






AQA Religious Studies A - Theme C: Existence of God and Revelation

Key Words			
Atheist	Someone who does not believe a God exists	Omnipotent	God's nature as all-powerful
Benevolent	God's nature as all-loving and all-good	Omniscient	God's nature as all-knowing and aware of all that has happened past, present, future
Faith	A commitment to God and religion that goes beyond proof	Personal	God's nature as merciful, compassionate and something humans can relate to
General Revelation	God making themselves known through ordinary experiences open to all	Proof	Evidence that shows something is true or existent
Immanent	God's nature as present in and involved in the world	Special Revelation	God making themselves known through extraordinary experiences
Impersonal	God's nature as non-human, unknowable and mysterious	Theist	Someone who believes in a God or Gods
Miracle	A remarkable event that cannot be explained by science alone	Transcendent	God's nature as beyond our understanding, existing outside the universe

Key Ideas		
<p>Design Argument</p> 	<p>The Design Argument argues that God must exist because the world around us is so intricate and well-designed that there must be an intelligent creator behind it.</p> <p>William Paley puts this forward in his Watchmaker's Argument that says if you found a watch in the grass you would not assume its intricate mechanism had come about by accident, you would assume someone had created it. The same applies for the world around us.</p> <p>☒ Atheists argue that nature and science are responsible for the world around us and that much of the so-called design is the result of chance and natural selection.</p>	
<p>First Cause Argument</p> 	<p>The First Cause Argument was put forward by Thomas Aquinas and it argues that there has to be an uncaused cause that made everything else happen and that must be God. It argues that nothing moves without first being pushed and that God is the only possible being that can exist with no cause as God is eternal (never beginning, never ending)</p> <p>☒ Atheists argue that by this logic God must have a cause or that if God is eternal then the universe itself could be eternal as well.</p>	
<p>Argument from Miracles</p> 	<p>The Argument from Miracles argues that miracles (a remarkable event seemingly only explained by God's actions) prove that God exists. They argue that these events (like Jesus walking on water or people coming back from the dead) cannot be explained by science and that they must be the result of God's intervention.</p> <p>☒ Atheists argue that miracles are not more than happy coincidences and that they can be explained either by science or people being delusional or lying.</p>	
<p>Special and General Revelation</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Special Revelation</u></p> <p>This is a form of revelation where God reveals themselves through remarkable experiences usually only open to one or a small group of people. These could be visions (seeing Mary, God or Jesus), dreams, miracles or hearing God's call directly. In the Bible Saul experiences a vision of Jesus on the Road to Damascus and this causes him to believe in God, change his name, and preach the Gospel</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>General Revelation</u></p> <p>This is a form of revelation where God reveals themselves through ordinary experiences which are open to all people to experience. This could be through nature where God's creation is revealed in the intricacy of the human eye or the beauty of the Grand Canyon. It could be through scripture, God reveals much information about themselves in the Bible.</p>
<p>Nature of God</p> 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Omnipotent, Omniscient, Benevolent</u></p> <p>According to the Bible and Christian teachings, God is omnipotent (all-powerful), omniscient (all-knowing) and benevolent (all-loving).</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Problem of Suffering</u></p> <p>This however leads to the Problem of Suffering. If God is all-powerful and all-loving why does so much suffering exist in the world? Some people see this as an argument against God's existence.</p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Personal vs Impersonal</u></p> <p>Different Christians have different views on God with some seeing them as personal and some as impersonal. A personal God has human characteristics and Christians can form a relationship with them through prayer. An impersonal God is mysterious and unknowable and has no human characteristics. More like an idea or a force than a human being.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Transcendent vs Immanent</u></p> <p>They also disagree about God's place in the world. A transcendent God exists beyond and outside of life on earth and is not limited by the laws of physics or the rules of time and space. An immanent God is active and involved in life on earth and can play a role in events that happen here. This could be through the Holy Spirit answering prayers for example.</p>