



# TRANSITION WORK. PHILOSOPHY RELIGION AND ETHICS



**Contents:**

- I. Suggested Reading and video list
- II. Tasks
- III. Written / Reflection Tasks
- IV. Essay Questions
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## **Task 1 Suggested Reading List**

### **PHILOSOPHY**

1 Gaarder, J. (1995) *Sophie's World*, London : Phoenix House.

Easy to read book: a story, written mostly in the form of letters, about a young girl who encounters key philosophical questions and key figures in western philosophy. A great introduction to the history of western philosophy.

2 Davies, B. (1993) *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press  
A more challenging read but touches on many of the topics covered on the Philosophy side of the course. This book will be very useful for extra reading throughout the course.

3 Annas, J. (1998) *An Introduction to Plato's Republic*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

A challenging read but chapters 9 and 10 particularly useful for the Plato unit of A level

### **ETHICS**

1 Ethics: Vardy, P.(1999) *The Puzzle of Ethics*, SCM Press

A good introduction to different ethical theories and their application to various ethical issues, this book will be very useful for extra reading throughout the course. #

2 Norman, R. (1998) *The Moral Philosophers*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

### **RELIGIOUS THOUGHT**

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

An accessible introduction to Christianity beliefs, teachings and practices that assumes no prior knowledge.

We are in the process of purchasing these books, they are however available to buy online. We will let you know as soon as we have them. If you do get access to these books, please do the following:

Create a picture mind-map of the key ideas. Use doodles and images to illustrate these. For a guide to mind-mapping, see this short video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wLWV0XN7K1g>

**Create a summary for your learning using a reflective diary**

## Task 4: Video Resources and Tasks:

Watch the videos below, choosing one to focus on for your task. Write a list of discussion points/questions it raises. Choose (at least) one of your questions and draft at least three possible answers that might be given.

[https://www.ted.com/talks/kwame\\_anthony\\_appiah\\_is\\_religion\\_good\\_or\\_bad\\_this\\_is\\_a\\_trick\\_question/transcript#t-22290](https://www.ted.com/talks/kwame_anthony_appiah_is_religion_good_or_bad_this_is_a_trick_question/transcript#t-22290) Ted Talk by Kwame Anthony Appiah -- Is Religion Good or Bad? (This is a trick question)

[https://www.ted.com/talks/damon\\_horowitz/transcript](https://www.ted.com/talks/damon_horowitz/transcript) Ted Talk by Damon Horowitz – We Need a Moral Operating System

[https://www.ted.com/talks/tom\\_honey\\_on\\_god\\_and\\_the\\_tsunami/transcript](https://www.ted.com/talks/tom_honey_on_god_and_the_tsunami/transcript) Ted Talk by Tom Honey – Why Would God Create A Tsunami?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8MzPmkNsgU> Debate: Atheist vs Christian (Christopher Hitchens vs William Lane Craig)

### **Films/ TV:**

Watch *The Matrix* (film). Note down your thoughts on the themes of truth, perception and reality.

Watch *Lost* (TV series). What moral and ethical points does this raise?

Watch *Sliding Doors* (film). Do you think your life is pre-destined (set out for you) or can you control your own fate?

### **Task 5: Audio Resources:**

Listen to 'The Moral Maze' on BBC Radio 4. (Available programmes vary over time)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qk11>

Note down the key points of argument. Create a flow chart of the main points of discussion.

Listen to this episode of 'In Our Time'. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01mwx64>

Based on these arguments, is it possible to argue that God necessarily exists?

Listen to this episode of 'Thinking Allowed'. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b099ypqf>

How should we help people who are dying?

Listen to this podcast from 'Philosophy Now'.

[https://philosophynow.org/podcasts/Free\\_Will\\_and\\_the\\_Brain](https://philosophynow.org/podcasts/Free_Will_and_the_Brain) To what extent can we exercise free will? List ten examples of choices you have made in the last seven days. For each one, consider what factors influenced your choice (habit, parents, media, friends, consideration of consequences, etc).

### **Thought Experiments:**

<http://www.philosophyexperiments.com/fatman/>

<http://moralmachine.mit.edu/>

<https://io9.gizmodo.com/9-philosophical-thought-experiments-that-will-keep-you-1340952809>

Carry out some of the above activities.

Write a written reflection of the moral questions that each one raises, and how you might respond to these.

Try to list your own "moral code" or "rules for life". Include 5-10 elements.

Can you imagine any exceptions to your own "rules"?

### **Task 6: Written/ Reflection Tasks:**

1. Consider your definitions of the following terms:
  - Truth
  - Reality
  - Good
  - Evil
  - Moral
  - God
  - Time

For each concept, try to argue against your own definition. Can you see any flaws in your ideas? How might they be criticised? What conclusions can you reach about *how* we define these concepts?

2. List *five* facts that you *know* to be true. For each one, explain *how* you know it to be true. Are any of your “facts” uncertain? What would have to happen to prove them irrefutably (without question)?
3. Create a picture collage, poem, song, mind map or vision board which illustrates the idea of “God”. Explain your choices of words, images and concepts. If you can, explain where these have originated.
4. Create a fact file of the philosophers Plato, Aristotle and Aquinas. Include pictures, key facts and a brief outline of their philosophical ideas.
5. Choose a story from the news that includes one of the following themes:
  - Abortion
  - Euthanasia
  - Cloning
  - Humans’ treatment of animals

Write a response to the story, considering several different points of view. To help with this, you could consider the points of view of:

- An atheist (someone who fervently believes there is no God)
- An agnostic (someone unsure about religion and faith in God)
- A committed Christian
- A dying man
- A child

## **Task 7: Essay Questions**

A. Write your own response to the following question:

“How should we decide the right thing to do?”

In your answer you should:

- Include a range of different opinions
- Conduct your own research to find possible answers from different fields of thinking (philosophy, psychology, sociology, religion, etc.)
- Justify your answer with a range of reasons
- Include examples to illustrate your point
- Reach a justified conclusion
- Include a bibliography to demonstrate your own research

B. Write a response to the following question:

“There is no solution to the problem of evil”

In your answer you should:

- Demonstrate understanding of several different viewpoints
- Show evidence of having discussed the question with at least three other people, and analyse their comments, including similarities and differences
- Give clear reasons for each perspective
- Give examples to justify your answer
- Reach a clear and justified conclusion
- Include a bibliography, if required

