



United Curriculum

The best in everyone™

Secondary

Religious Studies

Specification

Last updated 15/05/2026



Are you using the latest version of this document?

You will always find the most up-to-date version on the curriculum [website](#).
Minor edits to the document are logged in the Version History below; subject advisers will be in touch if there are significant changes.



Introduction	4
Why Have a Common Key Stage 3 Curriculum?	4
Why Has the United Curriculum for Religious Studies Been Updated for 2024/25 and Beyond?	4
What Are the Aims of the United Curriculum for Religious Studies?	5
United Curriculum for Secondary Religious Studies at a Glance	6
Structuring the United Curriculum for Religious Studies	7
Knowledge to Be Taught	7
How Knowledge Should Be Used	8
Using This Document	9
Detailed Knowledge for Year 7	10
Substantive Knowledge to Be Taught in Year 7	10
Disciplinary Knowledge to Be Taught in Year 7	17
Detailed Knowledge for Year 8	19
Substantive Knowledge to Be Taught in Year 8	19
Disciplinary Knowledge to Be Taught in Year 8	30
Detailed Knowledge for Year 9	32
Substantive Knowledge to Be Taught in Year 9	32
Disciplinary Knowledge to Be Taught in Year 9	41
How Knowledge Should Be Used	42
Summative Assessments	45
What Will the Assessments Look Like?	45
What Will Be Assessed in Each Summative Assessment?	45
Version History	48
Appendix A: Example Scripture that Students May Encounter in Year 7	49
Appendix B: Optional Opportunities to Develop Personal Knowledge	50



Introduction

The first iteration of the United Curriculum was developed over a decade ago in a small set of subjects at Key Stage 3. It began as a set of core concepts – co-created by subject advisers, teachers and other experts – that should be taught to all students in all United Learning schools. While it has developed over the years to include adaptable lesson resources and schemes of work, the heart of the United Curriculum is still the core concepts – the common curriculum intent – that all United Learning schools are expected to teach to their students.

Why Have a Common Key Stage 3 Curriculum?

- **Entitlement.** Our most important purpose is to teach young people things they would not learn outside school, which free them to think and act more powerfully in their lives. United Learning's common curriculum ensures that all students – no matter what classroom or school they are in – are taught at least *this* knowledge.
- **Scaling impacts.** Schools can share best practice more easily and the support of subject advisers can be leveraged more effectively when schools teach a common curriculum.
- **Collective expertise.** The United Curriculum harnesses United Learning's collective expertise and has invested more time in curriculum design than any one school could do alone.
- **Effective assessment.** A common curriculum allows for common, standardised assessments that are taken by thousands of students. These provide teachers with information about what their students do and do not know to inform their practice and enable reliable benchmarking across schools.

Why Has the United Curriculum for Religious Studies Been Updated for 2024/25 and Beyond?

No curriculum is ever done; all curricula should be iterated to reflect new evidence and research, as well as emerging scientific issues, and to improve pupil outcomes. The content in the United Curriculum for Key Stage 3 Religious Studies has been updated for 2024/25 for these reasons, as well as to ensure that:

- the sequencing of the curriculum – particularly within substantive and disciplinary themes – reflects the best evidence available,
- links between subjects are more meaningful, systematic and explicit. For example, students may revisit and build on knowledge across History, English and Religious Studies more systematically,
- the 'amount' of content reflects the model curriculum timetable, i.e. a minimum of 4% of teaching time at Key Stage 3 (or at least one 60-minute lesson per week).



What Are the Aims of the United Curriculum for Religious Studies?

State-funded schools have a statutory requirement to teach Religious Education to students in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. The United Curriculum for Religious Studies should therefore be considered a five-year curriculum: students should build on knowledge from Key Stage 2 (where possible, given mixed teaching in primary schools) and progress and deepen this knowledge over five years.

The United Curriculum for Religious Studies aims to provide students with:

knowledge and understanding of major world faiths, including:

- their historical foundations, origins and sources of authority,
- their central principles and teachings about human formation,
- their central principles and teachings about what it means to live a good life,
- the ethical and practical precepts within which people of the faith live,
- the major controversies within and between them,
- the different interpretations that individuals or groups may make.

opportunities to engage with ethical questions, which begin in Year 7 and increase in complexity across the key stages;

a recognition that religion is dynamic rather than fixed, shaped by interpretation, culture and context;

opportunities to see themselves reflected in the curriculum and to take them beyond their own experiences. The curriculum is representative, diverse and inclusive. The diversity of beliefs and practices within the major world faiths is reflected, and students see the role of diverse men and women in the origins and growth of each faith;

disciplinary knowledge of the processes of theology, philosophy and social sciences, which is embedded across units rather than taught discretely;

a curriculum that is 'collectively enough'. It is not possible to cover all religious and non-religious traditions in five years and the United Curriculum does not intend to try; instead, content has been selected so that students have a meaningful and deep understanding of some traditions;

knowledge of religious and non-religious traditions. While the depth studies focus on religious perspectives and practices (because of the relatively limited teaching time that Religious Studies occupies), there are ample opportunities to explore non-religious viewpoints, including Humanism, throughout and particularly in the ethical discussions in Year 9 and Key Stage 4;

specific, deeper knowledge of Christianity to reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian.



United Curriculum for Secondary Religious Studies at a Glance

The below is a summary of the depth studies taught in the United Curriculum for Religious Studies. Non-religious traditions are considered across some/all units.

Year	Depth Studies Taught
7	1. Judaism 2. Christianity <i>Note: in the United Curriculum, some of the content in Judaism and Christianity is split into a discrete unit that introduces Abrahamic Faiths.</i>
8	3. Islam 4. Hindu Dharma 5. Buddhism OR Sikhi
9	6. Introduction to Ethics 7. Ethics in the Modern World 8. Philosophy and the Moral Self
10	9. Christianity 10. Islam OR Other 11. Thematic Study 1 and 2
11	12. Thematic Study 3 and 4



Structuring the United Curriculum for Religious Studies

The specification includes:

1. The knowledge to be taught by the end of each year.
2. How this knowledge should be used.

Knowledge to Be Taught

Knowledge in Religious Studies generally falls into one of three types:

1. **Substantive knowledge.** This is the body of work of a subject. In Religious Studies, it is the knowledge about religious and non-religious traditions.
2. **Disciplinary knowledge.** This is *how* this body of work is produced. In Religious Studies, it refers to the methods, processes and conversations that are often undertaken by scholars of theology, philosophy and social sciences. It is often understood as ‘ways of knowing’.
3. **Personal knowledge.** Distinctive to Religious Studies, personal knowledge is students’ awareness of their own presuppositions and values about the religious and non-religious traditions they study.¹ Personal knowledge can be developed in the context of substantive and disciplinary knowledge and should not be taught discretely. Personal knowledge is not assessed and therefore it is not included in this specification. However, suggested opportunities for developing students’ personal knowledge are listed in [Appendix B](#).

The substantive and disciplinary knowledge in this specification has been organised in the below themes. Organising the curriculum in this way helps students to structure their knowledge into coherent conceptual frameworks. This is beneficial because students are more likely to retain new information when they can connect it to an existing conceptual framework, integrate it with new knowledge and make appropriate connections.

Schools are not necessarily expected to teach all the content in these blocks; they are actively discouraged from attempting to teach the disciplinary content discretely. The content set out below provides the endpoint, rather than the sequence to follow.

¹ Ofsted (2021), [Research review series: religious education](#)



Substantive Knowledge	Judaism	Within each of these themes, students will consider: • Origins of the Faith • Religious Authority • Beliefs about Creation • Beliefs about Nature of God • Beliefs about Morality and Living a Good Life • Practices • Diversity of Beliefs and Practices
	Christianity	
	Islam	
	Hindu Dharma	
	Buddhism	
	Non-religious Traditions, Including Humanism	
Disciplinary Knowledge	Theology	
	Philosophy	
	Social Sciences	

How Knowledge Should Be Used

Scholars of Religious Studies do not just need to know a list of facts; they need to apply their knowledge to known and unknown contexts, make connections and, often, use different pieces of knowledge in different ways.

In addition to teaching the detailed substantive and disciplinary knowledge set out below, schools should also ensure that students are taught how to use, and have the opportunity to practise using, this knowledge in these main ways:

- U1. Demonstrate knowledge
- U2. Analyse
- U3. Evaluate
- U4. Make thematic links (synoptic)

Appropriate expectations for Years 7 and 8 are set out in ['How Knowledge Should Be Used'](#) (below).



Using This Document

This specification sets out the knowledge that should be taught by the end of Year 7, 8 and 9. It could be considered in a similar way to an exam specification.

At a minimum, schools should review the detailed knowledge below and ensure their curriculum aligns with these expectations. Where there are gaps in their current curriculum, schools should make necessary adjustments and additions to ensure all students have the opportunity to learn the content set out.

We expect that many schools will choose to employ and adapt the optional, centrally-provided resources – including the schemes of work and lesson resources – to support them in meeting the requirements set out in this specification.



Detailed Knowledge for Year 7

Substantive Knowledge to Be Taught in Year 7

The below outlines the detailed knowledge that should be taught by the end of Year 7, grouped by theme and topic.

In addition to the content below, students are expected to be able to use key vocabulary in a range of contexts.

Judaism

J1 Origins of the Faith

J1.1 Abraham's Covenant with God	1. The importance of Abraham's life; including: a. that he was born around 2000 BC, b. that he was monotheistic in a polytheistic society. 2. Abraham's covenant with God: a. Abraham promised to only believe in one God., b. God would bless Abraham with land and many descendants. 3. Abraham's marriage to Sarah and birth of Isaac, including that, because of Sarah's age, some people believe that the birth of Isaac was a miracle caused by God.
J1.2 Abraham's Sacrifice	1. The story of Abraham's sacrifice; including: a. that Abraham was willing to sacrifice his son, whom Jewish people (and Christians) believe to be Isaac, b. that God spared Isaac by sending a ram to sacrifice instead.
J1.3 Moses in Egypt	2. The importance of the story of Moses, including: a. that the enslaved Israelites were Abraham's descendants, b. Miriam's role in watching over Moses, c. that God sent the final plague, where the firstborn son would die.
J1.4 Moses's Covenant with God	1. The story of Moses' covenant with God, including: a. that Moses spoke with God on Mount Sinai, b. that Moses received the Ten Commandments from God, c. that the laws that that were revealed were recorded in Exodus.



J1.5 Golden Calf and Leviticus	1. The breaking of the Ten Commandments through the worship of the Golden Calf. 2. Further laws were introduced in Leviticus to help the Israelites keep a state of purity.
J1.6 Female Leaders	1. The roles of Miriam in the Torah, including: a. that Miriam led the Israelites in celebration as they crossed the Red Sea. 2. The role of Esther in the Tanakh, including: b. that Esther's story sits in the Ketuvim, c. that Esther was a young Jewish woman living in the Jewish diaspora outside of Israel (Persia), d. that Esther was married to the King but revealed her Jewish identity in a plea to save the Jewish people. Students might study: • The festival of Purim and how it is celebrated, including a reading of the Book of Esther and a family meal.

J2 Religious Authority

J2.1 Written Sources	1. The Tanakh (Hebrew Bible) as the Torah, Nevi'im and Ketuvim. 2. The Torah as Law, as it contains the 613 mitzvot (commands) from God. 3. How some Jewish people believe the Torah is the word of God, as dictated to Moses on Mount Sinai. 4. The authority and origin of the Talmud. 5. The Talmud's intended purpose as a guide to follow the teachings of the Torah. 6. The Talmud is sometimes called the 'Oral Torah' as it was passed orally before being written down.
---------------------------------------	---

J3 Key Beliefs

J3.1	1. Judaism as a monotheistic faith, with belief in one God.
-------------	---



Nature of God	- The book of Isaiah prophesises that God will send a messiah to bring peace to the world. - Characteristics of the God of the Abrahamic Faiths, including: - Omnipotent: all-powerful, - Omnibenevolent: all-loving, - Omniscient: all-knowing. Students might study: - Omnipresent: present everywhere, at all times.
J3.2 Creation	An all-powerful God created the world.
J3.3 Morality and Living a Good Life	- The importance of the 613 mitzvot, drawn from all books in the Torah. - Examples of how the mitzvot are followed by many Jewish people today. - The concept of Tikkun Olam ('Repair the World').
J3.4 Afterlife	The importance of ethical living over specific, detailed descriptions of the afterlife.

J4 Practices

J4.1 Prayer and Acts of Worship	- The importance of the synagogue as a place of worship and community. - The role of the rabbi in leading worship, including reading the Torah scrolls. - Features of the Shema prayer, and why it is important. Students might study: - The Amidah prayer, and why it is important.
J4.2 Rituals and Festivals	Features and importance of Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremonies, including:



- a. that it is a rite of passage that takes place at age 13 for boys and 12 for girls,
 - b. that it includes the reading of the Torah in Hebrew.
2. Friends and family gather in the synagogue.

Students might study:

- Specific religious items that are worn, including the kippah, tallit and tefillin.
3. The origins of and Pesach/Passover and actions performed, including:
 - a. that it remembers the story of Exodus,
 - b. that the family will share the Seder meal, with symbolic food to remember the story.

Students might study:

- Matzah bread is eaten.
- Specific examples of symbolic food e.g. a lamb shank to remember the blood over the doorframes.
- Some Progressive Seder meals include 'Miriam's Cup' to symbolise the important role she played.

J5 Diversity of Beliefs and Practices

J5.1 Different Interpretations	1. Differing interpretations of scripture that lead to different practices, particularly in Orthodox and Progressive Judaism.
J5.2 Faith Across the World	1. To understand that there are Jewish communities all over the world and there is a diversity in practice that reflects different cultural contexts.



Christianity

C1 Origins of the Faith

C1.1 Roots in Judaism	1. The stories included in the origins of Judaism, particularly Abraham and Moses. 2. The roots of Christianity in the Jewish faith and Jesus' Jewish identity.
C1.2 Jesus's Life	1. The story and importance of Jesus's birth, including the role of Mary. 2. Examples and importance of Jesus's ministry, including the Sermon on the Mount. 3. The story and importance of Jesus's death, resurrection and ascension. 4. The role of Mary Magdalene in the story of Jesus's resurrection.
C1.3 Development of the Christian Church	1. The command and importance of the Great Commission. 2. The importance of St Paul in the spread of Christianity. 3. Phoebe and Lydia as a part of Paul's ministry, who helped to spread the message of Jesus. 4. The Nicene Creed established the Trinity by stating that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one. 5. The Reformation and establishment of the Protestant Church.

C2 Religious Authority

C2.1 Written Authority	1. The Bible as the holy text for Christianity. 2. The structure of the Bible, including the Old Testament (and its links to Tanakh) and New Testament; books, chapters and verses. 3. The Bible as a story of salvation, with large parts of the New Testament authored by Jesus's Apostles and other early Christian leaders.
C2.2 People in Authority	1. The Pope as the head of the Catholic Church.



C3 Key Beliefs

C3.1 Nature of God	1. Christianity as a monotheistic faith and the nature of God as three and one (the Trinity). 2. God as omnibenevolent, omnipotent and omniscient. 3. Jesus as the prophesied messiah and the Son of God. 4. Jesus' sacrifice as atonement for humanity's sin.
C3.2 Creation	1. The creation of the world by an all-powerful God, as in Genesis.
C3.3 Morality and Living a Good Life	1. The importance of the Sermon on the Mount in showing how Christians can fulfil the laws of Moses. 2. Belief in the afterlife gives a sense of accountability, encouraging Christians to follow Jesus' example and seek forgiveness for their mistakes.
C3.4 Afterlife	1. Beliefs about life after death, including judgement day, heaven and hell and salvation.

C4 Practices

C4.1 Prayer and Acts of Worship	1. The origins and importance of the Lord's Prayer. 2. Examples of and importance of sacraments to some Christians.
C4.2 Celebrations	1. How Christians may celebrate Christmas.



C5 Diversity of Beliefs and Practices

C5.1 Denominations	1. Denominations of the Christian Church have developed over time, reflecting different contexts and approaches to the faith. 2. Examples must include Catholicism and the Church of England.
C5.2 Catholicism and Protestantism	1. Sacraments are special religious ceremonies that give God's blessing. 2. For Catholics there are seven sacraments, whereas Protestants usually only focus on baptism and communion. 3. Different beliefs about religious authority, including the Catholic belief that the Pope has special authority to interpret the Bible, whereas Protestants believe the Bible has ultimate authority over church leaders. Students might study: • Different practices around leadership, including that in Catholicism only men can be ordained as priests, whereas in some Protestant churches both men and women can become leaders.
C5.3 Different Interpretations	1. The variety of approaches to interpreting scripture, including literal and symbolic reading. 2. That there is not one set way that Christians within a group should interpret the Bible.
C5.4 Faith Across the World	1. There are Christian communities all over the world and there is a diversity in practice that reflects different cultural contexts.

Non-Religious Traditions

N1 Non-religious Traditions	1. That there is a growing number of non-religious people in the UK. 2. That people may believe in God or a higher power and not be part of a religion.
--	---



Disciplinary Knowledge to Be Taught in Year 7

D1 Theology

D1.1

Scripture and Religious Authority

1. Theologians consider the language, form and context of scripture and religious texts and draw inferences from them.
2. Theologians consider the translation of scriptures from their original languages into the vernacular.
3. Students should be able to make inferences from scripture.

Note: suggestions of the scripture that students may consider are outlined in [Appendix B](#). Students are not expected to learn and recite scripture.

4. Theologians consider how scripture can be used to make claims about how people should live.
5. Theologians consider how interpretation of scripture is used to form doctrine.

D2 Social Sciences

D2.1

Interpreting Data

1. Social scientists collect data to understand religious and non-religious identification in society.
2. Students should know the importance of the census across England and Wales and its key findings from 2021, including that:
 - a. More than half of people in England and Wales reported as religious.
 - b. The largest religious group in England and Wales is Christian, followed by Muslim and Hindu.
 - c. Between 2011 and 2021, the proportion of people describing themselves as 'Christian' decreased. The proportion reporting 'no religion' or other religions [such as Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist] increased.
3. Social scientists consider how and why data about religious identification has changed over time.
4. Students should be able to describe how migration has contributed to the changing religious landscape in England and Wales.



D2.2 Forms of Expression	1. Social scientists study forms of expression and consider the similarities and differences of forms of expression between and within religious and non-religious traditions (locally, nationally and globally), and how these similarities and differences are shaped by geographical and cultural contexts. 2. Students should be able to identify the similarities and differences between forms of expression [such as Pesach or Christmas] in different geographical and cultural contexts.
D2.3 Shaping, and Being Shaped by, Wider Society	1. Social scientists consider how changes in society can impact religious beliefs and practices. 2. Students should be able to describe how the changing role of men and women in the Church of England and Reform Jewish tradition has been shaped by wider changes in society. 3. Students should be able to describe how changes in wider society impact attitudes in religious communities, in the example of divorce and remarriage in the Church of England.

D3 Philosophy

Students will build their understanding of philosophy more explicitly later in Key Stage 3.



Detailed Knowledge for Year 8

Substantive Knowledge to Be Taught in Year 8

The below outlines the detailed knowledge that should be taught by the end of Year 8, grouped by theme and topic.

In addition to the content below, students are expected to be able to use key vocabulary in a range of contexts.

Schools should teach **either** Buddhism **or** Sikhi.

Islam

I1 Origins of the Faith

I1.1 Islam's Roots in Judaism and Christianity	1. Islam's roots in Judaism and Christianity, including acknowledgement of prophets including Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus.
I1.2 Muhammad's Life	1. The importance of Prophet Muhammad, including his role as the 'Seal of the Prophets'. 2. Muhammad's role in guiding the early Muslim community (Ummah) in religious and political matters, including: a. The Makkan period, when Muhammad preached monotheism in a polytheistic society. b. The Medinan period, when Muhammad established a structured Muslim community, formed the Constitution of Medina and led military campaigns to defend and expand Islam. c. Muhammad's teachings, including the Final Sermon.

I2 Religious Authority

I2.1	1. The origins and importance of the Qur'an as the literal word of God, which was revealed to Muhammad.
-------------	---



Written Authority	2. The Sunnah as a collection of examples from Muhammad's life and practices, which serves as a model for Muslims to follow.
I2.3 Influential Leaders	1. Muhammad's role in providing the foundation for Islamic beliefs. a. Sunni and Shia Muslim views on the first four caliphs, including vocabulary of Rightly Guided Caliphs (Sunni) and Imams (Shia). Students might study: 1. The specific names and dates of the caliphs.

I3 Key Beliefs

I3.1 Nature of God	1. Islam as a monotheistic faith, with belief in Allah as the one, eternal and all-powerful God (Tawhid). 2. Allah as beyond human understanding yet close to His creation. Students might study: 1. Specific examples of the 99 names of Allah, including 'The Most Merciful' and 'The Opener'.
I3.2 Creation	1. The creation of the world by Allah, as described in the Qur'an, including the creation of Adam from mud.
I3.3 Morality and Living a Good Life	1. The importance of the Qur'an and the example of Muhammad in showing how Muslims can live a moral life. 2. Belief in the afterlife gives a sense of accountability, encouraging Muslims to act ethically and seek forgiveness for their mistakes.
I3.4 Afterlife	1. Beliefs about life after death, including judgement by Allah, reward in paradise (Jannah) and punishment in hell (Jahannam).



I4 Practices

I4.1 Prayer and Acts of Worship	2. The Five Pillars of (Sunni) Islam, and how they may be performed: a. Shahada: Statement of faith. b. Salah: Five daily prayers facing Mecca. c. Zakat: A donation of 2.5%. d. Sawm: Fasting during the month of Ramadan. e. Hajj: Pilgrimage to Makkah. 3. The importance of the Five Pillars. Students might study: 1. How Shi'a Muslims may perform the Five Pillars.
I4.2 Rituals and Festivals	1. How Ramadan may be observed, and why it is important. Examples might include: a. Fasting from food, drink and bad habits from dawn to dusk, including the concept of a 'digital detox'. b. Spending more time in prayer, reading the Qur'an and spiritual reflection. 2. How Eid al-Fitr may be celebrated and why it is important. Examples might include: a. Breaking the fast with dates and water following the Prophet's example. b. Celebrating with family, feasts, decorations and greetings of "Eid Mubarak". c. Beginning the celebration with the sighting of the new moon and marking it as a special holiday.

I5 Diversity of Beliefs and Practices

I5.1 Different Interpretations	1. There are different Islamic schools of thought that interpret the Qur'an in different ways, based on history, language and context.
---	--



	a. Different interpretations of the Sharia law across the Muslim world, based on cultural and historical traditions. Examples might include female rights to inheritance. Students might study: - Specific, named schools of thought, including: - Hanafi, - Hanbali, - Ja'fari. - A study of Mariam Khan's 'It's Not About the Burqa' and female Muslim voices interpreting the Qur'an.
I5.2 The Role of women	- Different interpretations of the role of women in Islam. - Some Muslims prioritise male leadership, whereas others emphasise the spiritual equality of men and women. - Muhammad's daughter, Fatima, is seen as a role model in Shia Islam. Students might study: - Mariam Mosque as a case study, as a mosque with female imams. - A case study of the 'Burqa Ban' in countries such as France, Belgium and Denmark.

Hindu Dharma

H1 Origins of the Faith

H1.1 The Origins of Hindu Dharma	- The origins of Hindu Dharma as one of the oldest religions, starting in the Indian subcontinent over 4,000 years ago. - The development of Hindu Dharma from the early Vedic traditions of the ancient Indus Valley.
H1.2 Difficulties in Naming Faiths	The term 'Hinduism' as a Western label that does not fully reflect the wide variety of beliefs and practices.



H2 Religious Authority

H2.1 Sacred Texts	1. The importance of the Vedas as the oldest and most important scriptures in Hindu Dharma. 2. The Vedas include hymns, rituals and teachings passed down over time. a. The Bhagavad Gita as a text that outlines Lord Krishna's teachings on duty (dharma) and the path to liberation (moksha). Students might study: • The philosophical teachings found in texts such as the Upanishads.
------------------------------	---

H3 Key Beliefs

H3.1 Nature of God	1. The importance of Brahman as the ultimate reality. 2. Atman as the inner self and a part of Brahman. a. Hindus may worship many gods and goddesses, but all are seen as forms of the ultimate reality, Brahman. 3. Hindu Dharma as including monotheistic, polytheistic and pantheistic views. 4. The importance of the Trimurti as a way to understand Brahman. 5. The roles within the Trimurti, reflecting the different stages of cyclical time. a. Brahma (creator), b. Vishnu (preserver), c. Shiva (destroyer).
H3.2 Creation	1. Hindu Dharma view of time as cyclical: that the universe is undergoing infinite cycles of creation, preservation and destruction.
H3.3	1. The importance of karma as the law of cause and effect. 2. Karma determines a human's future experiences and encourages Hindus to live in an ethical way.



Morality and Living a Good Life	
H3.4 Afterlife	1. The purpose of creation as to maintain dharma (cosmic order) and for all beings to realise Brahman, the ultimate reality. 2. The two types of duty: a. universal duty, known as Sanatana Dharma, b. individual duty, known as Varnashrama Dharma. 3. Sanatana Dharma teaches Hindus to live a good life through truth, compassion and self-discipline. 4. Varnashrama Dharma teaches that duties depend on a person's social group and stage of life. 5. Traditional Hindu society used varna, or social order, but many Hindus today reject caste discrimination. 6. The importance of ahimsa as the concept of non-violence.

H4 Practices

H4.1 Prayer and Acts of Worship	1. The importance of the mandir (temple) as a place of worship, prayer, rituals and community. a. Murtis as images or statues that help Hindus connect with the divine. b. Features and importance of puja (worship), both at home and in the mandir, including using murtis to focus on deities. Students might study: • Specific items on a puja tray and their corresponding symbolism.
H4.2 Festivals	1. Ramayana is a Hindu epic story that tells the life of Prince Rama and his wife Sita. 2. The importance of the Ramayana in emphasising Rama and Sita's devotion and dharma. 3. Features of Diwali as the festival of lights, celebrating the victory of good over evil, honouring Lord Rama. Students might study:



	• The full text of the Ramayana story, including the role of Hanuman. • Differences between how Diwali is celebrated in the UK and how it is celebrated in India.
H4.3 Rituals	1. The naming ceremony, including blessings, prayers and how astrology may influence the chosen name. 2. Hindu funerals, including cremation, prayers and rituals to guide the soul's journey. Students might study: • The specific names for the rituals e.g. Namakarana. • Ancestral remembrance through annual ceremonies after the funeral.

H5 Diversity of Beliefs and Practices

H5.1 Different Interpretations	1. Hindu Dharma in India encompasses a wide spectrum of beliefs and traditions; ranging from monotheism to polytheism and pantheism, different sects and varied ritual practices.
H5.2 Faith Across the World	1. Hindu communities worldwide adapt their traditions to local cultures, while maintaining core spiritual principles. 2. Hindu Dharma values non-violence, respect for all beings and family devotion.

Buddhism

B1 Origins of the Faith

B1.1 Roots in Hindu Dharma	1. Buddhism's origins in the 5th–4th century BC in ancient India as a reform movement within Hindu traditions. 2. Siddhartha Gautama as the founder of Buddhism. 3. Siddhartha's teachings to seek enlightenment through meditation, and good behaviour rather than following caste rules and rituals.
B1.2	1. Siddhartha Gautama's role as the founder of Buddhism:



Siddhartha Gautama	a. A prince in ancient India who renounced his life of privilege in search of spiritual truth. b. Later became the Buddha, or 'Enlightened One'. 1. The Four Sights (old man, sick person, dead body and a wandering ascetic), including their impact on Siddhartha and his realisation that suffering is an unavoidable part of life. 2. Siddhartha's extreme asceticism, which he eventually rejected in favour of the Middle Way: a. The Middle Way as a path of balance. 3. Siddhartha's enlightenment after meditating under the Bodhi tree.
---------------------------	---

B2 Religious Authority

B2.1 The Buddha	1. The Buddha's authority, from his own experience of enlightenment.
B2.2 Scriptures	1. The Buddhist scriptures as a highly respected record of the Buddha's life. 2. Personal experience and wisdom as the ultimate authority, over sacred texts.

B3 Key Beliefs

B3.1 Nature of God	1. The Buddhist focus on wisdom and ethical practice, rather than teaching belief in Brahman as the 'ultimate reality'.
B3.2 Creation	1. The Buddhist view of time as cyclical, with infinite cycles of birth, death and rebirth. 2. Unlike Hindu Dharma, Buddhism teaches that these cycles do not have a beginning.
B3.3 Morality and Living a Good Life	1. The Four Noble Truths and the teaching that suffering is caused by attachment. 2. The Eightfold Path as practical guidelines for ethical conduct and freedom from suffering, including:



	a. Right speech. b. Right action. c. Right mindfulness.
B3.4 Afterlife	1. Influences from Hindu Dharma, including: a. Karma b. Samsara c. Rebirth 2. The above concepts were reinterpreted within Buddhist teachings. 3. Nirvana as freedom from suffering and attachment, and liberation from the cycle of rebirth.

B4 Practices

B4.1 The Three Jewels	1. The Three Jewels: a. The Buddha (the teacher) b. The Dharma (his teachings) c. The Sangha (the community of practitioners) 2. Meditation as a core Buddhist practice, used to develop mindfulness and ultimately leading to enlightenment.
----------------------------------	---

B5 Diversity of Beliefs and Practices

B5.1 Branches of Buddhism	1. Buddhism's development into various traditions, each interpreting the Buddha's teachings in distinct ways, including Theravada and Mahayana.
B5.2 Different Interpretations	1. Theravada Buddhism as prominent in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. 2. The emphasis on personal enlightenment through monastic life and meditation. 3. Mahayana Buddhism, practised in East Asia. 4. The emphasis on compassion and the role of the Bodhisattvas: enlightened beings who help others to attain nirvana.



B5.3 Buddhism Across the World	1. Buddhism has adapted to different cultures, resulting in diverse practices and traditions across regions. 2. Buddhism is a minority religion in the UK, where it reflects these different expressions from across the world.
---	--

Sikhi

S1 Origins of the Faith

S1.1 Context	1. The origins of Sikhi in the Punjab region of South Asia, in the late 15th century. 2. Guru Nanak as the founder of Sikhi, who taught a path of devotion to one God, equality and selfless service.
S1.2 Relationship to Other Religions	1. The origins of Sikhi in a religiously diverse region, influenced by both Hindu and Islamic traditions.

S2 Religious Authority

S2.1 The Gurus	1. Guru Nanak's emphasis on the oneness of God, equality of all people and living a truthful and honest life. 2. The ten Sikh Gurus, from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh, and their roles in shaping Sikhi, which may include the study of specific examples from the Sikh Gurus.
S2.2 Holy Scriptures	1. The importance of the Guru Granth Sahib as the eternal Guru and ultimate religious authority. 2. The Guru Granth Sahib as a collection of teachings from the Sikh Gurus and other enlightened saints.

S3 Key Beliefs

S3.1 Nature of God	1. The nature of God, including that there is only one God known as Waheguru.
-------------------------------------	---



	a. Waheguru as formless, eternal and beyond human comprehension. b. Waheguru is both transcendent (beyond the physical world) and immanent (present within all creation). c. Waheguru can be experienced through meditation, truthful living and selfless service. 2. The emphasis on oneness and the rejection of idol worship.
S3.2 Creation	1. Creation of the universe by God's divine will, rather than through a single creation event. 2. Creation is seen as continuous, with God's presence sustaining all existence.
S3.3 Morality and Living a Good Life	1. Sikhi teachings that all humanity is one. 2. Rejection of division based on religion, caste or nationality. 3. The Khalsa as a community of committed Sikhs, started by Guru Gobind Singh. 4. Sewa as selfless service. A central Sikh value which encourages helping others through acts of kindness and community service.
S3.4 Afterlife	1. The concept of rebirth based on one's karma and devotion to Waheguru. 2. Mukti as liberation from this cycle, and how Mukti is achieved, including: a. through truthful living, b. selfless service, c. meditating on God's name. 3. The emphasis that union with Waheguru is the ultimate goal.

S4 Practices

S4.1	1. The importance of the gurdwara as the Sikh place of worship, including its role as spiritual and community centre.
-------------	---



Prayer and Acts of Worship	2. The importance of langar, or community kitchen, where free meals are served to all, regardless of background.
S4.2 Rituals	1. The Five Ks of the Khalsa, including: a. Kesh (uncut hair), b. Kara (steel bracelet), c. Kanga (wooden comb), d. Kaccha (cotton underwear), e. Kirpan (steel sword).

S5 Diversity of Beliefs and Practices

S5.1 Different Interpretations	1. All Sikhs accept the Guru Granth Sahib as the main spiritual authority, but they may interpret its teachings in different ways. 2. Variety in Sikh practice, with groups like the Khalsa following strict rules, while others take a more personal or cultural approach to their faith.
S5.2 Sikhi Across the World	1. Sikhs around the world remain connected to their faith but practise it in diverse ways, influenced by different cultural and social contexts. 2. Some Sikhs, such as the Khalsa, follow traditional practices strictly, while others express Sikh beliefs in different ways, including not wearing the Five Ks. 3. Gurdwaras reflect diversity by serving as places of worship, education, charity and sometimes interfaith work or social action.

Disciplinary Knowledge to Be Taught in Year 8

D1 Theology

D1.1	1. Theologians consider the language, form and context of scripture and religious texts and draw inferences from them.
-------------	--



Scripture and Religious Authority	2. Theologians consider the translation of scriptures from their original languages into the vernacular. 3. Students should be able to make inferences from sacred texts. 4. Theologians consider how scripture can be used to make claims about how people should live. 5. Theologians consider how interpretation of scripture is used to form authoritative teaching.
--	---

D2 Social Sciences

D2.2 Forms of Expression	1. Social scientists study forms of expression and consider the similarities and differences of forms of expression between and within religious groups, and how these similarities and differences are shaped by geographical and cultural contexts. 2. Students should be able to identify the similarities and differences between forms of expression in different geographical and cultural contexts.
D2.3 Shaping, and Being Shaped by, Wider Society	1. Social scientists consider how changes in society can impact religious beliefs and practices. 2. Students should be able to describe how the changing role of men and women in the Church of England and Reform Jewish tradition has been shaped by wider changes in society. 3. Students should be able to describe how changes in wider society impact attitudes in religious communities, in the example of divorce and remarriage in the Church of England.

D3 Philosophy

Students will build their understanding of philosophy more explicitly later in Key Stage 3.



Detailed Knowledge for Year 9

Substantive Knowledge to Be Taught in Year 9

Introduction to Ethics

E1 Ethical Frameworks

E1.1 Moral Dilemmas and Decision-Making	1. Moral decisions are influenced by upbringing, culture, religion and personal experiences. 2. An ethical dilemma as a situation in which all available options have moral advantages and disadvantages. a. The Trolley Problem is an example of an 'ethical dilemma'. b. The Trolley Problem is a thought experiment about whether to intervene by changing the course of a runaway trolley to save five people, at the cost of one life. Students might study: • R v. Dudley and Stephens (1884): Shipwreck case study where the cabin boy was killed and eaten. Defendants argued 'necessity', but the Court ruled that this was not a defence for murder.
E1.2 Natural Law	1. Natural Law as an ethical theory developed by Thomas Aquinas. 2. Natural Law teaches that morality comes from fulfilling God-given purpose. 3. The official teachings of the Catholic Church are known as the magisterium. 4. Absolute morality as the idea that some actions are always right or wrong, no matter the situation. 5. Relative morality as the idea that right and wrong depends on the situation. 6. Definitions of the Five Primary Precepts: a. Preserve life: Protect all human life. b. Reproduce: Continue the species. c. Educate children: Raise children in the faith. d. Live in an ordered society: Respect law and order. e. Worship God. 7. Secondary Precepts derive from the Primary Precepts.



E1.3 Criticisms of Natural Law	1. Criticisms of Natural Law, including: a. that the theory is too rigid and does not adapt to circumstances, b. that it relies on belief in a Christian God, c. that modern Catholics do not always follow it. Students might study: • An application of Natural Law to the case of conjoined twins, Rosie and Gracie. Separation would save one but kill the other, or else both would die.
E1.4 Situation Ethics (Joseph Fletcher)	1. Situation Ethics as an ethical theory based on 'love', developed by Joseph Fletcher in the 1960s. 2. The theory is rooted in agape (selfless, unconditional love). 3. Working Principles: a. Pragmatism: do what works best in practice. b. Personalism: must put people before rules. c. Relativism: morality depends on the situation. Students might study: • An application of Situation Ethics to the case of Rosie and Gracie.
E1.5 Criticisms of Situation Ethics	1. Criticisms of Situation Ethics, including: a. "Do the most loving thing" still acts like a rule, despite Fletcher rejecting rules. b. It is hard to define love, as people may disagree on what is truly loving.
E1.6 Utilitarianism	1. Utilitarianism as an ethical theory, developed by Jeremy Bentham. 2. According to Utilitarianism, morality is about achieving the greatest happiness for the greatest number. 3. The Hedonic Calculus as a tool for measuring an action's consequences: a. Intensity: How strong the pleasure or pain is. b. Duration: How long the pleasure or pain lasts. c. Certainty: How likely the consequence is. d. Purity: Whether the pleasure is free from pain. e. Extent: How many people are affected. Students might study: • John Stuart Mill's distinction between higher and lower pleasures: ○ Higher pleasures are unique to humans e.g. reading literature.



	Lower pleasures are shared by humans and animals e.g. eating.
E1.7 Criticisms of Utilitarianism	- Criticisms of Utilitarianism, including: - Future outcomes are difficult to predict, making the Hedonic Calculus unreliable. - It may justify immoral actions if they produce the greatest overall good. - Harris' Survival Lottery thought experiment: One healthy person is sacrificed to save several others through organ transplants. This highlights how Utilitarianism may violate individual rights. Students might study: - Mill's higher/lower pleasures could be considered elitist, as lower pleasures can be just as meaningful as higher ones.

E2 Sources of Morality

E2.1 Revelation as a Source of Morality (Islamic focus)	- The idea that for many people, God is the ultimate source of morality. - Moral guidance as revealed through revelation, delivered by Angel Jibril to the Prophet Muhammad. - Examples of Allah's names: 'The All-Wise', 'The Beneficent'. - How interpretations of the Qur'an and Hadiths vary over time and cultures. Students might study: - Amina Wudud's 'social justice' interpretation of the Qur'an, through a female lens. - Specific examples from Hanafi, Hanbali and Ja'fari schools of thought.
E2.2 Humanist Morality	- Humanists believe morality does not require God. - Humanist morality is grounded in reason and empathy. - Humanists value the importance of autonomy, which means individuals own their body and choices. - One example of a 'Humanists UK' campaign.

Ethics in The Modern World

M1 Value at the Beginning and End of Life



M1.1 Value and Meaning of Human Life	1. The concept of the sanctity of life in Christianity, Islam and Judaism. 2. In Hindu Dharma, all life is sacred because living beings have an atman connected to Brahman. 3. Non-religious views may use quality of life as a measure of value. 4. Factors affecting quality of life, including physical health, mental wellbeing, independence.
M1.2 Abortion	Students must be able to explain different views on abortion, including: 1. Pro-life: The view that unborn life should be protected. 2. Pro-choice: The view that pregnant women should have the right to choose. 3. A Catholic pro-life view, including: a. the application of Natural Law, b. the Sanctity of Life. 4. A Humanist pro-choice view, including: a. the application of autonomy and empathy, b. the utilitarian emphasis on the 'greatest good'. Students might study: • An evaluation of the different religious and non-religious views on abortion. • Judith Jarvis Thomson's Violinist analogy, which argues that even if a foetus does have a right to life, it does not automatically give it the right to use another person's body without consent.
M1.3 PGD and Saviour Siblings	1. A 'saviour sibling' is a child conceived to donate tissue to save a sick sibling. 2. PGD is a process used to identify genetic traits (health, gender). 3. Students must be able to explain and evaluate different views on saviour siblings, including: a. Saves a life, b. Low risk to donor child, c. Treats a child as a means to an end, d. Slippery slope to non-medical selections. 4. A Catholic view of saviour siblings: a. Application of Natural Law. b. Sanctity of Life.



	5. An alternative Christian view of saviour siblings: a. Application of Situation Ethics.
M1.4 Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide	1. Euthanasia is the deliberate ending of a life to relieve suffering. 2. Assisted suicide involves helping an individual to end their own life. 3. Paul Lamb's work as an example of a campaigner for legal reform. 4. Students must be able to explain and evaluate different views on euthanasia and assisted suicide, including: a. Autonomy (the right to choose), b. Reducing suffering, c. Potential coercion (pressure on vulnerable individuals), d. Slippery slope. 5. A Catholic view on euthanasia and assisted suicide: a. Application of Natural Law. b. Sanctity of Life. 6. A Humanist view on euthanasia and assisted suicide: a. Application of autonomy and empathy. b. The work and aims of 'Dignity in Dying'. Students might study: • A utilitarian approach to the issue of assisted suicide. • A case study of Dignitas in Switzerland. • Current UK law: Terminally Ill Adults Bill proposed changes.

M2 Value of Life in Wider Society



M2.1 Capital Punishment	1. Students must be able to explain and evaluate different views on capital punishment, including: a. Whether it is a successful deterrent. b. Risk of wrongful execution. 2. Capital punishment was abolished in the UK in 1969. 3. Execution methods include lethal injection and nitrogen gas. 4. Muslim arguments for capital punishment, including: a. Qur’anic texts specifying death for certain crimes. 5. Muslim arguments against capital punishment, including: a. Allah’s mercy. Students might study: • Saudi Arabia case study: High execution rates with a historically uncodified legal system. • USA case study: States with high execution rates (Texas) don’t have lower crime rates. Examples of innocent people being wrongly executed.
M2.2 Animal Testing	1. Students must be able to explain views on animal testing. 2. Cosmetic animal testing uses live animals to evaluate the safety of products e.g. makeup. 3. Medical animal testing uses live animals to evaluate the safety and effectiveness of medical treatments e.g. new drugs. 4. Over 100 million animals used globally per year (mostly small mammals). 5. Hindu views: a. Support for medical testing only if necessary. b. Application of ahimsa. c. Atman in all beings. Students might study: • Additional views on animal testing from a chosen perspective e.g. Catholic, Muslim, Humanist etc.



M3 Value of Life in Wider Society

M3.1 Environment and Fast Fashion	1. Students must be able to explain views on fast fashion and the impact on the environment. 2. Fast fashion as rapid, cheap clothing production. 3. Environmental impact, including: a. One truckload of clothing waste per second. b. Trillions of litres of water used. c. Microplastics released. 4. Hindu views: a. Application of ahimsa. b. Environmental protection as part of Sanatana Dharma. c. Ganges pollution includes microplastics from textiles. Students might study: • Additional views on protecting the environment from a chosen perspective e.g. Catholic, Muslim, Humanist etc.
--	--

Philosophy and the Moral Self

P1 Philosophical Foundations and the Self

P1.1 Introduction to Philosophy	1. Philosophy studies big questions about existence, knowledge, morality and religion. 2. There are many branches of philosophy, including: a. Epistemology: How knowledge is gained and justified. b. Ethics: What makes actions right or wrong. c. Philosophy of Mind: What the mind is and how it relates to the body.
P1.2 The Self	1. Exploration of the nature of the 'self' and where the mind is located.



2. Descartes' method of doubt: the idea that all knowledge can be doubted, except the certainty that we are thinking beings: "I think, therefore I am".
3. Dualism as the view that the mind is non-physical and exists separately from the body.
4. The 'Brain in a Vat' argument: the idea that reality may be an illusion, as the brain could exist independently and be deceived by external factors.
5. Patricia Churchland's view of the mind as identical to the brain, supported by developments in neuroscience.

P2 Arguments for God's Existence

P2.1 Cosmological Argument	1. Argument for God's existence based on cause and effect. 2. Al-Ghazali's argument that an infinite past is impossible, therefore the universe must have a beginning. 3. Aquinas' argument that there must be a First Cause that started everything (God).
P2.2 Design Argument	1. Argument based on order and purpose in the universe. 2. William Paley's watchmaker analogy suggests that the complexity of the universe implies the existence of a designer. 3. The fine-tuning argument states that as the constants of the universe (e.g. gravity) are so precisely set for life, there must be a designer behind this.

P3 Criticisms of Arguments for God's Existence

P3.3 Criticisms of the Cosmological Argument	1. Bertrand Russell's argument that the universe may simply be a "brute fact", meaning it exists without needing any further explanation. 2. If everything requires a cause, then God must also require a cause. 3. Richard Dawkins' 'God of the Gaps' criticism, suggesting God is used to explain what science has not yet understood. 4. A religious response is that God is a necessary, uncaused being who does not require a cause.
---	--



P3.4 Criticisms of the Design Argument	1. Charles Darwin's theory of evolution shows that complex life can develop without the need for a designer. 2. The presence of natural evil, such as diseases and natural disasters, suggests flaws in the idea of perfect design. 3. The multiverse theory proposes that many universes may exist, and ours supports life simply by chance rather than design.
---	--

P4 The Problem of Evil and Responses

P4.1 Problem of Evil	1. Epicurus' Inconsistent Triad: a. God is omnipotent, b. God is omnibenevolent, c. Evil exists. 2. Types of evil in the world, including: a. Moral (e.g. war, crime). b. Natural (e.g. earthquakes, illness).
P4.2 Responses to the Problem of Evil	1. Soul-Making (Irenaeus): a. Suffering helps humans develop virtues (e.g. courage, compassion). 2. Evil as a Test: a. Suffering is seen as a test of faith and trust in God.

P5 AI and the Moral Self

P5.1 AI and Philosophy	1. Alan Turing's Turing Test states that if a machine can convincingly imitate human responses, it may be said to "think". 2. Arguments for the use of AI (artificial intelligence) in assisting moral decisions: a. More objective than humans, as there is less emotional bias. b. Can process huge data, such as applying the Hedonic Calculus across many scenarios. 3. Arguments against the use of AI in assisting moral decisions: a. Cannot take moral responsibility (e.g. self-driving car accidents).
---	---



- b. Timnit Gebru's criticism that as AI is trained on biased human data, it can reinforce discrimination.

Students might study:

- Future debates e.g. whether AI should be used in issues relating to healthcare or law.

Disciplinary Knowledge to Be Taught in Year 9

D1 Theology

D1.1 Scripture and Religious Authority	1. Theologians consider the language, form and context of scripture and religious texts and draw inferences from them. 2. Theologians consider the translation of scriptures from their original languages into the vernacular. 3. Students should be able to make inferences from sacred texts. 4. Theologians consider how scripture can be used to make claims about how people should live. 5. Theologians consider how interpretation of scripture is used to form authoritative teaching.
D1.2 Understand Doctrinal Development	1. Theologians explain how religious moral teachings develop through interpretation and authority. For example, in this unit, students study how the Catholic Church continues to apply Aquinas' Natural Law to modern issues such as PGD and how Islamic moral guidance has developed through different schools of thought (e.g. Hanafi, Hanbali, Ja'fari).

D2 Social Sciences

D2.2 Forms of Expression	1. Social scientists study forms of expression and consider the similarities and differences of forms of expression between and within religious groups, and how these similarities and differences are shaped by geographical and cultural contexts. 2. Students should be able to identify the similarities and differences between forms of expression in different geographical and cultural contexts.
---	--



D2.3 Shaping, and Being Shaped by, Wider Society	1. Students explain how ethical views are shaped by social and historical contexts. For example, they analyse how medical advancements (PGD and saviour siblings) and changing social attitudes to autonomy influence modern ethical debates. 2. Analyse the influence of worldviews on ethical decisions. Students explain how underlying beliefs influence moral conclusions. For example, they explore how many Catholics do not support the Catholic Church's position on birth control, showing how other factors e.g. culture, experiences and age can impact ethical decisions, alongside religious belief.
---	---

D3 Philosophy

D3.1 Analyse Concepts	1. Students clarify and compare ethical concepts such as autonomy (Humanism), agape (Situation Ethics), pleasure (Utilitarianism), sanctity of life and quality of life. For example, they explore how defining life as sacred or as valuable only when it has quality, leads to different conclusions about abortion or assisted dying.
D3.2 Evaluate Arguments	1. Students evaluate ethical arguments using strengths and weaknesses. For example, they assess whether Utilitarianism's greatest happiness principle can justify killing one person in the Survival Lottery, or whether Situation Ethics' focus on love is too subjective to guide moral decisions consistently.

How Knowledge Should Be Used

Use of Knowledge (U)	Typical Command Words	Examples
U1	Define List	Year 7:



Demonstrate Knowledge	Identify Describe State Select	Select the word that matches the definition: the birth of Jesus Christ. Describe three Christian beliefs about the nature of God. Describe three events from the resurrection of Jesus. State one change in the religious landscape in England and Wales over the past 20 years. Year 8: Define the term 'tawhid'. Identify the founder of Islam. Describe three ways in which a Hindu may perform puja (worship). Describe three Hindu beliefs about the afterlife. Year 9: Describe three of the Five Primary Precepts. Define the term 'ethical dilemma'.
U2 Analyse	Explain	Year 7: Explain two reasons why Abraham is important in Judaism. Explain two reasons why the Sermon on the Mount is important. Explain two ways in which Jewish people may celebrate Passover/Pesach. Year 8: Explain two reasons why prophet Muhammad is important for Muslims. Explain two ways in which a Hindu could follow their dharma. Explain two reasons why Diwali is important for Hindus. Year 9: Explain two religious views on capital punishment.



		Explain one argument for and one argument against legalising euthanasia. Explain two of the Five Primary Precepts from Natural Law. Explain two principles from the Hedonic Calculus. Explain two ways in which Humanists may make moral decisions.
U3 Evaluate	Evaluate	Year 7: Not applicable. Year 8: Not applicable. Year 9: Situation Ethics is a relativist theory. State one strength of this. Situation Ethics promotes personalism. State one criticism of this. It is never acceptable to create saviour siblings. It is impossible to justify capital punishment. Applying Natural Law is the best way to make moral decisions. Sanctity of life is more important than quality of life.
U4 Make Thematic Links (Synoptic)	Evaluate	Year 7: Not applicable. Year 8: Not applicable. Year 9: U4 'evaluate' requires students to make thematic (synoptic) links by comparing different ethical theories, applying them to real-life issues and reaching a reasoned judgement about which approach is more convincing.



Summative Assessments

What Will the Assessments Look Like?

Summative assessments will assess a sample of the content in this specification. What is assessed may vary from year to year.

Papers will include a variety of questions intended to assess students' knowledge and their ability to use their knowledge in the ways set out in the specification. They will usually include some multiple choice or other objective questions, some short answer questions and some extended response questions. Students may be asked to bring together knowledge from different sections of the specification to show their holistic understanding of the content.

End-of-Year

The end-of-year assessment for Religious Studies comprises one paper. New, unseen papers will be provided annually.

The paper is designed to last one hour or less, to enable it to be sat during normal lesson time.

The end-of-year assessments are intended to be taken in June, with question papers and mark schemes made available in May. Teachers will be able to input marks into Smartgrade to obtain cohort-benchmarked results for summative use and, where available, topic and question-level analysis for formative use.

Mid-Year

An additional mid-year assessment provides formative feedback and helps track students' progress through the curriculum. This will assess a sample of the content intended to be taught in the first term. The mid-year assessment for Religious Studies comprises one paper. New, unseen papers will be provided annually.

The paper is designed to last one hour or less, to enable it to be sat during normal lesson time.

The mid-year assessments are intended to be taken in January, also with analysis available through Smartgrade.

What Will Be Assessed in Each Summative Assessment?

End-of-Year 7 Assessment

This specification outlines the content that should be taught in Year 7.

The substantive content in **C4 Practices** and **C5 Diversity of Beliefs and Practices** should be taught in Year 7, in the last half term of the year, but it will **not** be assessed in Year 7.



Mid-Year 7 Assessment

This assessment will assess a sample of the content intended to be taught in the first term of the year:

Judaism

- J1.1 Abraham's Covenant With God
- J1.2 Abraham's Sacrifice
- J1.3 Moses in Egypt
- J1.4 Moses's Covenant With God
- J1.5 Golden Calf and Leviticus

Christianity

- C1.1 Roots in Judaism
- C1.2 Jesus's Life (points 1-3 only)

Uses of Knowledge

- U1 Demonstrate Knowledge
- U2 Analyse

End-of-Year 8 Assessment

The assessable substantive content for the End-of-Year 8 assessment is **Islam** and **Hindu Dharma**.

The substantive content in **Buddhism** or **Sikhi** should be taught in Year 8, in the last half term of the year, but it will **not** appear in the end-of-year assessment for Year 8.

Mid-Year 8 Assessment

This assessment will assess a sample of the content intended to be taught in the first term of the year:

Islam

- I1.2 Muhammad's Life
- I2.1.1 Written Authority
- I2.3 Influential Leaders



- I3.1.1 Nature of God
- I3.3.1 Morality and Living a Good Life
- I4.1 Prayer and Acts of Worship

End-of-Year 9 Assessment

The assessable substantive content for the End-of-Year 9 assessment is **Introduction to Ethics** and **Ethics in the Modern World**.

The substantive content in **Philosophy of the Moral Self** will **not** appear in the end-of-year assessment for Year 9.

Mid-Year 9 Assessment

This assessment will assess a sample of the content intended to be taught in the first term of the year:

Introduction to Ethics

- E1.1 Introduction to Morality
- E1.2 Natural Law
- E1.3 Criticisms of Natural Law
- E1.4 Situation Ethics
- E1.5 Criticisms of Situation Ethics
- E1.6 Utilitarianism
- E1.7 Criticisms of Utilitarianism
- E2.1 Revelation as a Source of Morality
- E2.2 Humanist Morality

Uses of Knowledge

- U1 Demonstrate Knowledge
- U2 Analyse
- U3 Evaluate
- U4 Make Thematic Links (Synoptic)



Version History

Year	Version	Date	Description of Changes
For 2024/25	1.0	14 June 2024	Initial release.
For 2025/26	2.0	09 May 2025	Addition of Year 8.
	2.1	13 June 2025	Highlighting of content that is not assessable in 2025/26 only. Addition of assessable content for mid-year assessments.
	2.2	27 August 2025	Updates to assessable content.
For 2026/2027	3	15 June 2026	Addition of Year 9. Updates to assessable content in Years 7, 8 and 9. Addition of key words (7.C3.1).



Appendix A: Example Scripture that Students May Encounter in Year 7

Subject	Scripture
Creation of the niverse	Genesis 1:1-3
Creation of humans	Genesis 2:7
Abraham's covenant	Genesis 17:6-7
Passover festival	Exodus 12:13-14
Ten Commandments; monotheism and shabbat	Exodus 20:2-3
Jesus as the Word	John 1:1-3
The Nativity story; the virgin birth	Matthew 1:18
Jesus' teachings: the Sermon on the Mount	Matthew 5:38-39
Jesus's resurrection	Luke 24:1-3
Simon Peter, the disciple, will be the head of the church	Matthew 16:18



Appendix B: Optional Opportunities to Develop Personal Knowledge

Although not assessed in summative assessments, students should be given opportunities to develop their personal knowledge throughout Religious Studies, in appropriate contexts. Examples of appropriate contexts in Year 7 are suggested below.

In the context of Judaism:

- Tikkun Olam and the command to 'repair the world'.
- The significance of communities for our lives and how communities may support one another.
- The significance of life events which mark our passage through time, for example 'coming of age' rituals.
- The importance of keeping promises.
- The role that rules and guidance may have in our own lives, whether religious or secular.
- The importance of having meals together in our communities and the symbolism that some foods may hold for us.

In the context of Christianity:

- The importance of forgiveness in our own lives.
- Our own ideas around the formation of the world and humanity.
- The role of parental figures in our own lives.
- The role of ethical guidance in our own lives and the different ways that the golden rule may be applied, both secular and religious.
- How the command to love our enemies may relate to life today.
- The importance of having meals together in our communities and the symbolism that some foods may hold for us.
- Our own preconceptions and assumptions about religion in the UK, Judaism and Christianity as religious traditions.

