3.5 Liberal Thinkers: John Stuart Mill and John Rawls: 10-minute Pack

EDEXCEL 9PL0 · about 10 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Short answers may use bullet points. For levels-marked questions write a well-structured, developed response using accurate knowledge of Mill and Rawls and precise terminology. The final 30-mark essay must be answered in full sentences.

1 This question checks knowledge of Mill's view on free speech as set out in On Liberty. State Mill's view on the liberty of expression.

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

2 This short item asks for a named example: give one historical policy or institution Mill supported to protect freedom of expression, with an explanation and date where possible relating to the 19th century context.

(Total for Question 2 is 4 marks)

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3 This question tests knowledge of Rawls's two principles of justice in A Theory of Justice. State Rawls's two principles of justice.

(Total for Question 3 is 3 marks)

4 This question is about Mill's qualified support for democracy from On Liberty. Explain Mill's qualified support for democracy and his concern about the 'tyranny of the majority'.

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

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Mark scheme · 3.5 Liberal Thinkers: John Stuart Mill and John Rawls: 10-minute Pack

Question 1

states that Mill defended almost complete liberty of speech, including even offensive or false opinions, because debate helps reveal truth	**B1**

Answer: Mill defended near-complete liberty of speech, arguing that allowing offending or false views to be expressed helps test and clarify the truth.

Question 2

names a relevant 19th century example linked to Mill's context, e.g. opposition to strict press censorship or support for reforming libel law	**B1**
explains how this relates to free expression, e.g. Mill's arguments against censorship to enable debate and truth-seeking	**B1**
provides a dated or contextual detail, e.g. references to the mid 19th century reform climate or Mill's 1859 publication date	**B1**
links the example to Mill's principle such as the harm principle or developmental individualism	**B1**

Answer: Example: opposition to strict press censorship in the mid 19th century. Mill, writing in 1859, argued against censorship because open debate allows false beliefs to be challenged and truth to emerge, a position consistent with his harm principle and defence of individuality.

Question 3

states the first principle guaranteeing equal basic liberties for all	**B1**
states the second principle allowing social and economic inequalities only if they benefit the least advantaged and are attached to positions open to all	**B1**
identifies the difference principle as part of the second principle	**B1**

Answer: Rawls's two principles are: (1) each person has an equal right to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic liberties, and (2) social and economic inequalities are acceptable only if they are to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged and attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity.

Question 4

identifies that Mill supported democracy as generally valuable but not absolute	**B1**
identifies Mill's concern about the tyranny of the majority suppressing individuality and minority opinion	**B1**
explains that Mill advocated checks such as strong civil liberties, representative institutions and protection for minorities	**B1**
links this to Mill's belief that democracy must be limited to protect individual development	**B1**

Answer: Mill supported representative democracy as a valuable method of government but warned it could become a tyranny of the majority. He argued for safeguards including robust civil liberties, free speech and institutional checks to protect minorities and individuality, so democracy should be tempered to preserve space for individual development.

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