

Course Title: GCSE Religious Studies

Awarding Body: AQA

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Why study Religious Studies?

Religious Studies is a popular option which develops critical thinking in the search for truths in uncertain fields. It encourages philosophical thought, decision making skills, collaboration and independent working skills and the search for compromise and conflict resolutions that work. It creates opportunities for students to develop their skills of debate, interpretation and analysis in a coherent context. Religious Studies has a multidisciplinary nature involving philosophical thinking, study of teachings, ethics, social understanding and the skills of analysis and reasoning, developing core skills of literacy. All these are vital skills in a modern workforce where communication, collaboration and cooperation are core skills. Furthermore, Religious Studies makes a key and unique contribution to understanding British heritage, values and futures. It provides an excellent opportunity for young people to engage with contemporary contentious issues, developing social, cultural, political, philosophical and historical awareness.

Course Outline

Religious Studies at GCSE builds on the knowledge, skills and understanding developed in the lower school. There is only one tier of entry with all students completing the same examination papers.

The course consists of 2 examination papers. One focuses on the beliefs and practices of two faiths, and the other is based on themes. See below.

| Paper 1: Beliefs and Practices | Paper 2: Themes |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Christianity: Beliefs | Relationships and Families |
| Christianity: Practices | Religion and Life |
| Islam: Beliefs | Religion, Peace and Conflict |
| Islam: Practices | Religion, Crime and Punishment |

The course is weighted to ensure each unit is worth the same.

More information and the full syllabus can be found at:

<http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/religious-studies/gcse/religious-studies-a-8062>

Assessment Format

AQA (1-9) Religious Studies 8062

Students will be assessed by two final examinations of 1 hour and 45 minutes each.



What skills will I need to be successful in this subject?

There is a strong emphasis on critical thinking, explanation, and above all, essay writing. Background knowledge of faith is not crucial; personal beliefs are always considered relevant. The most important skills for a successful student of Religious Studies is having the ability to critically apply knowledge and understanding to extended answers. Students need to be open minded about contrasting religious viewpoints as well as being able to evaluate key beliefs, teachings and opinions.

Possible Careers and Future Education

Religious Studies is a totally different subject from any other in the curriculum. It can prepare students for any job that involves working with people and is becoming more popular with the growing need for religious tolerance and understanding in our society. Many students of Religious Studies go on to undertake careers in Teaching, Counselling, Social Work, the Armed Forces, the Prison Service, Medicine and Health, as well as The Civil Service. Indeed, there is no job or career that Religious Studies is not relevant to.

As Radhanath Swami said:

“Religion is meant to teach us true spiritual human character. It is meant for self-transformation. It is meant to transform anxiety into peace, arrogance into humility, envy into compassion, to awaken the pure soul in man”

