

Topic	Knowledge
<p><b>Religion</b></p>	<p>* According to UK Law for an organisation <b>to be defined as a religion it must have the following three features:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Supreme Spiritual Being:</b> Belief in a god or gods, goddess or goddesses, a supreme being or divine spiritual principle which is the object or focus of the religion.</li> <li><b>Sense of Seriousness and Importance:</b> A relationship between the believer and supreme being or entity by showing worship and/or a sense of clear seriousness and importance.</li> <li><b>Positive Moral Values:</b> An identifiable positive beneficial moral or ethical framework.</li> </ol> <p>* These key features can be easily identified in all main world religions, for example in Christianity:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supreme Spiritual Being: God in the form of the Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit).</li> <li>Sense of Seriousness and Importance: Christians demonstrate their commitment by praying, attending Church services, following the 10 Commandments and celebrating religious holy days such as Christmas (birth of Jesus), Easter (death and resurrection of Jesus) and others such as Advent and Holy Week.</li> <li>Positive Moral Values: Christianity teaches equality, acceptance and kindness to all human beings, for example Jesus taught 'Love thy neighbour'.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Alternative Religions</b></p>	<p>* <b>An alternative religion is a new religious movements with modern origins often with a small number of followers</b>, examples we have studied are <b>Jediism</b> and <b>Rastafarianism</b></p> <p>* Jediism originates from the 1977 Star Wars films and books produced by George Lucas, in 2008 Daniel Jones founded the 'International Church of Jediism'. Its core beliefs centre on the idea of 'The Force' an energy that flows through all things and joins the universe together. They also believe that humans can tap into the Force to unlock greater potential. A census was held in 2001 and In total: 390,127 claimed they were part of the Jedi religion.</p> <p>* Rastafarianism originated in Africa as a response to the oppressive slave trade. Guided by Marcus Garvey in the 1920's he is considered to be one of the religion's prophets, he taught people to be proud of their race and stand against oppression. He predicted God would return again to Earth and create a new world 'Zion' for those who has been enslaved and mistreated. In 1930 Haile Selassie I was appointed as Emperor of Ethiopia, he is believed to be the second coming, like Jesus, he is thought to be God in human form who has visited Earth. They believe in one God (Jah) and the key theme of Rastafari is that they will one day return to Africa, and particularly to Ethiopia - 'Zion' - the spiritual ideal world of Rastafari. They often use cannabis in religious ceremonies to connect to God which has caused controversy</p> <p>*<b>Issues: Many alternative religions are ridiculed and not respected despite great importance to the believer. Technically as long as the criteria set out by UK law is met anyone can create their own religion. Problems surrounding drug use and inequality in Rastafarianism – should religion encourage drug use? Can religions be exclusive?</b></p>
<p><b>Religion &amp; Ethics</b></p>	<p>* For centuries religious believers have used their faith to help guide them to make moral decisions, whether this be through the Bible, Church or the support of religious leaders. However <b>St Thomas Aquinas a Christian philosopher created 'Natural Moral Law' (NML) as a framework on how humans should act.</b></p> <p>* NML is not dependant on blind faith, but suggests <b>humans should use REASON, given by God to help them make moral and ethical decisions.</b> First he proposed that everything that exists in the world has 4 causes, a <b>Material Cause</b> (what it is made of) a <b>Formal Cause</b> (how it is designed) an <b>Efficient Cause</b> (how it got to that state) and a <b>Final Cause</b> (the end purpose and potential) Aquinas suggested that the Final Cause is the most important – as humans we should ensure everything meets its potential.</p> <p>* <b>God created everything with a Final Cause, humans are intelligent beings with reason, therefore it is our responsibility to consider the Final Cause when making decisions, EVERYTHING should reach its Final Cause, and by doing this we are following God's will.</b></p> <p>* NML is not concerned with the consequences of actions, but for everything to reach its Final Cause regardless of the consequences.</p> <p>* <b>Positives:</b> It's simple to follow and not dependant on the feelings or emotions of a person, feelings can change but right and wrong remain fixed.</p> <p>* <b>Negatives:</b> It is vague and so not precise or consistent, it relies on humans making judgements which can be wrong. The consequences are never considered – it may not be what is best for humanity. It can also be unclear – sometimes a FINAL CAUSE is a matter of opinion.</p>
<p><b>Innate Sense of God</b></p>	<p>* <b>Some philosophers suggest that all human beings have an innate sense of God, this is the idea that every human being who has ever existed on Earth has understood the concept of God – some would argue that this therefore means God must exist.</b> If the idea of God is something that every human being understands then it is a shared idea of all of humanity proving God's existence. Supporters often present cavemen drawings of God and remote tribes' belief in God as evidence that God is present in all aspects of society.</p> <p>* <b>Philosopher John Hick supports the idea that all humans have an innate sense of God, he created the 'Cultural Lens' theory – it suggests that all humans have a sense of God, but our culture and experiences make us interpret God differently. We all view and experience the world differently, this is our 'Cultural Lens' the way we see the world, this impacts the way we understand God, this explains why there is so much variety in religion - it's the same God – just being viewed differently!</b></p> <p>* Philosopher Rene Descartes also supports the idea of an innate sense of God, he spent his life doubting everything – even his own senses! He concluded that we can only truly know a few things, one is that we are thinking human beings so must exist, and secondly that all thinking human beings have an innate sense of God – therefore God must exist.</p>

## Year 8 RPE

## Topic 1: Philosophy of Religion

## Knowledge Organiser

<b>Anti-Theism</b>	<p>* One of the most prominent <b>anti-theists</b> is <b>Richard Dawkins</b>, a professor, biologist and scientist, <b>he is outspoken in his rejection of religion</b> and has written many books (available in the LRC) on his support for scientific discovery and criticism of those who believe in God. <b>He makes 5 key arguments:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>The Evolution Solution:</b> Dawkins argues that Darwin's Theory of Evolution makes God unnecessary, we don't need to turn to God for answers – science can explain everything.</li> <li><b>No Evidence Beliefs</b> about the divine creation of the world are essentially faith claims – there is no evidence. Dawkins thinks believing in a religion makes people stupid, they stop looking for answers and they don't help science improve. They just accept what their religion tells them and don't question it.</li> <li><b>Search For Meaning:</b> The question of meaning and significance should be an ongoing question, humans want to feel their life has meaning, we should continue to search for this – not just accept religion and give up. However Dawkins claims it is foolish to suggest meaning exists outside of this universe.</li> <li><b>The Religion Virus:</b> Dawkins argues that religion leads to evil - likening it to a virus which effects human minds. He claims religions take part in, Misleading education (i.e. Teaching God as fact), Prejudice, Ignorance, Inciting fear, and even claims that bringing up children in a religion is the same as child abuse.</li> <li><b>Memes:</b> Dawkins suggests that religion is a meme – it is a poor idea that needs to be removed. Throughout history human ideas have changed and evolved, with bad ideas (such as square wheels!) being rejected. Religion is the same – it is a bad idea that has no evolutionary benefit so needs to be discarded. A collection of these religious memes form a 'Mind Virus' where someone has belief in a religion. Dawkins suggest these ridiculous religious ideas from the past need to be dumped.</li> </ol>
<b>Religion &amp; Social Control</b>	<p>* <b>One argument used against religion is that it is a form of social control</b>, meaning that religion is <b>created by humans and used to oppress</b> those who are poor and weak by promising them a better afterlife. Examples include doom paintings from the middle ages that show horror images of hell and suffering, believers were told if they sinned they would be sent there for eternity, however if they lived a good life and endured the suffering as a test from God they would go to heaven. <b>Some philosopher argue that this is just an excuse used to control the poor and stop them rebelling and fighting for a better life.</b></p> <p>* <b>Karl Marx</b> was a prominent sociologist who studied the economics of society, <b>he argued religion is meant to create illusory fantasies for the poor.</b> Economic struggle prevent them from finding true happiness in this life, so religion tells them this is ok because they will find true happiness in the next life, religion makes people slaves and more accepting of the unfairness in society. He suggested we can only find true happiness when we discard old controlling religious beliefs and fight of equality.</p> <p>* <b>Friedrich Nietzsche</b> was a German philosopher who wrote largely about <b>Nihilism</b>. Nihilism is the belief that all values are baseless and that nothing can be known or communicated. A true nihilist would believe in nothing, have no loyalties, and no purpose. At its core, <b>the overriding belief that all life is meaningless.</b> Nietzsche would argue that <b>religion is just the creation of humans desperate to give life meaning, when in fact there is no meaning at all.</b></p>

Key Word	Meaning
Supreme Spiritual Being	Belief in a god or gods, goddess or goddesses, a supreme being or divine spiritual principle which is the object or focus of the religion
Sense of Seriousness	A relationship between the believer and supreme being or entity by showing worship and/or a sense of clear seriousness and importance
Positive Moral Values	An identifiable positive beneficial moral or ethical framework
Alternative Religion	A new religious movements with modern origins often with a small number of followers
Cult	A religious, political or self-help movement often with extreme ideas that cause harm to the believer, either physically, emotionally or financially.
The Four Causes	The idea that everything in existence has a Material Cause (what it is made of) a Formal Cause (how it is designed) an Efficient Cause (how it got to that state) and a Final Cause (the end purpose and potential)
Final Cause	The God given purpose of all things – the purpose, potential and meaning of something
Natural Moral Law	A theory which suggests we should use human reason to make moral decisions based on promoting the Final Cause of all things
Innate Sense of God	The idea of God inbuilt into the human mind

Cultural Lens	The idea that our culture and experiences effect the way that we understand God
Anti-Theism	Active opposition and rejection of religion
Meme	An idea or concept that has no evolutionary benefit and is outdated
Mind Virus	A collection of memes that form together to create a religion
Social Control	Controlling people's behaviour by applying pressure or sanctions to maintain order in society

Quotes
'Reason in man is rather like God in the world' <b>Aquinas</b>
'The sun's light is refracted by the earth's atmosphere into the spectrum of the different colours of the rainbow. Perhaps the ultimate light of the universal divine presence (God) is refracted by our different human religious cultures into the spectrum of the different world faiths' <b>Hick</b>
'I think therefore I am' <b>Descartes</b>
'I am against religion as it teaches us to be satisfied with not understanding the world' <b>Dawkins</b>
'Religion is the opiate of the masses' <b>Marx</b>
'You have your way. I have my way. As for the right way, the correct way, and the only way, it does not exist' <b>Nietzsche</b>