

RS

PHILOSOPHY, ETHICS AND STUDY OF A RELIGION - CHRISTIANITY

AN INTRODUCTION INTO THE ANALYTICAL MINDSET THAT
ENABLES THE LARGER QUESTIONS TO BE PONDERED



ARISTOTLE

NIETZCHE

Bentham

Dawkins

BONHOEFFER

JUNG

ST. AUGUSTINE

Fletcher

DEVELOPING & PREPARING

Hoping to study Philosophy at A Level? Considering the ethical dilemmas within the modern world? Or maybe you are simply interested in taking some time to further your understanding of the critical thinking skills that could be applied to wider life- wanting to win a debate, hoping to support people of all faiths in medical decisions, considering becoming a lawyer?

"Critical thinking is suspended judgment, and the essence of this suspense is inquiry to determine the nature of the problem before proceeding to attempts at its solution."

- John Dewey, How We Think (1910)



Benefits:

- contextual analysis skills
- develop an ability to comprehend complex concepts and information.
- Increased communication- articulation of your thoughts and creation of structured arguments.
- increased literacy

There is a lot this course can offer you. And inevitably what YOU bring will enhance the course itself.

This course develops great philosophers, great ethical debaters, great scholars and great theologians. To thrive you will need to hone your critical thinking skills. Thinking synoptically (see the wider overview and how everything links together) for this course (much like life) has many components and over arching themes.

In this course, there is more to it than the study of God, it encompasses the relationships between the historical actions, the modern interpretations and impacts, alongside the way each component weaves together. It will challenge you to make connections and apply them accurately and with purposeful articulation.

REFLECTION – WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

THE JOURNEY THUS FAR...

THE IMPACTS FROM GCSE

At GCSE you have covered a lot of the foundations of the underpinning concepts; theological truths, the nature of God for Christians, Jews, Muslims or Hindus, the problem of evil and suffering, the consideration of how beliefs impact actions that shape our society.

In addition, you have been cultivating the necessary skills for success; accurate description, developed responses with specific evidential support and purposeful persuasive arguments.

You may meet scholars you have come across in GCSE and you will definitely meet new ones. A Level will take point on those familiar topics, delve deeper and explore more thoroughly, often with links to other subjects such as Psychology, Law and Sociology to name a few.

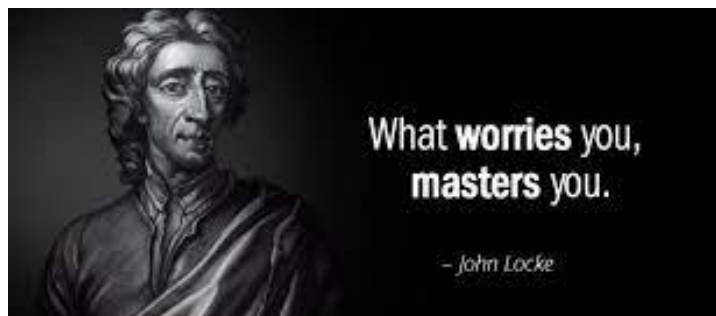
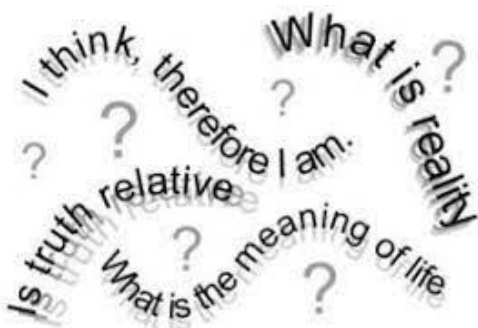
The best scholars at A Level keep reading the news and generally seek to improve their understanding by engaging with each components unique element- philosophical, ethical and theological discussions.

This guide has been designed for practical use. It enables you to pick it up and begin, place it down and come back to it. It will encourage you to know more specialist vocabulary, highlight philosophical and ethical concepts to seek out and opportunities to develop skills of a scholar.

As an added bonus, some of the topics we will be looking at in Year 12 and 13 so you can do some valuable background reading.

Getting started now:

- 1. Developing as a philosophical and ethical thinker** – through general reading around / watching videos / listening to podcasts etc. to boost comprehension on wider concepts.
- 2. Preparing for the A Level Course** -Starting to explore the topics and their foundations which will be studied in the A Level course.



SET UP FOR SUCCESS AT A-LEVEL

What does success look like at a-level?

It's building in time to unpack and fully comprehend the subject matter. It's cultivating resilience to work through the complex topics and the compassion to know you will get there. It's making a commitment to independent study and weekly summaries. It is communicating professionally with professors and peers. It's seeking further reading without being asked and asking for clarification or support when needed. These are the skills that you will need to hone across all subject.



Below is an example of what a week in your studies could look like.

We would recommend that you book in time to summarise what you've learnt, to independently study a topic that was a bit tricky and to practice papers.

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1		ETHICS	Practice One part of a Past Paper [30 mins]		CORE MATHS
2	PHILOSOPHY	Summarise Key concepts 10 Mins		PHILOSOPHY	
3	ETHICS	HISTORY		Summarise Key concepts 10 Mins	Independent Study
4			PHILOSOPHY	CORE MATHS	
5	HISTORY				
6					

Start thinking about which time of day you are most productive. AM? PM? Think about where you are most productive. On you own? Headphones in?

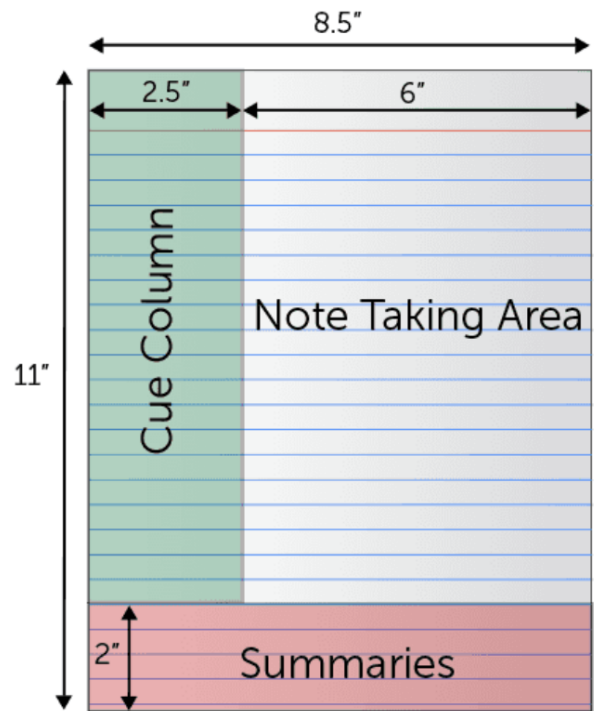
SET UP FOR SUCCESS AT A-LEVEL

Learn how to take notes that will set you up for long-term success:
The Cornell Note-taking method is tried-tested and approved for creating notes that will be effective to use in revision.

Note Taking in Lessons: Cornell



- Always have a **title** - this makes finding what you need easy.
- Your exercise margin may be big enough as the **cue column**.
- Every page / lesson should have a **brief summary**.
- The **cue column** and summary may be beneficial to do 24 hours (or more) after the lesson.
- This is generally regarded as the **best note taking system in the world**.



After class

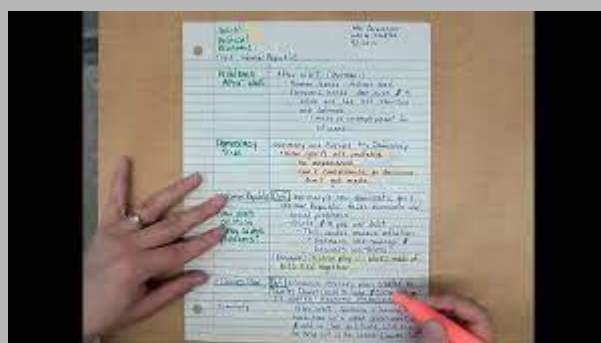
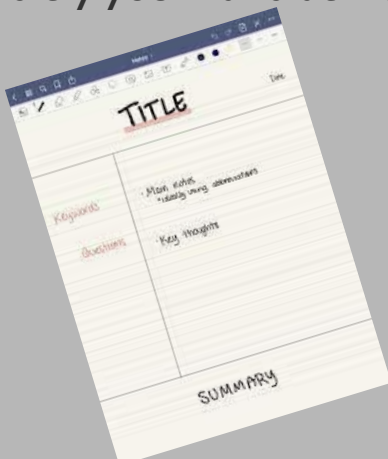
Highlighting: Highlight important information.

Cues and questions: Create a few hints to remind you of the content.

Summary: Make a brief summary of what you learned that lesson.

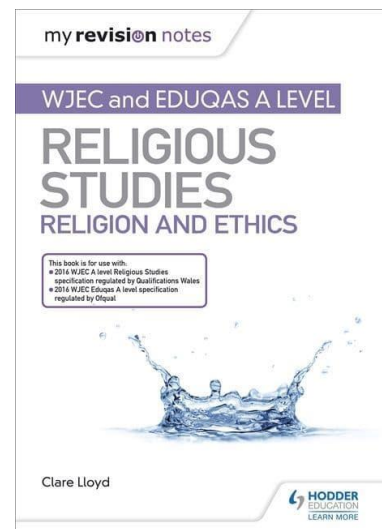
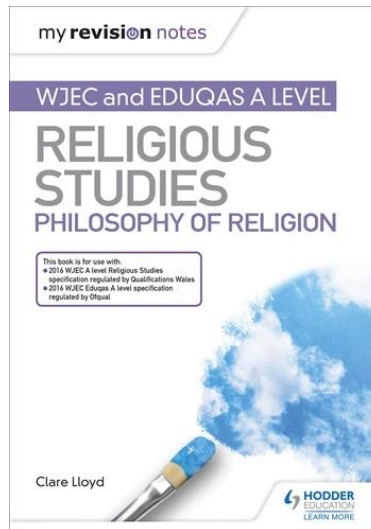
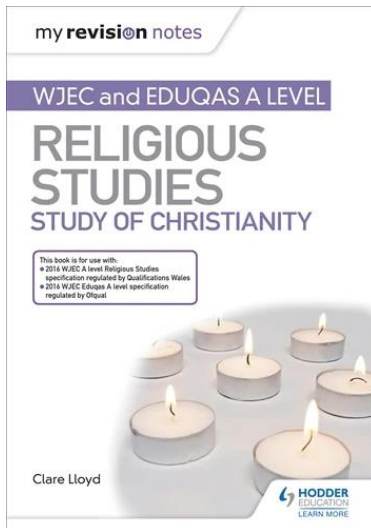
[Cornell Note-Taking Method - University of Maine at Fort Kent \(umfk.edu\)](http://umfk.edu)

Why not check out a TED TALK or a YOUTUBE (recommended in this pack) and try your hand at making Cornell notes?



A good idea would be to purchase the recommended revision guides ahead of next year. You can start your reading around the subject and even begin to make revision material such as mind maps, flash cards and practice exam questions. This would put you at a huge advantage over previous year groups given the extra time you now have.

The revision guides that we would recommend are:



[Amazon:](#)

[My Revision Notes: WJEC and Eduqas A level Religious Studies Study of Christianity: Amazon.co.uk: Lloyd, Clare: 9781510450561: Books](#)

[My Revision Notes: WJEC and Eduqas A level Religious Studies Religion and Ethics: Amazon.co.uk: Lloyd, Clare: 9781510450516: Books](#)

[My Revision Notes: WJEC and Eduqas A level Religious Studies Philosophy of Religion: Amazon.co.uk: Lloyd, Clare: 9781510450547: Books](#)

Educational vocabulary you will need to familiarise yourself with:

Specification: the course, the specific criteria communicated for a specific program of study.

Components: the specific area of study, i.e: Philosophy.

Themes: the over-arching concept.

Units: the specific topic area that is covered as a part of a theme.

Scholar: a person of authority on the topic whom we study.

Independent: on your own, of your own volition, outside of class time.

Punctuality: On time.

Professional: correspondence should be of a formal, professional nature.

Preparing for A Level at Bishop Challoner

At Bishop Challoner we follow the EDUQAS ROUTE A, at A-Level. It is under the title ' Religious Studies'. At Bishop Challoner as you are studying three disciplines at once our course is called ***Philosophy, Ethics & Study of a Religion***.

By the end of this course you will have studied FOUR themes per Component.

An Overview of Philosophy, Ethics & Study of a Religion:

Each Component	Themes & Units	Assessments
Component 1	Study of a Religion- Christianity Theme 1: Religious figures & Sacred texts Theme 2: Religious Concepts & religious Life. Theme 3: Significant Social & historical developments in religious thought. Theme 4: Religious practices & religious identity.	For each component there is a final examination. Each written examination will be 120 Minutes. Each will comprise of 33.5% of the qualification.
Component 2	Philosophy of Religion Theme 1: Arguments for the existence of God. Theme 2: Challenges to religious belief. Theme 3: Religious experience. Theme 4: Religious language.	
Component 3	Religion & Ethics Theme 1: Ethical thought. Theme 2: Deontological ethics. Theme 3: Teleological Ethics. Theme 4: Determinism & freewill.	

Here is a link the AQA specification for the A Level course:

[A level specification template \(eduqas.co.uk\)](https://www.eduqas.co.uk/A-level-specification-template)

We recommend you have a look and see in more detail some of the topics/individuals we will be studying.

If you want to know where to start, in the September of Year 12, we consider Arguments for and Against God's existence, Teleological Ethics and Religious Concepts + Religious Life.

EXPANDING YOUR INDEPENDENCE & CURIOSITY IN THE SUBJECT

We recommend that you review areas that relate to our course specifications as a part of your own independent growth prior to and throughout your studies. Here are some of our most recommended links to check out:

	Link	Interest
Online News articles	Ethics - BBC News	Look out for headings such as ethics, morality, moral, religious.
	Philosophy - BBC Future	Look out for headings such as reality, feelings, Christianity today.
Podcasts	Homepage - Closer To Truth	Look out for scholars you've heard of before and topics about existential experiences.
	The Pope Video The Pope Video is a global initiative developed by the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network (Apostleship of Prayer)	Why not stay up-to-date with Pope Francis' posts.
YouTube	CrashCourse - YouTube	This channel outlines several philosophical and ethical concepts we cover throughout the course. Why not check out Aristotle's Virtue Theory
	Philosophy and Ethics – YouTube	This channel outlines several philosophical and ethical concepts we cover throughout the course.
	CollegeBinary - YouTube	This channel outlines several philosophical and ethical concepts we cover throughout the course.



EXPANDING YOUR INDEPENDENCE & CURIOSITY IN THE SUBJECT

	Link/ Title	Interest
Films	God is Not Dead (2014)	After he refuses to disavow his faith, a devout Christian student (Shane Harper) must prove the existence of God or else his college philosophy professor (Kevin Sorbo) will fail him.
	The Two Popes	Pope Benedict and future Pope Francis, have to face their pasts and find common grounds in order to build the further for the Catholic Church
	God on Trial	In the Jewish tradition of arguing with God, Jewish prisoners in Auschwitz decide to put God on Trial.
Television	Amazon.com: The Chosen (season 1) : Jonathan Roumie, Shahar Isaac, Paras Patel, Noah James, Lara Silva, Nick Shakoour, George Harrison Xanthis, Erick Avari, Elizabeth Tabish, Dallas Jenkins, Ryan Swanson, Tyler Thompson, Dallas Jenkins, Chad Gunderson, Justin Tolley, Chris Juen: Prime Video	The Chosen- It follows the journey of the disciples as they discover more about their faith themselves and the Messiah. An excellent resource for the Study of a religion Component.
	Netflix: The Good Place	Includes mortal, ethical and philosophical concepts. Many of which we will explore.



We recommend that you immerse yourself in concepts that relate to our subject. Watch. Discuss. Debate. Defend your point of view.

WHAT CAN I DO NOW?

There are a number of things that can be done before starting an A-level.

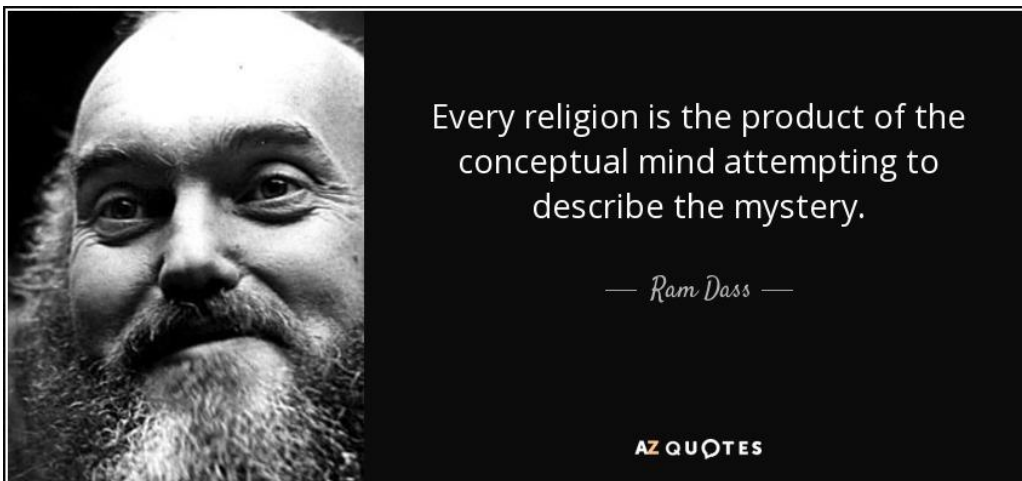
Especially when it comes to an A-level with three specific components. We recommend the following:

1. Ensure you've check out the course specification
2. Highlight/ identify key scholars (for example, Immanuel Kant)
3. Make a fact file about that scholar (this will require you to do independent research)
4. Beef up your reading/listening- that means watching T.V. , listening to podcasts, reading articles (check out the previous lists)
5. Familiarise yourself with vocabulary. (this means reviewing any GCSE specific language that could relate to our topics and brushing up on their uses in sentences)
6. Try out some of our sample lesson tasks on the next few pages.
7. Watch a TED TALK and practice taking Cornell notes.
8. Not familiar with Scripture (Biblical passages)? We recommend checking out Bible Gateway (www.bibelgateway.com) and committing a few passages to memory/ exploring their meaning:

Matthew 7:12

John 3:16

Deuteronomy 6:4-9



TRY SOME LESSON ACTIVITIES

WHY NOT HONE YOUR SKILLS AT DISCERNMENT, PERSUASION AND DEFENDING EVIDENCE.

LESSON 1:

TASK: STATE & EVALUATE

Tasks: State what qualifies as Pizza and Tacos. Evaluate what makes one BEST.

STATE:



EVALUATE:



STATE:

EVALUATE:

DEFEND- PERSUASIVELY CONVINC ME YOU ARE RIGHT



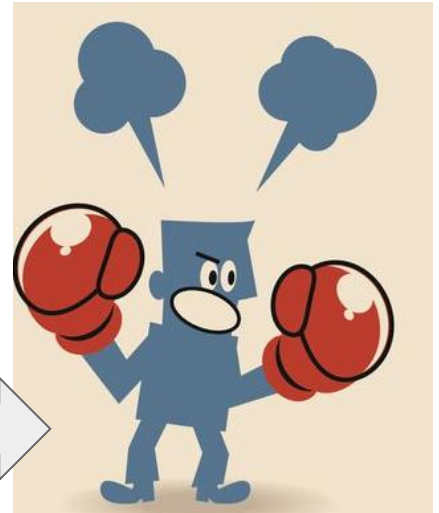
Nostra Aetate (In Our Time), the Latin name by which The Second Vatican Council's Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions is known, **formalized an expanded attitude of dialogue and respect toward the major non-Christian religions of the world: Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism.**

What are the principles of Nostra Aetate? **Religions should promote goodwill, friendship, peace and unity amongst all people since we form one human family.** For those who have faith or share a common faith, depending on the extent of a shared vision, dialogue can be established on whatever is common to both religions.

IF NO ONE WAS ABLE TO THINK CRITICALLY, COULD THEY HAVE THE ABILITY TO UNDERSTAND? RESPECT? SUPPORT?

BEEFING UP OUR ARGUMENTS

WHAT CAN STRENGTHEN AN ARGUMENT?



INTERMEDIATE CONCLUSIONS & COUNTER-ARGUMENTS

An **intermediate conclusion** is a claim which is supported by reasons and which gives support to a further conclusion.

P1 I want to go out

P2 It is raining

IC I will get wet if I don't take an umbrella.

MC So I need to take an umbrella

Intermediate conclusions help to clarify the steps in your reasoning. The IC can also act as a reason for your main conclusion.

EXAMPLE TO IMPROVE

P- TEACHER IS COUGHING.

P- TEACHER HAS A HEADACHE.

C- TEACHER HAS THE FLU.



Amend the above example with your own IC:

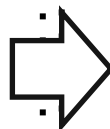
TURN THE FOLLOWING INTO ACCURATE ARGUMENTS USING

A. PREMISE

B. INTERMEDIATE CONCLUSION

C. CONCLUSION

1. TO STAY HEALTHY, YOU ARE ADVISED TO HAVE FIVE PORTIONS OF FRESH FRUIT OR VEG A DAY. YOU ONLY HAD FOUR SO FAR TODAY, SO YOU SHOULD HAVE A PIECE OF FRUIT. WE ONLY HAVE APPLES AND ORANGES AND YOU DO NOT LIKE ORANGES, SO YOU SHOULD HAVE AN APPLE TO MAINTAIN YOUR GOOD HEALTH.



LESSON 2:

TURN THE FOLLOWING INTO ACCURATE ARGUMENTS USING

- A. PREMISE
- B. INTERMEDIATE CONCLUSION
- C. CONCLUSION



2. MANY CHILDREN LIVE CLOSE ENOUGH TO SCHOOL TO CYCLE BUT ARE DROPPED OFF BY THEIR PARENTS. IF CHILDREN CYCLED TO SCHOOL THEY WOULD GET MORE EXERCISE. THIS COULD HELP COMBAT THE INCREASE IN CHILDHOOD OBESITY. MORE CHILDREN SHOULD CYCLE TO SCHOOL. THERE ISN'T ANY WAY FOR PUPILS TO KEEP THEIR BIKES SECURELY LOCKED AT SCHOOL. THE SCHOOL SHOULD BUILD BIKE SHEDS FOR PUPILS.

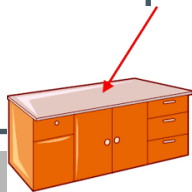


An intermediate conclusion is a claim which is supported by reasons and which gives support to a further conclusion.

Why are intermediate conclusions useful to use?

A counter-argument is a reason put forward to oppose an idea or reason presented in the main argument.

Why are counter arguments useful to use?



Superman is clearly better than Batman....
Provide YOUR counter argument

With great power comes great responsibility- Uncle Ben, Spider Man.

Learning what a 'Fallacy' is

Identify what is wrong with this argument

All ravens are black.
Charlie is black.
Therefore, Charlie is a raven



Write your own definitions:

Invalid Syllogism	Unsound Syllogism

Activity 3

- IF HUMANS ARE PERFECT, THEN THEY DO NOT NEED A SAVIOR.
HUMANS DO NOT (NOT) NEED A SAVIOR.
THEREFORE, HUMANS ARE NOT PERFECT
- IF GOD EXISTS, THEN MANKIND HAS MEANING IN LIFE.
MANKIND HAS MEANING IN LIFE.
THEREFORE, GOD EXISTS.

Review each argument.
Assumptions? Ambiguities? Valid or Sound?



Activity 4

WHAT IS THE LINK BETWEEN FAITH AND CRITICAL THINKING?

REFLECTION:

Plenary

Based on today's learning - What is your personal opinion towards the use of syllogism to prove God's existence.