



RS.TA10 Cohabitation and Adultery as Alternatives to Marital Fidelity

AQA 8062 · Calculators not allowed · about 50 minutes

Total Marks

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Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Answer ALL questions. Show all your working.

- 1** Which one of the following definitions correctly describes cohabitation in the context of modern relationships in the UK?

- ☐ A: living together as a couple without being married or in a civil partnership
- ☐ B: marrying but living apart for work reasons
- ☐ C: formally registered civil partnership between two people
- ☐ D: arranging a marriage between families

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

- 2** Give two reasons commonly given by couples for choosing to cohabit in the UK rather than marry, in the context of changing social attitudes.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

- 3** Give one religious reason why adultery is considered wrong in Christianity, naming a relevant source of authority.

(Total for Question 3 is 1 mark)

- 4** Identify two effects adultery can have on a family, referring to the family context and relationships.

(Total for Question 4 is 2 marks)

5 Explain two religious objections to cohabitation given by some Christian and Muslim believers.

(Total for Question 5 is 4 marks)

6 Explain two reasons why some Christians accept cohabitation in modern Britain as permissible, from a pastoral or practical point of view.

(Total for Question 6 is 4 marks)

7 Explain two contrasting religious attitudes to cohabitation, making reference to a sacred text or another authorised source in your answer.

(Total for Question 7 is 5 marks)

8 Give three possible social reasons why cohabitation has become more common in the UK in recent decades.

(Total for Question 8 is 3 marks)

- 9** Explain two reasons why adultery is considered wrong in religious teaching, referring to the effects on marriage and family life.

(Total for Question 9 is 4 marks)

- 10** Give three actions a religious community might take when adultery is discovered in a marriage, referring to pastoral or legal responses.

(Total for Question 10 is 3 marks)

- 11** Explain the importance of faithfulness within marriage for religious believers, referring to religious teaching and the role of marriage in family life.

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(Total for Question 11 is 6 marks)

- 12** Cohabiting before marriage is not wrong. Evaluate this statement. In your answer you should give reasoned arguments to support this statement, give reasoned arguments to support a different point of view, refer to religious arguments, reach a justified conclusion.

(Total for Question 12 is 12 marks)

Mark scheme · RS.TA10 Cohabitation and Adultery as Alternatives to Marital Fidelity

Question 1

- **B1** selecting A, living together as a couple without marriage or civil partnership, cao
- **Answer: A**

Question 2

- **B1** reason 1: to test the relationship before marriage or see if they are compatible, oe
- **B1** reason 2: financial convenience or sharing household costs without legal marriage, oe
- **Answer: Any two reasonable reasons, for example: to test compatibility; financial convenience.**

Question 3

- **B1** reference to the Ten Commandments forbidding adultery, eg Exodus 20:14, oe
- **Answer: Exodus 20:14, which forbids adultery.**

Question 4

- **B1** effect 1: breakdown of trust between spouses, oe
- **B1** effect 2: emotional harm or distress to children and wider family, oe
- **Answer: E.g. breakdown of trust between spouses; emotional harm to children and family.**

Question 5

- **B1** point 1: some Christians object because sexual relations are taught to belong within marriage, reflecting scripture and tradition, oe
- **B1** development 1: this is linked to teachings such as Hebrews 13:4 about marriage being honoured and the marriage bed kept pure, oe
- **B1** point 2: some Muslims object because sexual relations outside marriage are forbidden (zina), making cohabitation sinful, oe
- **B1** development 2: Islamic teachings stress chastity and that marriage provides lawful sexual relations, reflecting Quranic guidance such as Quran 17:32, oe
- **Answer: E.g. Christians: sex belongs within marriage (Hebrews 13:4); Muslims: zina forbids sexual relations outside marriage (see Quran 17:32).**

Question 6

- **B1** point 1: pastoral concern, where some churches prioritise care and support for couples over immediate judgement, oe
- **B1** development 1: this approach focuses on the wellbeing of partners and children and may encourage commitment rather than condemnation, oe
- **B1** point 2: pragmatic acceptance because attitudes and legal protections have changed, so some Christians focus on relationship stability rather than formal marriage, oe
- **B1** development 2: some clergy and congregations work with cohabiting couples to promote long-term commitment and responsibility, rather than excluding them, oe
- **Answer: E.g. pastoral care over judgement to protect wellbeing and encourage commitment; pragmatic focus on stability and responsibility in changed social contexts.**

Question 7

- **B1** attitude 1: a traditional Christian view opposes cohabitation because sex should take place only within marriage, oe
- **B1** development 1: this view can be supported by Hebrews 13:4 and by long-standing church teaching that honours marriage as the proper context for sexual relations, oe
- **B1** attitude 2: a more liberal Christian or pastoral approach tolerates cohabitation, treating couples with compassion and focusing on the quality of the relationship, oe
- **B1** development 2: this approach may appeal to Jesus's emphasis on mercy and to pastoral practice that welcomes people rather than excluding them, oe
- **B1** reference to a sacred text or authorised source is made accurately, eg Hebrews 13:4 or Quran 17:32, oe
- **Answer: Contrast: traditional opposition based on Hebrews 13:4 and church teaching vs a pastoral/liberal acceptance focusing on compassion and relationship quality, both supported by appropriate scripture or pastoral reasoning.**

Question 8

- **B1** reason 1: changing social attitudes that place less stigma on living together outside marriage, oe
- **B1** reason 2: greater financial pressures and housing costs encouraging couples to share a home, oe
- **B1** reason 3: increase in relationships forming later in life and more people prioritising careers before marriage, oe
- **Answer: Any three: reduced stigma; financial/housing reasons; later partnerships and career priorities.**

Question 9

- **B1** point 1: adultery breaks the marriage vows and betrays the commitment between spouses, oe
- **B1** development 1: this betrayal undermines trust, which is foundational for a stable marriage and family life, oe
- **B1** point 2: adultery can harm children and wider family relationships, causing emotional distress and instability, oe
- **B1** development 2: many religions emphasise protecting the family unit and preventing harm, so adultery is condemned because it threatens that protection, oe
- **Answer: E.g. adultery betrays marriage vows and destroys trust; it harms children and family stability and so is condemned to protect the family.**

Question 10

- **B1** action 1: offer pastoral counselling and reconciliation support, oe
- **B1** action 2: offer separate pastoral care to the wronged spouse and to any affected children, oe
- **B1** action 3: in some traditions, consider disciplinary measures or advice about seeking a religiously-sanctioned divorce or separation, oe
- **Answer: Any three: pastoral counselling and reconciliation; support for the wronged spouse and children; possible disciplinary advice or guidance about divorce/separation per tradition.**

Question 11

- **Level 3** (5-6): A detailed, well-structured answer that explains several reasons why faithfulness is important for religious believers, supported by accurate reference to religious teaching and clear links to the role of marriage and family life.
- **Level 2** (3-4): An answer that explains some reasons why faithfulness is important, with some supporting detail and a basic link to religion and family life.
- **Level 1** (1-2): One or two simple relevant points are made about faithfulness, with little supporting detail or reference to teaching.
- **Level 0** (0): No relevant content.
- **Indicative content:**
 - Faithfulness reflects keeping vows and promises made at marriage, which many religions view as sacred commitments.
 - Religious teachings, such as Exodus 20:14 and passages condemning adultery, stress the moral duty to be faithful.
 - Faithfulness promotes trust and emotional security between spouses, supporting a stable family environment for children.
 - For many believers, faithfulness is part of living according to God's will and maintaining moral integrity.
 - Unfaithfulness is seen as damaging to the witness of religious communities and can lead to practical harm, including breakdown of the family.
 - Some religious traditions link faithfulness to the sanctity of marriage and to responsibility for the wellbeing of the wider community.

Question 12

- **Level 1** (1-3): Basic, undeveloped statements or a one-sided answer. Limited reasoning and little reference to religious arguments.
- **Level 2** (4-6): Some development of arguments on both sides, with limited reference to religious teaching. Conclusions may be asserted rather than justified.
- **Level 3** (7-9): Clear and developed arguments on both sides, with appropriate reference to religious teachings and some evaluation. A conclusion is given and supported.
- **Level 4** (10-12): A balanced, well-argued evaluation that considers strong religious and secular reasons on both sides, shows clear understanding of different viewpoints, and reaches a justified, well-explained conclusion.
- **Level 0** (0): No relevant material.
- **Indicative content:**
 - Arguments that cohabiting before marriage is not wrong: changing social norms make living together acceptable; cohabitation allows couples to test compatibility and share financial burdens; pastoral arguments emphasise compassion and support rather than condemnation.
 - Religious arguments for permissibility: some Christians emphasise pastoral care and the importance of relationship quality over formal status; some Muslims and Christians may focus on avoiding harm and promoting commitment regardless of legal marriage, though traditional teaching differs.
 - Arguments that cohabiting before marriage is wrong: many religious teachings hold that sexual relations belong within marriage, and living together may be seen as encouraging premarital sex and undermining the sanctity of marriage.
 - Religious arguments against cohabitation: Hebrews 13:4 and traditional Christian teaching, and Islamic teachings on zina exemplified by Quran 17:32, both are used to argue that sexual relations should be reserved for marriage.
 - Consideration of consequences: cohabitation may work for some couples without harming family life, but for others it may create instability or unclear legal protections for children, which religious voices may highlight.
 - A balanced conclusion should weigh individual freedom, pastoral compassion and social context against religious teachings about marriage and sexual morality, and explain which reasons are more persuasive in context.