

GCSE Religious Studies – AQA Exam Board

RPE Vision: We aim to empower our students with the ability to interpret the stories, symbols and values that are at the foundation of humanity. Students will learn how different cultures have answered the ultimate questions of existence and become comfortable engaging with disagreement and uncertainty. They will ultimately live a more examined and reflective life as they are forced to confront important ideas concerning meaning, morals and mortality. Our vision is a response to this short letter:

Dear teacher,

I am a survivor of a concentration camp. My eyes saw what no person should witness: gas chambers built by learned engineers. Children poisoned by educated physicians. Infants killed by trained nurses. Women and babies shot by high school and college graduates.

So, I am suspicious of education.

My request is this: Help your children become human. Your efforts must never produce learned monsters, skilled psychopaths or educated Eichmanns.

Reading, writing, and arithmetic are important only if they serve to make our children more human.

This specification covers the content laid down by the Department for Education (DfE) subject content for GCSE Religious Studies. Students should consider different beliefs and attitudes to religious and non-religious issues in contemporary British society. They should be aware that the religious traditions of Great Britain are, in the main, Christian, and that religious traditions in Great Britain are diverse. The exam board requires that students study the Beliefs, Teachings and Practices of two religions, one of which must be Christian. At Huntington School we study Christianity and Buddhism. As directed, we study beliefs, teachings and practices and how these might differ within various denominations. Once armed with this knowledge we can begin to apply various beliefs and teachings to an understanding of why religious people might do the things they do. How do their beliefs influence their everyday lives? Why do attitudes and actions differ among religious followers under the same religious banner? How do their ideas and actions compare and contrast? This is the content of Paper 1 and it must be taught before Paper 2 in order to allow students to truly apply, evaluate and judge the ‘Themes’ investigated in Paper 2.

Students will be taught Christian and Buddhist beliefs, teachings and practices simultaneously in Year 10. Different teachers will be responsible for different religions to help students compartmentalise the two.

Once investigating ‘Paper 2 – Thematic Studies,’ students will bring ideas from Christianity, Buddhism and other religious and secular worldviews together in order to evaluate various contemporary themes and ideas.

Year 10

	Component/Paper 1 – Part 1 – Beliefs and Teachings	Component/Paper 1 – Part 2 - Practices
Christianity	The Nature of God – the Trinity, oneness and omnipotence of God and the problem of evil. Creation The Afterlife	Types of worship - liturgical, non-liturgical, prayer etc. Sacraments – baptism, Holy Communion Pilgrimage – Lodes and Iona Celebrations – Christmas, Easter, Lent

(Mr Parmiter and/or Mr Eden)		The Role of the Church in the wider community – Street Pastors, Food Banks, Christian Aid, CAFOD
Buddhism (Mrs Yeadon)	Life of the Buddha and its significance. The Four Noble Truths Dhamma - Dependent Arising, The three marks of existence. The human personality, in the Theravada and Mahayana traditions Human destiny - Theravada, Mahayana, Pure Land	Places of worship – temples, gompas, stupas, shrines etc. Festivals - including Wesak, Pirinirvana Day, Death and Mourning ceremonies etc. Puja – chanting, mantras, shrines and meditation. Buddhist Ethics – Karma, Karuna, Metta, The 5 Moral precepts and The Six Perfections.

Year 11

Themes	Content	Revision and Exam Technique
Relationships and families	Sex, marriage and divorce – heterosexual and homosexual relationships, sex outside of marriage, contraception, nature and purpose of marriage, divorce etc. Families and gender equality – nature and purpose of families, polygamy, roles of men and women.	Specific instruction and guidance around exam technique is given frequently throughout. Once all themes have been covered we dedicate a significant amount of time to really honing these skills ready for the final exam.
Religion and life	The origins and value of the universe – creation, Big Bang Theory, Stewardship, Dominion, the use and abuse of the environment, the use and abuse of animals including animal testing, animals for food. The origins and values of human life – including sanctity of life, quality of life, euthanasia, abortion and beliefs about the afterlife.	Specific instruction and guidance around exam technique is given frequently throughout. Once all themes have been covered we dedicate a significant amount of time to really honing these skills ready for the final exam.
Religion, peace and conflict	Religion, violence, terrorism and war – peace, justice, forgiveness, violence, terrorism, reasons for war, Holy war, Just war, pacifism. Religion and belief in 21st century conflict – causes of war, nuclear weapons, WMD, peace keeping efforts, victims of war.	Specific instruction and guidance around exam technique is given frequently throughout. Once all themes have been covered we dedicate a significant amount of time to really honing these skills ready for the final exam.
Religion, crime and punishment	Religion, crime and the causes of crime – good and evil intentions/actions, reasons for crime, types of crime Religion and punishment - The aims of punishment, including: retribution, deterrence, reformation. The treatment of criminals , including: prison, corporal punishment, community service, Forgiveness.	Specific instruction and guidance around exam technique is given frequently throughout. Once all themes have been covered we dedicate a significant amount of time to really honing these skills ready for the final exam.

Ethical arguments related to the death penalty, including those based on the principle of utility and sanctity of life.

<p>Homework</p>	<p>Frequency: Homework tasks will be set 1-2 weekly to students who take GCSE RE. Core 'Philosophy for Life' students will be asked to complete work rarely and as necessary.</p> <p>Types of tasks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reinforce and develop learning in class e.g. to practice completing examination questions. ▪ Consolidation of learning by applying knowledge and understanding to specific questions in order to personally reflect upon and evaluate topics investigated in class. ▪ Learning key subject terminology and its spelling and meaning e.g. Social Immortality, Nirvana, Ascetic, etc. ▪ Research in preparation for future tasks or to enhance knowledge of current ones e.g. to find supportive facts, figures and case-studies to help extend the depth of written responses. ▪ Personally annotate work completed in class – students will be encouraged to personally reflect upon and comment on the work we do. ▪ Practice and develop skills for exam success e.g. evaluation and explanation responses. ▪ Learning and revision for class tests and examinations. ▪ Quiz work on TEAMS to regularly review essential content – interleaving information and developing memory recall.
<p>Assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Two formal assessments per term, marked with feedback within 2 lessons. This is followed by a 'DIRT' lesson. ▪ Regular exam question practice – in class or for homework. ▪ Regular formative assessment tests on key terms and knowledge. ▪ Students will be taught to assess their own work (and sometimes that of peers) so that they truly understand the requirements of the exam. ▪ General attitude, effort, engagement and involvement in lessons. ▪ End of year exam.
<p>Feedback</p>	<p>In RPE, at all key stages, we will support students to make good progress. Exemplary work is modelled and methods of attaining best practice will be articulated and exemplified to your child repeatedly. High quality instruction will lay the foundations for effective feedback, including both summative and formative assessment strategies. Key knowledge will be regularly tested in advance of formal summative assessments and tools (e.g. Key word lists, exemplar essays, essay map guidance) will be provided to help them access and review key learning. We will endeavour to make instruction about how to make good progress clear and accessible to all students.</p> <p>We are aware that both pupils and parents value feedback. As such, books will be maintenance marked once termly, usually during summative assessment periods. Since we regulate and control much of the content of classwork, this feedback will be largely effort and presentation based, although it will be necessary to pay particular attention to exam question efforts. Feedback that is more detailed, target setting and DIRT work will be undertaken after summative assessments, which will most often take the form of exam papers. Feedback will highlight both strengths and specific areas for improvement. Opportunities for verbal feedback might be whole class based or on an individual basis. The latter will be indicated in exercise books using stamps. Praise and encouragement will often be shared – an often undervalued, essential and non-visible component of ensuring student progress. Postcards home and phone calls occur too.</p>

How can I help my child?

It would be great if you could take an interest in some of the work students are doing with us in RPE. We are often told by parents that we contribute to discussions in the evening.

There are films, documentaries, news articles and blogs in abundance. Please contact us if you would like recommendations for anything in particular.

Perhaps start with the classic 'Jesus of Nazareth' for Christianity and 'Little Buddha' for Buddhism.