

Study of Religion 2025 v1.2

IA1: Sample assessment instrument

This sample has been compiled by the QCAA to assist and support teachers in planning and developing assessment instruments for individual school settings.

Student name	sample only
Student number	sample only
Teacher	sample only
Exam date	sample only

Marking summary

Criterion	Marks allocated	Provisional marks
Explaining	6	
Analysing	8	
Evaluating	8	
Communicating	3	
Overall	25	

Conditions

Technique	Examination — extended response
Unit	Unit 3: Religious ethics
Topic/s	Topic 1: Social ethics
Time	Planning time: 15 minutes Working time: 120 minutes
Seen / Unseen	Students respond to an unseen question or hypothesis
Other	<p>This is an individual supervised task.</p> <p>Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• must not bring notes into the examination• must engage with unseen stimulus material• analyse perspectives from two of the major world religions that form and inform religious—ethical responses to one social—ethical issue• respond in the form of an analytical essay.

Instructions

- You may make notes during the planning time, but you may not begin writing your response until directed.
- You may use highlighters to assist with selecting material from stimulus.
- Write your response on the lined paper provided using black or blue pen. Planning paper will not be marked.

Task

You have been examining the ways that religious adherents respond to the social–ethical issue of war.

Using the stimulus provided, construct an analytical essay response that evaluates the significance and influence of religious–ethical stances of Buddhist and Islamic adherents to the social–ethical issue of war. Consider Saul Alinsky's statement that 'in war, the end justifies almost any means'¹ and examine this in reference to the use of chemical agents during the Vietnam War (1955–1975).

In your response:

- explain the features and expressions of Buddhism and Islam that inform the ways each religious tradition informs social–ethical responses regarding the issue of war
- analyse Buddhist and Islamic perspectives about religious expression that form and inform a response to the social– ethical issue of war and the use of chemical agents during the Vietnam War
- communicate to suit the purpose of creating an analytical essay response, using language choices, developing ideas or arguments about religious–ethical responses to the social–ethical issue of war, and identifying stimulus used.

¹ The social activist and political theorist Saul Alinsky (1909–1972) wrote: '...in war the end justifies almost any means.' (Alinsky, S. (1971). *Rules for radicals: A pragmatic primer for realistic radicals*. Vintage)

Stimulus

Source 1: Chemical agents used in the Vietnam War

Chemical weapon	Herbicides	Chemical Group A
Common name	Rainbow agents, particularly Agent Orange	napalm
Characteristics	Acts as a defoliant, used to destroy foliage and vegetation to clear land and destroy food crops.	Combination of a gel or adhesive and flammable substance such as diesel or gasoline. Designed to stick and burn.
Application	Sprayed over land from the air, via waterways, military vehicles and manually by soldiers on foot.	Known as an incendiary weapon or device, bombs are dropped from the air or flammable streams fired from boats. The gel spreads and sticks to targets, while the flammable substance ignites and burns.
Immediate impact	Leaves drop off plants and cause plants and crops to die, clearing the landscape and improving visibility for warfare.	Napalm burns at temperatures between 800-1200 degrees Celsius, causing rapid burning and immediate death. Because of its adhesive nature, it sticks and burns longer.
Long-term impact	Environmental: contamination of soils and waterways. Long-lasting impact on food chain and fragile ecosystems. Health: associated with significant birth defects, cancers, liver, heart and mental health issues. Impacts on people over generations.	Environmental: contamination of soils and waterways. Long-lasting impact on food chain and fragile ecosystems. Destruction of villages, buildings, landscapes and farming land. Health: trauma, burns and pain associated with scarring, disability.

Context: Overview of chemical agents used during the Vietnam War.

Source 2: Agent Orange and other chemicals used in the Vietnam War

The United States (US) military used Agent Orange herbicide during the Vietnam War. Its defoliant action stripped the leaves from trees. The US used it to clear vegetation used as shelter by Viet Cong and North Vietnamese soldiers, destroy enemy food crops and clear vegetation around US army bases. US forces sprayed almost 80 million litres of chemicals on Vietnam between 1962 and 1971. More than half of this was Agent Orange. Roughly 2.9 million hectares of Vietnamese farmland and forests were affected. Some 20,000 Vietnamese villages were sprayed, exposing up to 4 million Vietnamese people to toxins. Ecological impacts include long-lasting chemical residues in Vietnam's soil, water and food chain.

Australian, US and New Zealand soldiers were exposed to chemical agents during the war. Many veterans believed their exposure led to cancers and other serious illnesses. They also believed their exposure risked birth defects in their children. Intense debates have continued about the effects of Agent Orange on veterans' lives.

Context: The Australian Government Department of Veterans' Affairs has an Anzac Portal that provides information about chemicals used in the Vietnam War.

Source 3: Extract from online encyclopedia entry on Napalm usage in Vietnam

Napalm became an intrinsic element of US [United States of America's] military action during the Vietnam War as forces made increasing use of it for its tactical and psychological effects. Reportedly about 352,000 tonnes of napalm bombs were dropped in Vietnam between 1963 and 1973. The US Air Force and US Navy used napalm with great effect against all kinds of targets, such as troops, tanks, buildings, jungles, and even railroad tunnels. The effect was not always purely physical as napalm had psychological effects on Vietnamese forces and civilians as well.

Source 4: Surah al-Baqarah 2:190-191

190. And fight in the cause of Allah those who fight you, but do not commit aggression; Allah does not love the aggressors.

191. And kill them wherever you overtake them, and expel them from where they had expelled you. Oppression is more serious than murder.

Context: Surah al-Baqarah is called The Heifer or The Cow in English translation. It is the longest and most comprehensive surah of the Qur'an, covering diverse subjects.

Source 5: Article 2, *Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam*, 1990.

ARTICLE 2:

- (a) Life is a God-given gift and the right to life is guaranteed to every human being. It is the duty of individuals, societies and states to safeguard this right against any violation, and it is prohibited to take away life except for a shari'ah prescribed reason.
- (b) It is forbidden to resort to any means which could result in the genocidal annihilation of mankind.
- (c) The preservation of human life throughout the term of time willed by Allah is a duty prescribed by Shari'ah.
- (d) Safety from bodily harm is a guaranteed right. It is the duty of the state to safeguard it, and it is prohibited to breach it without a Shari'ah-prescribed reason.

Context: The *Cairo Declaration on Human rights in Islam* was created in 1990 by Islamic member states to present an Islamic perspective on Human Rights.

Source 6: An extract from the current (14th) Dalai Lama

When we face problems or disagreements today, we have to arrive at solutions through dialogue. Dialogue is the only appropriate method. One-sided victory is no longer relevant. We must work to resolve conflicts in a spirit of reconciliation and always keep in mind the interests of others. We cannot destroy our neighbors! We cannot ignore their interests! Doing so would ultimately cause us to suffer. I therefore think that the concept of violence is now unsuitable.

Source 7: An extract from Chapter 10 of the Dhammapada

129. All men tremble at punishment, all men fear death; remember that you are like unto them, and do not kill, nor cause slaughter.

Context: The Dhammapada is a collection of sayings of the Buddha drawn from various sections of the Pali Canon of Theravada Buddhism.

Instrument-specific marking guide (IA1): Examination — extended response (25%)

Explaining	Marks
The student response has the following characteristics:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> comprehensive and relevant identification of distinguishing features of religious traditions that inform religious ethics thorough and detailed description of characteristics of religious traditions that inform social–ethical responses accurate and detailed explanation of the ways in which the two religious traditions are expressed in the lives of adherents and inform ethical decision-making processes 	5–6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> relevant identification of distinguishing features of religious traditions that inform religious ethics description of characteristics of religious traditions that inform social–ethical responses explanation of the ways in which the two religious traditions are expressed in the lives of adherents and inform ethical decision-making processes 	3–4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> simplistic identification of features of religious traditions that inform religious ethics statements about characteristics of religious traditions that inform social–ethical responses limited and basic explanation of the ways in which the two religious traditions are expressed in the lives of adherents and inform ethical decision-making processes. 	1–2
The student response does not satisfy any of the descriptors above.	0

Analysing	Marks
The student response has the following characteristics:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> comprehensive selection and accurate use of relevant information from stimulus that influence decision-making on the social–ethical issue detailed and accurate explanation of distinct beliefs and practices in religious traditions, including similarities and differences thorough examination of perspectives from two religious traditions that form and inform religious–ethical responses to the social–ethical issue 	7–8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> appropriate selection and accurate use of relevant information from stimulus that influence decision-making on the social–ethical issue accurate explanation of distinct beliefs and practices in religious traditions, including similarities and differences considered examination of perspectives from two religious traditions that form and inform religious–ethical responses to the social–ethical issue 	5–6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> selection and use of relevant information from stimulus that influence decision-making on the social–ethical issue partial explanation of beliefs and practices in religious traditions, including similarities and/or differences some examination of perspectives from two religious traditions that form and inform religious–ethical responses to the social–ethical issue 	3–4

Analysing	Marks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • limited selection and lack of/irrelevant use of information from stimulus that influence decision-making on the social–ethical issue • simplistic and/or erroneous understanding of the two religious traditions' beliefs and practices in relationship to the religious–ethical response to the social–ethical issue • one or more statements are made on beliefs, practices and/or perspectives within religious traditions. 	1–2
The student response does not satisfy any of the descriptors above.	0

Evaluating	Marks
The student response has the following characteristics:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • succinct synthesis of ideas about the role of religion in social–ethical situations or within social–ethical issues • discerning judgments and relevant conclusions about the significance of religious–ethical stances to a social–ethical issue and its influence on adherents • consistent and thorough justification of judgments using religious teachings 	7–8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • synthesis of ideas about the role of religion in social–ethical situations or within social–ethical issues • considered judgments and appropriate conclusions about the significance of religious–ethical stances to a social–ethical issue and its influence on adherents • justification of judgments using religious teachings 	5–6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • combination of ideas about the role of religion in social–ethical situations or within social–ethical issues • basic judgments and simplistic conclusions about the significance of religious–ethical stances to a social–ethical issue and its influence on adherents • some justification of judgments 	3–4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one or more statements about the role of religion in social–ethical situations or within social–ethical issues • simplistic and/or erroneous judgments about the significance of religious–ethical stances to a social–ethical issue and its influence on adherents • inaccurate and/or irrelevant judgments. 	1–2
The student response does not satisfy any of the descriptors above.	0

Communicating	Marks
The student response has the following characteristics:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • accurate choice of religious language, logical, cohesive, and succinct development of ideas suitable for the analytical essay genre, including creation of hypothesis • consistently appropriate application of language conventions (spelling, grammar, punctuation) • consistent identification and acknowledgment of sources used 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate choice of some religious language, development of ideas suitable for the analytical essay genre, including creation of hypothesis • application of language conventions (spelling, grammar, punctuation) • identification and acknowledgment of sources used 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • some use of religious language, with ideas related to a hypothesis and features of an essay • limited application of language conventions (spelling, grammar, punctuation) • limited acknowledgment of sources. 	1
The student response does not satisfy any of the descriptors above.	0



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3. Source 4 — Itani T (2022) *Quran in English - Clear and Easy to Read.*, *Quran in English*, <https://www.clearquran.com/002.html> , Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 (CC BY 4.0)
4. Source 5 — Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), (1990). *The Cairo Declaration of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation on Human Rights* https://www.oic-oci.org/upload/pages/conventions/en/CDHRI_2021_ENG.pdf
5. Source 6 — Dalai Lama, Open Heart: Practising Compassion in Everyday Life, Hachette UK cited at Conflict of interest – Wikiquote
6. Source 7 — *The Dhammapada*, Translated from Pali by F. Max Müller <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2017/2017-h/2017-h.htm>