

Subject: *A-Level Religious Studies - Philosophy*

Exam Board: *EDEXCEL*

Welcome to A-level RE: Philosophy. We are delighted that you are considering A-level RS as an option in Year 12. To demonstrate your commitment to the course and to prepare you for September, you must complete the following tasks to the best of your ability. These tasks are compulsory and must be completed prior to your first RE lesson in Year 12.

We expect you spend at least 3 hours completing the tasks outlined in this pack. The activities have been designed to help you begin to develop some of the key skills you will need for A-level RS: Philosophy.




Contact for Support:

 Mr Scott – Please email via Insight or visit room 33A

What is Philosophy?



At its simplest, philosophy (from the Greek *philosophía* or *philosophía*, meaning 'the love of wisdom') is the study of knowledge, or "thinking about thinking", although the breadth of what it covers is perhaps best illustrated by a selection of other alternative definitions:

-  the discipline concerned with questions of how one should live (ethics); what sorts of things exist and what are their essential natures (metaphysics); what counts as genuine knowledge (epistemology); and what are the correct principles of reasoning (logic)
-  careful thought about the fundamental nature of the world, the grounds for human knowledge, and the evaluation of human conduct
-  the search for knowledge and truth, especially about the nature of man and his behaviour and beliefs

TASK: *You are going to complete a series of activities in order to learn about some of the most basic philosophical principals and also explore some of the biggest, age old philosophical problems that people have faced.*

Firstly we will look at what is real?

For each of the following, consider whether the object or topic in question is real or not. For this exercise, take 'real' to mean 'has an existence independent of minds - human or otherwise'. If something is 'not real', then it exists only in the mind.

	Real	Not real	Don't know
1. Numbers (e.g. '3')			
2. Your reflection in the mirror			
3. Colours (e.g. 'red')			
4. Smells (e.g. of coffee)			
5. Morality (e.g. murder is wrong)			
6. Scientific laws (e.g. $E=mc^2$)			
7. Ghosts			
8. Matter			
9. Aesthetics (e.g. 'beauty')			
10. The past and the future			

Are you a **realist** or an **anti-realist**?

(You might be both, depending on the topic in question!).

Do you think that the thing/object/concept in question (e.g. Numbers) exist **independently of our minds (human or otherwise)**, **OR**

Do you think that the thing/object/concept in question (e.g. Numbers) **exist only in the mind**.

In the space below explain your reasoning:

Task 2: Obtain a copy of the film the Truman show.

<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0120382/> (we have a copy of the film in the RE department that could be shared)

Watch and Complete the below questions:

What **issues** does the story focus on?

Describe who the main characters in the film are:

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Do you think this story helps a person consider ideas such as freedom, knowledge and freewill? **Explain your answer.**

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Next task: Go to YouTube and search for a video about “Plato’s Cave” – watch the video (the one in the link below is a good example) carefully and maybe more than once before attempting the below questions.

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=plato%27s+cave+claymation

What similarities to Plato’s Cave does the film show you? **Explain your answer.**

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What similarities to Plato’s Divided Line does the film show you? **Explain your answer.**

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What parts of the film tie into religious / Christian thinking about God? Freewill? etc

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Penultimate Task

Write a mini essay on the Truman Show and its "big brother" like approach. Critically analyse its pros and cons, where Plato's Cave fits in.

Some things you might include:

Intro- Highlight the key features of the film and explain its context- introduce characters and ideas.

Main- Explain the strengths and weakness of the film and explain how and why the lead character begins to question his reality. If possible you should make links to how this could impact our own lives.

Explain Plato's cave and make links to the film's story line.

Conclusion- Can you discuss the ethics of this experiment and overall evaluate whether anyone in the real world should ever be allowed to be put through something like this.
