

Religion, Ethics and Philosophy

A Level

Summer Independent Learning

Bring all completed tasks to your first day in college in September.

A. Introduction to Philosophy of Religion

1. Read the information below and answer the questions:

In philosophy an **argument** is a set of statements and one of them (the conclusion) is supported or implied by the others (the premises).

Some philosophical arguments use **inductive** reasoning. Inductive reasoning involves looking at the evidence and working out what is the best explanation for the things we observe. The more reliable data (evidence) we have, the more confident the conclusions. Inductive reasoning leads to the most probable explanation to match our observations. However, with inductive reasoning there is always the possibility we could be wrong so they can't give us proof, but they can be persuasive.

Other philosophical arguments use **deductive** reasoning. Deductive reasoning has premises which are logically linked to the conclusion. This means that if all the premises are true, then the conclusion is guaranteed to be true. Deductive arguments are therefore much stronger than inductive ones, as they give us certain proof of the conclusion. But they are much less common.

The statements used in philosophical arguments are either **a priori** or **a posteriori** (these are Latin terms, where the 'a' is part of the word). These terms refer to how we come to know the statement is true.

A posteriori means 'after experience'. So we know about a posteriori claims by using the experience of our senses. We have to look around and check using our senses to know whether the claim is true. An example of an a posteriori claim is "there is a tree outside this building", or "it is raining in Leeds right now". These are a posteriori because even if you thought about them for a long time, you could not know whether they are true without experience – you would have to look outside or check the weather report or call your friend in Leeds.

A priori means 'before experience'. So we know about a priori claims without using any senses, just by thinking. Using logic, reason, or just pure thought, we can come to know that a priori claims are true. An example of an a priori claim is "26+59=85" or "my mother is older than me". These are a priori claims because you don't need any experience to know they are true. It might take me a while, but if I sat thinking about 26+59 I could work out in my head that the answer is 85. I have acquired new knowledge with no new experience. Similarly, you don't need to have met me or my mother, or know our ages, or anything else about us, in order to know that my mother is older than me. Just by understanding the meaning of the words in the sentence, you can know this is true just by thinking about it.

What is an 'argument' in philosophy?

Explain the difference between inductive and deductive arguments

Explain the difference between a priori and a posteriori statements

Give your own examples of an a priori statement and an a posteriori statement

2. Complete the activity on the link below – remember to keep checking your answers until you get them all right and when you get 8/8 write out the answers in the table below.

https://resource.download.wjec.co.uk/vtc/2015-16/15-16_15/eng/arguments-for-existence-of-god/00-introduction/01-which-arguments.html

Deductive arguments – 3 statements	Inductive arguments – 3 statements	Fits both – 1 statement	Fits neither – 1 statement

3. Watch the following videos about the Cosmological Argument.

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

and [https:// www.youtube.com/watch?v=TgisehuGOyY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TgisehuGOyY) (just arguments 1-3)

The cosmological argument is inductive. Explain why

The cosmological argument is based on a posteriori premises. Explain why

How does the cosmological argument attempt to prove the existence of God?

Do you find the arguments convincing? Explain why/ why not

4. Research these ideas / concepts and make notes in the table below:

Idea	From your research – what is this idea about?	From your own thinking – how could this idea be used as an argument AGAINST the existence of God?
The Big Bang		
Evolution		
The logical problem of evil		
New Atheism		
Idea	From your research – what is this idea about?	From your own thinking – how could this idea be used as an argument FOR the existence of God?
Miracles		
Prayer		

B. Introduction to Ethics

5. Watch the video below and complete the following tasks.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FOoffXFpAlU&list=PLa_ZSYFNmJvvtaPCcfY-xQljsJDyhMtWe

Write a definition of ethics.

Write a definition of meta-ethics.

What is moral realism?

What are the problems with moral realism?

What is moral anti-realism?

What are the problems with moral anti realism?

What are moral relativism and moral absolutism?

After considering all these ideas, what do you think makes an action moral/immoral? Explain why, and try to use some of these terms.

Introduction to Christianity

1. The Old Testament.	Read these articles and answer the following questions https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/texts/bible.shtml https://www.christianity.org.uk/article/the-history-of-the-bible
	1. Why is the Bible described as being like a library?
	2. When was the Old Testament written?
	3. Why are the first five books called the books of Law?
	4. What are the other two sections called?
	5. What languages was the Old Testament originally written in?
	https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-genesis/#about https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/articles/zk3s2sg
	6. What are the main events in Genesis Chapters 1 to 3?
	7. Why do some people think an apple and the Devil are in this story?
	8. What is the Covenant between God and Abraham?
	https://bibleproject.com/guides/book-of-exodus/
	9. What does Exodus mean?
	10. Who was Moses and what did he do?

2. Jesus	https://www.christianity.org.uk/article/timeline-of-jesus-life https://www.learnreligions.com/profile-of-jesus-christ-701089 1. When is Jesus thought to have been born? Why do you think there is some uncertainty about this? 2. According to the Bible what was unique about Jesus' conception? Why might be hard for some modern people to believe these accounts? 3. What does 'incarnate' mean? 4. What is believed to have happened at Jesus' baptism? Why do you think it is seen as a very important event? 5. What miracles is Jesus said to have performed? Why do you think these miracles are seen as very important? 6. What did Jesus teach about? Do you think any of these teachings are still relevant today? 7. Explain the events of Jesus' last days on earth – Last supper, arrest, trial and crucifixion. https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zsjjxg8#zkyyrmn 8. Explain Christian ideas about the resurrection of Jesus – what does it mean to them? https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/articles/zf6qcqt 9. What do the 'Lost Gospels' teach about Jesus? Why do you think they have been rejected by many Christians?
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3. The Early Church	https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zvng7nb/revision/4 1. What do Christians believe about Jesus' ascension? https://request.org.uk/resource/people/history/history-of-the-early-church/ 2. Where did the early church start? Where did they worship? 3. Why did the Romans start persecuting Christians? When and why did it end? https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/articles/z7vn7nb 4. Why didn't Christianity die out in the 1st Century? https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Acts%202%3A42-47&version=NIV 5. How is the early church or fellowship of believers described in the New Testament book of Acts? https://www.history.co.uk/articles/the-council-of-nicaea-resolving-the-crisis-in-early-christianity 6. When was the Council of Nicaea? Why was the council held? What did they decide?
4. Developments in Christian history	https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East%E2%80%93West_Schism 1. What was the Great Schism of 1054? Which churches split? Why? https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/protestant-reformation/ 2. What was the Protestant Reformation? When did it occur? Who were the key thinkers? What were some of the reasons for it? https://www.theguardian.com/world/christianity 3. Look through the current articles on Christianity in the modern world, choose one that you are interested in, read it and write a 20-word summary.