

AQA Religious Studies Specification B ***Ethics, Philosophy and Religion in Society***

3.1 Unit 1 Religion and Citizenship – summary

- Topic 1 Religion and Relationships – 10 areas
- Topic 2 Religion, Sport and Leisure – 10 areas
- Topic 3 Religion and Work – 8 areas
- Topic 4 Religion and the Multicultural Society – 8 areas
- Topic 5 Religion and Identity – 9 areas
- Topic 6 Religion and Human Rights – 10 areas

3.2 Unit 2 Religion and Life Issues - summary

- Topic 1 Religion and Animal Rights - 6 areas
- Topic 2 Religion and Planet Earth - 9
- Topic 3 Religion and Prejudice - 7
- Topic 4 Religion and Early Life – 7
- Topic 5 Religion, War and Peace – 10
- Topic 6 Religion and Young People – 7

3.3 Unit 3 Religion and Morality – summary

- Topic 1 Religious Attitudes to Matters of Life (Medical Ethics) 3 with sub sections
- Topic 2 Religious Attitudes to the Elderly and Death – 8 areas
- Topic 3 Religious Attitudes to Drug Abuse – 8 areas
- Topic 4 Religious Attitudes to Crime and Punishment – 7 areas
- Topic 5 Religious Attitudes to Rich and Poor in British Society – 8 areas
- Topic 6 Religious Attitudes to World Poverty – 10 areas

3.4 Unit 4 Religious Philosophy and Ultimate Questions - summary

- Topic 1 The Existence of God – 6 areas
- Topic 2 Revelation - 8
- Topic 3 the Problems of Evil and Suffering - 16
- Topic 4 Immortality - 5
- Topic 5 Miracles – 8 areas
- Topic 6 Science and Religion – 14 areas

3.5 Unit 5 Religious Expression in Society - summary

- Topic 1 Religion and Art
- Topic 2 Religion and Architecture
- Topic 3 Religion and Literature
- Topic 4 Religion and Media
- Topic 5 Religion and Music
- Topic 6 Religion in Contemporary Society

3.6 Unit 6 Worship and Key Beliefs - summary

- Topic 1 Places of Worship - 7
- Topic 2 Worship - 6
- Topic 3 Pilgrimage – 5
- Topic 4 Origins and Beliefs - 6
- Topic 5 Practices and Belonging - 6
- Topic 6 Authority - 4

This is one example of a UK GCSE course.

Schools choose 2 units out of these 6 options for a full GCSE course. This takes 2 years to complete.

Full details available on <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/religious-studies/gcse/religious-studies-b-4055/spec-at-a-glance>

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3.4 Unit 4 Religious Philosophy and Ultimate Questions - Details

This unit is intended to begin philosophical thinking at GCSE, focussed on matters linked to the Philosophy of Religion. It encourages candidates to reflect upon ultimate questions about the meaning and purpose of life, and to develop their own reasoned response to those questions. In the examination, candidates will be expected to illustrate their answers by reference to actual arguments put forward by philosophers in relation to the issues. This unit allows candidates to use examples from one or more of the six major world religions of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism.

Topic 1 The Existence of God

Candidates need only refer to one religious tradition in this section. Candidates will be expected to know the following terms: *theist, atheist, agnostic*.

Candidates may be asked questions on the following arguments for God's existence:

- First Cause argument (cosmological argument);
- Design argument (teleological argument);
- Argument from miracles;
- Argument from religious experience;
- Argument from morality;
- Arguments against belief in the existence of God.

Candidates will be expected to be able to outline arguments in any of the preceding areas:

They will also be expected to be able to outline basic problems with the arguments;

- How plausible/strong are the arguments?
- What faults lie within them?

Topic 2 Revelation

This topic looks at the idea of God's self-revelation to humanity. It explores the reasonableness of the evidence of revelation, and why revelation is questioned as a real experience.

- General revelation. Candidates will be expected to understand God's revelation through scripture, nature and conscience;
- Special revelation. Candidates will be expected to understand God's revelation through a direct meeting, vision or dream, including examples from scripture, worship and prayer;
- The power of any type of revelation, and its impact on those receiving the revelation;
- What is learnt of God – qualities of God such as supremacy, immanence, transcendence, personal nature, impersonal nature, omnipotence, omniscience and benevolence;
- The comparative strengths and weaknesses of general versus special revelation;
- The issue of reality or illusion in terms of any revelation;
- Alternative explanations for claims of revelation;
- The question of whether accepting the reality of revelation leads to problems for the believer, such as why believers have different ideas about God.

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Topic 3 The Problems of Evil and Suffering

This topic explores the concepts of evil and suffering in a created world, God's responsibility for each, and man's response.

- The Problem of Evil – a definition;
- What is evil? – Examples and definition;
- What is its nature? – Impersonal force, a personal being, or psychological phenomena?
- Where does evil originate?
- What questions does evil raise about God's love, power and purpose?
- How do religious believers resolve the problem of evil in terms of their beliefs, for example in terms of believing in an all-loving, all-powerful, all-knowing God?;
- How do/should believers respond in the face of evil?
- The Problem of Suffering – a definition;
- What are the forms of suffering?
- Is suffering natural or man-made?
- In what ways is suffering unjust?
- Has suffering any purpose?
- What questions does suffering raise about God's love, power and purpose?
- The concept of karma as an explanation for evil in the world;
- How do religious believers resolve the problem of suffering in terms of their beliefs, for example in terms of karma or believing in an all-loving, all-powerful, all-knowing God?;
- How do/should believers respond in the face of suffering?

Topic 4 Immortality

This topic considers the meaning of death, and the afterlife. It also explores the reasonableness of such belief, as well as the problems created by it.

- Ideas of what would count as immortality –reincarnation, resurrection, rebirth, a legacy, as a memory of others;
- The problems associated with any of these options of immortality;
- Evidence of immortality, such as scriptural accounts, ghost experience, channelling, Near Death Experience, revelation;
- Evidence against immortality, such as lack of proof, science, atheism;
- The concept of dualism, and the mind/body/soul debate, including its impact on how we define death, and issues raised by people thinking of themselves as a combination of these entities.

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Topic 5 Miracles

This topic considers whether miracles occur, and if we can properly define them. It also explores the idea that miracles are based on interpretation rather than real evidence, and as such are always subject to doubt and cynicism.

- What do we mean by miracles? – Something impossible, something contrary to the laws of nature, something only God does;
- Does God work in the world through miracles?
- Can humans perform miracles?
- Examples of miracles from scripture, tradition, history and experience;
- Evidence of/for miracles;
- The power of miracles in revealing God, and the qualities of God, such as benevolence, omnipotence, immanence;
- The question of to what extent the acceptance of the existence of miracles leads to problems for the believer;
- Hume's argument regarding the impossibility of miracles.

Topic 6 Science and Religion

This topic compares and contrasts science and religion, trying to see how similar or different the two are. It particularly looks at two key issues – the origins of the universe, and the origins of life.

- Scientific truth versus religious truth – what each truth is, including examples, and how it is derived;
- The issue of an evolving, changing truth versus an absolute truth;
- The issue of compatibility, including the question of whether these types of truth answer the same questions;
- Why society seems to favour science over religion in the modern world, and the impact of this.

Scientific versus religious truth through the following two foci:

- Origins of the universe – Big Bang versus Genesis 1 creation story;
- Interpretations of religious creation stories, and whether this affects their compatibility with scientific theory;
- The Cosmological revolution (development of the round earth theory, and the universe with the sun as its focal point);
- The challenge the Cosmological revolution posed for religious belief in the late Middle Ages.
- Origins of life – creation versus evolution;
- Design versus evolution;
- Darwin's reliance on God to make evolution work;
- To what extent science and religion can agree;
- How evolutionary theory – when first put forward by Darwin – was a challenge to religious belief;
- The question of whether humans were created or evolved, and its impact on human attitudes and behaviour within society and to the rest of the world generally.

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