

## Arguments Against the Existence of God – Knowledge Organiser Key Words

<b>Agnosticism</b>	The belief that we cannot know if there is or isn't a God	<b>Omnibenevolence</b>	The idea that God is all-loving, and has unlimited goodness
<b>Atheism</b>	The belief that God, or Gods, do not exist.	<b>Omnipotence</b>	The idea that God has unlimited power.
<b>Faith</b>	Belief or trust in something which is not yet proven.	<b>Omniscience</b>	The idea that God has unlimited knowledge and knows everything.
<b>Free Will</b>	The idea that humans can choose how to live their lives, undetermined by God or other factors.	<b>Oppression</b>	Power being used against a group or individual in a cruel and unjust way
<b>Humanism</b>	Atheist belief that science, reason and compassion should guide how we live the one life we have.	<b>Social Cohesion</b>	The idea that Religion helps to unite people and ensure they support each other.
<b>Meme</b>	An idea or behaviour that spreads by means of imitation from person to person within a culture.	<b>Spiritual But Not Religious (SBNR)</b>	Belief that there is more to being human than a physical life: there is also a non-physical, spiritual dimension.
<b>Moral Evil</b>	The acts of humans which are considered to be morally wrong.	<b>Vitalisation</b>	The idea that Religious traditions are important as to help to make sure that important values get passed down to future generations
<b>Natural Evil</b>	Suffering not caused by nature, including diseases and natural disasters.	<b>Wish-fulfilment</b>	Someone satisfying a desire by creating a fantasy to accomplish this.

### Key Ideas

<b>The Problem of Evil</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The 'problem of evil' was first presented by ancient Greek philosopher Epicurus and developed by philosophers such as David Hume and J. L. Mackie. This argument criticises belief in 'The God of Classical Theism' who is said to be all-loving, all-powerful and all-knowing.</li> <li>The argument states that if God is all-loving, then he loves everyone to the extent that he wouldn't want anyone to suffer, if God is all-powerful, then he is able to eliminate suffering and if God is all-knowing, he knows that suffering is happening and knows how to stop it. So, if there is a God with all these traits – evil and suffering cannot exist. However, we know that evil and suffering DOES exist. Therefore, God doesn't exist.</li> <li>Philosophers have responded to this argument by presenting 'theodicies'.</li> </ul>
<b>Theodicy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A 'theodicy' is an attempt to explain why God allows evil. There are 2 main theodicies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Augustinian Theodicy argues that humans were born with free-will to choose how to act, and it was this free-will being used in an evil way that resulted in evil and suffering in the world. This has been criticised by some philosophers, including F.D.E Schleiermacher.</li> <li>The Irenaean Theodicy argues that God created the world imperfectly so that imperfect immature beings could develop through a soul-making process into a 'child of God,' in his perfect likeness. Evil and suffering help us develop, for example, by developing compassion, morality and help us grow closer to God and closer to being like God. Critics of this theodicy include D.Z. Philips and Michael Tooley.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Religion and Society</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Émile Durkheim believed that religion was created in early societies to bring people together, even though society is more developed now, religion still exists because religious traditions get passed down from generation to generation.</li> <li>Karl Marx argued that the ruling classes use religion as a way of controlling the people. The ruling class would do this by telling the workers that God designed the world for them to work throughout their lives in poor conditions, and that God wanted the members of the ruling class to be in charge. People were told that if they did as they were told they would go to Heaven and that if they disobeyed the rules God would send them to hell. This view has been criticised, especially in consideration of the work of the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.</li> </ul>
<b>The Psychology of Religion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Richard Dawkins calls religion a 'meme', meaning an idea that spreads within a particular culture, including between generations. He argues that religious belief can be explained through the study of psychology.</li> <li>Sigmund Freud argued that religions only exist because of 3 wishes that all people have (the desire for a father, the desire for fairness and the desire for immortality), and people only believe in God as a way of satisfying these wishes.</li> <li>This perspective has been criticised as it assumes that everyone shares these wishes and doesn't actually disprove God.</li> </ul>
<b>New Atheism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>'New Atheists' (such as Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens) are very critical of religion and argue that people's religious beliefs and ideas should not be shown a special respect and people should be free to criticise religious belief. They argue that science should be used to answer the question of God's existence. They also criticise the concept of 'faith' and dismiss it as an excuse to be wrong.</li> <li>Others criticise this, arguing that as God is supernatural, we should not try to use science to learn about God. Some defend the concept of faith, and argue it is a perfectly acceptable reason to believe in God.</li> </ul>
<b>Nones</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2017, 52% of the UK said that they follow no religion, these people are referred to as 'nones', however, not all 'nones' believe the exact same thing. 'Nones' include: atheists, agnostics, SBNR (Spiritual But Not Religious) and Humanists. The definitions for these can be found in the 'key words' section.</li> <li>There are various reasons why someone may identify as a 'none', this may be due to their beliefs that we should only use reason and science to learn about life or because they're put off mainstream religion due to acts of violence and discrimination done in the name of religion.</li> <li>Humanists UK are a group which campaign for the UK to become a secular country.</li> </ul>