

Philosophy & Ethics

Practice Questions

A Level
2016 AQA Linear Syllabus



Instructions

Individual, exam-style questions

The questions contained in this booklet match the style of questions that are typically asked in exams. This booklet is not however, a practice exam. Elevate's research with top students identified that top students do more practice questions than anyone else. They begin the process of testing their knowledge early in the year.

Therefore, we have provided exam-format questions that are sorted by topic so that you can answer them as you learn the information, rather than waiting until the very end of the year to complete exams.

Comments, questions?

Let us know if you need any further advice by visiting www.elevateeducation.com. You can comment on any of our material, or head to the FAQ section and ask us a question. Also, you can find us on social media so you can stay up to date on any brand new tips we release throughout the year.

Other information

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Philosophy

- Answer parts a and b. All part a questions are worth 10 marks and are ONLY assessing AO1 (knowledge and understanding).
- All part b questions are worth 15 marks and are ONLY assessing AO2 (Analysis and Evaluation).
- You have roughly 45 minutes for each question (18 minutes for part a and 27 minutes for part b).

Arguments for the existence of God

- a) 'Examine the differences between one a priori argument and one a posteriori argument for the existence of God.'
 - b) 'Kant's criticisms of the ontological argument are more convincing than Gaunilo's.' Evaluate this claim.
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- a) Examine Paley's contribution to the design argument
 - b) 'The teleological argument successfully proves that God exists' Evaluate this claim.
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- a) Examine how the design argument has been challenged
 - b) 'The presence of evil and suffering in the world disproves the teleological argument.' Evaluate this claim.
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- a) Examine Aquinas' Third Way in relation to the cosmological argument
 - b) 'The cosmological argument cannot prove the existence of God.' Evaluate this claim.
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- a) Examine the criticisms of the ontological argument
 - b) 'It is impossible to prove that God exists through reason alone.' Evaluate this claim.

Evil & Suffering

- a) Examine how Griffin's Process theodicy and Hick's Soul Making theodicy respond to the problem of evil and suffering.
- a) 'An omnibenevolent God would not allow evil and suffering to exist in the world.' Evaluate this claim.

- a) Examine the concepts of Natural and Moral Evil.
- b) 'Philosophers have successfully argued that God and evil and suffering can co-exist' Evaluate this claim.

Religious Experience

- a) Examine the different forms of religious experience
 - b) 'It is fair to say that some forms of religious experience are impossible to verify.' Evaluate this claim
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- a) Examine Swinburne's principles of credulity and testimony
 - b) 'Religious experiences prove that God exists.' Evaluate this claim.
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- a) Examine the challenges of verifying religious experiences
 - b) 'Science is the most effective way to disprove religious experiences' Evaluate this claim.

Religious Language

- a) Examine the view that religious language is symbolic
 - b) 'Religious language can only be viewed cognitively.' Evaluate this claim.
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- a) Examine the verification and falsification principles.
 - b) 'Some religious language is meaningless.' Evaluate this claim.
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- a) Examine the strengths and weaknesses of language game theory.
 - b) 'It is possible to understand religious language in a variety of ways.' Evaluate this claim.

Miracles

- a) Examine the differing understandings of miracles.
 - b) 'Hume's criticisms of miracles are less convincing than Wiles'. Evaluate this claim.
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- a) Examine Maurice Wiles ideas on miracles.
 - b) 'If miracles occur, then God must exist.' Evaluate this claim.

- a) Examine the difficulties in verifying miracles.
- b) 'It is more challenging to verify miracles than it is to verify personal religious experiences.' Evaluate this claim.

Self, Death and the Afterlife

- a) Examine Descartes' argument for the existence of the soul
 - b) 'The soul does not exist.' Evaluate this claim.
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- a) Examine the view that the body and soul are connected.
 - b) 'The theory of Dualism is more convincing than the theory of Monism.' Evaluate this claim.

Normative Ethical Theories and Application

- a) Examine the differences between virtue ethics and situation ethics in relation to theft.
 - b) 'Theft is never morally acceptable.' Evaluate this claim.
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- a) Examine differing views about natural moral law as a guide to moral decision making.
 - b) 'Deontological approaches to ethical decision making are unsatisfactory in comparison to other approaches.' Evaluate this claim. Your answer should focus on issues of non-human life and death.
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- a) Examine the strengths of situation ethics in relation to theft and lying.
 - b) 'Situation ethics is the most convincing normative ethical theory.' Evaluate this claim.
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- a) Examine the weaknesses of virtue ethics in relation to blood sports.
 - b) 'Natural moral law provides no satisfactory answer to the ethical problems associated with euthanasia.' Evaluate this claim.

Introduction to Meta-Ethics: The Meaning of Right and Wrong

- a) Examine the different ways in which "right" and "wrong" can be defined.
- b) 'There is no such thing as right and wrong when it comes to ethical decision making.' Evaluate this claim.

Free Will and Moral Responsibility

- a) Examine the differing ways in which libertarianism and hard determinism address the extent of moral responsibility.
- b) 'Humans are not responsible for their moral decisions.' Evaluate this claim.

Conscience

- a) Examine differing non-religious ideas about the nature of conscience.
- b) 'Conscience dictates that adultery is wrong.' Evaluate this claim.

Bentham and Kant

- a) Examine the similarities between Kant's ideas and Bentham's ideas about moral decision making.
- b) 'Kant's ideas are more consistent with religious moral decision making than Bentham's.' Evaluate this claim.

Mark Scheme

(Taken from the AQA specimen paper mark scheme).

AO1 - Knowledge and understanding of religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching.

- Knowledge and critical understanding is accurate, relevant and fully developed in breadth and depth with very good use of detailed and relevant evidence which may include textual/scriptural references where appropriate.
- Where appropriate, good knowledge and understanding of the diversity of views and/or scholarly opinion is demonstrated.
- Clear and coherent presentation of ideas with precise use of the appropriate subject vocabulary.

AO2 - Analysis and evaluation of aspects and approaches to religion and belief.

- A very well-focused response to the issue(s) raised.
- Perceptive discussion of different views, including, where appropriate, those of scholars or schools of thought with critical analysis.
- There is an appropriate evaluation fully supported by the reasoning.
- Precise use of the appropriate subject vocabulary.

Marking Tips

Hit the Assessment Objectives

Two of the most common themes from previous Examiner's Reports for this type of question are:

- a) That students provide a brilliant analysis of the issues in part a but don't get ANY marks for it because it's not relevant to the assessment objective; and
- b) Students recycle points between part a and b, which makes it very difficult to hit either assessment objective.

Learn the assessment objectives off by heart or have them out in front of you whilst doing practice questions to make your answer more focused.

Use the Specimen Paper

You can find this on the AQA website and the mark scheme is really useful. Go through it to get a more detailed idea of the different approaches required for part a and part b questions.