

Introduction to  
A-Level Philosophy  
and Ethics  
Summer 2021



# Philosophy and Ethics Okehampton College – Bridging Activities to prepare for KS5

Read the hand out – ‘How do we talk about the impossible and other big questions and debates in Philosophy’. You could write a summary of each section and conclude with your ideas about each debate. (produced by the university of East Anglia).

**Suggested Reading List – you can choose any from the list below but I would like you to read *The Sage Train* by Nicky Hansell over the summer.**

Brief Introductory Reading:

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. (1995) *Sophie’s World*, London : Phoenix House

Davies, B. (1993) *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

Annas, J. (1998) *An Introduction to Plato’s Republic*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, (particularly  
Chapters 9-10)

Baggini, J – ‘The Pig That Wants To Be Eaten: And 99 Other Thought Experiments’

Ethics:

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

Norman, R. (1998) *The Moral Philosophers*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

## Reading List Tasks:

For each of the texts you read, summarise the key points in one of the following ways:

- Write a review of the book, outlining which were the most useful sections and whether you enjoyed the book/ why/ why not.
- List any key terms from the text in a vocabulary list, researching their meanings (if not clear from the text) and recording these.
- Create a picture mind-map of the key ideas. Use doodles and images to illustrate these. For a guide to mind-mapping, see this short video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wLWV0XN7K1g>

## 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/transcript#t-22290](https://www.ted.com/talks/kwame_anthony_appiah_is_religion_good_or_bad_this_is_a_trick_question/transcript#t-22290) Ted Talk by Kwame Anthony Appiah - Is religion good or bad? (This is a trick question)

[https://www.ted.com/talks/damon\\_horowitz/transcript](https://www.ted.com/talks/damon_horowitz/transcript) Ted Talk by Damon Horowitz – We Need a Moral Operating System

[https://www.ted.com/talks/tom\\_honey\\_on\\_god\\_and\\_the\\_tsunami/transcript](https://www.ted.com/talks/tom_honey_on_god_and_the_tsunami/transcript) Ted Talk by Tom Honey – Why Would God Create A Tsunami?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8MzPmkNsgU> Debate: Atheist vs Christian (Christopher Hitchens vs William Lane Craig)

### **Films/ TV:**

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

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

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

Justice Michael Sandel – Watch any episodes <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kBdfcR-8hEY&list=PL30C13C91CFFFEA6>

The Good Place (Netflix). What moral and ethical points does this raise?

### **Audio Resources:**

Listen to the Infinite Monkey Maze on BBC Radio 4 (series 3 Philosophy)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00wdfd4>

Listen to The Moral Maze on BBC Radio 4. (Available programmes vary over time)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qk11>

Note down the key points of argument. Create a flow chart of the main points of discussion.

Listen to this episode of In Our Time. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01mwx64>

Based on these arguments, is it possible to argue that God necessarily exists?

Listen to this episode of Thinking Allowed. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b099ypqf>

How should we help people who are dying?

Listen to this podcast from Philosophy Now.

[https://philosophynow.org/podcasts/Free Will and the Brain](https://philosophynow.org/podcasts/Free_Will_and_the_Brain) To what extent can we exercise free will? List 10 examples of choices you have made in the last seven days. For each one, consider what factors influenced your choice (habit, parents, media, friends, consideration of consequences, etc).

Listen to this podcast from Philosophy Now.

[https://philosophynow.org/podcasts/Beyond Right and Wrong](https://philosophynow.org/podcasts/Beyond_Right_and_Wrong)

<https://thepanpsycast.com/episodes-by-category> - pick a selection from the Ethics and Philosophy of Religion sections.

### **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”?

### Written/ Reflection Tasks:

1. Consider your definitions of the following terms:

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

For each concept, try to argue against your own definition. Can you see any flaws in your ideas? How might they be criticised? What conclusions can you reach about *how* we define these concepts?

2. List *five* facts that you *know* to be true. For each one, explain *how* you know it to be true. Are any of your “facts” uncertain? What would have to happen to prove them irrefutably (without question)?

3. Create a picture collage, poem, song, mind map or vision board which illustrates the idea of “God”. Explain your choices of words, images and concepts. If you can, explain where these have originated.

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

5. 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

## Essay Question

Write your own response to the following question:

“How should we decide the right thing to do?”

In your answer you should:

- Include a range of different opinions
- Conduct your own research to find possible answers from different fields of thinking (philosophy, psychology, sociology, religion, etc)
- Justify your answer with a range of reasons
- Include examples to illustrate your point
- Reach a justified conclusion
- Include a bibliography to demonstrate your own research

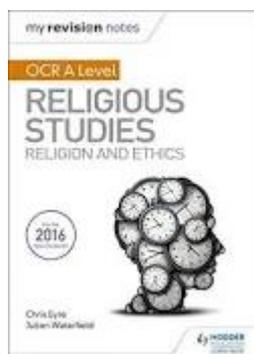
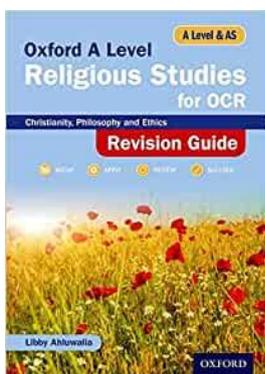
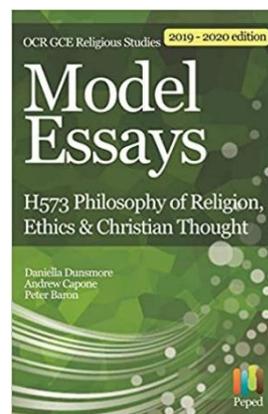
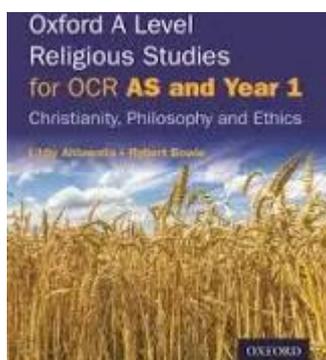
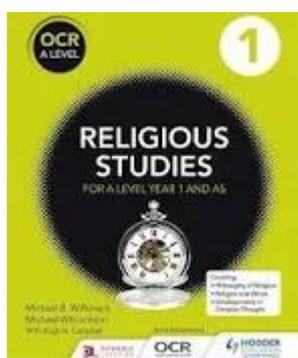
# Course: OCR A Level Religious Studies (H573)

You are studying **Philosophy of Religion (H573/01)**, **Religious Ethics (H573/02)** and **Developments in Buddhist Thought (H573/06)** you will be awarded an **OCR A Level in Religious Studies**.

The modules and their weightings are:

Unit Code	Unit Title	% of A Level
H573/01	Philosophy of Religion	33.3%
H573/02	Religious Ethics	33.3%
H573/06	Developments in Buddhist Thought	33.3%

- Each paper will contain four essay questions, you will choose three out of the four to answer.
- **Questions can target material from any area of the specification.**
- Two questions might be set from one specification section, or all questions might be from different sections.
- **In order to guarantee access to the full range of marks for the assessment you should cover and revise all aspects of the specification.**
- Each essay will be worth 40 marks and will test both A01 and A02.
- **Time allowed: 2 hours**
- <http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/as-a-level-gce->



[religious-studies-h173-h573-from-2016/](http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/as-a-level-gce-religious-studies-h173-h573-from-2016/)

# Content Overview

<i>Component Title</i>	<i>Content Overview</i>
<i>Philosophy of Religion (01)</i>	<p>Learners will study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ancient philosophical influences</li> <li>• the nature of the soul, mind and body</li> <li>• arguments about the existence or non-existence of God</li> <li>• the nature and impact of religious experience</li> <li>• the challenge for religious belief of the problem of evil</li> <li>• ideas about the nature of God</li> <li>• issues in religious language</li> </ul>
<i>Religion and Ethics (02)</i>	<p>Learners will study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• normative ethical theories – Kantian ethics (Kant)/Natural Law (Aquinas)/Situation Ethics (Fletcher)/Utilitarianism (Bentham, Mill and Peter Singer)</li> <li>• the application of ethical theory to two contemporary – Business Ethics and Euthanasia</li> <li>• ethical language and thought – Meta-ethics</li> <li>• debates surrounding the significant idea of conscience – Freud and Aquinas</li> <li>• sexual ethics and the influence on ethical thought of developments in religious beliefs</li> </ul>
<i>Developments in Religious Thought (06)</i>	<p><i>Buddhism - Learners will study:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The life of the Buddha (intellectual context)</i></li> <li>• <i>3 refuges</i></li> <li>• <i>Insight into the nature of reality - Samsara, rebirth and the three marks of existence</i></li> <li>• <i>Living – 4 noble truths and meditation</i></li> <li>• <i>Development of Mahayana Buddhism</i></li> <li>• <i>Buddhist society – spread into the west, Zen, Pure land</i></li> <li>• <i>Buddhist ethics – war and the environment</i></li> <li>• <i>Engaged Buddhism</i></li> </ul>

