OCR H573 | INDEPENDENT REVISION

A* Model Essay

Reason Arguments

Philosophy of Religion

Can the concept of necessary existence provide an independent reason to believe in God?

1,498 response words | Complete annotated PDF | Individual topic edition

What is included

A complete original response, an argument plan, paragraph-level AO1/AO2 annotations and source works for further reading.

A* describes the intended style of this teaching model. This is independently written, not an OCR-marked script or a guaranteed grade.

Use this model to study argument and evaluation, then write your own answer. Do not submit it as your own assessed work.

Individual-use digital edition | 10 November 2026

Argument plan

Can the concept of necessary existence provide an independent reason to believe in God?

Thesis: Necessary existence clarifies what classical theists mean by God and improves the ontological argument beyond a simple comparison between imagined and actual beings. However, it provides an independent reason for belief only if the possibility and instantiation of the divine nature are justified without assuming the conclusion. Anselm and Descartes illuminate a distinctive concept more successfully than they demonstrate its real application to a sceptic.

1. Anselm argues that a maximally great being cannot exist only in the understanding.

Counter-argument: Defining a concept and comparing candidates does not establish that an instance exists.

Interim judgement: The first form requires a disputed bridge from conceptual greatness to reality.

2. Necessary existence differentiates God from Gaunilo's contingent island.

Counter-argument: Uniqueness blocks a simple parody without establishing the coherence or reality of the special case.

Interim judgement: The modal distinction strengthens the argument but leaves its central burden in place.

3. Descartes treats existence as inseparable from the divine essence.

Counter-argument: Kant distinguishes a necessary connection within a concept from the existence of anything answering to it.

Interim judgement: The argument supports conditional understanding more securely than independent demonstration.