

# Bridging Resources for Year 11 Applicants: Philosophy, Ethics and Religion



St John Rigby College

# Philosophy, Ethics and Religion A-Level

There are a number of things that can be done to prepare for the A-Level course so that you begin your studies with enthusiasm and a desire to learn more about the subject.

Here is a breakdown of the course topics and some suggestions for research and reading.

## Philosophy

**Topic 1:** Arguments for God's existence including the Cosmological, Teleological and Ontological arguments.

**Topic 2:** The Problem of Evil, Freud and Jung (Psychologists who have a view of religion) and Atheism (The view of New Atheists including Richard Dawkins, Christopher Hitchens, Daniel Dennet and Sam Harris as well as their opponents Alistair McGrath and William Lane Craig) There is a great deal on social media about the New Atheists and the celebrities who support them or argue against them.

**Topic 3:** Religious Experience: types of experiences such as visions, conversion and mysticism. Miracles.

**Topic 4:** Religious Language

## Useful Philosophy Resources

- **YouTube: Mr McMillan REvis A-Level videos:** Arguments for God's existence and The Problem of Evil.  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/MrMcMillanREvis>
- **YouTube: School of life – Western Philosophy.** Learn about important philosophers – Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Augustine and Thomas Aquinas.  
[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=school+of+life+philosophy](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=school+of+life+philosophy)
- **Crash course videos** (more in depth videos but if you are feeling confident give them a try) (Episodes 1, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 27)  
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8dPuuaLjXtNgK6MZucdYldNkMybYIHKR>
- The Eduqas website has lots of information and resources for the A-level including schemes of work so that you can see which topics we will be studying. They also have lots of articles and video clips. Check out the site:  
<https://resources.eduqas.co.uk/Pages/ResourceByArgs.aspx?subid=26&lvlid=1>
- 
- The tablet student zone.  
<https://www.thetablet.co.uk/student-zone>
- For an introduction to the key topics in Philosophy try:  
[https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Introduction\\_to\\_Philosophy/Philosophy\\_of\\_Religion](https://en.wikibooks.org/wiki/Introduction_to_Philosophy/Philosophy_of_Religion)

## Ethics

**Topic 1:** Divine Command Theory, Virtue Ethics, Ethical Egoism

**Topic 2:** Natural Law

**Topic 3:** Situation Ethics and Utilitarianism

**Topic 4:** Freedom and Determinism

In Ethics we are also required to apply ethical theories to a number of ethical issues. Do some research and watch documentaries to update your background knowledge for the following issues:

Homosexuality, Polyamory (Louis Theroux did a fantastic documentary that you can find on iplayer), abortion, euthanasia, testing medicine on animals, using nuclear weapons as a deterrent, capital punishment, immigration. Do some research on current laws and try to get an understanding of different points of view.

- **Crash course videos** (Episodes 25, 26, 34, 35, 37, 39, 40 and 46)
- **As with philosophy have a look at the Eduqas website.**

## **Christianity**

**Topic 1:** How do different Christians interpret the bible. Did the virgin birth and resurrection happen or are they myths?

**Topic 2:** Is God male? Look up feminist theologians such as Sallie McFague who argue that we should call God 'She' rather than 'He'. Find out how the Reformation began.

**Topic 3:** Find out about the Prosperity Gospel. Who is Joel Osteen? Find out about Brother Lazarus the Coptic monk who lives in Egypt as a hermit. Who do you think is more 'Christian' Osteen or Br Lazarus. Do you think the UK is becoming more secular? Watch the BBC documentary on YouTube: The battle for Christianity. Find out about the work of Street Pastors.

**Topic 4:** Research how Christmas and Easter is celebrated by the Eastern Orthodox churches. What are the main differences between Christian practices here and there?

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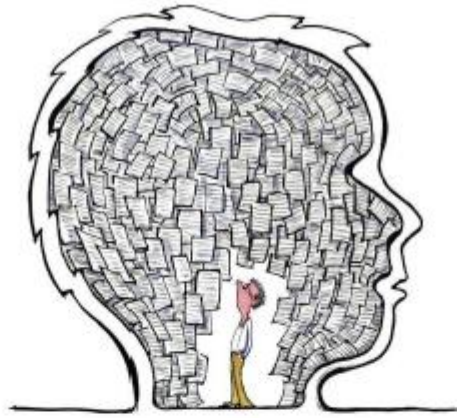
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Bridging Resources for  
Year 11 Applicants:  
Philosophy, Ethics and  
Religion  
Year 11 into 12  
progression booklet



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*“Wisdom begins with wonder”*

*Socrates*

## Philosophy Task

Watch this debate between William Lane Craig and Christopher Hitchens.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0tYm41hb48o>

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 complete a Cornell Notes activity. There are instructions on how to take Cornell Notes on the video below.

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

The video is called:

How to take Cornell Notes properly

At the back of the booklet is an example of some completed Cornell Notes for you to see on a different topic.

### Cornell Notes Template



Philosophy – Does God exist?

William Lane Craig's arguments for God's existence

Cornell Notes Template

Name

Date

Topic

Subject

Main Ideas

Notes

Summary



## Cornell Notes Template

**Name**

**Date**

**Topic** Philosophy – Does God exist?

**Subject** Christopher Hitchens' case for God not existing

**Main Ideas**

**Notes**

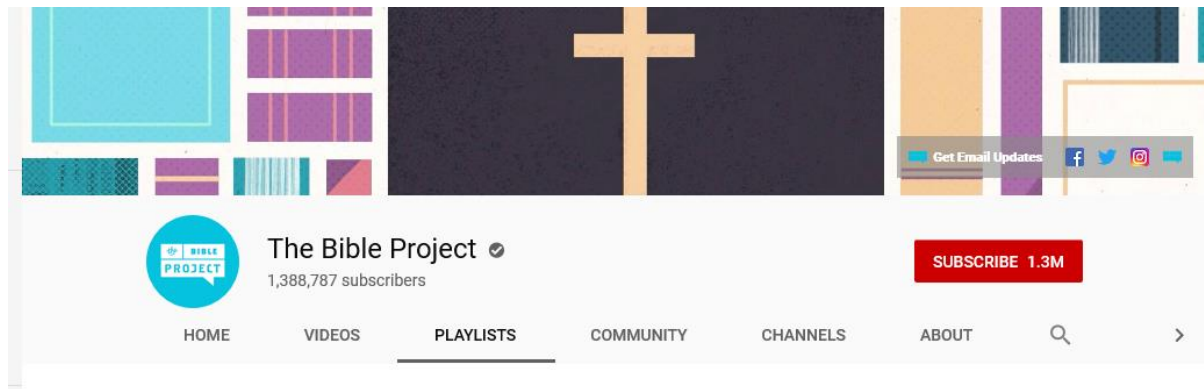
**Summary**

## Religion Task

Our studied religion is Christianity and a good background knowledge of the Bible is important and therefore this is what your task is based on.

The Bible Project Series on YouTube will help you with this.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/jointhebibleproject/playlists>



I would recommend the Biblical Themes playlist which is about 1 hour 30 minutes long if you watch every video.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XzWpa0gcPyo&list=PLH0Szn1yYNec-HZjvHooeb4BSDSeHhEoh>



Using these videos and your own additional research you need to find out about the following Biblical stories, events or characters.

For each topic below, you need to fill in a Cornell Notes template and a Thinking Hard template.

### **1. The Story of the Fall?**

What happens?

How does this story link with Christian ideas about Jesus?

### **2. The story of Exile**

Where, when and why were the Israelites exiled to?

What does the prophet Jeremiah teach about exile in Babylon?

What is the link with Jesus?

### **3. The Suffering Servant passages of Isaiah**

Who was Isaiah?

What is the background to Isaiah's writings?

What does Isaiah write about the suffering servant?

What is the link with Jesus?

### **4. The Prophets (there is a Bible project video called prophets)**

What do prophets do? Who are they?

What do they teach about the covenant?

What is the Day of the Lord? What is the link with Jesus?

### **5. The Messiah**

What does the Old Testament teach about the Messiah?

Why do Christians believe that Jesus was the Messiah?

What Jewish expectations of the Messiah does Jesus not fulfil?

### **6. Jesus**

What are the main events in Jesus' life?

What does Jesus teach in the Sermon on the Mount?

What does Jesus mean when he calls himself the Son of Man?

What is the day of the Lord?

## Cornell Notes Template

Name	Date
Topic	Subject

Main Ideas	Notes
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Summary
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Cornell Notes Template

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Summary
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## Ethics Task

Your ethics task requires you to read selected chapters from *The Puzzle of God* by Peter Vardy. This book is easy to purchase online and you should be able to pick up a second hand copy for very little. If you cannot get hold of a copy the PRE department can lend you one.

You will need to fill in a Cornell notes page and a thinking hard page on each of the following topics.

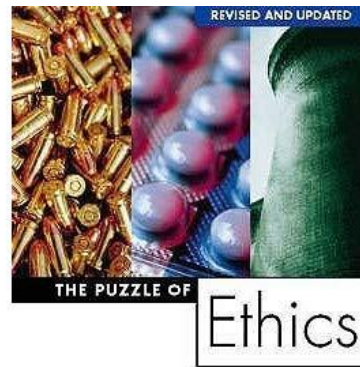
Chapter 2 Plato – Virtue and Knowledge

Chapter 3 Aristotle and Virtue Theory

Chapter 4 Aquinas, Natural Law and Proportionalism

Chapter 6 Bentham and Mill – Utilitarianism

Chapter 10 Situation Ethics



At the end of each chapter there are some questions guide you in your note taking. Stick to one Cornell and one Thinking Hard template for each topic.

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template

PETER VARDY & PAUL GROSCH

## 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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Main Ideas	Notes
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Summary
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## IX. A Model of the Cornell Notes document

Name	Date
Topic: Topic Rev Tom Honey on why God allows tsunamis	Subject: Problem of Evil

<p><b>Main Ideas:</b></p> <p>We need to move away from the God of classical theism</p> <p>We need to stop looking for a philosophical answer to the problem of evil</p> <p>Abandon God of classical theism for a suffering God – this fits the 20<sup>th</sup> century</p> <p>A God who responds to prayer or acts in history is biased and unfair</p> <p>Abandon traditional God, not one who acts but a divine presence</p>	<p><b>Notes:</b></p> <p>Many people see God as the almighty, a policeman in the sky. In the past we have not wanted to rock the boat by exploring other ideas about God.</p> <p>Archbishop of Canterbury – people do not want an intellectual explanation of evil. There are no words that can make up for what has happened; instead, a compassionate silence and practical help is needed.</p> <p>God has to be able to feel and experience our pain. One who weeps when we weep and rejoice when we rejoice. We need to move away from an unchanging God who is cold and indifferent. WW1, WW2 and Holocaust. Where is God – the answer is God is in this with us or he does not deserve our allegiance. An unchanging God may exist but I do not want to know him.</p> <p>Why would God act in some cases but not others? This makes him unfair and partisan.</p> <p>We should see God not as one who does things as in the Old Testament, defeating Egyptians etc. but instead he is in things. Is this Pantheism? Pantheism? There are lots of don't knows but that is what makes God a divine mystery.</p>
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<p><b>Summary:</b></p> <p>We must move away from the God of classical theism. God is not a grand fixer but instead a presence within us who feels our pain and joy. This allows us to offer support to those experiencing evil rather than philosophical arguments. A God who acts in history becomes partisan, and it makes more sense to have a God who understands all suffering rather than one that fixes some suffering whilst ignoring others' pain.</p>
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## Further Reading

If you would like to do further reading we can suggest the following books to you:

### Brief Introductory Reading:

Blackburn, S. *Think*, OUP 2001

Craig, E. *Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction*, OUP 2002

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

Annas, J. *An Introduction to Plato's Republic* (particularly Chapters 9-10), OUP 1998

### Ethics:

Norman, R. *The Moral Philosophers*, OUP 1998

### Religious Thought:

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

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Year 11 into 12 progression booklet

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