

GCSE

WJEC GCSE Religious Studies

Approved by Qualifications Wales

Specification

Teaching from 2025

For award from 2027

Version 5 - September 2026



This Qualifications Wales regulated qualification is not available to centres in England.

Made for Wales.
Ready for the world.

This specification meets the requirements of the following regulatory documents published by Qualifications Wales:

- [Made for Wales GCSE Qualification Approval Criteria](#) which set out requirements for any new GCSE qualification Approved for first teaching from September 2025 and beyond.
- [Standard Conditions of Recognition](#) which contains the rules that all awarding bodies and their qualifications must meet when offering qualifications to learners in Wales.
- Approval Criteria for [GCSE Religious Studies](#) which sets out the subject specific requirements for GCSE Religious Studies qualifications from September 2025 and beyond.

SUMMARY OF AMENDMENTS

Version	Description	Page number
2	Genesis 1:1 changed to Genesis 1:26	48 & 51
	Addition of: How Sikh Gurus fought for religious expression, including: • Guru Arjan (martyred for refusing to compromise his Sikh beliefs) • Guru Tegh Bahadur (beheaded for refusing to convert to Islam) • Guru Gobind Singh (instructed Sikhs to wear the turban) • Guru Tegh Bahadur sacrificed his life to protect the religious freedom of Hindus	77
	Unit 3 (3.5a) has been corrected from 'What makes us human and related medical ethics: Buddhist perspectives' to 'Roles, rights and responsibilities: human nature and the right to life: Buddhist perspectives'	58
	"three aspects of one God" amended to "three persons, one God" in Section 1.2.1b	17
3	Malpractice section has been updated Terminal rule change and addition of UMS table	87 88, 89 and 90
4	Terminal rule reference removed from 'Post-16 Candidates' section for clarity.	88
5	3.2 Updates in arrangements for non-examination assessment.	85

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GCSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES

SUMMARY OF ASSESSMENT

Unit 1: Religious and non-religious beliefs, teachings and practices Written examination: 1 hour 15 minutes 30% of qualification	60 marks
Questions requiring objective responses, questions that require short and extended answers.	
Unit 2: Religion and relationships Non-examination assessment: 6 hours 20% of qualification	60 marks
Set by WJEC, marked by the Centre and moderated by WJEC. The assessment will be based on one of two set themes and a statement which will be set by WJEC annually. The set theme and statement will be available via the WJEC Portal.	
Unit 3: Roles, rights and responsibilities Written examination: 1 hour 15 minutes 30% of qualification	60 marks
Questions requiring objective responses, questions that require short and extended answers.	
Unit 4: Religion and human rights Non-examination assessment: 6 hours 20% of qualification	60 marks
Set and marked by WJEC. The assessment will be based on two of three set human rights issues which will be set by WJEC annually. The set human rights issues will be available via the WJEC Portal.	

This is a unitised, untiered qualification.

Aside from Unit 1, which is an introductory unit, there is no hierarchy implied by the order in which the other units are presented.

The examinations for Units 1 and 3, and the submission of Unit 2, will be available for the first time in summer 2026. The submission of Unit 4 will be available for the first time in summer 2027. Each assessment will then be available every summer series.

The first award of the qualification will be 2027.

Qualification Approval Number: C00/4967/8

GCSE RELIGIOUS STUDIES

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Aims

GCSE Religious Studies supports learners to:

- develop knowledge and understanding of religious and non-religious beliefs, values, teachings, practices, and philosophical convictions
- engage with contrasting lived religious and non-religious experiences
- develop curiosity about the purpose of life
- explore ways in which religious and non-religious ethical and philosophical convictions have influenced human experience and society
- explore evidence from a range of religious and non-religious sources that engage with philosophical, ethical, and moral issues
- appreciate the complex, pluralistic and diverse nature of society by understanding the need for tolerance, resilience, and empathy
- reflect on their own values, beliefs, and perspectives and those of others
- align with aspects of the Religion, values and ethics statutory guidance to enable learners to:
 - develop an awareness of self in relation to others
 - make connections to the wider and natural world
 - develop creativity and curiosity
 - explore ultimate questions and contemplate meaning and purpose
- make sense of and interpret human experience, the natural world, and their own place within it, from a pluralistic perspective, understanding different religions and non-religious philosophical convictions in their own locality and in Wales, developing their sense of cynefin, as well as in the wider world.

These aims are set out in Qualifications Wales' Approval Criteria.

1.2 Curriculum for Wales

This GCSE Religious Studies qualification is underpinned by the Curriculum for Wales framework and has been designed to ensure that learners can continue to make progress towards the four purposes whilst studying for this qualification. Central to this design are the [principles of progression](#), along with the [statements of what matters](#) and those [subject specific skills and concepts](#) outlined in the '[Designing your Curriculum](#)' section of the Humanities Area of Learning and Experiences.

In developing this qualification, we have considered where there are opportunities to embed the cross-curricular themes and where there are opportunities for integral skills and cross-curricular skills to be developed. Appendix A provides a simple mapping, and information to support teachers will be provided in the Guidance for Teaching.

We have also considered where the qualification can generate opportunities for integrating the learning experiences noted on page 82, the Guidance for Teaching will include further information on integrating these learning experiences into delivery.

The GCSE Religious Studies qualification supports the Curriculum for Wales by:

- supporting the statements of what matters¹, giving learners the opportunity to:
 - gain a deeper understanding of the concepts underpinning humanities, and their application in local, national and global contexts
 - understand human experiences better
 - learn how various worldviews and factors can influence their own and others' perceptions and interpretations
 - develop an appreciation of how contexts influence the constructions of narratives and representations
 - develop an understanding of the complex, pluralistic and diverse nature of societies
 - appreciate the interplay between a range of factors, including religious and non-religious beliefs and worldviews
 - develop a common understanding of the ethnic diversity, identities, experiences and perspectives of their local area, Wales and the wider world
 - explore and develop a tolerant and empathetic understanding of the varied beliefs, values, traditions and ethics that underpin and shape human society
- supporting the principles of progression² by encouraging learners to:
 - ask increasingly sophisticated enquiry questions
 - engage with an increasing breadth and depth of knowledge and underlying concepts
 - make supported judgements in more complex contexts
 - build an increasingly clear and coherent understanding of the world around them
 - move on to more focused awareness of the lives of others, in their own social context and elsewhere in the world
 - use evidence to construct and support an answer and relating that to representation and interpretation of enquiry results.

The construct of the GCSE Religious Studies qualification is based on the Welsh Government subject specific considerations for Religious Studies³. The qualification provides:

- opportunities to understand religious and non-religious beliefs, teachings, practices, philosophical convictions, values and experiences from a local, national and international perspective
- opportunities to seek answers to ultimate philosophical questions, such as the purpose and meaning of life
- opportunities to explore the foundations of religious and non-religious viewpoints and the influence of religious and non-religious philosophical convictions on our pluralistic and diverse society over time
- learners with the skills to explore philosophical and moral issues, reflect on their own beliefs and values, and the beliefs and values of others
- opportunities to develop empathy, creativity, curiosity, resilience, tolerance, a sense of cynefin and human experiences within the natural world.

Please note – as explained in Qualifications Wales' report on their outcomes on the Approval Criteria consultation

[<https://qualifications.wales/media/knaphlc0/consultation-outcomes-by-subject.pdf>], GCSE Religious Studies is not designed to cover all aspects of RVE guidance.

¹ <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/humanities/statements-of-what-matters/>

² <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/humanities/principles-of-progression/>

³ <https://hwb.gov.wales/curriculum-for-wales/humanities/designing-your-curriculum/#specific-considerations-for-this-area>

1.3 Prior learning and progression

Although there is no specific requirement for prior learning, the qualification is designed primarily for learners between the ages of 14 and 16 and builds on the conceptual understanding learners have developed through their learning from ages 3 – 14.

The qualification allows learners to develop a strong foundation of knowledge, skills and understanding which supports progression to post-16 study and prepares learners for life, learning and work. The qualification provides a suitable foundation for the study of Religious Studies at either AS or A level. In addition, the specification provides a coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study for learners who do not progress to further study in this subject.

1.4 Guided learning hours

GCSE Religious Studies has been designed to be delivered within 120 – 140 guided learning hours. The qualification has been primarily designed as a 2-year programme for learners in years 10 and 11.

1.5 Use of language

As our understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion evolves, so must our language. Updated terminology better reflects individual identities and fosters respect and accuracy. Language used should be specific as possible. Staying informed and adaptable is crucial, as inclusive language promotes dignity and equity. Recognising that language will continue to evolve, we will remain open to further amendments to ensure it accurately represents and supports all individuals. WJEC will inform centres of any amendments and the most up to date version of the specification will always be on the website.

1.6 Equality and fair access

The specification may be followed by any learner, irrespective of gender, ethnic, religious or cultural background. It has been designed to avoid, where possible, features that could, without justification, make it more difficult for a learner to access and achieve because they have a particular protected characteristic.

The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Access arrangements and reasonable adjustments are made for eligible learners to enable them to access the assessments and demonstrate their knowledge and skills without changing the demands of the assessment.

Information on access arrangements and reasonable adjustments is found in the following document from the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ): Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments: General and Vocational Qualifications. This document is available on the JCQ website (www.jcq.org.uk).

We will be following the principles set out in this document and, as a consequence of provision for reasonable adjustments, very few learners will encounter a complete barrier to any part of the assessment.

2 SUBJECT CONTENT

How to read the amplification

The amplification provided in the right-hand column uses the following three stems:

- 'Learners should understand' is used when learners are required to demonstrate and apply knowledge to familiar or unfamiliar contexts and can synthesise and evaluate information for a given purpose.
- 'Learners should have a basic understanding' is used when learners do not need to understand all aspects of the specified content in detail. Teachers should refer to Guidance for Teaching documents for further guidance on the depth and breadth to which this content should be taught.
- 'Learners should be able to' is used when learners need to apply their knowledge and understanding to source material or demonstrate application of practical skills and techniques.

Centres must teach:

- **either** Christianity **or** Catholic Christianity

and

- **one** world religion from the following list:
 - Buddhism
 - Hinduism
 - Islam
 - Judaism
 - Sikhism (Sikhi)

and

- non-religious perspectives.

Please note that these choices **must** remain consistent across **all** Units.

Unit 1

Religious and non-religious beliefs, teachings and practices

Assessment Type: Written examination (1 hour 15 minutes)

30% of qualification

60 marks

Overview of unit

The purpose of this unit is to:

- explore key diverse religious and non-religious beliefs, practices and worldviews
- develop understanding of key elements of religious studies to enable conceptual understanding of the nature of belief
- explore sources of authority and ethical systems that shape religious and non-religious perspectives towards morality
- understand how beliefs and teachings shape religious and non-religious views on identity, belonging, meaning, purpose, and belief in life after death.

The unit is divided into four parts:

- Nature of belief – all candidates must study the nature of belief
- Christianity or Catholic Christianity – candidates must study **one** of the following options:
 - a – Christianity
 - b – Catholic Christianity
- World religions – candidates must study **one** of the following options:
 - a – Buddhism
 - b – Hinduism
 - c – Islam
 - d – Judaism
 - e – Sikhism (Sikhi)
- Non-religious perspectives – all candidates must study non-religious perspectives.

Non-religious perspectives will be assessed in relation to Christian perspectives and Catholic Christian perspectives.

Nature of Belief**1.1 Nature of Belief**

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.1.1 Nature of belief

Section	Amplification
1.1.1 Nature of belief	Learners should understand: • What theists, monotheists, polytheists, religious pluralists and agnostics believe • Why some believe in a god or gods and identify as religious • What atheists and humanists believe • Why some people do not believe in a god or gods and identify as non-religious.

Christianity or Catholic Christianity

a – Christianity

1.2a Beliefs – Christianity

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.2.1a Key beliefs and teachings in Christianity

1.2.2a Christian belief in action

Section	Amplification
1.2.1a Key beliefs and teachings in Christianity	Learners should understand: Christian beliefs and teachings about the nature of God: • Creator ex nihilo; Genesis 1:1-2 • omnipotent • omniscient • omnibenevolent • omnipresent. Christian beliefs and teachings about the Trinity: three aspects of one God: • Father: Luke 15:11-32 • Son: John 1:1-3, 14 • Holy Spirit: John 14:25-26 and Galatians 5:22-23. Christian beliefs and teachings about Jesus: • birth: Matthew 1:18- 2:12, Luke 1:26-35 and 2:1-21 • incarnation as the Word: John 1:1-3, 10: 30-38, 14:1-9 • ministry: Luke 5: 17-24, John 11: 21-27 • death: Mark 15:1-3 • Resurrection: John 20:1-21 • Ascension: Acts 1:9-11 • Jesus as the Messiah: Matthew 16:13-17 • as the way to salvation and atonement: John 3:16, 14:6. Christian beliefs and teachings about the soul: • created in the image of God: Genesis 1:27 • a divine spark originating from God: Genesis 2:7 • eternal and transcendent • humans possess rationality and free will but have fallen: Genesis 1:26-28; Genesis 2:15-17 and Genesis 3. Key beliefs and teachings of Christianity found within: • the Apostle's Creed • the Lord's Prayer. The importance of the Bible: • using the Bible as a source of wisdom and guidance – literal, conservative and liberal interpretations.

1.2.2a Christian belief in action	Learners should understand: Key Christian beliefs and teachings: • supporting the poor: Acts 20:35 • giving generously: 2 Corinthians 9:7 • duty to put faith into action: James 2:17. Contemporary local or national examples of Christian faith and belief in action – community work and faith-based activism. How the aims and work of Christian Aid reflect Christian beliefs in action.
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1.3a Beliefs about life and death – Christianity

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.3.1a Meaning of life in Christianity

1.3.2a Christian beliefs about life after death

1.3.3a Christian practices

Section	Amplification
1.3.1a Meaning of life in Christianity	Learners should understand: Christian beliefs about the meaning of life: - to worship God: Romans 12:1 - teachings on loving God and others: Matthew 22:37-39 - spiritual growth and transformation as essential for understanding life's purpose: Luke 8:1-15 - Parable of the Sower.
1.3.2a Christian beliefs about life after death	Learners should understand: The basis for Christian belief in life after death: - John 3:16 - John 11: 25-26. Christian beliefs and teachings about life after death: - heaven: John 14:1-4 - hell: Luke 12:4-5; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-9 - resurrection: Luke 16:19-31; John 11:24-27; 1 Corinthians 15: 20-22; 1 Corinthians 15:42-44.
1.3.3a Christian mourning and funeral practices	Learners should understand: The importance of mourning and funeral practices: - committing a person's body to God - giving thanks to God for that person's life - celebrating and remembering the life of the deceased - using signs and symbols to express a deeper meaning - showing the link between this life and Christian beliefs about life after death. Christian mourning practices: - use of symbols, such as wearing black - prayers recited for the deceased. Christian funeral practices: - vigil service - funeral service – prayers, hymns and eulogy - burial or cremation and the rite of committal.

1.4a Religious beliefs in contemporary society – Christianity

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.4.1a Christian identity, belonging and practices

1.4.2a Christianity and morality

Section	Amplification
1.4.1a Christian identity, belonging and practices	Learners should understand: The importance of expressing a sense of religious identity and belonging for Christians, such as: • belonging to a worshipping community • a shared sense of purpose, direction and morality in life. Christian identity and belonging expressed through symbolic actions – pilgrimage. Possible reasons for completing pilgrimage: • showing commitment to God as an act of religious devotion • learning more about Christian figures by visiting sites associated with their lives • following in the footsteps of key figures in Christianity • experiencing a sense of community • pilgrimage sites may be associated with miracles. The role, significance and features of the following sites of Christian pilgrimage: • St David's Cathedral, Pembrokeshire • Taizé. Christian identity and belonging expressed through symbolic actions – rites of passage. The role, significance and features of: • baptism: Mark 1:9-11, infant; implied in Acts 16:33 and believers' baptism; Acts 2:37-41 • eucharist/communion: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 • confirmation: Acts 2:1-13.

1.4.2a Christianity and morality	Learners should understand: Christian beliefs and teachings about how to make moral decisions: • obeying divine commands: the Ten Commandments; Exodus 20:1-17 • the Bible as a source of morality: • Christian love (agape): Luke 10:25-37; Luke 13:34-35 • forgiveness: Matthew 6:12; Matthew 18:21-22; Luke 23:34 and Matthew 5:43-44 • the use of conscience to make moral decisions: 2 Corinthians 1:12. Morality and Divine judgement in the afterlife: • treasures on earth and in Heaven; Matthew 6:19-21 and Luke 16:19-31 • future judgement based on earthly actions; Matthew 25:31-46 - Parable of the Sheep and the Goats. Learners should have a basic understanding of: • what is meant by the problem of evil – what is meant by moral evil (caused by humans) and natural evil (caused by nature) • the philosophical challenges posed by belief in God and the existence of evil and suffering – the inconsistent triad • what a theodicy is, and how the Irenaean (soul-making) and Augustinian (soul-deciding) theodicies attempt to address the problem of evil.
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Christianity or Catholic Christianity

b – Catholic Christianity

1.2b Beliefs – Catholic Christianity

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.2.1b Key beliefs and teachings in Catholic Christianity

1.2.2b Catholic belief in action

Section	Amplification
1.2.1b Key beliefs and teachings in Catholic Christianity	Learners should understand: Catholic beliefs and teachings about the nature of God: • Creator ex nihilo; Genesis 1:1-12 • omnipotent • omniscient • omnibenevolent • omnipresent. Catholic beliefs and teachings about the Trinity: three persons, one God: • St. Augustine's De Trinitate 8.10 • Father: Luke 15:11-32 • Son: John 1:1-3, 14 • Holy Spirit: John 14:25-26 and Galatians 5:22-23. Catholic beliefs and teachings about Jesus: • birth: Matthew 1:18- 2:12, Luke 1:26-35 and 2:1-21 • Incarnation as the Word: John 1:1-3, 10: 30-38, 14:1-9 • ministry: Luke 5: 17-24, John 11: 21-27 • death: Mark 15:1-3 • resurrection: John 20:1-21 • ascension: Acts 1:9-11 • Jesus as Messiah: Matthew 16:13-17 • as the way to salvation and atonement: John 3:16, 14:6. Catholic beliefs and teachings about the nature of the soul: • the soul is the innermost aspect and spiritual principle of the human person created in the image of God; Genesis 1:27 • a divine spark originating from God; Genesis 2:7 • immortal and transcendent • humans possess rationality and free will but have fallen; Genesis 1:26-28; Genesis 2:15-17 and Genesis 3. Key Catholic beliefs and teachings: • the Nicene Creed • the Lord's prayer. The importance of the Bible: • using the Bible as a source of wisdom and guidance – literal, conservative and liberal interpretations. The use and importance of other important texts in daily life: • Papal encyclicals • Catechism of the Catholic Church.

1.2.2b Catholic belief in action

Learners should understand:

Key Catholic beliefs and teachings:

- supporting the poor: Acts 20:35
- giving generously: 2 Corinthians 9:7
- duty to put faith into action: James 2:17.
- Preferential Option for the Poor.

Contemporary local or national examples of Catholic faith and belief in action – community work and faith-based activism.

How the aims and work of Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD) reflect Catholic belief in action.

1.3b Beliefs about life and death – Catholic Christianity

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.3.1b Meaning of life in Catholic Christianity

1.3.2b Catholic beliefs about life after death

1.3.3b Catholic mourning and funeral practices

Section	Amplification
1.3.1b Meaning of life in Catholic Christianity	Learners should understand: Catholic beliefs about the meaning of life: - to worship God; Romans 12:1 - teachings on loving God and others; Matthew 22:37-39 - St. Thomas Aquinas' Natural Law – the 5 primary precepts - spiritual growth and transformation as essential for understanding life's purpose; Luke 8:1-15 - Parable of the Sower.
1.3.2b Catholic beliefs about life after death	Learners should understand: The basis for Catholic belief in life after death: - John 3:16 - John 11: 25-26. Catholic beliefs and teachings about life after death: - heaven: John 14:1-4; Catechism of the Catholic Church 1022 - hell: Luke 12:4-5; 2 Thessalonians 1:5-9; Catechism of the Catholic Church 1033 - resurrection: Luke 16:19-3; John 11:24-27; 1 Corinthians 15: 20-22 and 1 Corinthians 15: 42-44 - beliefs about Purgatory: Catechism of the Catholic Church 1022; 1030.
1.3.3b Catholic mourning and funeral practices	Learners should understand: The importance of mourning and funeral practices: - committing a person's body to God - giving thanks to God for that person's life - celebrating and remembering the life of the deceased - using signs and symbols to express a deeper meaning - showing the link between this life and Catholic beliefs about life after death. Catholic mourning practices: - mass for the deceased - prayers recited for the deceased. Catholic funeral practices: - vigil service - requiem mass - funeral service, hymns, prayers and eulogy - burial and the rite of committal.

1.4b Religious beliefs in contemporary society – Catholic Christianity

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.4.1b Catholic identity, belonging and practices

1.4.2b Catholicism and morality

Section	Amplification
1.4.1b Catholic identity, belonging and practices	Learners should understand: The importance of expressing a sense of religious identity and belonging for Catholics, such as: • belonging to a worshipping community • shared sense of purpose and direction in life. Catholic identity and belonging expressed through practices and symbolism – pilgrimage. Possible reasons for completing pilgrimage: • showing commitment to God as an act of religious devotion • learning more about Catholic figures by visiting sites associated with their lives • following in the footsteps of key figures in Catholicism • experiencing a sense of community • pilgrimage sites may be associated with miracles. The role, significance and features of the following sites of Catholic pilgrimage: • Lourdes • St Peter's Basilica, Rome. Catholic identity and belonging expressed through symbolic actions – rites of passage. The role, significance and features of: • baptism: Mark 1:9-11 • eucharist/communion: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 • first holy communion • confirmation: Acts 2:1-13.

1.4.2 Catholicism and morality

Learners should understand:

Catholic beliefs and teachings about how to make moral decisions:

- obeying divine commands such as the Ten Commandments; Exodus 20:1-17
- St. Thomas Aquinas' Natural Law – the 5 primary precepts
- the Bible as a source of morality; Christian love (agape): Luke 10:25-37; Luke 13:34-35; forgiveness: Matthew 6:12; Matthew 18:21-22; Luke 23:34 and Matthew 5:43-44
- the use of conscience to make moral decisions; 2 Corinthians 1:12.

Morality and Divine judgement in the afterlife:

- treasures on earth and in Heaven; Matthew 6:19-21 and Luke 16:19-31
- future judgement based on earthly actions; Matthew 25:31-46 - Parable of the Sheep and the Goats
- Catechism of the Catholic Church 1022.

Learners should have a basic understanding of:

- what is meant by the problem of evil – what is meant by moral evil (caused by humans) and natural evil (caused by nature)
- the philosophical challenges posed by belief in God and the existence of evil and suffering – the inconsistent triad
- what a theodicy is, and how the Irenaean (soul-making) and Augustinian (soul-deciding) theodicies attempt to address the problem of evil.

World religions

a – Buddhism

1.5a Beliefs – Buddhism

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.5.1a Key beliefs and teachings in Buddhism

1.5.2a Buddhist belief in action

Section	Amplification
1.5.1a Key beliefs and teachings in Buddhism	Learners should understand: Beliefs and teachings of Buddhism: - no belief in a central deity or creator - the nature of existence: The Four Noble Truths: types of suffering (dukkha); the cause of suffering (tanha); enlightenment as the end of suffering (nirodha); the path to liberation from suffering (maggā) - the Noble Eightfold Path as a way to end suffering; Dhammapada 20. The three sections of the Eightfold Path: - wisdom (panna) right understanding, right intention - morality (sila) right speech, right action, right livelihood - meditation (samadhi) right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration. The Three Marks of Existence (Lakshanas): - anicca – the concept of impermanence (Dhammapada 20). - anatta – the concept of no permanent self, using the Story of Nagasena and the Chariot as an example of the idea of the Five Skandhas (Dhammapada 113 and 279) - dukkha – dissatisfaction arising from an inability to accept anicca and anatta (Dhammacakkapavattana Sutta) Buddhist beliefs and teachings about the Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama): - early life: pre-birth, birth, prediction, life in palace - Four Sights: old age, sickness, death, holy man - renunciation: leaving palace, becoming ascetic - Enlightenment: seeing the world as it really is - revelation of the Dharma (Samyutta Nikaya).

1.5.2a Buddhist belief in action	Learners should understand: Key Buddhist beliefs and teachings: • dana: generous giving (Ittivuttaka 26) • karuna: compassion due to all living things being interdependent • metta: loving-kindness. "My religion is very simple, My religion is kindness." (Dalai Lama). Contemporary local or national examples of Buddhist faith and belief in action – community work and faith-based activism. How the aims and work of the Karuna Trust reflect Buddhist beliefs in action.
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1.6a Beliefs about life and death – Buddhism

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.6.1a Meaning of life in Buddhism

1.6.2a Buddhist beliefs about life, death and rebirth

1.6.3a Buddhist practices

Section	Amplification
1.6.1a Meaning of life in Buddhism	Learners should understand: Buddhist beliefs about the meaning of life: - achieving enlightenment (Nirvana) through the Eightfold Path and other teachings - cultivating wisdom, ethical conduct, and mental discipline - understanding the nature of suffering and its causes.
1.6.2a Buddhist beliefs about life, death and rebirth	Learners should understand: Buddhist beliefs about life, death and rebirth: - the concept of karma (Dhammapada 1:1 and 1:2) - the cycle of samsara (Dhammapada 1:16) - the concept of rebirth (Dhammapada 1:17) - achieving Nirvana - different realms of existence - the views of the Triratna tradition on 'moment-to-moment rebirth'.
1.6.3a Buddhist practices	Learners should understand: The importance of mourning and funeral practices: - transferring 'merit' to the deceased person - using symbols to express meaning - showing the link between this life and a future life - remembering that death is not the end of life, but a stage of life between existence and rebirth - celebrating and remembering the life of the deceased. Buddhist mourning and funeral practices: - Mahayana mourning and funeral practices – Japanese and Tibetan - Japanese practices – chanting, giving the deceased a new name, cremating the body and burying the ashes - Tibetan practices – use of the Tibetan Book of the Dead, cremation, sky burial, giving offerings and offering food to the deceased - Theravada mourning and funeral practices – monks chanting, sprinkling water, tying the deceased's hands and feet, placing monks' robes on the coffin and cremation.

1.7a Religious beliefs in contemporary society – Buddhism

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.7.1a Buddhist identity, belonging and practices

1.7.2a Buddhism and morality

Section	Amplification
1.7.1a Buddhist identity, belonging and practices	Learners should understand: The importance of expressing a sense of identity and belonging in Buddhism, such as: • belonging to a Buddhist community – the sangha • having a shared sense of purpose, morality and direction in life. Buddhist identity and belonging expressed through devotional practices: • The practices and significance of three different types of meditation: samatha, vipassana and metta bhavana; Dhammapada 282 • The practices and significance of chanting; Dhammapada 190 • The uses and significance of using malas, mantras and mandalas. Buddhist identity and belonging expressed through symbolic actions – pilgrimage. Possible reasons for completing pilgrimage: • showing respect to the Buddha for his dharma and example • learning more about Buddhas and Bodhisattvas by visiting sites associated with their lives. The role, significance and features of the following sites of Buddhist pilgrimage: • Bodh Gaya • Lumbini.
1.7.2a Buddhism and morality	Learners should understand: Buddhist beliefs and teachings about how to make moral decisions: • the Five Precepts as basic rules for everyday life • avoidance of the Three Poisons – greed, ignorance and hatred • the Six Paramitas (perfections) – generosity, morality, patience, energy, meditation and wisdom. The connection between karma, rebirth and morality in Buddhism.

World religions

b - Hinduism

1.5b Beliefs – Hinduism

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.5.1b Key beliefs and teachings in Hinduism

1.5.2b Hindu belief in action

Section	Amplification
1.5.1b Key religious beliefs and teachings in Hinduism	Learners should understand: Beliefs and teachings about the nature of God: • Brahman as one God with many forms; Brihadaranyaka Upanishad (391) • Brahman as the universal soul or spirit, source of all life and in all things (Antaryami); Katha Upanishad 5:2; Chandogya Upanishad 3:14.1 • Brahman as Bhagavan • Nirguna Brahman and Saguna Brahman • nature and role of the Trimurti; Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva; Kurma Purana 1:6, 1:9, 1:26 • the concept of avatar; Bhagavad Gita 4:5, 7-8, with reference to Vishnu - Rama (The Perfect Man) and Krishna (the Divine Statesman) • the role and importance of other gods and goddesses to Hindus – Durga, Ganesh and Saraswati. Hindu beliefs and teachings about the relationship between Brahman and atman (soul): • the atman as unchanging, indestructible and eternal; identical to the souls of all things (Advaita Vedanta); Bhagavad Gita 2:12, 2:17, 18:61 – similar to salt in water • the atman is Brahman's creation, Brahman is all-knowing, all powerful but the soul is distinct from Brahman (Dvaita Vedanta) – like a tear and salt water (separate entities). The use and importance of sacred texts in daily life: • the Upanishads and the Vedas.
1.5.2b Hindu belief in action	Learners should understand: Key Hindu beliefs and teachings: • dana: generous giving • karma yoga: selfless action • seva: selfless service. Contemporary local or national examples of Hindu faith and belief in action – community work and faith-based activism. How the aims and work of Sewa International reflect Hindu beliefs in action.

1.6b Beliefs about life and death – Hinduism

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.6.1b Meaning of life in Hinduism

1.6.2b Hindu beliefs about life, death and reincarnation

1.6.3b Hindu practices

Section	Amplification
1.6.1b Meaning of life in Hinduism	Learners should understand: Hindu beliefs about the meaning of life: - The four aims of human life: - dharma – moral duty - kama – worldly pleasure - artha – wealth and power - moksha – spiritual liberation and release from the cycle of samsara.
1.6.2b Hindu beliefs about life, death and reincarnation	Learners should understand: Hindu beliefs about life, death and reincarnation: - the atman as distinct from the physical body and mind: Bhagavad Gita 2:222 - reincarnation: Bhagavad Gita 2:12-13 - the concept of samsara: Bhagavad Gita 2:27 - moksha: Bhagavad Gita 2:15; Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4.4.3–6.
1.6.3b Hindu practices	Learners should understand: The importance of mourning and funeral practices: - using signs and symbols to express a deeper meaning - showing the link between this life and a future life - remembering that death is not the end of life, but a stage of life between existence and reincarnation - celebrating and remembering the life of the deceased. Hindu mourning practices: - Tarpana - the Shraddha period. Hindu funeral practices: - Antyesti - Pinda Daan.

1.7b Religious beliefs in contemporary society – Hinduism

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.7.1b Hindu identity, belonging and practices

1.7.2b Hinduism and morality

Section	Amplification
1.7.1b Hindu identity, belonging and practices	Learners should understand: The importance of expressing a sense of identity and belonging in Hinduism, such as: • belonging to a Hindu community • having a shared sense of purpose and direction in life. Hindu identity and belonging expressed through symbolic actions – pilgrimage. Possible reasons for completing pilgrimage: • showing commitment to Brahman as an act of religious devotion • learning more about Hindu figures by visiting sites associated with their lives • following in the footsteps of key figures in Hinduism • experiencing a sense of community. The role, significance and features of the following sites of Hindu pilgrimage: • Ayodhya • Varanasi (Kashi). Hindu identity and belonging expressed through symbolic actions: the Bhakti Movement: • Vaishnava bhakti – devotion to Vishnu • Shaiva bhakti – devotion to Shiva and Rudra.
1.7.2b Hinduism and morality	Learners should understand: Hindu beliefs and teachings about morality: • dharma – moral duty guiding everyday actions; Bhagavata Purana 1.2.6 • kama – worldly pleasure - physical, mental and emotional pleasure • artha – wealth and power, enough of each to feel secure • Hindus believe in free-will and its link to karma • due to ignorance Hindus fall into maya – a love of money, possessions and even family keep us bound to this world • Hinduism encourages the cultivation of divine qualities (Daivi Sampad) and warns against the dangers of demonic qualities (Asuri Sampad); Bhagavad Gita chapter 16. The connection between karma, rebirth and morality in Hinduism.

World religions

c - Islam

1.5c Beliefs – Islam

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.5.1c Key beliefs and teachings in Islam

1.5.2c Islamic belief in action

Section	Amplification
1.5.1c Key beliefs and teachings in Islam	Learners should understand: Beliefs and teachings about the nature of Allah: • one God – Allah: tawhid; Qur'an 3:18 • the qualities of Allah in the Qur'an • the 99 names of Allah • immanent • transcendent • beneficent • merciful • omnipotent • omniscient • omnibenevolent • omnipresent. Reasons for the prohibition of images of Allah; Qur'an 42:11 and the significance of shirk. Prophethood in Islam: • the role and importance of prophethood within Islam – Adam, Ibrahim and Isa • Muhammad as the Seal of the Prophets – the revelation of the Qur'an by Allah, through Angel Jibril Qur'an 2:97-98. Islamic beliefs about the soul: • originates from Allah and is His divine creation; Qur'an 32:7-9 • created by Allah and breathed into the human being at conception; the first man, Adam, was given a soul in this way; Qur'an 32:8-9. Key beliefs and teachings of Islam: • submission to Allah – being Muslim, and the Shahadah as an expression of faith • the importance of the Five Pillars of Faith • the importance of greater jihad. The use and importance of sacred texts in daily life: • Qur'an and the Hadith.

1.5.2c Islamic belief in action

Learners should understand:

Islamic beliefs and teachings about belief in action:

- the importance of the Ummah, Islam encourages a sense of unity; Qur'an 3:110; Qur'an 23:52
- the Qur'an and Hadiths (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad) repeatedly encourage Muslims to help others; Qur'an 2:195
- mercy is a quality of Allah and those who show mercy in this life will be shown mercy by Allah in the next life; Sunan al-Tirmidhī 1924
- Muslims have a duty to put faith into action; Qur'an 5:2; Qur'an 9:60.

Contemporary local or national examples of Islamic faith and belief in action – community work and faith-based activism.

How the aims and work of Islamic Relief UK reflect Islamic beliefs in action.

1.6c Beliefs about life and death – Islam

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.6.1c Meaning of life in Islam

1.6.2c Islamic beliefs about life and death

1.6.3c Islamic practices

Section	Amplification
1.6.1c Meaning of life in Islam	Learners should understand: Islamic beliefs about the meaning of life: - submitting to the will of Allah; Qur'an 33:35 - performing acts of worship; Qur'an 40:65 and righteousness; Qur'an 18:30 - preparing for the Day of Judgment (Qur'an 84:25) and serving humanity; Qur'an 3:185.
1.6.2c Islamic beliefs about life and death	Learners should understand: Islamic beliefs about the afterlife (Akhirah): - the soul awaits judgement after death in Barzakh; Qur'an 23:100 - the Day of Judgement; Qur'an 3:30 - Hellfire (Jahannam); Qur'an 2:24 - Paradise (Jannah); Qur'an 31:8 - predestination (Al-Qadr); Qur'an 87:2 - resurrection; Qur'an 46:33.
1.6.3c Islamic practices	Learners should understand: The importance of mourning and funeral practices: - committing a person's body to Allah - giving thanks to Allah for that person's life - celebrating and remembering the life of the deceased - using signs and symbols to express a deeper meaning - showing the link between this life and Islamic beliefs about the afterlife. Islamic mourning practices: - increased devotion - receiving visitors and condolences - avoiding decorative clothing and jewellery - wearing white - maximum period of mourning. Islamic funeral practices: - Ghusl Mayyit - Kafan - Salat al-Janazah - funeral attire - burial facing Makkah within 24 hours - relative performing dua at the graveside - giving to charity (sadaqah) on behalf of the deceased.

1.7c Religious beliefs in contemporary society – Islam

In this topic learners will gain knowledge, understanding and skills in the following areas:

1.7.1c Islamic identity, belonging and practices

1.7.2c Islam and morality

Section	Amplification
1.7.1c Islamic identity, belonging and practices	Learners should understand: The importance of expressing a sense of identity and belonging for Muslims, such as: • belonging to a worshipping community • a shared sense of purpose and direction in life. Islamic identity and belonging expressed through symbolic actions – pilgrimage. Possible reasons for completing pilgrimage: • showing commitment to Allah as an act of religious devotion • learning more about Islamic figures by visiting sites associated with their lives • following in the footsteps of key figures in Islam • experiencing a sense of community. The role, significance and features of the following sites of Islamic pilgrimage during Hajj: • Mount Arafat • the pillars at Mina. Islamic identity and belonging expressed through symbolic actions – observing dress and diet customs: • the burkha • the hijab • the niqab • halal food.
1.7.2c Islam and morality	Learners should understand: Islamic beliefs and teachings about how to make moral decisions: • obeying divine commands; Qur'an 7:28; Qur'an 54:49-55 • following Prophet Muhammad's ethical teachings; Qur'an 4:59 • sharia law as the ideal set of rules; Qur'an 45:18 - using the Qur'an; Qur'an 38:29 or Hadith as sources of morality • the use of conscience; Qur'an 75:1-2. Morality and Divine judgement in the afterlife: • The judging of souls on the Day of Judgement; Qur'an 6:160-164; Qur'an 16:90; Qur'an 16:97; Qur'an 21:47.

World religions

d - Judaism

1.5d Beliefs – Judaism

In this topic learners will gain knowledge, and understanding in the following areas:

1.5.1d Key beliefs and teachings in Judaism

1.5.2d Jewish belief in action

Section	Amplification
1.5.1d Key beliefs and teachings in Judaism	Learners should understand: Jewish beliefs and teachings about the nature of God: • Creator ex nihilo; Genesis 1:1-12 • God as one • transcendent; Isaiah 55:8-9 • merciful • eternal • judge • law-giver • omnipotence • omniscience • omnibenevolence • omnipresent. Jewish beliefs and teachings about the Messiah (Mashiach) and the Messianic Age (often associated with Olam ha-ba): • being a descendent of King David; Jeremiah 23:5 • Anointed One and Judge; Isaiah 2:1-4 • the Messianic Age; Isaiah 11:9 • differing Orthodox and Reform views on the Messiah • the Messianic Age (Olam Ha-Ba). Jewish beliefs and teachings about the soul: • the soul (nefesh) created in the image of God; Genesis 1:27 • a divine spark originating from God; Genesis 2:7 • eternal and transcendent, humans possess rationality and free will. Key beliefs and teachings in Judaism: • the Shema prayer; Deuteronomy 6:4-5 • covenants: • the Abrahamic Covenant; identity, monotheism, circumcision and Promised Land, Genesis 12:1-3, 17:6-8, 17:11-14 • the Mosaic Covenant; law, commandments, identity, Promised Land, Exodus 3:11- 15 • the importance of the Covenants for Jews today. The use and importance of sacred texts in daily life: • the differing perspectives of Orthodox and Reform Judaism on the Torah, the Tenakh and the Talmud.

1.5.2d Jewish belief in action	Learners should understand: Jewish beliefs and teachings: • Gemilut Hasadim; acts of loving kindness – doing good deeds to reflect God’s compassion; Pirkei Avot 1:2 from the Mishnah • Jews are instructed by God to help the poor and needy; Deuteronomy 15:11 • Tikkun Olam; repair of the world includes the idea of social justice. Contemporary local or national examples of Judaism faith and belief in action – community work and faith-based activism. How the aims and work of Mitzvah Day reflect Jewish beliefs in action.
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1.6d Beliefs about life and death – Judaism

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.6.1d Meaning of life in Judaism

1.6.2d Jewish beliefs about life and death

1.6.3d Jewish practices

Section	Amplification
1.6.1d Meaning of life in Judaism	Learners should understand: Jewish beliefs about the meaning of life: • living in accordance with the covenant with God • observing the mitzvot of the Torah • pursuing justice, compassion, and lifelong learning • fostering strong family and community ties.
1.6.2d Jewish beliefs about life and death	Jewish beliefs about the afterlife: • Gan Eden (paradise) • Gehenna (hell) • Resurrection; bodily (Orthodox) and spiritual (Reform) • Olam Ha-Ba (the world to come – the afterlife also often linked to the Messianic Age) • Sheol (where souls are cleansed and purified).
1.6.3d Jewish practices	The importance of mourning and funeral practices: • committing a person's body to God • giving thanks to God for that person's life • celebrating and remembering the life of the deceased • using signs and symbols to express a deeper meaning • showing the link between this life and Jewish beliefs about the afterlife. Jewish mourning practices: • aninut • shiva • shloshim • yartzheit. Jewish funeral practices: • taharah • the funeral service.

1.7d Religious beliefs in contemporary society – Judaism

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.7.1d Jewish identity, belonging and practices

1.7.2d Judaism and morality

Section	Amplification
1.7.1d Jewish identity, belonging and practices	Learners should understand: The importance of expressing a sense of identity and belonging for Jewish people, such as: • belonging to a worshipping community • shared sense of purpose and direction in life. Jewish identity and belonging expressed through symbolic actions – going to significant places. Possible reasons for going to significant places: • showing commitment to God as an act of religious devotion • learning more about Jewish figures by visiting sites associated with their lives • following in the footsteps of key figures in Judaism • experiencing a sense of community. The role, significance and features of the following significant places for Jews: • the Western Wall • Yad Vashem. Jewish identity and belonging expressed through symbolic actions – observing dress and diet customs: • kippah • tefillin • tallit • kosher food.

1.7.2d Judaism and morality	Learners should understand: Jewish beliefs and teachings about how to make moral decisions: • obeying divine commands – the Ten Commandments that form part of the covenant; Exodus 20:1-17 • the 613 Mitzvot (Orthodox and Reform perspectives) • use of conscience (matzpun) in conjunction with the Torah • good inclinations (yetzer ha tov) versus evil inclinations (yetzer hara) and the free will to make these judgements • ethical teachings of the Torah, the Tenakh, and the Talmud (Orthodox and Reform perspectives). Morality and Divine judgement in the afterlife: • God judging your every deed; Ecclesiastes 12:14 • a time of distress but also divine judgment; Daniel 12:1-2.
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World religions

e – Sikhism (Sikhi)

1.5e Beliefs – Sikhism (Sikhi)

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.5.1e Key beliefs and teachings in Sikhism

1.5.2e Sikh belief in action

Section	Amplification
1.5.1e Key beliefs and teachings in Sikhism	Learners should understand: Beliefs and teachings about the nature of God: - the many names for God; Guru Granth Sahib 877 - as found in the Mool Mantra - Ik Onkar (one God); Sat Nam (whose name is truth), Nirankar (formless); immortal, without fear; without hate, Nirgun; Guru Granth Sahib 290, Sargun; Guru Granth Sahib 294, self-illuminated; the true Guru - omnipotent - omniscient - omnibenevolent - omnipresent - self-revealing; Guru Granth Sahib 1 - genderless - Waheguru (Wonderful Guru). Sikh beliefs and teaching about Waheguru as Creator: - the world created through divine will (hukam); Guru Granth Sahib 1399 - created the universe and all life within it; sustains everything in existence; Guru Granth Sahib 294 - Waheguru exists beyond and separate from the universe (Nirgun and Sargun). Sikh beliefs about the atma (human soul): - the soul as a divine essence; a spark of Waheguru; resides within every living being – animals and humans - humans are the highest form of living creature; pure; transcendent, eternal - the atma comes from the Waheguru and returns to it. Key beliefs and teachings of: - Guru Nanak - Guru Gobind Singh. The use and importance of sacred texts in daily life: - the Guru Granth Sahib.

1.5.2e Sikh belief in action

Learners should understand:

Key Sikh beliefs and teachings:

- all humans are equal; Guru Granth Sahib 272:12-13
- seva: selfless service
- taan; physical service
- maan; mental service
- dhan; material service.

Contemporary local or national examples of Sikh faith and belief in action – community work and faith-based activism.

How the aims and work of Khalsa Aid reflect Sikh beliefs in action.

1.6e Beliefs about life and death – Sikhism (Sikhi)

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.6.1e Meaning of life in Sikhism

1.6.2e Sikh beliefs about life and death

1.6.3e Sikh practices

Section	Amplification
1.6.1e Meaning of life in Sikhism	Learners should understand: Sikh beliefs about the meaning of life: - gurmurkh – living in a Waheguru centred way as laid down in the Guru Grath Sahib - practicing seva and accepting the divine will (hukam) - achieving union with Waheguru through righteous living and devotion - achieving mukti.
1.6.2e Sikh beliefs about life and death	Learners should understand: Sikh beliefs about life, death and reincarnation: - karma - reincarnation - samsara; Guru Granth Sahib 13:11-12 - mukti.
1.6.3e Sikh practices	Learners should understand: The importance of mourning and funeral practices: - giving thanks to the Waheguru for that person's life - celebrating and remembering the life of the person and their soul reuniting with God - using signs and symbols to express a deeper meaning - showing the link between this life and Sikh beliefs about life, death and reincarnation - remembering that death is not the end of life, but a stage of life between existence and rebirth. Sikh mourning practices: - no formal mourning custom, but there are expressions of grief - providing a supportive environment for those who are grieving - charitable acts in memory of the deceased, such as organising a langar or making donations to the community, reflecting the Sikh value of seva (selfless service). Sikh funeral practices: - Antam Sanskaar - Cremation - Antim Ardas - The Bhog ceremony.

1.7e Religious beliefs in contemporary society – Sikhism

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

1.7.1e Sikh identity, belonging and practices

1.7.2e Sikhism and morality

Section	Amplification
1.7.1e Sikh identity, belonging and practices	Learners should understand: The importance of expressing a sense of identity and belonging for Sikhs, such as: • belonging to a worshipping community • shared sense of purpose and direction in life. Sikh identity and belonging expressed through symbolic actions – pilgrimage. Possible reasons for pilgrimage: • showing commitment to Waheguru as an act of religious devotion • learning more about Sikh figures by visiting sites associated with their lives • following in the footsteps of key figures in Sikhism • experiencing sense of community. The role, significance and features of the following sites of Sikh pilgrimage: • Amritsar • Anandpur Sahib. Sikh identity and belonging expressed through symbolic actions – the 5Ks: The significance of the 5Ks: • Kesh • Kara • Kanga • Kaccha • Kirpan.
1.7.2e Sikhism and morality	Learners should understand: Sikh beliefs and teachings about how to make moral decisions: • using seva as a guide to ethical service – social justice out of a love for Waheguru and humanity • Kirat Karo (working honestly) as one of the 3 pillars of Sikhism • avoiding the 5 vices and develop the 5 virtues in order to progress on the spiritual path towards unity (mukti) with Waheguru. The connection between karma, rebirth and morality in Sikhism.

Non-religious beliefs

1.8 Beliefs about life and death – Non-religious beliefs	
1.8.1 Non-religious perspectives on the meaning of life 1.8.2 Non-religious perspectives on life and death 1.8.3 Non-religious practices	
Section	Amplification
1.8.1 Non-religious perspectives on the meaning of life	Learners should understand: Non-religious perspectives on the meaning of life, including: - no agreed meaning of life - individuals determine their own life's meaning - people should be free to live their lives as long as they do not harm others - some people gain a sense of meaning in their lives through, for example, engagement with the natural world and spending time in nature - Humanist beliefs on what gives life meaning, including autonomy, ethical living, responsibility, pursuit of fulfilment and pursuit of happiness.
1.8.2 Non-religious perspectives on life and death	Learners should understand: Non-religious perspectives on life and death, including: - death as an end of existence - no future reward or punishment - the significance and value of having no belief in the soul or life after death.
1.8.3 Non-religious practices	Learners should understand: Non-religious mourning practices, including: - no specific, agreed mourning customs - mourning as an expression of grief - celebration and remembrance of the life of the deceased - mourning as providing a supportive environment for those who are grieving. Non-religious funeral practices, including: - no specific, agreed burial or cremation structure - celebrant may lead a service - eulogy may be given as a celebration of life - music is usually used during the service.

1.9 Non-religious beliefs in contemporary society	
1.9.1 Non-religious perspectives on identity, belonging and practices	
1.9.2 Non-religious perspectives towards morality	
Section	Amplification
1.9.1 Non-religious perspectives on identity, belonging and practices	Learners should understand: Non-religious perspectives on identity, belonging and practices, including: - the significance and value of identity and belonging without religion - ways that non-religious people may express a sense of identity and belonging such as being part of charities and organisations that promote good causes.
1.9.2 Non-religious perspectives towards morality	Learners should understand: Ways in which non-religious believers make moral decisions, including: - the use of conscience - the use of reason and free will - the act itself (absolutism) - the situation (relativism) in which the act is performed and the consequences (consequentialism) of it.

Unit 2

Religion and relationships

Assessment Type: Non-examination assessment (6 hours)
 20% of qualification
 60 marks

Overview of unit

The purpose of this unit is to:

- develop and apply knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs, teachings and practices relating to relationships
- explore sources of information about religious and non-religious perspectives on relationships
- analyse and evaluate different religious and non-religious perspectives towards relationships
- reflect on personal values and beliefs relating to relationships.

Learners must complete tasks based on the **two** religions studied in all other units (Christianity or Catholic Christianity and a world religion), and non-religious perspectives.

Areas of content

In this unit learners will gain knowledge, understanding and skills in the following areas:

2.1 Religion and relationships	
2.1.1 Beliefs, teachings, practices and perspectives relating to relationships	
2.1.2 Similarities and differences in perspectives relating to relationships	
Section	Amplification
2.1.1 Beliefs, teachings, practices and perspectives relating to relationships	Learners should understand: • religious beliefs, teachings, practices and perspectives relating to relationships • non-religious perspectives relating to relationships. Learners will focus on one of two themes set annually by WJEC from the following list: - Marriage, adultery, divorce and remarriage - Artificial contraception and natural family planning - Cohabitation and sex before and outside marriage - Same-sex relationships, civil partnerships and same-sex marriage - Interfaith relationships and marriage outside the religious tradition - Roles within family, including gender roles within relationships - Religious upbringing, childhood ceremonies and faith-based schooling.

2.1.2 Similarities and differences in perspectives relating to relationships	Learners should understand the similarities and differences in beliefs, teachings, practices and perspectives relating to relationships, including: • between different religions • between religions and non-religious perspectives. Learners should have a basic understanding of: • the changing landscape of religious belief in the context of relationships • where appropriate, relevant changes to UK law linked to relationships • how the changing landscape of religious belief and changes in relevant UK law, where appropriate, interconnect.
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2.2 Religious Studies skills

In this unit learners will gain knowledge, understanding and skills in the following areas:

2.2.1 Selecting or producing suitable sources

2.2.2 Using sources to support a judgement

2.2.3 Reflecting on personal values and beliefs

Section	Amplification
2.2.1 Selecting or producing suitable sources	Learners should be able to: • select or produce suitable sources to gain insights into religious and non-religious perspectives and experiences • explain relevant reasons for selecting sources, such as: • to provide clear information, supported by reasoning and/or evidence • to prove the reliability of another source used • to provide a different perspective leading to greater understanding • to help diminish any bias • to provide a different source type, leading to greater understanding • to provide evidence of lived experience.
2.2.2 Using sources to support a judgement	Learners should be able to use relevant sources: • to analyse and evaluate religious and non-religious perspectives about relationships • to reach a judgement.
2.2.3 Reflecting on personal values and beliefs	Learners should be able to: • justify their own values and beliefs relating to relationships.

Unit 3

Roles, rights and responsibilities

Assessment Type: Written examination (1 hour 15 minutes)

30% of qualification

60 marks

Overview of unit

The purpose of this unit is to:

- explore key diverse religious and non-religious beliefs, practices and worldviews
- develop an understanding of the different perspectives and interpretations about what makes us human, caring for the world, animal rights, freedom of religious expression and medical ethics
- explore sources of authority and ethical systems that shape religious and non-religious perspectives towards what makes us human, caring for the world, animal rights, freedom of religious expression and medical ethics.

The unit is divided into three parts:

- Christian perspectives or Catholic Christian perspectives
Choose **one** of the following options:
 - a – Christian perspectives
 - b – Catholic Christian perspectives
- World religion perspectives
Choose **one** of the following options:
 - a – Buddhist perspectives
 - b – Hindu perspectives
 - c – Islamic perspectives
 - d – Jewish perspectives
 - e – Sikh (Sikhi) perspectives
- Non-religious perspectives – all candidates must study non-religious perspectives.

Non-religious perspectives will be assessed in relation to Christian perspectives and Catholic Christian perspectives.

Areas of content**Christian perspectives or Catholic Christian perspectives****a – Christian perspectives**

3.1a Roles, rights and responsibilities: Stewardship of the earth – Christian perspectives	
In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas: 3.1.1a Humanity's relationship with the natural world – Christian perspectives 3.1.2a Animal rights – Christian perspectives	
Section	Amplification
3.1.1a Humanity's relationship with the natural world – Christian perspectives	Learners should understand: Christian beliefs, teachings and practices about humanity's relationship with the natural world: • based on the belief that God created the world ex nihilo; Genesis 1:2, and humans are created in the image of God; Genesis 1:26 • humans have been given control as part of God's plan – dominion; Genesis 1:26–28; Psalm 8:6 • humans have been given a unique, God-given duty to protect creation – stewardship; Genesis 2:15 • stewardship also implies using natural resources wisely and sustainably; Leviticus 25 8-25. How the aims and work of A Rocha UK reflect Christian beliefs about stewardship.
3.1.2a Animal rights – Christian perspectives	Christian beliefs, teachings and practices about animal rights: • animals were created by God and He declared all creation 'very good'; Genesis 1:31 • God gives humans dominion over animals; Genesis 1:26-28 • stewardship – humans are expected to care for and manage animal life wisely and compassionately, Proverbs 12:10; Exodus 20:10. Christian perspectives on using animals for human benefit: • Genesis 1:26-28 – different interpretations of the concepts of 'dominion' and 'stewardship' • balancing using animals for human benefit and avoiding unnecessary harm; Matthew 10:31; Proverbs 12:10 • the use of animals for food; Genesis 9:3 • vegetarianism or veganism based on teachings such as Genesis 1:26-28. Christian perspectives on the use of animals in scientific and medical research: • essential for advancing human health and well-being • must try to minimise suffering • call for strict regulations to ensure humane treatment • supporting the development of alternatives to animal testing (such as computer modelling). How the aims and work of Christian Vegetarians & Vegans UK reflect Christian beliefs about animal rights.

3.2a Roles, rights and responsibilities: human nature and the right to life - Christianity

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.2.1a What makes us human – Christian perspectives

3.2.2a Medical ethics: abortion and euthanasia – Christian perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.2.1a What makes us human – Christian perspectives	Learners should understand: Christian beliefs and teachings about what makes us human: - created in God's image; Genesis 1:26-27 - possess a soul, a spiritual dimension; Matthew 10:28; Ecclesiastes 12:7 - possess autonomy – free will, and moral responsibility; Genesis 3; Romans 2:14-15 - fell into sin, but given an opportunity for redemption through Jesus – John 3:16.
3.2.2a Medical ethics: abortion and euthanasia – Christian perspectives	Learners should understand: Christian perspectives of when life begins: - for many, that human life begins at conception - that at the point of conception, the embryo is fully human with inherent dignity and worth; Psalm 139:13-16 - a minority of Christians believe that personhood or full human life begins at birth. Christian beliefs and teachings about abortion: - the principle of the sanctity of life – created by God in his image; Genesis 1:26 - many oppose abortion, seeing it as the taking of an innocent life; Exodus 20:13 God has a plan for each human life and abortion prevents this; Jeremiah 1:5 - some may accept abortion in certain extraordinary circumstances - some Christians advocate for alternatives to abortion, such as adoption. Christian beliefs and teachings about euthanasia: - the principle of the sanctity of life – created by God in his image; Genesis 1:26 - only God should decide when a life should end - many strongly oppose active euthanasia viewing this as ending a life given by God; Exodus 20:13 - palliative care is an opportunity to show love and compassion; Galatians 6:2 - some support passive euthanasia on compassionate grounds - some are concerned about the 'slippery slope' argument.

3.3a Roles, rights and responsibilities: freedom of religious expression and the use of personal wealth – Christian perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.3.1a Freedom of religious expression – Christian perspectives

3.3.2a The use of personal wealth – Christian perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.3.1a Freedom of religious expression – Christian perspectives	Learners should understand: Christian beliefs and teachings about the freedom of religious expression: - the Great Commission; Matthew 28:19-20 - part of humanity's God-given free will - the importance of people of other faiths having the same right to religious expression; Matthew 7:12 - supporting the right to religious expression due to historical and contemporary persecution of Christians - religious expression in all forms should be allowed in public spaces; Matthew 5:14-16.
3.3.2a The use of personal wealth – Christian perspectives	Learners should understand: Christian beliefs and teachings about the use of personal wealth: - linked to the concept of stewardship - the use of wealth should reflect God's purposes and values - tithing as a traditional practice - contributions during church services - wealth as a blessing that comes with great responsibility; Matthew 25:14-30 - wealth for its own sake as incompatible with a life of faith; Matthew 19:24 - Matthew 6:24 – cannot worship God and money - focus on storing up “treasures in heaven” rather than on earth; Matthew 6:19-21 “Love of money is the root of all evil”; 1 Timothy 6:10 - loving money will never bring real satisfaction; Ecclesiastes 5:10 - monks and nuns take a vow of poverty – more focus on spiritual values - the Prosperity Gospel.

Christian perspectives or Catholic Christian perspectives
b – Catholic Christian perspectives

3.1b Roles, rights and responsibilities: Stewardship of the earth – Catholic Christian perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.1.1b Humanity's relationship with the natural world – Catholic Christian perspectives

3.1.2b Animal rights – Catholic Christian perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.1.1b Humanity's relationship with the natural world – Catholic Christian perspectives	Learners should understand: Catholic beliefs, teachings and practices about humanity's relationship with the natural world: • based on the belief the God created the world ex nihilo; Genesis 1:2 • humans are created in the image of God; Genesis 1:26 • Pope Francis' teaching in '<i>Laudato Si</i>' • humans have been given control as part of God's plan – dominion; Genesis 1:26–28; Psalm 8:6 • humans have been given a unique, God-given duty to protect creation – stewardship; Genesis 2:15 • stewardship implies using natural resources wisely and sustainably; Leviticus 25 8-25. How the aims and work of The Laudato Si Movement reflect Catholic beliefs about stewardship.
3.1.2b Animal rights - Catholic Christian perspectives	Learners should understand: Catholic beliefs, teachings and practices about animal rights: • animals were created by God in Genesis 1:31, God declares all of creation, including animals, "very good" • God gives humans dominion over animals; Genesis 1:26-28 • stewardship – humans are expected to care for and manage animal life wisely and compassionately, Proverbs 12:10; Exodus 20:10 • St. Francis of Assisi taught about the interconnectedness of all life as part of God's creation (Canticle of the Creatures). Catholic perspectives on using animals for human benefit: • there is justification for using animals; Genesis 1:26-28 • others see animal rights as a form of stewardship, balancing using animals for human benefit and avoiding unnecessary harm; Matthew 10:31; Proverbs 12:10 • many accept the use of animals for food; Genesis 9:3 • some Catholics choose vegetarianism or veganism based on teachings such as Genesis 1:26-28.

	Catholic perspectives on the use of animals in scientific and medical research: • many argue that it is essential for advancing human health and well-being • most believe it should be done ethically, with efforts to minimize suffering • many support the development of alternatives to animal testing • many call for strict regulations to ensure humane treatment. How the aims and work of Catholic Concern for Animals reflect Catholic beliefs about animal rights.
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3.2b Roles, rights and responsibilities: human nature and the right to life – Catholic Christian perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.2.1b What makes us human – Catholic Christian perspectives

3.2.3b Medical ethics: abortion and euthanasia – Catholic Christian perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.2.1b What makes us human – Catholic Christian perspectives	Learners should understand: Catholic beliefs and teachings about what makes us human: - created in God's image; Genesis 1:26-27, The Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena (of Discretion) - possess a soul, a spiritual dimension; Matthew 10:28; Ecclesiastes 12:7 - possess autonomy – free will, which comes with moral responsibility; Genesis 3; Romans 2:14-15 - the concept of Original Sin – St Augustine (The Enchiridion 3:11) - Thomas Aquinas – humankind does not choose sinful acts, (Summa Theologica) - fell into sin, but have the opportunity to gain redemption and be restored to a right relationship with God, through belief in Jesus; John 3:16.
3.2.3b Medical ethics: abortion and euthanasia – Catholic Christian perspectives	Learners should understand: Catholic perspectives of when life begins: - Catholics believe that human life begins at conception - the embryo is considered a human person at the point of conception - the embryo has inherent dignity and worth; Psalm 139:13-16. Catholic beliefs and teachings about abortion: - that abortion is a grave moral wrong (Pope John Paul II Evangelium Vitae) - the principle of the sanctity of life – made in God's image; Genesis 1:26 - the Catechism of the Catholic Church – that life is a fundamental human right from conception to natural death - all human rights are grounded in the right to life (The Common Good, 1996) - abortion is the taking of an innocent life, forbidden in the Ten Commandments; Exodus 20:13 - the Bible states that God has a plan for each human life and abortion prevents this from taking place; Jeremiah 1:5 - some Catholics may accept abortion in certain circumstances, such as when the mother's life is at risk, in cases of rape or incest, or when severe foetal abnormalities are present, but this is not official Catholic teaching - Catholics advocate for alternatives to abortion, such as adoption

- The Doctrine of Double Effect allows procedures that may also lead to abortion, but only under very specific circumstances.

Catholic beliefs and teachings about euthanasia:

- euthanasia is a grave violation of the law of God – Pope John Paul III (Evangelium Vitae, 1995)
- Catholics do not accept 'right to die' arguments, as only God has control over life and death
- the principle of the sanctity of life – created by God in his image; Genesis 1:26
- strong opposition to active euthanasia viewing this as ending a life given by God; Exodus 20:13
- the belief that suffering and pain do not make a life less valuable or sacred
- the importance of 'dying well' and to show compassion for those who are suffering; Galatians 6:2
- strong support for palliative care and hospices
- concerns about the 'slippery slope' argument
- The Doctrine of Double Effect allows for treatment to be given that may cause death, but only in very specific situations.

3.3b Roles, rights and responsibilities: freedom of religious expression and the use of personal wealth – Catholic Christian perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.3.1b Freedom of religious expression – Catholic Christian perspectives

3.3.2b The use of personal wealth – Catholic Christian perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.3.1b Freedom of religious expression – Catholic Christian perspectives	Learners should understand: Catholic beliefs and teachings about the freedom of religious expression: - the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) Jesus' instruction to share the faith with others - this is part of humanity's God-given free will - Catholics are instructed to evangelise – Pope Francis (Evangelii Gaudium 15. 48-49, 197-198, 264-265) - the importance of people of other faiths having the same right to religious expression; Matthew 7:12 - the role of the Catholic Church in inter-faith dialogue; it is the duty to speak about their faith, even in the face of opposition; Acts 4:19-20 - many Catholics are sensitive to the right to religious expression based on their own history of persecution - religious expression should be allowed in public spaces, includes the freedom to pray, wear religious symbols, and participate in religious activities; Matthew 5:14-16.
3.3.2b The use of personal wealth – Catholic Christian perspectives	Learners should understand: Catholic beliefs and teachings about the use of personal wealth: - this is linked to stewardship and should reflect God's purposes and values - at Mass, Catholics are called upon to contribute to the collection, if they can afford it - wealth is often viewed as a blessing that comes with great responsibility; Matthew 25:14-30 - warnings about the dangers of greed and the love of money; 1 Timothy 6:10 - wealth for its own sake is often viewed as incompatible with a life of faith; Matthew 19:24 - Christians cannot serve both God and money; Matthew 6:24 - Pope Francis stated "Money must serve, not rule" (2024) - a reminder to focus on storing up "treasures in heaven" rather than on earth; Matthew 6:19-21 - loving money will never bring real satisfaction; Ecclesiastes 5:10 - Catholic monks and nuns such as the Franciscans, advocate a life that is less focused on money and more on spiritual values - some Catholic monks and nuns swear a vow of poverty.

World religion perspectives
a – Buddhist perspectives

3.4a Roles, rights and responsibilities: Stewardship of the earth – Buddhist perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.4.1a Humanity's relationship with the natural world – Buddhist perspectives

3.4.2a Animal rights – Buddhist perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.4.1a Humanity's relationship with the natural world – Buddhist perspectives	Learners should understand: Buddhist beliefs, teachings and attitudes about humanity's relationship with the natural world: • Dependent Origination (Pratityasamutpada) – inter-dependency • all living things should be respected • humanity affects the environment and the environment affects humanity • the concept of karma teaches that all actions have positive or negative consequences • the concept of Right Action teaches Buddhists to avoid harming the environment • the second of the Five Precepts warns against taking what is not freely given, including from the environment. How the aims and work of Eco Dharma Network reflects Buddhist beliefs about caring for the natural world.
3.4.2a Animal rights – Buddhist perspectives	Learners should understand: Buddhist beliefs, teachings and practices about animal rights: • the status of human beings is no higher than that of other living beings • human compassion, wisdom and loving kindness must be extended to all living beings (Dhammapada 129) • the First Precept teaches the concept of ahimsa • the principle of Right Action – harming animals would accrue negative karma • animals are also part of the cycle of samsara. • being re-born as an animal is due to bad karma in past lives and considered a serious spiritual setback • animals cannot improve their karmic status. They must continue to be re-born as an animal until their bad karma has been used up. Buddhist perspectives on using animals for human benefit: • the Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama) was not a vegetarian and did not teach his followers to be vegetarian • some say the First Precept refers more to direct killing than the indirect killing of animals for food • eating meat is another example of the reality of dukkha • vegetarianism avoids causing suffering (ahimsa)

- vegetarianism avoids industrial farming which can lead to climate change/environmental damage
- the concept of 'Right Livelihood' teaches that Buddhists should avoid work that involves killing or harming animals.

Buddhist perspectives on the use of animals in scientific and medical research:

- many Buddhists agree with the UK Animal Welfare Sentience Act of 2022
- experimenting on animals is morally wrong if the animal concerned might come to any harm
- many acknowledge the value that animal experiments may have for human health
- some would point to drugs tested on animals damaging human health
- the experimenter must accept the negative karma of carrying out the experiment
- experiment only for a morally good purpose
- experiment only on animals where there is no alternative
- design the experiment to do as little harm as possible
- avoid killing the animal unless it is absolutely necessary
- treat the animals kindly and respectfully.

How the aims and work Dharma Voices for Animals reflect Buddhist beliefs about animal rights.

3.5a Roles, rights and responsibilities: human nature and the right to life – Buddhist perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.5.1a What makes us human – Buddhist perspectives

3.5.2a Medical ethics: abortion and euthanasia – Buddhist perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.5.1a What makes us human – Buddhist perspectives	Learners should understand: Buddhist attitudes, beliefs and teachings about what makes us human: • Buddha-nature: that all have the potential to achieve Nirvana (enlightenment) • Mahayana – The concept of Buddhahood • Theravada – The concept of Arhathood • recognising and avoiding the Three Poisons • recognising the Three Marks of Existence • seeking Nirvana through Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.
3.5.2a Medical ethics: abortion and euthanasia – Buddhist perspectives	Learners should understand: Buddhist beliefs and teachings about abortion: • the cycle of samsara means there is no point at which a foetus or embryo is not living • human life is precious as only humans can reveal the buddha-nature or attain arhathood • the first of the Five Precepts teaches against taking a life • the principle of ahimsa guides against causing harm to living beings • Precepts and principles are only guidelines, not rules or moral laws • abortion is usually a complex issue and the complexity of each situation must be considered • the concept of a skilful act means that abortion could be considered a negative act or a 'necessary evil'. Buddhist beliefs and teachings about euthanasia: • death is the point of transition between this rebirth and the next rebirth • as human life is precious, it should carry on for as long as possible • a person's state of mind (karmic state) at the time of death can determine the kind of rebirth that will follow • the First Precept guides against the killing of a living being, so euthanasia is considered unskilful • the principles of ahimsa and metta encourage no harm and loving kindness • even if the intention is merciful, the act of killing is still wrong; Vinaya III. 86 • the principles of karuna and Right Intention, and individual circumstances, allow for euthanasia to be acceptable, as long as the intention to kill is avoided.

3.6a Roles, rights and responsibilities: freedom of religious expression and the use of personal wealth – Buddhist perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.6.1a Freedom of religious expression - Buddhist perspectives

3.6.2a The use of personal wealth – Buddhist perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.6.1a Freedom of religious expression – Buddhist perspectives	Learners should understand: Buddhist beliefs and teachings about the freedom of religious expression: • Buddhism is often considered to be a tolerant religion and evangelisation is not one of its main aims • the principles of Right Speech and Right Action guard against using freedom of expression unskillfully and giving offense • the principles of karuna and metta also guard against using freedom of expression unskillfully • positive karma is gained by living by these principles and ensuring that freedom of expression is used sensitively, causing no harm.
3.6.2a The use of personal wealth – Buddhist perspectives	Learners should understand: Buddhist beliefs and teachings about the use of personal wealth: • the example of the Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama) who abandoned extreme wealth to find enlightenment • stories about the Buddha's previous lives demonstrate his great acts of generosity • the Four Noble Truths teach that tanha (craving) leads to dukkha • the Buddha taught The Middle Way between wealth and poverty • the principle of Right Livelihood guides against making money from unskillful means or using money in a way that harms oneself or others • the principle of Right Action guides against taking money (or resources) that are not given freely • the principle of dana (generous giving) is important and leads to positive karma • the principle of karuna encourages the use of money to help others, for example, the work of The Karuna Trust • Buddhist monks have no possessions of their own; they rely on dana • wealth itself is not unskillful, but it must be used for the right purposes; Anguttara Nikaya 1.80.

World religion perspectives
b – Hindu perspectives

3.4b Roles, rights and responsibilities: Stewardship of the earth – Hindu perspectives	
In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas: 3.4.1b Humanity's relationship with the natural world – Hindu perspectives 3.4.2b Animal rights – Hindu perspectives	
Section	Amplification
3.4.1b Humanity's relationship with the natural world – Hindu perspectives	Learners should understand: Hindu beliefs and teachings about humanity's relationship with the natural world: - the ultimate reality is Brahman - every atman is a part of this divine essence and are manifestations of Brahman and interconnected; Bhagavad Gita 11:7; Chandogya Upanishad 4.10.4–5 - harmful actions towards nature can lead to negative karma - living in harmony with nature is essential to fulfilling one's dharma - the principle of ahimsa (non-violence) extends to all living beings, several aspects of nature are often revered as gods or goddesses; this reverence leads to practices that protect and preserve natural resources - Hindu practices of yoga and meditation often emphasize connection with nature, such as Surya Namaskar (Sun Salutation). How the aims and work of Hindu Climate Action reflect Hindu beliefs about caring for the natural world.
3.4.2b Animal rights – Hindu perspectives	Learners should understand: Hindu beliefs and teachings about animal rights: - all living beings possess an atman and are part of Brahman; Isha Upanishad v6, and the cycle of samsara; Yajurveda 12.32 - some animals are regarded as sacred, and their well-being is important for maintaining the balance of nature; Baghavata Purana 7:14.9 - ahimsa teaches that causing harm to living beings should be avoided, caring for animals is part of one's dharma - harming animals can lead to negative karmic outcomes in this life or future lives - harming an animal could be harming a being that may have been a human in a previous life - depending on karma, their own atman may return in animal form in their next life - various animals are associated with deities and are considered sacred such as monkeys (Hanuman), elephants (Ganesh)

- the cow is particularly revered and protected (Gau Mata).

Hindu beliefs and teachings about the use of animals for human benefit:

- many practise vegetarianism, such as ISKCON, thereby adhering to ahimsa, and out of respect for animal life; Manu Smriti 5:48
- the Mahabharata reflects the Hindu view that the cow should be protected and honoured, the practice of factory farming directly contradicts the principle of ahimsa

Hindu beliefs and teachings about the use of animals in scientific and medical research:

- diverse views exist within Hinduism
- some Hindus may accept the use of animals in research if it is for the greater good and conducted with minimal harm
- others may oppose it outright on the grounds of ahimsa and the impact of negative karma
- many advocate for alternative methods to animal testing that align with ahimsa.

How the aims and work of Jivdaya Charitable Trust reflect Hindu beliefs about animal rights.

3.5b Roles, rights and responsibilities: human nature and the right to life – Hindu perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.5.1b What makes us human – Hindu perspectives

3.5.2b Medical ethics: abortion and euthanasia – Hindu perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.5.1b What makes us human – Hindu perspectives	Learners should understand: Hindu beliefs and teachings about what makes us human: • due to the cycle of samsara, there is no point at which a fetus or embryo is not living • the core of human identity is the atman, the soul or self, which is part of Brahman • the atman's ultimate goal is unity with Brahman (moksha) and end the cycle of samsara • humans possess free will and have the ability to create good or bad karma which affects samsara • the prakriti (nature) of everything possess 3 qualities (the Three Gunas) • only humans can alter the balance of Gunas • the senses, which cause instability and desire, have to be controlled; Bhagavad Gita 5:20-21.
3.5.2b Medical ethics: abortion and euthanasia – Hindu perspectives	Learners should understand: Hindu beliefs and teachings about medical ethics – abortion: • Hindus hold different beliefs • Hindus generally believe all living beings possess an atman and are part of Brahman • dharma emphasizes the protection of life; Manu Smriti • dharma is also context-dependent – therefore abortion might be considered permissible in some situations • the principle of ahimsa and the belief that the atman exists from the moment of conception is stated in Hindu scripture; the Garbhopanishad • abortion can be seen as generating negative karma for those involved. Hindu beliefs and teachings about medical ethics – euthanasia: • Hindus hold different beliefs • Hindus believe all living beings possess an atman and are part of Brahman • dharma – there is a conflict between the duty to preserve life and the duty to alleviate suffering • some argue that it is a person's dharma to endure suffering with courage and dignity, as it may lead to spiritual development • ending a life prematurely might be seen as disrupting the cycle of samsara; Manu Smriti • ahimsa – ending a life can be viewed as an act of violence • Hinduism also values karuna (compassion), so passive euthanasia may be acceptable in some situations.

3.6b Roles, rights and responsibilities: freedom of religious expression and the use of personal wealth – Hindu perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.6.1b Freedom of religious expression – Hindu perspectives

3.6.2b The use of personal wealth – Hindu perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.6.1b Freedom of religious expression – Hindu perspectives	Learners should understand: Hindu beliefs and teachings about the freedom of religious expression: • The Hindu view is that there are many paths to the same truth; Sarva Dharma and Sama Bhava • Hindu tradition encourages dialogue and debate – there are multiple schools of thought, such as Advaita (non-dualism), Dvaita (dualism) • ahimsa advocates for peaceful coexistence, harm that could be caused by religious intolerance or coercion • various reform movements within Hinduism emphasise freedom to pursue spiritual truths.
3.6.2b The use of personal wealth – Hindu perspectives	Learners should understand: Hindu beliefs and teachings about the use of personal wealth: • one of the four main goals of human life is artha – the Bhagavad Gita teaches the importance of vairagya (detachment) from material possessions and wealth. • the true goal of life is spiritual progress – wealth should only be used to support this journey, not hinder it • wealth should not be obtained through unethical practices • dana is a highly valued virtue that earns positive karma.

World religion perspectives
c – Islamic perspectives

3.4c Roles, rights and responsibilities: Stewardship of the earth – Islam

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.4.1c Humanity's relationship with the natural world – Islamic perspectives

3.4.2c Animal rights – Islamic perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.4.1c Humanity's relationship with the natural world – Islamic perspectives	Learners should understand: Islamic beliefs and teachings about humanity's relationship with the natural world: - the world was created by and belongs to God; Qur'an 7:54 - humans are seen as khalifahs (stewards); Qur'an 35:39 of the earth (fil ardh); Qur'an 6:165 - stewardship reflects a deep interconnectedness with the rest of creation - humans are responsible for maintaining the balance (mizan) in the world; Qur'an 55. 7-9 - tawhid, extends to the oneness of creation - fitrah leads people to seek God and to live in harmony with the environment - on the Day of Judgment (Akhirah), humans will be made accountable for their actions towards the natural world. How the aims and work of Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences (IFEES) reflect Islamic beliefs.
3.4.2c Animal rights – Islamic perspectives	Learners should understand: Islamic beliefs and teachings about animal rights: - the Prophet Muhammad showed kindness to animals - Muhammad taught that those who are kind to animals are rewarded by Allah; Bukhari - on the Day of Judgment (Akhirah), humans will be accountable for their actions towards animals. Islamic beliefs and teachings about using animals for human benefit: - God provided livestock for humans to use, including for food; Qur'an 40:79-80 - some Muslims avoid factory farming and killing animals for sport - Muslims are encouraged not to over-work animals - Halal slaughter practices include thanking Allah for the animal's life. Islamic beliefs and teachings about use of animals in scientific and medical research: - some Muslims believe that animal experimentation is permissible when it serves as beneficial to human life and health

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• it must be conducted with the intention of achieving a greater good• it must inflict as little harm as possible• if alternatives are available, they should be used. |
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How the aims and work of Salam for Animals reflect Islamic beliefs about animal rights.

3.5c Roles, rights and responsibilities: human nature and the right to life – Islamic perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.5.1c What makes us human – Islamic perspectives

3.5.2c Medical ethics: abortion and euthanasia – Islamic perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.5.1c What makes us human – Islamic perspectives	Learners should understand: Islamic beliefs and teachings about what makes us human: - human beings were uniquely created by Allah with the best physical, intellectual, and spiritual capabilities; Qur'an 95:4 - the soul (ruh) is considered the essence of human existence, given by Allah; Qur'an 17:85 - humans possess autonomy – free will - humans have moral responsibility; Qur'an 76:3 - humans are born with a natural disposition towards good - humans can recognise the existence of Allah, which is part of the fitrah; Qur'an 30:30 - humans have intellectual ability (aql) and can recognise Allah in creation.
3.5.2c Medical ethics: abortion and euthanasia – Islamic perspectives	Learners should understand: Islamic perspectives about when life begins: - some believe that life begins at ensoulment - some believe that when the foetus is physically formed, it then becomes a person - some believe that it is a person from conception. Islamic beliefs and teachings about medical ethics – abortion: - Muslims hold different views, depending on their interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadith - sanctity of life is emphasised and taking a life unjustly is considered a grave sin; Qur'an 5:32 - the intention (niyyah) behind actions are crucial in Islamic ethics - the principle of darar (minimizing harm) is important - many Muslims would argue that there are valid grounds for abortion. Islamic beliefs and teachings about medical ethics – euthanasia: - sanctity of life is emphasised and taking a life unjustly is considered a grave sin; Qur'an 5:32 - most Muslims agree that euthanasia, whether voluntary or involuntary, is not permissible in Islam - the intention (niyyah) behind actions are crucial in Islamic ethics - euthanasia is wrong as it involves intentionally ending a life prematurely; Qur'an 16:61 - suffering is often viewed as a test from Allah, which Muslims are encouraged to endure with patience (sabr) and trust in Allah's wisdom; Qur'an 67.2, Surah Al Baqarah 2.155

	• palliative care can relieve suffering without hastening death • some Muslims argue that withholding medical treatment may be acceptable if the treatment is prolonging suffering without a reasonable hope of survival.
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3.6c Roles, rights and responsibilities : freedom of religious expression and the use of personal wealth – Islamic perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.6.1c Freedom of religious expression – Islamic perspectives

3.6.2c The use of personal wealth – Islamic perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.6.1c Freedom of religious expression – Islamic perspectives	Learners should understand: Islamic beliefs and teachings about the freedom of religious expression: - Islam teaches that religious belief should not be compelled; Qur'an 2:256 - the Qur'an acknowledges followers of Judaism and Christianity as "People of the Book" - Muslims are instructed to respect Jews and Christians and their scriptures; Qur'an 29:46 - Shar'ia provides guidance on how to treat non-Muslims within an Islamic state, emphasizing justice and protection - the degree of religious freedom in Muslim-majority countries varies widely: - some have enshrined religious freedom in their constitutions and legal systems - others impose strict limitations on religious expression, especially when it conflicts with Islamic law - publicly reciting the Shahadah is an important practice to demonstrate commitment to Islam.
3.6.2c The use of personal wealth – Islamic perspectives	Learners should understand: Islamic beliefs and teachings about the use of personal wealth: - wealth is viewed as something God has trusted humans to use wisely (amanah) - Muslims are expected to use it in ways that reflect God's will - Muslims must avoid israf – extravagance and waste - zakah – is a mandatory act of charity for those who can afford to give it; Qur'an 73:20 - sadaqah - can take many forms, including money, food, or time; Qur'an 3:92 - khums – is one of the Ten Obligatory Acts of Shi'a Islam; Qur'an 8:41 - Muslims are encouraged to invest their wealth in halal ventures - Islam strictly prohibits the practice of charging interest on loans (riba).

World religion perspectives

d – Jewish perspectives

3.4d Roles, rights and responsibilities: Stewardship of the Earth – Jewish perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.4.1d Humanity's relationship with the natural world – Jewish perspectives

3.4.2d Animal rights – Jewish perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.4.1d Humanity's relationship with the natural world – Jewish perspectives	Learners should understand: Jewish beliefs, teachings and practices about humanity's relationship with the natural world: - humanity was given dominion over the earth; Genesis 1:28 - humans are Shomrei Adamah (guardians/stewards of the earth); Genesis 2:15 - the concept of Tikkun Olam includes the idea of social action including environmental responsibility - bal tashchit (do not destroy or waste) promotes sustainability and respect for the natural world Deuteronomy 20:19-20 - Tu B'Shevat (New Year of the Trees) is a Jewish holiday that celebrates the renewal of nature - some modern interpretations of kashrut include eco-kashrut – environmental and ethical concerns about dietary practices. How the aims and work of EcoJudaism reflect Jewish beliefs about stewardship.
3.4.2d Animal rights – Jewish perspectives	Learners should understand: Jewish beliefs, teachings and practices about animal rights: - the principle of Tza'ar Ba'alei Chayim (the prevention of any pain or suffering to animals) Exodus 23:12; Deuteronomy 25:4 Jewish beliefs, teachings and practices about using animals for human benefit: - humane use of certain animals for food and work is permitted; Leviticus 12; Deuteronomy 14 - animals used for kosher food must be slaughtered using the shechita method to minimise suffering the Torah prohibits certain practices; Exodus 23:19, Deuteronomy 22:6-7 some Jews (Rabbi Moshe Feinstein) object to practices such as overfeeding animals to produce delicacies - only animals such as an ox or a donkey can be used for ploughing or carrying heavy loads - animals cannot be beaten or forced to work excessively or unnaturally; Proverbs 12:10 - the laws of Shabbat also provide a day of rest for working animals; Exodus. 20:10.

	Jewish beliefs, teachings and practices about the use of animals in scientific and medical research: • Jewish teaching allows animal experiments when there is a clear benefit to human life and health • the concept of Tza'ar Ba'alei Chayim must be considered • the concept of Bal Tashchit (do not destroy or waste items) must be considered • each case may be subject to individual interpretation of Jewish religious law • some Jews encourage alternative research methods that do not involve animals. How the aims and work of the Jewish Initiative for Animals reflect Jewish beliefs about animal rights.
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3.5d Roles, rights and responsibilities: human nature and the right to life - Jewish perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.5.1d What makes us human – Jewish perspectives

3.5.2d Medical ethics: abortion and euthanasia – Jewish perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.5.1d What makes us human – Jewish perspectives	Learners should understand: Jewish beliefs and teachings about what makes us human: - created in God's image; Genesis 1:26-27 - possess a soul or a divine spark, a spiritual dimension; Ecclesiastes 12:7 - born with both a good, altruistic impulse (yetzer ha tov) and an evil or selfish impulse (yetzer hara) - possess autonomy – free will which comes with moral responsibility; Genesis 3.
3.5.2d Medical ethics: abortion and euthanasia – Jewish perspectives	Learners should understand: Jewish perspectives on when life begins: - Jewish thought recognizes the foetus as having potential life - a foetus is not considered a full person (nefesh) until birth according to the Talmud, it is considered part of the mother's body until then. Jewish beliefs and teachings about abortion: - In Orthodox Judaism, abortion is generally permitted if the pregnancy endangers the life or health of the mother; Talmud - Ohalot 7:6-8; - pikuach nefesh (saving a life) must be considered - abortion may be permitted in certain situations but is subject to rabbinic guidance and is evaluated on a case-by-case basis - abortion is both a medical and spiritual moral decision - Reform Judaism places a strong emphasis on the woman's right to choose. Jewish beliefs and teachings about euthanasia: - life is considered sacred; and is of utmost value; Genesis 1:26-27 - the principle of pikuach nefesh applies - Jewish Law prohibits active euthanasia because only God has the authority to end a human life; Ecclesiastes 3:2 - some Jews might support passive euthanasia if a person is suffering and death is imminent - many Jews encourage the use of pain relief and palliative care, even if such treatments might hasten death - Reform Judaism places importance on the dignity and free will of the individual to decide.

3.6d Roles, rights and responsibilities: freedom of religious expression and the use of personal wealth – Jewish perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.6.1d Freedom of religious expression – Jewish perspectives

3.6.2d The use of personal wealth – Jewish perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.6.1d Freedom of religious expression – Jewish perspectives	Learners should understand: Jewish beliefs and teachings about the freedom of religious expression: - humans are created in the image of God, with inherent dignity and worth - humans are free to express their religious beliefs and personal identity - there is an emphasis on justice, and all have the right to live according to their beliefs without fear of persecution or discrimination; Deuteronomy 16:20 - Jews have often been persecuted for their religious beliefs, leading to support for religious liberty, both for themselves and for others - Jews are obliged to live according to Jewish Law - the Talmud teaches acceptance of diversity of religious expression - the Talmud teaches the belief that morality and righteousness are not confined to the Jewish people alone - the principle of dina de-malkhuta dina ("the law of the land is the law") must be applied - if the laws of a country violate Jewish Law, they may not apply to Jews.
3.6.2d The use of personal wealth – Jewish perspectives	Learners should understand: Jewish beliefs and teachings about the use of personal wealth: - the Torah teaches that God gives the power to acquire wealth; Deuteronomy 8:18 - Jews have a responsibility to use their wealth not just for personal gain but also for the greater good – Tikkun Olam - Judaism warns against the dangers of greed and excessive attachment to wealth - The pursuit of wealth can lead to unethical behaviour and neglect of spiritual and communal responsibilities; Proverbs 28:20-22 - Tzedakah is often translated as charity but more accurately translated as "justice" or "fairness" - charity giving is an act of justice not simply one of generosity - Jews are required to give a portion of their income, usually 10% as a ma'aser (tithe) to those in need - traditional Jewish homes often have a pushke box to collect money for charity.

World religion perspectives
e – Sikh (Sikhi) perspectives

3.4e Roles, rights and responsibilities: Stewardship of the earth – Sikh perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.4.1e Humanity's relationship with the natural world – Sikh perspectives

3.4.2e Animal rights – Sikh perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.4.1e Humanity's relationship with the natural world – Sikh perspectives	Learners should understand: Sikh beliefs and teachings about Humanity's relationship with the natural world: - all forms of life are interconnected - the entire universe is a manifestation of Waheguru and deserves respect; Guru Granth Sahib 8; 723 - the Guru Granth Sahib contains numerous hymns that celebrate nature as expressions of Waheguru's greatness - the concept of Sarbat da Bhala (the well-being of all) includes the well-being of the planet and all its inhabitants - harming nature is seen as harming a part of God's creation - the concept of santok (contentment) in Sikhism applies to how one interacts with the natural world - Sikhs are encouraged to live simply, avoiding excessive consumption and wastefulness. How the aims and work of Eco Sikh UK reflect Sikh beliefs about caring for the natural world.
3.4.2e Animal rights – Sikh perspectives	Learners should understand: Sikh beliefs and teachings about animal rights: - Waheguru (God) resides in all forms of life, not just humans; Guru Granth Sahib 663 - Sikh Gurus set examples of compassion towards animals. Guru Har Rai, the seventh Sikh Guru, was known for his kindness to animals - the practice of the virtue of daya (compassion) applies to animals as well as humans - harming animals disrupts the balance of nature and is inconsistent with the principle of Sarbat da Bhala - the concept of reincarnation means people live many lives on earth, some of these in the form of animals - harming or killing animals could result in bad karma and lead humans further away from mukti. Sikh beliefs and teachings about the use of animals: - Sikhism allows for personal choice in dietary practices - using animals for food is not forbidden

- the jhatka method of slaughter means that the animal must be killed as quickly as possible and experiences as little suffering as possible
- many Sikhs, especially those who follow the Khalsa code of conduct, are vegetarian; Guru Granth Sahib 467
- some consider that the concept of ahimsa applies just as much to animals
- langar kitchens in gurdwaras offer vegetarian food only.

Sikh beliefs, teachings and practices about the use of animals in scientific and medical research:

- there is no explicit prohibition against using animals in scientific and medical research
- many Sikhs see human life as ultimately of more value than animal life
- any research using animals would need to be balanced against the Sikh value of ahimsa
- any suffering must be justified by significant benefits to human life and health
- Sikhs might support the use of alternative research methods.

How the aims and work of Khalsa Rescue Foundation reflect Sikh beliefs about animal rights.

3.5e Roles, rights and responsibilities: human nature and the right to life – Sikh (Sikhi) perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.5.1e What makes us human – Sikh perspectives

3.5.2e Medical ethics: abortion and euthanasia – Sikh perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.5.1e What makes us human – Sikh perspectives	Learners should understand: Sikh beliefs and teachings about what makes us human: - every human contains a divine spark known as atma (soul) - the atma is part of the universal soul or Waheguru; Guru Granth Sahib 96 - humans were all created by Waheguru and are worthy of respect; Guru Granth Sahib 272; 349 - humans are the highest form of living creatures and are unique because they can make moral judgements - humans have a spiritual essence - human actions have consequences – positive or negative karma - humans are encouraged to align their will with hukam (the divine will) - karma affects the attainment of mukti - Sikhs should aim for their lives to be gurmukh rather than manmukh - Sikhs should aim to transcend haumai (the ego – self-centredness).
3.5.2e Medical ethics: abortion and euthanasia – Sikh perspectives	Learners should understand: Sikh beliefs and teachings about medical ethics – abortion: - due to the cycle of samsara, there is no point at which a foetus or embryo is not living - life is sacred and is a gift from Waheguru; Guru Granth Sahib 921 - the atma (soul) enters the body at the moment of conception; Guru Granth Sahib 74 - the concept of daya (compassion) - the importance of intention behind actions - the concept of miri-piri – the balance between religious teachings and practical situations - in certain situations, Sikh ethics might support abortion as a compassionate choice - there is a recognition of the complex moral decisions that are often involved. Sikh beliefs and teachings about medical ethics – euthanasia: - a high value on the sanctity of life - an emphasis on compassion, moral responsibility, and acceptance of hukam (Waheguru's will) - all life is a gift from Waheguru; Guru Granth Sahib 921 - most Sikhs believe that the timing of birth and death should be left in the Waheguru's hands; Guru Granth Sahib 376

	• suffering can be part of one's karmic cycle and lead to spiritual growth • euthanasia could be seen as disrupting the karmic journey towards mukti • daya (compassion) is a Sikh virtue • Sikh teachings would encourage providing palliative care and pain relief rather than hastening death • seva (selfless service), involves caring for those in need.
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3.6e Roles, rights and responsibilities: freedom of religious expression and the use of personal wealth – Sikh (Sikhi) perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.6.1e Freedom of religious expression – Sikh perspectives

3.6.2e The use of personal wealth – Sikh perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.6.1e Freedom of religious expression – Sikh perspectives	Learners should understand: Sikh beliefs and teachings about the freedom of religious expression: - the concept of Sarbat da Bhala (well-being of all) respects the rights of individuals to follow their own religious beliefs - there are many paths to the Waheguru; Guru Granth Sahib 139 and 483 - How Sikh Gurus fought for religious expression, including: - Guru Arjan (martyred for refused to compromise his Sikh beliefs) - Guru Tegh Bahadur (beheaded for refusing to convert to Islam) - Guru Gobind Singh (instructed Sikhs to wear the turban) Guru Tegh Bahadur sacrificed his life to protect the religious freedom of Hindus - Sikh leaders have allowed all religions to practice their faith freely (Maharajah Ranjit Singh's reign 1801 to 1839) - Sikh Gurus consistently preached against coercion in matters of religion; Guru Granth Sahib 7 - the Adi Granth also includes writings from Hindu and Muslim writers who believed in the oneness of God - Sikhs are encouraged to read the books of other religions for self-education; Rehat Maryada Chapter 10 - the kirpan symbolises the importance of defending the Sikh faith.
3.6.2e The use of personal wealth – Sikh perspectives	Learners should understand: Sikh beliefs and teachings about the use of personal wealth: - Sikhs are encouraged to set aside a portion of their income – daswandh (traditionally 10%) for charitable purposes and to support community welfare 1 of the 3 pillars of Sikhism is Vand Chhako (giving) Guru Granth Sahib 1245 - the avoidance of a desire for excessive wealth - the encouragement of contentment through peace and spiritual fulfilment; Guru Granth Sahib 286 - the pursuit of wealth should not lead to materialism or distract from spiritual goals; Guru Granth Sahib 5; Guru Granth Sahib 1331 - Sikhs should aim for their lives, to be gurmukh rather than manmukh - Sikhs need to transcend haumai (the ego – self-centredness).

Non-religious perspectives

3.7 Roles, rights and responsibilities: stewardship of the earth – non-religious perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.7.1 Humanity's relationship with the natural world – non-religious perspectives

3.7.2 Animal rights – non-religious perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.7.1 Humanity's relationship with the natural world – non-religious perspectives	Learners should understand: Non-religious perspectives about humanity's relationship with the natural world: - the interconnectedness of all living things - humans have the capacity to reason and foresee the consequences of their actions - environmental justice – to protect vulnerable populations from environmental harm. How the aims and work Humanist Climate Action reflect humanist beliefs about caring for the world. The similarities and differences between religious and non-religious believers' perspectives about humanity's relationship with the natural world.
3.7.2 Animal rights – non-religious perspectives	Learners should understand: Non-religious perspectives on animal rights: - Animal Welfare Act 2022 recognises that animals are sentient beings - the concept of speciesism - the concept of Deep Ecology - commitment to preserving biodiversity and maintaining healthy ecosystems. Non-religious perspectives on using animals for human benefit: - concerns about the humane treatment of animals in food production - for some, the promotion of veganism or vegetarianism - concerns about the impact of animal agriculture and industrial farming practices on the environment and on humans. Non-religious perspectives on the use of animals in scientific and medical research: - justified where it could lead to significant human medical advancements - minimising harm and trying to find alternatives (such as computer modelling) - a concern that the prohibition of animal research could hinder scientific and medical progress

- a concern that some research on animals has resulted in harm to humans (e.g. thalidomide) for some, that animals and should not be used as a means to an end.

How the aims and work of the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals reflect non-religious perspectives about animal rights.

The similarities and differences between religious and non-religious believers' perspectives about animal rights.

3.8 Roles, rights and responsibilities: human nature and the right to life – non-religious perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.8.1 What makes us human – non-religious perspectives

3.8.2 Medical ethics: abortion and euthanasia – non-religious perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.8.1 What makes us human – non-religious perspectives	Learners should understand: Non-religious perspectives on what makes us human: - humans are a defined species - physical traits such as large brains and the ability to use complex language and symbols - possess self-consciousness - possess autonomy – free will and are moral agents capable of distinguishing right from wrong - can explore the quest for life's meaning and purpose. The similarities and differences between religious and non-religious believers' perspectives about what makes us human.
3.8.2 Medical ethics: abortion and euthanasia – non-religious perspectives	Learners should understand: Non-religious perspectives on abortion: - take different sides of the Pro-Choice vs. Pro-Life debate - some argue it should be based on personal autonomy - some stress the need for a legal framework to access abortion - some want full access to abortion services as necessary to protect women's health - some believe that personhood develops later in the pregnancy and allow early abortions - a consideration of the individual situation and the consequences - concerns about the 'slippery slope'. The similarities and differences between religious and non-religious believers' perspectives about abortion. Non-religious perspectives on euthanasia: - different views on when a person ceases to exist - personal autonomy and quality of life – the right to die - rational, informed, legal decision-making based on medical advice and personal values - the need for a clear legal framework to protect patients and healthcare providers. The similarities and differences between religious and non-religious believers' perspectives about euthanasia.

3.9 Roles, rights and responsibilities: freedom of religious expression and the use of personal wealth – non-religious perspectives

In this topic learners will gain knowledge and understanding in the following areas:

3.9.1 Freedom of religious expression – non-religious perspectives

3.9.2 The use of personal wealth – non-religious perspectives

Section	Amplification
3.9.1 Freedom of religious expression – non-religious perspectives	Learners should understand: Non-religious perspectives on freedom of religious expression: • a fundamental human right that promotes individual autonomy and dignity • is not absolute, it should be limited when it conflicts with other rights or public order • freedom of religious expression is enshrined in law in the UK – Human Rights Act 1998 • support for a pluralistic society • support for the need for a clear separation between religion and government • some would oppose faith schools • laws and policies should not favour religious expression or symbols over secular ones • restrictions on the use of religious symbols or proselytizing in public schools, government offices, or other state-controlled spaces. The similarities and differences between religious and non-religious believers' perspectives about freedom of religious expression.
3.9.2 The use of personal wealth – non-religious perspectives	Learners should understand: Non-religious perspectives on the use of personal wealth: • personal wealth as a tool to improve the quality of life for oneself and others • personal wealth can contribute to comfort and security, but it is not the sole determinant of happiness • spending money on goods and services is a driver of economic growth for all and brings personal satisfaction • wealth is useful but should not lead to greed. The similarities and differences between religious and non-religious believers' perspectives about the use of personal wealth.

Unit 4

Religion and human rights

Assessment Type: Non-examination assessment (6 hours)

20% of qualification

60 marks

Overview of unit

The purpose of this unit is to:

- consider human rights issues from religious and non-religious perspectives
- enable an awareness of the importance of human rights issues in contemporary society through the lens of religious studies
- reflect on personal values and beliefs relating to human rights

Learners must complete tasks based on the **two** religions studied (Christianity or Catholic Christianity and a world religion) in all other units, **and** non-religious perspectives.

Areas of content

In this topic learners will gain knowledge, understanding and skills in the following areas:

4.1 Human rights	
4.1.1 Beliefs, teachings, practices and perspectives relating to human rights	
Section	Amplification
4.1.1 Beliefs, teachings, practices and perspectives relating to human rights	Learners should understand: • religious beliefs, teachings, practices and perspectives relating to human rights • non-religious perspectives relating to human rights • relevant articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Learners will focus on two of three human rights issues set annually by WJEC from the following list: • gender equality • LGBTQ+ rights • racial equality of Black, Asian and minority ethnic people and communities • the right to education • the right to freedom from slavery and forced labour • the right to life and freedom from capital punishment • the right to seek justice for human rights violations • the rights of people with disabilities • the rights of refugee and asylum seekers. Learners should have a broad understanding of the aims, purposes and key principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

4.2 Religious Studies skills

- 4.2.1 Selecting and researching charities or organisations
 4.2.2 Considering the importance of human rights issues to society today
 4.2.3 Reflecting on personal values and beliefs

Section	Amplification
4.2.1 Selecting and researching charities or organisations	Learners should be able to: - select local, national or global charities or organisations based on their aims and purpose, and how they campaign for human rights issues - research into the work of charities or organisations and how that work aligns with the relevant articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
4.2.2 Considering the importance of human rights issues to society today	Learners should be able to analyse and evaluate the importance of human rights issues to society today based on: - religious and non-religious perspectives - purpose, aims and work of charities or organisations.
4.2.3 Reflecting on personal values and beliefs	Learners should be able to: - reflect on their own values and beliefs in relation to the human rights issue - reflect on how their own values and beliefs align with charities or organisations.

Opportunities for integration of learning experiences

Learners should be encouraged to consider the following learning experiences to further develop their understanding, appreciation and awareness of the subject content:

- develop independent thinking and confidence in articulating their own beliefs, values, and convictions with increasing sophistication
- explore their own beliefs, values, and convictions, understanding that beliefs can change over time
- develop empathy, tolerance compassion and curiosity through engagement with different religious and non-religious viewpoints and convictions
- engage in collaborative working.

The Guidance for Teaching will include further information on the opportunities provided by the qualification for teachers/centres to integrate these learning experiences into delivery.

For opportunities to develop cross-cutting themes, cross-curricular skills and integral skills please see Appendix A.

3 ASSESSMENT

The Assessment Pack will include all detailed information relating to assessment.

3.1 Assessment Objectives and Weightings

Below are the assessment objectives for this specification. Learners must:

AO1

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of religious and non-religious beliefs, practices, and teachings

AO2

Apply knowledge and understanding of religious and non-religious beliefs, teachings, practices, values, and philosophical convictions

AO3

Analyse, evaluate, or make judgements on a variety of ethical and moral issues, religious and non-religious beliefs, teachings, practices, values, and philosophical convictions

AO4

Select, use and apply skills and techniques in practice relevant to the study of Religious Studies

The table below shows the weighting of each assessment objective for each unit and for the qualification as a whole (to be confirmed).

	AO1	AO2	AO3	AO4	Total
Unit 1	15%	8%	7%	0%	30%
Unit 2	0%	5%	10%	5%	20%
Unit 3	5%	11%	14%	0%	30%
Unit 4	0%	10%	5%	5%	20%
Overall weighting	20%	34%	36%	10%	100%

3.2 Overview of arrangements for non-examination assessment

Unit 2

Every two years, WJEC will select two of the following set themes and will provide a statement associated with each theme:

- a) Marriage, adultery, divorce and remarriage
- b) Artificial contraception and natural family planning
- c) Cohabitation and sex before and outside marriage
- d) Same-sex relationships, civil partnerships and same-sex marriage
- e) Interfaith relationships and marriage outside the religious tradition
- f) Roles within family, including gender roles within relationships
- g) Religious upbringing, childhood ceremonies and faith-based schooling.

The themes and associated statements will be set by WJEC every two years and made available via the WJEC Portal in September during the first year of study, with subsequent releases taking place in the first week of June at the start of each new two-year cycle. This arrangement will continue on a biennial basis.

Centres will choose one theme and an associated statement as the focus of the non-examination assessment tasks.

The assessment must be based on the two religions studied in all other units (Christianity or Catholic Christianity and a world religion) and non-religious perspectives.

This assessment contributes to 20% of the overall qualification grade.

This unit will be assessed through an externally set assignment and will be marked by the centre and moderated by WJEC. Assessments must be submitted digitally (they may be handwritten and scanned or completed digitally).

Unit 4

WJEC will on a two-year cycle, select three of the following human rights issues:

- gender equality
- LGBTQ+ rights
- racial equality of Black, Asian and minority ethnic people and communities
- the right to education
- the right to freedom from slavery and forced labour
- the right to life and freedom from capital punishment
- the right to seek justice for human rights violations
- the rights of people with disabilities
- the rights of refugee and asylum seekers.

The themes will be set by WJEC every two years and made available via the WJEC Portal in July of the first year of study with subsequent releases taking place in the first week of June at the start of each new two-year cycle. This arrangement will continue on a biennial basis.

Centres will choose two human rights issues as the focus of the non-examination assessment tasks.

The assessment must be based on the two religions studied in all other units (Christianity or Catholic Christianity and a world religion) and non-religious perspectives.

This assessment contributes to 20% of the overall qualification grade.

This unit will be assessed through an externally set assignment and will be set and marked by WJEC. Assessments must be submitted digitally (they may be handwritten and scanned or completed digitally).

4 MALPRACTICE

Before the course starts, the teacher is responsible for informing candidates of WJEC's regulations concerning malpractice. Candidates must not take part in any unfair practice in the preparation of work for GCSE Religious Studies.

Information regarding malpractice is available in our [Guide to preventing, reporting and investigating malpractice](#).

All cases of suspected or actual malpractice must be reported immediately to WJEC (malpractice@wjec.co.uk). If candidates commit malpractice, they may be penalised or disqualified from the examinations.

In all cases of malpractice, centres are advised to consult the JCQ booklet [Suspected Malpractice: Policies and Procedures](#).

5 TECHNICAL INFORMATION

5.1 Entries and awards

This is a unitised qualification. Learners are entered for each unit separately.

Assessment opportunities will be available in the summer series each year, until the end of the life of the specification.

Unit 1, Unit 2 and Unit 3 will be available in 2026 (and each year thereafter). Unit 4 will be available in 2027 (and each year thereafter) and the qualification will be awarded for the first time in summer 2027.

Pre-16 Candidates (i.e. candidates who are 16 or under on 31st August in the academic year in which they were entered)

The terminal rule is set at 40% of the overall qualification for Pre-16 Candidates for GCSE Religious Studies.

If the assessment being re-taken contributes to the 40% terminal rule requirement, the mark for the new assessment will count regardless of previous results in that assessment.

Candidates may resit an individual unit once only but are not permitted to improve a previously submitted NEA. The better uniform mark score from the two attempts will be used in calculating the final overall grade subject to the terminal rule being satisfied first i.e. that candidates must complete 40% of the assessment for a qualification in the series in which they are cashing in.

If any unit has been attempted twice and a candidate wishes to enter the unit for the third time, the candidate will have to re-enter all units and the appropriate cash-in(s). This is referred to as a 'fresh start'. When retaking a qualification (fresh start), a candidate may have up to two attempts at each unit. However, no results from examination units taken prior to the fresh start can be used in aggregating the new grade(s).

If a candidate has been entered for but is absent for a unit, the absence does not count as an attempt. The candidate would, however, qualify as a resit candidate in the final resit series.

Marks for non-examination assessment may be used for the life of the specification.

Post-16 Candidates (i.e. candidates who are 16 or over on 1st September in the academic year in which they are entered)

There is no terminal rule that applies to Post-16 Candidates for GCSE Religious Studies.

There is no limit on the number of times a candidate can resit an individual unit; however, the better uniform mark score from the most two recent attempts will be used in calculating the final overall grade.

The 'fresh start' rule does not apply to post-16 candidates.

If a candidate has been entered for but is absent for a unit, the absence does not count as an attempt. The candidate would, however, qualify as a resit candidate in the final resit series.

Marks for non-examination assessment may be used for the life of the specification.

The entry codes appear below:

		Entry codes	
		English medium	Welsh medium
Unit 1	Religious and non-religious beliefs, teachings and practices - Christianity & Buddhism	3150UA	3150NA
Unit 1	Religious and non-religious beliefs, teachings and practices - Christianity & Hinduism	3150UB	3150NB
Unit 1	Religious and non-religious beliefs, teachings and practices - Christianity & Islam	3150UC	3150NC
Unit 1	Religious and non-religious beliefs, teachings and practices - Christianity & Judaism	3150UD	3150ND
Unit 1	Religious and non-religious beliefs, teachings and practices - Christianity & Sikhism	3150UE	3150NE
Unit 1	Religious and non-religious beliefs, teachings and practices - Catholic Christianity & Judaism	3150UF	3150NF
Unit 2	Religion and relationships	3150U2	3150N2
Unit 3	Roles, rights and responsibilities - Christianity & Buddhism	3150UG	3150NG
Unit 3	Roles, rights and responsibilities - Christianity & Hinduism	3150UH	3150NH
Unit 3	Roles, rights and responsibilities - Christianity & Islam	3150UJ	3150NJ
Unit 3	Roles, rights and responsibilities - Christianity & Judaism	3150UK	3150NK
Unit 3	Roles, rights and responsibilities - Christianity & Sikhism	3150UL	3150NL
Unit 3	Roles, rights and responsibilities - Catholic Christianity & Judaism	3150UM	3150NM
Unit 4	Religion and human rights	3150U4	3150N4
WJEC GCSE Religious Studies		3150QS	3150CS

The current edition of our Entry Procedures and Coding Information gives up-to-date entry procedures.

5.2 Grading, awarding and reporting

GCSE qualifications are reported on an eight point scale from A*-G, where A* is the highest grade. Results not attaining the minimum standard for the award will be reported as U (unclassified).

Individual unit results are reported on a uniform mark scale (UMS) with the following grade equivalences:

	MAX.	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Unit 1	120	108	96	84	72	60	48	36	24
Unit 2	80	72	64	56	48	40	32	24	16
Unit 3	120	108	96	84	72	60	48	36	24
Unit 4	80	72	64	56	48	40	32	24	16
Subject Award	400	360	320	280	240	200	160	120	80

Appendix A: Opportunities for embedding elements of the Curriculum for Wales

Curriculum for Wales Strands	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4
Cross-cutting Themes				
Local, National & International Contexts		✓	✓	✓
Sustainability			✓	✓
Relationships and Sexuality Education	✓	✓		✓
Human Rights				✓
Diversity	✓	✓	✓	✓
Careers and Work-Related Experiences				✓
Cross-curricular Skills - Literacy				
Listening	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reading	✓	✓	✓	✓
Speaking	✓	✓	✓	✓
Writing	✓	✓	✓	✓

Curriculum for Wales Strands	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4
Cross-curricular Skills - Numeracy				
Developing Mathematical Proficiency				
Understanding the number system helps us to represent and compare relationships between numbers and quantities				
Learning about geometry helps us understand shape, space and position and learning about measurement helps us quantify in the real world				
Learning that statistics represent data and that probability models chance help us make informed inferences and decisions		✓		✓
Digital Competence				
Citizenship				
Interacting and Collaborating				
Producing		✓		✓
Data and Computational Thinking		✓		✓

Curriculum for Wales Strands	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4
Integral Skills				
Creativity and Innovation		✓		✓
Critical Thinking and Problem Solving		✓		✓
Planning and Organisation		✓		✓
Personal Effectiveness	✓	✓	✓	✓