

# Year 13

# Exam Technique



# A01 objective

- 18 minutes, including thinking time.
- 360 words recommended maximum length – no longer can be expected.
- Must respond to the exact question asked.
- Should cover it in breadth and depth as relevant.
- Should support points with evidence and/or examples.
- Should be clear and coherent and use appropriate subject vocabulary.

**Examine Hick's soul making theodicy and how it influences attitudes to evil and suffering. (10)**

In pairs you have 5 minutes to make a mini-plan of this answer

**Look at the answer and use the mark  
scheme to try and work out the level  
and score**

I   
Marking

# AQA mark and feedback

- 394 words – longer than required. Mostly relevant, but not all the points are directly related to Hick.
- Shows understanding of the attitude to evil encouraged by the theodicy, and some awareness of
- the theodicy itself. Appropriate use of technical vocabulary.
- Borderline level 3 or 4 – awarded level 4: 7.

**Examine the meaning of each of the following:**

- **Religious language is symbolic**
- **Religious language is analogical (10)**

In pairs you have 5 minutes to make a mini-plan  
of this answer

# What would you edit out of this plan?

- 1: Cognitive and non-cognitive language
- 2: Tillich. God is love; symbol not sign
- 3: Symbol as object
- 4: Aquinas
- 5: Equivocal and univocal language
- 6: Analogy of attribution and proportion
- 7: Example of Einstein as clever and baby as clever.

# Reduced plan

- 2: Tillich. God is love; symbol not sign
- 4: Aquinas
- 6: Analogy of attribution and proportion



**Look at the answer and use the mark  
scheme to try and work out the level  
and score**

I   
Marking

- There are two commands in this question, so a maximum of level 3 is available if only one is tackled. The specification only requires the study of Tillich for religious language as symbolic and of Aquinas for religious language as analogical, so full marks is available for an answer which only references these two thinkers.
- 584 words – Far longer than necessary. The answer is not focused, nor the expression clear. In fact in places the writer says the exact opposite to what was probably intended. If the whole of three hours was spent writing like this, one can imagine that the student was utterly exhausted at the end.
- The first paragraph is irrelevant.
- The material on Tillich is very vague and repetitive. Some credit can be given for a general understanding that symbolic language should not be taken literally, unlike signs they ‘hold something beyond what is seen’ and they can bring believers closer to Jesus/God, however, the whole answer lacks precision.
- On analogy, the diversion into univocal and equivocal is not necessary but could have been helpful in showing what analogical language is not. There is some awareness of how analogical language functions, but the baby/Einstein illustration is not applied to God, although its general implication is clear, and the idea reinforced in the final statement.
- This is a level 3 response.

# A02 objective

- 27 minutes.
- 540 words recommended maximum: no longer can be expected.
- Must debate the issue.
- Discussion of different views.
- Critical analysis.
- Evaluation.
- Some of the very weakest answers did not express a point of view, and, of those, some did not include any information that could have been used as evidence. It did **not** appear that these students had run out of time.

**‘The ontological argument proves the existence of God.’ Evaluate this claim. (15)**

In pairs you have 5 minutes to make a mini-plan of this answer

**Look at the answer and use the mark  
scheme to try and work out the level  
and score**

I   
Marking

- Level 5 answer
- 673 words – This is longer than the suggested maximum (540)
- The specification requires only a study of the objections of Gaunilo and Kant, so these are the only ones the student is required to discuss. As before, this is not a ‘perfect’ answer. It shows an understanding of Gaunilo’s objection and critically counters it with the idea that God and ‘an island’ are incomparable. It comments on the strength of ‘pure logic’ as opposed to empirical evidence and on the possibility that the argument is based on religious experience, all of which is said to increase the value of the argument for believers. In the section on Kant, the argument that accepting the definition of something does not mean that it exists is clear, as is the idea that, if successful, the argument would remove all doubt, which it clearly does not – this is very good analysis of the implications of the argument. The conclusion clearly follows from the reasoning.

**‘Religion has no satisfactory response to the challenge of the verification principle.’  
Evaluate this claim. (15)**

In pairs you have 5 minutes to make a mini-plan of this answer

**Look at the answer and use the mark  
scheme to try and work out the level  
and score**

I   
Marking



- 619 words – Longer than required, and no more could be expected. This is a maximum mark answer and illustrates how 15 marks can be awarded without the answer being perfect. It covers all three responses specified for study: Blik, eschatological verification and language games, and evaluates each response to the challenge. Its overall conclusion reflects what has been argued in the body of the essay.