

# A Level Religious Studies Summer Work Pack



'Wisdom begins with wonder'  
*Socrates*

'We are what we repeatedly do, excellence then is not an act, but a habit'  
*Aristotle*

## Philosophy Tasks

You have two tasks, one on reasons to believe in God, the other about the possibility of reincarnation **Task 1**

Watch this debate between William Lane Craig and Christopher Hitchens.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=otYm41hb48o>

The video is called

Does God Exist? William Lane Craig vs. Christopher Hitchens - Full Debate [HD]

If you watch from 11 minutes 30 seconds you will see William Lane Craig and Christopher Hitchens being introduced. William Lane Craig is a Christian and Christopher Hitchens was a New Atheist.

### **Structure of the talk**

The lecture is quite long and so you may wish to watch this in stages. They talk for 20 minutes each and then have a right of reply each.

- William Lane Craig starts at 13 minutes
- Christopher Hitchens starts at 33 minutes and 30 seconds
- Williams Lane Craig replies to Christopher Hitchens from 54 minutes and 15 seconds • Christopher Hitchens replies to William Lane Craig from 1hr and 7 minutes

From one hour 20 minutes there is a cross examination that you may wish to watch.

Having watched the videos you are going to make notes, we'd recommend the Cornell notes method (see the study skills section)

Make notes on;

- The key arguments given by both sides
- The responses and evaluations given
- Your own view of which side is more convincing and why

## Cornell Notes Template

Name	Date
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Topic	Subject
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Main Ideas	Notes
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Summary
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Philosophy – Does God exist?

William Lane Craig's arguments for God's existence

Name

Date

Topic

Subject

Main Ideas

Notes

Summary



## Ethics Tasks

There are 2 ethics tasks, one to give you an overview of what we'll study and another to get you involved in some ethical decision making with a famous thought experiment. Complete them in any order. For many students this is their favourite area of the course, so there's some additional tasks too.

### **Task 1 - Would you sacrifice one person to save five?**

Complete the Ted-Ed lesson here <https://ed.ted.com/on/HcROMDBy> Watch the video, try the multiple choice questions, explore further on the dig deeper links and then post some thoughts on the discussion

Do you think the right thing to do is to pull the lever? Why or why not?

Would it be acceptable to kill one person to allow 5 people to receive organ transplants? Why or why not?



## Extras

TED talks – <https://www.ted.com/talks>

These are usually wonderful, with plenty to stimulate your questioning and reasoning skills.

Some favourites:

- Elizabeth Loftus – how reliable is your memory?
- Dan Gilbert – why we make bad decisions
- Richard Dawkins – militant atheism
- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie – We should all be feminists
- Damon Horowitz – Philosophy in prison
- His Holiness the Karmapa: The technology of the heart
- Playlist: Are you there, God? (11 talks)
- Matthieu Ricard: The habits of happiness

There are loads of talks on here, so use the search engine to find topics that interest you.

Practice notetaking; write notes as you listen, just as you would if you were listening to a real-life lecture and practice the skill of jotting down key points at speed.

Ask yourself questions when you get to the end:

- What were the speaker's key messages?
- Do you agree with the speaker?
- What might someone who disagreed say, and what might their reasons be?

## Study Skills

Note-making is a key skill for A level. You will be provided with workbooks throughout the course but also additional reading and multi-media resources. Being able to bring this all together in an organised way so that you have effective notes to learn from is one of the key differences between students who do well and those who do less well.

We strongly recommend the Cornell Notes method and have provided some guidance here, as well as some blank templates. Try making Cornell Notes for at least one of these activities and make sure you bring them in when you start with us in the autumn.

There are instructions on how to take Cornell Notes in this video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ErSjc1PEGKE>

You have some blank templates in this booklet, but you can easily use a ruler to divide up a page.

On the next page is an example of some completed Cornell Notes for you to see on a different topic.



Based on the Ted-Talk here

[https://www.ted.com/talks/tom\\_honey\\_why\\_would\\_god\\_create\\_a\\_tsunami?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/tom_honey_why_would_god_create_a_tsunami?language=en)18

## Further Reading

### Brief Introductory Reading:

Law, S. The Philosophy Files, Orion 2002; The Outer Limits, Orion 2003; The Philosophy Gym, Hodder Headline 2003

Nagel, T. What Does It All Mean? OUP 1987 (reprinted 2004)

Warburton, N. Philosophy: The Basics (5th ed.), Routledge 2012

### Philosophy:

Gaarder, J. Sophie's World, London: Phoenix House 1995

Davies, B. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion, OUP 1993

Hansel, N. The Sage Train, Matador 2016

Vardy, P. The Puzzle of God, Collins 1999; God Matters, SCM Press 2013

### Ethics:

Norman, R. The Moral Philosophers, OUP 1998

Vardy, P. The Puzzle of Ethics, Collins 1999; Ethics Matters, SCM Press 2012

### Religious Thought:

McGrath, A. Christianity: An Introduction, Blackwell Publishing 2015

Vardy, P. The Puzzle of Christianity, Collins 201621