7.4 Atheism, Agnosticism and the Nature of Non-Belief: Test Pack

AQA 8062 · about 15 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 Which one of the following best defines agnosticism, as used in discussions about belief in God or ultimate reality?

- ☐ A. the belief that God exists and intervenes in the world
- ☐ B. the denial that any gods exist
- ☐ C. the view that the existence of God cannot be known
- ☐ D. the practice of following a religious tradition

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

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2 Give two clear reasons people sometimes give for not believing in God, naming each reason briefly and simply in the context of modern discussion about non-belief.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

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3 Outline two brief reasons, other than the problem of evil, that some people give for a lack of belief in God in modern Western societies.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

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4 Explain two ways that identifying as an atheist or agnostic might influence a person's ethical decisions or moral life. Give a reason and a linked development for each.

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

5 Explain two contrasting beliefs about the existence of God, one from a religious point of view and one from a non-religious point of view. Refer to a source of wisdom or authority for the religious belief in your answer.

(Total for Question 5 is 5 marks)

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Mark scheme · 7.4 Atheism, Agnosticism and the Nature of Non-Belief: Test Pack

Question 1

selecting C, the view that the existence of God cannot be known, cao **B1**

Answer: C

Question 2

one reason: lack of empirical evidence for God, oe **B1**

second reason: the existence of evil and suffering seems incompatible with an all-powerful, loving God, oe **B1**

Answer: Any two, e.g. lack of empirical evidence; problem of evil and suffering.

Question 3

any one valid brief reason, for example scientific explanations for origins reducing need for God, oe **B1**

any second valid brief reason, for example perceived contradictions or diversity of religions causing scepticism, oe **B1**

Answer: Any two from: science offers alternative explanations; diversity/contradictions between religions; lack of personal or cultural religious formation.

Question 4

point 1: without belief in divine command, some non-believers base ethics on secular philosophy or human wellbeing, oe **B1**

development 1: this can lead to emphasis on consequences, rights or social contracts rather than obedience to religious rules, oe **B1**

point 2: agnostics may act morally from a sense of uncertainty and responsibility rather than divine reward, oe **B1**

development 2: this may produce an ethical stance focused on evidence, empathy and human flourishing, oe **B1**

Answer: E.g. secular ethical frameworks emphasising wellbeing rather than divine command; agnostics acting from responsibility and humanistic concerns.

Question 5

religious belief: theism, the view that God exists and is the creator and sustainer of the world, oe **B1**

development: many theists cite scripture as a source, for example Psalm 19:1 'The heavens declare the glory of God', as evidence of God's role in creation, oe **B1**

non-religious belief: atheism, the denial that God exists, often based on the view that there is insufficient evidence, oe **B1**

development: atheists may point to scientific accounts of cosmology and evolution as alternatives to theistic explanations, oe **B1**

explicit reference to a source of wisdom or authority for the religious belief, named correctly, oe **B1**

Answer: Contrast example: theism citing Psalm 19:1 as evidence of God in creation, versus atheism arguing insufficient evidence and offering scientific accounts as alternatives.

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