

St Bede's Catholic College

Year 11 into 12
Transition Work

Religious Studies
Ethics



Exam board: Edexcel

Course length: Two years

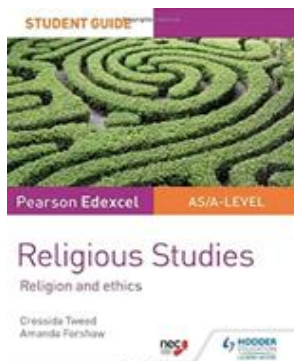
Specification: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/religious-studies-2016.html> The pages relevant to the areas of study are:

Philosophy: pages 9-16 **Ethics:** pages 17-23 **New Testament:** pages 24-30

Exam structure:

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Course content | Assessment Overview |
| Philosophy of Religion (33.3%) | 2 hour written exam 80 marks |
| Religion and Ethics (33.3%) | 2 hour written exam 80 marks |
| New Testament Studies (33.3%) | 2 hour written exam 80 marks |

Useful textbooks for Ethics. These books are highly recommended and can be purchased second-hand from Amazon.



Product details

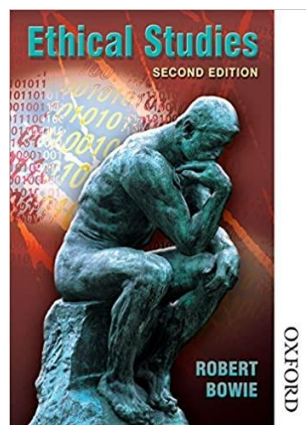
Paperback: 120 pages

Publisher: Hodder Education (27 Sept. 2019)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1510433406

ISBN-13: 978-1510433403

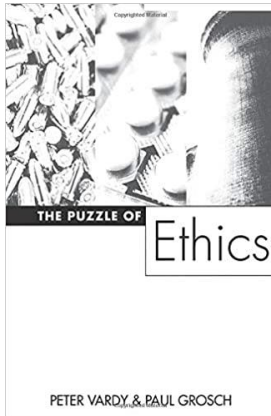


Paperback: 352 pages

Publisher: Oxford University Press; 2 edition (16 April 2004)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 9780748780792 **ISBN-13:** 978-0748780792



Paperback: 304 pages

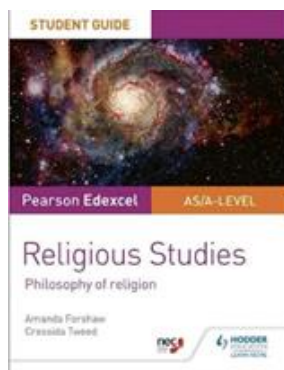
Publisher: William Collins; 2Rev Ed edition (2 Aug. 1999)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 9780006281443

ISBN-13: 978-0006281443

Philosophy:



Product details

Paperback: 120 pages

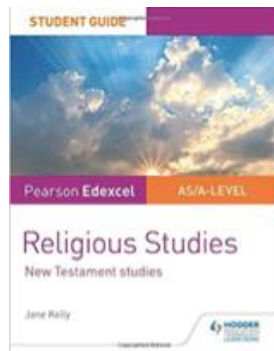
Publisher: Hodder Education (30 Aug. 2019)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1510433392

ISBN-13: 978-1510433397

New Testament:



Product details

Paperback: 128 pages

Publisher: Hodder Education (22 Feb. 2019)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1510433422

ISBN-13: 978-1510433427

Useful websites:

<https://revisionworld.com/a2-level-level-revision/religious-studies-level-revision/rs-level-past-papers/edexcel-level-rs-past-papers>

<http://www.rsrevision.com/contents/index.htm>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yiNbJlqcJo&list=PLO9sTSBHwEDZ39WU0WUQI2Hc3Hgy5wdA3>

Sample/past papers:

https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/A%20Level/Religious%20Studies/2016/Specification%20and%20sample%20assessments/SAMs_GCE_A_Level_in_Religious_Studies.pdf

Section 1

What is Ethics?

What do you think the word 'ethics' means? How has our moral code been shaped by those around us?

The word 'ethics' comes from **ethos** which is translated as character, while morality comes from **moralis** which is translated as customs or manners.

Ethics is the philosophical study of good and bad/ right and wrong. People often do not have logical reasons for what they believe about ethical issues.

Essentially ethics is concerned with deciding what is **right** and **wrong** and the **moral code** we live by.

Tasks:

1: Write a **paragraph** to explain how we know the difference between what is right and wrong. Use supporting examples to illustrate your point.

2: As a **mind map** write down where you think our morals come from. Do you think morals are absolute or relative?

3: Watch the **following video** as an introduction to ethics. You may wish to make notes as you watch. Good practice is to constantly make notes and look out for key words and definitions as you go along. Create a glossary so you become more familiar with this new language.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rr7U49RPpTs>

Section 2:

There are essentially three ways of 'doing' ethics.

1: **Normative/Prescriptive – this approach asks whether actions are right or wrong.**

This is the traditional form which focuses on how people ought to act. It talks about how choices should be made and is interested in setting up a value system that prescribe how people ought to behave.

2: **Descriptive – describes and compares ethical different ethical practices.** This form is used in social sciences and deals with human behaviour and conduct. However, the theory does not involve making value judgements as to what is morally right or wrong.

3: Meta-ethics – study of the meaning of ethical language. This is known as analytic ethics as is based on analysing ethical language e.g. what do we mean by the word 'good'? Theories include intuitionism and emotivism.

If you are going to study ethics seriously, you must be prepared to examine your views critically and be open to a range of ideas that may be quite different from your own. What you read may challenge your convictions. At the very least, it will require you to re-examine them. Complete the following questions by thinking carefully about your viewpoint and providing examples to show your understanding.

Tasks

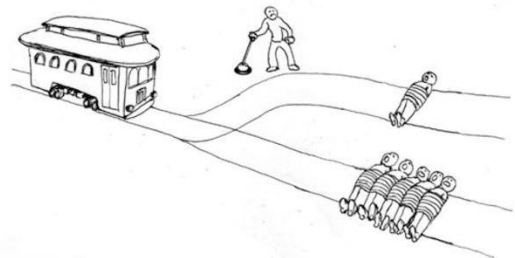
Answer the following questions:

- 1: If I do a good thing for a bad reason, does it matter?
- 2: Is an action right or wrong depending on the situation?
- 3: Are we free to make moral choices? How do you know?
- 4: Is being moral about following rules?
- 5: Can we moral without religion?
- 6: Are human beings selfish or selfless?
- 7: Should we use our heads or our hearts when deciding what is moral?

Now consider..

The trolley problem is a thought experiment in ethics modelling an ethical dilemma. It is generally considered to represent a clash between looking at the act and the consequence. As you watch the video, pay close attention to the scenario, and write down what you would do and why. When making an ethical decision, do you consider the **act**, the **consequence** or **both**?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bOpf6KcWY>



What is your moral duty towards others?

What would you do?

Now watch the discussion of this ethical dilemma with contributions from students. Listen carefully to the debate and think about which side you are on.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TSH-m5GrzE>

Task

Using the internet to help you, write down the definitions for these keywords.

Absolutist:

Objective:

Relativist:

Deontological:

Teleological:

Subjective:

Section 3

Teleological ethics is concerned with the **ends or consequences of actions** (The word **Telos** is Greek for 'end'). It is also referred to as consequentialism and maintains the link between the act and the consequence; both are extremely important in decision making.

A teleological theory argues that what makes an action right or wrong is decided by the consequence it produces. If my action causes pain and suffering, it is bad. If my action produces happiness and love, then it is good. **Utilitarianism and Situation Ethics** would be examples of teleological theories.

Deontological ethics is concerned with the **act itself**. It is the opposite of teleological ethics. Deontologists argue that acts are right or wrong in themselves because of some absolute law laid down by God, or because it is our duty or obligation. For example, deontologists would say that murder is wrong, no matter what! **Natural moral law and Kantian Ethics** would be examples of deontological theories.

Task

Which statement shows teleological thinking and which shows deontological thinking:

- 1: We should permit the abortion because she's too young and too poor to look after the child.
- 2: You should help your mother because it's your duty.
- 3: Do what your father says.
- 4: It's okay to steal if you are starving.
- 5: If you tell her the truth she will be really upset.
- 6: Whatever you say, just tell the truth.

Now come up with your own examples showing deontological and teleological statements.

Task

1: Watch the video and make notes explaining what **deontology** is (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wWZi-8Wji7M>)

2: Watch the next video and make notes explaining what **teleological ethics** is.

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=51DZteag74A>)

Now write a paragraph explaining what you think are the strengths and weaknesses of **both** deontological and teleological ethics.



Section 4

What do we mean when we say something is good?

The philosopher **G.E.Moore** thought that there is a difference between good things and goodness itself. The aspect or qualities that make something good are different from goodness itself. An action may be good because it is a generous action, but good isn't identical to generosity.

When we add 'good' to a sentence it has an effect that's different from that of the adjectives. If we call a hat 'a red hat' then it adds a quality, or aspect, to the description. If we call a person 'a good person', the word good certainly adds something to the person, but 'good' is just another word like 'red' or 'old' or 'tall'.

When we call someone a 'good' person we are saying something very different from calling them 'tall' or 'short', or 'old' or 'young'. We may be referring to the nature of their character, the kind of things that they do or the way in which they weigh up a situation. The moral sense of good refers to actions, consequences, situations, people, characters, choices and lifestyles.

Tasks

1: We use the word 'good' in many different ways. Try to describe in different words what 'good' means in each of these sentences:

A: He was a good dog.

B: It was a good film.

C: We gave it a good shot

D: They made us a good breakfast.

E: It was good that we double-checked the time of the flight.

F: She was a good soul.

G: This car is as good as any other.

2: Different philosophers explain the word 'good' in many different ways, according to their preferred ethical theory. Consider these examples and decide which you most and least agree with. **Good means:**

A: In accordance with the will of God.

B: The thing that produces the greatest good for the greatest result.

C: Following the moral rules.

D: The thing that produces the most loving result.

E: Doing your duty.

F: Becoming a virtuous person.

G: Things you like.

3: Describe, in no more than 20 words, a good person – someone, who helps others, follows the Commandments, has good intentions...?

4: Write definitions for each of these words: right, wrong, good, bad, moral, immoral, amoral.

5: Is there any difference between good things and goodness?

6: Are pleasurable things always good?

What is Good?

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with any queries.

