AN EXAMPLE OF AN ESSAY ANSWER TO (e) – too long for exam probably unless you can write very quickly!

**(e)** ‘All Murderers Should Be Killed’. Do you agree? Give reasons or evidence for your answer, showing that you have thought about more than one point of view.

USING FARM

**F -** An argument for capital punishment could be if you take away a life then you deserve to lose yours and that it acts as a deterrent to make people think before doing terrible crimes - so reducing these crimes (even though there is little evidence of this). It also less expensive than keeping someone in prison for life and more humane than life-imprisonment.

**A -** An argument against capital punishment could be that it is sometimes carried out where murder has not been committed and the methods are sometimes inhumane e.g. beheading and hanging. Sometimes the wrong person has been convicted, and sometimes in places like America they may be on ‘death row’ for years. In some countries the person is only told hours before their death and they have to live each day as if it is their last. People regard all this as cruel. Also people believe it should have nothing to do with money considerations and that the death penalty can even lead to a more brutal society.

**R - All** religions teach justice and forgiveness are more important than revenge and Jesus taught compassion and not revenge, **BUT** there are contradictions in sacred texts. In Christianity the Old Testament teaches ‘an eye for an eye’ but one of the Ten Commandments is ‘Thou salt not kill’ and The Catholic Church has never officially condemned the death sentence whereas the Quakers (Society of Friends) are a Christian Group who have campaigned against capital punishment since 1818. They think that punishment should be used to reform people which cannot happen if it is the death penalty.

**R** - It is interesting that God chose the death penalty for his own son, Jesus. Jesus was put to death to pay for the sins of us all to extend external life to us. If no crime deserves the death penalty, then why was it right for Jesus to be put to death for our sins? The death penalty seems to be the justice of God? In America, many people, including Christians support capital punishment for convicted murderers.

**R -** The Torah states some crimes are punishable by death (Leviticus says that anyone who commits murder shall be put to death) , such as murder and if someone takes a life they kill more than one person as they also deny all the future generations that could have been, **BUT** also teaches about the sanctity of life. In Israel the death sentence can only be used for genocide or treason. Modern Judaism formally opposes the death penalty as an unjustified taking of life

**R –** In fact **the valuing of life is universal to all religions (SANCTITY OF LIFE)**. Life is seen by religions as a ‘gift’ from God and is special and sacred. There is a part of God in all of us and it is something which only He has the right to take away - it is not for humans to decide when your life is up. The sin is against God and he must make the decision of punishment. - just because someone has sinned does it make their life less sacred?

**M** – The confusion in religion mirrors the confusion in society and may even be partly responsible for it. It is difficult to give an answer because there are different circumstances, and mistakes have been made where the wrong person has been convicted - and therefore executed for a crime they did not commit. It seems like a revengeful act which makes it wrong but why should a brutal killer be allowed to live? The choice is either life in prison or the death penalty and either would not result in future generations, so killing the murderer would not deny life. The death penalty in some cases though is carried out inhumanely. I think the only decision for me is that it is wrong because it could cause suffering which is like torture and torture is never right.

**(b)** Explain how having a religious belief might influence a view on capital punishment (4)

Need to choose 2 from 1 -2 - 3 i.e. influence of religious teachings or of religious community or from leadership with the best example you can think of on the day

1. **Religious teachings** guide believers to love God by obeying his will. Sacred texts are regarded as ‘the word of God’ e.g. The Torah states some crimes are punishable by death, such as murder - 2 marks

You could also have given an example of the Old Testament (Christianity) teaching an ‘eye for an eye’

You could also have included the Commandment ‘Thou shalt not kill’

Or even given two examples!!

1. **Religious believers have personal considerations based on the community** they worship with. This often helps when there is a **contradiction in texts** e.g. Christianity has unclear views because ‘an eye for an eye’ seems to support a life for a life but ‘thou shalt not kill’ Commandment shows life is sacred and God will be the punisher and not humans - 2 marks

You could also have given an example of the Torah stating that someone who takes a life kills more than one person as they kill all generations that could have been but also teaches the sanctity of life.

1. **Religious leaders** will influence the actions of believers as they would wish to follow their ways and preaching e.g. Jesus once served as a one-man jury on a death penalty case of an adulterous woman. His response was let those without sin to cast the first stone - he was teaching that only a perfect being – only God – should have power over death and life – 2 marks

You could also have given an example of The Catholic Church never officially condemning the death sentence so as a Catholic you would be more likely to take this view.

You could also have given an example of the Society of Friends (Christianity) actively campaigning against capital punishment since 1818 because they believe in punishment allowing reform so if you were a member these would be your beliefs

**(c)**

‘’AA’A life for a life’ – reintroduce capital punishment

Give two reasons why a religious believer might agree or disagree with this statement (4)

(Remember can be one for and one against or two for or two against)

* A Christian might disagree because Jesus once served as a one-man jury on a death penalty case of an adulterous woman. His response was let those without sin cast the first stone – he was teaching that only a perfect being – only God – should have power over death and life.

Or

* A Christian might agree with this statement because in The Old Testament there is a teaching ‘en eye for an eye’ which seems to support a life in exchange for a life i.e. the punishment must fit the crime.

Or

* A member of the Quakers (Society of Friends) would disagree because they are a Christian group that has campaigned against capital punishment since 1818. They think that punishment should be used to reform and this cannot happen with the death penalty.

Or

* In Judaism the Torah states that some crimes are punishable by death, such as murder so a religious believer might agree with this statement as they believe taking a life denies future generations of that life so it is killing more than one person.

Choose 2 of the strongest that you can think of in all ‘c’ questions which I would say in this case is the one including the story with Jesus and the Quakers or Judaism example

**(d)** type questions may ask for one example or two – so would need more detail from one religion if only one example is asked for or a bit less from each if two examples are asked for - as they would share the same marks.

**Christianity**

* The position is unclear as with most religions e.g. Jesus once served as a one-man jury on a death penalty case of an adulterous woman. His response was let those without sin to cast the first stone - he was teaching that only a perfect being – only God – should have power over death and life. That life is seen as a ‘gift’ from God and is special and sacred. There is a part of God in all of us and it is something which only he has the right to take away. One of the Ten Commandments is ‘Thou Shalt not kill’
* **But** the Bible also teaches ‘an eye for an eye’ in The Old Testament which seems to support a life for a life. The Catholic Church has also never officially condemned the death penalty. There is and always has been much debate over the meanings of seemingly contradictory teachings in the Bible with different arguments saying that they have to be taken in the context of the situation.
* **Judaism**
* The Torah states some crimes are punishable by death such as murder (Leviticus) and if someone takes a life they will kill more than one person as they also deny future generations that could have been. In Israel the death sentence can only be used for genocide or treason.
* **But** as with most religions the position is unclear as the sanctity and importance of life is emphasised in Judaism also. That life is a ‘gift’ from God and he decides when a person’s life should end.

Remember Protestant and Catholic religions are separate traditions so they could both be used to provide the answers for two examples.