



Cardinal Newman
CATHOLIC SCHOOL



Religious Studies A Level

A level Religious Studies involves the study of 3 disciplines of wisdom: Philosophy, Moral Philosophy (Ethics) and Theology. It is a study of the big questions such as “why are we here?” or “indeed are we actually here?”, “how does a person act morally?” or “is there such a thing as right and wrong moral action?”, “is a person saved or damned before they are born?” or “is there actually a hell?”.

We follow the OCR Religious Studies A-level course you can explore it in depth by clicking on the following link:
<http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/beta/as-a-level-gce-religious-studies-h173-h573-from-2016/>

Religious Studies A level – Summer Task - Ethics

1. Read the two sources that discuss the two broad approaches to making decisions about what is right and wrong when it comes to human actions. (This is what ethics is – the philosophical study of what is good and bad).
P8-19 Oliphant *OCR Religious Ethics for AS and A2*
P11-20 Bowie *Ethical Studies*
2. Watch the two clips that can be reached by clicking on the links below. The utilitarian’s would be relativists – they look at outcome relative to a situation. Kant would be an absolutist, he argues that you always do the same thing regardless of the situation – there is an absolute moral value – never lie.
Trolley problem https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOpf6KcWYyw&list=RDx_uUEaeqFog&index=2
Kant’s Axe
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x_uUEaeqFog&list=RDx_uUEaeqFog&index=1
3. Once you have read the material please write a **1000 word** response to the following statement:

“All moral decisions are relativist” Do you agree?

Structure:

- You will need an introduction that sets out your overall argument – that you agree or disagree with the statement and what you will discuss.
- You will need to provide arguments that demonstrate how moral decisions are relativist
- You will need to provide arguments that demonstrate how moral decisions are linked to moral absolutes.
- Draw on evidence and philosophers ideas from the sources. Quoting them to support your arguments.
- You will need a conclusion that sums up your overall argument – that you agree or disagree with the statement and give you best reason for that belief.

Introduction sentence starter (only if you need it):

Throughout the course of this discussion it will be argued that it is on balance fair/unfair (delete as necessary) to conclude that all moral decisions are relativist. In order to reach this position the following will be considered....

Want to challenge yourself? Complete the tasks at the end of each chapter in the textbook; they will sharpen and start to develop your ability to think philosophically!