

# **Topic on a Page**

## **for AS / A Level Year 1 AQA**

Component 1A: Philosophy of Religion

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# Teacher's Introduction

This resource covers the AS / A Level Year 1 AQA Religious Studies specification for Component 1A: Philosophy of Religion, and includes the following content:

## Arguments for the Existence of God

- Design argument
- Ontological argument
- Cosmological argument


## Evil and Suffering

- Concepts of evil
- Responses to the problem of evil and suffering

## Religious Experience

- Nature of religious experience
- Verifying religious experience

The resource is split into five sections as follows:

1. **A4 teacher information pages.**
  2. **Three A3 revision posters**, between them covering the seven subtopics. These are labelled: **1** to **3**. These posters are intended as a summary of all topic material, focusing on the main points rather than the detail, so that all important areas are covered without going into too much depth.
  3. **Seven A3 subtopic sheets with activities.** Each of these sheets covers one subtopic and provides write-on activities for students to complete. Answers can generally be found in the A3 revision posters themselves, but are also provided in a separate answer document (see section 5). These are labelled with numbers inside white circles: **1a** to **3b**.
- Exam-style questions, modelled on those found in the AS / A Level exam, are marked by a pencil icon: 
4. **Nine A4 subtopic revision posters.** These provide answers for the main activities given in the A3 subtopic activity sheets. As revision posters, these can be used as a summary for each area, and have enough space for teacher or student annotation. These are labelled with numbers inside black circles: **1a** to **3b**.
  5. **A4 answer sheets.** These pages provide more detailed answers to the questions on the A3 subtopic activity sheets; in particular, the long-answer questions. Student-friendly, AQA-style mark schemes are also provided for the exam-style questions.

All posters can be displayed on classroom walls, or given to students to learn in lessons or at home.

As a whole, the resource can be used to help students to consolidate knowledge at the end of a topic/subtopic, or to revise before a test or an exam. Different styles and layouts are used to make the information interesting and to help the students engage with the information in a productive way.

November 2019

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Aquinas' **fifth way** is a form of the design argument in which he argues that everything, seems to work towards an 'end'. Because these objects cannot achieve this 'best result' by themselves, they must be guided to it by an **intelligent being**, just as 'the arrow is directed by the archer'. This **order** in the world cannot be self-explanatory – something that 'lacks intelligence' cannot act 'with... intelligence'. Therefore, the explanation for this working towards a particular 'end' must be **explained** by something else controlling it which does have intelligence. This **intelligent being is, of course, God**.

The design argument is based on the following inductive premises reasoning:

- **Premise 1:** Man-made things in the world have been created by a designer with a particular purpose in mind, e.g. a watch and a watchmaker, a toy and a factory worker.
- **Premise 2:** The world looks as though it has been designed for a particular purpose because it works so well and has many intricate, complex parts.
- **In conclusion,** the world must have had a designer. This designer must have been God. Therefore, God exists.

The design argument uses **inductive reasoning**. Inductive reasoning is a form of proof or conclusion based on previous experience. It is reasoning based on premises which do not necessarily prove the conclusion. One can accept the premises and still not have to agree with the conclusion. This is the opposite of deductive reasoning where you would accept the premises (which obviously you don't have to), then the conclusion is necessarily true.

The design argument is a **posteriori** because they rely on experience of the world through perception and interpretation of the design within it. This means they have an empirical basis – they are based on evidence drawn from the world using the five senses.

### Background to the Design Argument



#### Paley's Argument

Paley puts forward his version of the design argument in response to Hume's criticism of Aquinas' argument. He draws an analogy using a **watch**. Both the watch and the world show purpose and design, which would not occur accidentally. The watch has been designed to work towards an end and needs a designer. In the same way, Paley argues that the world all works together towards the end of existence of humans and, therefore, needs a designer.



#### Strengths of the Design Argument

It is an inductive argument, which means that it is based on observation, which appeals to the human ability to observe. Paley's analogy is user-friendly; it makes sense and is easy to understand. It fits well with human concepts of purpose for life and for the universe – it seems inconceivable that this vast, complicated universe could be the result of random chaos.

#### The Design Argument

Hume's critique of Aquinas' Fifth Way has six main points:

1. Causal fallacy
2. Weak analogy
3. Unknown cause, not designer
4. Based on part, not whole
5. Could point to a designer, but tells us nothing about him or her or it
6. Anthropomorphism

#### Hume's Critique

#### A posteriori

Reasoning based on experience of the empirical world.

#### Predicate

An attribute or quality of something that can be possessed or lacked, e.g. a zebra's stripes.

#### 3.1.1

### Arguments for the existence of God

#### First Way – Argument from Motion

Things are in motion and can't move themselves. This forms a chain of 'moved' and 'moving'. This cannot go back forever (**infinite regress**). There must be an unmoved mover. This is God.

#### Second Way – Argument from Efficient Cause

Everything has a cause as things cannot be self-causing. There must be a necessary, ultimate cause. This is God.

Thomas Aquinas presents his Five Ways of God's Existence in his *Summa Theologica*. Three of these are cosmological.

For the sake of this course, the third way is considered.

**Third Way – Argument from Possibility** The world is made up of contingent beings. The contingent being which was always contingent. Only the existence of a necessary being can explain the existence of the contingent beings which we see. This necessary being is God.

#### The Cosmological Argument

#### Critiques of the Cosmological Argument

#### Strengths of the Cosmological Argument

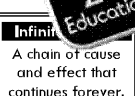
#### Key Terms

On a logical level, the cosmological argument works. The logic fits with our observation of the world.

It fits with current scientific beliefs about the universe, e.g. that it has not always been, but has had a beginning point (i.e. the Big Bang).

Hume's critique of key points:

1. Rejects necessity
2. We cannot assume the world has a cause.
3. The world by itself is self-sufficient, needing God.
4. Just because the world exists does not mean it was created.



#### First cause

Something which can create a chain of cause and effect, without being caused itself. The idea is rooted in the thought of Aristotle and is commonly thought to be God.

#### Infinite

A chain of cause and effect that continues forever.

#### Necessary existence

A being which cannot be conceived of as not existing and was not brought into being by anything else.

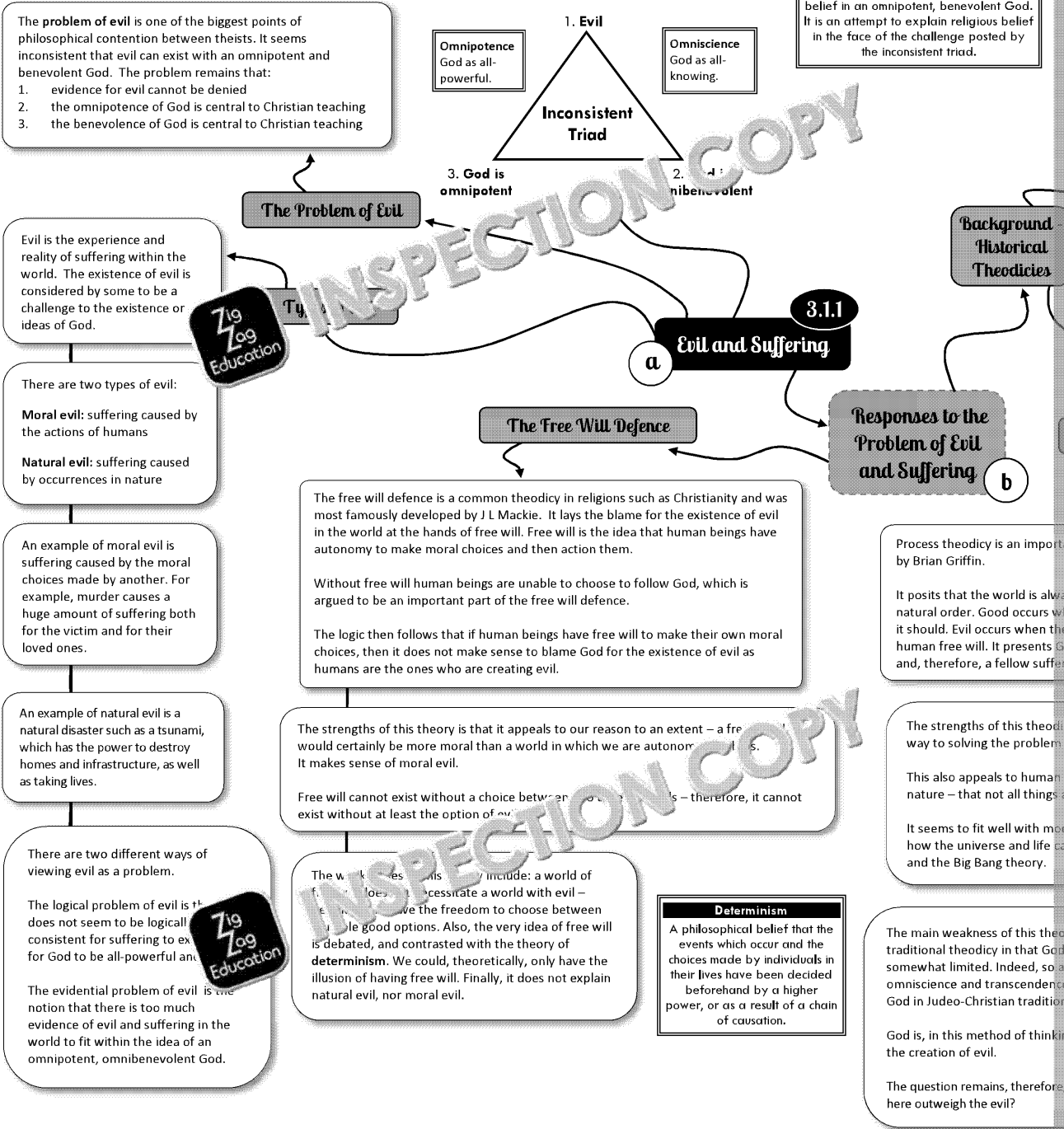
#### Contingent existence

A being or entity which depends on something else for its existence and can be conceived of as not existing.

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**William James** was a nineteenth-century theologian who was specifically interested in the religious experience and mystical experiences. He developed the following terms:

**Ineffability:** the nature of religious experience which is beyond human words

**Noetic quality:** being beyond the knowledge of normality

**Transiency:** the short-lived nature of a religious experience (but it may nonetheless effect great change in the person having it).

**Passivity:** a religious experience as being sourced from outside the individual and having an impact on them.

**Rudolph Otto** was a Christian Philologist who examined the nature of religious experience. He believed that a religious experience was defined by being **numinous**, which means the presence of the divine – an experience of what is considered wholly 'other' to the ordinary experience of human beings.

He developed the following terms:  
**Mysterium:** the mystery of religious experience  
**Tremendum:** sense of awe at religious experiences  
**Fascians:** fascination with the divine

Mystical experiences are a subsection of religious experiences. These are specifically defined as experiences of the numinous – the beyond.

**Walter Stace** believes that a mystical experience should be understood as a **non-sensuous and non-intellectual** union with the divine. During this experience the self will cease to be. The self is usurped by 'pure consciousness'. On this basis, he would not consider a vision to be a mystical experience, as visions are sensory (i.e. vision).

#### Religious experience

A religious experience is an experience of some Ultimate Reality – an experience of the divine, in which the individual is in contact with the divine.

### Religious Experience

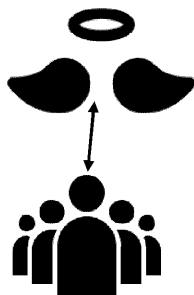
3.1.1

The two main religious responses to the nature of the brain are represented in the diagram.

#### The Top-down Model

Represents the idea that God or the divine gives religious experiences, which are interpreted through the brain.

#### The Interactive Model



Represents the idea that God or the divine can be approached by the believer and the believer can interact with this higher power through religious experiences. These can be interpreted through the brain and potentially achieved through stimulation.

#### Religious Science

#### Richard Swinburne's Principles of Testimony and Credulity

Richard Swinburne developed two principles which he held gave weight to the likelihood that religious experiences are as experiencers claim:

- **Principle of verification:** that unless there is evidence against a claim, we should believe the testimony of individuals
- **Principle of credulity:** that unless there is evidence against a claim, we should believe that things are as they appear to be

However, things are often not as they seem – for example, when hallucinations are involved.

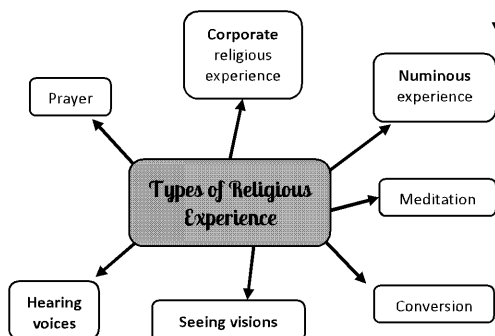
Swinburne is making an appeal to our moral intuition that we should not instantly assume people who have had religious experience are lying or misunderstanding. What then are the good principles for life, are these strong enough to argue for God's existence?

Religious experiences can be divided into two different categories:

- **Direct religious experience** (contact with God / an ultimate reality); for example, the conversion of Paul to Christianity and the giving of the Qur'an to Muhammad.
- **Indirect religious experience** (an internal sense of something other than this world); for example, the many mystical experiences of St Teresa of Avila in which she felt God's presence.



This is a condition which affects the temporal lobe of the brain. People afflicted with TLE are reported to have had experiences compared almost directly to religious experiences. It can be seen as an explanation for religious experiences. It has been suggested that perhaps those who are traditionally viewed as having experienced pivotal moments (e.g. St Paul) may have suffered from this condition.



There are different kinds of religious experience – such as corporate and individual. These are defined:

**Corporeal** – a vision which is external to the body

**Imaginative** – a vision which takes place within the mind

**Intellectual** – a vision which gives only knowledge/understanding/revelation

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# Arguments for the Existence of God: The Design Argument

1. Fill in the argument from design as posited by the philosopher indicated in each box.

B) William Paley

a) St Thomas Aquinas



Existence of God

The Design Argument

Explain the individual points of Hume's criticism in one sentence.

- a) Causal fallacy
- b) Weak analogy
- c) Unknown cause
- d) Based on part, not whole
- e) Could point to a designer, but tells us nothing about him
- f) Anthropomorphism

3. Write in each of the smaller boxes which kind of argument (a priori or a posteriori) is being described in the darker boxes.

A reasoning based on experience of the empirical world.

A form of reasoning which is independent of experience – through reason alone.

6. Explain the role of an argument from design

4. Explain the design argument using inductive reasoning. The formula has been laid out for you.

Premise 1:

Premise 2:

In conclusion:



If you are studying the AS level style question

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## Arguments for the Existence of God: The Ontological Argument

1. Fill in the gaps – with no clues!

Anselm of \_\_\_\_\_ first put forward the \_\_\_\_\_ argument. He sets out two premises which, if true, make the conclusion logically necessary:

1. God is the \_\_\_\_\_ conceivable being.
2. To be the greatest \_\_\_\_\_ being, God must exist in \_\_\_\_\_.

Conclusion: God \_\_\_\_\_

2. Multiple-choice

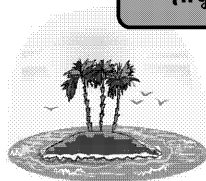
What kind of argument is Anselm's version of the ontological argument?

- a) A posteriori
- b) Inductive
- c) A priori



Arguments for the Existence of God

The Ontological Argument



3. Write the conclusion into the correct box with no clues!

a) \_\_\_\_\_  
→ Something that can be conceived of in our minds.

b) \_\_\_\_\_  
→ Something that exists within the realm of reality.

4. Circle the word which is correct within the brackets.

Gaunilo posited a rebuttal to Anselm's ontological argument.

- His reply was entitled 'On Behalf of the (Wise/Fool)'.
- His argument tries to highlight the false reasoning in Anselm's argument by applying the reasoning to other objects (apart from God) which clearly do not exist. He uses the example of (a lost / an imaginary) island.
- Overall, Gaunilo is arguing that there needs to be some kind of (inductive/empirical) proof that the island (and God) exists.
- He concludes that it is not possible to give a definition of (the island / God) and from this definition alone decide that God exists.

6. Define the terms in the boxes below.

a) Essence

b) Aseity

c) A priori

d) Predicate

5. Explain Kant's critique of the Ontological argument.

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## Arguments for the Existence of God: The Cosmological Argument

1. Fill in the definitions of the key terms in the boxes to the right.

a) First cause

b) Contingent existence

c) Necessary being

5. How did Hume critique the cosmological argument?

2. Describe the following three concepts in the boxes provided.

- a) Motion
- b) Efficient Cause
- c) Contingency and Necessity



c)

b)

a)

3. Which of the following is the text in which Aquinas put forward his 'Ways'?

- a) Summa Philosophica
- b) Summa Biblosica
- c) Summa Theologica

4. Explain the idea of infinite regress.



Hint!  
There are some red herrings among the word clues

Arguments for the Existence of God

6. Fill in the blanks to summarise your critique of the cosmological argument.

whole	necessary	complete
brute fact	always	never
necessary	partial	is

Bertrand Russell's critique of the argument is:

The logic used in the cosmological argument that God must have a \_\_\_\_\_ contradicts the idea of \_\_\_\_\_

- It is possible that the world could have always existed, meaning there is no need for a first cause.
- Russell argues that there is no need for a first cause.
- He believes that a \_\_\_\_\_ the world is satisfactory.
- He believes that the universe is infinite - something he calls a \_\_\_\_\_

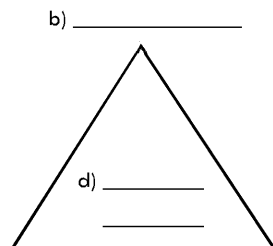
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## Evil and Suffering

1. Fill in the points of the triangle, and write in the center what philosophical concept this represents.



a) **Omnipotence**

b) **Omniscience**

c) **Omnibenevolence**

4. Give an example of extreme suffering that could be used to illustrate the problem of evil.

3. Write the correct word in the gaps below.

→ The problem of A \_\_\_\_\_ is one of the biggest points of philosophical contention for theists to deal with.

→ It seems B \_\_\_\_\_ that evil can exist with an omnipotent and benevolent God.

→ The problem remains that:

1. C \_\_\_\_\_ for evil cannot be denied
2. the D \_\_\_\_\_ of God is central to Christian teaching
3. the E \_\_\_\_\_ of God is central to Christian teaching

<b>A</b>	goodness	suffering	evil	hardship
<b>B</b>	plausible	necessary	inconsistent	obvious
<b>C</b>	existence	lies	experience	evidence
<b>D</b>	omnipotence	malevolence	incompetence	affluence
<b>E</b>	malevolence	physicality	benevolence	character

2. Define the terms above.

### Evil and Suffering

6. Which kind of evil might be more difficult for a theist to explain?

7. Why do you think this type of evil is more difficult to explain?

5. Explain what is meant by moral and natural evil, and give an example of each.

8. Explain what is meant by the logical problem of evil, and the evidential problem of evil.

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## Evil and Suffering: Responses to the Problem of Evil and Suffering

1. Define the term 'theodicy'.

3. Write out the definition for the term below.

Epistemic distance

A \_\_\_\_\_ believed that evil was a result of free will. Humans had the choice to do evil or do good and were free to choose to do evil. \_\_\_\_\_ believed that evil suffers from Augustinian evil. \_\_\_\_\_ believed God gave humanity free will so that they could achieve a particular purpose. \_\_\_\_\_ argued that this was to allow humans to develop moral and spiritual perfection – to develop to become truly in the image of God.

Evil and Suffering

Responses to the Problem of Evil and Suffering

2. In the boxes below, write the name of the philosopher who put forward the theodicy being described in the corresponding box.

A

B

C

Process theodicy was developed by C \_\_\_\_\_.

It posits that the world is always changing, and that there is a natural order. Good occurs when the natural order works as it should. Evil occurs when there is discord, as a result of human free will. It presents God as being part of the world and, therefore, a fellow sufferer.

B \_\_\_\_\_ of Iraq  
of Iraq  
soul-  
he be  
life in  
and r  
exist  
this g  
good  
For e  
suffe  
comp  
expe  
make  
this g  
that  
justif  
epist

4. What are the weaknesses of each of the theodicies given below? Write your thoughts in the space provided.

a) John Hick's theodicy

b) Brian Griffith's theodicy



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## Religious Experience

1. Fill in the gaps with the type of religious experience.

There are two different categories of religious experience. The \_\_\_\_\_ religious experience is an internal sense of something other than this world. The \_\_\_\_\_ is contact with the divine / God.

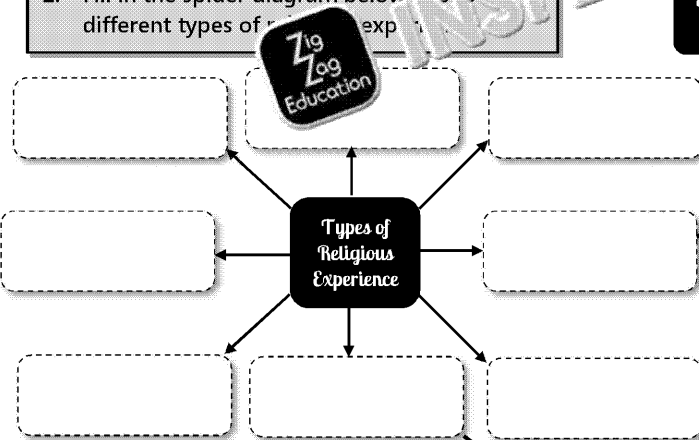
5. Fill in below the terms posited by Otto which are defined within the boxes.

a) \_\_\_\_\_  
→ This refers to the mystery of the religious encounter as experienced by the individual which cannot be adequately put into words.

b) \_\_\_\_\_  
→ This refers to a particular nature of the experience of the feeling of awe: a sense of dread of the impact of the greatness of the experienced impending power.

c) \_\_\_\_\_  
→ This refers to the nature of the belief being drawn into a religious experience by a fascination with the divine.

2. Fill in the spider diagram below with the different types of religious experience.



Religious Experience

6. Research an example of one of these experiences down below, it will be useful to use during exam. James and Otto in your notes.

3. Fill in the terms and meanings below.

William James' terms regarding religious experience:

- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_
- ✓ \_\_\_\_\_

4. Fill in the terms for the different kinds of vision below.

- There are different kinds of vision within religious experience. The
- \_\_\_\_\_ – a vision which is external to the body
  - \_\_\_\_\_ – a vision which takes place within the mind
  - \_\_\_\_\_ – a vision which gives only knowledge/understanding/revelation.

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## Religious Experience: Verifying Religious Experience

1. In the spaces provided below, give a brief summary of the three main scientific arguments against the existence of religious experiences.

2. Find the error in the sentence and write the correction below.

- a) David Hume claimed that his three principles gave weight to the fact that religious experiences were as those who experience them claimed.

.....

.....

- b) The principle of credulity states that unless there is evidence against a claim, we should believe the testimony of the experimenter.

.....

.....

- c) The principle of incredulity is that unless there is sufficient evidence to disprove something, we should accept the claim. However, we should not accept it, especially if many people report it, as in religious experiences.

.....

.....

- d) He argues that we should not instantly assume that people have understood what they have experienced.

.....

.....

3. How might a religious person respond to the challenge of Freud?

Religious  
Experience

Verifying  
Religious  
Experience

4. Which of the following is not one of Swinburne's principles?

- a) Principle of morality  
b) Principle of credulity  
c) Principle of testimony

In the space below, explain Swinburne's two principles.

1

2

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# Arguments for the existence of God (1)

Paley puts forward his version of the design argument in response to Hume's criticism of Aquinas' argument. He draws an analogy using a **watch**. Both the watch and the world show purpose and design, which would not occur accidentally. The watch has been designed to point towards an end – a designer. In the same way, the world all works towards the end of existence of humans and, therefore, needs a designer.

Aquinas' **fifth way** is a form of the design argument in which he argues that things which seem to work towards an 'end'. For example, these objects cannot achieve themselves, they must be moved to it by an **intelligent being**, just as 'by the archer'. This order in the world cannot be self-explanatory – so *'intelligence cannot exist without... intelligence'*. Therefore, the explanation to this order must be **explained** by something else containing more intelligence. **This intelligent being is, of course, God.**

Background to the Argument: Aquinas'

Paley's Argument

The Design Argument

Hume's Critique

Hume's critique of Aquinas' Fifth Way has six main points:

1. Causal fallacy
2. Weak analogy
3. Unknown cause, not designer
4. Based on part, not whole
5. Could point to a designer, but tells us nothing about him or her or it
6. Anthropomorphism

Elements of the Design Argument

The design argument  
**Premise 1:** If there is a particular part of the world...  
**Premise 2:** ...because it works...  
**In conclusion:** ...Therefore, C...

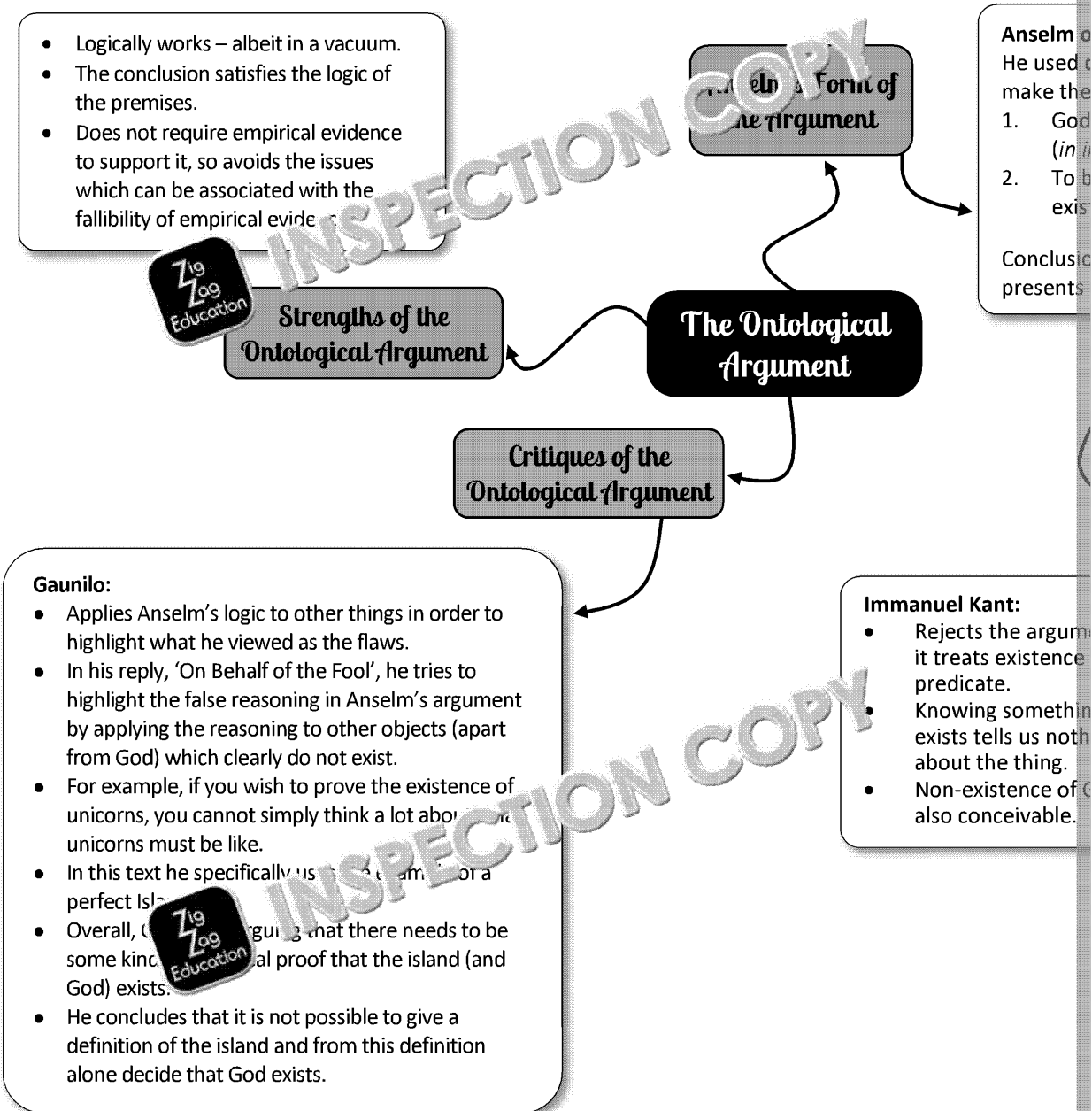
It is an inductive argument, which means that it is based on observation, which appears to be humanly observable. Paley's analogy is user-friendly; it is simple and is easy to understand. It fits well with human concepts of order for life and for the universe – it seems inconceivable that this vast, complicated universe could be the result of random chaos.

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## Arguments for the existence of God (2)

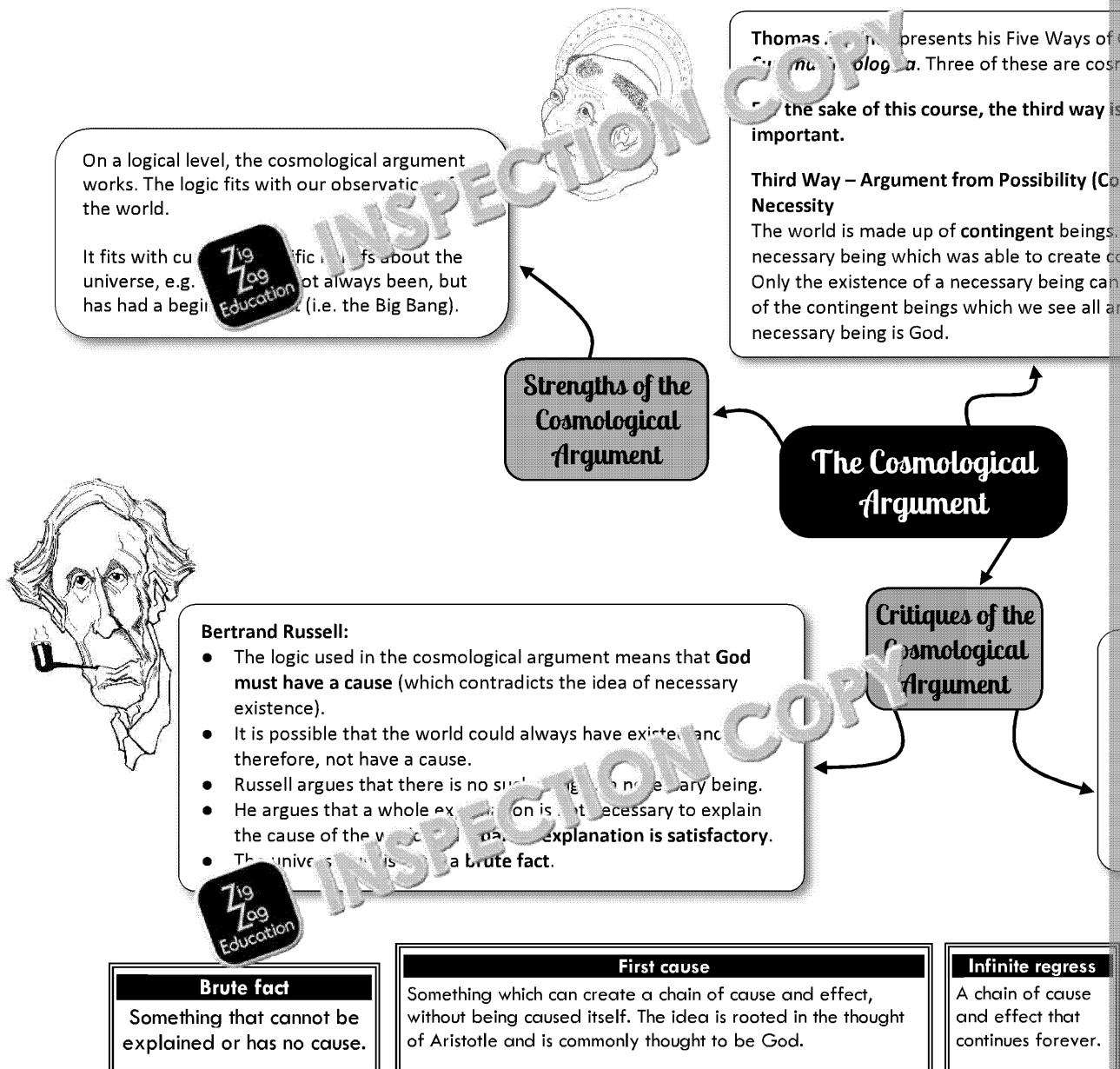


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# Arguments for the existence of God (3)



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# Evil and Suffering

The **problem of evil** is one of the biggest points of philosophical contention between theists. It seems inconsistent that evil can exist with an omnipotent and benevolent God. The problem remains that:

1. evidence for evil cannot be explained
2. the omnipotence of God is central to Christian teaching
3. the problem of evil is central to Christian teaching



The Problem of Evil

Evil and Suffering

**Omnibenevolence**  
God as all-loving.

**Omnipotence**  
God as all-powerful.

**Omniscience**  
God as all-knowing.

1. Evil

Inconsistent  
Triad

3. God is  
omnipotent

2. God is  
omnibenevolent



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## Responses to the Problem of Evil and Suffering (1)

**John Hick** worked on the ideas of Irenaeus, creating what is termed his **soul-making theodicy**.

This means that Hick believed that humans went through life in a process of moral development and moving towards perfection. The existence of good helps with this process. It helps humans develop good characteristics, experiencing the suffering of others help to develop compassion and sympathy. Similarly, experiencing the outcome of lies might make someone more honest. Hick calls this process 'soul-making'. He concedes that this process is rarely completed within one lifetime so this must continue in the afterlife; therefore, there must be an afterlife (hypothesis of life after death). This he called **eschatological justification**. He argues that this makes the existence of evil justified. He also posited the idea of epistemic distance, explained in the box below left.

The weaknesses of the argument are that the process of soul-making does not explain why it allows extreme suffering, such as a child dying a baby. It does not explain why such a loving God would not give us longer than human life to get better. Also, people such as Jesus were morally good before they experienced suffering, so this is a contradiction.

The strengths of the argument are that it places responsibility with human beings rather than with God, meaning that it works as a theodicy. We can confirm within our own experience that human beings have free will. It eases the experience of evil and suffering if there is a greater purpose.

### Epistemic distance

An argument by Hick that God created humans at a special distance from him so they could know God but not be so close they had no choice not to believe in him.

The main weakness of the argument is that an omnipotent and transcendent God is, in the end, not a God. The question is whether or not this is a God.

## Responses to the Problem of Evil and Suffering (1)

### Irenaeus' Theodicy

Irenaeus believed that evil was necessary for humans frequently choose to do evil. God gave humanity free will to allow humans to develop moral and spiritual qualities.

Irenaeus thought that having free will had made humans so that the result of coercion and, therefore, they would be lost. God therefore allowed them to have the opportunity for moral growth brought about through their free will.

### Background - Historical Theodicy

The strengths of this theodicy are that it does go some way to solving the problem of evil. This also appeals to human beings' realist, pragmatic nature – that not all things are actually possible.

It seems to fit with modern scientific theories of how the universe and life came to be, such as evolution and the Big Bang theory.

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## Responses to the Problem of Evil and Suffering (2)

### Determinism

A philosophical belief that the events which occur and the choices made by individuals in their lives have been decided beforehand by a higher power, or as a result of a chain of causation.



### Responses to the Problem of Evil and Suffering (2)

#### The Free Will Defence

The weaknesses of this theory include: a world of free will does not necessitate a world with evil – people could have the freedom to choose between multiple good options. Also, the value of free will is debated, and contrasted with the theory of **determinism**. We could, therefore, only have the illusion of free will. Finally, it does not explain natural or moral evil.



The free will defence is most famously developed in the world at the autonomy to make

Without free will humans would be argued to be an

The logic then follows that if humans have free choices, then it does not follow that humans are the ones

The strengths of this theory would certainly be

It makes sense of

Free will cannot exist without at least

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# Religious Experience

**William James** was a nineteenth-century theologian who was specifically interested in the religious experience and mystical experiences. He developed the following terms:

**Ineffability:** the nature of religious experience which is beyond human words

**Noetic quality:** being beyond the knowledge of normality

**Transiency:** the nature of a religious experience (but it has nonetheless effect great change in the person having it).

**Passivity:** a religious experience as being sourced from outside the individual and having an impact on them.

## Religious experience

A religious experience is an experience of some Ultimate Reality – an all-powerful, ineffable being.

Mystical experience specifically defined

**Walter Stace** defined non-sensuous experience the consciousness of experience, as

## Religious Experience

**Rudolph Otto** was a Christian Protestant theologian who examined the nature of religious experience. He believed that a religious experience was defined by being **numinous**, which means the presence of the divine – an experience of what is considered wholly 'other' to the ordinary experience of human beings.

He developed the following terms:  
**Mysterium:** the experience of religious experience  
**Tremendum:** the awe at religious experiences  
**Fascians:** fascination with the divine

Religious experiences are divided into two different categories:

- **Direct religious experience** (contact with God / an ultimate reality); for example, the conversion of Paul to Christianity and the giving of the Qur'an to Muhammad.
- **Indirect religious experience** (an internal sense of something other than this world); for example, the many mystical experiences of St Teresa of Avila in which she felt God's presence.

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## Verifying Religious Experience (1)

Richard Swinburne developed two principles which he held gave weight to the likelihood that religious experiences are as experienced.

- **Principle of verification:** that unless there is evidence in favour of a claim, we should believe the testimony of our senses.
- **Principle of credulity:** that in the absence of evidence against a claim, we should believe what we are told as they appear to be.



things are often not as they seem – for example, when hallucinations are involved!

Swinburne is making an almost common-sense appeal that we should not instantly assume people who have had a religious experience are lying or misunderstood what they saw. While good principles for life, are these strong enough as an argument for God's existence?

Richard Swinburne  
Testimony

Hallucinations  
drugs



TLE

This is a condition which affects the temporal lobe of the brain. Those afflicted with TLE are reported to have had experiences which can be compared almost directly to religious experiences. Therefore, this can be seen as an explanation for religious experiences without the need for God. It has been suggested that those who have been traditionally viewed as having experienced pivotal religious experiences (e.g. St Paul) may have suffered from this condition.



Many have pointed out that religious experiences could be explained by the consumption of drugs which might have caused the individual to hallucinate. For example, some drugs, such as LSD, are known to cause hallucinations. They have been known to stimulate certain regions of the brain, such as the temporal lobes and the frontal lobes. These parts of the brain are known to be connected to the experience of religious experiences. Due to scientific experiments such as the God Helmet test by Michael Persinger.

The observation of the effect that stimulation of the brain by drugs, the God Helmet or a pre-existing condition such as TLE, can cause experiences which are very similar to religious experiences is considered evidence in science that religious experiences come from the brain, not from God. These ideas are supported by scientific investigation and findings.

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## Verifying Religious Experience (2)

Firstly, a religious individual might critique Freud's ideas about religious experiences by pointing out that Freud's argument is not based on any scientific evidence whatsoever. It appears to only express an opinion, albeit an opinion based on his theory of psychoanalysis. The issue they might point to is that Freud's theory, while well known, is known to be on shaky ground for lack of scientific development and effort to support his claim. They would argue that this means that religious experience is little different from dreams or conscience.



Another religious response to this is that the scientific theories regarding TLE and the use of hallucinogenic drugs do not disprove the existence of God in religious experiences; they merely show us how our brains process them. Theoretically, all these scientific endeavours show is which areas of the brain are stimulated when a religious experience occurs – and, of course, if you stimulate them artificially, then you will experience a similar feeling. To find the part of the brain which processes light is not to state that light does not exist. Therefore, the same cannot be said for religious experience.

William James himself does not specify a specific way to achieve a mystical experience – theoretically, according to his definition, it could be sought, such as through the use of hallucinogenic drugs. The argument follows that the God of religions such as Christianity is both personal and creative – in other words, he is believed to have created human beings. Therefore, if God could be considered to be personal, it makes a lot of sense for human brains to contain something which enables them to experience a mystical experience as a way for God to interact with human beings. God in such religions is seen as personal, and, therefore, followers of those religions would not consider such scientific challenges to be challenges at all!

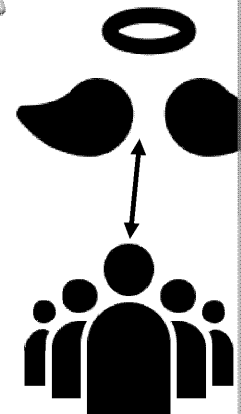


### Religious Response to Scientific challenge

The  
of the

### The Interactive

Represents the idea that God and the divine can be approached by the believer and the believer can interact with this higher power through religious experiences. These can be interpreted as the brain and potentially achieved through stimulation.



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## Mark Schemes

### Levels of Response (AS)

Level	Levels of Response (A01)
<b>Level 5 (13–15 marks)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Answer should demonstrate a good level of knowledge and understanding of the content which is requested in the question.</li> <li>The answer should also make use of and reference to specific views or specific theories which demonstrate very good knowledge and understanding.</li> <li>Use of specific or specialist language should be employed accurately.</li> </ul>
<b>Level 4 (10–12 marks)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Answer should demonstrate fair knowledge and understanding. Answer should address the subject raised in the question.</li> <li>The answer should also make use of and reference to specific views or specific theories which are sufficient to demonstrate good knowledge and understanding.</li> <li>Use of specific or specialist language should be generally employed accurately.</li> </ul>
<b>Level 3 (7–9 marks)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Answer should demonstrate sufficient knowledge and understanding of the subject raised in the question.</li> <li>The answer should also make use of and reference to specific views or specific theories which are sufficient to demonstrate knowledge and understanding.</li> <li>Use of specific or specialist language should be generally employed.</li> </ul>
<b>Level 2 (4–6 marks)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Answer should demonstrate limited knowledge and understanding of the subject raised in the question.</li> <li>The answer should also make use of and reference to specific views or specific theories to demonstrate limited knowledge and understanding.</li> <li>Use of specific or specialist language should be generally employed, accurately.</li> </ul>
<b>Level 1 (1–3 marks)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Answer will demonstrate poor, or lack, knowledge and understanding of the subject directly address the subject raised in the question.</li> <li>The answer should also make use of and reference to specific views or specific theories which are sufficient to demonstrate poor knowledge and understanding.</li> <li>Use of specific or specialist language may be employed inaccurately.</li> </ul>

Level	Levels of Response (A02)
<b>Level 5 (13–15 marks)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Answer should contain a high level of analysis and evaluation of the content.</li> <li>Strong argumentation should have been employed throughout the answer in a logical manner, and the answer should lead to a justified conclusion based on content analysed throughout the answer.</li> <li>Use of specific or specialist language should be employed accurately.</li> </ul>
<b>Level 4 (10–12 marks)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Answer should contain a good level of analysis and evaluation of the content.</li> <li>Good argumentation should have been employed throughout the answer and the answer should lead to a justified conclusion based on content analysed throughout the answer.</li> <li>Use of specific or specialist language should be employed mostly accurately.</li> </ul>
<b>Level 3 (7–9 marks)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Answer should contain a sufficient level of analysis and evaluation of the content of the question.</li> <li>Some argumentation should have been employed throughout the answer and the answer should lead to a conclusion based on content analysed throughout the answer.</li> <li>Use of specific or specialist language should be employed.</li> </ul>
<b>Level 2 (4–6 marks)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Answer should contain limited analysis and evaluation of the content of the question.</li> <li>Limited argumentation should have been employed throughout the answer and the answer should lead to a conclusion based on content analysed throughout the answer.</li> <li>Use of specific or specialist language should be employed although inaccurately.</li> </ul>
<b>Level 1 (1–3 marks)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Answer will have given a poor standard of analysis and evaluation of the content of the question.</li> <li>Poor use of argumentation, or complete lack of argumentation, will be evident in the answer. Answer will lack justification for the arguments or views presented and will be completely irrelevant to the desired topic.</li> <li>Use of specific or specialist language will have been poorly employed.</li> </ul>

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## Levels of Response (A Level)

Level	Levels of Response (A01)
<b>5</b> (9–10 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Answer will communicate a strong knowledge base showing nuance with fully relevant information included.</li> <li>Reference to the scholars, views and sources of wisdom and authority and correct.</li> <li>Use of specific language will be applied accurately, demonstrating exact context and meaning of these phrases.</li> </ul>
<b>4</b> (7–8 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Answer will communicate a good knowledge base showing nuanced with mostly relevant information included.</li> <li>Reference to the scholars, views and sources of wisdom and authority and correct.</li> <li>Use of specific language will be applied accurately, demonstrating at the context and meaning of these phrases.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b> (5–6 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Answer will communicate an adequate knowledge base showing some relevant information included.</li> <li>Reference to the scholars, views and sources of wisdom and authority and correct.</li> <li>Use of specific language will be applied, demonstrating satisfactory meaning of these phrases.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b> (3–4 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Answer will communicate a limited knowledge base showing under information included.</li> <li>Reference to the scholars, views and sources of wisdom and authority and correct.</li> <li>Use of specific language will be applied, demonstrating satisfactory the context and meaning of these phrases.</li> </ul>
<b>1</b> (1–2 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Answer will communicate a poor knowledge base showing very limited understanding with little relevant information included.</li> <li>Reference to the scholars, views and sources of wisdom and authority and/or incorrect.</li> <li>Use of specific language will not be applied, or if it is it will be applied</li> </ul>

Level	Levels of Response (A02)
<b>6</b> (13–15 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Answer will display outstanding analysis and evaluation of the content</li> <li>Reference to the scholars, views and sources of wisdom and authority</li> <li>A strong argument will be displayed showing nuanced and balanced</li> <li>Use of specific language will be applied accurately, demonstrating exact context and meaning of these phrases.</li> </ul>
<b>4</b> (10–12 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Answer will display above average analysis and evaluation of the content</li> <li>Reference to the scholars, views and sources of wisdom and authority and correct.</li> <li>An above average argument will be displayed showing balanced understanding</li> <li>Use of specific language will be applied accurately, demonstrating at the context and meaning of these phrases.</li> </ul>
<b>3</b> (7–9 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Answer will display sufficient analysis and evaluation of the content</li> <li>Reference to the scholars, views and sources of wisdom and authority and correct.</li> <li>A sufficient argument will be displayed showing some balanced understanding</li> <li>Use of specific language will be applied sufficiently, demonstrating satisfactory context and meaning of these phrases.</li> </ul>
<b>2</b> (4–6 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Answer will display fairly basic analysis and evaluation of the content</li> <li>Reference to the scholars, views and sources of wisdom and authority and correct.</li> <li>A basic argument will be displayed showing some understanding.</li> <li>Use of specific language will be applied, demonstrating satisfactory the context and meaning of these phrases.</li> </ul>
<b>1</b> (1–3 marks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Answer will display poor, or lack, evaluation of the content raised by</li> <li>Reference to the scholars, views and sources of wisdom and authority and/or incorrect.</li> <li>A poor argument will be displayed showing limited understanding.</li> <li>Use of specific language will not be applied, or if it is it will be applied</li> </ul>

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## Answers

### 3.1.1 Philosophy of Religion

#### 1 Design Argument

1.
  - a) St Thomas Aquinas – The fifth of Aquinas' Ways. He argues that the world exists towards a purpose. This, he argues, shows guidance and design. This could only be explained if an intelligent designer is required to be behind it. This, for Aquinas, is God.
  - b) William Paley – Paley puts forward his version of the design argument in response to Aquinas' argument. He makes his argument using the analogy of a watch found on the ground (and the world) shows purpose and design, which he argues would not occur accidentally. The watch is designed to work towards an end and needs a designer. In the same way, Paley argues the world exists together towards the end of the existence of humans and, therefore, needs a designer.
2.
  - a) Causal fallacy – Finding effects/events do not mean these effects had a similar cause.
  - b) Weak analogy – The analogy within the argument is weak because there is a clear difference between objects in nature and objects made by man.
  - c) Unknown cause – Hume argues that the design argument only goes so far as to suggest there is a designer, not a known designer such as God.
  - d) Based on part, not whole – Hume argues that the argument is based on looking at a small part of the world which cannot speak for the whole world; this is an assumption and a jump to a conclusion.
  - e) Could point to a designer, but tells us nothing of him, her or it – Hume argues that the design argument does go so far as to logically suggest there could be a designer, this tells us nothing about the designer, therefore, garnering aspects of what God is like from the design premise is a fallacy.
  - f) Anthropomorphism – This is the issue of attributing human features to non-human things. By comparing the cause to a watchmaker, the argument commits anthropomorphism.
3.
  - a) A posteriori
  - b) A priori
4. The design argument is based on the following inductive premises reasoning:  
**Premise 1:** Man-made things in the world have been created by a designer with a purpose, e.g. a watch and a watchmaker, a toy and a factory worker.  
**Premise 2:** The world looks as though it has been designed for a particular purpose and has many intricate, complex parts.  
In conclusion, the world must have had a designer. This designer must have been God.
5. Students should express a personal view on the different arguments. They should be able to compare different arguments and be able to justify their reasoning and state their opinion using evidence.
6. Answers could include, but are not limited to, the following content. Responses should be marked according to the mark scheme for AS.
  - William Paley is one of the theologians well known for this development of the design argument.
  - His version of the design argument is posited as a response to Hume's critique of the design argument put forward in his *Summa*.
  - Paley puts forward his version of the design argument in response to Hume's critique.
  - He draws an analogy using a watch.
  - In Paley's argument he tells the story of a man walking across a field, here known as the 'Lapland' story.
  - If this man were to come across a rock, he would think nothing of it – he would think there was a rock there and it holds no purpose greater than being a rock.
  - However, should this individual instead find a pocket watch in the middle of the field, he would think differently.
  - A watch is something which has been made by a watchmaker – its parts all work together towards a purpose (telling the time).
  - Remove one part of the watch and it could cease to be effective in its purpose of telling the time.
  - The watch has been designed to work towards an end and needs a designer – the watchmaker.
  - The watch shows purpose and design, which would not occur accidentally – it must have been designed.

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- In the same way, Paley argues that the world all works together towards the end of an overall purpose, and therefore, much like the watch, needs a designer.
- Paley's use of analogy shows how this designer must be intelligent.
- For Paley, this designer is God.

7. Answers could include, but are not limited to, the following content. Responses should be marked according to the mark scheme for A Level.

- David Hume was a Scottish philosopher known for his critique of the various arguments for the existence of God.
- His argument against the design argument, as posited in Thomas Aquinas' five ways, is based on five main facets. These are as follows:
- Firstly, he points out that the argument commits the causal fallacy – he argues that everything has to have a cause – this is not necessarily always true. He argues that the cosmological argument is flawed.
- While we have never experienced this, it is so convincing that we can conceive of it as a possibility. It is an assumption which is a weak argument.
- He also critiques the analogy used by Aquinas as being a weak analogy. An arrow cannot even come close to capturing effectively the complicated nature of the universe.
- While conceding that Aquinas' argument does in some ways work, he points out that it is a leap of faith to conclude that there is some kind of unknown designer. It is a leap of faith to believe in the God of traditional Judaeo-Christianity.
- Hume also argues that we cannot infer from one smaller thing what is true of the whole. Just because a small part of the universe can appear to be designed, this does not necessarily mean the whole is designed. It is similar to looking at a small drop of water and assuming that the whole ocean is exactly the same. This is not the case, e.g. differences between salt water and fresh water.
- He also rejects attributions given in Aquinas' argument to God – it might tell us little to nothing about that designer. Indeed if this designer is so intelligent, why does he tell us little to nothing about that designer? Indeed if this designer is so intelligent, why does he tell us little to nothing about that designer?
- Finally, he argues that the argument commits anthropomorphism. This is the idea that we attribute human qualities to a deity. Simply because human beings have the capacity to act towards an end, does not necessitate the fact that God must also have the same capacity.

## 2 Ontological Argument

1. Anselm of **Canterbury** first put forward the **ontological** argument. He sets out the argument and the conclusion logically necessary:
  - 1) God is the **greatest** conceivable being
  - 2) To be the greatest **conceivable** being, God must exist in **reality**.

Conclusion: God **exists**

2. A priori

3. a) *In intellectu*  
b) *In re*

4. Gaunilo posited a rebuttal to Anselm's ontological argument.

- ➔ His reply was entitled 'On the fallacy of the **(Wise/Fool)**'.
- ➔ His argument tries to highlight the false reasoning in Anselm's argument by using objects (apart from God) which clearly do not exist. He uses the example of an island.
- ➔ Gaunilo is arguing that there needs to be some kind of **(inductive/deductive)** argument to prove that God exists.
- ➔ He concludes that it is not possible to give a definition of (the island / God) and then decide that God exists.

5. **Immanuel Kant**

Kant rejects the ontological argument on the grounds that it falsely treats existence as an attribute or quality of something that can be possessed or lacked. Predicates form part of the nature of things, e.g. a predicate of a zebra is having black and white stripes – it is only by recognising a zebra; if an animal did not have black and white stripes, we would assume it was not a zebra. That knowing something exists does not help us to understand what it is (as a predicate does not help us to know anything about its nature or mean we could recognise it).

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argues from this basis that we must, therefore, establish whether something exists. It argues that while it is contradictory to think of a triangle that does not have three angles, it is not contradictory to think of a triangle and its angles as not existing. The same applies to God – even though it is contradictory to think of God as not the greatest conceivable being, and all the characteristics (or predicates) of God as not one of these characteristics. It is, therefore, perfectly conceivable that God does not exist.

6. a) Essence – Descartes uses ‘essence’ to mean something fundamental to what something is. For example, the essence of a triangle is that it has three sides and three angles. b) Aseity – The idea of a being which is independent and exists in and of itself. c) A priori – A form of reasoning which is independent of experience – through logic alone. d) Predicate – An attribute or quality of something that can be possessed or lacked.

7. Answers could include, but are not limited to, the following content. Responses should be marked according to the mark scheme for AS.

- The ontological argument is an argument for the existence of God which is put forward by St Anselm of Canterbury.
- It uses deductive reasoning to put forward the argument as follows: God is the greatest conceivable being. To be the greatest conceivable being, God must exist in reality.
- It is based purely on reason and, therefore, is considered to be a priori.

Arguments for:

- In terms of strengths, the ontological argument appears to work in a logical way and appeals to human beings’ sense of reason.
- Because it is an a priori argument, it does not rely on any empirical evidence (even if it is a good thing it does not contain any empirical evidence!). Therefore, it does not need any other argument for the existence of God in that empirical evidence can be easily duped.
- The use of the word ‘proof’ when discussing theories about the existence of God were intended to support existing faith in reason rather than prove to a non-believer.

Arguments against:

- However, many people argue that the ontological argument is not a sound proof.
- Among the most influential of these individuals is Guinilo, who applies the ontological argument to other things in order to show how the argument is flawed. For example, he argues that the perfect island in order to present this idea.
- Immanuel Kant is also known for critiquing the ontological argument.
- Firstly, he rejects the argument as it treats existence as a predicate. Here he argues that the argument itself rather than the content.
- He also argues that Anselm made a leap of faith in his argument as a result of assuming that something exists tells us nothing about the thing.
- He also critiques the sound nature of one of the premises – he argues that the greatest conceivable being is not necessarily conceivable.

8. Answers could include, but are not limited to, the following content. Responses should be marked according to the mark scheme for A Level.

- The ontological argument is an argument for the existence of God which is put forward by St Anselm of Canterbury.
- It uses deductive reasoning to put forward the argument as follows: God is the greatest conceivable being in the universe, which is termed ‘in intellectu’. To be the greatest conceivable being, God must exist in reality – in other words, therefore, God must exist.
- It has been heavily critiqued by Immanuel Kant, a philosopher who used logic in his arguments.

Arguments for:

- Immanuel Kant critiqued on the basis that the argument treats existence as a quality of something that can be possessed or lacked, e.g. a zebra’s stripes).
- He considers this to be an assumption. A perfect being could be conceived of without existence. It is common to say the perfect job does not exist, although many strive towards it.
- He also argues that the assertion that God is perfect is an assumption and assuming that something exists tells us nothing about the thing.
- He also argues that the non-existence of God is conceivable.
- These arguments are all based on logic – like the ontological argument. Kant’s arguments are based on the very basis of the ontological argument – in order to challenge and undermine it.

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- In fact, in using logic to undermine the argument by pointing out logical inconsistencies, Kant is tackling one of the argument's main strengths: that it is logically satisfying. If viewed as flawed, Kant is undermining the a priori nature of the argument.
- Kant himself was a believing Christian, and, therefore, is attacking this argument from a viewpoint, but from a logical one.

Arguments against:

- Arguments against might not necessarily mean arguments for the effectiveness of the ontological argument. Some might feel that other scholars, such as Guanilo, had more successful criticisms.
- In his work 'On Behalf of the Fool', he applies the logic of Anselm's ontological argument in order to show how the argument is flawed.
- For example, he puts forward the idea of the perfect island in order to present a counter-argument.
- Immanuel Kant is also known for critiquing the ontological argument. In this work, he introduces the term 'God' within the argument with the phrase 'perfect being'.
- This logic could be used to insert other mythical beings to similar effectiveness.
- Firstly, he rejects the argument as it treats existence as a predicate. Here he argues that the argument itself rather than the conclusion is flawed.
- He also argues that Anselm made a leap of faith in his argument as a result of something existing rather than something about the thing.
- He also criticises the sound nature of one of the premises – he argues that the premise is not self-evident.
- Others might, however, highlight the strengths of the ontological argument and argue that Kant has not disproved it.
- It appears to work in a logical vacuum – it makes sense and appeals to human logic.
- This avoids the pitfalls of some other arguments for the existence of God, such as the cosmological argument.
- This is because empirical evidence can be very flawed, i.e. vision and senses can be deceived.
- The use of the word 'proof' when discussing theories about the existence of God is problematic as they were intended to support existing faith in reason rather than prove to a non-believer.

### 3 Cosmological Argument

- a) Something which can create a chain of cause and effect, without being caused by anything. This is the concept of Aristotle and is commonly thought to be God.
  - b) A being or entity which depends on something else for its existence and cannot exist on its own.
  - c) A being which cannot be conceived of as not existing and was not brought into existence by anything.
- a) There are certain things in the world that are moving. Nothing can move by itself; it must be moved by something else. This cause must itself be in motion, because something cannot move itself. This forms a chain of 'moved' and 'moving'. This chain cannot go on forever (infinite regress); there must be a first mover that started this chain – God.
  - b) Everything has an efficient cause. This is because something cannot bring itself into existence – this is logically impossible. Something has to already exist to create something. If we try to explain the existence of the world, there must be a partial explanation for the efficient cause of individual things, there must be a first cause. God is the efficient cause of everything that exists. As the first cause, he has always existed.
  - c) The world is made up of contingent beings. There has to be a necessary being to cause all contingent beings. Only the existence of a necessary being can explain the existence of the world which we see all around us. This necessary being is God.
- c) *St Thomas Aquinas' Cosmological Argument*
- Infinite regress is the idea of the chain of cause and effect continuing back in time forever. It is considered impossible in Aquinas' argument.
- Hume's Critique of the Cosmological Argument has four prongs.
  - Firstly, Hume rejects the notion of necessary existence (drawn from the ontological argument) because he argues it is always a possibility for us to imagine something that has never existed.
  - Secondly, he argues that it is an assumption that everything has to have a cause. This is not necessarily true.

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- While we have never experienced this, it is something that we can conceive as an assumption which is a weak argument.
- Thirdly, Hume argues that there is no reason given why the world itself could exist. He argues there is no reason why only God should be attributed the quality of necessary existence.
- While there is no evidence pointing towards a necessary world, he argues that we have not yet come to understand it.
- Finally, Hume also argues that we cannot infer from one smaller thing what some parts of the universe can appear to be caused, this does not necessarily mean the whole universe is caused.

6. **Bertrand Russell:**

- The logic used in the cosmological argument means that God must have a cause of necessary existence).
- It is possible that the world could have always existed and, therefore, not have a cause.
- Russell argues that there is no such thing as a necessary being.
- He argues that a whole explanation is not necessary to explain the cause of the universe.
- The universe just is a brute fact.

7. Answers could include, but are not limited to, the following content. Responses should be marked according to the mark scheme for AS.

- The arguments from contingency and necessity are part of what is known as the cosmological argument.
- The cosmological argument was first put forward by thirteenth-century medieval philosopher Thomas Aquinas. It is a well-known argument for the existence of God.
- In his text *Summa Theologica* he put forward the cosmological argument, which outlines three ways of God's existence.
- The third of these ways is the argument from contingency and necessity.
- It is important to first establish the meaning of these words.
- Something which is contingent is something which depends on another thing. A contingent being/entity can be conceived of as not existing.
- Something which is necessary cannot be conceived of as not existing, and we can observe it to exist without another being or force.
- This argument goes as follows:
  - The world is full of contingent beings. Things are caused – we can observe this by their parents producing them. In turn, these parents were caused by their parents.
  - Due to the impossibility of infinite regress (forever going back in a chain of causes), there has to be a necessary being which was able to create the world.
  - Only the existence of a necessary being is able to explain the existence of the world.
  - Therefore, this necessary being is God.

8. Answers could include, but are not limited to, the following content. Responses should be marked according to the mark scheme for A Level.

- Saint Thomas Aquinas presents his five ways of God's existence in his *Summa Theologica*. The first is the argument from motion, the second is the argument from causality, the third is the argument from necessity and contingency.
- Third way – argument from possibility (contingency) and necessity goes as follows: The world is made up of contingent beings. There has to be a necessary being to explain the existence of contingent beings. Only the existence of a necessary being can explain the existence of the world which we see all around us. This necessary being is God.

Arguments for:

- On a philosophical level, the cosmological argument works – the premises follow logically and in a sensible fashion.
- Furthermore, the cosmological argument goes a good way to appeal to our intuition about the world.
- We can observe that the world around us does indeed appear to be contingent. The Bible's testament to this – we needed our parents in order for us to come into existence.
- Many modern proponents of the cosmological argument have pointed to the fact that scientists have demonstrated that the cosmological argument could be considered to be true.
- It fits with current scientific beliefs about the universe, e.g. that it has not always existed but had a beginning point (i.e. the Big Bang).
- The Big Bang theory is generally considered to be the most commonly accepted explanation for the world.

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Arguments against:

- However, there are many who have argued against the effectiveness of the cosmological argument. Bertrand Russell and David Hume.
- Bertrand Russell argues that the logic used in the cosmological argument is flawed (which contradicts the idea of necessary existence).
- He also emphasises in his critique that he believes it is possible that the world could therefore, not have a cause.
- The universe just is – it is a brute fact.
- Russell argues that there is no such thing as a necessary being, and that the idea of one is a fallacy.
- He argues that a whole explanation is not necessary to explain the cause of the world; an explanation is satisfactory.
- David Hume also critiques the cosmological argument.
- Similarly to Russell, he rejects necessary existence as being something that must be true other than as an assumption made on the basis of human experience. We cannot assume empirically that everything has a cause – our experience only dictates the reality of our world.
- The cosmological argument suggests that the world itself could be considered to be necessary, as it is the only thing about the need for a God.
- Just because parts of the world appear caused, it does not mean the whole world is caused.
- The cosmological argument does not prove the existence of God – otherwise, however, it could be seen to provide a reasonable basis for giving reason as a basis for faith.

#### 4 Evil and Suffering

1. a) Evil  
b) God is omnipotent  
c) God is omnibenevolent  
d) Inconsistent Triad

Please note that these could be in any order.

2. a) God is all powerful  
b) God is all-knowing  
c) God is all-loving
3. The problem of **A evil** is one of the biggest points of philosophical contention for **B inconsistent** that evil can exist with an omnipotent and benevolent God.

The problem remains that:

1. **C evidence** for evil cannot be denied
2. the **D omnipotence** of God is central to Christian teaching
3. the **E benevolence** of God is central to Christian teaching

4. Any example of extreme suffering could be used here; for example, a common one is the Holocaust of German Jews at the hands of the Nazis during the 1940s.
5. Generally, students should be able to state that moral evil is evil caused by the actions of humans, whereas natural evil is evil caused by events occurring in nature. Any relevant example of natural evil could be used here; for example, a flood, an earthquake, a tsunami, etc. Moral evil could include theft, greed, etc.
6. Natural evil is evil caused by events occurring in nature.
7. Generally, answers should indicate the idea that it is easier to blame moral evil on humans, whereas natural evil is not caused by humans, so causes more issues with the idea of a powerful God.
8. The logical problem of evil is the difficulty in logic to be able to conceive of a God who is all-powerful, all-knowing, and yet allows suffering. The evidential problem of evil is the idea that the existence of evil that appears inconsistent with the idea of a loving and powerful God.

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9. Answers could include, but are not limited to, the following content. Responses score 1 mark scheme for AS.

- The inconsistent triad is a specific term used within discussion of the philosophy of religion.
- It is known as a triad because it grapples with three concepts which do not fit together.
- The first part of the inconsistent triad is omnipotence.
- This is the idea that God is all-powerful and is able to do whatever he wills. Nothing is impossible for him.
- The second is benevolence – specifically, omnibenevolence. This is the idea that God is all-loving and loves every single person and every part of the world.
- The third is the reality of evil and suffering in the world.
- In our lives and throughout history, there is an indisputable reality that people experience natural disasters (natural evil) or as a result of the actions of another human being (moral evil), it is an undeniable reality that human beings experience suffering.
- The inconsistent triad, then, examines this inconsistency – how can a God who is all-powerful and all-loving if suffering exists?
- Surely an all-powerful God would be able to stop the experience of suffering?
- Surely an all-loving God would want to relieve suffering?
- Therefore, due to the reality of suffering, this creates three logical possibilities. Firstly, God is all-powerful, but is not all-loving and that is why evil exists – theodicy of free will. Secondly, God is not all-powerful, but is all-loving and that is why evil exists – theodicy of limited power. Thirdly, such an omnibenevolent, omnipresent God does not exist.

10. Answers could include, but are not limited to, the following content. Responses score 2 mark scheme for A Level

- The inconsistent triad is a specific term used within discussion of the Philosophy of Religion. It is considered to be one of the biggest issues with which theists grapple.
- It is known as a triad because it grapples with three concepts which do not fit together.
- The first part of the inconsistent triad is omnipotence.
- This is the idea that God is all-powerful and is able to do whatever he wills. Nothing is impossible for him.
- The second is benevolence – specifically, omnibenevolence. This is the idea that God is all-loving and loves every single person and every part of the world.
- The third is the reality of evil and suffering in the world.
- In our lives and throughout history, there is an indisputable reality that people experience natural disasters (natural evil) or as a result of the actions of another human being (moral evil), it is an undeniable reality that human beings experience suffering.
- The inconsistent triad highlights this discrepancy in logic.
- Surely an all-powerful God would be able to stop the experience of suffering?
- Surely an all-loving God would want to relieve suffering?
- Therefore, due to the reality of suffering, this creates three logical possibilities. Firstly, God is all-powerful, but is not all-loving and that is why evil exists – theodicy of free will. Secondly, God is not all-powerful, but is all-loving and that is why evil exists – theodicy of limited power. Thirdly, such an omnibenevolent, omnipresent God does not exist.
- It causes issues as it makes the existence of the God which many theists (such as religions such as Judaism and Christianity) believe in highly unlikely to exist.
- However, many religious people have developed theodicies in an effort to explain the existence of evil and suffering, for some it is not an issue without solutions.

## 5 Responses to the problem of Evil

1. A theodicy is an attempt to solve the problem of evil from a religious perspective. It is an attempt to show that the existence of God is compatible with the existence of evil. The theories show that God's power is limited, or that God is not all-loving, despite the existence of evil. The theories show that God's power is limited, or that God is not all-loving, despite the existence of evil.
2. A Irenaeus, B Hick, C Brian Griffith
3. **Privation** – The loss or absence of something, e.g. the privation of evil.  
**Epistemic distance** – An argument by Hick that God created humans at a special distance from him so that they could choose to believe in him.

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4.
  - A) The weaknesses of Hick's argument are similar to the issues with Irenaeus' process of soul-making does not explain why it allows extreme suffering, so it doesn't explain why such a loving God wouldn't give us longer than a human such as Jesus were morally good before they experienced suffering, so this is not a good response to the problem of evil.
  - B) The main weakness of Brian Griffin's theodicy is that this is not a traditional view of God. Omnipotence is somewhat limited. Indeed, so are the benevolence, omniscience, and omnipresence. This is not the traditional view of God in Judeo-Christian tradition. God is, in this method of theodicy, not all-powerful, all-knowing, or all-present. This is a problem for the creation of evil. The question remains, therefore, does the good create evil?

5. Answers could include, but are not limited to, the following content. Responses should be marked according to the mark scheme for AS.

Arguments against:

- A theodicy is a theory developed by theists in order to grapple with the issue of why such theodicy is process theodicy.
- It was developed by Brian Griffins
- This begins with the premise that the world is always changing, and that the observe this order of nature.
- Good because the natural order works as it should.
- Evil occurs when there is discord, as a result of human free will.
- It presents God as being part of the world and, therefore, a fellow sufferer.
- Therefore, this solves the problem of the inconsistent triad insofar as it removes evil from God to the result of human free will.
- This also appeals to human beings' realist, pragmatic nature – that not all things are perfect.
- It seems to fit well with modern scientific theories of how the universe and life are developing and the idea of the natural order.

Arguments for:

- However, many people posit that this is not a true theodicy.
- This is considered to be a main weakness of this theory; God's omnipotence
- A theodicy is, by definition, an attempt at explaining the issue of the inconsistency between the existence of evil and the benevolence and omnipotence of God.
- Some might even argue that this is not a theodicy at all, because not only does it not explain the existence of evil, it also challenges the benevolence, omniscience and transcendence of the traditional Christian tradition.
- God is, in this method of thinking, in a way responsible for the creation of evil.
- The failure of this theodicy to fulfil and uphold these two vital aspects of theodicy is to say that it cannot be considered a true theodicy.

6. Answers could include, but are not limited to, the following content. Responses should be marked according to the mark scheme for A Level.

- The free will defence is a theodicy which is popular among many religious people.
- It lays the blame for the existence of evil in the world at the hands of the creature.
- Free will is the idea that human beings have the autonomy to make decisions and then act on these choices.
- Within Christianity, free will is believed to have entered the world during the Fall of Man in the Bible.
- Here Adam and Eve ate of the tree of good and evil, despite being forbidden to do so. Sin entered the world because they had misused their free will.
- The argument goes that as a result of the misuse of free will, suffering entered the world.
- Free will here is considered to be an important part of the world and the structure of the universe.
- For many people, without free will human beings are unable to choose to follow God, which is an important part of the free will defence.
- For example, if someone is forced to love another person through the use of magic, this is not considered to be true love, as it is not chosen. In the same way, the God of the Bible asks his followers to have a real relationship with him.
- The logic then follows that if human beings have free will to make their own choices, it makes sense to blame God for the existence of evil as humans are the ones who choose to do evil.
- This, therefore, goes some way to solving the problem of the inconsistent triad as the God of the Bible's benevolence can be maintained; however, it is not without challenges.



## 6 Religious Experience

- There are two different categories of religious experience. The **indirect** religious experience is contact with something other than this world. The **direct** is contact with the divine / God.
- Examples which could be included within the spider diagram include: corporate, private, numinous experiences, seeing visions, meditation. These do not need to be in this order; any relevant examples will be accepted, although the seeing of visions is preferred.
- The terms should be as follows, with sufficient explanation within the space provided.
  - Ineffability – the experience should be beyond the capability of human words to describe.
  - Noetic quality – the experience should be beyond human knowledge to understand what we would consider to be normal.
  - Transiency – the short-lived nature of a religious experience (but it may not be the person having it).
  - Passivity – the feeling that the experience your own will is being taken over by something outside yourself.
- There are three kinds of vision within religious experience. These are:
  - Corporate** – a vision which is external to the body
  - Imaginative** – a vision which takes place within the mind
  - Intellectual** – a vision which gives only knowledge/understanding/revelation
- The terms should be defined as followed: a) Mysterium b) Tremendum c) Fascinans
- Any relevant example of a recorded religious experience will be accepted. This is to generate an example with which they can individually engage and which they can discuss. Throughout the example they give, they should highlight the different ideas of Otto which constitutes a religious experience. They might use an example which is one of the from the spider diagram. An answer which demonstrates engagement with the content will be accepted.
- Answers could include, but are not limited to, the following content. Responses should be marked according to the mark scheme for AS.
  - A religious experience is where an individual has a distinctive experience of something beyond the natural world.
  - This can come in many forms – including prayer, meditation, hearing voices, corporate religious experiences, and numinous experiences.
  - As a result of the widespread occurrence of 'religious experiences', there have been many definitions of exactly what is meant by this phrase.
  - According to William James, who was a nineteenth-century theologian, a religious experience is characterised by the following terms: ineffability, noetic quality, transiency, and passivity.
  - Ineffability means that it is beyond human words to describe – so, for James, it is so amazing that it was beyond the capability of humans to describe it.
  - The noetic quality refers to the fact that a religious experience needs to be based on some knowledge of what humans would consider to be normal.
  - It must also be transient, which means it must have temporal limits – it has to be short-lived.
  - Passivity is one of the key elements of a religious experience, i.e. it has to be something that happens to an individual from outside themselves and has an impact upon them.
  - Religious experiences can also be direct or indirect.
  - A direct religious experience is a direct encounter with the divine – the kind of experience where people speak to an individual, whereas an indirect religious experience is more of an inspiration, or something other.
  - Rudolf Otto also posited ideas about the nature of religious experience, and his ideas are often referred to as 'numinous' in relation to religious experiences.
  - For Otto, something had to be numinous in order to be a religious experience – it should experience something wholly and utterly other to this world.
- Answers could include, but are not limited to, the following content. Responses should be marked according to the mark scheme for A Level.
  - A religious experience is an experience of some ultimate reality – an all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-loving being.
  - It is a phenomenon which is experienced across a wide variety of societies and cultures from a range of different religious backgrounds.
  - As there is a huge variety of people who have experienced such things, scholars have developed various characteristics in order to explain these events.

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- **Rudolph Otto** was a Christian Protestant theologian who examined the nature of religious experiences.
- He believed that a religious experience was defined by being 'numinous', which is the presence of the divine – it is an experience of what is considered wholly 'other' to human beings.
- Therefore, in order to be considered a religious experience there needs to be something about it.
- A subsection of religious experiences is mystical experiences.
- Mystical experiences are defined as experiences of the numinous – the beyond.
- William Stace believes that a mystical experience should be understood as an intellectual union with the divine.
- During this experience the self will cease to be. The self is usurped by 'pure consciousness'.
- On this basis, he would not consider a vision to be a mystical experience, as it is not a union with the divine.

## 7 Verifying Religious Experience

- These are in no particular order.
  - Many have argued that religious experiences could be explained by the mind. Some have argued that the mind can be used to hallucinate. For example, drugs such as LSD have been known to stimulate certain regions of the brain, such as the temporal and frontal lobes. These parts of the brain are known to be connected to religious experiences due to scientific experiments such as the God Helmet by Michael Persinger.
  - This is a condition which affects the temporal lobe of the brain. Those afflicted with this condition have had experiences which can be compared almost directly to religious experiences. This has been seen as an explanation for religious experiences without the need for God. It has been argued that those who have had these experiences have not had the occurrence of religious experience without the need for the Divine. It has been argued that those who have been traditionally viewed as having experienced pivotal religious experiences have suffered from this condition.
  - Freud was an Austrian psychoanalyst. He viewed religion, and religious experiences, as a result of the mind's need to give meaning and structure to existence. For example, individuals are comforted that there is more to life than their experiences, and that there is a higher power. This helps us manage our fear of what we do not know and cannot control. However, Freud argues that this is a childish and misguided belief. He argues that this want to believe in something greater than ourselves drives people to have religious experiences in order to validate their beliefs.
- Richard Swinburne** claimed that his **two** principles gave weight to the **likelihood** that religious experiences were as those who experience them claimed.
  - The principle of **verification** states that unless there is evidence against a claim, then the claim is true. The testimony of the experiencer.
  - The principle of **credulity** states that unless there is evidence against a claim, then the claim is true. The claim is as they appear.
  - He argues that we should not instantly assume that people have **misunderstood** their experiences.
- Firstly, a religious individual might critique Freud's ideas about religious experiences. His argument is not based in any scientific evidence whatsoever. It appears to only exist based in his theory of psychoanalysis. The issue they might point to is that Freud's theory is known to be one which is critiqued for lack of scientific development and effort to be scientific. It is argued that this viewpoint regarding religious experiences is little different to his critiques of other religious beliefs.
- Principle of morality
- Richard Swinburne developed two principles which he held gave weight to the likelihood that religious experiences were as experiencers claim: Principle of verification: that unless there is evidence against the testimony of individuals. Principle of credulity: that unless there is evidence against the claim, then the claim is true. The claim is as they appear to be.
- Answers could include, but are not limited to, the following content. Responses should be marked according to the mark scheme for AS.
 

Arguments for:

  - Religious experiences have historically been accepted; however, in modern times, they are challenged by new scientific evidence.
  - Science has not necessarily disproved the validity of religious experiences, and the debate is still continuing.

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- However, the scientific community has offered different explanations for what happen which could explain these phenomena without the need for a God.
- For example, some scientists have posited the evidence that specific use of drugs are very similar to religious experiences via hallucination.
- For example, some drugs, such as LSD, are known to cause hallucinations.
- These drugs work in such a way as to stimulate regions of the brain (i.e. the temporal lobe) which are the same regions of the brain which are believed to be connected to religious experiences.
- Some within the scientific community have drawn comparison between the had 'religious experiences' and the experiences of those with specific conditions such as temporal lobe epilepsy.
- TLE is a condition which affects the temporal lobe of the brain. Those afflicted with this condition have had experiences which can be compared almost directly to religious experiences.
- Therefore, this can be seen as an explanation for religious experiences without the need for God.
- It has been suggested that perhaps those who have been traditionally viewed as having religious visions (e.g. St Paul) may have suffered from this condition.
- The observation of the effect of stimulation of the brain by drugs, or by a procedure for TLE, can cause experiences which are very similar to religious experiences. This suggests that religious experiences come from the brain, not from God.
- These findings are supported by scientific investigation and findings.
- A further scientific challenge to the idea of religious experience is posed by the work of the Austrian psychoanalyst, Sigmund Freud.
- He viewed religion, and religious experience by extension, as being the result of a search for meaning and structure to existence.
- For example, by believing in God, individuals are comforted that there is no death and that death is not the end. It helps us manage our fear of what we do not know.
- However, Freud argues that such fears are themselves childish and misguided. He believed that the belief in something bigger than ourselves drives people to have religious experiences as a way of managing their neurosis.

Arguments against:

- However, the religious community has replied to these critiques of religious experience.
- Firstly, William James himself does not specify a specific way to achieve a mystical experience according to his definition, it could be sought, such as through the use of hallucinogenic drugs.
- The argument follows that the God of religions such as Christianity is both personal and impersonal. It is believed to have created human beings.
- Therefore, such a God could be considered to be relational, so it makes a lot of sense that it should contain a part which enables them to experience a mystical experience of the divine. This would interact with human beings. God in such religions is seen as personal, and, therefore, it makes sense that religions would not consider such scientific challenges to be challenges at all.
- Another religious response to this is that the scientific theories regarding the brain and the use of drugs do not disprove the existence of God in religious experiences; they merely describe the process them.
- Theoretically, all these scientific endeavours show is which areas of the brain are involved in the experience occurs – and, of course, if you stimulate them artificially, then you can have a similar experience.
- A religious response to Freud's critique might be to turn the tables and critique Freud's theory of psychoanalysis by pointing out that Freud's argument is not based on any scientific evidence. They would simply express an opinion, albeit an opinion based on his theory of psychoanalysis. They would argue that Freud's theory, while well known, is known to be one which is critiqued and has not stood the test of development and evidence. They would back up his claim. They would argue that this view of the brain and the experience is different from his theories on conscience.

7. Answers may include, but are not limited to, the following content. Responses should be marked according to the mark scheme for A Level.

Arguments for:

- Modern scientific development has led to the scientific community challenging
- In some ways, the scientific community has been successful in giving alterna
- Many have pointed out that religious experiences could be explained by the  
might have caused the individual to hallucinate.
- For example, some drugs, such as LSD, are known to cause hallucinations.

- They have been known to stimulate certain regions of the brain, such as the lobes. These parts of the brain are known to be connected to the experience in scientific experiments such as the God Helmet by Michael Persinger.
- Some within the scientific community have drawn comparison between the had 'religious experiences' and the experiences of those with specific conditions such as temporal lobe epilepsy.
- TLE is a condition which affects the temporal lobe of the brain. Those afflicted with TLE have had experiences which can be compared almost directly to religious experiences.
- Therefore, this can be seen as an explanation for religious experiences without the need for God.
- It has been suggested that perhaps those who have been traditionally viewed as having religious visions (e.g. St Paul) may have suffered from this condition.
- The observation of the effect that stimulation of the brain by drugs, the God Helmet, and conditions such as TLE can cause experiences which are very similar to religious experiences is evidence in science that religious experiences come from the brain, not from God.
- These ideas are supported by scientific investigation and findings.
- A further scientific challenge to the idea of religious experience is posed by psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud.
- He argued that religious experience, and religious experience by extension, as being the result of a person's mind and structure to existence.
- For example, by believing in God, individuals are comforted that there is more to life than death and that death is not the end. It helps us manage our fear of what we do not know.
- However, Freud argues that such fears are themselves childish and misguided. He believes that the belief in something bigger than ourselves drives people to have religious experiences to cope with their neurosis.

## Arguments against:

- Some religious people have refuted this idea.
- Some have pointed out that William James himself does not specify a specific way to experience God.
- Therefore, according to his definition of a religious experience, there is nothing that could not be sought after (e.g. through means such as drugs).
- Furthermore, many religious people, such as Christians, might argue that there is only one God. They would argue that in his creation of human beings he would have created a way for them to be able to interact with him. Therefore, it would make sense for human brains to be able to experience religious things. They would argue that science has not shown the why, it has only shown the how.
- It is a way for God to interact with human beings. God in such religions is seen as a personal God. Followers of those religions would not consider such scientific challenges to be complementary facts to their already held beliefs in a relational God.
- Science is providing the explanation for how our brain processes religious experiences. It does not disprove that they are from God. Theoretically, all these scientific endeavours to find the part of the brain which processes religious experiences are stimulated when a religious experience occurs – and, of course, if you have a religious experience then you will experience a similar feeling.
- The comparison can be made that to find the part of the brain which processes religious experiences does not exist. Therefore, the same cannot be said for religious experience.
- The challenge laid down by Sigmund Freud is theoretically easier to challenge than the idea of God.
- It appears to only express an opinion, and, while it is based on his knowledge, it is not based on scientific proof.
- Many of Freud's other theories (e.g. his ideas about the conscience) are well known to lack of scientific evidence and explanation. Therefore, it could be argued that his theory of religious experience are no different.

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