

GCSE



CCEA GCSE GLOSSARIES

# Religious Studies

Unit 7: An Introduction to Philosophy  
of Religion



For first teaching from September 2017



## GCSE Religious Studies Glossary

<b>Absolute morality</b>	This is the belief that something is morally right or wrong regardless of what the circumstances are.
<b>Abstract</b>	This is when something exists in thought or as an idea but does not actually have concrete or physical existence.
<b>Afterlife</b>	This refers to the belief in life after death.
<b>Agnostic</b>	A person who is uncertain if God exists or not because there is insufficient evidence.
<b>Analysis</b>	This refers to the detailed examination of the elements or structure of something.
<b>Anglican</b>	A person who is a member of the Church of England (or Ireland).
<b>Attribute</b>	This refers to a quality or feature which is regarded as a characteristic or inherent part of someone or something.
<b>Atheist</b>	This is a person who believes that there are convincing reasons and arguments to conclude that God does not exist.
<b>Belief</b>	This is something which people accept to be true or exists when they may not necessarily have proof.
<b>Bible</b>	The holy book of the Christian faith which is accepted as the final source of authority in belief and practice for Christians.
<b>Big Bang Theory</b>	A scientific theory which seeks to provide an explanation for the origins of the universe by reference to an initial 'explosion.'
<b>Charles Darwin</b>	A British naturalist who lived from 1809 – 1882. He studied Biology and is associated with the theory of evolution.
<b>Contrasting</b>	This is when two beliefs or ideas are compared in order to highlight their differences.
<b>Conversion</b>	The process of a person changing from one belief/religion to another, e.g. someone who changes from being a Muslim to a Christian.
<b>Creationism</b>	The belief that God created the world as outlined in a sacred text such as the book of Genesis in the Bible. It is sometimes interpreted to denote rejection of evolution.

<b>Design (argument)</b>	An argument that claims the existence of God can be inferred from the intricate design and complexity of the world in which we live.
<b>Devil/Satan</b>	A term which is used to describe a personal, spiritual adversary of God, whose aim is to thwart God's purpose and plans.
<b>Evolution</b>	A scientific theory that claims that human life developed from simple organisms through natural selection.
<b>Existence</b>	This term means the state or fact of existing. It is frequently used when talking about God.
<b>First Cause</b>	The theory that everything has a cause apart from God, who is the first cause, the "uncaused". This feature is used to argue in support of the existence of God.
<b>Free will</b>	This is the belief that God has given each person the power to perform actions for which he or she is fully responsible; the ability to choose and act on the basis of one's freedom, e.g. Christians believe that God created humans with free will.
<b>General Revelation</b>	Knowledge of God available to everyone, e.g. through reflection on nature.
<b>Genesis</b>	The first book of the Bible, which includes the Christian creation story of God being the one who made the world we live in.
<b>Hallucinations</b>	This is a reference to an experience involving the apparent perception of something which is not actually present at the time.
<b>Holy Spirit</b>	He is the Third person of the Trinity; a gift to believers of the early church at Pentecost. He indwells Christians today and guides and empowers them.
<b>Illusion</b>	A (false) belief that is not justified or warranted but which possesses a certain quality that suggests to some (uncritical) people that it is true.
<b>Immanent</b>	The belief that God is involved and present in his creation.
<b>Impersonal</b>	This is the idea that God does not possess personal qualities and does not enter into personal relationships with individuals.
<b>Knowable</b>	Able to be acquainted with; able to be known.

<b>Miracle</b>	This is an extraordinary event that cannot be explained by natural or scientific laws. It is usually regarded as a direct action of God and provides evidence for his existence.
<b>Monotheism</b>	This refers to the belief in one God.
<b>Moral evil</b>	Suffering or pain caused by the acts/words/choices of another person, e.g. murder.
<b>Moral relativism</b>	The belief that what is morally right or wrong depends on the situation/circumstances of each case; people adhering to this argue that there are no universal moral truths.
<b>Natural suffering</b>	Refers to suffering or pain which is caused by nature, e.g. earthquake. There is no human involvement in the cause of the suffering.
<b>Omnipotent</b>	Means all powerful; it is a quality which is essential to the nature of God. There is nothing which is beyond God or impossible for him to do.
<b>Omnipresent</b>	This term means present everywhere. It is an attribute of God.
<b>Omniscient</b>	A term which means all knowing; a quality essential to the nature of God.
<b>Peace</b>	This is when people live in a state where there is an absence of conflict/war/violence.
<b>Personal</b>	Having personal qualities and the ability to interact with others.
<b>Polytheism</b>	Refers to the belief in the existence of many gods. It can be used to refer to people who worship more than one god. It is viewed by many as the opposite of monotheism.
<b>Prayer</b>	This is a way which people communicate with God either personally or as a group.
<b>Reason</b>	Refers to the power to determine truth by rational means.
<b>Religious experience</b>	Can also be called a spiritual experience. It is an experience which is caused by God rather than by ordinary or natural processes. Religious believers argue that a miracle is a type of religious experience.
<b>Sacrament</b>	An outward and visible sign of a deeper spiritual reality. They are practised in Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches, e.g. baptism and communion.

<b>Sacred texts</b>	A holy document used by a religion, e.g. the Bible which is inspired by God and believed by Christians to be the final and ultimate source of authority.
<b>Scripture</b>	The holy writings of a religious group which contains guidelines and instructions for living.
<b>Special Revelation</b>	This refers to the knowledge of God that is not available to everyone, but rather to an individual or a group of people. Dreams, visions, prophecies and the Bible can be regarded as special revelation by Christians.
<b>Soul</b>	The spiritual or immaterial part of a human being that continues to exist after a person has died. The soul is the essential part of someone that survives death.
<b>Theist</b>	This term refers to a person who believes in the existence of God.
<b>Tradition</b>	Beliefs or practices that have been passed on from generation to generation.
<b>Transcendence</b>	Comes from the Latin prefix <i>trans</i> meaning beyond. The belief that God is beyond and not limited by the world which he has created.
<b>Unknowable</b>	Cannot be known or understood. Beyond the limits of our understanding.
<b>Vision</b>	A vision refers to something which is seen in a dream or dream-like state and regarded by the subject as a revelation from God.
<b>William Paley</b>	He lived from 1743 – 1805 and argued that the signs of design in the world justifies belief in the existence of God.
<b>Worship</b>	A religious act of adoration; where people are freely expressing and acknowledging the worth of God.