



RS.TB3 Abortion

AQA 8062 • Calculators not allowed • about 55 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Answer ALL questions. Show all your working.

1 This question checks key vocabulary used in the abortion debate.

(a) State what is meant by abortion. (1)

(b) State what is meant by the sanctity of life. (1)

(c) State what is meant by quality of life. (1)

(d) State what is meant by a foetus. (1)

(e) State what is meant by viability, in the context of abortion. (1)

(Total for Question 1 is 5 marks)

2 Give three facts about the law on abortion in England, Scotland and Wales.

(Total for Question 2 is 3 marks)

- 3** Explain two religious teachings that might lead a believer to hold a pro-life view on abortion. Refer to a source of wisdom and authority in your answer.

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

- 4** Explain two contrasting religious beliefs about whether abortion can ever be morally acceptable. Refer to a source of wisdom and authority in your answer.

(Total for Question 4 is 5 marks)

5 This question is about religious and non-religious perspectives on abortion. It is the AQA-style 24-mark, five-part question: parts (a) to (d) below are worth 12 marks; the 12-mark evaluation, part (e), is Question 6.

- (a)** State one situation in which abortion is currently permitted by law in England, Scotland and Wales after 24 weeks of pregnancy. **(1)**
- (b)** Give two reasons why abortion is a controversial ethical issue in Britain today. **(2)**
- (c)** Explain two religious teachings about the sanctity of human life. Refer to a source of wisdom and authority in your answer. **(4)**
- (d)** Explain two contrasting beliefs, religious and/or non-religious, about a woman's right to choose an abortion. Refer to a source of wisdom and authority or another source in your answer. **(5)**

(Total for Question 5 is 12 marks)

- 6** This is the final part of the 24-mark question that began in Question 5. Evaluate this statement: 'Religious believers should never support a woman's right to choose an abortion.' In your answer you should: refer to religious teaching, refer to different points of view, reach a justified conclusion.

(Total for Question 6 is 12 marks)

- 7** Explain two non-religious arguments used in the abortion debate. Refer to Humanist or other non-religious beliefs in your answer.

(Total for Question 7 is 4 marks)

- 8** Give three reasons why some people, religious or non-religious, campaign against abortion.

(Total for Question 8 is 3 marks)

Mark scheme · RS.TB3 Abortion

Question 1

- (a) **B1** the deliberate ending of a pregnancy before the foetus can survive independently, oe
- (a) **Answer: The deliberate ending of a pregnancy.**
- (b) **B1** the belief that human life is sacred/holy because it is created by God, oe
- (b) **Answer: The belief that human life is sacred because it is created by God.**
- (c) **B1** a judgement about how enjoyable or worthwhile a person's life is/would be, oe
- (c) **Answer: A judgement about how enjoyable or worthwhile a life is.**
- (d) **B1** an unborn baby, from about eight weeks after conception until birth, oe
- (d) **Answer: An unborn baby, from about eight weeks after conception until birth.**
- (e) **B1** the point at which a foetus is able to survive outside the womb, oe
- (e) **Answer: The point at which a foetus can survive outside the womb.**

Question 2

- **B1** abortion is governed by the Abortion Act 1967 (as amended), oe
- **B1** abortion is legal up to 24 weeks of pregnancy in most circumstances, oe
- **B1** two doctors must agree that an abortion is necessary, oe
- **Answer: Any three: governed by the Abortion Act 1967 (as amended); legal up to 24 weeks in most circumstances; two doctors must agree it is necessary.**

Question 3

- **B1** point 1: many Christians believe human life is sacred because it is made in God's image, oe
- **B1** development: Genesis 1:27 teaches that God created humans in his own image, and Psalm 139:13 describes God forming a person in the womb, suggesting life has value from before birth, oe
- **B1** point 2: many Muslims believe human life should not be taken except in circumstances Islamic teaching permits, oe
- **B1** development: most Muslim scholars teach that once ensoulment has taken place, traditionally understood to occur around 120 days into pregnancy, the foetus has the moral status of a human being, oe
- **Answer: E.g. sanctity of life through creation in God's image (Genesis 1:27, Psalm 139:13); ensoulment-based Muslim teaching on the moral status of the foetus.**

Question 4

- **B1** belief 1: the Roman Catholic Church teaches that abortion is gravely wrong at every stage of pregnancy, because human life is sacred from the moment of conception, oe
- **B1** development: this is based on Church teaching about the sanctity of life and the belief that every human life, however small, is willed by God, oe
- **B1** belief 2: many other Christians and Muslims accept that abortion may be morally justified in exceptional circumstances, such as serious risk to the mother's life, oe
- **B1** development: this reflects a view that compassion for the mother is also an important religious value, to be weighed alongside the sanctity of life, oe
- **B1** reference to a source of wisdom and authority made accurately, oe
- **Answer: Contrast: Catholic teaching that abortion is always wrong (sanctity of life from conception) vs other believers accepting abortion in exceptional circumstances (e.g. risk to the mother's life).**

Question 5

- (a) **B1** risk to the life of the mother / severe foetal abnormality / grave permanent injury to the mother, oe
- (a) **Answer: E.g. risk to the life of the mother.**
- (b) **B1** there is disagreement between the rights of the mother and the moral status of the foetus, oe
- (b) **B1** there is disagreement between religious and non-religious views, and between different religious believers, about when life/personhood begins, oe
- (b) **Answer: E.g. disagreement about the rights of the mother vs the foetus; disagreement about when life/personhood begins.**
- (c) **B1** point 1: many Christians believe human life is sacred because it is created by God in his own image, oe
- (c) **B1** development: Genesis 1:27 teaches that God created humankind in his own image, giving human life special value and worth, oe
- (c) **B1** point 2: many Muslims believe human life is a trust (amanah) from Allah that should be protected, oe
- (c) **B1** development: this teaching means Muslims generally see the deliberate taking of innocent human life as a serious wrong, to be avoided except in circumstances Islamic teaching permits, oe
- (c) **Answer: E.g. life sacred as made in God's image (Genesis 1:27); life as a trust from Allah to be protected.**
- (d) **B1** belief 1: many religious believers oppose a woman's unrestricted right to choose, because they believe the foetus has its own moral status/right to life from an early stage, oe
- (d) **B1** development: this can be based on religious teaching about the sanctity of life, e.g. Psalm 139:13, which describes God forming a person in the womb, oe
- (d) **B1** belief 2: many non-religious people (e.g. Humanists) support a woman's right to choose, based on the principle of bodily autonomy, oe
- (d) **B1** development: this view holds that a woman has the right to make decisions about her own body and pregnancy, and that this should be respected regardless of religious belief, oe
- (d) **B1** reference to a source of wisdom and authority or another appropriate source made accurately, oe
- (d) **Answer: Contrast: opposition based on the foetus's moral status/sanctity of life (e.g. Psalm 139:13) vs support based on bodily autonomy (a Humanist/non-religious argument).**

Question 6

- **Level 4** (10-12): A well-argued, balanced answer that considers more than one point of view in a developed way, using accurate and detailed references to religious teaching and/or scripture to support each point, and reaches a clear, justified conclusion.
- **Level 3** (7-9): A clear and reasoned answer that considers more than one point of view, supported by relevant references to religious teaching and/or scripture, though the justification of the conclusion may be less developed.
- **Level 2** (4-6): A reasoned answer that considers at least one point of view, with some relevant supporting evidence, but with limited or no consideration of an alternative view.
- **Level 1** (1-3): One or more relevant points are made, but with little or no supporting evidence and no reasoned conclusion.
- **Level 0** (0): No relevant content.
- **Indicative content:**
 - Agree: Christians and Muslims both generally hold that human life is sacred and given by God, so intentionally ending an innocent life could be seen as against God's will, whatever the circumstances.
 - Agree: the Roman Catholic Church teaches that abortion is gravely wrong at every stage of pregnancy, since it teaches that human life is sacred from the moment of conception.
 - Agree: many Muslims believe that once ensoulment has occurred (traditionally understood as around 120 days), a fetus has the same moral status as any other human being, so its life could not be deliberately ended.
 - Agree: if religious believers supported an unrestricted legal right to choose, some would see this as inconsistent with their own tradition's teaching about the sanctity of life.
 - Disagree: many Christians and Muslims accept that abortion is morally justified in exceptional circumstances, such as serious risk to the mother's life or pregnancy resulting from rape, so 'never' may be too absolute a position.
 - Disagree: some Muslim scholars teach that early abortion, before ensoulment, may be permitted for good reason, showing that religious teaching on this issue is not a single fixed position.
 - Disagree: in contemporary Britain, some religious believers separate their personal moral view from what they think the law should require of everyone, arguing they can support a legal right to choose while personally believing abortion is wrong, out of respect for the woman's own conscience and circumstances.
 - Disagree: compassion for the woman, for example in cases of danger to her life or mental health, is also an important religious value that some believers weigh alongside the sanctity of life.
 - A balanced answer might conclude that whether a religious believer can support a woman's right to choose often depends on the specific circumstances of the pregnancy, rather than there being one single, absolute religious answer.

Question 7

- **B1** point 1: bodily autonomy - a woman has the right to make decisions about her own body and pregnancy, oe
- **B1** development: Humanists generally argue this right should not be overridden by the state or by religious belief that the woman herself may not share, oe
- **B1** point 2: quality of life/potential personhood - some argue that whether an early-stage foetus has full moral status depends on factors such as its capacity to feel pain or its stage of development, rather than on religious belief, oe
- **B1** development: on this view, decisions about abortion should be guided by scientific evidence about foetal development and the wellbeing of the woman and any future child, oe
- **Answer: E.g. bodily autonomy (Humanist argument); potential personhood/quality-of-life arguments based on foetal development and wellbeing.**

Question 8

- **B1** belief that human life begins at conception and should be protected from that point, oe
- **B1** concern for the rights/moral status of the unborn foetus, oe
- **B1** belief that alternatives, such as adoption, should be considered and supported instead, oe
- **Answer: Any three: belief life begins at conception; concern for the foetus's rights/moral status; support for alternatives such as adoption.**