

OCR Religious Studies – Religion, Philosophy and Ethics



Be a free thinker and don't accept everything you hear as truth. Be critical and evaluate what you believe in.

Y12 transition work pack

Welcome, year 12! This is your transition work for A level Religion, Philosophy and Ethics, which you've chosen to take at A level this September, and good decision at that! The pack is designed to give you a flavour of what A level Philosophy and Ethics is all about. The pack will introduce you to some core philosophical, ethical and theological concepts and events, to aid your understanding of Philosophy and Ethics ready for sixth form. The timings given are just suggested indications of how long the tasks should take you and obviously, we don't expect you to complete all the tasks at once.

Ms Millington and Ms Devine are so looking forward to teaching you when you begin your Sixth Form studies in September! Email us at the addresses below if you have any questions

Ms Millington – Philosophy and Ethics kmillington@forgevalley.sheffield.sch.uk

Ms Devine – Developments in Christian thought sdevine@forgevalley.sheffield.sch.uk

There are so many other ways in which you can still practice and develop Religious Studies skills at home. You can read, watch and listen to interesting ideas and think about the opinions expressed. How far do they match your own views? What might someone say if they had a very different opinion? Keep up your writing skills by putting your ideas down on paper – try, if you can, to handwrite, just to keep up the practice of handwriting so that your writing isn't completely illegible by the time you go back to school!

Reading good quality writing is the best way of improving your own writing. As you read a good writer, you will gain a better understanding of the meanings of new words and the ways in which carefully chosen words and punctuation can add real emphasis to someone's argument. Different writers express themselves in different ways, and by reading them you will develop your own 'voice'.

Thinking skills can be developed if you try to take a questioning attitude to the things you watch, hear and read. Do you agree with what's being said? If you watch a film where people have different attitudes towards something, which do you agree with most, or least, and why?

Task 2: Is there evidence for life after death? (linking to Philosophy - Religious Experiences) (2 hours)

Watch this documentary, 'Barra Boy' (47 mins)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nhGX1YCsvAM>

1. Do you think the story provides convincing evidence for reincarnation? Why, or why not?
2. What do you think counts as 'convincing evidence' for life after death (e.g. scripture, near death experiences, nothing)? What makes evidence convincing or unconvincing? Are you sceptical about the existence of life after death?
3. Read the accounts in the gospels of the resurrection of Jesus (if you are using biblegateway.com use the bible translation NRSV)

Matthew 28:1 – 10

Mark 16: 1 – 8

Luke 24: 1 – 10

John 20: 1 – 18

4. Do you find these stories convincing? Why, or why not?
5. Do you think the stories contradict each other, or are they just told from different points of view, in your opinion? What might account for the differences and the similarities between the stories?

Task 3: Making a Case (1.5 hours)

Now I would like you to make a case for and against a particular issue. Philosophy and Ethics at A level will require you to make judgements about issues and be able to write clearly using evidence and examples. In order to write about issues, it's so important that we are able to verbally articulate them and be able to respond to opposing viewpoints. Developing your oracy skills is important for our lessons as we rely on a lot of discussion and debate in preparation for essays and to recognise our own understanding of topics.

You need to create both a for/against case for each of the following issues ensuring the arguments are underpinned with at least a piece of evidence for each side:

1. 'There is evidence that God exists'
2. 'A Just God would surely create an afterlife'
3. 'Jesus was the Son of God'
4. 'Abortion should be legal in all circumstances'
5. 'Euthanasia should be made legal in the UK'

When you have recorded your case, listen back to yourself (I know it can be scary but it's only you who needs to hear it!) and evaluate your performance against the following criteria.

- How articulate clearly did you present the arguments?
- Did you give evidence?
- How 'sound' was your evidence?
- Did you respond to the counter-argument?

Task 4: Key scholar Research (1 hr)

In Philosophy and Ethics you will be introduced to many scholars to support arguments you make in your essays. I want you to create some sort of leaflet/flyer/Instagram page about your chosen scholar. This should be one page of A4 typed or hand-written work.

In this you need to make sure you have completed the following success criteria:

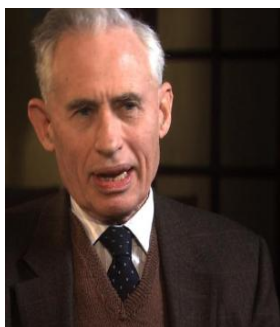
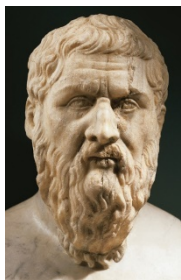
- When were they alive?
- What key books did they write?
- What key issues did they write about?
- Are there any key quotes?
- Do you find their work convincing?

The following scholars to choose to research from are:

- Plato
- Aristotle
- St Augustine
- St Thomas Aquinas
- Richard Swinburne
- Mary Daly
- Joseph Fletcher
- Jeremy Bentham

Like all well-informed research, you need to consider the location of the information you find. Some good suggestions for research are

- Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy
- Philosophy Cat
- The School of Life



Here are some suggested books to help develop your thinking skills:

The pig that wants to be eaten – Julian Baggini

50 Philosophy Ideas you must know -

Think – Simon Blackburn

The Blind Watchmaker, and/or The God Delusion – Richard Dawkins

These suggestions are only a few of the very many available, so don't worry if you can't get hold of these specific titles.

And some online resources:

The Philosophy Man - thephilosophyman.com

This website gives you lots of different ideas to think about. Some are for younger children but you could try the 'brainsqueezers'. These are good if you don't have too much time, or if you're finding it difficult to settle to anything more concentrated.

Philosophers Magazine – philosophersmag.com

Try the games on this website, and read the commentaries that go with them. Lots to think about!

Peped – peped.org

This website has a lot of good resources that you might use once you start you're a level course; you could dip in and start exploring some of the ideas you will meet next year.

Some things to watch and think about:

All kinds of films and series have philosophical and religious ideas in them, so follow your own interests! You could try these, or choose something else, but try and use them as a stimulus for thinking and writing, rather than just sitting in front of them:

The Good Place

The Matrix

Unorthodox

Twelve Angry Men

TED talks – these are usually wonderful, with plenty to stimulate your questioning and reasoning skills.

Some favourites:

Elizabeth Loftus – how reliable is your memory?

Dan Gilbert – why we make bad decisions

Richard Dawkins – militant atheism

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie – We should all be feminists

Damon Horowitz – Philosophy in prison

There are loads of talks on here, so use the search engine to find topics that interest you. Practise note-taking; write notes as you listen, just as you would if you were listening to a real-life lecture, and practise the skill of jotting down key points at speed. Ask yourself questions when you get to the end: what were the speaker's key messages? Do you agree with the speaker? What might someone who disagreed say, and what might their reasons be?

