

Religion, Philosophy and Ethics at Key Stage 3 at Cottenham Village College

Religion, Philosophy and Ethics is a truly unique subject within the secondary curriculum. It gives students the opportunity to explore some of the most challenging ideas of human history. It explores some of the most difficult ethical issues that humanity has ever faced. It looks at the past and explores how beliefs have shaped the world that we live in now. It looks at the future and considers how all this might influence what will happen next for humanity. In short, it requires students to engage with high level, critical thinking. There are few places in the secondary curriculum, where students are given the freedom to explore issues in such a way. They can challenge perspectives, understand how others view their world differently, track how beliefs have changed over time and understand how religion is viewed from the perspective of a religious believer and those who don't believe. The subject also supports students in developing their opinions in relation to ethical issues that are having an impact on society now. In the years to come, these will be the issues that young people are voting on. Religion, Philosophy and Ethics provides students with a balanced understanding of the most important questions that face modern society.

At Cottenham VC we routinely use a range of strategies to formatively assess and give feedback to students about their progress. In Religion, Philosophy and Ethics these strategies include: An assessed written response in the first unit for year 7, regular knowledge tests, end of topic assessments for each topic (these range for written essay responses and knowledge-based quizzes), feedback lessons for students to self-evaluate their work, mid-year and end-of-year cumulative tests.

Autumn Term	Topic 1 – What is my lens?	Topic 2 – Is Meat Murder?
Key subject knowledge:	This unit explores why we do RPE and the ultimate questions that students will encounter throughout KS3 and 4. Students also cover what the terms religion, philosophy and ethics mean. A significant part of this unit involves students developing their understanding of their own individual lens (their worldview and the things that have influenced this).	The students first ethics topic. We use a case study relating the ethical questions around eating meat to allow students to engage in ethical debate in a productive and thoughtful way. This unit looks at what worldviews (3 world religions) say about eating meat (arguments for and against) and an understanding of how meat arrives on our plates.
Key disciplinary knowledge:	What their lens is and how it has been developed over their lives. Consider what the ultimate questions in the world are and how we can answer these – during this topic students will begin to develop key skills in terms of understanding, communication and debate. Apply the content and skills learnt to help them answer one ultimate question in a short written response.	Students consider the moral and ethical implications of eating meat. They consider the conditions that the animals are kept in and are invited to come to their own view, based on an evaluation of the arguments and perspectives they have studied.
Summative Assessment	Short written response – Students get the chance to answer an ultimate question.	Written Essay – students write a response to the question – Is Meat Murder?
How does this unit prepare students for future study?	The topic provides students with a foundation to build on for their future topics. It encourages students to think in a way that they may not have encountered in primary school and introduces some of the fundamental questions and concepts that they will be exploring in future units. The lens they construct helps them to understand how they respond to what we learn in RPE. This will be returned to through the RPE topics at CVC.	This topic encourages students to consider the impact of religion in the modern world. This is a concept that they will return to in different forms throughout KS3 and KS4. This provides students with the key skills needed to be able to have these conversations at a higher level in future topics.

Spring Term	Topic 3 – History of Belief Part 1 - What is religion?	Topic 4 – History of Belief Part 2 – What were the origins of Hinduism?
Key subject knowledge:	<p>The concepts of religion and myth and the similarities and differences between these terms.</p> <p>How different cultures have expressed mythical, spiritual and religious ideas throughout history.</p> <p>How religious beliefs have changed over time.</p>	<p>Students will cover:</p> <p>How and where Hinduism started; the Hindu concept of Brahman; the trimurti and their roles in Hinduism; some of the other gods that form part of Brahman; dharma, atman, ahimsa, karma and reincarnation. Moksha and evidence of modern examples of reincarnation; how Hindu concepts are taught through the game Moksha Chitram (Gyan Chapaur); the Ramayana and its importance to Hindus today; the rituals behind the Hindu festival of Diwali.</p>
Key disciplinary knowledge:	A short topic that explores what religion is, why it is important and how it has evolved.	This topic explores how the myths and beliefs of two different civilisations combine to create what eventually evolved into modern Hinduism.
Summative Assessment Strategies	This topic leads into the next topic – which is assessed through a knowledge test.	Knowledge test at the end of the unit.
How does this unit prepare students for future study?	This topic provides students with a clear understanding of what religion is and how it has changed throughout history. It also helps students to appreciate how much of an impact religion has around the world. This lays the foundation for all their future studies of religion, philosophy and ethics.	<p>This topic builds on the previous one and allows students to track the development of the oldest living religion.</p> <p>It also helps students to develop an understanding of when and where religious ideas first started to appear. This allows them to track the development of these ideas when they encounter Judaism, Christianity and Islam in year 8.</p>

Summer Term	Topic 5 – What are the arguments for and against the existence of God?
Key subject knowledge	<p>Students will cover:</p> <p>The most common arguments for or against the existence of God, including the cosmological, ontological and teleological arguments. They will look at arguments for the existence of God from a religion point of view. They will consider the problems of evil and suffering and how religions respond to these ideas. They will cover Sigmund Freud’s views that God is an illusion.</p>
Key disciplinary knowledge	<p>This topic encourages students to consider their own lens and develop their appreciation of how their worldview impacts their understanding and first impressions of what they learn in RPE. The topic also allows students to consider the different approaches to understanding God in the world. Finally, students learn about the main arguments for and against the existence of God.</p>
Summative Assessment Strategies	Written essay response.
How does this unit prepare students for future study?	<p>This unit helps students to appreciate and understand their own lens. Their lens will change over time, but it will always determine their initial reaction to many of the topics that students encounter in their RPE lessons. This lens will be returned to throughout their time at CVC.</p> <p>The topic also gives students foundational knowledge about the nature of God in multiple religions, and the main arguments for and against the existence of a potential God or gods.</p>