open to all and not just people with temporal lobe epilepsy.

Swinburne's Principle of Testimony and Principle of Credulity

- Richard Swinburne presents two reasons/defences for why you should believe in religious experience. They both rely on probability.
- The principle of testimony is the idea that we should believe what a person who has seen something should be considered reliable. The focus is on what has been seen.
- The principle of credulity is the idea that we should believe a person when they tell us something. The focus is on the person who had the experience.

The Influence of Religious Experiences and Their Value for Religion

- Religious experiences are a valuable aspect of most religions. They feature in the lives of many people. The conversion to Christianity is famously documented in the Bible. The visions of the Virgin Mary and the Revelation. The Muslim prophet Mohammed's revelations that form the Qur'an are also religious experiences.
- Religious experiences are not just evidence of religious beliefs.
- Religious experiences can change a person's life, and this is evidence for others who have had similar experiences. It can encourage others to do the same.
- Religious experiences inspire believers to lead a religious life.
- Places such as Lourdes have become places of religious significance because of the religious experiences that have occurred there.

Key Texts/Scholars

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939):

Freud was the founder of psychoanalysis, which recognised the existence of a subconscious mind. Freud was an empiricist and an atheist and believed that his new science of the mind could explain religion. He believed that religion was for the immature. He studied patients with mental illnesses and found that they often had religious beliefs.

Carl Jung (1875-1961):

Jung was a student of Freud's for a short time. He also practised psychoanalysis. Jung believed that religion had a positive role as it helped with the process of individuation. This is the process of becoming a whole or self-realised person.

V S Ramachandran (1951-):

Ramachandran is a neuroscientist famous for examining neurological conditions such as phantom limb pain and religious experiences.

Paul the Apostle:

Paul was originally named Saul. He converted to Christianity after having a vision on the road to Damascus. This important event is recorded in the New Testament.

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Year 2 Advanced Considerations

In Year 2, you will look at the nature of religious language. Religious experiences are where you discuss whether religious experiences are to be taken as a matter of fact. In the topic of miracles in Year 2, there are realist and anti-realist views of miracles. Realist views are different from miracles in that miracles are public events, the realist and anti-realist views are to religious experiences. A realist would argue that they should be regarded as events that do not. Swinburne argues that they do happen in applying the principles of credulity. An anti-realist will not consider it important to resolve religious experiences as proof but a matter of faith. The final topic of self, death and the afterlife, near-death experiences are considered. Near-death experiences are also a type of religious experience.

Student Checklist

What Do I Know?	No Idea 😞	Some Idea 😐	Good Idea 😊
What are the challenges in verifying religious experiences?			
What are the challenges to religious experiences from science?			
What are the religious responses to these challenges?			
What is Swinburne's principle of credulity?			
What is Swinburne's principle of testimony?			
What are the influences of religious experiences on religious belief?			
How important are religious experiences for religious faith?			

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Exam-style Questions

AS

A. Explain the challenges in verifying religious experiences, including the (15 marks)

HINTS

- This question is testing your knowledge and understanding (Assessment Objective 1) and is recognised by the command 'explain'.
- The question asks you to be looking to place your answer in one of the following bands:

marks band	Level	What type of answer
5	13–15	An answer that is completely correct, relevant and detailed. There is a lot of detail with good examples and the answer is clear and has used specialist terminology throughout.
4	10–12	An answer that is predominantly correct, relevant and detailed. There are lots of examples and references to texts to illustrate the answer is clear and specialist terminology is used.
3	7–9	An answer that has a lot that is correct, relevant and detailed. There are some examples and references to texts to illustrate. The answer is quite clear and specialist terminology is used.
2	4–6	A limited answer which shows some knowledge and understanding. There are very few examples and references to texts to illustrate. The answer is relatively clear. Some specialist terminology is used.
1	1–3	The answer shows some basic knowledge and understanding. There are a few points that are relevant or accurate but most of the answer is underdeveloped. Specialist terminology is not used.
0	0	Nothing worthy of credit

Here is a suggestion of what you could put in each paragraph:

- In the first paragraph it is good to explain what a religious experience is, and how it is mental, subjective and ineffable.
- In the second paragraph, you explain the challenges that religious experiences face as they cannot be verified and are not objective. In order to demonstrate your understanding it is good to include what logical positivists would say. This is where you can link in theories and scholars.
- In the next paragraphs you need to write about the scientific explanation of religious experiences. These include Freud and Ramachandran. Again, you are referring to scientific theories, so specialist terminology and explain it. Giving examples of religious experiences and explain them also provides detail.

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B. 'In spite of criticisms, religious experiences are a trustworthy argument'.
Assess this claim. (15 marks)

HINTS

- This question is testing how well you can analyse, assess and evaluate the claim (Objective 2 or AO2). This can be recognised by the term 'assess'.
- The examiners will be looking to place your answer in one of the following bands:

Marks band	Level	What type of answer
 5	13–15	The answer is well-reasoned with detailed analysis. There are good examples, evidence or textual references. The answer is clear and has used specialist terminology throughout.
4	10–12	Different sides to the argument are presented with evaluation based on the points made. There are textual references included to illustrate the point. The answer is clear and specialist terminology is used correctly.
3	7–9	Different sides to the argument are considered with some evidence or textual references. The answer has some relevant points. The answer is mainly clear and specialist terminology is used correctly.
2	4–6	A limited answer that is one-sided. There are some textual references to support the point and the answer is quite clear and uses some specialist terminology.
1	1–3	There is an answer to the question, but this is one-sided. The answer is inaccurate or irrelevant and specialist terminology is rarely mentioned.
0	0	Nothing worthy of credit.

Here is a suggestion of what you could put in each paragraph:

- In your first paragraph, you could explain why religious experiences might be trustworthy. Give a brief account of what happened. Explain why this is a reasonable claim.
- In your second paragraph you could discuss Swinburne's principles of credulity. Explain why you think religious experiences are trustworthy. Explain why you think this is the case.
- In your next paragraph, you could provide further support for Swinburne's claim that religious experiences are proof for the actual person experiencing the event.
- In your next paragraph, you could explain how personal experiences do not prove that something actually happened, despite what Swinburne states. Religious experiences, as those that are recorded in religious scripture, cannot be easily tested. We do not have a scientific explanation now we know more about things in terms of neuroscience.
- In your conclusion answer the question by taking a position and say why you think religious experiences are trustworthy.

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A Level

- C. Examine the challenges in verifying religious experiences, including the (10 marks)

HINTS

- This question is testing your knowledge and understanding (Assessment Objective 1) recognised by the term 'examine'. Examine requires more depth in the form of the question word 'explain' which you would get at AS. At A Level the AO1 question word 'explain' is used.
- The examiners will be looking for you to place your answer in one of the following

Mark	Level	What type of answer
5	9-10	An answer that is completely correct, relevant and detailed. There is critical analysis and different views are discussed in detail with good examples and references to texts. Specialist terminology is used consistently and correctly.
4	7-8	An answer that is predominantly correct, relevant and detailed. There is critical analysis. There are lots of examples and references to texts to illustrate the points made. Diverse views are addressed clearly and specialist terminology is used correctly.
3	5-6	An answer that has a lot that is correct, relevant and detailed. There are some examples and references to texts to illustrate the points made. Some critical analysis and some knowledge of different views is shown. Specialist terminology is used correctly.
2	3-4	A limited answer which shows some knowledge and understanding. There are some references to alternative positions but there are few examples and references to texts to illustrate the points made. There is some critical analysis. Some specialist terminology is used.
1	1-2	The answer shows some basic knowledge and understanding. It is often irrelevant or inaccurate and with some references to texts. Most of the answer is incorrect, unclear or unconvincing. There is little or no critical analysis. Specialist terminology is very rarely used.
0	0	Nothing worthy of credit.

Here is a suggestion of what you could put in each paragraph:

- In your first paragraph it is good to explain what a religious experience is. It is mental, subjective and ineffable. To demonstrate critical analysis, you could discuss the challenges of religious experience.
- In the second paragraph, you explain the challenges that religious experiences face. They cannot be verified and are not objective. In order to demonstrate critical analysis, it is good to include what logical positivists would say. You can link in theories and scholars. You could integrate Anthony Flew's falsification here (this is something you learnt under religious language).
- In the next paragraphs you need to write about the scientific explanation of religious experiences. These include Freud and Ramachandran. Again, you are referring to scientific theories and specialist terminology and explain it. Giving examples of religious experiences and explain them also provides detail.

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D. 'In spite of criticisms, religious experiences are a trustworthy argument'. Evaluate this claim. (15 marks)

HINTS

- This question is testing how well you can analyse, assess and evaluate the text (Objective 2 or AO2). This can be recognised by the term 'evaluate'. It is often indicated by inverted commas.
- The examiners will be looking to see your answer in one of the following bands:

Marks band	Level	What type of answer
5	13–15	The answer is well-reasoned with detailed analysis. There are good examples, evidence or textual references. The answer shows clarity and insightful discussion. There is consistent use of specialist terminology used consistently and throughout.
4	10–12	Different sides to the argument are presented with a clear evaluation based on the points made. There are good textual references included to illustrate the point made and contains some critical analysis. Specialist terminology is used.
3	7–9	Different sides to the argument are considered with some evidence or textual references. The answer has a clear point. The answer is mainly clear and specialist terminology is used correctly.
2	4–6	A limited answer that is one-sided. There are some textual references to support the point and the point is clear. The answer is quite clear and uses some specialist terminology.
1	1–3	There is an answer to the question but this is one-sided. The answer is inaccurate or irrelevant and specialist terminology is not mentioned.
0	0	Nothing worthy of credit.

Here is a suggestion of what you could put in each paragraph:

- In your first paragraph, you could explain why religious experiences might be a trustworthy account of what happened. Explain why this is a reasonable claim.
- In your second paragraph you could discuss Swinburne's principles of credulity for believing religious experiences are trustworthy. Explain why you think these are good examples where this might be the case.
- In your next paragraph, you could provide further support for Swinburne's claim that religious experiences are proof for the actual person experiencing the event.
- In your next paragraph, you could explain how personal experiences do not prove something actually happened, despite what Swinburne states. Religious experiences, as those that are recorded in religious scripture, cannot be easily tested. We do not have a scientific explanation now we know more about things in terms of neuroscience.
- You could bring the discussion of cognitivism versus non-cognitivism into the discussion (the topic of religious language). This shows detailed analysis and integration of different theories.
- In your conclusion answer the question by taking a position and say why you think this is the best answer.



Activity: Now have a go at writing your own responses to the question above OR using the ideas.



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True/False Quiz

1.	The design argument is an inductive argument.
2.	Paley criticised the design argument.
3.	Paley compared a stone to the eye.
4.	Hume believed that similar causes do not mean similar effects.
5.	The ontological argument is an inductive argument.
6.	Aquinas put forward a version of the ontological argument.
7.	The ontological argument argues that existence is a perfection and, because God is perfect, he must have existence.
8.	Gaunilo criticised the ontological argument using the example of a perfect island.
9.	Kant argued that existence is not a category but a perfection.
10.	The conclusion to the ontological argument is true if the premises are true.
11.	The cosmological argument is a deductive argument.
12.	The third way of Aquinas' arguments for the existence of God describes God as an unmoved mover.
13.	Oceans full of plastic causing fish to die is a natural evil.
14.	The logical problem of evil can be presented as the inconsistent triad.
15.	The inconsistent triad explains that God is omniscient and omnibenevolent yet evil exists.
16.	A theodicy defends the existence of an omnipotent and omnibenevolent God and evil in the world.
17.	Hick claims that God has made the world perfect.
18.	Hick believes that we cannot know God or of his plan as this would not encourage us to develop our souls.
19.	Mackie uses the free will defence.
20.	God could have made free will without the possibility of choosing evil, but he didn't.
21.	The process theodicy claims that God is still transcendent.
22.	The process theodicy is not a proper theodicy because it does not see God as omnipotent.
23.	Having a dream of an angel speaking to you is a corporeal vision.
24.	William James describes mystical experiences as numinous.
25.	William James describes mystical experiences as ineffable.
26.	Walter Stace believes that true mystical experiences are non-sensuous and non-intellectual.
27.	Religious experiences are mental, not objective and so they can easily be verified.
28.	Ramachandran has used that religious experiences could be verified. They are the result of someone suffering from temporal lobe epilepsy.
29.	Religious believers are happy for religious experiences to be explained by science.
30.	Swinburne argues in his principle of testimony that if an angel appears before a person, then there was probably an angel.

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Answers to True/False Quiz

1. True.
2. False. Paley presented a version of the design argument which he believed was created by God.
3. False. Paley compared a watch to the eye.
4. False. Hume argued that similar effects do not necessarily have similar causes.
5. False. The ontological argument is a deductive argument.
6. False. Aquinas did not put forward an ontological argument. Anselm is the person in relation to the ontological argument.
7. True.
8. True.
9. False. Kant argued that existence is a category, not a property or perfection.
10. True.
11. False. The cosmological argument is an inductive argument.
12. False. This is the first way. Aquinas describes God as a necessary being in his second way.
13. False. Fish dying from plastic waste is the result of humans not acting morally, not a moral evil.
14. True.
15. False. The inconsistent triad explains that God is omnipotent and omnibenevolent, but not omniscient.
16. True.
17. False. The world was created perfect so that humans could be tested.
18. True.
19. False. Alvin Plantinga uses the free will defence. J L Mackie criticises it.
20. False. Having free will but not being able to choose evil acts is not true free will.
21. False. God is transcendent as he is not part of creation.
22. True. Being omnipotent is an attribute of the God of classical theism and being omnibenevolent and evil existing is why there is a problem.
23. False. This is an example of a non-realist vision.
24. False. Rudolph Otto described a certain type of religious experience, not a mystical experience.
25. True. This is one of our criteria of a mystical experience.
26. True.
27. False. In order to be verified, more than one person needs to experience it. It is not physical.
28. True.
29. False. Science explains things without the need of God and so religious beliefs are not scientific explanations of religious experiences. Religious experiences are not explained by science that God exists.
30. False. This describes Swinburne's principle of credulity. The principle of testability says you should not believe a person when they say they have seen an angel.

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