

WJEC/EDUQAS

Religious Studies for AS & A Level

Philosophy of Religion

**Revised
Edition**

Karl Lawson

Series editor: Richard Gray

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About this book

With the A Level in Religious Studies, there is a lot to cover in preparation for the examinations at the end of the course. The aim of these books is to provide enough support for you to achieve success at A Level, whether as a teacher or a learner.

This series of books is skills-based in its approach to learning, which means it aims to combine covering the content of the specification with examination preparation from the start. In other words, it aims to help you get through the course while at the same time developing some important skills needed for the examinations.

To help you study, there are clearly defined sections for each of the AO1 and AO2 areas of the specification. These are arranged according to the specification themes and use, as far as is possible, specification headings to help you see that the content has been covered.

The AO1 content is detailed but precise, with the benefit of providing you with references to both religious/philosophical works and to the views of scholars. The AO2 responds to the issues raised in the specification and provides you with ideas for further debate, to help you develop your own evaluation skills.

Ways to use this book

In considering the different ways in which you may teach or learn, it was decided that the books needed to have an inbuilt flexibility to adapt. As a result, they can be used for classroom learning, for independent work by individuals, as homework, and they are even suitable for the purposes of 'flip learning' if your school or college does this.

You may be well aware that learning time is so valuable at A Level and so we have also taken this into consideration by creating flexible features and activities, again to save you the time of painstaking research and preparation, either as teacher or learner.

Features of the books

The books all contain the following features that appear in the margins, or are highlighted in the main body of the text, in order to support teaching and learning.

Key terms of technical, religious and philosophical words or phrases.

● Key terms

Holy Spirit: God as he is active in the world

Key quotes either from religious and philosophical works and/or the works of scholars.

“Key quote”

I ... decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account.

(Luke 1:3)

Key person boxes summarise essential figures.

● Key person

Rudolf Bultmann (1884–1976): a German theologian who called for the 'demythologisation' of the New Testament

AO1 activities that serve the purpose of focusing on identification, presentation and explanation, and developing the skills of knowledge and understanding required for the examination.

AO1 Activity

a Using bullet points, outline the key ideas in both the classical and modern forms of the problem of evil.

This helps with presenting a thorough and extensive knowledge and understanding of the topic area.

AO2 activities that serve the purpose of focusing on conclusions, as a basis for thinking about the issues, developing critical analysis and the evaluation skills required for the examination.

AO2 Activity *Possible lines of argument*

Listed below are some conclusions that could be drawn from the AO2 reasoning in the accompanying text:

Specification content boxes highlight exactly what is being covered in each section and how it connects to the specification.

Specification content

The extent to which the classical form of the problem of evil is a problem.

Glossary of all the key terms for quick reference.

AO2 skills: critical analysis and evaluation

A good way to prepare yourself for an AO2 part (b) evaluation answer is to consider the different ways to approach this. Sometimes writing frames or anacronyms may be suggested. Whilst these are useful, they are meant as 'scaffolding' or support for an answer, but the danger is that they end up restricting more natural and personal evaluation.

One useful approach is to think about some different styles of writing and relate these to 'characters' that are easily remembered.

Strong evaluative characters

We can look at what are considered **strong evaluative character styles** that display all the qualities that avoid the pitfalls above. By this we mean different aspects, elements or ingredients of an effective critical analysis and evaluation.





If we look at the table below, we can see 7 characters, each of which has a specific strength and quality that display skills of critical analysis and/or evaluation. The strength of each character forms a **part** of a strong evaluation. In a full AO2 answer it may be useful to vary the characters in terms of depth and breadth.




The characters can be used as a checklist not a structured plan or rigid writing frame. The best way to use them is to consider the different styles

and skills **before** writing an answer and then measure your answer by checking that the critical analysis and evaluation elements are there.

Examples of this can be seen in the sample answer we provide. In these sample answers you may notice that not all the character styles have been used in the same order, detail or combination; however, generally, most are often covered.

In the table below, we have attempted to demonstrate how each character may fulfil the criteria for a band 5 evaluation using the descriptors it presents. These are highlighted in blue in the third column.

Character	Strength	Application and AO2 Band descriptor link
Tennis player 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The tennis player deals with specific lines of arguments (often from either named scholars or schools of thought) and returns counter arguments. The tennis player manages arguments and counter arguments, making sure there is consideration of several lines of argument in response to the statement in the question. This is sometimes understood as 'for' or in support of an argument and 'against'; however, this does not necessarily always have to be done in an even or balanced way since some answers may wish to argue effectively towards a conclusion that is supported by several lines of reasoning, evidence and argument that support each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The tennis player ensures that thorough, sustained and clear views are given in an answer. The tennis player also ensures that the views of scholars/schools of thought are used extensively.
Detective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The detective has a forensic ability to examine, collate and clarify evidence and provide examples. The detective makes sure that the argument presented is substantial in that it is based in evidence and examples to support the reasoning presented. The detective selects details that are accurate and relevant in a thorough way. They make sure that there is correct reference to specialist language in the correct context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The views of scholars/schools of thought are used appropriately and in context. There is a thorough and accurate use of specialist language and vocabulary in context.
Philosopher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The philosopher likes to raise and ask interesting and relevant questions. The philosopher often indicates that there may be problems or challenges to a specific approach and likes to suggest a solution. When an argument or analysis is in 'full flow' we may think of questions that we would like to raise in response to views analysed. The philosopher loves to do this. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The philosopher character is typical of perceptive evaluation. The philosopher successfully identifies the issues raised by the question set.
News reporter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The news reporter provides perspective, clarity, an overview of the debate. Commentary is vital in an AO2 answer as it demonstrates that the student is engaging with the debate that the statement presents. It is an easy way to demonstrate that you are thinking about the issues. The best way to provide yourself with an opportunity to develop a more personalised approach is to practice pausing and reflecting upon points made, developing them with evidence and examples and commenting on the qualities a line of argument possesses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using a news reporter style ensures that a response thoroughly addresses the issues raised by the question set.

Explorer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The explorer likes to suggest some alternative ways of answering a question. Sometimes it feels as though a debate needs a different angle, approach or perspective. The explorer often suggests new ways of attempting to arrive at a solution to the debate. • This can often be your own response in considering a given statement including a new suggestion or perhaps a question you would like to raise. • You can even try to bring in other strands and evidence beyond the immediate topic from other areas of the course. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This ensures that there is confident and perceptive analysis of the nature of connections between the various elements of the approaches studied.
Critical thinker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The critical thinker points out more technical aspects of an argument. The critical thinker is often concerned with how an argument 'works' and 'flows'. • The critical thinker sometimes challenges more forensic aspects of an argument. • The critical thinker checks for coherence and consistency. Does the evidence support the conclusion? Is there a counter argument? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The critical thinker ensures that there is extensive, detailed reasoning in an answer.
Judge 	<p>Makes an overall ruling and concludes matters. The judge in some ways is the most vital character. They cannot stand alone and rely upon others and their contributions to make a final decision. This can be in favour or against the statement, or, it may be that the statement itself is questionable.</p> <p>Often an overall judgement ends an answer; however, sometimes an overall conclusion may start the answer and then discuss, analyse and reason why this may be the case. Strong evaluative answers often have several judgments or mini-conclusions throughout the answer.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The judge is the final voice of an answer. They may appear anywhere in an answer but usually summarises at the end. The judge should be clear evidence of confident critical analysis.

Summary of a strong evaluative answer

- Offers clear, sustained and varied lines of argument (view) like the exchanges of a tennis player.
- The varied evidence of scholarly views and schools of thought are precisely examined and coherently presented like the report of a detective.
- Issues are identified to focus on, and questions may be raised like a philosopher.
- Engages with a debate by offering commentary and reflection upon the points presented like a news reporter.
- May explore some new ways of answering the question and possible refer to other elements of the course like an explorer.
- Contains reasoning that is detailed, ordered, coherent and effective like a critical thinker.
- Ensures there is an overall judgment made that clearly links to the reasoning and evidence contained in the answer like a judge.

Arguments for the existence of God – inductive

This section covers AO1 content and skills

Specification content

Inductive proofs; the concept of *a posteriori*

A: Inductive arguments – cosmological

Imagine that you are trying to solve a murder mystery. You know where the crime took place, you know roughly when it took place and you think you know who was at the scene of the crime. However, you did not actually witness it first-hand, so how can you prove what happened? How do you solve the crime?

The only way to do so is to gather evidence. So, you begin your search for clues. After some time, you have managed to gather witness statements, you have photographs of the murder scene, you have examined the body, you have had forensics experts reporting back to you and, finally, you are ready to reveal who the murderer is and why he or she committed the crime.



Looking for clues

Key terms

inductive proof: argument constructed on evidence and/or experience that puts forward a possible conclusion based on these

empirically: using knowledge gained through the experiences of any of the five senses

Inductive proofs

What you have just done is to induct a judgement, based on evidence and experience that has led to a possible conclusion. In philosophical terms, you have reached your conclusion via **inductive proof**. Such proof is the only type available to us in many circumstances – particularly when we are not available to gather direct proof: that is, we were not present at the time of the event to witness it **empirically**. Equally, we cannot use pure logical reasoning to come up with a conclusion because neither the circumstances nor the events allow this to happen.

The concept of *a posteriori*

Inductive proofs are **a posteriori** because they need evidence and/or experience for them to make sense. In the philosophy of religion, any argument that is constructed on evidence and/or experience is an *a posteriori*, inductive, argument.

Cosmological argument: St Thomas Aquinas' first Three Ways

First Way

St Thomas Aquinas' First Way is often referred to as 'motion' or 'change'. Essentially, Aquinas says that when we observe the universe, we notice that things tend to be in a state of change or motion. From this observation, Aquinas notes that things do not do this of their own accord, but are instead 'moved' (or 'changed') by something else (here Aquinas is restating what Aristotle said).

“Key quote”

It is certain, and evident to our senses, that in the world some things are in motion. Now whatever is in motion is put in motion by another, for nothing can be in motion except it is in potentiality to that towards which it is in motion; whereas a thing moves inasmuch as it is in act. For motion is nothing else than the reduction of something from potentiality to actuality. But nothing can be reduced from potentiality to actuality, except by something in a state of actuality.

(Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*)

The Unmoved Mover

Aquinas says that if we look back down this sequence of movements or changes, we will eventually have to come to something that started off the whole sequence. Now, as all things in the universe (that are observable) are either moving or movers, we need to find a point that started these things. That has to mean looking outside of the universe: that is, to something that has not been moved by anything else and is, in fact, incapable of being moved or changed by anything else, but is responsible for starting the whole sequence of movement or change.

The Ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle named this the *Prime Mover*, and Aquinas developed this into the *Unmoved Mover*: 'that which all men call God'.

The efficient cause

To illustrate this point further, Aquinas builds on Aristotle's examples and explanations. Aristotle speaks of things moving from a state of **potentiality** (that is, a situation where it has a possibility of moving or changing into something else) towards a state of **actuality** (where it actually achieves or reaches its potential).

Key term

a posteriori: based on actual observation, evidence, experimental data or experience – relates to *inductive reasoning*

Specification content

Cosmological argument;
St Thomas Aquinas' first Three Ways (motion or change; cause and effect; contingency and necessity)

Key terms

potentiality: the ability to become something else
actuality: when something is in its fully realised state

Key terms

efficient cause: the 'third party' that moves potentiality to actuality

However, both Aristotle and Aquinas note that this change could happen only if something that already possessed a state of actuality acted on something that was in its state of potentiality. This third party is known as the **efficient cause**.

Aquinas uses the example of wood becoming hot, via fire, to illustrate this point.



Fire is the efficient cause that makes wood hot

Key quote

Thus that which is actually hot, as fire, makes wood, which is potentially hot, to be actually hot, and thereby moves and changes it. Now it is not possible that the same thing should be at once in actuality and potentiality in the same respect, but only in different respects. For what is actually hot cannot simultaneously be potentially hot; but it is simultaneously potentially cold. It is therefore impossible that in the same respect and in the same way a thing should be both mover and moved, i.e. that it should move itself.

(Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*)

Aquinas is stating that the fire that makes wood hot must already have the property of hotness to make the wood hot. If it had any other state (e.g., coldness), then it would be impossible to make the wood hot.

Second Way

Key quote

Now in efficient causes it is not possible to go on to infinity, because in all efficient causes following in order, the first is the cause of the intermediate cause, and the intermediate is the cause of the ultimate cause, whether the intermediate cause be several, or only one. Now to take away the cause is to take away the effect. Therefore, if there be no first cause among efficient causes, there will be no ultimate, nor any intermediate cause.

(Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*)

Aquinas' Second Way deals with the concept of cause and effect. Aquinas believed that everything observable in nature is subject to this law. He also believed that it was impossible for this chain of cause and effect to go back infinitely. This led Aquinas to ask the question: 'What was the first cause?' and, for him, the answer was 'God'.

Aquinas states here not only the idea that cause and effect is a simple, undeniable law of the universe, but also that it is impossible for anything within the universe to cause itself. (It would be like you being your own parent – you cannot exist before you exist; you need something else to bring you into existence.)



Cause and effect

Third Way

Aquinas' Third Way deals with the concept of contingency and necessity. Again, Aquinas notes that everything that exists has the possibility of not existing (that is, it is **contingent**). He concludes that if this is true of everything in existence, then nothing would ever have come into existence. This is because for contingent beings to exist, there has to be a non-contingent (that is, **necessary being**) that brought everything else into existence. For Aquinas, this necessary being is 'God'.

“Key quote”

The third way is taken from possibility and necessity, and runs thus. We find in nature things that are possible to be and not to be, since they are found to be generated, and to corrupt, and consequently, they are possible to be and not to be. But it is impossible for these always to exist, for that which is possible not to be at some time is not. Therefore, if everything is possible not to be, then at one time there could have been nothing in existence ... it would have been impossible for anything to have begun to exist; and thus even now nothing would be in existence ... which is absurd.

(Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*)

Aquinas states that all things in nature are limited in their existence. They all have beginnings and endings. Following this idea to its logical conclusion, Aquinas notes that this means at one point in history nothing existed and that without a necessary being, even now, nothing would exist – which is plainly not the case.

A way of thinking of this idea is to consider the relationship of the parent and the child. Without the existence of the parent, the child cannot come into existence. Or, to put it another way, the child is contingent on the parent for its existence.

The Kalam cosmological argument

From the Arabic word *Kalam*, meaning 'to argue or discuss', the Kalam cosmological argument traces its origins to the work of Islamic scholars in the ninth and eleventh centuries AD. It has been modernised and championed by Christian **apologist** William Lane Craig.

Craig outlined his argument as follows:

- 1 Everything that begins to exist has a cause of its existence.
- 2 The universe began to exist.
- 3 Therefore, the universe has a cause of its existence.
- 4 Since no scientific explanation (in terms of physical laws) can provide a causal account of the origin of the universe, the cause must be personal (explanation is given in terms of a personal agent).

● Key terms

contingent: anything that depends on something else; in the case of a contingent being, it is contingent upon another being for its existence (e.g. a child is contingent upon its parent)

necessary being: Aquinas' contention that a non-contingent being is necessary for contingent beings to exist; it is this necessary being that is the source of all existence for all other contingent beings

Specification content

The Kalam cosmological argument with reference to William Lane Craig (rejection of actual infinities and concept of a personal creator)

● Key term

apologist: a person who promotes and explains a specific point of view or cause, often in the context of responding to opposition to that view or cause

Key term

actual infinite: a concept that suggests things can exist in time and space yet be never ending; this idea was classically rejected by Aristotle and is also rejected by Craig in his Kalam argument

Key term

potential infinite: the potential infinite is something that could continue, were effort to be applied (e.g. it would be possible always to continue a number line if we wanted to, as we could always come up with a bigger number)

Summary

- ★ Inductive arguments use evidence or experience as their basis.
- ★ The cosmological argument is an *a posteriori* inductive argument for the existence of God.
- ★ Aquinas supports this argument with the first three of his Five Ways: change, cause and contingency.
- ★ William Lane Craig has developed the argument in recent times; it is known as the *Kalam cosmological argument*.

This is a (relatively) straightforward and easy-to-follow argument. However, to answer challenges to the idea that the universe might be considered infinite, Craig developed the following defence to his second point:

- An **actual infinite** cannot exist.
- A beginningless temporal series of events is an actual infinite.
- Therefore, a beginningless temporal series of events cannot exist.

The example of the infinite library

The example of a library is often used to explain an actual infinite. Imagine a library with an actually infinite number of books. Suppose that the library also contains an infinite number of red and an infinite number of black books. You would have to conclude logically that the infinite number of red books was equal to the total number of books in the library (that is, both red and black books), but that conclusion makes no sense. This conclusion shows that infinities make no sense either, and so can't exist in the physical universe.

Potential v. actual infinity

However, critics point out that this is ignoring that there are two types of infinity recognised in standard mathematics: *actual* and *potential*. Craig refers only to the impossibility of the first, not the second, in his initial argument. Craig's response to this criticism forms the second part of his argument: if an actual infinite is recognised as impossible, a **potential infinite** confirms that the universe had a beginning.

The influence of Craig's Kalam cosmological argument

Craig's Kalam cosmological argument is often seen as very confusing, not least because it depends on an understanding of the concepts of infinity, which are, in themselves, difficult to grasp. However, in its simplest form, it is straightforward and appealing; to such a degree that it has had significant influence in philosophical debates against atheism. This is especially true in the fundamentalist Christian churches of the USA.

AO1 Activity

- Explain Craig's Kalam argument as two separate arguments:
 - that the universe had a beginning
 - that the beginning of the universe was due to the deliberate choice of a personal creator.This helps with presenting a thorough and extensive knowledge and understanding of the topic area.
- Select the five most important ideas presented by Aquinas and Craig, and explain why they are important to our understanding of the cosmological argument.
This helps develop skills of organisation by selecting and ordering evidence and examples.

Specification content

The extent to which the Kalam cosmological argument is convincing

This section covers AO2 content and skills

Issues for analysis and evaluation

The extent to which the Kalam cosmological argument is convincing

Possible line of argument	Critical analysis and evaluation
Craig's Kalam cosmological argument benefits from being able to draw on the widely accepted scientific view that the universe had a beginning	Craig's Kalam cosmological argument would seem to benefit from being written in the modern scientific age. He has access to contemporary scientific information about the universe: the Big Bang theory, cosmological background radiation, etc. These all provide straightforward, scientifically validated evidence that the universe is finite and thus had a beginning. This provides an extremely useful evidence base for any argument attempting to demonstrate that a beginning of the universe is required.
The first part of Craig's Kalam cosmological argument is scientifically valid and therefore convincing	In a sense, this renders the need for Craig to prove the universe is finite as meaningless. Why argue for something that most of the scientific world supports? The concept that all things in our experience – including the universe itself – have beginnings, lends itself nicely to the first part of Craig's argument. Craig's work here, it would seem, is done – the Kalam cosmological argument for God's existence appears to be entirely convincing.
Craig's Kalam cosmological argument is potentially weakened when he suggests the universe has a specific cause	However, Craig's argument moves from demonstrating that the universe had a beginning to the suggestion that this beginning had a cause, external to the universe – which Craig eventually asserts as being God. The question of how convincing the argument is now rests on how far the individual is willing to accept the next steps in Craig's argument.
The universe cannot be explained in terms of physical laws	Effectively, Craig suggests that the cause of the universe must be through the deliberate choice of a personal being, as the physical laws of the universe, which cause everything within the universe to work, did not themselves exist until the universe existed. Therefore, the cause of the universe could not be explained in terms of them.
The cause of the universe must be personal	The only other viable explanation for Craig is that the cause is personal. For Craig, the only viable personal agent capable of existing outside of the universe and having the will, power and ability to create the universe is God.
The appeal for theists of the argument	For the theist, there is much that is attractive about this argument. It involves modern cosmology, appears entirely rational and fits with traditional theistic interpretations regarding creation. In this sense, it is a convincing argument.
The issue for non-theists	For those not predisposed to the position of the theist, however, the argument does not have the same power to convince. Why should God be the answer? Why not something else entirely?
The Kalam cosmological argument is not convincing because it contradicts itself	Craig states in his Kalam cosmological argument that infinity is impossible, which is why the universe must have a beginning. However, later in the argument, he refers to a personal creator that is infinite. As an argument, this is self-contradictory and is one of the key reasons for non-theists to reject the Kalam cosmological argument for God's existence.

Specification content

Whether inductive arguments for God's existence are persuasive

News reporter 

Detective 

A good introduction that outlines how inductive arguments work and also indicates how the evaluation may proceed, in respect to the existence of God – a good overview. It is also grounded in accurate terminology that the writer correctly understands.

Critical thinker 

This response highlights one of the main reasons that inductive arguments can be effective and points out that it's the very flexibility of this approach that gives it its strength.

Explorer 

Philosopher 

The answer explores the impact that inductive-based theories have in the contemporary world in their scientific context. It then raises interesting questions as to possible use as a reason to confirm validity in both a philosophical and theological context.

AO2 Activity

- a Analyse three possible conclusions that could be drawn from the critical analysis and evaluation of the cosmological argument. What are their strengths and weaknesses? Which conclusion is strongest?
- b Using the strongest conclusion, select three lines of argument that you would use to support this conclusion. Try to explain why you have selected these three lines.

Exam practice

Sample question

Evaluate whether inductive arguments for God's existence are persuasive.

Sample answer

One of the key strengths of inductive arguments for God's existence lies in its ability to establish probability – gathering evidence, such as the existence of the universe, and suggesting the most likely conclusion, i.e. that it was deliberately created by an all-powerful being, based on this evidence. Evidence-based arguments are often more persuasive than arguments not based on evidence. Inductive arguments are *a posteriori* and synthetic (true in relation to how they relate to the world) as they depend on experience and/or evidence. This provides them with credibility and makes them more likely to be persuasive. Inductive arguments rely on experience that may be universal and testable – allowing them to be widely used. For many people, this is extremely important as it makes the argument more understandable and accessible and, therefore, persuasive. This is particularly relevant for the theist, in showing that, based on inductive criteria, God's existence can be proved.

Another key strength is that the argument recognises there may be more than one correct answer – the evidence used can support more than one probable conclusion, which is particularly useful if an individual is not entirely certain what the conclusion should be. This means the argument can be persuasive precisely because it has flexibility. This also allows for the possibility of error, which means changes can be made to elements of the reasoning without undermining the process (or conclusion) as a whole. This provides the theist with a suitable response should God not be the conclusion reached by other forms of inductive reasoning.

Furthermore, inductive arguments are the basis of the vast majority of scientifically accepted theories, and these have a wide appeal in the twenty-first-century world. People readily accept such theories as valid precisely because of the inductive and evidence-based approaches that led to these theories being formed. Does this mean that any philosophical or theological reasoning that mirrors the work of science must surely have a similar claim to both validity and persuasiveness – unlike any reasoning that has not been based on such foundations?

However, some may argue that inductive arguments are not persuasive – often for the same reasons as others would claim they are. For instance, one of the significant weaknesses of inductive arguments is that we can accuse them of having limited effectiveness as ‘undeniable proofs’. Their very flexibility means that we could consider them weak arguments and, because of this, not persuasive.

It is also true to state that we can readily challenge inductive arguments if alternative evidence, which is equally likely to be true, is provided – thereby undermining the persuasiveness of the argument. An extension to this is that it is also equally possible to accept all the evidence but to deny the conclusion without contradiction. If we accept this, then it suggests that there can be no persuasiveness in the argument as this limits its effectiveness, particularly in terms of attempting to establish the existence of a divine being with specific characteristics: for example, the God of classical theism as the designer of the universe.

Perhaps most important to consider is that the premises, while supporting the conclusion, do not make it definite – for many, this means that inductive arguments are not persuasive enough to support a basis for a belief in the existence of God.

Evaluation

This is a very good answer. There is a clear and well-developed line of reasoning, considering the strengths and then the weaknesses within the argument, leading to a clear conclusion. The candidate shows how the same characteristic of inductive arguments can be used both for and against it and acknowledges that, while flexibility of approach is useful in a scientific context, it provides a challenge when attempting to reach a definitive conclusion.

Over to you

For this first task, try using the framework/writing frame provided to help you practise the AO2 skills needed to answer the question below.

As the units in each section of the book develop, the amount of support will gradually reduce to encourage you to be independent and to perfect your AO2 skills.

Question

‘Inductive arguments for God’s existence are persuasive.’ Evaluate this view.

(Q3b, Component 2: Philosophy of Religion, WJEC, Summer 2024)

Writing frame

The issue for debate here is whether arguments such as the cosmological and teleological arguments can show that God exists, which they attempt to do by ...

The following evidence supports the contention ...

We could, however, reject the contention by considering the following points ...

It is my view that ... and I base this argument on the following reasons: ...

Tennis player

This argument delivers a direct counterpoint to the previous one, demonstrating that the greatest strength of inductive arguments may also be their greatest weakness.

News reporter

Critical thinker

The answer revisits the theme of flexibility and provides an overview of the debate. It then develops the reasoning in the argument to show the key flaw in this approach as one of trying to ‘prove’ definitively the existence of God.

Judge

The conclusion the candidate draws follows the inevitable line of reasoning in the second part of the answer and points out the mechanics of inductive arguments as fundamentally undermining the power of a persuasive argument.