

Preparation for A-Level : Philosophy Design Argument

A-Level RE is split into three parts; Philosophy, Ethics & Christianity.

The Design Argument is the first philosophical argument we look at in Philosophy Lesson. Read through the information below, watch the videos and see if you can complete the tasks at the bottom of the page.

Remember this is A-Level work, it is difficult and it is ok if you do not fully understand it. It often takes several lessons with a teacher to understand it so working on your own may be difficult but give it a go.

The argument is **based on observation of things in the universe**, this means it uses empirical evidence (evidence of things we can see).

The design argument can be summarised as follows....

1. certain phenomena within the universe appear to have been designed in so far as they are perfectly adapted to fulfil their function e.g. human eye is so complex and perfectly designed for seeing.
2. Such design could not have come about by chance and can only be explained by an **intelligent, personal designer**.
3. The only possible explanation for such as designer is God.

Conclusion: God must exist

Key Philosophers

St Thomas Aquinas C13
William Paley C19
Arthur Brown C20
Richard Swinburn C20
Fredrick Tennant C20

What is considered evidence of design in the world?

Sustainability for human life - the universe provides the right environment for human life.



Order - objects and scientific laws operate in a regular way.



Purpose - objects within the universe appear to be working towards an end or purpose.



Appearance - the beauty of nature and the universe suggests that it is intended for something more than basic survival.



Benefit - the universe provides all that is necessary for life.



St Thomas Aquinas (13th Century C.E)

The design argument was the 5th of Aquinas' five arguments for the existence of God (five ways)

- 1, There is beneficial order in the universe (i.e. there are things in the universe that work towards an end or purpose).
 2. This beneficial order could not happen by chance.
 3. Objects do not have the intelligence to work towards an end or purpose.
 4. Therefore, they must be directed by something that does have intelligence.
- Conclusion... Therefore God exists.

Things in the universe are directed to their *telos* by God, like an arrow is directed by it's archer.



William Paley (19th Century C.E)

Paley devised a modern version of Aquinas' fifth way in his book **Natural Theology**.



The argument was formed in two parts... design relating to regularity & design relating to purpose

Design qua Regularity

This looks at the way in which the universe behaves according to some order. Paley sees the intricacies of the world and considers that they must suggest an intelligent designer.

Paley considered the motion of the planets in our solar system. The relationship between the planets, and the effect of gravity could not have come about without a designing principle at work. (i.e. If Gravity was slightly stronger or weaker the Universe may not exist today). *Such a complicated design could not have come together simply by chance, it must have been designed. That Designer is God.*



Design qua Purpose

This looks at the way in which the universe was designed in order to fill some purpose. Parts of the universe appear to fit together intentionally. In the same way parts of a Television are pieced together in such a way as to receive pictures and sound. If they were fitted incorrectly, or in a random manner, then the Television simply wouldn't work. Just like in the universe things have been put together by a designer with specific functions in mind.

Paley used the intricate mechanisms of the human body

E.g., The eye and the way in which it is adapted for sight. It's various parts co-operate in complex ways to produce sight.

He believed that the eye was specifically designed for the purpose of seeing, and that this complex design suggests an intelligent designer.

Paley's Watch Analogy

Paley uses the watch analogy to demonstrate how the universe must have been designed. *In the same way a watch must have a 'watch-maker', the universe must have a 'universe-maker'*

Unlike a stone on the ground, if we found a watch that it has purpose (time telling), works in a specific way, and has regularity and order (it always works in the same way towards the same telos). Therefore, unlike the stone, it must have been designed

Similarly to the watch, the world works like a machine, made up of parts that work towards the benefit of the whole.

This 'machine' works in a methodical and constant way (that could not be the result of sheer chance) towards a particular end or goal. Such purpose and regularity in the world is proof it must have been **intelligent designed**.

Fredrick R Tennant (1866-1957) Anthropic & Aesthetic Principle

Tennant argued for the teleological argument by relying on a two principles...



Anthropic Principle

The world can be analysed in a rational manner. Through this analysis we can see that the inorganic world provides the basic necessities to sustain life. Even the progress of evolution acts towards the emergence of human life.

Thus the universe must have been designed (finely tuned) to sustain intelligent life.

Aesthetic Principle

The existence of an intelligent designer is found not just in the order of the universe (anthropic principle) but also in its beauty – nature, music, art and literature.

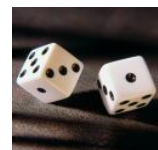
The universe is more than just orderly, it possesses a natural beauty beyond that which is necessary to live.



Richard Swinburne (born 1934)

Swinburne's premises...

1. Everything in the universe works together in an orderly way.
2. The orderly pattern of the universe is very simple.
3. The easiest and most simple explanation for the universe is that it has a cosmic designer.



By this Swinburne meant that the universe is law governed rather than chaotic...

> The way the universe fits perfectly (is 'finely tuned') for the development of human life is just what would be expected from a loving creator.
> God is the best explanation for this creator because of the providential nature of the universe (it contains everything necessary for human survival – air, water, food etc., - within it.

He claimed therefore that it was probable that the world was designed rather than pure chance, and that God was the simplest argument for this. It comes down to probabilities – it is more probable the world was designed.

Youtube "Mr McMillanREvis Design Argument"



The Design Argument (1 of 2) | by MrMcMillanREvis

MrMcMillanREvis • 117K views • 6 years ago

An introduction to the Design Argument designed for studying Philosophy of Religion at AS/A2 Level. Part

Youtube "Intelligent Design Crash Course"



Intelligent Design: Crash Course Philosophy #11

CrashCourse ✓ 1.7M views • 3 years ago

Last week we introduced Thomas Aquinas's four arguments for the existence of god; today we intr

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Tasks

Remember this is A-Level work, it is difficult and it is ok if you do not fully understand it at this point.

1. Read this sheet carefully
2. Watch the videos
3. Have a go at trying to answer these questions in a sentence or two.
 1. What evidence is there within the natural world that suggests it is so complex it couldn't have happened by chance but must have been designed? Give two examples
Hint: A watch is evidence of a human designer not God so this cannot be an answer. The human eye is not designed by humans but works in a complex way with the purpose of seeing so this could be an example.
 2. What does it mean to say "Just like a watch needs a watch-maker the world needs a world maker"?
 3. How could you summarise Aquinas' argument into one sentence?
 4. Which of Paley's two analogies do you like better; the watch analogy or the arrow and the archer? Why?
 5. Tennant's aesthetic principle suggests that there are things in the world that couldn't have happened through evolution because evolution causes survival traits in us and some things like the ability to appreciate music or a sunset isn't needed for survival. Using this reasoning he suggests an intelligent designer must have made us to appreciate music and sunsets instead because there is no other explanation. Do you think this is a good argument
4. Now you have had a go at those questions see if you can come up with any criticisms of the design argument. Use the images below to help you.

