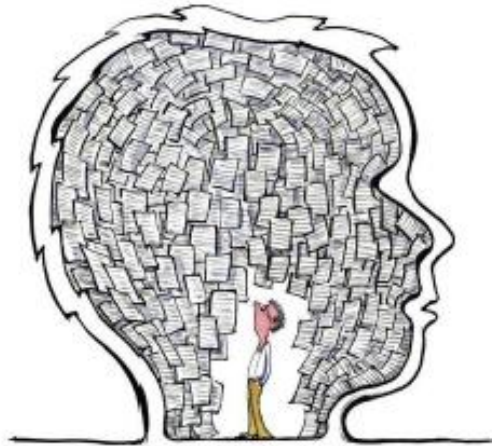


# A Level Religious Studies Summer Work Pack



‘Wisdom begins with wonder’  
*Socrates*

‘We are what we repeatedly do, excellence then is not an act, but a habit’  
*Aristotle*

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## Welcome!

Hello! Welcome to A Level Religious Studies. Do you enjoy...?

- Taking part in discussions and debates
- Listening to other people's views
- Learning about unusual ideas from both atheists and religious thinkers
- Analysing events and concepts from a variety of perspectives; historical, literary and philosophical
- Looking for answers when there are no set right or wrongs

If so Religious Studies A level is the course for you!

This course offers the opportunity for inquisitive individuals to discuss some of the ultimate questions facing humanity today, delving into key philosophical arguments from the views of Plato and Aristotle. It also questions God's existence, the problem of evil in the world and explores belief in relation to key atheists such as Richard Dawkins, Bertrand Russell and Freud.

The aim of this booklet is to introduce you to some aspects of the study of philosophy, ethics and religion with the intention to prepare you for studying with us at A-Level. Many of you will have studied GCSE RE so will have some grounding in these areas but A Level is going to take you much more deeply into these areas. If you haven't studied GCSE don't worry, you're in good company and these tasks will help get you thinking like an A level RS student.

The activities and information in this workbook will help you understand the context of the three modules you will study in Year 12 and Year 13. Work through the recommended activities in any order. We've included some study skills help around note-making. You don't have to use it, but making effective notes is an incredibly useful skill at A level.

We're really looking forward to meeting you!

## Philosophy Tasks

You have two tasks, one on reasons to believe in God, the other about the possibility of reincarnation

### **Task 1**

Watch this debate between William Lane Craig and Christopher Hitchens.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=otYm41hb48o>

The video is called

Does God Exist? William Lane Craig vs. Christopher Hitchens - Full Debate [HD]



If you watch from 11 minutes 30 seconds you will see William Lane Craig and Christopher Hitchens being introduced. William Lane Craig is a Christian and Christopher Hitchens was a New Atheist.

### **Structure of the talk**

The lecture is quite long and so you may wish to watch this in stages. They talk for 20 minutes each and then have a right of reply each.

- William Lane Craig starts at 13 minutes
- Christopher Hitchens starts at 33 minutes and 30 seconds
- Williams Lane Craig replies to Christopher Hitchens from 54 minutes and 15 seconds
- Christopher Hitchens replies to William Lane Craig from 1hr and 7 minutes

From one hour 20 minutes there is a cross examination that you may wish to watch.

Having watched the videos you are going to make notes, we'd recommend the Cornell notes method (see the study skills section)

Make notes on;

- The key arguments given by both sides
- The responses and evaluations given
- Your own view of which side is more convincing and why

## Cornell Notes Template

Name

Date

**Topic** Philosophy – Does God exist?

**Subject** William Lane Craig's arguments for God's existence

**Main Ideas**

**Notes**

**Summary**

## Cornell Notes Template

**Name**

**Date**

**Topic** Philosophy – Does God exist?

**Subject** Christopher Hitchens' case for God not existing

**Main Ideas**

**Notes**

**Summary**



## Going further with Philosophy of Religion

If this is your favourite area, you might want to try some of the following extras

### 1. **Stephen Law and the Evil God challenge**

Watch the video here on Stephen Law's 'Evil God' argument

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

Summarise his reasoning as best as you can



Law isn't suggesting that Evil God exists, but that if you reject the reasoning around why an Evil God would allow goodness, you should also reject the reasoning for why a Good God would allow evil. Do you think this is an effective challenge? Why or why not?

### 2. Research some of these key thinkers and schools of thought;

Aristotle

Plato

St Thomas Aquinas

St Augustine

David Hume

JL Mackie

Ludwig Wittgenstein

Logical Positivism

### 3. Watch the BBC documentary 'God on the Brain'

<https://www.dailymotion.com/video/x7okydo>

(apologies, this is the only public link I can find and for some strange reason the image is flipped)



Make a note of some of the key ideas and thinkers associated with 'neurotheology'

Based on the evidence from the video – do you think that religious belief is a result of the biology of the human brain? Do you think that this counts as evidence for or against the existence of God? Why



## Religion Tasks

Our studied religion is Christianity and good background knowledge of the Bible and church history is important.

### Task 1 - Church History

Having some understanding of how the church began, how it grew and spread and how it has split over time is really useful when starting to study A Level. To get started with this, access the Ted-Ed lesson on Church History here <https://ed.ted.com/on/lVs36zph>

## Church History in Ten Minutes

LESSON CREATED BY LISA O'CONNOR USING TED-Ed's LESSON CREATOR  
VIDEO FROM TrueTube YOUTUBE CHANNEL

Let's Begin...

To understand Christianity today we need to understand something of the history of the religion. How did we get from a man being executed for blasphemy and treason to a worldwide religion of great diversity? This video lesson will help you to begin to understand this and to start to ask the right kind of questions to study this further



Watch

Think

Dig Deeper

Discuss

...And Finally

Test yourself with the multiple choice questions, add a comment to the discussions and explore some of the further links in 'Dig Deeper'

Make your own set of notes on some of the key dates and developments. Try to include the following;

### 1<sup>st</sup> Century Christianity – key figures and events

- Who were the apostles?
- Who were the leaders in the early church?
- When were the first letters of the New Testament written?
- Which was the first gospel?
- When was it written?
- When were the others written?
- How and why were Christians persecuted by the Roman Empire?

### 2<sup>nd</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> Century Christianity

- Who were the church fathers?
- When did Christianity come to Britain?
- Who was Constantine and why is he so important?

- When and what was the Edict of Milan?
- What was the Council of Nicea (325CE)?
- What was an ecumenical council?
- How many were there?
- What did they focus on?
- Why was Theodosius and why is he important?
- Which groups left the church? Why? At which church councils did they leave?
- Why did the Pope becoming increasingly powerful?
- When and why did the Eastern and Western churches start to drift apart?
- What was the Holy Roman Empire?

### **The 11<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> centuries – Schism, Crusades and dissatisfaction with the church**

- When was the Great Schism and what was the outcome?
- What were the Crusades? When did they happen and what was the outcome?
- Why were some Christians concerned about the church and that the Bible was only available in Latin?
- Who was John Wycliffe?

### **The 16<sup>th</sup> Century – Reformation and Counter-Reformation**

- Who was Martin Luther?
- What were the 95 theses and when were they hammered to a church door?
- When was Luther excommunicated and what did he do afterwards?
- Who were some of the other Protestant Reformers?
- Who was William Tyndale and what did he do?
- What is the significance of Henry VIII?
- Who was Thomas Cranmer?
- When and what was the Act of Supremacy?
- What and when was the Council of Trent?
- Why is King Edward VI (yes, that's our KEVI!) significant?
- Cranmer wrote the 39 articles and The Book of Common Prayer. What are they?
- Who was Bloody Mary?

### **The 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards – Protestant Diversity**

- Which new churches were formed in this period and when?

### **The 20<sup>th</sup> century**

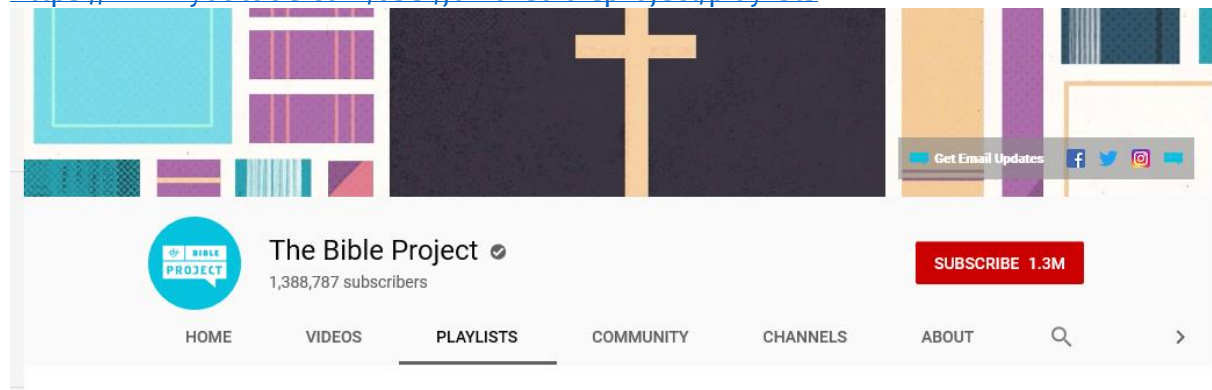
- When and what was Vatican II?

## Task 2 - Background Bible Knowledge

It's useful to understand both the overall narrative of the Bible, and particularly significant figures and events.

The Bible Project Series on YouTube will help you with this.

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



For a background in what the Bible is and how it came to be written, watch this video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ako6MSETeo4>



To get a sense of the 'Big Story' of the Bible, watch the following video from The Bible Project

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7\\_CGP-12AE0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7_CGP-12AE0)

For particular stories and themes, I would recommend the Biblical Themes playlist which is about 1 hour 30 minutes long if you watch every video.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XzWpaogcPyo&list=PLHoSzn1yYNec-HZjVHooeb4BSDSeHhEoh>

Using these videos and your own additional research you need to find out about the following Biblical stories, events or characters.

For each topic on the next pages you need to make notes – either Cornell Notes or your own preferred style

**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. The Messiah**

What does the Old Testament teach about the Messiah?

Why do Christians believe that Jesus was the Messiah?

What Jewish expectations of the Messiah does Jesus not fulfil?

#### **6. 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?

## Ethics Tasks

There are 2 ethics tasks, one to give you an overview of what we'll study and another to get you involved in some ethical decision making with a famous thought experiment. Complete them in any order. For many students this is their favourite area of the course, so there's some additional tasks too.

### Task 1 - Would you sacrifice one person to save five?

Complete the Ted-Ed lesson here <https://ed.ted.com/on/HcROMDBy>  
Watch the video, try the multiple choice questions, explore further on the dig deeper links and then post some thoughts on the discussion

**TEDEd**

Discover Create Manage Support

## Would you sacrifice one person to save five?

LESSON CREATED BY LISA O'CONNOR USING TED-Ed's LESSON CREATOR  
VIDEO FROM TED-Ed YOUTUBE CHANNEL

### Let's Begin...

Imagine you're watching a runaway trolley barreling down the tracks, straight towards five workers. You happen to be standing next to a switch that will divert the trolley onto a second track. Here's the problem: that track has a worker on it, too — but just one. What do you do? Do you sacrifice one person to save five? Eleanor Nelsen details the ethical dilemma that is the trolley problem.



Watch

Think

Dig Deeper

Discuss

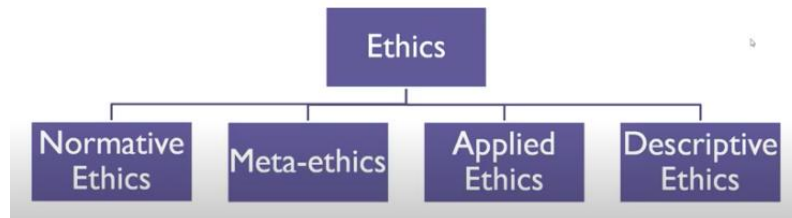
Do you think the right thing to do is to pull the lever? Why or why not?

Would it be acceptable to kill one person to allow 5 people to receive organ transplants?  
Why or why not?

## Task 2 – An introduction to Ethics

There is an accessible video introduction to this topic area here  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VI-toeWp9WA>

### Areas of Study in Ethics



Make notes on the following;

1. What is ethics?
2. What is meant by normative ethics?
3. What are the key ideas of;
  - a. Deontological ethics
  - b. Consequentialist ethics
  - c. Virtue Ethics
4. What is meant by meta-ethics?
5. What is meant by descriptive ethics?

## Going further on Ethics

If you'd like to explore this area further we'd recommend;

1. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=15&v=3\\_t4obUc51A&feature=emb\\_title](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=15&v=3_t4obUc51A&feature=emb_title)

This video from Academy of Ideas goes deeper into the different areas of ethics and asks whether morality is objective or subjective.



Watch and add to your previous notes.

Do you think that morality is an objective fact about the world that we can discover somehow, or is it an expression of individual feeling? Or is it something else? Why?

2. Research some of these key thinkers and schools of thought;

St Thomas Aquinas

Jeremy Bentham

John Stuart Mill

Aristotle

Joseph Fletcher

Divine Command Theory

Virtue Ethics

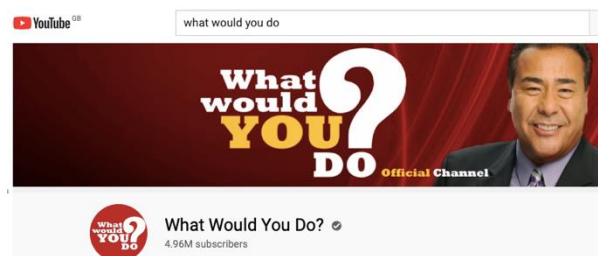
Ethical Egoism

Utilitarianism

Natural Law

Situation Ethics

3. Test out your own moral intuitions and those of others by watching some of the clips from 'What would you do?'



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=15&v=3\\_t4obUc51A&feature=emb\\_title](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=15&v=3_t4obUc51A&feature=emb_title)



## Extras

TED talks – <https://www.ted.com/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
- His Holiness the Karmapa: The technology of the heart
- Playlist: Are you there, God? (11 talks)
- Matthieu Ricard: The habits of happiness

There are loads of talks on here, so use the search engine to find topics that interest you.

Practice notetaking; write notes as you listen, just as you would if you were listening to a real-life lecture and practice 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?

## Study Skills

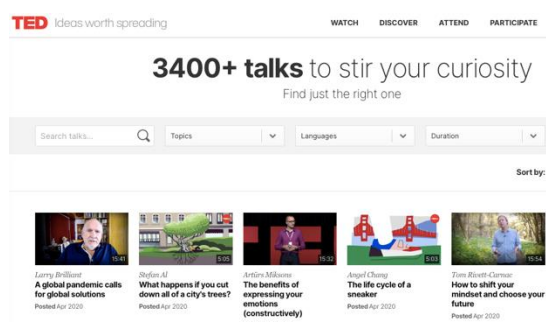
Note-making is a key skill for A level. You will be provided with workbooks throughout the course but also additional reading and multi-media resources. Being able to bring this all together in an organised way so that you have effective notes to learn from is one of the key differences between students who do well and those who do less well.

We strongly recommend the Cornell Notes method and have provided some guidance here, as well as some blank templates. Try making Cornell Notes for at least one of these activities and make sure you bring them in when you start with us in the autumn.

There are instructions on how to take Cornell Notes in this video.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ErSjc1PEGKE>

You have some blank templates in this booklet, but you can easily use a ruler to divide up a page.

On the next page is an example of some completed Cornell Notes for you to see on a different topic.



Based on the Ted-Talk here

[https://www.ted.com/talks/tom\\_honey\\_why\\_would\\_god\\_create\\_a\\_tsunami?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/tom_honey_why_would_god_create_a_tsunami?language=en)

### IX. A Model of the Cornell Notes document

Name	Date
Topic: Topic Rev Tom Honey on why God allows tsunamis	Subject: Problem of Evil

<p><b>Main Ideas:</b></p> <p>We need to move away from the God of classical theism</p> <p>We need to stop looking for a philosophical answer to the problem of evil</p> <p>Abandon God of classical theism for a suffering God – this fits the 20<sup>th</sup> century</p> <p>A God who responds to prayer or acts in history is biased and unfair</p> <p>Abandon traditional God, not one who acts but a divine presence</p>	<p><b>Notes:</b></p> <p>Many people see God as the almighty, a policeman in the sky. In the past we have not wanted to rock the boat by exploring other ideas about God.</p> <p>Archbishop of Canterbury – people do not want an intellectual explanation of evil. There are no words that can make up for what has happened; instead, a compassionate silence and practical help is needed.</p> <p>God has to be able to feel and experience our pain. One who weeps when we weep and rejoice when we rejoice. We need to move away from an unchanging God who is cold and indifferent. WW1, WW2 and Holocaust. Where is God – the answer is God is in this with us or he does not deserve our allegiance. An unchanging God may exist but I do not want to know him.</p> <p>Why would God act in some cases but not others? This makes him unfair and partisan.</p> <p>We should see God not as one who does things as in the Old Testament, defeating Egyptians etc. but instead he is in things. Is this Pantheism? Pantheism? There are lots of don't knows but that is what makes God a divine mystery.</p>
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<p><b>Summary:</b></p> <p>We must move away from the God of classical theism. God is not a grand fixer but instead a presence within us who feels our pain and joy. This allows us to offer support to those experiencing evil rather than philosophical arguments. A God who acts in history becomes partisan, and it makes more sense to have a God who understands all suffering rather than one that fixes some suffering whilst ignoring others' pain.</p>
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Name

Date

Topic

Subject

Main Ideas

Notes

Summary

## Cornell Notes Template

Name

Date

Topic

Subject

Main Ideas

Notes

Summary

## Further Reading

### Brief Introductory Reading:

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

Hansel, N. The Sage Train, Matador 2016

Vardy, P. The Puzzle of God, Collins 1999; God Matters, SCM Press 2013

### Ethics:

Norman, R. The Moral Philosophers, OUP 1998

Vardy, P. The Puzzle of Ethics, Collins 1999; Ethics Matters, SCM Press 2012

### Religious Thought:

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

Vardy, P. The Puzzle of Christianity, Collins 2016