



National Certificate of Educational Achievement
TAUMATA MĀTAURANGA Ā-MOTU KUA TAEA

Exemplar for Internal Achievement Standard

Religious Studies Level Three

This exemplar supports assessment against:

Achievement Standard 90827

Analyse the key beliefs of a religious tradition and a secular world view
in relation to ultimate questions

An annotated exemplar is an extract of student evidence, with a commentary, to explain key aspects of the standard. It assists teachers to make assessment judgements at the grade boundaries.

New Zealand Qualifications Authority

To support internal assessment

	Grade Boundary: Low Excellence
1.	<p>For Excellence, the student needs to analyse, with perception, the key beliefs of a religious tradition and a secular world view in relation to ultimate questions.</p> <p>This involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • critically evaluating the key beliefs of a religious tradition and a secular world view in relation to ultimate questions • drawing conclusions that address the wider implications arising from the analysis. <p>The student has provided evidence that critically evaluated the key beliefs of Christians (in particular Protestants), and an atheistic worldview, in relation to our origins and what happens at the end of life.</p> <p>The student has drawn conclusions that address both social and personal implications arising from the analysis (1).</p> <p>For a more secure Excellence, the student could provide more analysis, with perception of the wider implications of Christian and atheistic key beliefs, with regard to questions regarding the origins and end of life.</p> <p>For example, the student could draw a conclusion around how geographic variance will affect how readily people accept or reject either Christianity or atheism, and how political parties are often associated with the views of different Christian or atheistic views on social policy.</p> <p>Additionally, the student could draw a conclusion as to why there is a difference between branches of Christianity and atheism in their understanding of the origins and end of life, and how these reflect the way a person may choose to live.</p>

[The student also provided evidence that critically evaluated the key beliefs of Christians and a secular worldview in relation to where we came from and where we are going.]

Two ultimate questions we can ask ourselves as self-aware human beings, related to the origin of life are where did we come from? Where are we going?

One wider social implication of the key beliefs of some Protestants is that if we are created by a deity then we are linked to this deity whether we choose to believe in a God or not. Therefore, some sort of divine plan may also exist regarding where we are heading, and what behaviour is expected of us, as a parent exercising their role over their children. The bible says that “by this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother”, 1 John 3:10 - NASV. ①

The apostle Paul wrote, “If from human motives I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what does it profit me? If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” 1Cor 15:32 – NASV. This hedonistic attitude is as prevalent in society today as it was with ancient Epicureans and often leads to purely selfish pursuits, as there is no need to consider or help anyone outside of your immediate circle of family and friends, as there is no designer, no creator to take into consideration. Those who choose to live a good life and help others do so for their own personal, ethical or humane reasons rather than from a belief in God and the resurrection of Christ and his faithful followers. ①

This demonstrates an important similarity, in that both atheists and Protestants as humans can behave in very good ways towards others, showing love and kindness. I think this is the true beauty of free will; we get to choose how we behave as self-aware creatures and can consider the consequences of our behaviour towards others in society and ourselves. ①

	Grade Boundary: High Merit
2.	<p>For Merit, the student needs to analyse in depth the key beliefs of a religious tradition and a secular worldview in relation to ultimate questions.</p> <p>This involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discussing the similarities and differences in the key beliefs of a religious tradition and a secular world view in relation to ultimate questions • drawing conclusions supported by a range of evidence. <p>The student has discussed a number of similarities and differences between atheistic and Christian (in particular Protestant) beliefs concerning the origin and end of life (1).</p> <p>The student has used biblical teachings regarding sin as evidence, and how atheists explain the origin of life (Evolution/Big Bang theory), and drawn conclusions about the way a person may choose to live and their belief in a deity (2).</p> <p>The student has provided some evidence of a critical evaluation of atheist and Protestant beliefs with regard to the origin and end of life (3).</p> <p>To reach Excellence, the student could provide evidence of conclusions drawn that address at least two wider implications of the origins and end of life for atheists and Christians.</p> <p>For example, the student could draw a conclusion around how the Christian understanding of science has changed since the time of the Enlightenment in the 18th Century. The student could draw a second conclusion around how different branches of Christianity react in different ways to atheism. The student could show perception by including further references to back up atheistic perspectives.</p>

Two ultimate questions we can ask ourselves as self-aware human beings, related to the origin of life are where did we come from? Where are we going?

One secular worldview often held by atheists is that humans evolved rather than being designed and created by God, as some Christians believe. Atheism is the rejection of any sort of belief in deities or a God. ①

The figures for a 2010 Eurobarometer survey in the European Union (EU), reported that 20% of the EU population claimed not to believe in "any sort of spirit, God or life force".¹ ②

Therefore, for atheists one possible answer to where we came from all started with a "Big Bang" 13.8 billion years ago, during the period of time when the universe was habitable for the biochemistry of life to happen billions of years ago.² Complex organic molecules found in the solar system and in interstellar space may have provided molecules, the starting materials for the development of life on Earth.³ ②

There is one similarity here with the Protestant belief of Creation by God, and that is both viewpoints attribute something happening in the universe a long time ago for the initiation of human life to happen here on Earth. ①

The bible book of Genesis 2:7 states that "then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature" (ESV). ②

However, the difference in beliefs according to the Bible is that Adam was created as a perfect human male, in God's image. ①

Genesis 1:26 says, "Then God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." - *New American Standard Version (1995)*. Luke goes as far as calling Adam the Son of God ([Luke 3:38](#)). The gospel refers to Jesus Christ resembling Adam. Christ, while on earth in human form, was sinless, and so was Adam for a time. ②

According to the bible account, Adam did not evolve from living organisms containing nucleic acid to the mammal stage through replication, adaptation, natural selection and then through speciation appear through primates to become a modern human over a period of approximately 2 billion years.⁴ ①

Another of the arguments of atheists is the design flaws in human beings, asking "if there is an omniscient, omnipotent, omnibenevolent God then would humans who Protestants ①

believe to be made in the 'likeness of God' be perfectly designed if created." *Originally published in Creation 4(1):21–29, March 1981.*

2

One design flaw in humans referred to is having our oesophagus and trachea only separated by a flap of skin (epiglottis) that can fail, which is why we can choke when eating food or drinking and needing to breathe as well.

2

Evolution puts this down to effectively making do with what we had in terms of genetics and replication, adaptation, natural selection and speciation rather than due to design and creation.

3

However, Protestants argument could be that the fall from grace lead to imperfection and flaws. God's creation was perfect but humanity's misuse of its free will to rebel against God has resulted in the corruption of good design.

1

As Genesis 3:16, 17 says, "To the woman He said, I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you will bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you. Then to Adam He said, Because you have listened to the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree about which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat from it'; Cursed is the ground because of you; In toil you will eat of it All the days of your life." - NASV.

2

Because Adam and Eve sinned and therefore were no longer perfect, each successive generation afterwards would have become more flawed, weaker and genetic imperfections would have naturally occurred and increased over time.

3

All Christians believe that how we live our lives and how we treat others has great importance, Galatians 3: 16 says, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus", so atonement for sin and imperfection is possible leading back to perfection and eternal life. How we live our lives has meaning, a life time of faith and good works towards others means this person's life should be celebrated when they die, as "a 'good' name is better than precious oil; and the day of death, than the day of one's birth" Ecclesiastes 7: 1 - ASV (1901).

2

However, atheists do not believe in deities or a God so there is no sense of a plan or purpose other than what they choose to implement themselves. Existence is purely biological in nature, they believe we are all heading towards death, without any afterlife, and that life and death is the natural cycle of all living creatures.

1

This can result in an attitude of just living in the moment, making the most of this life because it is the only one you will get, you no longer exist when you die.

3

This can lead to purely selfish human pursuits, as there is no need to consider or help anyone outside of your immediate circle of family and friends, as there is no creator to take into consideration. Those who choose to live a good life and help others do so for their own personal, ethical or humane reasons rather than from a belief in God. There is another similarity here, in that both atheists and Christians as humans can behave in very good ways towards others, showing love and kindness.

3

1

	Grade Boundary: Low Merit
3.	<p>For Merit, the student needs to analyse in depth the key beliefs of a religious tradition and a secular worldview in relation to ultimate questions.</p> <p>This involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discussing the similarities and differences in the key beliefs of a religious tradition and a secular world view in relation to ultimate questions • drawing conclusions supported by a range of evidence. <p>The student has discussed a number of similarities and differences between atheist and Christian (in particular Protestant) beliefs concerning the origin and end of life (1).</p> <p>The student has drawn a conclusion supported by biblical teachings regarding sin as evidence, with regard to the way a person may choose to live, their belief in a deity, and their opinions about the theory of evolution (2).</p> <p>The student has provided limited evidence of a critical evaluation of atheist and Protestant beliefs concerning the origin and end of life (3).</p> <p>For a more secure Merit, the student could provide more biblical and secondary sources of evidence acceptable from within atheism and the Protestant tradition to support the conclusions. The inclusion of references to back up atheistic perspectives would help the grade.</p>

Two ultimate questions we can ask ourselves as human beings, related to the origin of life are where did we come from? Where are we going?

One secular worldview often held by atheists is that humans evolved rather than being designed and created by God, as some Christians believe. Atheism is the rejection of any sort of belief in deities or a God. ①

One possible answer to where we came from for atheists is that it all started with a “Big Bang” 13.8 billion years ago, and evolution happened from possibly some molecules from the universe that landed on earth at the right time for life to develop. ②

There is a similarity here with the Protestant belief of Creation by God; both these viewpoints attribute something happening in the universe a long time ago for life to happen here on Earth. ①

The bible book of Genesis 2:7 states that “then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature” (ESV). The difference in beliefs is that Adam was created as a perfect human male, in God’s image. Genesis 1:26 says, “Then God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth” (NASV). Therefore, Adam did not evolve from a simple living organism to a mammal and then appear from primates as believed by atheists. ②

Another belief of atheists is that human beings have design flaws, so how could humans who were made in the ‘likeness of God’ who is perfect be designed and created with limitations like the epiglottis that can fail, which is why we can choke when eating food or drinking, as we need to keep breathing at the same time. ①

They put human design flaws down to making do with what we had in terms of genetics and evolution rather than design and creation. ②

However, Protestants believe that the fall from grace lead to imperfection and flaws. Christian’s believe that God’s creation was perfect, but Adam and Eve had free will and chose to rebel against God and ate from the ‘tree of knowledge of good and evil’ in the middle of the Garden of Eden, which they were instructed not to eat. ①

Because Adam and Eve sinned and therefore were no longer perfect, each successive generation of their children have become more flawed, and genetic imperfections have increased over time. ③

Atheists do not believe in deities or a God so there is no sense of a plan or purpose other than what they choose to implement themselves. Existence is purely biological in nature, they believe we are all heading towards death, without any afterlife, and that life and death is the natural cycle of all living creatures. ①

This can result in an attitude of just living in the moment, making the most of this life because it is the only one you will get, you no longer exist when you die. ②

This can lead to purely selfish human pursuits, as there is no need to consider or help anyone outside of your immediate circle of family and friends, as there is no creator to take into consideration.

3

This is different from Christians who are taught to believe that how we live our lives is very important, Jesus Christ said “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, You shall love your neighbour as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these”. Mark 12: 30, 31 (King James, 2000).

1

2

Atheists can choose to live a good life and help others for their own personal, ethical or humane reasons, due to free will rather than from a belief in God.

3

However, there is another similarity, because atheists and Christians as humans can behave in very good ways towards others, showing love and kindness.

1

	Grade Boundary: High Achieved
4.	<p>For Achieved, the student needs to analyse the key beliefs of a religious tradition and a secular world view in relation to ultimate questions.</p> <p>This involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • considering the key beliefs of a religious tradition and a secular world view in relation to ultimate questions, and breaking them down into components or essential features • drawing conclusions about the key beliefs, supported by evidence. <p>The student has considered a number of key beliefs of both atheist and Christian (in particular Protestant) beliefs concerning the origin and end of life (1).</p> <p>The student has drawn a conclusion supported by biblical teachings regarding sin as evidence, and drawn conclusions about the way a person may choose to live, their belief in a deity and their opinions about the theory of evolution (2).</p> <p>To reach Merit, the student could provide more evidence of similarities between atheist and Protestant key beliefs regarding the origin and end of life. For example, the student could consider how atheists and Christians could recognise their similarities and differences in the 21st Century, especially in areas of social reform and the secularisation of society.</p> <p>In addition, the student could support the discussion with more biblical and secondary sources of evidence, from both atheist and Christian perspectives.</p>

Two ultimate questions we can ask ourselves as human beings, related to the origin of life are where did we come from? Where are we going?

One secular worldview often held by atheists is that humans evolved rather than being designed and created by God, as some Christians believe.

①

Atheism is the rejection of any sort of belief in deities or a God. One possible answer to where we came from for atheists is that it all started with a “Big Bang” 13.8 billion years ago, and evolution happened from possibly some molecules from the universe that landed on earth at the right time for life to develop.

②

The bible book of **Genesis 2:7** states that “then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature” (ESV). The difference in beliefs is that Adam was created as a perfect human male, in God's image. Therefore, Adam did not evolve from a simple living organism to a mammal and then appear from primates as believed by atheists.

②

Another belief of atheists is that human beings have design flaws, so how could humans who were made in the ‘likeness of God’ who is perfect be designed and created with limitations like the epiglottis that can fail, which is why we can choke when eating food or drinking, as we need to keep breathing at the same time. They put human design flaws down to making do with what we had in terms of genetics and evolution rather than design and creation.

①

However, Protestant's believe that the fall from grace lead to imperfection and flaws. Christians believe that God's creation was perfect, but Adam and Eve had free will and chose to rebel against God and ate from the ‘tree of knowledge of good and evil’ in the middle of the Garden of Eden, which they were instructed not to eat, as written in Genesis.

①

Atheists do not believe in deities or a God so there is no sense of a plan or purpose other than what they choose to implement themselves. They believe we are all heading towards death, without any afterlife, and that life and death is the natural cycle of all living creatures. This can result in an attitude of just living in the moment, making the most of this life because it is the only one you will get, you no longer exist when you die.

①

②

This is different from Christians who are taught to believe that how we live our lives is very important, Jesus Christ said “And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, You shall love your neighbour as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these”. Mark 12: 30, 31 (King James, 2000).

①

②

	Grade Boundary: Low Achieved
5.	<p>For Achieved, the student needs to analyse the key beliefs of a religious tradition and a secular world view in relation to ultimate questions.</p> <p>This involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • considering the key beliefs of a religious tradition and a secular world view in relation to ultimate questions, and breaking them down into components or essential features • drawing conclusions about the key beliefs, supported by evidence. <p>The student has considered some key beliefs of atheists and Protestants regarding the origin and end of life (1).</p> <p>The student has drawn a conclusion, supported by biblical teachings regarding regarding sin as evidence, about the way a person may choose to live, and about the theory of evolution (2).</p> <p>For a more secure Achieved, the student could provide more depth to the conclusions, and support the analysis with more biblical evidence and secondary sources of information from atheist and Christian perspectives.</p> <p>For example, the student could explain the significance of why there is variation in Christians' understanding of evolution, and identify components or features that share similarities with an atheistic worldview. Additionally, the student could reference authoritative texts from Christianity such as the <i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i>, and the writings of atheists like Richard Dawkins or Christopher Hitchens.</p>

Two ultimate questions we can ask ourselves as human beings, related to the origin of life are where did we come from? Where are we going?

One secular worldview often held by atheists is that humans evolved rather than being designed and created by God, as some Christians believe. Atheism is the rejection of any sort of belief in deities or a God.

1

One possible answer to where we came from for atheists is that it all started with a "Big Bang" 13.8 billion years ago, and evolution happened from possibly some molecules from the universe that landed on earth at the right time for life to develop.

2

The bible book of **Genesis** says, "Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature". **Adam and Eve were created as perfect human beings, in God's image.** *Therefore, they did not evolve from a simple living organism to a human being over a long period as believed by atheists. However, not all Christians have this same understanding of how Creation happened.*

2

Another belief of **atheists** is that human beings have design flaws, so how could humans who were made in the 'likeness of God' who is perfect be designed and created with limitations.

1

They put human design flaws down to making do with what we had in terms of genetics and evolution rather than design and creation.

2

However, **Protestant's believe that the fall from grace lead to imperfection and flaws. This is what we learn about in the story of the Fall in Genesis 3.**

1

Christians believe that God's creation was perfect, but Adam and Eve had free will and chose to rebel against God and ate from the 'tree of knowledge of good and evil' in the middle of the Garden of Eden, which they were instructed not to eat. When they ate of the Tree then they showed that they were not able to follow God's command and to listen to the voice of God. Sin came in to the world not because God wanted it but because human beings had free will.

2

Atheists do not believe in deities or a God so there is no sense of a plan or purpose other than what they choose to implement themselves. They do not believe in an afterlife, that life and death is the natural cycle of all living creatures.

1

This can lead to selfishness, as there is no need to consider or help anyone outside of your immediate circle of family and friends, as there is no creator to take into consideration. Once you are dead that is it, everything is over for you according to atheists.

2

	Grade Boundary: High Not Achieved
6.	<p>For Achieved, the student needs to analyse the key beliefs of a religious tradition and a secular worldview in relation to ultimate questions.</p> <p>This involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • considering the key beliefs of a religious tradition and a secular world view in relation to ultimate questions, and breaking them down into components or essential features • drawing conclusions about the key beliefs, supported by evidence. <p>The student has stated some beliefs, and discussed other key beliefs of atheists and Christians, concerning the origin and end of life (1).</p> <p>The student has drawn conclusions, supported by basic evidence, regarding sin and the way a person may choose to live (2).</p> <p>To reach Achieved, the student could expand on the key beliefs, add more to the conclusions drawn about the key beliefs, and provide evidence in the form of biblical references and secondary sources of information to support the analysis.</p> <p>For example, the student could provide more explanation of the understanding of sin from different perspectives within Christianity, as compared to secular perspectives such as the humanistic writings of Carl Rogers on the development of self.</p>

Two ultimate questions we can ask ourselves as human beings, related to the origin of life are where did we come from? Where are we going?

A worldview often held by atheists is that humans came about because of evolution rather than being designed and created by God. This is what some Christians believe. Atheism is the rejection of any sort of belief in deities or a God.

1

The bible book of Genesis says Adam and Eve were created as perfect human beings, in God's image. *Therefore, they did not evolve from a simple living organism to a human being over a long period as believed by atheists.*

2

Another belief of atheists is that human beings have the ability to sin, so how could humans who were made in the 'likeness of God' who is perfect be designed and created with limitations. They put human sin down to making do with what we had in terms of genetics and evolution rather than design and creation.

2

However, Christians believe that sin which is seen as the fall from grace lead to imperfection and flaws.

1

Christians believe that God's creation was perfect, but Adam and Eve had free will and chose to rebel against God and ate from the 'tree of knowledge' in the middle of the Garden of Eden, which they were instructed not to eat.

2

Atheists do not believe in a plan or purpose other than what they choose to implement themselves, believing life and death is the natural cycle of all living creatures and there is no afterlife.

1

However, Christians are taught to believe that how we live our lives is very important and will determine what happens to us after death.

2