

A Level Religion, Philosophy and Ethics - Induction Tasks

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

The following tasks aim to introduce you to the different elements of the RPE course. They should be completed by the start of term and brought to your first RPE lesson.

These tasks are designed to help you develop some of the knowledge and skills that you will need to study A Level RPE – specifically, the ability to take notes effectively, research information from a variety of sources, identify and summarise key points, evaluate, and write clearly and concisely.

Some of the tasks focus mainly on note-taking whereas the Ethics task also requires a written piece of work to be completed and handed in in September. This will build on the work that you did in Transition week when you were introduced to Utilitarianism and it will help us gauge what level you are currently working at and whether you need some additional support.

There are also optional extension activities under each task and these are, as stated, optional. It is your choice whether you want to take your learning further by completing one or more of them and they should go directly into your folder, you do not need to bring them to your lessons in September.

TASK 1: Philosophy task using Cornell note-taking

Watch the following video which gives instructions on how to take notes effectively at A Level using the ‘Cornell Notes’ method.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ErSjc1PEGKE>

At the back of this pack there is an example of a successfully completed set of notes made according to the Cornell method which should give you an idea about how to make notes effectively, as well as a blank template, although you can easily create your own.

Philosophy debate

Then, watch this debate between William Lane Craig and Christopher Hitchens.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0tYm41hb48o>

The video is called:

Does God Exist? William Lane Craig vs. Christopher Hitchens - Full Debate [HD]

If you watch from 11 minutes 30 seconds you will see William Lane Craig and Christopher Hitchens being introduced. William Lane Craig is a Christian and Christopher Hitchens was a New Atheist.



Structure of the talk

The lecture is quite long and so you may wish to watch this in stages. They talk for 20 minutes each and then have a right of reply each.

William Lane Craig starts at 13 minutes

Christopher Hitchens starts at 33minutes and 30 seconds

Williams Lane Craig replies to Christopher Hitchens from 54 minutes and 15 seconds

Christopher Hitchens replies to William Lane Craig from 1hr and 7 minutes

From one hour 20 minutes there is a cross examination that you may wish to watch.

Success criteria

Use the Cornell method to make notes on William Lane Craig's arguments and Christopher Hitchens (at least 1 side of A4 each) and bring them to your first lesson in September.

OPTIONAL EXTENSION TASK: Pick one of the arguments for God's existence out of: Design, Cosmological or Ontological and research it. Consider whether you find it convincing and write up your ideas.

TASK 2: Ethics Task

For this task, you are going to watch some introductory videos by Julia Markovits at Cornell University, explaining the theory of Utilitarianism; some of its strengths and some of the potential problems.

Utilitarianism Part 1

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uvmz5E75ZIA>

Utilitarianism Part 2

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uGDk23QoS9E>

Utilitarianism Part 3

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MoCuVa9UeR4>

Once you have made notes from these (you may decide to use the Cornell method again), carry out some further research. A good starting place is the Peter Vardy book *'The Puzzle of Ethics'* (which we recommend that you buy – more details regarding recommended reading can be found in the Year RPE Handbook), as it has a chapter on Utilitarianism. You will also find lots of good resources online. Use your research to produce about 750-1000 words in answer to questions (a) and (b) combined.

a. Explain the key ideas of Utilitarianism.

b. To what extent is Utilitarianism a good ethical theory?

Success criteria:

We are looking for certain skills to be demonstrated in your response:

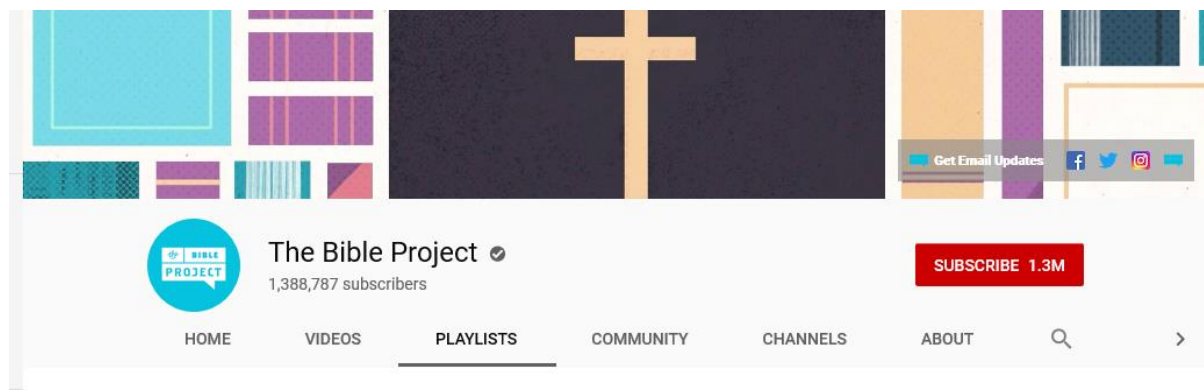
- In part a. we are looking for the ability to understand and explain some of the key concepts of Utilitarianism – to do this well you will need to use key terms and refer to the ideas of scholars.
- In part b. we are looking for you to give an argument that answers the question and gives reasons for that position. To do this well you need to put forward your own perspective but also demonstrate that you have considered the strengths **and** weaknesses.
- In both part a. and part b. we are looking for writing that is clear and concise, as well as clearly structured.
- You should list all the sources ie. books, websites that you have used in your research at the end of your work.
- Bring this to your first lesson in September.

OPTIONAL EXTENSION TASK: As part of your research you could consider the ideas of modern utilitarian philosopher Peter Singer.

TASK 3: Religion Task

Our studied religion on the A Level RPE course is Christianity. We consider it in more depth than at GCSE and all of the topics are really meaty and interesting. To prepare for this, good background basics are useful. This final task involves note taking and answering comprehension questions. The Bible Project Series on YouTube will help you with this.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/jointhebibleproject/playlists>



I would recommend the Biblical Themes playlist which is about 1 hour 30 minutes long if you watch every video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJLan-pJzFQ&list=PLH0Szn1yYNec-HZjVHooeb4BSDSeHhEoh&index=1>



Use these videos and your own additional research to find out about the following Biblical stories, events or characters. For each topic below you need to answer the questions and you may want to also complete a Cornell Notes template.

1. The Story of the Fall?

What happens?

How does this story link with Christian ideas about Jesus?

2. The story of Exile

Where, when and why were the Israelites exiled to?

What does the prophet Jeremiah teach about exile in Babylon?

What is the link with Jesus?

3. The Suffering Servant passages of Isaiah

Who was Isaiah?

What is the background to Isaiah's writings?

What does Isaiah write about the suffering servant?

What is the link with Jesus?

4. The Prophets (there is a Bible project video called prophets)

What do prophets do? Who are they?

What do they teach about the covenant?

What is the Day of the Lord? What is the link with Jesus?

5. The Messiah

What does the Old Testament teach about the Messiah?

Why do Christians believe that Jesus was the Messiah?

What Jewish expectations of the Messiah does Jesus not fulfil?

6. Jesus

What are the main events in Jesus' life?

What does Jesus teach in the Sermon on the Mount?

What does Jesus mean when he calls himself the Son of Man?

What is the Day of the Lord?

Success criteria

This work should be completed as **detailed** responses to the questions. You should bring these to your first lesson in September.

OPTIONAL EXTENSION TASK: Pick of theologian eg. Bonhoeffer, Augustine, Barth, Tillich or someone else of your choosing to research their key ideas, summarise them concisely and raise any criticisms that you have of their ideas.

Well done! You have finished the Induction tasks!

IX. A Model of the Cornell Notes document

Name	Date
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Topic: Topic Rev Tom Honey on why God allows tsunamis	Subject: Problem of Evil
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<p>Main Ideas:</p> <p>We need to move away from the God of classical theism</p> <p>We need to stop looking for a philosophical answer to the problem of evil</p> <p>Abandon God of classical theism for a suffering God – this fits the 20th century</p> <p>A God who responds to prayer or acts in history is biased and unfair</p> <p>Abandon traditional God, not one who acts but a divine presence</p>	<p>Notes:</p> <p>Many people see God as the almighty, a policeman in the sky. In the past we have not wanted to rock the boat by exploring other ideas about God.</p> <p>Archbishop of Canterbury – people do not want an intellectual explanation of evil. There are no words that can make up for what has happened; instead, a compassionate silence and practical help is needed.</p> <p>God has to be able to feel and experience our pain. One who weeps when we weep and rejoice when we rejoice. We need to move away from an unchanging God who is cold and indifferent. WW1, WW2 and Holocaust. Where is God – the answer is God is in this with us or he does not deserve our allegiance. An unchanging God may exist but I do not want to know him.</p> <p>Why would God act in some cases but not others? This makes him unfair and partisan.</p> <p>We should see God not as one who does things as in the Old Testament, defeating Egyptians etc. but instead he is in things. Is this Pantheism? Pantheism? There are lots of don't knows but that is what makes God a divine mystery.</p>
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<p>Summary:</p> <p>We must move away from the God of classical theism. God is not a grand fixer but instead a presence within us who feels our pain and joy. This allows us to offer support to those experiencing evil rather than philosophical arguments. A God who acts in history becomes partisan, and it makes more sense to have a God who understands all suffering rather than one that fixes some suffering whilst ignoring others' pain.</p>

Cornell Notes Template

Name

Date

Topic

Subject

Main Ideas

Notes

Summary