

Religious Studies

Subject level A Level (Philosophy, Ethics and Religion), Eduqas specification

Resource site www.wqe.ac.uk/tasteractivities

Teacher Emma Starkey

Subject context This is a 2-year course which focuses on the 3 key elements of **Religion and Ethics, The Philosophy of Religion and the study of Buddhism. The course develops the skills needed to:**

- Investigate ultimate questions such as “Who is responsible for the existence of evil in our world?”, “Is there a God?” and considers the relationship between religion and psychology.
- Understand contemporary ethical and religious issues such as animal experimentation, and whether our behaviour is based upon our own self-interest. Ask questions such as, “What kind of person should I be?” and “What does it really mean for an action to be ‘right’ or ‘wrong’?”
- Study **Buddhism** and consider its main themes including: What is the root cause of human suffering? How can we live more mindfully and develop compassion for all beings? What happens when we die?

Grades needed: College level 3 entry requirements, plus English Language grade 5

Deadline Please try and complete this before your normal summer holidays would begin, but at least before the start of college in September.

Estimated time required to complete activity 3 – 5 hours

Resources required Internet

Assignment details

TASK 1

This is the first episode of a documentary about attitudes towards **homosexuality**.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMPI25oraVc>

This is the first episode of Stephen Fry's series 'Out There', where he explores attitudes to homosexuality in different parts of the world.

Questions to think about and/or write about – try to support your answers with reasoning:

1. Do you think there is a 'right' attitude and a 'wrong' attitude towards homosexuality? What is it that makes these attitudes right or wrong?
2. Some people might argue that different cultures have different ideas about morality, and that these different cultural beliefs should be respected even if we/you don't agree with them. Do you think we should always respect the beliefs and attitudes of cultures different from our own, or should we try to persuade them to adopt our own beliefs instead? Give clear reasons for your answer and see if you can think of different examples to illustrate your thinking.
3. What religious reasons do people sometimes give for opposing homosexual relationships? How would you support or oppose these views?

TASK 2

This is a video of an interview between a Guardian journalist and **Richard Dawkins**.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dQ5QG3MUTtg>

Watch the clip and consider the following questions. Again, try to support your answers with detailed reasoning:

1. Do you agree with Dawkins that religious belief is simply belief without evidence?
2. Why does Dawkins regard himself as an **agnostic** rather than an **atheist**? He puts himself as a 6.5 out of 7 on his "atheist scale". Why?
3. Do you think we need religion in order to be moral? To what extent do you agree with Dawkins' comments on this issue?

4. Dawkins argues that we can appreciate the wonders of our life without religion, what do you think about this? Is he right to suggest that we don't need religion in order to have a purpose and appreciate our lives?

TASK 3

Use this website <https://peped.org/> to access resources on a number of different philosophical and ethical themes.

Choose 2 themes that interest you and make your own notes.

Make a list of key questions you have and see if you can offer some answers based on what you've read.

Themes that are directly relevant to the A Level course include:

- Arguments for the existence of God (Teleological, Cosmological, Ontological)
- The Problem of Evil
- Religious Experience
- Miracles
- Situation Ethics
- Utilitarianism
- Free Will and Determinism

Task 4 - Buddhism

- Research the life of The Buddha and the main claims of his teachings. Put together a fact file and autobiography.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EDgd8LT9AL4> Watch this documentary on Buddhism
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KiEADtRLQfs> Watch this documentary on the wonders of the Buddhist world. It's a great introduction to the belief system and history of Buddhism

Task 5 (Just for fun!)

This is a TED talk by Nigerian novelist **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie – Why we should all be feminists.**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hg3umXU_qWc

Watch it and enjoy it 😊