



## What is A Level Religious Studies?

The OCR A Level Religious Studies course is divided into three components whose weightings are:

Unit Code	Unit Title	% of A level
H573/01	Philosophy of Religion	33.3%
H573/02	Religion and Ethics	33.3%
H573/03	Developments in Religious Thought (Christianity)	33.3%

### Exams and Assessment

#### H573/1: Philosophy of Religion

You will answer 3 essay questions from a choice of 4. **Exam:** 2 hour written exam. 120 marks

#### H573/2: Religious and Ethics

You will answer 3 essay questions from a choice of 4. **Exam:** 2 hour written exam. 120 marks

#### H573/3: Developments of Religious (Christian) Thought

You will answer 3 essay questions from a choice of 4. **Exam:** 2 hour written exam. 120 marks

**You are required to write essay responses to questions throughout the course for all topics covered. Your essays are assessed using two assessment objectives and given an overall mark out of 40.**

#### A01: 40% (up to 16 marks)

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including:

- Religious, philosophical and/or ethical thought and teaching
- Influence of beliefs, teachings and practices on individuals, communities and societies
- Cause and significance of similarities and differences in belief, teaching and practice
- Approaches to the study of religion and belief

#### A02: 60% (up to 24 marks)

Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief, including their significance, influence and study.

- You will study both the Philosophy and Ethics units throughout Year 12 and the Development in Christian Thought unit in Year 13
- All exams are taken at the end of Year 13

## Study Techniques

### Debating Ideas

Watch this debate between Bill Nye (the Science Guy) and Dr Ken Ham, Creation Scientist.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z6kgvhG3AkI>

This debate has had over 7 million views and is very well produced.

Start at 14 minutes. You will see Bill Nye and Ken Ham being introduced. Bill Nye is a famous US TV presenter of science/nature programmes, and Ken Ham works for the 'Answers in Genesis' organisation.

### Structure of the talk

The debate is quite long and so you may wish to watch in stages. They each give an introductory presentation and then each have a right of reply.

- Ken Ham starts at 15 minutes
- Bill Nye starts at 57 minutes
- The right of reply starts at 1 hour 28

Consider as you watch:

How is each speaker arguing? What evidence do they use to support their views? Is their evidence used well?

Who 'won' the debate, in your opinion?

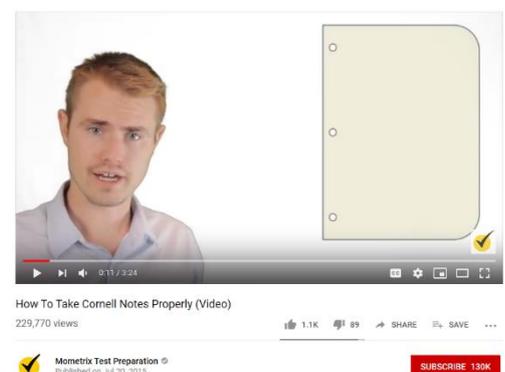
### How to take good notes

Having watched the video, you are going to complete a Cornell Notes activity. There are instructions on how to take Cornell Notes on the video below.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ErSjc1PEGKE>

The video is called:

How to take Cornell Notes properly



## Philosophy of Religion

Have a go at using the Cornell Notes method whilst watching these introductory videos on Philosophy and Plato:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCewkYZ1n50&feature=youtu.be&app=desktop>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hzyo-X7NVLw>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TissHzEG\\_JY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TissHzEG_JY)



Ancient philosophy is the first unit you will study in the Philosophy part of the course, so it is good to get a bit of a head start in trying to understand the ideas presented here by Plato.

You should also independently research SOCRATES, as although we do not cover him explicitly, we do make reference to him and his ideas.

## Religion and Ethics

### How do we know what is right and wrong?

Former US Vice-President Dick Cheney has urged the CIA to release memos which he says show harsh interrogation techniques such as water-boarding work.

“There are reports that show specifically what we gained as a result of this activity. They have not been declassified. I formally ask that they be declassified now.”

The American people should have a chance to weigh the intelligence obtained using harsh interrogation techniques alongside the debate that these techniques should be illegal.

Quoting one of the memos, The New York Times said water-boarding – or mock drowning – was used on two al-Qaeda terror suspects on up to 266 occasions.

Other methods mentioned in the memos include week-long sleep deprivation, forced nudity and the use of stress positions.

When Mr Obama was the President, he said he would not prosecute under anti-torture laws CIA personnel who relied in good faith on Bush administration legal opinions issued after the 11 September attacks.

But he was Criticised by human rights organisations and UN officials, who say charges are necessary to prevent future abuses and to hold people accountable.



Stress positions



Water-boarding

Task 1 - Read the article on harsh interrogation techniques.

Read this summary:

At the time, the CIA hoped that by employing harsh interrogation techniques, terrorist suspects might release information about future attacks. This would allow the CIA to prevent future attacks and find and arrest other terrorists.

Many people would argue that harsh interrogation techniques are an abuse of human rights and that we need to safe guard human rights.

Making an ethical judgement about something like harsh interrogation techniques involves us deciding what is right and what is wrong. To do this we have to have some sort of moral code to measure things against. This immediately raises the question: how do we know what is right and what is wrong?

Task 2 - Some people take an absolutist stance on issues like harsh interrogation techniques.

What does it mean to have an absolutist stance?

Identify 1 strength of an absolutist stance

Identify 1 weakness of an absolutist stance

This type of ethic is deontological. What does this mean?

Some people take a more relativist stance on issues like harsh interrogation techniques.

What does it mean to have a relativist stance?

Identify 1 strength of a relativist stance

Identify 1 weakness of a relativist stance

This type of ethic is teleological. What does this mean?

Task 3

Outline another issue where you think an absolutist stance would be of benefit

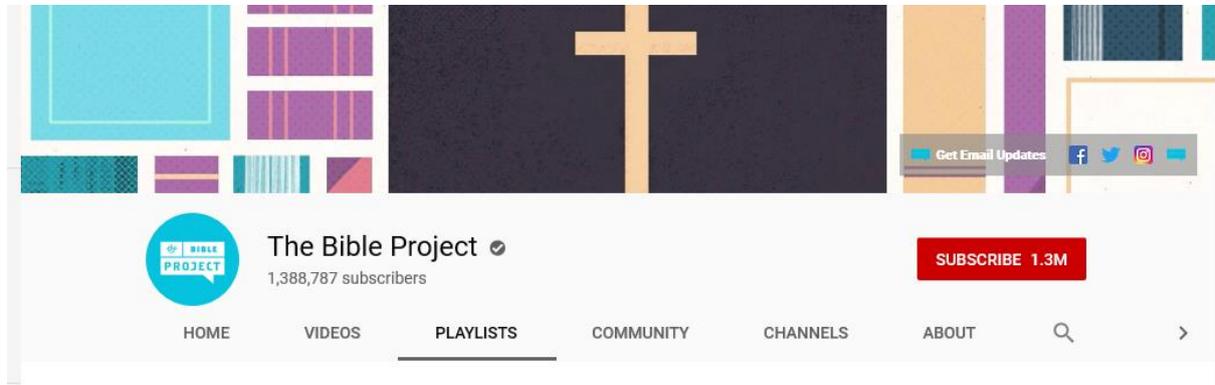
Outline an issue where you think a relativist stance would be of benefit

**PLEASE NOTE: I WANT TO SEE YOUR WRITTEN RESPONSES TO THESE QUESTIONS AND THEY WILL BE USED IN DISCUSSION WITHIN THE FIRST ONE OR TWO ETHICS LESSONS.**

## Developments in Christian Thought

Whilst not compulsory, having a good background knowledge of the Bible is useful for many aspects of this course. The Bible Project Series on YouTube will help you with this.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/jointhebibleproject/playlists>



The Biblical Themes playlist which is about 1 hour 30 minutes long if you watch every video, is recommended.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XzWpa0gcPyo&list=PLH0Szn1yYNec-HZjVHooeb4BSDSeHhEoh>



You do not need to look at all of these now, but make yourself familiar with the channel so you can access it with ease later on in your studies.

The following Biblical stories, events or characters may be good to look at:

**1. The Story of the Fall?**

What happens?

How does this story link with Christian ideas about Jesus?

**2. The story of Exile**

Where, when and why were the Israelites exiled to?

What does the prophet Jeremiah teach about exile in Babylon?

What is the link with Jesus?

**3. The Suffering Servant passages of Isaiah**

Who was Isaiah?

What is the background to Isaiah's writings?

What does Isaiah write about the suffering servant?

What is the link with Jesus?

**4. The Prophets (there is a Bible project video called prophets)**

What do prophets do? Who are they?

What do they teach about the covenant?

What is the Day of the Lord? What is the link with Jesus?

**5. Jesus**

What are the main events in Jesus' life?

What does Jesus teach in the Sermon on the Mount?

What does Jesus mean when he calls himself the Son of Man?

What is the day of the Lord?

## **GCSE Religious Studies**

**IF YOU DID NOT STUDY RELIGIOUS STUDIES AT GCSE THEN YOU SHOULD FAMILIARISE YOURSELF WITH CHAPTER FIVE OF THE CHRISTIANITY TEXTBOOK AVAILABLE TO LOAN FROM THE HUMANITIES DEPARTMENT.**

AQA GCSE Religious Studies – Christianity (purple front cover)

Unit 5 – The existence of God and revelation is on Pages 106 to 121

## **Further Reading**

### **Introductory Reading:**

Gaarder, J. *Sophie's World*, London: Phoenix House 1995

### **Philosophy of Religion:**

Vardy, P. *The Puzzle of God*, Harper Collins (1999)

Davies, B. *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, OUP 1993

Keller, T. *The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Scepticism*, Hodder and Stoughton, 2009

### **Ethics:**

Palmer, M. *Moral Problems: a Coursebook for Schools and Colleges*, James Clarke and Co., 2005

Wilcockson, M. *Issues of Life and Death*, Hodder Education, 2009

Dimmock, M. and Fisher, A. *Ethics for A Level*, Open Book Publishing

This book is free to download from Open Book Publishing, and is available here:

<https://www.openbookpublishers.com/product/639>

This will be a useful resource to refer back to throughout the lifetime of the course and compliments the text books you will be asked to purchase to use in school.

## **Online resources:**

Crash Course Philosophy

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8dPuualjXtNgK6MZucdYldNkMybYIHKR>

The School of Life (Western Philosophy)

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLwxNMb28XmpeypJMhfNbJ4RAFkRtmAN3P>