

Learning Grids

For AS / A Level Year 1 AQA

Component 1A: Philosophy of Religion

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Teacher's Introduction

These *learning grids* are a tool designed to help you deliver the AS / A Level Year 1 AQA Component 1A: Philosophy of Religion specification. The concept is that your students are assigned a topic to learn about (e.g. by giving them a set of pages to read from the course companion), possibly for homework, and then asked to complete the relevant learning grids. These activities may be particularly useful for your weaker learners, who may benefit from both the requirement to find the information and the act of writing the answers down.

The grids cover the specification content comprehensively and are designed to ask questions which your students should be able to answer correctly when they have studied the relevant topics. Each section begins with questions on basic concepts around the topic before progressing to longer questions designed to both test a student's knowledge of a particular area of study and their ability to evaluate between different academic perspectives. While the resource is mostly in specification order, occasionally the topics in a particular section are arranged differently than they appear on the specification. This is due to a different topic order being more conducive to student learning.

Completed grids are provided so that your students' answers can be marked or checked. It may also be useful to hand them out to students during their revision to assist them with answers they cannot find. The majority of the content can be cross-referenced against the textbooks listed below, and there is a small amount of marked extension content designed to stretch students' capabilities and knowledge.

Advantages of using these *learning grids* are:

- Some students will find this method of studying of great value, particularly if they find it difficult to absorb information in class.
- Completed grids contain a sample answer that may be useful for revision.
- They are an easy-to-set yet valuable homework.
- They are a useful catch-up tool to help students who have missed a lesson.
- They can be used as a basis for cover lessons that require minimal preparation and no interaction from the cover teacher.
- They are an independent learning resource.

You may want to photocopy the sheets onto A3 paper, particularly for students with reading or writing difficulties.



Word + PDF

Note that there is the option to pay an additional 30% to get this resource in PDF format or an additional 50% to get this resource in Word format. The latter allows you to edit the resource to adapt it for your students, and also to put it on your intranet or VLE so students can fill in the grids electronically.

For all formats the licence terms are that the purchasing institution can make unlimited copies on a single site, for students and teachers officially registered at that site.

This resource is cross-referenced to the following:

- *Course Companion for AS / A Level Year 1 AQA Component 1A: Philosophy of Religion*, ZigZag Education
- *A Level Religious Studies for AQA Year 1*, John Frye, Hodder Education ISBN 978147187 3959

Free Updates!

Register your email address to receive any future free updates* made to this resource or other Religious Studies resources your school has purchased, and details of any promotions for your subject.

* resulting from minor specification changes, suggestions from teachers and peer reviews, or occasional errors reported by customers

Go to **zzed.uk/freeupdates**

Selected Question and Answer Pages

For demonstration only, the sample answer pages immediately follow their corresponding question pages

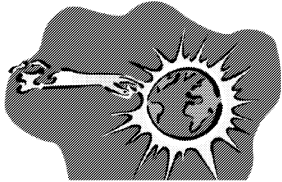
Arguments for the Existence of God

Reason and Faith



Hodder: pp. 15–16, 30–31

ZigZag: pp. 2–3, 9–10, 15

Topic	Question	Answer
Reason and Faith: Basic Issues	<p>What is the traditional role of faith in religious belief?</p> 	
	How might an individual come to have faith in the existence of God?	
	Why have theologians provided differing interpretations of faith when discussing belief in God?	
	Why might a theist view both reason and faith as important to their belief in God?	
	How might reason and faith work together in arguments for the existence of God?	

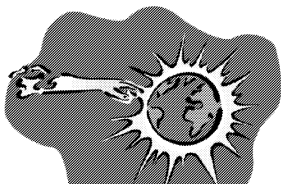
Arguments for the Existence of God

Reason and Faith



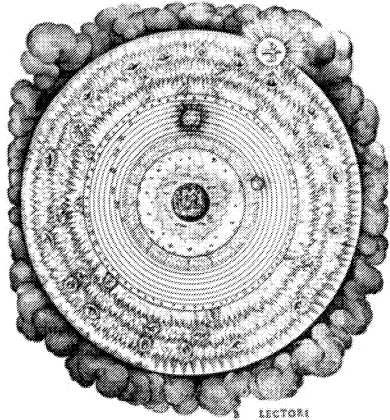
Hodder: pp. 15–16, 30–31

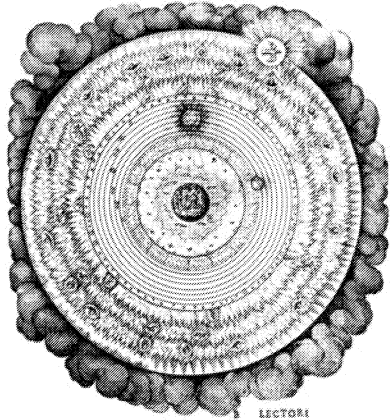

ZigZag: pp. 2–3, 9–10, 15


Topic	Question	Answer
Reason and Faith: Basic Issues	What is the traditional role of faith in religious belief? 	<i>Faith is often believed to be foundational to belief in God, traditionally perceived within the Christian religion, for example, to be outside of human comprehension, and whose existence is not always immediately self-evident to the senses. Therefore, faith is an essential act of trust which brings human beings together with God.</i>
	How might an individual come to have faith in the existence of God?	<i>An individual might come to have faith in God in numerous ways; for example, reading religious texts, having visions or religious experiences, believing philosophically there is a strong but not certain case for the existence of God, or even just perceiving God in the everyday world.</i>
	Why have theologians provided differing interpretations of faith when discussing belief in God?	<i>Faith has an important personal and experiential quality for many theologians, and cannot be simply categorised as belief without certain forms of evidence. Therefore, there are often differing opinions about what is the best way to categorise and interpret faith in ordinary language.</i>
	Why might a theist view both reason and faith as important to their belief in God?	<i>A theist might well believe that there is always a gap between human beings and God that only faith can bridge. However, they might also believe that they can come to partially understand God and the dimensions of his being using reason. Therefore, reason develops it in a theist's life.</i>
	How might reason and faith work together in arguments for the existence of God?	<i>Arguments for the existence of God do not necessarily have to be based on reason. A theist may well already have faith in God, and use arguments for how God can be understood within the potentially ordered and observable in everyday life.</i>




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Topic	Question	Answer
Critical Evaluation	<p data-bbox="398 491 913 595">Is it ever valid for the design argument to argue from an effect (universe) to a cause (God)?</p> 	

Topic	Question	Answer
Critical Evaluation	<p data-bbox="398 491 913 593">Is it ever valid for the design argument to argue from an effect (universe) to a cause (God)?</p> 	<p data-bbox="938 469 2112 750"><i>Strict empiricists might contend that, no matter how much we identify features such as complexity or order in the universe, these are not strong enough reasons to infer that there must have been a designer that caused the universe. Since the universe was a unique event, unless we have direct evidence of the process of universe designing, or universe creating, there is no way of really contending that from the presence of design in the universe there must be a designer. The appearance of design in the universe may well have any number of potential causes and human beings are not in a place where we can accurately evaluate which one of these causes led to the universe that is observed today.</i></p> <p data-bbox="938 794 2112 1110"><i>On the other hand, others might argue that human beings make valid inferences from the observed to the unobserved regularly, even when the event is beyond the powers of human observation. For example, there are many valid theories on how black holes are formed, even if we have not observed the formation of a black hole. In this way, it is valid to move from an effect to a cause as long as the explanation given best fits our observations and structural understanding of the universe itself. In the same way, scientists conclude from background microwave radiation there must have been a Big Bang event; it might be argued from specific, inexplicable instances of functional complexity, there must have been a designer responsible for this feature and such an explanatory move is philosophically valid.</i></p> <div data-bbox="1778 1126 2002 1347">  </div> <p data-bbox="1727 1378 2051 1410">© ZigZag Education</p>

Topic	Question	Answer
Taking It Further (Extension) (continued)	<p>Is the best explanation for religious experiences a naturalistic one?</p> 	
	<p>Can tests of credibility ever be reliably established for religious experiences?</p>	

Topic	Question	Answer
Taking It Further (Extension) (continued)	<p><i>Is the best explanation for religious experiences a naturalistic one?</i></p> 	<p><i>Some theists might argue that a naturalistic explanation can never give a full account for why religious experiences occur. Even if biological or physical causes can be located, this does not explain why human beings have religious experiences in the first place, or why they experience them in the way that they do. Similarly, psychological explanations can always be contested, and often have their own hidden assumptions about human nature or behaviour. Other theists might even argue that the best explanation simply is the existence of God altogether, with psychological and biological explanations for religious experiences being problematic.</i></p> <p><i>However, critics of theism or religious experiences might argue that the question of why human beings have religious experiences is irrelevant, for the same question can be asked of any form of experience that is commonly thought to have a naturalistic explanation. All that matters is a reasonable biological or psychological cause can be found for the kind of characteristics religious experiences seem to display, and religious experiences should not be given special emphasis simply because of the experiential content and the persuasive power they often seem to possess. Some may contend in particular that psychologists such as Freud, or biological triggers, can fully explain why human beings have religious experiences altogether.</i></p>
	<p><i>Can tests of credibility ever be reliably established for religious experiences?</i></p>	<p><i>Some theists might argue that there are definitive tests of credibility, that are used throughout ordinary life to determine whether an experience of something is genuine, which can also apply to religious experiences. On the strong end, it can be argued from Swinburne's principles of credulity and testimony that, unless there are convincing reasons to doubt an explanation, it should be regarded as genuine and credible. If this is the case, all that is required when examining the testimony of someone who has had a religious experience is to identify whether there are key extraneous factors that would have caused them to potentially hallucinate or, through wishful thinking, believe falsely they had a religious experience. If this is not the case, theists may argue in lieu of an alternative, objective explanation for religious experiences, establishing whether a religious experience is credible or not.</i></p> <p><i>On the other hand, critics may argue such tests are also vague. Knowledge of how the mind works is still very limited, and even if there are extraneous factors causing one to hallucinate, this does not provide a conclusive reason to suppose that they weren't, especially when the experiences are both ineffable and inaccessible. Therefore, any such tests are not all-encompassing, and cannot be used definitively to determine whether a religious experience is genuine or not.</i></p> <div data-bbox="1767 1123 2007 1347" data-label="Image"> </div> <p>© ZigZag Education</p>

Additional Selected Question Pages

Arguments for the Existence of God

Exam Preparation



Hodder: pp. 2–50

ZigZag: pp. 2–20

Below are featured a number of arguments relating to the existence of God, with a corresponding criticism presented opposite. Evaluate each before writing your own opinion in the final box on the right.

Argument	Criticism	Student's Evaluation
The design argument fails as human beings have no experience of the universe, or any other universe, being created. Therefore, it is impossible to say it requires a designer, unlike other objects inside the universe.	There are many distinctive features about the universe that are fine-tuned in such a way that, regardless of direct experience, still require explanation. The order and complexity of the universe cannot simply be dismissed as chance.	
The design argument only proves that there was a creator of the universe. This may not be God, and instead could be any number of agents powerful enough to cause an event such as the Big Bang.	God is the best explanation for the creator of the universe, as nothing else within human understanding exists outside of time and space, and has the power that God conceptually is thought to possess.	
The theory of evolution demonstrates that what appears to be design can equally be chance. There is no way that observing the universe from human beings' limited perspective should lead to concluding certain things must have a necessary order or purpose.	Evolution may be an intelligent process devised by God at the beginning of the universe, in the knowledge that eventually under certain circumstances it will lead to the birth of intelligent life such as humans. Purpose cannot be ruled out within the theory of evolution itself.	

Argument	Criticism	Student's Evaluation
Arguments for God from the contingency of the universe fall flat due to being guilty of the fallacy of composition. There is nothing to suggest that there has to be a necessary being, or that the universe is not necessary in some way itself.	Regardless of whether the universe itself can be categorised as contingent or not, it is not a large leap to say that the contingent objects as a whole that form it require some explanation for their existence, and the best explanation is God.	
Existence is not a predicate, and as such God as a being cannot be a priori argued to exist. Otherwise, anything can be thought to exist simply by defining existence as part of its essence.	The ontological argument succeeds because God is unlike anything else, and only God has existence as part of his essence. Therefore, in the case of God, existence is not simply a predicate but a necessary quality only present in an unlimited or omnipotent being.	
The argument from contingency is the best argument for God's existence, as it relies on constants and observations such as cause and effect that underpin not only ordinary human experience, but also scientific investigation and knowledge.	The design argument is the best argument for God's existence, as it is the fine-tuning of the universe as a whole, not just individual constants, that shows God to be the best explanation for the order and complexity of the world.	
The concept of 'necessary existence' is meaningless, as any being or thing that can be thought to exist can also be thought to not exist. It is never a logical impossibility for a being to not exist.	Since God is limitless in all aspects, usual ideas of logical possibility and impossibility surrounding existence do not apply. In this way the categories surrounding contingent beings, and their existence, are different to those which can be used to describe God.	

Evil and Suffering

Basic Concepts

Fill the keyword definitions below:



Hodder: pp. 51–86

ZigZag: pp. 21–31

Natural Evil

Moral Evil

Free Will

Theodicy

Moral Responsibility

Determinism

Compatibilism

Summarise the differences between the arguments below:

Soul-making Theodicy

Process Theodicy

Free Will Theodicy

Evil and Suffering

The Problem of Evil and Soul-making



Hodder: pp. 51–62, 71–76

ZigZag: pp. 22–31

Topic	Question	Answer
The Problem of Evil: Basic Issues	Why does the existence of evil seem to instinctively present a challenge to traditional conceptions of God?	
	How can the problem of evil be conceived both as a logical problem and as an evidential one?	
	How is the logical problem of evil often presented as an 'inconsistent triad'?	
	Name a modern-day philosopher who argues that the problem of evil is a logical one.	