

# ABORTION

## Learning outcomes:

To **describe** key terms

To **explain** religious beliefs on  
abortion

To **evaluate** when human life  
begins

## Starter:

When does human  
life begin? What do  
you think? Write  
down your answer.

# Key Terms

- **Sanctity of life:** all life is holy as it is created and loved by God; Christians believe human life should not be misused or abused.
- **Quality of life:** the general well-being of a person, in relation to their health and happiness; also, the theory that the value of life depends upon how good or how satisfying it is.
- **Abortion:** the removal of a foetus from the womb to end a pregnancy, usually before the foetus is 24 weeks old.
- **Conception** – when the sperm meets the egg.
- **Foetus** – when the unborn baby looks human.
- **Embryo** – earliest stages of pregnancy. Baby does not look human yet.
- **Contraception** – method used to stop someone becoming pregnant.



## Challenge!

What week does an embryo change to be a foetus? Does this make it officially a human? Why?

# What is your current thoughts on abortion? Why do you think that?



We will then compare your answer to this question at the end of the lesson!

# The Stages Of Pregnancy



## Challenge!

At what week during the pregnancy would you class as a life?

# Abortion Act of 1967

## What the Act actually stated

The Abortion Act of 1967 revolutionised the situation in England by allowing doctors to perform an abortion where two other doctors agree:

“that the continuance of the pregnancy would involve risk to the life of the pregnant woman, or of injury to the physical or mental health of the pregnant woman or any existing children of her family, greater than if the pregnancy were terminated”

or

“that there is a substantial risk that if the child were born it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities as to be seriously handicapped.”

# History On Abortion

Abortion is the removal of a foetus from the womb to end a pregnancy before the child is born. This happens naturally when a woman has a miscarriage, but abortion usually refers to the deliberate termination of a pregnancy through a medical procedure.

Before 1967 abortion was illegal in the UK. It is now allowed up to the 24<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy in a licensed clinic if two doctors agree that one of the following conditions applies:

- The woman's life is in danger if the pregnancy continues.
- There is a risk to the woman's physical and mental health.
- There is a significant risk that the baby will be born with severe physical or mental disabilities.
- An additional child may affect the physical or mental health of existing children in the family.

There is no time limit if the mother's life is in danger or if the foetus is severely deformed. The number of legal abortions carried out by doctors in England and Wales in 2014 was 184,571.

# Should Abortion Be Legal?

- Watch the documentary:  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/p068tm7g/the-fight-for-womens-bodies>
- What has happened in Ireland?
- Why is abortion a controversial topic?
- Should women be allowed to terminate their pregnancies during the early stages? Why?
- What would a religious person (i.e. Christian or Buddhist) say in response to abortion being legalised?



# Should Abortion Be Allowed?

1. **Read** and **watch** the clip:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-48275795>

2. Now **reflect**. How do **you feel** after **reading** and **watching** this? Why?

3. Do you **agree** or **disagree** with what has **happened** in **America**? **Why**?





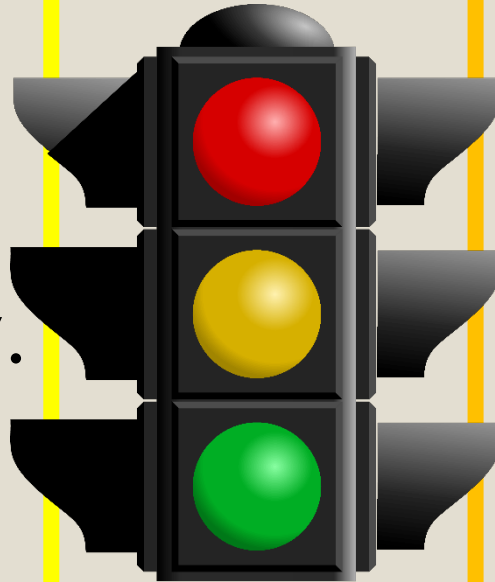
# Does it matter when life begins? Why?



# Pro-choice Vs. Pro-life

## FOR

Pro-choice is a term to describe that it is the woman's right to choose what happens to her body. Pro-Choice supports the woman's right to abortion before the foetus' right to life.



## AGAINST

Pro-life is a term representing that the unborn child needs protection and its right to life comes before the rights of the woman.

# What types of arguments can you come up with for Pro-Life and Pro-Choice?

- Pro-Life groups argue that as life begins at conception....



- Pro-Choice groups believe the mother's life....

**Challenge!**  
Use religious teachings to support the contrasting views!

## PRO-CHOICE

Why should a woman have free choice about abortion?

- Every woman has the right to do as she wishes with her body!
- A baby has the right to be born into a loving and caring family who can provide basic needs.
- There are far too many unwanted babies in the world, it would not be fair to add to this number.
- A woman who is raped should not be compelled to have the rapist's baby.
- Life doesn't begin until birth (or from the point when the foetus can survive outside the womb), so abortion doesn't involve killing.

Did you  
get these  
points?!

### Challenge!

Are there any  
points that you  
agree with?  
Why?

## **PRO-LIFE**

- Every child is a gift from God, no one should think of destroying that gift!
- Abortion is infanticide – it is the killing of a baby.
- Every aborted child could have been the next greatest scientist or leader!
- The unborn child is unable to speak for itself.
- No-one has the right to play God and take away the life of another!
- The child could be given for adoption.
- Those who choose abortion can suffer from depression and guilt afterwards.

Did you  
get these  
points?!

### **Challenge!**

Are there any  
points that you  
agree with?  
Why?

## What Do These Quotes Tell Us About Christian Views On Abortion

“It does not matter whether you take away a life that is born, or destroy one that is coming to the birth. In both instances, destruction is murder.”  
Tertullian, a Christian writer, 197AD

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart.”  
Jeremiah 1:5; see also Galatians 1:15

“As God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, gentleness and patience.”  
Colossians 3:12

“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”  
Psalm 139:13

# Christian Views on Abortion

# What would a Buddhist view be on abortion?





# Buddhist Views on Abortion

- In general, abortion is seen as a form of killing which goes against the first moral precept and so is unskillful.
- However, Buddhists may sometimes favour abortion, such as when the baby is likely to be born with a serious disability, or have a poor quality of life.
- Some Buddhists believe that deciding to have an abortion is a question of personal choice.
- Buddhist views on abortion differ from country to country depending on social norms and traditions.

1. Summarise Buddhist views on abortion.
2. Do you agree or disagree with their view? Why?

## **Challenge!**

Is a Buddhist's view similar or different to a Christian's?

Strong Pro  
Choice

Moderate  
Pro  
Choice

Moderate  
Pro Life

Strong  
Pro Life

Where are you on this scale?  
Decide and give reasons to why.

**Choose  
one of the  
questions  
to answer:**

1. If all life is sacred, and God made all life, does the sanctity of life argument apply if the babies life has not 'begun' yet?
2. Why is the issue of when life begins so important when thinking about pro-life and pro-choice arguments?

**‘Abortion should not be legal in the UK.’ Evaluate this statement. In your answer you should:**

- Give detailed arguments in support of this statement**
- Give detailed arguments in support of a different point of view**
  - Refer to religious teachings**
  - Reach a justified conclusion (12 marks)**

**F**or – Some Christians may agree with this statement because...Evidence for this is...This supports their view because...Therefore...

**A**gainst – Some Christians may disagree with this statement because...Evidence for this is...This supports their view because...Therefore...

**R**eligious – Some Protestants/ Catholics/ would agree/disagree with this statement because... Evidence for this is...This supports their view because...Therefore...

**M**y opinion – Overall, I think the strongest argument is...

Reflect  
upon your  
answer.  
Mark it  
using:  
WWW  
EBI  
NTIW

Levels	Criteria	Marks
4	A well-argued response, reasoned consideration of different points of view. Logical chains of reasoning leading to judgement(s) supported by knowledge and understanding of relevant evidence and information.	10-12
3	Reasoned consideration of different points of view. Logical chains of reasoning that draw on knowledge and understanding of relevant information.	7-9
2	Reasoned consideration of a point of view. A logical chain of reasoning drawing on knowledge and understanding of relevant evidence and information OR Recognition of different points of view, each supported by relevant reasons/evidence	4-6
1	Point of view with reason(s) stated in support.	1-3
0	Nothing worthy of credit.	0

Has your view changes on abortion  
after today's lesson? Why?

