

S3 Religious and Philosophical Questions

The Existence of God



Using this skills booklet

You will see that there for each week there are 4 sections to be completed.

The four sections are a guide for the four days you would normally be in the classroom.

National 3 Outcomes

The content and skills you are being assessed on are at national 3 level.

Outcome 1

The learner will:

1 Demonstrate an awareness of religious and philosophical issues by:

- 1.1 Stating an issue raised by a religious and philosophical question
- 1.2 Stating a religious and a non-religious response to a religious and philosophical question in simple terms

Outcome 2

The learner will:

2 Evaluate responses to a religious and philosophical question by:

- 2.1 Presenting a simple personal viewpoint on a religious and philosophical question
- 2.2 Stating a reason in support of a personal viewpoint in simple terms

Taking it further

You will also see for each week there will be a taking it further section. These tasks are based on *National 4 RMPS*.

You are not required to do these tasks, but they are there for those who are ready to challenge themselves further.

Week beginning 18/01/2021.

Welcome to week one of "The Existence of God" unit where you will explore what we mean by God and the qualities given to God.

Section 1

Below is a table of different religious beliefs. Read them carefully and then complete task 1.

Theist	Agnostic	Atheist
Does believe in God.	Might believe in a God, but not sure.	Do not believe in a God.

Task 1 (understanding)

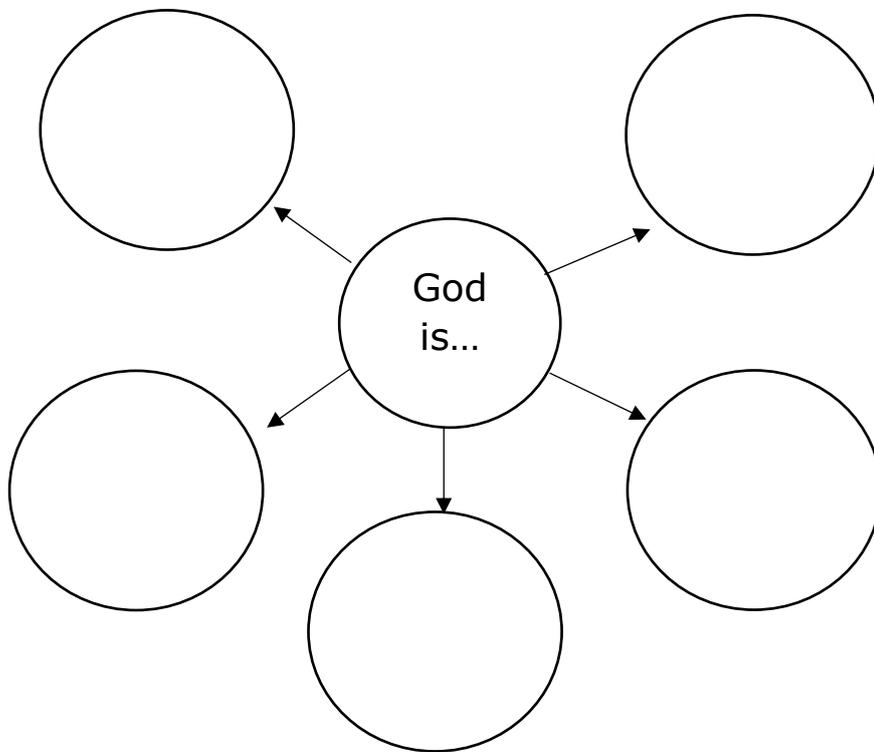
Read the following statements and decide if the argument is theist, agnostic or atheist.

"If God exists, where did he come from? Did a different God make him? Then who would have made that God? The cycle could go on forever, so I doubt God exists in the first place.	I think this argument is..... because.....
Everything in nature has been perfectly designed for us to use. Our eyes seem to be perfectly designed for us to see. There must be some sort of designer then. That designer must be God.	I think this argument is..... because.....
No one can ever prove that God exists, but then no one can ever disprove it either. There are lots of good arguments from both sides. I would say that humans are unsure of God exists.	I think this argument is..... because.....

What is God like?

Task 2

What do you think God would be like? Complete the spider diagram below to share your ideas.



Judaism, Christianity and Islam are often referred to as the 'Abrahamic religions.' This is because they can all be traced back to the prophet Abraham (Ibrahim in Islam).

We will be looking at some of the **key characteristics of God** in the Abrahamic religions.

Associate means to connect with.

Task 3 (gathering information)

Below the qualities that people often associate with God.

Using your research skills, match up the correct quality with its definition.

Omnipotent
Omniscient
Omnipresent
Benevolent
Eternal
Necessary

Not created
Loving
Never ending
All Knowing
All present (is everywhere)
All Powerful

Task 4

For each of the qualities copy out the sentence below.

1. God is described as omnipotent and this means that He is all powerful.

Section 1 looked at different beliefs about God, and now you are going to develop your analysis skills by examining three of them:

1. Omnipotent (all powerful)
2. Omniscient (all knowing)
3. Omnibenevolent (all loving)
4. Omnipresent (everywhere)

Task 2

What evidence can you find that God is all powerful, all knowing and all loving?

Below are different statements that relate to the qualities of God and the scripture that Christians will draw on.

Correctly match up statement with the quality of God.

<p>In the beginning God created the heavens and the Earth. Genesis 1:1</p>	<p>Omniscient</p>
<p>But you, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness. Psalms 86:15</p>	<p>Omnipotent</p>
<p>The Lord looks down from heaven; he sees all the children of man; from where he sits enthroned he looks out on all the inhabitants of earth. Psalms 33:13-14</p>	<p>Omnibenevolent</p>
<p>God is greater than our heart, and He knows everything. 1 John 3:20</p>	<p>Omnipresence</p>

Are there problems with God's qualities?

Task 3 (analysis)

Below are reasons why some people argue that God cannot exist.

Your task is to match up the quality of God it is arguing **against**.

Issue	Quality
1. Poverty and inequality 2. Disease 3. Cruelty to other life (including animals) 4. Natural disasters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Omnipotent (all powerful) • Omniscient (all knowing) • Omnibenevolent (all loving) • Omnipresent (everywhere)

For example:

Crime shows that God cannot be all powerful because he would be able to stop crime.

1. _____ shows that God cannot be all _____ because

2. _____ shows that God cannot be all _____ because

3. _____ shows that God cannot be all _____ because

4. _____ shows that God cannot be all _____ because

Section 3

God the creator

Many people (including Christians, Jews, and Muslims) believe that God **created the universe.**

Task 1

You will complete the storyboard on the next page to show the 6 days of creation. On the 7th day God rested.

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3
Day 4	Day 5	Day 6

Many religious and non-religious people have tried to answer these questions and we are going to start by looking at the cosmological argument.

Cosmological argument

St Thomas Aquinas believed that he could prove the existence of God and that God created the universe.

Task 2

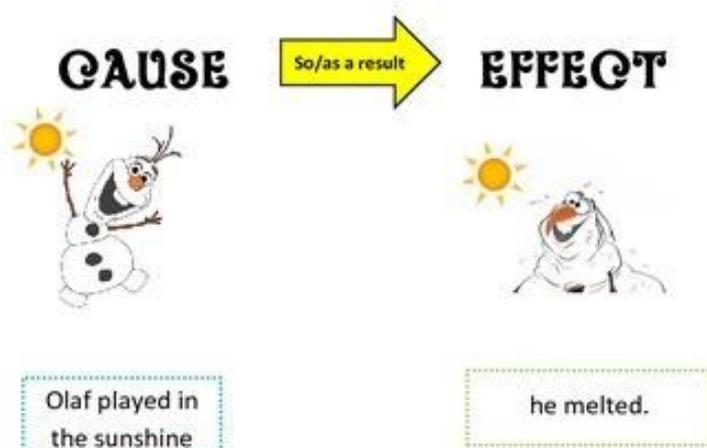
Have a look at the picture below.



What would happen if you were to knock that first domino down?

This is an example of **cause** and **effect**.

Another example could be:



Write down your own example of cause and effect.

First Cause Argument

The cosmological argument uses the understanding of cause and effect to prove the existence of God.

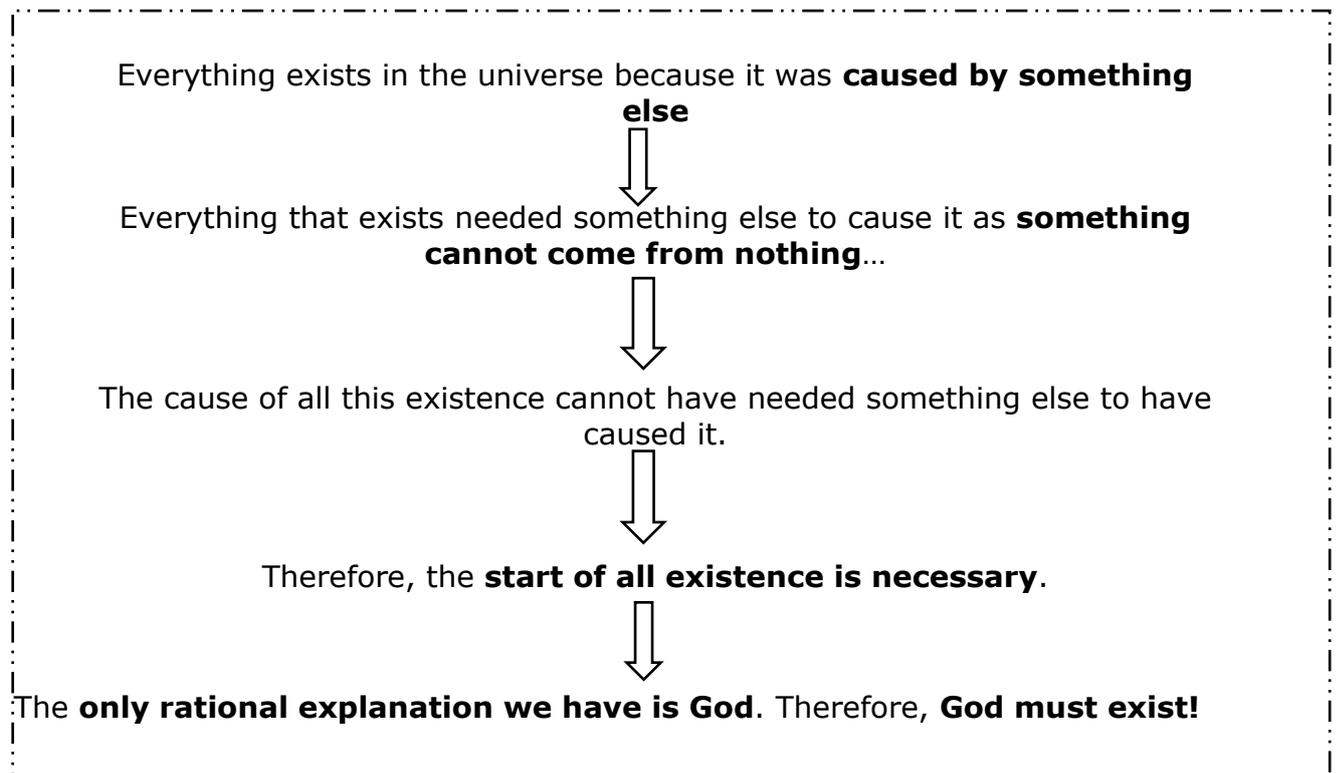
You → Your parents → Your grandparents → Your Great Grandparents →



Aquinas argued that **everything in the universe has a cause.**

If you track things back through a series of causes, there must have been a 'first cause'.

He said that this '**first cause**' is **God.**



You are now going to explore strengths and weaknesses to this argument.

Strength = an argument that agrees

Weakness= an argument that disagrees

Task 2

Read the argument below and decide which is a strength or a weakness.

Argument	Strength or weakness
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The argument does not rely on having a <u>prior</u> belief in God. (Do not need to have believed in God)2. The argument contradicts itself: everything has a cause, but what caused God?3. There are easy to understand analogies that explain the argument well (dominos).4. An example is not proof that something is true, it is just a story that compares two things.5. Flaw in the argument: If God does not need a cause, why does the universe?6. It is a structured argument so easy to understand.	

You can check your answers at the bottom of the page.

Task 3

Describing question practice!

Describe at least one strength of the cosmological argument.

1= S 2=W 3=S 4=W 5=W 6=S

Describe at least one weakness of the cosmological argument.

Section 2

The Design argument

Also called the Teleological argument.

- The design argument is an attempt to prove that God exists.
- It starts by noting that many things in our world have a designer.
- For example, the lightbulb was invented (designed) by Thomas Edison.

Task 1

Look at the images below and write a short sentence to describe what this object was **designed** to do.

		
This was designed to...	This was designed to...	This was designed to...

William Paley (1743 – 1805) argued that the complexity of the world suggests there is a **purpose** to it. This suggests there must be a designer, which he said is God.

To help people to understand his argument he used an analogy of a watch.

An analogy is when one idea, concept, or thing is compared to something else that is significantly different from the first.

An example of this would be the phrase "the box was as light as a feather".

The box is not a feather.

In Paley's analogy the universe is being likened to a watch.

Task 2

Below is Paley's watch analogy, for each part draw an image to help you remember that part of it.

1	Imagine you are walking through a field... You see a stone on the ground, you presume it has always been there, needing no one to design it.	
2	Then you see a watch on the ground. You have never seen a watch before, so you pick it up and examine it. You see that it is very complicated (cogs, moving hands, glass, a case). You would naturally wonder where it came from.	
3	You would look at the complexity of the watch and decide that it could not have just randomly appeared and that someone must have made it.	
4	If you observed the watch for a while, you would understand that it had a purpose (or job)... to tell the time. The way the watch is designed makes it perfect for its purpose.	

The chances of this coming about randomly are so slim that it is almost impossible. There must be an intelligent designer that made the watch for its particular purpose.	
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Here is his argument in full.

- 1.The universe is highly complicated.
2. Within the complex universe there are millions of other complicated processes (like the tides, change of seasons, circle of life, etc.).
3. It is highly unlikely that all these things work so effectively along **and together** by random chance.
4. It is more likely that something designed the universe that way.
- 5. This designer must be all knowing and powerful. That designer is God.**

Task 3

Answer the questions below:

1. What is the design argument also called?
2. What does the design argument try to prove?
3. Who does Paley argue to be the designer of the universe?
4. What analogy does Paley use to help people understand his argument?

You can check your answers at the bottom of this page.

Task 4

Describing question practice!

Describe at least one strength of the teleological argument.

Describe at least one weakness of the teleological argument.

Section 4

You have explored how some religious people have argued the existence of God, you will now look at non-religious arguments.

Charles Darwin

- **Charles Darwin was a scientist who published a theory of evolution** in 1859. His book was called *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*.
- **In it he said that animal and plant species had changed gradually over time, or had evolved. They were not designed!**
- This caused an outcry as it went against the theory of Creation by God.

Task 1

Look at the different birds below.
Complete the table by identifying similarities and differences.

Think about their colours and their beak shape and size.

1= S 2=W 3=W 4=S 5=S 6=W



Brambling

Bullfinch

Crossbill

Parrot crossbill

Similarities	Differences

The Galápagos finches are probably one of the most well-known examples of evolution and will forever be tightly linked to Charles Darwin's voyage and his theory of natural-selection.

The above birds are all finches! Even though they have different shaped beaks.



Here we can see four of Darwin's Finches.

Why do you think their beaks are different?

The finches with long thin beaks will be good at catching insects, whereas the finches with short thick beaks will be good at cracking nuts.

Darwin vs Paley

Through his theory of natural selection, Darwin shows that the reason animals and plants are designed so well for their purpose is because the individuals born with mutations that made them better grew stronger and reproduced.

They were not designed by a supernatural being, they evolved to become more and more effective through trial and error.

Therefore, nature is designing itself and is not finished. It was not created perfect by God.

This question is asking you to say what Paley's argument is and how it is different to Darwin and his theory of evolution.

Task 2

Describe question practice!

Describe the difference between Paley and Darwin's ideas.

Developing skills further

National 4

What explanations do religious people offer for the appearance of design in the universe?
