

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

TRANSITION RESOURCES

EXAM BOARD: OCR

An Introduction to A Level Religious Studies

It is fantastic that you are considering studying A Level Religious Studies and I am so excited for next year. It is a thoughtprovoking and interesting course.

This pack contains a programme of activities and resources to prepare you to start in September.

The some core themes that you will study in Religious Studies are:

- Philosophy of religion and ethics
- Study of religion and dialogues

Key information

Exam board: OCR

Entry Code: H573

Assessment Objectives:

There are two assessment objectives:

	Assessment Objective	
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religion and belief, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	40%
AO2	Analyse and evaluate aspects of, and approaches to, religion and belief including their significance, influence and study	60%

AO WEIGHTINGS IN AS LEVEL IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Component	AO1	AO2
Philosophy of religion (H573/01)	13.3	20
Religion and ethics (H573/02)	13.3	20
Developments in religious thought (H573/03–07)	13.3	20
	40	60

This qualification is linear. Linear means that students will sit all their exams at the end of the course.

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Subject Specific Reading List: Religious Studies (OCR)

Books

Oxford A Level Religious Studies for OCR 'Christianity, Philosophy and Ethics' Year 1
ISBN: 9780198392859

Oxford A Level Religious Studies for OCR 'Christianity, Philosophy and Ethics' Year 2
ISBN: 9780198375333

Pre-course Wider Reading Suggestions for Religious Studies A Level: Non-Fiction

Blackburn, S. *Think*, OUP 2001

Craig, E. *Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction*, OUP 2002

Law, S. *The Philosophy Files*, Orion 2002; *The Outer Limits*, Orion 2003; *The Philosophy Gym*, Hodder
Headline 2003

Nagel, T. *What Does It All Mean?*, OUP 1987 (reprinted 2004)

Warburton, N. *Philosophy: The Basics* (5th ed.), Routledge 2012

Philosophy:

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

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

Annas, J. *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (particularly Chapters 9-10), OUP 1998

Ethics:

Vardy, P. *The Puzzle of Ethics*, SCM Press 1999

Norman, R. *The Moral Philosophers*, OUP 1998

Religious Thought:

McGrath, A. *Christianity: An Introduction*, Blackwell Publishing 2015

Video Resources and Tasks:

Watch the videos below, choosing one to focus on for your task. Write a list of discussion points/
questions it raises. Choose (at least) one of your questions and draft at least three possible answers
that might be given:

https://www.ted.com/talks/kwame_anthony_appiah_is_religion_good_or_bad_this_is_a_trick_question - Ted Talk Is religion good or bad?

https://www.ted.com/talks/damon_horowitz/transcript Ted Talk 'We Need a Moral Operating System'

https://www.ted.com/talks/tom_honey_on_god_and_the_tsunami/transcript Ted Talk 'Why Would God Create A Tsunami?'

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xOwr4tibvzM> R v's Dudley and Stephens

Films/ TV:

Watch *The Matrix* (film). Note down your thoughts on the themes of truth, perception and reality.

Watch *Lost* (TV series). What moral and ethical points does this raise?

Watch *The Good Place* (Netflix Series). How does it approach ethical living?

Watch *Sliding Doors* (film). Do you think your life is pre-destined (set out for you) or can you control your own fate?

Thought Experiments:

<http://www.philosophyexperiments.com/fatman/>

<http://moralmachine.mit.edu/>

<https://io9.gizmodo.com/9-philosophical-thought-experiments-that-will-keep-you-1340952809>

Carry out some of the above activities.

Write a written reflection of the moral questions that each one raises, and how you might respond to these.

Try to list your own "moral code" or "rules for life". Include 5-10 elements.

Can you imagine any exceptions to your own "rules"?

Tasks for summer

Task 1: Core concepts

Find the definitions for the following concepts:

- Truth
- Reality
- Good
- Evil
- Moral
- God
- Time

Task 2: Ethics

2a. Create a fact file of the philosophers Plato, Aristotle and Aquinas. Include pictures, key facts and a brief outline of their philosophical ideas.

2b. Choose a story from the news that includes one of the following themes:

- Abortion
- Euthanasia
- Capital punishment
- Humans' treatment of animals

Write a response to the story, considering several different points of view. To help with this, you could consider the points of view of:

- An atheist (someone who fervently believes there is no God)
- An agnostic (someone unsure about religion and faith in God)
- A committed Christian
- A dying man
- A child

Task 3: Religion

3a. Create a timeline of significant events in the New Testament of the Bible. Include events such as Jesus' birth and particularly the last week of his life. Include biblical references. You could complete this either by hand or on a computer, but you must have a hard copy of this to go in your folder.

Websites for reference

<http://www.datesandevents.org/people-timelines/36-timeline-of-jesus.htm>

http://www.bible-history.com/Chart_Jesus_Chronology/

https://www.esv.org/resources/esv-global-study-bible/chart_40_00_nt_timeline/

3b. 'Is the Bible a reliable source of authority?' Discuss.

You must research the reasons why some Christians follow the Bible literally, some take meaningful truths from the Bible and other non-religious people claim that the Bible cannot be considered trustworthy. You should reach a justified conclusion. This should be written

as a short, formal essay.

Websites for reference

<http://request.org.uk/bible/questions-about-the-bible/is-the-bible-reliable/>

<http://cocolumbus.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Reasons-to-believe-is-the-Bible-really-Gods-word-.pdf>

<https://americanhumanist.org/what-is-humanism/reasons-humanists-reject-bible/>

<https://bible.org/seriespage/3-why-believe-bible>

Task 4: Philosophy

4. Do events like this (please see case study below) mean that God cannot exist? Or does it just mean that God can exist but cannot be omnibenevolent, omniscient or omnipotent? Explain your opinion in less than 300 words.

Case study: Boxing Day Tsunami, 2004

On 26 December 2004 a tsunami occurred in the Indian Ocean. It was the result of the Indo-Australian Plate subducting below the Eurasian Plate. It was caused by an earthquake measuring more than magnitude 9. The earthquake caused the seafloor to uplift, displacing the seawater above.

- In open ocean the tsunami measured less than 1 metre high.
- The tsunami travelled at speeds up to 800km per hour.
- When the Tsunami reached the shores, the height of the wave increased to 15 metres in some areas.



Map of Indian Ocean tsunami 2004

Main impacts

- A quarter of a million people died.
- Two million people were made homeless.
- People were swept away in the waters, which arrived rapidly and with little warning.
- Thirteen countries were affected, the worst being Indonesia.
- Indonesia was hit by the tsunami first. Forty-five minutes later the tsunami reached Thailand.
- Mangrove swamps helped to act as a barrier to reduce the energy of the water in some areas.
- Short-term aid, such as water purification tablets, temporary housing and medical supplies were given from international countries.
- Islands reliant on tourism and fishing, such as the Maldives, had to rebuild their industries.
- An early warning system between countries surrounding the Indian Ocean has been set up.