

Pearson Edexcel GCSE in Religious Studies A

Useful Terminology

Introduction

These words have been taken from the GCSE Religious Studies Specification A. These definitions have been provided to assist teachers and students through the teaching and assessment of the specification. The words are sectioned, according to their appearance in the specification.

1RAO-1A__Section 1

Useful Terminology	Definition
Trinity	The Christian belief that there is One God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit
Nicene Creed	A Christian statement of faith primarily about the nature of God. Accepted by the majority of Christians
First Council of Nicaea	A council of Christian Bishops that took place in Nicaea in AD 325
First council of Constantinople	The second council of Christian Bishops, they confirmed, with some expansion, the Nicene Creed. AD 381
Creation	The Creation of the universe regarded as an act of God
Creator	God the Creator of the universe. A characteristic of God
Benevolent	All loving
Omnipotent	All powerful
Eternal	God has no beginning and no end. Last forever.
Dominion	Control over something, e.g. the natural world
Stewardship	Humanity's responsibility to manage the world and animals for the next generation
Incarnation	The belief that God became a human being in Jesus

Divine Word	Jesus as the Word of God as in John 1
Paschal Mystery	The mystery of the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus; relates to Easter
Resurrection	The belief that Jesus rose from the dead after three days. The belief that the body stays in the grave until the end of the world, when it is raised and judged
Redemption	The action of being saved from sin
Salvation	The deliverance of humanity from sin
Grace	The undeserved love and mercy given to humanity by God because of his desire, not because of human action
Judgement	The final trial of all humanity, the living and the dead, at the end of the world
Heaven	The ultimate end and the resting place of saved souls
Hell	The eternal separation from God
Purgatory	A preparation for Heaven, a place of purification and healing
Literal understanding of Creation	Believing Creation occurred as outlined in Genesis 1-3
Metaphorical understanding of Creation	Believing Genesis 1-3 can be understood as a myth/symbolically
Catholic Catechism	The official teachings of the Catholic Church

1RAO-1A__Section 2

Useful Terminology	Definition
Sacrament	A visible sign of an inward grace
Grace	The undeserved love and mercy given to humanity by God because of his desire, not because of human action
Liturgy (liturgical worship; liturgical celebrations)	A set form of public worship/religious rite
Prayer	Communication with God. 'Raising the hearts and minds to God'
Evangelical Christians	A Protestant denomination; can also refer to a movement within Christianity that emphasises evangelism
The Lord's prayer	The prayer taught by Jesus to his disciples
Formulaic prayers	Prayers that follow a set format, can often be taught and learned, or read the same every time
Informal prayers	Prayers that are given spontaneously, are often seen as more personal
Rosary	A set of prayers often using a string of beads
Eucharist	The celebration of the Mass when bread and wine become the body and blood of Jesus
Stations of the Cross	A series of images depicting Jesus Christ on the day of his crucifixion and accompanying prayers
Pilgrimage	A journey made to a place of importance to a religion for spiritual reasons

Justice	Giving to people what they deserve. It is one of the four cardinal virtues
Peace	An inner calmness. Treating one another as brother and sisters, recognising all as children of God
Reconciliation	Bringing together people who were opposed to one another. The overall message of Christianity where humanity is reconciled with God
CAFOD	Catholic Agency For Overseas Development. A Catholic Charity
Catholic Mission	People serving Christ by bringing the Catholic truth to the world
Evangelism	The spreading of the faith though teaching about the religion and helping others
Commission of Jesus	(The Great Commission) Jesus' last command to his disciples to go out and spread the teachings of Jesus
Popular piety	Forms of prayer and worship that Christians perform which are inspired by popular practice rather than by liturgy

1RAO-1A__S3

Useful Terminology	Definition
The Bible	The holy book of Christians; comes from Greek word meaning 'the books' or 'library'
Old Testament	The first part of the Bible; It refers to Creation, the covenant with Abraham and then with the people of Israel
New Testament	The second part of the Bible; it refers to the new covenant with all people through Jesus
The Magisterium	The living teaching office of the Church
Catholic Catechism	The official teachings of the Catholic Church
Conciliar Magisterium	Solemn teaching from a council meeting of the Magisterium
Pontifical Magisterium	When the Pope uses his authority to make an infallible statement
The Second Vatican Council	Informally known as Vatican II. Bishops met to discuss issues of the time. From 1962-1965. The council produced key documents
Dei Verbum	Key document produced by the Second Vatican Council. Means 'Word of God'. Deals with the divine revelation of the Bible and the tradition handed down from the apostles
Lumen Gentium	Key document produced by the Second Vatican Council. Means 'The light of Humanity'. It covers common priesthood and a united Church on a journey together towards the second coming
Sacrosanctum Concilium	Key document produced by the Second Vatican Council. Means 'The sacred council'. It covers liturgy and worship and the Mass in particular

Gaudium et Spes	Key document produced by the Second Vatican Council. Means 'Joy and hope' This document addresses the world and the Church and concerns human rights and justice
Body of Christ	The idea that the Church is Christ on Earth. Members unitedly form the Body of Christ in the world today
The four marks of the Church	The four teachings of the Catholic Church stated in the Nicene Creed and is part of the belief of all Christians. The Church is One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic
Holy Church	The belief that God made the Church, so his Church is Holy
Catholic Church	The belief that the Church is universal and includes all people
Apostolic Church	The Church continues the teachings and tradition of the apostles
One Church	The Church is united in belief and worship
Nicene Creed	The Christian statement of Faith which originated at the First Council of Nicaea
First council of Constantinople	The second council of Christian Bishops, they confirmed, with some expansion, the Nicene Creed. AD 381
Mary	The mother of Jesus and the mother of the Church
Salvation	The deliverance of humanity from sin
Discipleship	Accepting and assisting in the spreading of the 'good news' of Christ. Following Christ
Faith	Belief and confidence in God based on spiritual conviction
Charity	One of the virtues showing love for others

Jesus	The Son of God, the Third Person of the Trinity
Natural law	The inbuilt moral order of the universe given by God
Conscience	An inner sense that comes from God and helps a person decide what is right and wrong
Gospel	Literally 'Good News'
Apostolic tradition	The teaching passed down from the apostles to the Bishops, through the ages to today
Apostolic Succession	The teaching of Jesus comes from the apostles continually and unaltered to the Bishops

1RAO-1A__S4

Useful Terminology	Definition
Architecture	The buildings and physical structures
Design	The plan for the construction of an object, which shows its purpose
Decoration	Something used to improve or adorn a space
Lectern	Raised stand where the Bible is read from
Altar	The table at which the bread and wine are consecrated
Crucifix	A cross with the image of Jesus crucified upon it, represents the death and suffering of Christ. Is a symbol of Christian faith
Tabernacle	A safe place to keep the Blessed Sacrament
Redemption	The mystery of God's saving of humanity from sin
Sacred vessels	The utensils and receptacles used in liturgical celebrations; especially those that come into contact with the Blessed Sacrament
Sarcophagi	A stone or marble coffin or tomb, usually highly decorated
Hunger cloths	Used during Lent and hung over the altar
Fresco	A picture painted on a plastered wall whilst still wet

Symbolism	The use of symbols to represent ideas or qualities
Imagery	A visual description
The cross	The empty cross represents the risen Christ. It is a symbol of Christian faith
Fish symbol	Used to symbolise Christians - who are fishers of men. Comes from the Greek word for fish Ichthus. The symbol was a secret code for early Christians
Chi-Rho	A sign made up of the first letters for Christ in Greek
Eagle	Supports the idea of spreading the Gospel over the world. Often found on lecterns
Alpha and Omega	A title of God. The first and the last; the beginning and the end of the Greek alphabet
Mystery plays	Medieval plays about important events and stories in the Bible
Passion plays	Plays retelling the story of the journey of Christ to the cross, his trial, suffering and death. Performed in Lent
Hymns	A religious song of praise or poem to God
Plainchant	Plainchant is a form of medieval church music that involves chanting, or words that are sung, without any instrumental accompaniment. It is also called plainsong
Psalms	A book in the Bible. A song or hymn. They are chanted in the Catholic liturgy
Worship songs	Songs used to worship God, can use contemporary music and instruments

1RAO-1B__S1

Useful Terminology	Definition
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Nicene Creed	A Christian statement of faith primarily about the nature of God. Accepted by the majority of Christians
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Creator	God the Creator of the universe. A characteristic of God
Benevolent	All loving
Omnipotent	All powerful
Resurrection	The belief that Jesus rose from the dead after three days. The belief that the body stays in the grave until the end of the world, when it is raised and judged
Atonement	The reconciliation of God and humanity accomplished through the life, suffering, and death of Christ
Salvation	The deliverance of humanity from sin
Grace	The undeserved love and mercy given to humanity by God because of his desire, not because of human action

Judgement	The final trial of all humanity, the living and the dead, at the end of the world
Heaven	The ultimate end and the resting place of saved souls
Hell	The eternal separation from God
Purgatory	A Catholic belief where one is purified to achieve holiness to enter Heaven
Literal understanding of Creation	Believing Creation occurred as outlined in Genesis 1-3
Metaphorical understanding of Creation	Believing Genesis 1-3 can be understood as a myth/symbolically
Catholic Catechism	The official teachings of the Catholic Church
Ascension	When Jesus went up to heaven from earth
Sin	An act against the will or law of God
Righteous	Upright and moral
Freewill	God's gift to humanity allowing them to make their own choices
Vale of Soul making	The argument that both natural and moral evil are essential to "soul-making" so they have a good purpose
Prayer	Communication with God
Charity	An organisation that raises money to help those in need. Or another word for love

1RAO-1B__S2

Useful Terminology	Definition
Sacrament	A visible sign of an inward grace
Non-liturgical worship	Informal worship
Liturgy (liturgical worship; liturgical celebrations)	A set form of public worship
Prayer	Communication with God
Book of common prayer	A permanent feature of the Church of England's worship and a key source for its doctrine
Pentecostal	Christianity that places special emphasis on a direct personal experience of God through the baptism with the Holy Spirit
Evangelical Christians	Christians dedicated to sharing the Good News of Jesus
The Lord's prayer	The prayer taught by Jesus to his disciples
Set prayers	Formulaic Prayer: Prayers that follow a set format, can often be taught and learned, or read the same every time
Informal prayers	Prayers that are given spontaneously, are often seen as more personal
Baptism	Holy sacrament. Sometimes called Christening. Initiation rite. Can be infant or adult
Eucharist	A sacrament commemorating the Last Supper

Pilgrimage	A journey made to a place of importance to a religion for spiritual reasons
Christmas	Celebration of the birth of Jesus
Advent	Advent is a season observed in many Christian churches as a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus at Christmas
Easter	Celebration of the death and resurrection of Jesus
Holy Week	Holy Week is the week leading up to the important Christian festival of Easter
Mission	An important goal or purpose that is accompanied by strong conviction; a calling or vocation
Evangelism	The spreading of the faith through teaching about the religion and helping others
Commission of Jesus	(The Great Commission) Jesus' last command to his disciples to go out and spread the teachings of Jesus
Reconciliation	Bringing together people who were opposed to one another. The overall message of Christianity where humanity is reconciled with God
Christian Aid	Christian charity
Ecumenism	Efforts by Christians of different Church traditions to develop closer relationships and better understandings

1RAO-1B__S3

Useful Terminology	Definition
The Bible	The holy book of Christians; comes from Greek word meaning 'the books' or 'library'
Old Testament	The first part of the Bible; It refers to Creation, the covenant with Abraham and then with the people of Israel
New Testament	The second part of the Bible; it refers to the new covenant with all people through Jesus
The book of Common Prayer	A permanent feature of the Church of England's worship and a key source for its doctrine
Conscience	A person's moral sense of right and wrong; an inner voice, often seen as God given
Word of God	A title for Jesus found in John 1
Social justice	The way in which human rights are seen in everyday society and the lives of people
Forgiveness	When a person seeks to make things right with someone they have offended. Christians seek forgiveness from God. When a victim changes feelings or attitude regarding an offense
Servanthood	Being a servant; idea of putting others first and serving them
Reconciliation	Bringing together people who were opposed to one another. The overall message of Christianity where humanity is reconciled with God
Body of Christ	The idea that the Church is Christ on Earth. Members unitedly form the Body of Christ in the world today
Catholic	Used to refer to the Roman Catholic Church (led by the Pope), also catholic refers to the Church as universal

Orthodox	The Orthodox Church is one of the three main Christian groups (the others being Roman Catholic and Protestant). Around 200 million people follow the Orthodox tradition
Protestant	Christian Churches that separated from the Roman Catholic Church in accordance with the principles of the Reformation, including the Baptist, Presbyterian, and Lutheran Churches
Filioque controversy	The disagreement after the words "and from the son" were added to the Nicene Creed, indicating the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son. This led to the split between the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church in 1054 A.D. Known as the Great Schism
Reformation	The separation from the Catholic Church initiated by Martin Luther
Laity	Ordinary people, lay people, as distinct from clergy
Ministers	Church leaders, literally means servant. They are people authorised to take religious services
Priest	A person who is ordained and holds an office in the church to perform religious rights and make offerings. Usually used in Catholic context
Vicars	A person acting as a priest of a parish. Usually used in the Church of England context
Bishops	An appointed member who is in charge of several parishes
Pope	The Head of the Catholic Church. The Bishop of Rome. (The supreme pontiff)
Kingdom of God	The idea of a spiritual kingdom, on earth or in Heaven, where God reigns over the lives of his followers

1RAO-1B__S4

Useful Terminology	Definition
Symbolism	The use of symbols to represent ideas or qualities
Imagery	A visual description
The cross	The empty cross represents the risen Christ. It is a symbol of Christian faith
Fish symbol	Used to symbolise Christians - who are fishers of men. Comes from the Greek word for fish Ichthus. The symbol was a secret code for early Christians
Mystery plays	Medieval plays about important events and stories in the Bible
Passion plays	Plays retelling the story of the journey of Christ to the cross, his trial, suffering and death. Preformed in Lent
Hymns	A religious song of praise or poem to God
Psalms	A book in the Bible. A song or hymn. They are chanted in the Catholic liturgy
Worship songs	Songs used to worship God, can use contemporary music and instruments
Gregorian Chant	A form of medieval church music that involves chanting, or words that are sung, without any instrumental accompaniment. It is also called plainsong
Musicum Sacrum	Sacred music

1RAO-1C_S1

Useful Terminology	Definition
Adl	Arabic word meaning justice. One of the names of Allah
Nubuwah	Prophets of Allah. Prophethood
Imamah	Successors of Muhammad
Mi'ad	The Last Day; the day of judgment and resurrection
Immanence	Allah is here in, and part of the material world, close to believers
Transcendence	Allah is beyond the physical or normal experiences of Humanity
Omnipotence	Allah is all powerful
Beneficence	Allah is all loving
Mercy	Allah shows compassion and forgiveness
Fairness	Allah is equal in his treatment of all, without favourites
Justice	Allah will judge people in the right way
Adalat in Shi'a Islam	God's quality of being just
Kutub	Muslim Holy Books

Tawrat	The Torah
Zabur	The Psalms
Injil	The Gospel
Sahifah	The scrolls
Malaikah	Angels
al-Qadr	Idea of Predestination
Predestination	The idea that a person's destiny is what Allah has already decided. Allah wrote down in the Preserved Tablet all that has happened and will happen, which will come to pass as written. It is one of Islam's six articles of faith
Akhirah	The last things. Belief in the Last Day and life after death
Judgement	The final trial of all humanity, the living and the dead, at the end of the world
Paradise	Final resting place for those who have submitted to Allah
Hell	A place of eternal punishment
RiSalah	The messengers of Allah. Belief in prophethood

1RAO-1C_S2

Useful Terminology	Definition
Ten Obligatory Acts	Ten acts expected of Shi'a Muslims
Shahadah	Declaration of faith. 'There is no God but Allah. Muhammad is his prophet'. The first pillar of Islam
Salah	Ritual prayers said five times a day. The second pillar of Islam
Ablution	The ritual act of washing
Mosque	Muslim place of worship
Jummah Prayer	Friday midday prayers
Sawm	Fasting - the fourth pillar of Islam
Ramadan	The ninth month of the Muslim calendar during which Muslims should fast (Sawm)
Night of Power	The night when Muhammad received the first revelation of the Qur'an
Laylat al-Qadr	The festival celebrating the Night of Power
Zakah	An annual tax on wealth within Islam, given to charity. The Third pillar of Islam
Khums	An additional charity tax for Shi'a Muslims

Hajj	Pilgrimage to Makkah. The fifth pillar of Islam
Lesser Jihad	The struggle to remove evil from the world
Greater Jihad	The struggle to make oneself live in submission to Allah
Id-ul-Adha	Id ul-Adha is a four-day festival to commemorate the willingness of Ibrahim to sacrifice his son
Id-ul-Fitr	The celebration of the end of fasting, and to thank Allah for the help and strength that he gave them throughout the previous month (Ramadan) to help them practise self-control
Id-ul-Ghadeer	The celebration of the occasion of Muhammad appointing Ali as his successor. Celebrated by Shi'a Muslims
Hadith	Sayings of the Prophet Muhammad
Ashura	Ashura marks the day of the martyrdom of Hussein

1RAO-1C_S3

Useful Terminology	Definition
The Qur'an	The Islamic Holy Book. The Holy Book of Muslims
Revelation	Comes from the Greek term meaning to unveil. Used to describe Allah unveiling himself to humanity
Mosque	Muslim place of worship
Seal of the Prophets	The final prophet, Muhammad
Hadith	Sayings of the prophet Muhammad. Can also be used as a shorthand to include the Sunnah of the Prophet
Sunnah	The example and way of life of the Prophet Muhammad
Shari'ah Law	The Law of Islam based on the Qur'an
Qiyas	The use of analogy comparing the Hadith and the Qur'an
Ijma	The consensus of Muslim scholars
Qadis	A judge in a Muslim community
Ulema	A group of Muslim scholars who are recognised as having specialist knowledge about Islamic sacred law and theology
Imam	Leader of worship in a Sunni mosque. Has a different meaning within Shi'a Islam with reference to the successors of Muhammad as leaders of the Muslim community

The Hadith of pond of Khumm	An account of a speech given by Muhammad which is interpreted by Shi'a Muslims to be the appointment of Ali as his successor; but by Sunni to mean only that he should be held in high regard
Doctrine of Nass	One of the basic principles of Shi'a is that every Imam nominates his successor by divine designation (nass)
Inerrancy	Lack of error; infallible
Intercession	Action of intervening on behalf of another

1RAO-1C_S4

Useful Terminology	Definition
Ummah	The Muslim community; The Brotherhood of Islam
Halal	Allowed - that which is permitted
Haram	Not- allowed - that which is not permitted
Calligraphy	Visual art related to writing
Idolatry	The worship of idols
Amr bil Maruf	Encouraging others to do good
Nahy Anil Munkar	Discouraging others from doing bad
Tawallah	To love the friends of Allah
Tabarra	Refers to the duty to not associate with those who do not believe in Allah
Sufi	A tradition within Islam
Sheikh	Teacher
Devotional act	An action showing commitment, affection, dedication
Sadaqah	The idea of voluntary giving

1RAO-2A__S1

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Stewardship	Humanity's responsibility to manage the world and animals for the next generation
Incarnation	The belief that God became a human being in Jesus

Divine Word	Jesus as the Word of God as in John 1
Paschal Mystery	The mystery of the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus; relates to Easter
Resurrection	The belief that Jesus rose from the dead after three days. The belief that the body stays in the grave until the end of the world, when it is raised and judged
Redemption	The action of being saved from sin
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Grace	The undeserved love and mercy given to humanity by God because of his desire, not because of human action
Judgement	The final trial of all humanity, the living and the dead, at the end of the world
Heaven	The ultimate end and the resting place of saved souls
Hell	The eternal separation from God
Purgatory	A preparation for Heaven, a place of purification and healing
Literal	Something that is factual and exact
Metaphorical	Something which is symbolic
Catholic Catechism	The official teachings of the Catholic Church

1RAO-2A_S2

Useful Terminology	Definition
Sacraments	A visible sign of an inward grace
Grace	The undeserved love and mercy given to humanity by God because of his desire, not because of human action
Liturgy (liturgical worship; liturgical celebrations)	A set form of public worship
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Pilgrimage	A journey made to a place of importance to a religion for spiritual reasons

Justice	Giving to people what they deserve. It is one of the four cardinal virtues
Peace	The freedom from war and conflict. An inner calmness
Reconciliation	Bringing together people who were opposed to one another. The overall message of Christianity where humanity is reconciled with God
CAFOD	Catholic Agency For Overseas Development. A Catholic Charity
Mission	An important goal or purpose that is accompanied by strong conviction; a calling or vocation
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Baptism	Holy sacrament. Sometimes called Christening. Initiation rite. Can be infant or adult
Eucharist	A sacrament commemorating the Last Supper

Pilgrimage	A journey made to a place of importance to a religion for spiritual reasons
Christmas	Celebration of the birth of Christ
Advent	Advent is a season observed in many Christian churches as a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus at Christmas
Easter	Celebration of the death and resurrection of Christ
Holy Week	Holy Week is the week leading up to the important Christian festival of Easter
Mission	An important goal or purpose that is accompanied by strong conviction; a calling or vocation
Evangelism	The spreading of the faith through teaching about the religion and helping others
Commission of Jesus	(The Great Commission) Jesus' last command to his disciples to go out and spread the teachings of Jesus
Reconciliation	Bringing together people who were opposed to one another. The overall message of Christianity where humanity is reconciled with God
Christian Aid	Christian charity
Ecumenism	Efforts by Christians of different Church traditions to develop closer relationships and better understandings

1RAO-2C_S1

Useful Terminology	Definition
Six Beliefs of Islam	Belief in Allah, the Only One God. Belief in Angels. Belief in Holy Books (Qur'an). Beliefs in the Holy Books. Belief in the Prophets. Belief in the Day of Judgement. Belief in predestination
Usul ad-Din	The five roots of faith of Shi'a Islam, also known as the Principles of religion
Tawhid	The oneness of Allah. Belief in Allah's unity
Adl	Arabic word meaning justice. One of the names of Allah
Nubuwwah	Prophets of Allah. Prophethood
Imamah	Successors of Muhammad
Mi'ad	The Last Day; the day of judgment and resurrection
Immanence	Allah is here in, and part of the material world, close to believers
Transcendence	Allah is beyond the physical or normal experiences of Humanity
Omnipotence	The quality of being all powerful
Beneficence	The quality of being all loving
Mercy	Compassion and forgiveness
Fairness	Equal treatment, without favourites

Justice	The due allocation of rewards and punishments
Adalat in Shi'a Islam	God's quality of being just
Kutub	Muslim Holy Books
Tawrat	The Torah
Zabur	The Psalms
Injil	The Gospel
Shahifah	The scrolls
Malaikah	Angels
al-Qadr	Idea of Predestination
Predestination	The idea of divine destiny in Islam. Allah wrote down in the Preserved Tablet all that has happened and will happen, which will come to pass as written. It is one of Islam's six articles of faith
Akhirah	The last things. Belief in The Last Day and life after death
Judgement	The final trial of all humanity, the living and the dead, at the end of the world
Paradise	Final resting place for those who have submitted to Allah
Hell	A place of eternal punishment

RiSalah

The messengers of Allah. Belief in prophethood

1RAO-2C_S2

Useful Terminology	Definition
Ten Obligatory Acts	Ten acts expected of Shi'a Muslims
Shahadah	Declaration of faith. 'There is no God but Allah. Muhammad is his prophet'. The first Pillar of Islam
Salah	Ritual prayers said five times a day. The second Pillar of Islam
Ablution	The ritual act of washing
Mosque	Muslim place of worship
Jummah Prayer	Friday midday prayers
Sawm	Fasting - the fourth Pillar of Islam
Ramadan	A month long fast
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Zakah	An annual tax on wealth within Islam, given to charity. The third Pillar of Islam
Khums	An additional charity tax for Shi'a Muslims
Hajj	Pilgrimage to Makkah. The fifth Pillar of Islam

Lesser Jihad	The struggle to remove evil from the world
Greater Jihad	The struggle to make oneself live in submission to Allah
Id-ul-Adha	A four-day festival to commemorate the willingness of Ibrahim to sacrifice his son
Id-ul-Fitr	The celebration of the end of fasting, and to thank Allah for the help and strength that he gave them throughout the previous month (Ramadan) to help them practise self-control
Ud-ul-Ghadeer	The celebration of the occasion of Muhammad appointing Ali as his successor
Hadith	Sayings of the Prophet Muhammad
Ashura	Ashura marks the day of the martyrdom of Hussein

1RAO-2D-S1

Useful Terminology	Definition
Four sights	The four sights Siddhartha saw after leaving the palace: an old man, a sick man, a dead man and a holy man
Enlightenment	The aim of human life; when a Buddhist finds the truth about life and stops being reborn
Sangha	Means community. Refers commonly to monastic community within Buddhism
Dhamma	The teachings of the Buddha
Paticca-Samuppada	Idea describing the cause of suffering and the events that lead a being through rebirth, old age and death
Anicca	No fixed self
Dukkha	Suffering/pain. The First Noble Truth
Anatta	Soul or essence
Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta	Buddhist text
Four Noble Truths	Four central beliefs that contain the essence of Buddhist teaching
Samudaya	Second noble truth- the cause of suffering
Three poisons	The three unwholesome roots, Greed, hatred and delusion

Theravada Buddhism	This school of Buddhism believes that it has remained closest to the original teachings of the Buddha. It does not over-emphasise the status of these teachings in a fundamentalist way - they are seen as tools to help people understand the truth, and not as having merit of their own
Mahayana Buddhism	Mahayana Buddhism is not a single group but a collection of Buddhist traditions: Zen Buddhism, Pure Land Buddhism, and Tibetan Buddhism are all forms of Mahayana Buddhism. Mahayana talks a great deal about the bodhisattva as being the ideal way for a Buddhist to live
Nirodha	The cessation of suffering
Tanha	an important concept in Buddhism, referring to "thirst, desire, longing, greed", either physical or mental. It is typically translated as craving, and is of three types: kama-taṇhā (craving for sensual pleasures), bhava-taṇhā (craving for existence), and vibhava-taṇhā (craving for non-existence)
Samsara	The beginning-less cycle of repeated birth, mundane existence and dying again
Nibbana	The goal of the Buddhist path. It marks the release from rebirth
Magga	The Fourth Noble Truth. The EightFold Path
Eightfold Path	The Eightfold Path is also called the Middle Way: it avoids both indulgence and severe asceticism, neither of which the Buddha had found helpful in his search for enlightenment. It has eight parts
Threefold Way	The path of ethics, mediation, and wisdom
Sila	Ethics - good or right conduct. Right speech, right action, and right livelihood
Samadhi	Meditation. Right concentration
Panna	Wisdom, insight. Right knowledge and understanding

The Five Khandas	Aggregates. The components that come together to make an individual. Material Form (rūpa) Feelings (vedanā) Perception (saññā) Mental Formations (saṅ khāra) Consciousness (viññāṇa)
Sunnata	A meditative state or experience
Tathagatagarbha	Mahayana Buddhist scripture
Arahant	One who is worthy' or 'perfected person'
Bodhisattva	(in Mahayana Buddhism) A person who is able to reach nibbana but delays doing so through compassion for suffering beings
Kamma	Actions and results. On a larger scale Kamma determines where a person will be reborn in the next stage of life

1RAO-2D_S2

Useful Terminology	Definition
Meditation	Focussing on breath, mindfulness of body, sensations, mind and mental phenomena
Samatha	Concentration; the calming of the mind.
Metta bhavana	Kindness
Vipassana	Insight
Zazen	A meditation technique
Amitāyus Mediation Sutra	The Sutra is one of three basic Sutras in Pure Land School. It is sometimes abbreviated as The Contemplation Sutra.
Chanting	A Buddhist chant is a form of musical verse or incantation
Mantra recitation	A sacred utterance, word of verse repeatedly said.
Namo Buddhaya	Homage to the Buddha
Gompas	A Tibetan Buddhist monastery.
Viharas	An early type of Buddhist monastery.
Shrine	Buddhists will often set aside a room or a part of a room as a shrine. There will be a statue of Buddha, candles, and an incense burner

Buddharupas	A statue or models of beings who have obtained buddhahood .
Bodhi Tree	A symbol of Buddhism. A symbol of Buddha's enlightenment/
Puja	Worship. When prayers are offered to the Buddhas
Wesak	Buddhist celebration of the birth of Buddha
Vassa/Rain Retreat	The three-month annual retreat observed by Theravada Buddhists
Kathina	The celebration of the largest alms-giving ceremony of the Buddhist year
Uposatha days	Times of renewed dedication to Dhamma practice, observed by lay followers and monastics throughout the world of Theravada Buddhism
Hanamatsuri	Literally flower festival, is celebrated on April 8, commemorating the birth of Siddhartha Gautama. Siddhartha became enlightened as Sakyamuni Buddha and this marks the release of sentient beings from suffering and sorrow
Obon	Obon is an annual Buddhist event for commemorating one's ancestors
Parinibbana Day	This is a Mahayana Buddhist festival that marks the death of the Buddha. It is also known as Nirvana Day
Lama Tsongkhapa Day	Celebration of the founder of the Gelug tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. Traditionally in Tibet, this day is celebrated by making many colorful light offerings

1RAO-2E_S1

Useful Terminology	Definition
Brahman	The one true God
Nirguna Brahman	God is without form and attributes, God is the Absolute Spirit and Pure consciousness and has no name or other attributes
Saguna Brahman	God has a name and a form and other attributes
Vaikuntha	Spiritual world. Where Vishnu lives with his consort and liberated souls
Antaryami	An attribute of God. Within the heart. Omniscient.God, as He is regarded to be the one who knows everything, and from Him nothing is unknown or hidden
Bhagavan	An attribute of God, beyond, as a personal and loving God
Avatars	The philosophy reflected in the Hindu epics is the doctrine of the avatar (incarnation of Vishnu or God as an animal or a human form). The two main avatars of Vishnu that appear in the epics are Rama, the hero of the Ramayana, and Krishna, the advisor of the Pandavas in the Mahabharata
Murti	An image, statue or idol of a deity
Shiva	Shiva is the third god in the Hindu triumvirate. Shiva is responsible for the destruction of the world
Shakti	Shakti is the mother goddess, the source of all, energy, power and creativity
Parvati	Goddess of fertility, love and devotion; as well as of divine strength and power. Known by many other names, she is the gentle and nurturing aspect of the Hindu goddess Shakti

Lakshmi	Goddess of wealth, fortune and prosperity
Atman	'Eternal self'. The atman refers to the real self beyond ego or false self. It is often referred to as 'spirit' or 'soul' and indicates the true self or essence which is in all living things
Karma	Actions and results. On a larger scale Karma determines where a person will be reborn in the next stage of life
Cycle of samsara	The beginning-less cycle of repeated birth, mundane existence and dying again
Moksha	Release from the cycle of samsara; the cycle of death and rebirth. Spiritual liberation
Purusharthas	The goals of man. There are four in Hinduism
Dharma	Moral duty
Artha	Economic prosperity
Kama	Love and pleasure
Sanatana dharma	Eternal law. A set of duties for all Hindus
Varnashrama dharma	Duties for your class or caste or stage of life (ashrama)
Ahimsa	The avoidance of harming any kind of living creatures not only by deeds, but also by words and in thoughts
Hindu Cosmology	Hindu beliefs about how the universe was created
Yugas	A four age cycle that the world goes through described in Sanskrit scriptures
Kali yuga	The last of the four stages the world goes through as part of a cycle of yugas

Prakriti	Matter or substance form from which the physical universes evolves
Tri-guna	Three qualities/gods
Maya	Illusion; The idea that the world is an illusion, a play of the supreme consciousness of God

1RAO-2E_S2

Useful Terminology	Definition
Yoga	A group of mental and physical practices
Karma yoga	Yoga in action. Right work done well is a form of prayer
Jnana yoga	Wisdom or knowledge. Considered the most difficult of the four paths of Yoga. The mind is used to inquire into its own nature and to transcend the mind's identification with its thoughts and ego
Astanga yoga	Contemplation and meditation, leading to self knowledge
Bhakti yoga	Bhakti yoga has been called "love for love's sake" and "union through love and devotion." Bhakti yoga, like any other form of yoga, is a path to self-realization, to having an experience of oneness with everything
Puja	Worship. When prayers are offered in Hinduism
Havan	The fire ritual
Darshan	Viewing or looking at a deity, revered person or sacred image. It is considered to be two ways with the worshiper receiving a blessing
Bhajan	Devotional hymns and music
Kirtan	Musical recitation of hymns, mantras and the praise of deities
Japa	The meditative repetition of a mantra or a divine name
Dawali	The five-day festival of lights

Holi	Holi was originally a spring festival of fertility and harvest. Now it also marks some Hindu legends, which provide some of the ingredients for the celebrations
Navratri	Is a nine nights (ten days) Hindu festival, celebrated in the autumn every year
Dussehra	Festival that celebrates the victory of good over evil. It is a gazetted holiday in India, which is marked on the 10th day of the bright half (Shukla Paksha) of the month of Ashvin (Ashwayuja), according to the Hindu calendar
Ram Navami	Celebrates the birth of Lord Rama, son of King Dasharatha of Ayodhya
Ratha-yatra	Hindu festival of India, observed by taking an image of a deity in a procession (yatra) through the streets in a chariot (ratha). This affords darshan (auspicious viewing) of the deity to worshippers who, because of caste or sectarian restrictions, are not admitted to the sanctuary
Janmashtami	Annual Hindu festival that celebrates the birth of Krishna, the eighth avatar of Vishnu
Raksha Bandhan	Festival that celebrates brotherhood and love
Pilgrimage	A journey made to a place of importance to a religion for spiritual reasons
Vrindavana	Vrindavan has an ancient past, associated with Hindu mythology and history, and is an important Hindu pilgrimage site since long
Varanasi	Is the holiest of the seven sacred cities in Hinduism

1RAO-2F_S1

Useful Terminology	Definition
Almighty	Name for God
Shekhinah	The glory of God, referring to the presence of God in the world
Torah	The five books of Law.
The Messiah	A Hebrew word meaning 'Anointed One'; a person that is expected to come to deliver Israel
Messianic Age	A time when all nations will live in peace and there will be justice in the world
Orthodox Jew	Traditional Jews, who follow the Torah as the Word of God. Some integrate with the modern world, some live separately
Reform Jew	Modernised Judaism binging in the findings of science and biblical criticism into Judaism
Covenant	A sacred agreement between God and humanity
Covenant at Sinai	The agreement made by God with Moses
The Decalogue	The Ten Commandments
Abrahamic covenant	The agreement made by God with Abraham
The Promised Land	The land which, according to the Tanakh was promised and subsequently given by God to Abraham and his descendants

Pikuach Nefesh	The primacy of life
Mitzvot	The 613 laws recorded in the Torah
Mishneh Torah of Maimonides	The code of law written by the Maimonides
Free will	Thee ability to choose between different possible courses of action without interference. Given by God
Resurrection	The belief that the body will be raised again to life, in a new, spiritual, transformed way
Judgement	The due allocation of rewards and punishments

1RAO-2F_S2

Useful Terminology	Definition
Synagogue	Jewish place of worship
Tenakh	The Jewish holy book. Its name comes from the initial letters in Hebrew of the books
Talmud	The oral tradition that explains how the laws were to be obeyed
Kashrut	The keeping of Jewish food laws
Kosher	Fitting/Allowed. Food allowed to be eaten by a Jew
Treifah	Forbidden. Usually used in food laws
Prayer	Communication with God
Shema	The Shema is one of only two prayers that are specifically commanded in Torah. It is a declaration of Jewish belief in one God
Amidah	The core of every Jewish worship service, and is therefore also referred to as HaTefillah, or "The prayer." Amidah, which literally means, "standing," refers to a series of blessings recited while standing
Mezuzah	A container for the Shema scroll put on doorposts
Brit Milah	Covenant of circumcision
Bar Mitzvah	The son of the commandment. The Jewish boy's coming of age

Bat Mitzvah	The daughter of the commandment. The Jewish girl's coming of age
Shiva	The seven days of intense mourning
Avelut	The mourning period
Yahrzeit	The anniversary day of someone's death
Shabbat	The Jewish holy day; Saturday, the seventh day of the week
Rosh Hashanah	The Jewish new year festival
Yom Kippur	Jewish holy day; also known as the Day of Atonement
Pesach	One of the spring festivals, it is a commemoration of the Exodus from Egypt—especially the night when God “passed over” the houses of the Israelites during the tenth plague—and of the following day, when the Israelites had to leave Egypt hurriedly. Centered on the family or communal celebration of the seder(ritual meal), Passover is one of the most celebrated of all Jewish holidays
Shavuot	The word Shavuot means “weeks.” It marks the completion of the seven-week counting period between Passover and Shavuot
Sukkot	A week long Jewish holiday that comes five days after Yom Kippur. Sukkot celebrates the gathering of the harvest and commemorates the miraculous protection G- d provided for the children of Israel when they left Egypt
Ark	Large cupboard at the front of the synagogue where the Torah scrolls are kept
Bimah	Raised platform in front of the Ark from which the scriptures are read
Yad	Pointer used when reading the Torah Scroll

Ner tamid	A lamp that burns perpetually in Jewish synagogues before or near the ark of the Law
Menorah	Seven branched candlestick
Sefer Torah	The scroll of the Torah

1RAO-3A_S1

Useful Terminology	Definition
Revelation	Comes from the Greek term meaning to unveil. Used to describe God unveiling himself to humanity
Visions	Something seen in a dream, trance or religious ecstasy, which gives a religious message
Miracles	An event that seems to break the laws of science and the only explanation for it seem to be God
Religious experience	An event that people feel gives them direct contact with God
Design argument	Philosophical arguments that go from the order in the universe (its design) to the existence of God. Given by Plato, Aquinas and Paley
Cosmological argument	The First Cause Argument is a philosophical argument for the existence of God which explains that everything has a cause, that there must have been a first cause, and that this first cause was itself uncaused
Philosophical argument	The study of the nature of knowledge presented in reasoned and logical way

1RAO-3A-S2

Useful Terminology	Definition
Marriage	The legally and religiously recognised union of two people as partners in a personal relationship
Sanctity	Something that is holy or sacred
Cohabitation	Living together as partners and having a sexual relationship without being married
Marital	Something that refers to the married relationship of a couple
Unitive	The union is both of body and spirit, it is a union of persons
Procreative	Making a new life
Homosexuality	Sexual attraction to someone of the same sex
Nuclear family	A mother, father and their child/ren living together
Single parent family	One parent and child/ren living together
Same-sex family	Two parents of the same gender living with a child/ren
Extended family	Family that is outside the immediate, e.g. grandparents and other relatives
Blended family	Children from different relationships coming together when their parents come together to form a new family
Parish	A small administrative district typically having its own church and a priest or pastor

Family planning	The controlling of the number of children one has and the intervals between their births, particularly by means of contraception or voluntary sterilization
Artificial contraception	The deliberate use of unnatural methods or other techniques to prevent pregnancy as a consequence of sexual intercourse
Situation ethics	A decision-making should be based upon the circumstances of a particular situation, and not upon fixed Law. The only absolute is Love. Love should be the motive behind every decision. Joseph Fletcher
Divorce	The legal ending of a marriage
Annulment	The declaration by the Church that a marriage was never a true marriage so the partners are free to marry
Remarriage	Marrying more than once
Equality	The state of being equal, especially in status, rights, or opportunities
Gender discrimination	Believing that one sex is superior to the other based on a feeling rather than the assessment of evidence
Gender prejudice	Putting gender prejudice into action and treating people differently because of their gender
Theology of the body	Theology of the Body is the topic of a series of 129 lectures given by Pope John Paul II during his Wednesday audiences in St. Peter's Square and the Paul VI Audience Hall between September 5, 1979 and November 28, 1984

1RAO-3B-S1

Useful Terminology	Definition
Revelation	Comes from the Greek term meaning to unveil. Used to describe God unveiling himself to humanity
Visions	Something seen in a dream, trance or religious ecstasy, which gives a religious message
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Design argument	Philosophical arguments that go from the order in the universe (its design) to the existence of God. Given by Plato, Aquinas and Paley
Cosmological argument	The First Cause Argument is a philosophical argument for the existence of God which explains that everything has a cause, that there must have been a first cause, and that this first cause was itself uncaused
Prayers	Communication with God
Religious upbringing	The training in religious matters which a child receives during his or her childhood

1RAO-3B_S2

Useful Terminology	Definition
Marriage	The legally and religiously recognised union of two people as partners in a personal relationship
Cohabitation	Living together as partners and having a sexual relationship without being married
Sex outside of marriage	Sex that takes place between two people who are not married to one another. Can refer to sex before marriage or adultery
Homosexuality	Sexual attraction to someone of the same sex
Nuclear family	A mother, father and their child/ren living together
Single parent family	One parent and child/ren living together
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1RAO-3C_S1

Useful Terminology	Definition
Revelation	Comes from the Greek term meaning to unveil. Used to describe Allah unveiling himself to humanity
Visions	Something seen in a dream, trance or religious ecstasy, which gives a religious message
Miracles	An event that seems to break the laws of science and the only explanation for it seem to be Allah
Religious experience	An event that people feel gives them direct contact with Allah
Design argument	Philosophical arguments that go from the order in the universe (its design) to the existence of Allah
Cosmological argument	The First Cause Argument is a philosophical argument for the existence of Allah which explains that everything has a cause, that there must have been a first cause, and that this first cause was itself uncaused
Philosophical argument	The study of the nature of knowledge presented in reasoned and logical way

1RAO-3C_S2

Useful Terminology	Definition
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