



Philosophy and Ethics 2023

Year 11-12 Transition Work Booklet



Rushcliffe School



Revision of key knowledge and skills

Complete the sections within the boxes. Be reflective with your answers and ensure, where appropriate, many of your own views are included.

All personal views must be supported by evidence or experience.

<p>1) Come up with a list of ways that Christianity has influenced world history. In what ways does it still influence life today? In your answer consider Film, Music, Literature, the Calendar.</p>			
<p>2) Describe the colour 'red' to someone who has been blind since birth.</p>			
<p>3) <u>Presuming</u> there <u>is</u> an afterlife if you were able to judge the fate of people when they die, how would you make the decision? What criteria would you use and why?</p>			
<p>4) The world in which we live is undoubtedly amazing. Christians believe that God has created it. In addition, Christians have been given 'dominion over God's creation' in the book of Genesis as well as being told to be 'stewards of creation'. Make a list of the pros and cons of both of these roles. Include examples where you can.</p>			
Dominion - Pros	Dominion - Cons	Stewardship - Pros	Stewardship - Cons

5) Research the concept 'Eco-theology' and give a brief description of what it means.			
6) Can you suggest a situation where Weapons of Mass destruction can be justified. Explain and give specific reasons for your answers.			
7) Many people argue that belief in God is <u>unreasonable</u> . Explain as fully as you can what is <u>unreasonable</u> about this belief. Check out the precise meaning of 'unreasonable' before you begin to write.			

Key Skills Development

Read the article below from The Independent and answer the questions.

Sarah Cassidy Education Correspondent

Monday 9 November 2015 01:39

The parents believe the lack of attention given to non-religious world views in the syllabus is in effect discriminatory

Three families will go to court to challenge the Government's decision to exclude non-religious beliefs from the new religious studies GCSEs.



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Kate Bielby and her 12-year-old daughter, Daisy, from Frome in Somerset, are one of three humanist families bringing the case to try to have non-religious beliefs included for in-depth study on religious studies courses.

Ms Bielby said: “I recognise the importance of children learning about the different religions, especially in our increasingly diverse society. What I object to is the lack of parity between religious beliefs and non-religious world views in the school curriculum, which may well lead children to the belief that religion, in whatever form, has a monopoly on truth and on morality. This is not accurate: it reflects neither the views of the population nor the traditions of the country, and we shouldn’t be encouraging our children to believe it.

Ms Bielby said that she had accepted that her daughter would attend collective worship and religious-themed assemblies at school. She said: “We could opt our daughter out of these, of course, but that’s quite an isolating and stigmatising course of action. We don’t see our non-religious views as an extreme position, so we’ve just accepted this as a pragmatic compromise.

“I don’t feel that compromise should be made in the context of academic study, however, and that’s why we feel so strongly about the GCSE curriculum.”

The families, with the support of the British Humanist Association, plan to challenge the Government’s decision to exclude non-religious world views from the latest subject content for GCSE religious studies, on which all exam boards will base their courses.

The content was published earlier this year and does not allow for the in-depth study of a non-religious worldview such as humanism, despite a campaign to have it included.

The parents, all of whom have children who are set to take their GCSEs in the next few years, are subjecting the Government’s decision to a judicial review. The parents believe that the priority given in GCSE religious studies to Buddhism, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism over all non-religious worldviews is in effect discriminatory.

The original decision of the Government in November 2014 to exclude humanism was condemned by 113 leading philosophers, RE academics, teachers, consultants and advisors, and also by 28 religious leaders, including the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams.

Both the Religious Education Council of England and Wales and the National Association of Teachers of RE opposed the decision, as did 85 per cent of people who responded to a Department for Education consultation.

Nicky Morgan, the Education Secretary, has previously defended her decision saying “as these are qualifications in religious studies, it is right that the content primarily focuses on developing students’ understanding of different religious beliefs”.

QUESTIONS

1) Explain the argument put forward by Mrs Bielby

2) What do you believe the word 'religion' means?

3) Explain your view on this story. Give reasons to support your answer and use quotes from the article or other sources to further support your view

4) Why may others disagree with your point of view? Give reasons to support your answer and use quotes from the article or other sources to further support your answer.

Research and/or Wider Reading

(See Preparing for Year 12 pages)

Submission Pieces x 4

TASK: 1

Find out the meaning of each of the following terms. These relate to the first topic you will cover in Philosophy.

Concept	Definition
Philosophy	
Premise	
Argument <i>NOTE: Not the quarrel/fight variety</i>	
a posteriori argument	
a priori argument	

Inductive argument	
Analogy	
Teleological	
Anthropomorphism	
Anthropic principle	
Omnibenevolent	
Omnipotent	

TASK: 2

Read the following article ‘Methods of Proving’ and answer the questions. Please read carefully and slowly in order to familiarise yourself with these new concepts. As a result your answers should reflect your level of understanding.
Note: work you will have already completed in the previous vocabulary task will help you understand many of the key terms in this article.

METHODS OF PROVING?

Over the centuries countless people have tried to prove that God exists because it matters to religious believers that their faith has credibility. To prove something means to provide conclusive reasons for accepting it as true. Providing conclusive reasons for accepting the truth of God’s existence has not been easy and philosophers have tried all the principle methods for proving

Essentially when someone is trying to prove something she/he is attempting to show that something is true. In other words she/he is trying to convince someone of something and a successful proof is one that removes any possibility of reasonable doubt. There are three main types of proof. God and Proof. John Lee.

There are three types of proof used by philosophers to try to establish the truth of a statement:

- direct proof – a way of showing, in a direct and immediate way that something is true. It is based on empirical evidence.

One way in which someone may try to prove something is directly. Suppose, for example, that someone in England wanted to prove that pillar boxes are red. Generally it is agreed that this is obvious: it is self evident that pillar boxes are red. People observe (directly) that pillar boxes are red. However, even though it is obvious this may still be considered to be a

proof as it is not possible to rationally doubt what is being seen. This type of "proof" is obviously very basic, and would not necessarily be one that is used all that often, but if a similar proof of God's existence can be found, then God's existence would be proven as it would be shown to be obvious. *God and Proof p. 5*

Some religious believers claim that religious experiences in which an individual "sees" or "hears" God would count as direct proof of the existence of God, - the argument from religious experience.

- **deductive reasoning** - a process of reasoning in which the conclusion follows logically and inevitably from the premises (the propositions / points on which the argument is based.) The argument has a series of premises linked by logical steps so the argument has the power to be completely convincing. The premises are "a priori" (coming before experience).

Most arguments are based on a series of assumptions; these are called "premises". These premises form the basis of an argument and the statement that someone is attempting to prove is called the "conclusion". For example, suppose somebody wanted to prove that a dog called Sophie has fleas. An argument for this could be based on two assumptions: firstly that all dogs have fleas and secondly that Sophie is a dog (these are the premises). It could therefore be concluded that Sophie has fleas.

Thus the ideas of "premises" and "conclusions" are important. In logic a "successful" argument is one in which the conclusion is implied by the premises. This is often expressed as "if the premises are true, then the conclusion must also be true" or in other words the conclusion cannot be denied. Such successful arguments are known as "valid" arguments and the type of reasoning involved is called "deductive reasoning". (The conclusion is deduced from the premises.)

There is, however, another important aspect of logical arguments that needs to be kept in mind. Consider, for example, the following argument: All politicians are men, Mrs. Thatcher was a politician, therefore Mrs. Thatcher was a man. According to logic this is a valid argument:

the conclusion does follow on from the premises. However, it is clear that the conclusion is not true. This is because the premises on which the argument is based are not true; it is not true that all politicians are men. Thus even though the argument follows the laws of logic and is valid it is still possible to doubt the conclusion.

It is the implications of this that are important. In order to prove something by means of deductive reasoning not only is a logically valid argument required but it has to be an argument in which the premises are true. *God and Proof p. 6 ff.*

For centuries philosophers have struggled with the idea of finding a deductive argument for the existence of God that is both valid and has premises that can be shown to be true. If they were to succeed it would then be illogical for anyone to refuse to believe in the existence of God. The **Ontological argument is a deductive argument** that has been refined and refashioned many times.

Philosophers have also produced arguments for the existence of God based on inductive logic

- **inductive reasoning.** – a process of reasoning that reaches general conclusions from particular examples. This type of reasoning is often based on evidence of some kind, and so the premises of the argument are said to be “**a posteriori**” (following from experience.) Scientists commonly use inductive argument.

An inductive argument is one that attempts to make a general conclusion based on some evidence. This evidence is usually based on experience or experiment. An excellent example of the way an inductive proof might work can be found in science. A scientist might observe that when a piece of metal is heated it expands; she/he might then observe that another piece of metal also expands when it is heated. From this, and a series of other observations, the scientist might make the general conclusion that all metal expands when it is heated. In other words the conclusion has been based on experience and observation.

Science is clearly an excellent discipline that uses experiment to prove something. However, the idea of evidence is not limited to repeated experiment; proofs are found in other areas. Suppose, for example, that someone wishes to prove that Christopher Columbus discovered America in 1492. This is an historical claim and it would not be possible to construct an experiment to try to show that it was true; rather evidence would need to be gathered from sources such as documents in Christopher Columbus' time. In order to establish a proof that Christopher Columbus discovered America in 1492 it would be necessary to determine whether the evidence collected is convincing.

There are also other types of evidence that are often used as attempts to prove something. As an example suppose a company wanted to prove that its brand of washing-up liquid was the best. One way to try to do this would be through market research. A representative sample of people might be interviewed and if the company's washing-up liquid is judged the most effective and popular, then this might be seen as evidence that it is the best.....

there is another important form of inductive argument and that is the argument from analogy. An analogy is a comparison of one thing to another to show how they are similar. This can be used as a proof of something if, for example, the two things that are being compared are very similar (or identical) in many ways and the first thing has a quality but it is not known whether the second thing has this quality: it could be concluded that it does since the two things are so similar in other ways.

Clearly one of the biggest problems with inductive arguments is that they do not, and indeed cannot, produce proofs that completely remove an element of doubt from the conclusion. In other words the conclusion does not necessarily follow from the premises. This is important to remember when considering "proofs" of God's existence: the idea of certainty can no longer apply.

God and Proof. p. 10 ff.

There have been a number of attempts to use evidence or observation as the starting point for arguments for the existence of God. These inductive arguments include the **Cosmological argument**, the Design argument and the closely related Teleological argument and also the Moral argument.

Questions

What is meant by the term 'proof'

List the three methods for providing proof.

Explain how direct proof works – what is the weakness of this type of proof?

What is deductive reasoning?

Explain how deductive reasoning leads to proof

What makes a deductive argument valid?

Is a valid argument always convincing?- what is necessary to make it convincing?

What is inductive reasoning?

Explain how inductive reasoning leads to proof.

Why can this type of argument never lead to absolute proof/certainty?

TASK: 3

Research briefly the terms 'logarithmic spiral' and 'Fibonacci numbers'. Take (2 or more) photos of where you see they occur in nature.

TASK: 4

Over the summer, study the news carefully and select one or more moral debates that are currently going on in the public arena within the following areas:

- embryo research (e.g. cloning and 'designer' babies)
- abortion
- voluntary euthanasia and assisted suicide
- capital punishment.
- use of animals in scientific procedures (e.g. cloning)
- blood sports
- animals as a source of organs for transplants.

Collect newspaper articles on the issue(s), ideally from a range of newspapers (note how a tabloid might report the issue differently from a broadsheet). Analyse the issue carefully. You may consider the following:

- Into what category of ethics (e.g. business, medical ethics) does the issue fit?
- Who finds it a matter of concern? For example, does it only concern the individuals, or a professional body, or is it a matter which the community at large is likely to be concerned?
- What perennial (long-lasting) ethical concerns does the issue raise?
- What is unique about the issue?
- What precedents does the matter set?

Prepare to present the issue to the class on your return to school in September. (You will also need to hand in evidence of your work including the newspaper clippings and your notes on the areas above)