9.1 Religion and the Causes of Crime: 30-minute Pack

AQA 8062 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions.

1 Explain two contrasting explanations, religious and/or non-religious, for why people commit crime. Refer to a source of wisdom and authority in your answer.

(Total for Question 1 is 5 marks)

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2 This question is about religion and the causes of crime. It is the AQA-style 24-mark, five-part question: parts (a) to (d) are worth 12 marks; part (e) is the 12-mark evaluation.

(a) State one type of crime. **(1)**

(b) Give two factors that sociologists suggest can make it more likely that a person will commit a crime, without this making it certain that they will do so. **(2)**

(c) Explain two religious teachings on individual responsibility for wrongdoing. Refer to a source of wisdom and authority in your answer. **(4)**

(d) Explain two contrasting views about whether individuals or wider society bears more responsibility for crime. Refer to a source of wisdom and authority or another source in your answer. **(5)**

(e) Evaluate this statement: 'Individuals, not society, are always responsible for the crimes they commit.' In your answer you should: refer to religious teaching, refer to different points of view, reach a justified conclusion. **(12)**

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(Total for Question 2 is 24 marks)

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Mark scheme · 9.1 Religion and the Causes of Crime: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

explanation 1: some religious teaching emphasises personal moral responsibility, holding that people freely choose to give in to wrongful desire, oe **B1**

development: 'each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. Then... desire gives birth to sin' (James 1:14-15), oe **B1**

explanation 2: many sociologists and Humanists instead point to contributing factors such as addiction or poor mental health that can increase the likelihood of offending, oe **B1**

development: this view does not claim any individual factor, or any social group, makes offending certain, only that some circumstances make it statistically more likely, oe **B1**

reference to a source of wisdom and authority made accurately, oe **B1**

Answer: Contrast: crime explained by individual moral choice and temptation (James 1:14-15) vs crime explained by contributing sociological factors such as addiction or poor mental health, understood as risk factors rather than causes.

Question 2

(a) any recognised type of crime, e.g. theft, murder, hate crime, fraud, oe **B1**

(a) Answer: E.g. theft.

(b) experiencing addiction to drugs or alcohol, oe **B1**

(b) experiencing abuse or neglect during childhood, oe **B1**

(b) Answer: E.g. addiction; childhood abuse or neglect (also accept: poor mental health, peer pressure).

(c) point 1: many Muslims believe every person is personally accountable before Allah for their own actions, oe **B1**

(c) development: the Qur'an teaches that every soul is held in pledge for what it has earned (Qur'an 74:38), oe **B1**

(c) point 2: many Christians believe humans have free will and are personally responsible when they give in to sinful desire, oe **B1**

(c) development: 'desire, when it has conceived, gives birth to sin' (James 1:15), showing sin as a personal choice rather than something forced on a person, oe **B1**

(c) Answer: E.g. personal accountability before Allah (Qur'an 74:38); sin as a personal choice arising from desire (James 1:15).

(d) view 1: many religious believers emphasise that each person freely chooses whether to sin, so the individual bears primary responsibility, oe **B1**

(d) development: 'You shall not steal' and 'You shall not murder' (Exodus 20:15, 20:13) are addressed to individuals as personal commands, oe **B1**

(d) view 2: many Humanists and sociologists argue that reducing crime means addressing the wider social and economic conditions, such as access to mental health support, that make offending more likely, oe **B1**

(d) development: on this view, punishing individuals without addressing these underlying conditions is unlikely to reduce crime in the long term, oe **B1**

(d) reference to a source of wisdom and authority or another appropriate source made accurately, oe **B1**

(d) Answer: Contrast: individual moral responsibility, addressed by commands such as Exodus 20:13/20:15, vs a wider social/sociological view that reducing crime requires addressing conditions that increase risk of offending.

(e) **L4** 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. **10-12**

(e) **L3** 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. **7-9**

(e) **L2** 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. **4-6**

(e) **L1** One or more relevant points are made, but with little or no supporting evidence and no reasoned conclusion. **1-3**

(e) **L0** No relevant content. **0**

(e) Indicative content:

- Note for markers: this question can be answered with either conclusion; credit any well-supported argument, whether it agrees, disagrees, or takes a middle position.
- Agree: many religious believers hold that humans are given free will, so choosing to break a religious or civil law, such as 'You shall not steal' (Exodus 20:15), is always a personal choice regardless of circumstances.
- Agree: some argue that treating crime as always caused by society removes an offender's moral agency and excuses harmful behaviour, which many religious traditions reject.
- Agree: James 1:14-15 teaches that sin comes from being 'dragged away by their own evil desire', locating the origin of wrongdoing within the individual, not their surroundings.
- Disagree: many sociologists and Humanists point out that some people facing addiction, poor mental health or childhood neglect are statistically more likely to offend, showing that circumstances play a genuine role alongside choice.
- Disagree: most people who experience these contributing factors never commit any crime, so a balanced view holds that such factors influence risk without removing an individual's own responsibility.
- Disagree: the Qur'an's teaching that every soul is accountable for 'what it has earned' (Qur'an 74:38) can be read alongside social context rather than instead of it, since Islamic teaching also emphasises social justice and care for the vulnerable.
- A balanced answer might conclude that religious and sociological perspectives are not simply opposites: most agree that individuals remain accountable for their choices, while also recognising that reducing the conditions that make offending more likely is part of a just response to crime.

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