



Revision Summaries for AS / A Level Year 1 Eduqas

Component 2: Philosophy of Religion

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Teacher's Introduction

These revision summaries are designed to provide students with a detailed overview of everything they need to know for their AS and A Level exams. It follows the Eduqas Religious Studies specification for Component 2, which focuses on Philosophy of Religion only. These topics are also included in the full A Level programme. A separate resource is available for the topics in A Level, Year 2.

All students of different academic abilities will benefit from this overview as it provides a clear and concise account of what to revise. The best way to use these overviews is by providing students with a copy of a particular topic once it has been taught in class. It is also possible to give the entire pack to the students before they start their final revision for the exams.

Remember!

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

Each topic follows a set structure detailed below:

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

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

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

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Overview

This topic examines two inductive arguments (the cosmological and teleological argument) for the existence of God. These are considered to be forms of proof presented by famous philosophers and theologians through the ages. Each argument concludes that God exists as the designer of the universe. The teleological argument concludes that God exists as the unmoved mover, the uncaused cause and the necessary existence of the universe. David Hume and the development of science have put into question these two arguments.

Key Points

Inductive Arguments

- Both the cosmological and the teleological arguments are inductive arguments. They develop the conclusion that God exists from observations of what happens in the world.
- Inductive arguments such as these are a posteriori. A posteriori means after. Inductive arguments reach their conclusions after experiencing things.

A. The Cosmological Argument

Aquinas' three ways:

- The cosmological argument is an inductive argument based on a posteriori evidence. The universe (cosmos) being caused by something else.
- Aquinas argues, in his first way, that everything in the universe moves.
- Things cannot move themselves. They must be moved by something else.
- There must have been a point when you had a first mover because infinite regress is impossible.
- That first mover was unmoved and is God.
- Aquinas argues, in his second way, that everything in the universe is caused.
- Things cannot cause themselves. They are caused by something else.
- There must have been a point when you had a first cause because infinite regress is impossible.
- That first cause was uncaused and is God.
- Aquinas argues, in his third way, that everything in the universe has a beginning. The world is contingent.
- If things in the world come into existence, there must have been a time when nothing existed.
- Nothing comes from nothing.
- So, there must have been something that has always existed to bring other things into existence.
- That being is necessary and is God.

The Kalam cosmological argument with reference to William Lane Craig:

- The Kalam argument was an ancient Arabic argument presented by Al-Kindi in the twelfth centuries CE.
- Craig is a modern-day defender of this argument.
- This argument states that we would not be in the present if the universe was infinite.
- This is because you cannot add in succession to the infinite as you do not have a starting point.
- Craig adds that this would also mean, for example, that you would have just a finite number of events put together.
- We are in the present which is the result of a finite succession.
- Craig adds that history shows us that one event followed another. These sequences do not add up infinity.
- This means that the universe must be finite and have a beginning in time.
- The beginning of the universe must have been caused because things cannot cause themselves.
- That first cause is God.
- The Kalam argument goes on to explain how God is the personal creator of the universe who purposely wanted to create the universe.

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Issues to consider:

- Whether inductive arguments for God's existence are persuasive. This issue covers the cosmological and teleological argument and comment on how either of them are persuasive. Consider the criticisms and alternative explanations as well in the discussion of the deductive arguments. You can also compare these inductive arguments to the ontological argument which is deductive.
- The extent to which the Kalam cosmological argument is convincing. Here you compare the Kalam arguments are more convincing than the Kalām argument or vice versa, or not convincing. You need to make sure you know why they are convincing or not convincing.
- The effectiveness of the cosmological argument for God's existence. This is a discussion of one version or all versions of the cosmological argument. You may think that one version is more convincing or that none of them is convincing and that they are all equally unconvincing.
- Whether cosmological arguments for God's existence are persuasive in the twenty-first century. This requires you to consider whether cosmological arguments are convincing in the twenty-first century. You could discuss whether the scientific explanations are compatible with the teleological argument. Some think that the Big Bang needed to be triggered by someone. Some contemporary philosopher who still supports the cosmological (Kalam) argument is still acceptable in the twenty-first century.

B. The Teleological Argument

- The teleological argument is an inductive argument, based on a posteriori evidence, that the world is being designed.

Aquinas' fifth way 'from the governance of things':

- Aquinas presented a version of the teleological argument. This was his fifth way. It is an argument that focuses on regularity in the natural world.
- Aquinas observed that everything follows natural laws and is directed towards an end. Those things that follow natural laws do so to do well.
- Inanimate objects cannot direct themselves. They are directed by something else.
- Aquinas gave the analogy of an archer (the agent who directs) and an arrow (the object being directed) towards a target.
- Everything in the natural world follows natural laws and heads for its end or purpose.
- They must be directed by something that does the directing.
- That being is God.

William Paley's watchmaker, analogy of complex design:

- Paley imagines coming across a stone on the heath. He would not think about its origin.
- Paley then considers what he would think if he came across a watch. He would think it must come from somewhere.
- Paley then asks why then we do not ask the same question about the stone.
- The reason is that the watch has characteristics of being designed: being complex, having parts fitting together harmoniously and intelligence behind the design. (Complexity, Harmoniousness, Intelligence, Purpose and Planning)
- The watch must have a designer.
- Similar characteristics are evident in the natural world. Paley gave the example of a watch.
- The conclusion is that the world must have the same characteristics as things that can be designed.
- The designer of the world is God.

FR Tennant's teleological and aesthetic arguments:

- Tennant argues that there are three types of evidence in the natural world that point to design:
 - The world is ordered in a rational way.
 - The natural world has the necessities for life to form and be sustained.
 - There has been a progression in evolution towards intelligent human life.
- The universe is clearly not chaotic.

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- The universe must have been designed to lead to intelligent life (humans).
- The designer is God and the emergence of humans has been his plan.
- The aesthetic argument is an extension of the anthropic principle.
- Everywhere the universe appears beautiful.
- This beauty is appreciated by humans and is not necessary for their survival.
- Someone must have designed the world to be this beautiful and be appreciated about through natural selection. Only things advantageous to survival and reproduction are selected.
- God is the designer of the universe and its beauty.

Issues to consider:

- The effectiveness of the teleological argument for God's existence. This issue involves considering different versions of the teleological argument. You may think that one version is more convincing than another or that they are all convincing or that none of them is convincing and more evidence is needed.
- Whether teleological arguments for God's existence are persuasive in the twenty-first century. This issue requires you to consider whether teleological arguments are convincing in an age of scientific advancement. You could discuss whether the scientific explanations are compatible with theism. Some think that the theory of evolution by natural selection was part of God's design.

C. Challenges to Inductive Arguments

Criticisms of the cosmological argument:

- Criticisms of the cosmological argument focus on the use of the word necessary. Bertrand Russell and David Hume argue that necessary is a concept only applicable to abstract entities, not living beings.
- Russell and Hume also argue that the cosmological argument makes a fallacy of composition. Just because parts in the universe are caused, the whole universe is caused. It is like assuming that because human individuals have mothers and jumping to the conclusion that the human race has a mother.
- Hume argues that we have no experience of universals being caused.

Criticisms of the teleological argument:

- Hume's criticisms of the teleological argument attack the analogy made between the universe and a machine. The world is not like a machine compared to something organic rather than mechanical. It is more like a garden.
- He also argues that there is a lack of experience with worlds being designed.
- There is also the assumption that the designer is the God of classical theism. It could be an apprentice god. It could also be no god at all.

Alternative scientific explanations:

- The Big Bang theory is one alternative theory of how the universe was caused. It suggests that the universe began as an infinitely small, infinitely dense, infinitely hot singularity exploding. At that point, time and space came into existence. Since that time, the universe has expanded. The red shift seen by powerful telescopes. The red shift shows remnants from the beginning of the universe.
- Charles Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection is an alternative explanation for the complexity of life. It is not ordered or harmonious but the result of the struggle for survival between organisms. Organisms have developed advantageous features that have allowed them to survive. These features are passed on through inheritance and eventually form a new species. Evolution is brutal rather than orderly and harmonious.

Issues to consider:

- The effectiveness of the criticisms to the cosmological argument for God's existence. This issue requires you to consider whether the criticisms of the cosmological argument put forward by philosophers are persuasive. Why are you convinced by them. Do they have satisfactory alternative explanations.
- The effectiveness of the challenges to the teleological argument for God's existence. This issue requires you to consider whether the criticisms of the teleological argument put forward by philosophers are persuasive. Why are you convinced by them. Do they have satisfactory alternative explanations.
- Whether scientific explanations are more persuasive than philosophical explanations for the existence of God. This issue requires you to consider whether scientific explanations like the Big Bang theory or Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection are adequate. Can they explain the existence of God?

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Key Texts/Scholars

Al-Ghazali (c.1058-1111 CE):

Al-Ghazali was a famous Sunni Muslim mystic and philosopher. He used the Kalam cosmological argument in his philosophical writings.

Al-Kindi (c.801-873 CE):

Al-Kindi was a Muslim philosopher and mathematician who was inspired by the work of Aristotle. He wrote at least 200 books. In his philosophical books he refers to the Kalam version of the cosmological argument.

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274):

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

William Lane Craig (1949-):

Craig is a contemporary American philosopher who defends the existence of God using the Kalam version of the cosmological argument. He is a Christian apologist (someone who defends Christianity) and has had many debates with atheists such as Sam Harris.

David Hume (1711-1776):

Hume presents a version of the design argument in order to then present his critique of it in *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*. Hume was an atheist. Hume is also known for his skepticism. He argues that you cannot combine the a priori with the empirical. They belong to two different ways of gaining knowledge. A priori relates to the analysis of things you reason about without reference to what is in the world. Necessary truths are truths that are true in all possible worlds. 2 + 2 is a necessary truth and is worked out through reasoning alone, according to Hume. Hume's fork are the synthetic a priori, synthetic a posteriori and contingent truths. These relate to things that are not necessary or that are not known through reasoning alone. This is why Hume does not believe God can be necessary or that a priori arguments can prove the existence of God.

Frederick Robert Tennant (1866-1957):

Tennant was a British theologian and philosopher of religion. He argues that God exists for the purpose of evolution. He put forward the anthropic principle and the aesthetic principle as alternatives to the teleological argument, to explain this.

William Paley (1743-1805):

Paley presented his design argument in his book *Natural Theology*. Paley starts his argument by walking on the heath and coming across a stone. Nobody would question why the stone was there, but the question why a watch was there because it shows clear signs of being designed. Similarly, the world, such as a human eye. They show the same characteristics of being designed by God. Paley's teleological argument was the first teleological argument.

Bertrand Russell (1872-1970):

Lord Russell was a famous philosopher and scholar and sided with a movement known as logical positivists and thought that only things that can be verified are worth considering. This was a later than the A level. Russell was an atheist and agreed with a lot of what Hume said. He argued that the a priori and the synthetic are unrelated.

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Year 2 – Advanced Considerations

These inductive arguments for the existence of God can be incorporated into other arguments. You can use the cosmological and teleological arguments as evidence that religious language is meaningful in a cognitive sense. They want to prove God exists in a factual way. The explanations could be just a different language game. You can also give Craig as a philosopher in the topic on New Atheism in Year 2. Darwinism turns in the topic of religious belief. You will also need to know key concepts, particularly those relating to a posteriori and induction, for understanding logical positivism. Logical positivism is a key figure in the A Level topic of religious language at A Level.

Student Checklist



What Do I Know?	No Idea 😞	Some Idea 😊	Good Idea 😄
What kind of argument is the cosmological and teleological argument?			
What are Aquinas' three ways of proving God exists?			
What is the Kalam argument?			
What did Craig add to the Kalam argument?			
Are inductive arguments for the existence of God persuasive?			
Is the Kalam argument convincing?			
Are cosmological arguments effective arguments in proving God exists?			
Are cosmological arguments relevant in the twenty-first century?			
What is Aquinas' first way of proving God exists?			
What is Paley's teleological argument?			
What does Tennant argue in relation to the teleological argument?			
Is the teleological argument effective in proving God exists?			
Are teleological arguments relevant in the twenty-first century?			
What are the criticisms of the cosmological argument?			
Are the criticisms of the cosmological argument effective?			
What are the criticisms of the teleological argument?			
Are the criticisms of the teleological argument effective?			
What are the alternative scientific explanations there as alternatives to the cosmological and teleological arguments?			
Are the alternative scientific explanations that replace the cosmological and teleological argument more persuasive?			

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Exam-style Questions

AS Level

A. Examine the cosmological argument with reference to Aquinas (25 marks)

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- This question is testing your knowledge of a tradition (Assessment Objective 1) recognised by the term 'examined'. The command words include 'apply'.
- The examiners will be looking to judge your answer in one of the following ways:

Marks	What type of answer
5 21–25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An answer that is thorough, correct and relevant. The answer addresses all aspects of the question. There is depth to the answer, showing insight with good examples. There are plenty of references to texts and/or scholars. The answer is clear and has used specialist terminology throughout.
4 16–20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An answer that is correct and relevant. The answer addresses the question. There is some depth to the answer with detail and some references to texts and/or scholars where appropriate. The answer is clear and specialist terminology is used.
3 11–15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An answer that has a lot that is correct and relevant. The answer addresses most aspects of the question. There is some depth to the answer and some references to texts and/or scholars. There are some references to texts and some connections between texts with some knowledge of the tradition. The answer is quite clear and specialist terminology is used.
2 6–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A limited answer which shows some knowledge of the tradition. Part of the question is answered. There is limited depth to the answer. There is some reference to alternative positions, examples and references to texts to illustrate points. Some specialist terminology is used.
1 1–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The answer shows some basic knowledge and points that are relevant or accurate. Partially answers the question. Lacks depth in the form of critical analysis which connects between texts and/or scholars. Some reference to alternative positions but many are incorrect, unclear or underdeveloped. There are few references to scholars or texts. Specialist terminology is very rarely mentioned.
0 0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nothing worthy of a grade.

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

- In your first paragraph try to write some general points about the tradition. Explain what the cosmological argument is and how it is different from other arguments. Do not mix inductive and deductive arguments mixed up. Make sure you explain why the cosmological argument is inductive and what that means demonstrating that the argument is inductive.
- In your second paragraph explain Aquinas' first way. In order to get full marks you need to give more details to the steps of the arguments.
- In your third paragraph explain Aquinas' second way.
- In the final paragraph, explain Aquinas' third way.
- You do not need a conclusion, but some students like to give a brief summary. Remember you have limited time and it won't get you extra marks.

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B. 'The cosmological argument is effective in proving God exists'. Evaluate this claim.

HINTS

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

Marks Band	Level	What type of answer
5	21–25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An answer is well-reasoned with detailed analysis. • The answer is appropriate to the question and shows critical analysis. • The answer shows clarity and insightful use of examples and evidence. • Textual references are included. • Specialist terminology is used consistently.
4	16–20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different sides to the argument are presented and evaluation based on the points made. • Most of the answer is appropriate to the question and evidence. • The answer is clear and contains some convincing examples and evidence. • Textual references are included to illustrate points. • Specialist terminology is used correctly.
3	11–15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different sides to the argument are considered. • The answer has some points that are correct, relevant and clearly explained. • There is some depth with examples and evidence. Most of the scholarly and/or textual views used are relevant. • Specialist terminology is used correctly.
2	6–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A limited answer that is one-sided with a clear point made. • The answer is basic in answering the question. • There is limited depth with few examples and evidence. • There are some textual references to support the point made clearly. • The answer is quite clear and uses some specialist terminology.
1	1–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an answer to the question, but the analysis is limited. • Most of the answer is inaccurate or irrelevant. • Little development of the points made. • Limited points are made with very few examples and evidence. • Specialist terminology is very rarely mentioned.
0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing worthy of credit.

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

- In your first paragraph, you could state the reasons why Aquinas' cosmological argument is effective. The fact that it is still used today by Christians might be one of the reasons why it is effective.
- You could also consider the criticisms of the cosmological argument by scientists and philosophers who believe in better scientific explanations.
- Perhaps you think that the scientific explanations are compatible with the existence of God.
- In your conclusion give a final answer to the question and support your answer with the points you argued in one of your points in the main body of your answer.

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D. 'The cosmological argument is effective in proving God exists'. Evaluate this claim.

HINTS

- This question is testing how well you can analyse, assess and evaluate the claim (AO1 or AO2). This can be recognised by the term 'evaluate'. It usually starts with 'Evaluate...'.
- At A Level the AO1 question is out of 30 marks, not 25.
- It is important at A Level to make sure your evaluation is not formulaic. It should not be one argument for, one argument against, one argument for. The answer should flow from one point to the next and sometimes this may be two or more points in favour of one side.
- The examiners will be looking to place your answer in one of the following bands:

Band	Level	What type of answer
5	25–30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An answer is well-reasoned with detailed and insightful discussion. • The answer is appropriate to the question. The discussion is insightful. • There is critical analysis with good examples of evidence. • Textual references are included. • Specialist terminology is used consistently and correctly.
4	19–24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different sides to the argument are presented and evaluated based on the points made. • Most of the answer is appropriate to the question. • There is some critical analysis with examples of evidence. • Textual references are included to illustrate the points made. • Specialist terminology is used correctly.
3	13–18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different sides to the argument are considered with some evidence or textual references. • The answer has a lot that is correct and relevant. • There is some development with examples or evidence. • Most of the specialist terminology and/or textual views are relevant. • Specialist terminology is used correctly.
2	7–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A limited answer that is one-sided. • The answer is basic in answering the requirements of the question. • There are a limited number of points made with some evidence. • There are textual references to support the points made. • Some specialist terminology is used.
1	1–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an answer to the question, but this is basic. • Most of the answer is inaccurate or irrelevant. • Little development of the points made. • Limited reference to textual sources. • Specialist terminology is very rarely mentioned.
0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing worthy of credit.

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

- In your first paragraph, you could give reasons why Aquinas' cosmological argument is effective. The fact that it is still used today by many people might be one of the reasons why it is effective.
- You also need to consider the criticisms of the cosmological argument by other philosophers. There are better scientific explanations.
- Perhaps you think that scientific explanations are compatible with theism.
- You could include some material from Year 2 in your answer. For example, you could mention the language of the topic of New Atheism into your answer.
- In your conclusion give a final answer to the question and support your conclusion in one of your points in the main body of your answer.

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

Deductive Arguments for the Existence of God

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- Analytic:** This refers to statements where the predicate in the statement (the verb) says something about the subject of the statement (the noun). For example, 'All insects have eight legs'. A subject in a statement is about the statement is about insects with eight legs.
- A priori:** This literally means 'before' experience. It refers to statements or conclusions arrived at through reasoning and no experience was involved.
- Deductive:** This refers to a type of argument that starts with a universal premise and then applies this to a specific instance of something or someone. Deductive arguments must be true if the premises are true. Deductive arguments do not involve having to use experience to arrive at the conclusion.
 - All spiders have eight legs (universal premise)
 - This insect has eight legs (specific example)
 - It is a spider (conclusion)
- Metaphysical:** There are two meanings. In this topic, if something is metaphysically plausible. It does not necessarily mean it is definite.
- Necessary:** This usually refers to truths that are necessary. Necessary truths are otherwise and are true in all possible worlds (dream world, other universes). Necessary is also used in relation to God. Here it is understood to mean something that has no beginning or end and relies on nothing else.
- Ontology:** This refers to what exists. You may, for example, have in your ontology UFOs. The ontological argument is, therefore, an argument that looks at the existence of God.
- Premise:** This is those parts of an argument that lead to the conclusion. The conclusion made.
- Thalers:** The old currency of Prussia where Immanuel Kant lived. It is believed that he was a Thaler.

Overview

This theme examines different versions of the ontological argument for the existence of God. The first of these is the ontological argument presented by Anselm. The second ontological argument is that of Descartes. The third ontological argument is by a more recent philosopher. These ontological arguments have been criticised by Gaunilo, a contemporary of Descartes' ontological argument in mind in his criticism.

Key Points

Anselm's Ontological Arguments

Anselm's first ontological argument:

- Anselm's ontological argument is written in response to 'the fool' in Psalm 14 who says 'There is no God.'
- Anselm wants to show that 'the fool' is being contradictory because God by definition cannot say he does not exist.
- The ontological argument is a deductive argument based on a priori reasoning.
- It starts with a universal premise which defines God as the greatest conceivable being.
- In *Proslogion*, Anselm defines God as 'that than which no greater can be conceived'.
- From this definition of God, a step is made to explain that to be the greatest conceivable being is to exist.
- The argument concludes by stating that God must exist because he is defined as the greatest conceivable being.

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Anselm's second ontological argument:

- In *Proslogion 3*, Anselm defines God as a necessary being. This is because God is a being and so that must also mean he has necessary existence.
- Anselm argues that it is possible to think of a being who never began to exist. This is a necessary being.
- It is also possible to think of a being that does not exist at all.
- Out of these two options (a necessary being or no being at all), a being that does not exist at all.
- Anselm concludes that as God is the greatest conceivable being, he must also be necessary.

Issues:

- The extent to which 'a priori' arguments for God's existence are persuasive. Heidegger's 'a priori' arguments do not rely on experience which can be fallible (mistaken) and 'a posteriori' arguments are more reliable. If the premises are true, then the conclusion must be true. Premises might not be true. This can be illustrated with the ontological argument. The universal premise, that defines God as the greatest conceivable being (or supreme being), is not everyone's definitions of God. Other philosophers, Gaunilo and Kant, have argued that it is the case that a priori arguments are not going to prove anything existing in the real world. It might be better to opt for inductive arguments that are based on empirical evidence.
- The extent to which different religious views on the nature of God impact on the ontological argument. This point is referring to the fact that different religious views mean different definitions of God. The result is that the universal premise, the first premise in an ontological argument, means the rest of the ontological argument won't work. You will also need to consider the ontological argument from the previous theme and whether different religious views impact on the ontological argument, the religious view must see God as a perfect designer. The existence of evil and suffering in the world suggests that the design is not perfect. For the cosmological argument, God must be regarded as an unmoved mover, an uncaused cause and a necessary being. Different religious views view their god, gods or goddesses as this.

Descartes' and Malcolm's Ontological Arguments**Descartes' ontological argument:**

- Descartes starts his ontological argument by considering the essence of things.
- The essence of a triangle is to have three sides.
- The essence of God is to exist. The reason for this is that God is 'a supremely perfect being' (the definition of God).
- To be the supremely perfect being involves possessing all perfections.
- Existence is a perfection.
- God, as the supremely perfect being, must exist.
- Descartes adds that thinking of God existing is the same as thinking of mountain existing.

Malcolm's ontological argument:

- Norman Malcolm is a modern recent defender of the ontological argument.
- Malcolm agrees that Anselm's first ontological argument and Descartes' ontological argument are flawed because you cannot bring God into existence by defining him as perfect.
- Malcolm focuses on God as a necessary being. He argues that if God is the supremely perfect being, he cannot come into existence. If he were brought into existence, then he is a limited being. He would not be God.
- The same applies to God not existing. That would also make him limited.
- If God cannot come into existence, another alternative is to claim that God has necessary existence. This means that either God has necessary existence or does not exist at all.
- God not existing can be the only possible option if it is logically absurd to think of God existing.
- It is not logically absurd to think of God existing.
- This means that God has necessary existence and necessarily exists.

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Gaunilo of Marmoutiers (994-1083):

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

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804):

Kant is an important philosopher who argued that you can combine a priori with empirical knowledge when we are born with things, such as concepts of time and space, and they help us understand the world. Kant did not believe this work of reason. He argued that the existence of God is a perfection. If the concept of God is false in a deductive argument, Kant believes that the moral argument for the existence of God is the only valid argument.

Norman Malcolm (1911-1990):

Malcolm was an American philosopher. He presented a version of the ontological argument.

Year 2 – Advanced Considerations

Concepts such as a priori and deductive will return in other themes in Year 2. You will also explore concepts in relation to Hume's fork, which will help your understanding of logical positivism. This is a key movement in the topic on religious language at A Level.

Student Checklist

What Do I Know?	No Idea 😞	Some Idea 😊	Good Idea 😄
What kind of argument is the ontological argument?			
What is Anselm's first ontological argument?			
What is Anselm's second ontological argument?			
To what extent are a priori arguments persuasive?			
To what extent do other religious views on the nature of God impact on arguments for the existence of God?			
What is Descartes' ontological argument?			
What is Malcolm's ontological argument?			
How effective is the ontological argument in proving God exists?			
Are ontological arguments more persuasive than cosmological or teleological arguments?			
How does Gaunilo criticise the ontological argument?			
How does Descartes criticise the ontological argument?			
Are the challenges to the ontological argument effective?			
How persuasive are the challenges to the ontological argument?			

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Exam-style Questions

AS Level

A. Examine the ontological argument with reference to Anselm (25 marks)

HINTS

- This question is testing your knowledge and understanding (Assessment Objective 1) recognised by the term 'examine'. The command words include 'apply'.
- The examiners will be looking for your answer in one of the following categories:

Marks	Band	What type of answer
5	21–25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An answer that is thorough, correct and relevant. The answer addresses all aspects of the question. There is depth to the answer, showing insight with examples. There are plenty of references to texts and/or scholars. The answer is clear and has used specialist terminology throughout.
4	16–20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An answer that is correct and relevant. The answer addresses the question. There is some depth to the answer with detail or some references to texts and/or scholars where appropriate. The answer is clear and specialist terminology is used.
3	11–15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An answer that has a lot that is correct and relevant. The answer addresses most aspects of the question. There is some development and depth with some detail. There are references to texts and some connections between texts and/or texts with some knowledge of diverse views. The answer is quite clear and specialist terminology is used.
2	6–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A limited answer which shows some knowledge of the question. Part of the question is answered. There is limited depth to the answer. There is some reference to alternative positions, examples and references to texts to illustrate points. Some specialist terminology is used.
1	1–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The answer shows some basic knowledge and uses some points that are relevant or accurate. Partially answers the question. Lacks depth in the form of critical analysis when comparing between texts and/or scholars. Some reference to alternative positions but most are unclear or underdeveloped. There is little or no reference to texts. Specialist terminology is very rarely mentioned.
0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nothing worthy of credit.

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

- In your first paragraph it is good to write some general points about the ontological argument. Explain what type of an argument the ontological argument is and why it is inductive and deductive. Do not mix them up. Make sure you explain why the ontological argument is deductive and what that means demonstrate.
- In your second paragraph focus on Anselm's first version of the ontological argument. Explain each step of the argument. This demonstrates development. You can also refer to the context by explaining that Anselm presented this argument in response to the question of whether God exists.
- This is a reference to religious scripture.
- Your third paragraph explains Anselm's second version of the ontological argument. Explain key terms such as necessary and contingent.
- Do not explain any of the criticisms or any other versions of the ontological argument.

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B. 'Gaunilo's response to Anselm's ontological argument is stronger than Anselm's claim (25 marks).

HINTS

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

Marks Band	Level	What type of answer
5	21–25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An answer is well-reasoned with detailed and relevant evidence. The answer is appropriate to the question and the requirements of the task. The answer shows clarity and insightful discussion. Textual references are included. Specialist terminology is used consistently and correctly.
4	16–20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Different sides to the argument are presented and evaluated based on the points made. Most of the answer is appropriate to the question and the requirements of the task. The answer is clear and contains some critical discussion. Textual references are included to illustrate the points made. Specialist terminology is used correctly.
3	11–15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Different sides to the argument are considered and evaluated. The answer has a lot that is correct, relevant and appropriate to the question and the requirements of the task. There is some depth with some examples and evidence. Most of the scholarly and/or textual views are relevant to the question. Specialist terminology is used correctly.
2	6–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A limited answer that is one-sided with a limited range of points. The answer is basic in answering the requirements of the task. There is limited depth with few examples or evidence. There are some textual references to support the points made clearly. The answer is quite clear and uses some specialist terminology.
1	1–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is an answer to the question, but this is basic and one-sided. Most of the answer is inaccurate or irrelevant to the question and the requirements of the task. Little development of the points made. Limited points are made with very few examples or evidence. Specialist terminology is very rarely mentioned.
0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nothing worthy of credit.

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

- In the first paragraph it is good to start off by explaining why Gaunilo's argument is stronger than Anselm's. This is because Gaunilo's logic of the ontological argument and that by defining something as perfect being does not bring it into existence.
- In the next paragraph you could explain that the ontological argument could be resolved by Gaunilo's argument. God has necessary existence whereas an island is contingent. Gaunilo's argument makes in a later chapter of his work in section 3.
- In the third paragraph it is good to look at why Kant's argument might be stronger than Gaunilo's. This is because of the fact that existence is not a property or perfection. This makes sense. Kant's argument is stronger than Gaunilo's because it makes it stronger than Gaunilo's.
- In the fourth paragraph you could have a conclusion where you provide a final answer to the question. You could say that Kant's criticism is stronger than Gaunilo's. You then explain briefly why you think this is true and it is true that existence is not a property of something. You could also mention any new argument in it.
- Alternatively, you might think that Gaunilo's argument is stronger because it is more logical. Defining things as perfect doesn't bring them into existence. You could also mention any new argument in your conclusion.

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A Level

C. Examine how Anselm proves the existence of God (20 marks).

HINTS

- This question is testing your knowledge and understanding (Assessment Objective 1) recognised by the term 'examine'. Other command words include 'apply'.
- At A Level the AO1 question is out of 20 marks and is worth 25% of the total mark.
- The examiners will be looking to place your answer in one of the following bands:

Marks Band	Level	What type of answer
5	17–20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An answer that is thorough, correct and relevant. • The answer is entirely clear and answers all aspects of the question. • There is depth to the answer, showing insight with good examples. • There are references to texts and/or scholars. • Specialist terminology is used consistently and correctly.
4	13–16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An answer that is correct and relevant. • The answer addresses the question and demonstrates some depth. • There is some depth and detail with good examples. • References to texts and/or scholars are made. • The answer is clear and specialist terminology is used correctly.
3	9–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An answer that has a lot that is correct and relevant. • The answer addresses most of the aspects of the question. • There is some development and depth with some examples. • Some references are made and there are some references to scholars and/or texts and some knowledge of specialist terminology. • Specialist terminology is used correctly.
2	5–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A limited answer which shows some knowledge and understanding. • The answer addresses the question in a limited way. • Some connections are made between scholars and/or texts. • There is some reference to alternative positions. • Some examples are used. • Few references to texts to illustrate points are made. • Some specialist terminology is used.
1	1–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The answer shows some basic knowledge and understanding. • The question is partly answered with some relevant points that are relevant or accurate. • The answer is partly answered with some relevant points but most of the answer is incorrect, unclear or irrelevant. • There is limited depth where the answer lacks detail and few or no connections between texts and/or scholars. • There is little or no reference to scholars or texts. • Specialist terminology is very rarely mentioned.
0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing worthy of credit.

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

- In your first paragraph it is good to write some general points about the ontological argument. Explain what type of an argument the ontological argument is and why. Mention that the ontological argument is deductive and what the use of specialist terminology. In order to include critical analysis, you could mention that deductive arguments provide conclusions that are certain if the premises are. They provide inductive arguments.
- In your second paragraph focus on Anselm's version of the ontological argument. Make sure you include every part of the argument. This demonstrates development. You could also mention the context by explaining that Anselm presented this argument in his *Proslogium* chapters 2 and 3. This is a reference to religious scripture.
- Your third paragraph explains Anselm's second version. Make sure you explain in detail.

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D. 'Gaunilo's response to Anselm's ontological argument is stronger than Anselm's claim (30 marks).

HINTS

- This question is testing how well you can analyse, assess and evaluate the argument (Objective 2 or AO2). This can be recognised by the term 'evaluate'. It is important to use inverted commas.
- At A Level the AO1 question is out of 30 marks, not 25.
- It is important at A Level to make sure your evaluation is not formulaic. It should not be one argument for, one argument against, one argument for. The answer should move from one point to the next and sometimes this may be in favour of one point in favour consecutively.
- Examiners will be looking to place your answer in one of the following bands:

Marks Band	Level	What type of answer
5	25–30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An answer is well-reasoned with detailed and relevant analysis. • The answer is appropriate to the question. The answer shows an insightful discussion. • There is critical analysis with good examples of evidence. • Textual references are included. • Specialist terminology is used consistently and correctly.
4	19–24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different sides to the argument are presented and evaluated. • Evaluation based on the points made. • Most of the answer is appropriate to the question. • There is some critical analysis with examples of evidence. • Textual references are included to illustrate the points made. • Specialist terminology is used correctly.
3	13–18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different sides to the argument are considered and evaluated. • Some textual references. • The answer has a lot that is correct and relevant. • There is some depth with examples or evidence. • Most of the scholarly and/or textual views are relevant. • Specialist terminology is used correctly.
2	7–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A limited answer that is one-sided. • The answer is basic in answering the requirements of the question. • There are a limited number of points made with little evidence. • There are textual references to support the points made. • Some specialist terminology is used.
1	1–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an answer to the question, but this is basic. • Most of the answer is inaccurate or irrelevant. • Little development of the points made. • Limited reference to textual sources. • Specialist terminology is very rarely mentioned.
0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing worthy of credit.

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

- In the first paragraph it is good to start off by explaining why Gaunilo's response is stronger than Anselm's. You could explain that by defining something as 'necessary existence' and that by defining something as 'contingent existence'. You could add, for further depth, that Gaunilo preferred the empirical approach which is likely to be more successful in proving the actual existence of God.
- In the next paragraph you could explain that this could be resolved by saying that God is different from an island. God has necessary existence whereas an island has contingent existence. You could link to the cosmological argument that Anselm makes in a later chapter of his *Proslogion*. You could add that this is necessary existence that link to the cosmological argument.

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- In the third paragraph it is good to look at why Kant's argument might be stronger than Gaunilo's. It is a fact that existence is not a property or perfection. This makes sense. Kant's argument responds to which makes it stronger than Gaunilo's.
- In the next paragraph, you could consider ways in which Kant's criticism is stronger than Gaunilo's. You could argue that existence should be added to the concept of God just that God must exist.
- In the next paragraph, you could respond to this by stressing that Kant's defining God as 'the greatest conceivable being', this does not mean he was 'the greatest conceivable being', he would be necessary.
- You could also include a conclusion where you provide a final answer to the question. You could argue that Kant's criticism is stronger than Gaunilo's. You then explain briefly why you think this is the case and it is true that existence is not a property of something. You could include any new argument in it.
- You could include material from Year 2 in your answer. For example, you could refer to the nature of religious language or from the topic of New Atheism and its integration.
- Alternatively, you might think that Gaunilo's argument is stronger because his argument. Defining things as perfect doesn't bring them into existence. You could include this in your conclusion.



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



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The Problem of Evil and Suffering

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Counterfactual hypothesis:	John Hick uses this as part of his defence of the existence of evil and suffering. He argues that God could not achieve perfect beings if there were no evil and suffering as these are necessary for humans to develop their souls.
Epistemic distance:	John Hick uses this as part of his defence of the existence of evil and suffering. He argues that humans cannot know God and so can be distanced from him. If we did know God we would just obey him and not develop our souls on our own development of souls.
Eschatological justification:	This is a term John Hick uses in his defence of the existence of evil and suffering. It refers to the end of time. Eschatological justification allows God to forgive humans when they die. This allows God to be just.
The Fall:	This is the event in Genesis when Adam committed the original sin, a state of disobedience and innocence.
Free will:	This is a key concept that is used in most theodicies. It is the idea that we are entirely free to make our own decisions and are fully responsible for the choices we make.
Inconsistent triad:	This is an argument used to prove that the God of theism is inconsistent. It states that God is all-powerful, all-knowing and so he has the power to do anything. God is omnibenevolent (all good creatures he has created). If God were omnibenevolent and omnipotent, he would eliminate human suffering.
Moral evil:	This is suffering caused by a free agent. Someone who chooses to do a moral evil.
Natural evil:	This is suffering caused by natural events. A volcano erupting and people die is natural evil.
Omnibenevolent:	This is an attribute of God. It describes God as being all good.
Omnipotent:	This is an attribute of God. It describes God as being all powerful.
Omniscient:	This is an attribute of God. It describes God as all-knowing.
Original sin:	This is the first sin committed in the Bible. It was committed by Adam from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Bad. This was forbidden and so Adam disobeyed.
Second-order goods:	These are good feelings that arise out of evil and suffering. Second-order goods include compassion, courage, and faith.
Soul-deciding:	This describes a theodicy that argues that there is a purpose to evil and suffering in order to test our souls. How a person responds to evil and suffering determines what will happen to them in the afterlife. Augustine and Aquinas are associated with this.
Soul-making:	This describes a theodicy that argues that there is a purpose to evil and suffering that humans can develop their souls. Irenaeus and John Hick are associated with this.
Theodicy:	This refers to a reply from a religious apologist (someone who defends the problem of evil). It explains why God and evil co-exist.

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Overview

The presence of evil and suffering in the world is one of the biggest challenges to the existence of God. There is a logical inconsistency in the fact that an omnipotent and omnibenevolent God would allow evil to occur. There is also evidential proof that an omnipotent and omnibenevolent God is looking at the sheer amount of evil and suffering that happens. Various theologians present, have defended the existence of God in the face of evil and suffering. Theodicies of God and of humans in a world where there is evil and suffering. Each theodicy allowed moral and natural evil in the world. There are several logical problems with the overall problem that there is just too much evil and suffering in the world to justify an omnibenevolent and omnipotent God.

Key Points



Natural and Moral Evil

- Natural evil is suffering caused by natural events. These acts cause people to suffer.
- Moral evil is evil caused by deliberate human acts. These acts cause others to suffer.

The Logical and Evidential Problem of Evil

Epicurus:

- It makes sense logically to question the existence of an omnibenevolent and omnipotent God in the presence of evil.
- Epicurus was one of the first to recognise the logical problem of evil.
- Epicurus argued that an omnipotent, omniscient and omnibenevolent God would not allow a world where nothing goes wrong.
- Things do go wrong.
- An omnipotent, omniscient and omnibenevolent God cannot have created the world as it is.

Mackie:

- The inconsistent triad is a classic of the logical problem of evil.
- J L Mackie believes that this is a logical problem of evil:
 - The God of classical theism is omnipotent and so he has the power to do anything.
 - God is also omnibenevolent and so loves the creatures he has created (including humans).
 - There is evil in the world.
 - If God were omnibenevolent and omnipotent, he would intervene and prevent animals to suffer.
 - As he has not, God must not exist.

Rowe:

- There is evidence to suggest that an omnipotent and omnibenevolent God does not exist.
- William Rowe gives the example of a fawn trapped in a forest fire.
- There is no purpose to the fawn suffering. There is also no purpose to intense suffering.
- An omnipotent and omnibenevolent God would prevent this from happening.
- It does happen and so God probably doesn't exist.

Paul:

- Gregory Paul gives the example of millions of innocent children that suffer and die.
- These children don't have a chance to learn from natural and moral evil.
- An omnipotent and omnibenevolent God would prevent this suffering from happening.
- It does happen and so the God of classical theism does not exist.

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Issues:

- The extent to which the classical form of the problem of evil is a problem. The question is whether the classical form of the problem of evil, that of Epicurus, has been solved. The fact that the logical problem reappears in the contemporary works of Mackay could also be argued that the classical form of the problem of evil might not be a problem for our understanding of God. The process theodicy is a theodicy that solves the problem by defining God as omnibenevolent but not omnipotent. The question is whether we want to worship.
- The degree to which modern problems of evil arguments are effective in proving the issue requires you to look at the classical logical problem of evil as well as the one presented by Rowe and Mackay. Are these arguments effective in proving the problem of theodicy? Do they also address the issues adequately?

Augustinian-type theodicy**The theodicy:**

- Augustine presents a soul-deciding theodicy.
- Augustine argues that the world was made perfect.
- Evil came into the world when Adam committed the original sin through his disobedience and inherited this sin from Adam.
- Evil is, therefore, a consequence of sin. It is a lack of total goodness in the world due to deprivation. Evil is a lack of goodness.
- This meant that humans fell from a state of innocence and obedience. This is why the creation became imperfect because of the absence of total goodness.
- Augustine argues that following in Christ's footsteps and choosing the Cross can help overcome evil.

Challenges:

- Many would argue that the accounts in Genesis 2 and 3 are not to be taken literally. If you take them literally, you will believe that the event did not literally happen. The liberal view among Christians has a much harsher view of Augustine's view and does not encourage that we should see the whole of humanity in this way.
- There are also scientific errors in Augustine's account of what happened. It is not true that humanity descended from one single pair of humans. It is more likely that there were many pairs and that they came about gradually through evolution by natural selection. This means that humans could not have inherited sin from Adam.
- There are also moral contradictions in Augustine's theodicy. How could an omniscient God create a perfect world with the possibility of evil and the existence of hell? Did he have evil in mind all the time when he created the world?
- There is also a logical contradiction in Augustine's theodicy where he argued that the world in order becomes chaotic when evil comes into the world. Geological evidence shows that the world slowly shifted towards order.
- There is a logical contradiction in stating that God created a perfect world and that it should not change.

Issues:

- Whether Augustinian-type theodicies are relevant in the twenty-first century. The question is whether people today would accept Augustine's account of how the world was created. The way of thinking and the amount of scientific evidence that argues against what he says means there are still a lot of Christians, particularly literalists, who would still accept his account.
- The extent to which Augustine's theodicy succeeds as a defence of the God of the Bible asks you to evaluate how good the challenges to Augustine's theodicy are. Do you think it is the best at ruling out Augustine's theodicy? You may think that it is not. You will need to think carefully about how you could defend Augustine's theodicy.

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Irenaean-type theodicy

The theodicy:

- One theodicy that defends the existence of the God of classical theism is the one presented originally by Irenaeus and defended more recently by John Hick. It is based on reference to the fact that we need to develop in God's likeness.
- The theodicy describes the world as a vale of soul-making because the world is necessary for our souls.
- This theodicy argues that the world was made imperfect by God for the purpose of developing our souls.
- Humans were made imperfect so that they could become in God's likeness through suffering.
- Hick adds the counterfactual hypothesis which is the idea that it makes sense to think that an imperfect world is necessary to develop our souls which is God's purpose.
- Hick argues that we cannot know God or that he exists because this would make it epistemologically impossible to have any evidence of God's existence.
- God making an imperfect world means that natural evil will occur.
- God gave humans free will so they can choose to develop their souls.
- Having free will also means that some will make decisions that will cause the presence of moral evil.
- The presence of evil and suffering in the world gives rise to second-order goods. Without evil and suffering, we wouldn't experience love and compassion.
- God is also forgiving and merciful allowing everyone to develop their souls even if they die. The possibility of development after life Hick calls eschatological justification.

Challenges:

- One weakness with Hick's soul-making theodicy is that animals and some humans do not develop their souls. Hick would counter this with the idea of eschatological justification.
- Eschatological justification does not seem fair. Forgiving someone like Hitler after his death and giving him salvation is unjust.
- It does not seem right for some humans to be sacrificed so that others can develop their souls. The idea that there is immense suffering in the world and it is unequally distributed. Irenaeus would argue that we do not know the bigger picture.
- The suffering in the world cannot be justified by stating that it is all so we can develop our souls.
- An omnibenevolent God would not use suffering as a means of development. An omnibenevolent God would not use evil and suffering as a tool.

Issues:

- Whether Irenaean-type theodicies are credible in the twenty-first century. Is it reasonable to believe that whether this type of theodicy works better for people today than the Augustinian theodicy?
- Whether Irenaean-type theodicies compatible with science? Do all aspects of the theodicy fit with the major problem of moral and natural evil in the world?
- The extent to which Irenaeus's theodicy succeeds as a defence of the God of classical theism requires you to consider the Irenaean theodicy in light of all the challenges. Is there an issue of the inconsistent triad and can God still be omnipotent and omnibenevolent if there is suffering in the world?

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Key Texts/Scholars

Augustine of Hippo (354-430 CE):

Augustine was one of the Church fathers, an important figure in the history of Christianity and Christian doctrine. Augustine was converted to Christianity and became an important figure for presenting a theodicy to defend the God of classical theism against the existence of evil in the world. He also argued that we are predestined since Adam committed the original sin.

John Hick (1922-2012):

Hick was a theologian and philosopher. He is famous for his soul-making theodicy, his pluralism (the idea that there are many aspects of the truth), his concept of a creator and his arguments that claim that religious experiences come across cultures in other topics in Philosophy of Religion.

Irenaeus of Lyons (c.130- c.202):

Irenaeus is one of the Christian Church fathers – ancient influential Christian thinker. He argued against *Heresies* in a time when there were competing religious groups emerging during the early Church, establishing itself. This is one of the reasons why Irenaeus is considered a Church Father. He argued for an upward theodicy, a theodicy that argues from imperfection to perfection, that is that humans are to become perfect.

J L Mackie (1917-1981):

Mackie was an Australian philosopher and atheist. He put forward and argued against the existence of God.

Gregory S Paul (1954-):

Paul wrote a paper in *Philosophy and Theology* that talks about how God cannot justify an immense number of child deaths.

William Rowe (1931-2015):

Rowe was a professor of philosophy. He is most famous for putting forward the evidential theodicy. The evidential theodicy uses the example of a fawn who is trapped by a fire. The purpose of the theodicy is to show that it does not serve for the fawn to suffer.

Bible, Old Testament, Genesis 1:26:

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

Bible, Old Testament, Genesis 3:

In this chapter, the account of the Fall of Man is given. Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden. They could do anything except eat from the Tree of Knowledge. Eve was tempted by the serpent from the Tree of Knowledge and she then tempted Adam. This resulted in Adam and Eve being driven from the Garden of Eden. This is the Fall of Man.

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Year 2 Advanced Considerations

Some of the key figures in this topic will come back in other themes and topics. The nature of religious language and his idea of eschatological verification. The problem philosophers look at in trying to falsify religious belief. This is something that Aquinas is looking at religious language. Basil Mitchell also refers to the problem of evil but for different reasons, despite evidence that often goes against faith for those believing in God. Augustine of the course when you look at predestination

Student Checklist

 What Do I Know?	No Idea 	Some Idea 	Good Idea 
What is natural and moral evil?			
What is the logical problem of evil (Epicurus)?			
What is the logical problem of evil according to Mackie?			
What is the evidential problem of evil (Rowe)?			
What is the evidential problem of evil (Paul)?			
To what extent is the classical problem of evil a problem?			
To what extent are modern problem-of-evil arguments effective in proving God does not exist?			
What is Augustine's theodicy?			
What are the challenges to Augustine's theodicy?			
Is Augustine's theodicy still relevant in the twenty-first century?			
Is Augustine's theodicy successful in defending the existence of God in the face of evil?			
What does the Irenaean-type theodicy claim?			
What are the challenges to the Irenaean-type theodicy?			
Is Irenaean-type theodicy still credible in the twenty-first century?			
Does Irenaean-type theodicy succeed as a defence of God as understood in classical theism?			

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Exam-style Questions

AS Level

A. Examine Augustinian-type and Irenaean-type theodicies as possible solutions to the problem of evil and suffering in the world (25 marks).

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- This question is testing your knowledge and understanding (Assessment Objective 1) and your ability to apply (Assessment Objective 2) what you have learned. Other command words include 'apply', 'compare', 'contrast', 'discuss', 'evaluate', 'explain', 'justify', 'show', 'support', 'use', 'write'.
- The examiners will be looking for you to place your answer in one of the following bands:

Level	Band	What type of answer
5	21–25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An answer that is thorough, correct and relevant. The answer addresses all aspects of the question. There is depth to the answer, showing insight with examples. There are plenty of references to texts and/or scholars. The answer is clear and has used specialist terminology throughout.
4	16–20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An answer that is correct and relevant. The answer addresses the question. There is some depth to the answer with detailed references to texts and/or scholars where diverse views are considered. The answer is clear and specialist terminology is used.
3	11–15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An answer that has a lot that is correct and relevant. The answer addresses most aspects of the question. There is some development and depth with some references to texts and/or scholars. There are references to texts and some connections between them. The answer is quite clear and specialist terminology is used.
2	6–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A limited answer which shows some knowledge and understanding. Part of the question is answered. There is limited depth to the answer. There is some reference to alternative positions, examples and references to texts to illustrate points. Some specialist terminology is used.
1	1–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The answer shows some basic knowledge and understanding that are relevant or accurate. Partially answers the question. Lacks depth in the form of critical analysis when comparing and contrasting views. Some reference to alternative positions but mostly unclear or underdeveloped. There is little or no reference to texts. Specialist terminology is very rarely mentioned.
0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nothing worthy of credit.

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

- In your first paragraph you need to give the theodicies some context. You could say that theodicies are responses to the problem of evil and the logical problem of evil. In brief, don't go into detail about the logical and evidential problem of evil. The logical problem of evil is an inconsistency with God being omnipotent and omnibenevolent and evil existing. If God is all-powerful and all-good, then God would needlessly every day create a world in which God doesn't exist. This demonstrates your understanding of the problem of evil and the need for theodicies.
- In your second paragraph you explain Augustine's theodicy. Make sure to include the concept of original sin. Explain key terms such as original sin.
- In your third paragraph you explain Irenaean and Hick's soul-developing theodicy. Explain the problem of evil. Mention and explain as many details as possible (such as epistemic distance, among other things). These are classed as terminology of your understanding. Explain also how this theodicy resolves the problem of evil. This answers the part of the question where it states 'as possible solutions'. You could also mention the biblical text (Genesis 1:26 talks about God making man in his image and that we must undergo trials and tests in this imperfect world of natural and moral evil).

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B. 'Augustinian-type theodicies are not relevant for the twenty-first century' (25 marks).

HINTS

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

Marks Band	Length	What type of answer
5	21–25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An answer is well-reasoned with detailed and relevant analysis. • The answer is appropriate to the question and contains a high level of critical analysis. • The answer shows clarity and insightful discussion and evidence. • Textual references are included. • Specialist terminology is used consistently and correctly.
4	16–20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different sides to the argument are presented and evaluated based on the points made. • Most of the answer is appropriate to the question and contains relevant evidence. • The answer is clear and contains some critical analysis and evidence. • Textual references are included to illustrate the points made. • Specialist terminology is used correctly.
3	11–15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different sides to the argument are considered and evaluated. • The answer has a clear line that is correct, relevant and clear. • There is some depth with examples and evidence. • Most of the scholarly and/or textual views are included and are relevant. • Specialist terminology is used correctly.
2	6–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A limited answer that is one-sided with a limited range of points. • The answer is basic in answering the requirements of the question. • There is limited depth with few examples or evidence. • There are some textual references to support the points made clearly. • The answer is quite clear and uses some specialist terminology.
1	1–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an answer to the question, but this is basic and one-sided. • Most of the answer is inaccurate or irrelevant. • Little development of the points made. • Limited points are made with very few examples or evidence. • Specialist terminology is very rarely mentioned.
0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing worthy of comment.

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

- In your first paragraph, you could explain how the world today is dominated by science and technology. You could mention the evidence that argues against what Augustine states.
- In your second paragraph, you could explain how there are still a lot of Christians who would still accept Augustine's theodicy. Give examples to illustrate how some are literalists and would probably agree with Augustine.
- Also consider whether there are some aspects of Augustinian-type theodicy that are still relevant. For example, is the idea of original sin compatible with the idea that humans are free-willed?
- In your conclusion give your final answer backed by one of the points from the text.

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A Level

- C. Examine Augustinian-type and Irenaean-type theodicies as possible evil and suffering in the world (20 marks).

HINTS

- This question is testing your knowledge and understanding (Assessment Objective 1) recognised by the term 'examine'. Other common words include 'apply'.
- At A Level the AO1 question is out of 25 marks, not 20.
- The examiners will be looking to grade your answer in one of the following ways:

Marks	Level	Typical type of answer
5	17–20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An answer that is thorough, correct and relevant. • The answer is entirely clear and answers all parts of the question. • There is depth to the answer, showing insight and good examples. • There are references to texts and/or scholars. • Specialist terminology is used consistently and correctly.
4	13–16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An answer that is correct and relevant. • The answer addresses the question and demonstrates some depth. • There is some depth and detail with good examples. • References to texts and/or scholars are made. • The answer is clear and specialist terminology is used.
3	9–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An answer that has a lot that is correct and relevant. • The answer addresses most of the aspects of the question. • There is some development and depth with some examples. • Some references are made and there are some references to scholars and/or texts and some knowledge of specialist terminology is used correctly.
2		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A limited answer which shows some knowledge and understanding. • The answer addresses the question in a limited way. • Some connections are made between scholars and/or texts. • There is some reference to alternative positions. • Few references to texts to illustrate points are made. • Some specialist terminology is used.
1	1–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The answer shows some basic knowledge and understanding of the question. • The question is partly answered with some relevant points but most of the answer is incorrect, unbalanced or incomplete. • There is limited depth where the answer lacks detail and few or no connections between texts and/or scholars. • There is little or no reference to scholars or texts. • Specialist terminology is very rarely mentioned.
0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing worthy of credit.

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

- In your first paragraph you need to give the two theodicies some context. You have theodicies – as responses to the evidential problem of evil and the logical problem of evil. In brief, don't go into detail about the logical and evidential problem of evil but state that there is an inconsistency with God being all-powerful and omnibenevolent if children die needlessly every year. This suggests a God doesn't exist. This is the problem of the need for theodicies.
- In the second paragraph you explain Augustine's theodicy. Make sure you mention key terms such as original sin.
- In your third paragraph you explain Irenaeus and Hick's soul-developing theodicy. Mention and explain as many details as possible (such as epistemic distance, among other things). These are classed as terms you should know. Showing your understanding. Explain also how this theodicy resolves the problem of evil. It is important as it answers the part of the question where it states 'as possible evil and suffering in the world'. Reference scripture (Genesis 1:26 talks about God making man in his image and likeness through the trials and tests in this imperfect world of natural evil).

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D. 'Augustinian-type theodicies are not relevant for the twenty-first century' (30 marks).

HINTS

- This question is testing how well you can analyse, assess and evaluate the evidence (AO1 and AO2). This can be recognised by the term 'evaluate'. It usually starts with 'Evaluate...'.
- At A Level the AO1 question is out of 30 marks.
- It is important at A Level to make sure your answer is not formulaic. This does not mean one argument for, one argument against, one argument for and one argument against. It should flow from one point to the next and sometimes this might mean that you are in favour consecutively.
- The examiner will be looking to place your answer in one of the following levels:

Level	What type of answer
5 25–30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An answer is well-reasoned with detailed analysis. • The answer is appropriate to the question. The discussion is insightful. • There is critical analysis with good examples and textual references included. • Specialist terminology is used consistently and the answer is well-structured.
4 19–24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different sides to the argument are presented well based on the points made. • Most of the answer is appropriate to the question. • There is some critical analysis with examples and textual references included to illustrate the points. • Specialist terminology is used correctly.
3 13–18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different sides to the argument are considered with textual references. • The answer has a clear focus which is correct and relevant to the question. • There is some evidence with examples or evidence included. • Most of the scholarly and/or textual views are presented. • Specialist terminology is used correctly.
2 7–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A limited answer that is one-sided. • The answer is basic in answering the requirements of the question. • There are a limited number of points made with some textual references to support the points. • Some specialist terminology is used.
1 1–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an answer to the question, but this is basic. • Most of the answer is inaccurate or irrelevant. • Little development of the points made. • Limited reference to textual sources. • Specialist terminology is very rarely mentioned.
0 0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing worthy of credit.

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

- In your first paragraph, you could explain how the world today is dominated by scientific evidence that argues against what Augustine states. Give examples of this.
- In another paragraph, you could explain how there are still a lot of Christians who would still accept Augustine's theodicy. Give examples to illustrate this. For example, some Christians are literalists and would probably accept what Augustine says.
- Also consider whether there are some aspects of Augustinian-type theodicy that are relevant. For example, is the idea of original sin compatible with the idea that humans are free to choose?
- Try to include a reference from Year 2 into your answer. You could include discussion on the idea of theodicy, for example, by explaining how Augustinian-type theodicy is a more credible sense which would be more credible. What could this theodicy mean for Augustine actually meant?
- In your conclusion give your final answer backed by one of the points from the table above.

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

Religious Experience 1

G₂ L₁ O₁

Conversion experiences:	These are a type of religious experience that trigger someone to go from no religion to a religion. It is also possible for someone to convert from one religion to another but this would not be classified as a conversion experience.
Corporeal:	When used in the context of a vision, this is a vision of a figure or object that is visible to the senses. Such visions are also known as corporeal visions. They are the senses to see something external to the mind.
Ecstatic:	A word used to describe mystical experiences. It means a state of being peaceful and in a blissful state.
Glossolalia:	This is the ability to speak in different, ancient languages in an unlearned way. This is a phenomenon that usually happens to people who claim to be speaking to the Holy Spirit in Christianity.
Imaginative:	This is a type of vision that is produced by someone's imagination. It can appear in dreams and so a dream vision is a type of imaginative vision.
Intellectual:	This is a type of vision that gives the person knowledge or insight into a spiritual or religious truth.
Logical positivism:	This refers to a scientific and philosophical movement that claims that only statements that can be verified (proved) are meaningful. It is a philosophy that claims that statements that cannot be verified are meaningless.
Mystical experience:	In the context of this specification, a mystical experience is a religious experience that goes beyond the physical and cannot be put into words. It is a religious experience because it is a direct experience of God or something beyond the physical world. It is described as a union with the divine.
Mysticism:	Mysticism is the belief that mystical experiences are possible and are a way to achieve a closer relationship with God. It is a term for a branch within a religion that believes in mystical experiences and offers a way to achieve them. For example, Christian mysticism is interpreted as Christian and subsequently offering practices to achieve mystical experiences.
Numinous:	This is a term coined by Rudolph Otto. He thought that the concept of the numinous was adequate enough to describe a religious experience or a feeling of awe and wonder. It is used as a term for the purpose of trying to describe what is experienced in a religious experience.
Religious experience:	This is an experience of a religious nature. There are different types of religious experiences: visions, voices, near-death experiences, conversion experiences and so on. Religious experience is used as a term to describe an experience of what has been experienced. It is an experience that is often described as being mental and life-changing.
Transcendent:	This refers to something that is beyond this physical world and is often used to describe a religious experience.
Visions:	These are a type of religious experience that involve the perception of something from within the mind).

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Overview

Religious experience is an important aspect of most religions. It is an experience of a divine nature that calls for the person experiencing them to have some proof of its existence. This topic looks at four types of religious experience: visions, conversion experiences, near-death experiences and prayer. It also looks at a closer look at mystical experiences and how they can be explained. It also considers the objectivity and authenticity of religious experiences before looking at religious experiences and their alternative explanations.

Key Points

Nature of Religious Experience

- Religious experiences are used as evidence for the existence of God. It is not the evidence of the person having the experience.
- The argument is as follows:
 - People say they experience X.
 - X exists.
 - People say they experience God.
 - God must exist.
- Religious experiences are subjective, mental, unverifiable by more than one person, sometimes involve instead of ordinary objects, difficult to describe, provide insight into changing human nature.
- Religious experiences provide evidence for the person having the experience. They can also be seen as proof to others of their religious experience.

Visions:

- Visions are a type of religious experience. They are personal proof to those who say they have seen exists.
- Sensory (or corporeal) visions are visions that involve a person seeing a religious figure. It might be an angel, a saint or some other significant figure. An example of a vision is Bernadette who saw the vision of Mary in Lourdes, where she was living. She saw her clearly as she sees other people. It is likely that some other people (but not Bernadette) saw her. An example of a group of people seeing a vision is the angel of Mons. This was seen by British soldiers fighting during WWI.
- Dreams or imaginative visions are visions that are the product of someone's imagination. Whether corporeal visions are not just imaginative visions in that they are in the mind. Imaginative visions usually appear to a person when they have been in deep meditation and are disconnected from their senses. They can appear in dreams. An example is that of an angel who appeared to Joseph telling him to marry Mary and to flee to Egypt (Matthew 19).
- Intellectual visions are visions that give the experiencer special knowledge and an important message as was the case with John who had visions of the end of the world described in the Book of Revelation, in particular Revelation 20:12–15.

Conversion:

- Conversion experiences are another type of religious experience. They are experienced by a person converting to a religion and changing their way of life.
- Conversions can be gradual or sudden.
- An example of a gradual conversion experience is that of C S Lewis. He changed from not believing in God and then to believing in Jesus as the son of God.
- An example of a sudden conversion is that of Saul on the road to Damascus. He was a persecutor of Christians. On one of his travels, on the road to Damascus, he had a vision of Jesus and instantly convert to Christianity and change his name to Paul.
- Conversions can also be individual or communal.
- An individual conversion experience involves the conversion of just one person. An example would be Cat Stevens who had an experience of nearly drowning in the sea, converted to Islam and become known as Yusuf Islam.
- Communal conversions involve a group of people converting. An example of this is in Acts 2 Holy Spirit. Here a group of people converted to Christianity after experiencing the Holy Spirit speaking them to speak in tongues (glossolalia).

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Mysticism:

- Mysticism is, in nature, ineffable and so there have been different ways of trying to describe and experience it.
- One way is to explain mysticism as transcendent. These are experiences described as being about a reality beyond this physical reality. An example would be the experiences of a spiritual ascent.
- Another way is to explain mysticism as ecstatic. This describes how a mystic feels during their experience.
- Another way to explain mysticism is to describe these experiences as unitive. Unitive means that the mystic becomes one with God. Meister Eckhart, a famous mystic, described his mystical experiences as a experience of being lost in God.

Prayer:

- Teresa of Avila described the stages of her mystical experience as stages of prayer.
- The first stage is quietness. This is where the mystic is no longer using or needing words.
- The second stage is where the mystic experiences union with God.
- The third stage is when the mystic experiences spiritual ecstasy.
- The final stage is mystical marriage. This is where the soul merges with God.

Issues:

- The impact of religious experiences upon religious belief and practice. This issue concerns the importance of religious experiences on a religion. Religious experiences are recorded and are offered as proof. The fact that an individual has had a religious experience is seen as proof of their beliefs but also proof for others. An example where this is evident is the conversion of Paul on the road to Damascus. This may be convincing for religious believers but not for those who do not have a religious experience themselves. Bernadette's vision of the Virgin Mary has led to Lourdes being seen as a place of pilgrimage and worship. In this way, religious experiences can influence religious practice. Alternatively, it could be argued that religious experiences are not a good basis for aspects of a religion. Religious experiences are subjective and can be influenced by many factors. Being brought up in a religion is why many practise religion. Religious experiences may also be the ethical codes that religions put forward that keep people believing. For example, the Ten Commandments.
- Whether different types of religious experience can be accepted as equally valid. This issue, you need to consider whether certain religious experiences are more believable than others. Visions may be more believable than mystical experiences. Visions, however, do not necessarily lead to religious practice. Mystical experiences can help convey the message that union with God is possible. Mystical experiences can help convey the message that union with God is possible. Conversion experiences might lead someone to change their life. This then influences others to do the same. It could be argued that religious experiences are as valid as each other because they are all forms of religious experience.

Mystical Experiences

- Examples of famous mystics who wrote about their mystical experiences include St. Augustine in Christianity, Rumi in Islam or the practice of Kabbalah in Judaism. The Hindu concept of moksha is an experience where it is realised that the soul of a person (the atman) is one with the pervading macro-spirit (God or Brahman).
- Mystical experiences can be defined according to their characteristics.
- Mystical experiences are often about union with the divine.
- Mystical experiences are internal rather than external.
- Mystical experiences often involve a revelation.

James on mystical experiences

- William James identifies them to have four characteristics: ineffability, noetic quality, transiency and passivity (acronym PINT).
- Ineffability is about not being able to describe the experience.
- Noetic quality is the deeper knowledge and insight that mystical experiences can be gained from books or in a rational way.
- Transiency is about the fact that the experience does not last very long but is intense.
- Passivity is that the mystical experience happens to the experiencer; they are not in control of it.

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Otto and the numinous:

- The term 'numinous' was coined by Rudolph Otto who thought that terms such as 'mystical' were too subjective to describe a religious experience.
- Otto defines it as 'the deepest and most fundamental element in all strong affective religious experience, which is an emotion'. It is an experience of the 'wholly other'.
- Numinous experiences are experiences where the experiencer feels very separate from the world.
- Numinous experiences happen suddenly and depend on something external to the person.
- Otto argues that humans can experience both rational and mundane as well as irrational (and numinous). Humans, therefore, have a predisposition for religious experiences.
- Otto analysed the numinous as the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* (the terrifying and fascinating). This *mysterium* has three aspects: awefulness, overpowering and fascination. The *mysterium* has two aspects: wholly other and fascination.

Issues:

- The adequacy of James' four characteristics in defining mystical experience. Consider whether James' four characteristics of a mystical experience are clear and whether they define what a mystical experience is. James examined many examples of mystical experiences and found that not all of these four characteristics. His characteristics have been used and quoted by many people but it is clear that these four characteristics do not cover all mystical experiences or that not all mystical experiences have all four characteristics. For example, Evelyn Underhill argued that mystical experiences are not always passive. The fact that mystics do describe their mystical experiences in words suggests that mystical experiences are not ineffable. There may be better ways of defining mystical experiences. For example, using Otto's numinous might be a better option, although there are differences between Otto's numinous experiences and James' mystical experiences.
- The adequacy of Otto's definition of 'numinous'. For this issue, you need to consider whether Otto's definition is any different from those offered by James or anyone else. Is it clear what a numinous experience is? Is his description of a numinous experience different from those of other people? For example, describing the numinous as being overpowering is a characteristic of passive experiences but it seems to reduce the numinous to a feeling of being overwhelmed. Otto's descriptions are also subjective and do not really tell us what God is like. Otto was criticised because 'wholly other' was not good enough. In this respect his definition might be inadequate.

Challenges to the Objectivity and Authenticity of Religious Experiences**Caroline Franks Davis:**

- Franks Davis challenges the authenticity of religious experiences in three ways:
 - She argues that the way a religious experience is described can be challenged. For example, a religious experience can be explained in a more mundane way which would make more sense. This is a subject-related challenge.
 - Reports of religious experiences can also be challenged by looking at the reliability of the person reporting the experience. The subject might not be reliable. This is her subject-related challenge.
 - The object that a religious experience is meant to be about might also be challenged. This is an object-related challenge.

Other challenges:

- Claims of religious experience rejected on grounds of misunderstanding. Religious experiences are often described in terms of things that do not belong to the world and so are difficult to verify. Logical and empirical verification of religious experiences is not possible and so they are meaningless. This is a subject-related challenge. Religious experiences, as a type of religious experience, are ineffable. If an experience is ineffable then it cannot have happened. Furthermore, they are subjectively unverifiable.
- Religious experiences are rarely repeated, which makes them difficult to verify.
- Sigmund Freud argued that religious experiences were illusions and that they were delusional. This is further confirmed by the fact that religious experiences are not always repeated.

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- Richard Swinburne, although accepting that religious experiences are possible they may occur to those who are drugged and so the experience is possibly not authentic rather than an authentic experience.
- Religious experiences also make fantastical claims that are contrary to every day experience. It is difficult for them to be believed.

Responses to the challenges:

- Religious experiences are valid for the individual who has them if they are non-verifiable.
- Richard Swinburne presents two reasons why you should believe in religious experiences. They both rely on probability:
 - Principle of testimony: the idea that we should believe what a person says if they are usually considered reliable. The focus is on what has been seen.
 - Principle of credulity: the idea that we should believe a person when they say something. The focus is on the person who had the experience.
- One-off experiences can still be valid even if never repeated.

Issues:

- The extent to which the challenges to religious experiences are valid. This issue is whether you think the challenges to religious experiences are convincing. Do you agree with positivists or Freud? If so, you need to say why their criticisms are convincing and the responses to those challenges and whether they cancel out the challenges.
- The persuasiveness of Franks Davis's different challenges. This issue requires you to evaluate three challenges to religious experiences. Swinburne agrees that drug-induced experiences are authentic. This relates to the subject-related challenge of Franks Davis. You need to say which is more persuasive. Make sure you explain why with examples.

Key Texts/Scholars

Acts 2:

This refers to the Acts of the Apostles which is a book in the New Testament that describes the communal conversions that happened on the day of Pentecost. The apostles had a collective experience of 'a rushing wind' and 'tongues of fire appeared' and they were speaking in tongues. This experience is particularly relevant to those churches whose services involve trying to invoke the presence of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 9:

In this Acts of the Apostles the famous account of Saul's conversion on the road to Damascus. His conversion Saul changed his name to Paul and became one of the Apostles. His conversion was described as 'Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?'

Teresa of Avila (1515-1582):

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

St. Bernadette (1844-1879):

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

Caroline Franks Davis:

Franks Davis is a contemporary Canadian scholar of religion who presents her typology of religious experiences in *Evidential Force of Religious Experience*.

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Meister Eckhart (c.1260-c.1328):

Eckhart was a German Dominican philosopher and theologian who had various mystical experiences that he wrote about. His descriptions bordered on the heretical and he was accused of heresy.

Yusuf Islam (1948-):

Yusuf Islam was formerly known as Cat Stevens and renamed himself after having converted to Islam. Before Cat Stevens he had been a musician but always showed an interest in religion and spirituality. He kept his religion up until he had his conversion experience. The event that convinced him to convert was a storm that drowned in the sea. He was saved by a boat that lifted him ashore after he had been in the water for a long time. He felt that he had been saved was a sign that he should live a pious life as a Muslim.

William James (1842-1910):

James was an American philosopher and psychologist. His brother Henry James was a famous writer. James's famous work for Religious Studies is *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. He discusses various mystical experiences: chapters 15 and 16. Chapter 15 discusses the characteristics of mystical experiences. James was a radical empiricist which studies both observable objects and the relations between them.

C S Lewis (1898-1963):

Lewis is famous for his children's books *The Chronicles of Narnia* (which also have a lot of religious symbolism). He was a Christian convert which he claimed came about after discussing with the author J R R Tolkien. He went on to write some theological writings as well as fiction.

Rudolph Otto (1869-1937):

Otto was a German theologian who belonged to the Lutheran (Protestant) Church. He wrote *The Holy of Holies* in 1917 that he talks about the numinous.

Rumi (1207-1273):

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

Richard Swinburne (1934-):

Swinburne is a contemporary British philosopher of religion. He has added to the philosophy of religion by including evolutionary theory and also believes that the argument from religious experience that should also be taken into consideration when proving religious beliefs.

Evelyn Underhill (1875-1941):

Underhill was a British writer on religion from the Edwardian period. She wrote a book *Mysticism: A Study of the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness* in 1904. She discusses mystics such as Jan van Ruusbroec (a Flemish medieval mystic) and Plotinus (a Neoplatonist philosopher from the 3rd century CE).

Upanishads (c.800 – c.500 BCE):

The Upanishads are a collection of short books on Hindu spiritual and philosophical ideas. Upanishad means to sit near. This refers to the fact that these texts are the words of a teacher to a disciple sitting near or sitting at the feet of the teacher.

Year 2 Advanced Religious Studies Considerations

In Year 2, you will look at the topic of miracles. Miracles are different from religious experiences. Miracles are usually defined as being a physical act that goes against the laws of nature (although there are other ways of defining miracles). Miracles do, however, face similar problems of verification as religious experiences. You will also examine the influence of religious experience on religious practice and evaluate how great this impact is and whether religious communities can claim to have genuine religious experiences.

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Student Checklist

What Do I Know?	No Idea 😞	Some Idea 😊	Good Idea 😄
What is the argument from religious experience?			
How would you describe a religious experience in general terms?			
What is a vision?			
What types of visions are there?			
Give some examples of the types of visions?			
What is a conversion?			
Give some examples of the different types of conversion.			
What is mysticism?			
Give some examples of mysticism.			
What stages of prayer are there?			
What is the impact of religious experiences upon religious belief and practice?			
Are different types of religious experiences accepted as equally valid in communicating religious truths and beliefs?			
What are mystical experiences?			
How did William James define mystical experiences (what are the characteristics)?			
How does Rudolph Otto describe religious experiences?			
Are James' four characteristics adequate in defining mystical experience?			
Is Otto's definition of 'numinous' adequate?			
What are Caroline Franks Davis's challenges to religious experience?			
Explain other challenges to religious experience.			
What are the responses to the challenges of religious experience?			
To what extent are the challenges to religious experience persuasive?			
How persuasive are Franks Davis's different challenges?			

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Exam-style Questions

AS Level

A. Examine the different types of visions that religious people might experience.

HINTS

- This question is testing your knowledge and understanding (Assessment Objective 1) which is recognised by the term 'examining'. Other command words include 'apply', 'analyse', 'compare', 'discuss', 'evaluate', 'explain', 'justify', 'show', 'support', 'use'.
- The examiners will be looking to place your answer in one of the following categories:

Grade	Level	What type of answer
5	21–25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An answer that is thorough, correct and relevant. The answer addresses all aspects of the question. There is depth to the answer, showing insight and good examples. There are plenty of references to texts and scholars. The answer is clear and has used specialist terminology throughout.
4	16–20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An answer that is correct and relevant. The answer addresses the question. There is some depth to the answer with detailed analysis. There are references to texts and/or scholars acknowledged. The answer is clear and specialist terminology is used.
3	11–15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An answer that has a length that is correct and relevant. The answer addresses most aspects of the question. There is some development and depth with analysis. There are references to texts and some correct scholars and/or texts with some knowledge. The answer is quite clear and specialist terminology is used.
2	6–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A limited answer which shows some knowledge and understanding. Part of the question is answered. There is limited depth to the answer. There is some reference to alternative positions, examples and references to texts to illustrate points. Some specialist terminology is used.
1	1–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The answer shows some basic knowledge of points that are relevant or accurate. Partially answers the question. Lacks depth in the form of critical analysis or comparison made between texts and/or scholars. Some reference to alternative positions but they are incorrect, unclear or underdeveloped. There are few references to scholars or texts.
0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specialist terminology is very rarely mentioned. Nothing written or no credit.

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

- In your first paragraph it is good to write some general points about what the basic types of religious experience are. Explain how they are used in the text. This demonstrates understanding of the importance of religious experience.
- In the next paragraphs you need to write about the three types of vision and illustrate. The examples provide detail. The more accurate and detailed the better the mark.

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B. 'Visions are more valid than other religious experiences in communities and beliefs'. Evaluate this claim (25 marks).

HINTS

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

Marks Band	Level	What type of answer
5	21–25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An answer is well-reasoned with detailed and relevant analysis. • The answer is appropriate to the question and contains a clear line of argument. • The answer shows clarity and insightful discussion with relevant evidence. • Textual references are included. • Specialist terminology is used consistently and correctly.
4	16–20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different sides to the argument are presented and evaluated based on the points made. • Most of the answer is appropriate to the question and contains relevant evidence. • The answer is clear and contains some critical discussion. • Textual references are included to illustrate the points made. • Specialist terminology is used correctly.
3	11–15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different sides to the argument are considered and evaluated. • The answer has a lot of relevant, correct, relevant analysis. • There is some discussion with examples and evidence. • Most of the answer is relevant and/or textual views are included. • Specialist terminology is used correctly.
2	6–10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A limited answer that is one-sided with a limited line of argument. • The answer is basic in answering the requirements of the question. • There is limited depth with few examples or evidence. • There are some textual references to support the points made clearly. • The answer is quite clear and uses some specialist terminology.
1	1–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an answer to the question, but this is basic and lacks depth. • Most of the answer is inaccurate or irrelevant. • Little development of the points made. • Limited points are made with very few examples or evidence. • Specialist terminology is very rarely mentioned.
0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing worthy of credit.

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

- In your first paragraph, you could explain how visions can be more believable than other religious experiences because visions can be described whereas mystical experiences cannot. Visions of the Virgin Mary, prayer and mystical experiences are not different. They are more believable because they can persuade people of religious beliefs and practices.
- In favour of other religious experiences being more valid, you could explain that visions are not necessarily correct and are religious teachings. Seeing a vision of the Virgin Mary is not an addition to what is stated in scripture. Mystical experiences are not a way to achieve that union with God is possible and desirable, if you are devoted. Conversion experiences might be considered more valid if they cause someone to then influence others to do the same.
- You might want to include the fact that all religious experiences are as valid as each other and are all forms of communication with the divine.
- In your conclusion, answer the question with your final word on the matter and state the reasons you made in the main part of your answer.

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A Level

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

HINTS

- This question is testing your knowledge and understanding (Assessment Objective 1) recognised by the term 'examine'. Other command words include 'apply', 'analyse', 'outline'.
- At A Level the AO1 question is out of 25 marks, not 25.
- The examiners will be looking for your answer in one of the following

Marks	Band	What type of answer
5	17–20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An answer that is thorough, correct and relevant. The answer is entirely clear and answers all parts of the question. There is depth to the answer, showing insight and good examples. There are references to texts and/or scholars. Specialist terminology is used consistently and correctly.
4	13–16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An answer that is correct and relevant. The answer addresses the question and does not ignore any part. There is some depth and detail with good examples. References to texts and/or scholars are made. The answer is clear and specialist terminology is used correctly.
3	9–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An answer that has a lot that is correct and relevant. The answer addresses most of the aspects of the question. There is some development and depth with good examples. Some references are made and there are some connections between scholars and/or texts and some key terms. Specialist terminology is used correctly.
2	5–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A limited answer which shows some knowledge and understanding. The answer addresses the question in a limited way. Connections are made between scholars and/or texts. There is some reference to alternative positions. Examples are given. Few references to texts to illustrate points are made. Some specialist terminology is used.
1	1–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The answer shows some basic knowledge and understanding of the question. The question is partly answered with some relevant points that are relevant or accurate. The question is partly answered with some relevant points but most of the answer is incorrect, incomplete or underdeveloped. There is limited depth where the answer lacks detail and makes few or no connections between texts and/or scholars. There is little or no reference to scholars or texts. Specialist terminology is very rarely mentioned.
0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nothing worthy of comment.

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

- In your first paragraph it is good to write some general points about what visions are and how visions are a type of religious experience. Explain how they are different from other types of religious experience. This demonstrates understanding of the importance of religious experience.
- In your next paragraphs you need to write about the three types of vision and give examples to illustrate. The examples provide detail. The more accurate the better the mark.
- To demonstrate critical analysis, you could explain how it is difficult to distinguish between real and imaginative visions because it could be argued that visions are entirely subjective.

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D. 'Visions are more valid than other religious experiences in communities and beliefs'. Evaluate this claim (30 marks).

HINTS

- This question is testing how well you can analyse, assess and evaluate the claim (AO2). This can be recognised by the term 'evaluate'. It usually starts with 'Evaluate...'.
- It is important at A Level to make sure your evaluation is not formulaic. This should not be one argument for, one argument against, one argument for and one against. It should flow from one point to the next and if you can't think of any more points in favour consecutively.
- The examiners will be looking for you to place your answer in one of the following categories:

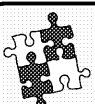
Marks	Level	What type of answer
5	25–30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An answer is well-reasoned with detailed analysis. • The answer is appropriate to the question. The claim is supported by an insightful discussion. • There is critical analysis with good examples and evidence. • Textual references are included. • Specialist terminology is used consistently and throughout.
4	19–24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different sides to the argument are presented with some analysis based on the points made. • Most of the answer is appropriate to the question. • There is some critical analysis with examples and evidence. • Textual references are included to illustrate the points. • Specialist terminology is used correctly.
3	13–18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different sides to the argument are considered with some textual references. • The answer has a lot that is correct and relevant. • There is some depth with examples or evidence. • Most of the scholarly and/or textual views are presented. • Specialist terminology is used correctly.
2	7–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A limited answer that is one-sided. • The answer is basic in answering the requirements of the question. There are a limited number of points made with some evidence. • There are textual references to support the points made. • Some specialist terminology is used.
1	1–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is an answer to the question, but this is basic. • Most of the answer is inaccurate or irrelevant. • Little development of the points made. • Limited reference to textual sources. • Specialist terminology is very rarely mentioned.
0	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing worthy of credit.

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

- In your first paragraph, you could explain how visions can be more believable than other religious experiences because visions can be described whereas mystical experiences cannot. Visions are a form of prayer and mystical experiences are not. If they are more believable than other religious experiences, then people of religious beliefs and practices.
- In favour of other religious experiences being more valid, you could explain how other religious experiences communicate religious teachings. Seeing a vision of the Virgin Mary or of other figures is in addition to what is stated in scripture. Mystical experiences can help convey religious teachings if possible and desirable, if you are devoted to a religion. Christian mystics were considered more valid if they could help people to change their life. This then supports the claim that visions are more valid.
- You might want to include a point that all religious experiences are as valid as each other and that all forms of communication with the divine.
- You can also include some arguments from Year 2. You might want to discuss how mystical experiences are often described to be symbolic (non-cognitivism) rather than factual (cognitivism). Descriptions of mystical experiences might better be understood to be symbolic than factual. Different types of religious experiences are more valid from a cognitive sense.
- In your conclusion, answer the question with your final word on the matter by stating which side you have made in the main part of your answer.

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

True/False quiz

1.	The cosmological argument is a deductive argument.
2.	The third way of Aquinas' arguments for the existence of God describes God as an unmoved mover.
3.	The teleological argument is an inductive argument.
4.	Paley criticised the teleological argument.
5.	Paley argued that a stone is like a watch.
6.	Hume argues that similar causes does not mean similar effects.
7.	The ontological argument is an inductive argument.
8.	Aquinas put forward a version of the ontological argument.
9.	The ontological argument argues that existence is a perfection and because God is perfect, he must have existence.
10.	Gaunilo criticised the ontological argument using the example of a perfect island.
11.	Kant argued that existence is not a category but a perfection.
12.	The conclusion to the ontological argument is true if the premises are true.
13.	Oceans full of plastic causing fish to die is natural evil.
14.	The logical problem of evil can be presented as the inconsistent triad.
15.	The inconsistent triad explains that God is omniscient and omnibenevolent yet evil exists.
16.	A theodicy defends the existence of a omnipotent and omnibenevolent God and evil in the world.
17.	Hick claims that God created the world perfect.
18.	Hick claims that we cannot know God or know of his plan as this would not encourage us to develop our souls.
19.	Augustine believes the world was made imperfect.
20.	Augustine's theodicy is contradictory in claiming the world was made perfect and yet it changed.
21.	Augustine talks about eschatological justification in his theodicy.
22.	Franks Davis argued that there are two problems with religious experiences subject-related and object-related.
23.	Having a dream of an angel speaking to you is a corporeal vision.
24.	William James describes mystical experiences as numinous.
25.	William James describes mystical experiences as ineffable.
26.	Religious experiences are mental and subjective and so they can easily be verified.
27.	Religious believers are happy for religious experiences to be explained by science.
28.	Swinburne argues in his principle of testimony that if an angel appears before a person there was probably an angel.

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Answers to True/False Quiz

1. False. The cosmological argument is an inductive argument.
2. False. This is the first way. Aquinas describes God as a necessary being in the second way.
3. True.
4. False. Paley presented a version of the teleological argument which he based on the existence of God.
5. False. Paley compared a watch to the eye.
6. False. Hume argued that similar effects does not mean similar causes.
7. False. The ontological argument is a deductive argument.
8. False. Aquinas did not put forward an ontological argument. Anselm is the one who put forward an ontological argument.
9. True.
10. True.
11. False. Kant argued that existence is a category, not a property or perfection.
12. True.
13. False. Fish dying from plastic waste is the result of humans not acting morally. It is a moral evil.
14. True.
15. False. The inconsistent triad explains that God is omnipotent and omnibenevolent but not omniscient.
16. True.
17. False. The world was created perfect so that humans could be tested.
18. True.
19. False. Augustine claims the world was made perfect before Adam committed the fall.
20. True.
21. False. It is Hick who talks about eschatological justification.
22. False. Franks Davis writes about three types of perception-related, subjective religious experiences.
23. False. This is an example of a dream or imaginative vision.
24. False. Rudolph Otto describes a certain type of religious experience, not a general one. It is numinous.
25. True. This is the first of his four criteria of a mystical experience.
26. False. In order to be verified, more than one person needs to experience a religious experience that is physical.
27. False. Science explains things without the need of God and so religious believers do not accept scientific explanations of religious experiences. Religious experiences are not explained by science. Religious believers that God exists.
28. False. This describes Swinburne's principle of credulity. The principle of credulity says that we should believe a person when they say they have seen an angel.

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