



Year 8

Philosophy and Ethics 1:

Arguments for the Existence of God

Knowledge Organiser & Homework Booklet

Name.....

Philosophy and Ethics 1: Arguments for the Existence of God – Knowledge Organiser

Key Words			
Analogy	A comparison between one thing and another, to help explain something.	Prayer	A message addressed to God, through words or thought.
Conversion Experience	When something happens which causes someone to develop particular religious beliefs	Principle of Credulity	Swinburne's idea that we ought to believe that things are as they seem unless we have evidence to suggest otherwise
Creationism	The belief that the universe and the various forms of life were created by God out of nothing as stated in the Bible.	Recurrent Laryngeal Nerve	Nerve which transmits messages from the brain to the muscles of the larynx. Evidence for evolution.
Infinite Regress	An endless line of causes with no beginning.	Religious Experience	An encounter between people and the divine.
Intelligent Design	Belief that the universe is so complex that it must have been designed by a higher intelligent being.	That than which none greater can be conceived	Saint Anselm of Canterbury's definition of God.
Miracle	An event that cannot be explained naturally, so is seen as an act of God.	The Big Bang Theory	The idea that the universe began as just a single point, then expanded and stretched to grow as large as it is now.
Myth	A story that is not historically accurate but contains spiritual truth.	Theologian	People who study of the nature of the Divine and religious belief.
Perfection	When something is as good as it is possible to be.	Uncaused cause	The belief that God is the first cause of the Universe, but was not caused himself.

Key Ideas	
Philosophical Argument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An argument that tries to prove a point through reasoning and logic. It tries to convince someone that the conclusion is right by showing how they got there. It is made up of multiple premises (a logical step) which lead to a conclusion. For example: Premise 1: Munchie is a cat Premise 2: All cats have whiskers Conclusion: Munchie has whiskers
The Teleological Argument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Also known as 'The Design Argument'; The argument follows that there is clear evidence that the universe was designed, as there is evidence of design, this suggest that there must be a designer, which is God. The argument was originally proposed by Saint Thomas Aquinas and was later developed by William Paley using his Watchmaker Analogy. The argument has received support from various philosophers, but has also been criticised by some philosophers such as David Hume
The Cosmological Argument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saint Aquinas' Cosmological Argument states that everything which exists was caused by something else which already existed, this includes the universe, which must also have a cause, which must be God Al-Kindi, Al Ghazali and William Lane Craig developed the 'Kalam Cosmological Argument', which specifies that anything that begins to exist must have a cause The argument has been criticised by scientists as The Big Bang Theory is said to offer an alternative explanation for the cause of the universe, though some philosophers argue that this discovery can be compatible with religious belief
Evolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the book 'On the Origin of Species', Charles Darwin suggested that all life on earth had developed (evolved) from a common ancestor (a single cell), over a long time, these cells developed into humans. This is seen as an alternate explanation to intelligent design. There is a great deal of scientific evidence which supports the theory of evolution, such as from studying the anatomy of humans and animals. Some religious believers argue that you can believe in both God and evolution as they are compatible with each other, even when interpreting the Bible literally.
The Ontological Argument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An argument by Saint Anselm and developed by Descartes that if we define God as being the greatest possible being, then it is impossible for God not to exist. As something existing in reality is better than something that only exists in our minds, defining God as the greatest possible being means we are admitting that God exists. The logic of this argument was criticised by Gaunilo and Aquinas. The argument has also been criticised by Bertrand Russell and Richard Dawkins.
Religious Experience and Miracles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some people may believe in God as they believe they have experienced something supernatural, which provoked a feeling of being in the presence of a greater power. The individual may claim to have personally 'seen', 'heard' or 'felt' God (e.g. prayer, conversion experiences.) Richard Swinburne argues that we should believe peoples' accounts of religious experiences, if someone perceives something to have happened, it probably has, and we should believe what people tell us, unless there is a good reason not to. Other philosophers argue that we should not believe people's accounts of religious experience, as these may be delusions or the individual may have a reason to lie. There is also record of 'miracles' occurring, which are events which cannot be explained through the laws of nature (e.g. healings, so they must be explained as the work of God). Paul Tillich argues that the purpose of these events is to tell us about the nature of God. Hume has been critical of the accounts of miracles, arguing that there are more convincing reasons to believe that they didn't happen than to believe that they did.

Homework 1: How may religious experiences lead to belief in God?

Due:

Read the following passage and answer the questions below:

John Pridmore



I thought what I want from this world, I have to take because no one gives you anything. I started working as a bouncer around the East-End and West-End clubs in London; I thought I liked fighting so I might as well get paid for it. It was there that I met some of the guys who ran most of the organised crime in London, so I started working for them. Not long after this, I stopped working for them and I began to work with them. I lived the classic gangster lifestyle with plenty of money, drugs and women. I had a penthouse flat in St. John's Wood, a 7 series BMW, Sport Mercedes Convertible and I couldn't spend the money I got fast enough because from the protection rackets and drug dealing cash kept pouring in. I truly believed what the world told me was true, that having all of the possessions, relationships and drugs would make me happy, but I felt sick inside because this life was slowly destroying me. Nothing satisfied me, nothing fulfilled me. At the same time, I was trying to destroy my conscience because with the people I was involved in the more vicious and brutal you could be the more respect you got and I wanted that respect. I wanted people to walk into a club and when people saw me they would know who I was and what I was involved in.

One night I was working at one of the clubs we ran in the West-End and I hit this guy with my knuckleduster, but when I hit him he fell straight back and smashed his head on the curb. I could see blood everywhere and people around started screaming, so I left the scene and I remember being in my car on the way home thinking, 'I could get ten years for this.' Slowly it came to me that I might have just killed someone and I don't even care. I used to care I used to want to make a difference but here I was just taking and destroying everyone around me. The only person I cared about was myself and I didn't think that would ever change. I came home and I heard a voice speaking to me in my heart, it is a voice we all know, our conscience, God within us. Up to his point, I felt God was just a nice little story to keep us from being bad, but now I was faced with the fact that God was real and it didn't matter what I thought.

Though I was never aware of God's love or presence in my life up to this point, in one moment I felt Him withdraw Himself from me. People say that separation from God is hell, well if that was hell I pray that no one ever goes there because it was the most terrifying experience in my life. I had people put guns to my head, I had been stabbed but this was terrifying because I was fully aware of the choices I had made. I cried out to God for another chance not because I was sorry, but because I did not want to stay in the desolation I was experiencing. Right then I felt lifted up, I walked out of my flat and said the first prayer I had ever said in my life. I said, 'Up to now all I have done is taken from you God, now I want to give.' As I said that prayer that emptiness within my heart which the drugs, power and relationships could not satisfy was filled with the love of God. I could not believe God could love someone like me with all the terrible things I had done, but He kept showing me that He loved me and accepted me. All throughout my life I had felt useless and it didn't matter if I lived or died, but God showed me that it did matter because He loved me and created me.

What did John Pridmore feel after his conversion experience? How did his life change for the better after his conversion to Christianity?

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Homework 2: The compatibility of science and spirituality in the search for Truth Due:

Read the following passage and make notes of the key points in the bullet-points below the text. You will be quizzed testing your knowledge of this text in your next lesson.

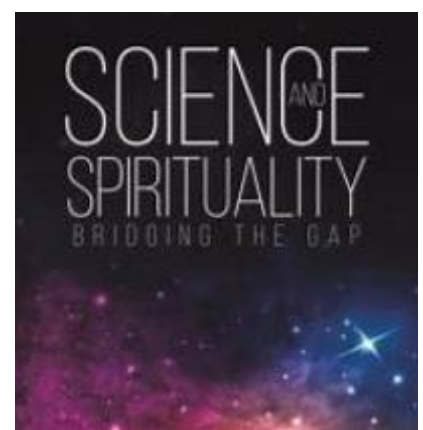
Both science and spirituality are the search for truth. One is the search for the truths of the physical world; the other the search for the truth of the nature of consciousness. As such there is no conflict between them.

For the same reason, there is currently little meeting between the two either. The current scientific model does not include consciousness or mind as a fundamental reality, but seeks to explain everything in physical terms. Western science has now looked out to the edges of the Universe, back in time to the beginning of creation, and down into the sub-atomic structure of matter; and it finds no place, nor need, for God. But this is because it has not yet included the inner realm of mind in its scope. Some people argue that when science explores mind as fully as it has explored space, time and matter, it will create a new worldview, one that includes spirituality.

Spirituality, on the other hand, is often very unscientific in its approach to self-liberation. People believe things simply because someone has said it or written it. But this is hardly the best way to arrive at truth. The Buddha warned against this 2,500 years ago when he said "Do not believe anything because I have told you it is so. Only believe it when you have tested it for yourself." In this respect spiritual growth can, and should, be very scientific. We can form a hypothesis -- that certain meditation practices enhance awareness, for example -- set up a personal experiment in meditation practice, and see what the results are. This is important not only to make sure that we do not deceive ourselves, but also to ensure that our spiritual progress is as rapid as possible. And rapid spiritual growth is something the world today needs very badly.

Key Points:

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Knowledge Quiz:

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- 5.
- 6.