

United Curriculum

Secondary Religious Studies

For Teachers



United Curriculum
Secondary
Part of United Learning



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Building on the Framework for Excellence, The United Learning Primary Curriculum has six core principles:

- **Entitlement**
All pupils have the right to learn what is in the United Learning curriculum, and schools have a duty to ensure that all pupils are taught the whole of it.
- **Coherence**
Taking the National Curriculum as its starting point, our curriculum is carefully sequenced so that powerful knowledge builds term by term and year by year. We make meaningful connections within subjects and between subjects.
- **Mastery**
We ensure that foundational knowledge, skills and concepts are secure before moving on. Pupils revisit prior learning and apply their understanding in new contexts.
- **Adaptability**
The core content – the ‘what’ – of the curriculum is stable, but schools will bring it to life in their own local context, and teachers will adapt lessons – the ‘how’ – to meet the needs of their own classes.
- **Representation**
All pupils see themselves in our curriculum, and our curriculum takes all pupils beyond their immediate experience.
- **Education with character**
Our curriculum - which includes the taught subject timetable as well as spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, our co-curricular provision and the ethos and ‘hidden curriculum’ of the school – is intended to spark curiosity and to nourish both the head and the heart.

Subject-specific rationales are built on these six principles.





The KS3 Religious Studies Curriculum aims to provide students with:

- Knowledge and understanding of major world faiths, including:
 - Their historical foundations, origins and sources of authority;
 - Their central principles and teachings about human formation;
 - Their central principles and teachings about what it means to live a good life, including those informed by eschatological views;
 - The ethical and practical precepts within which people of the faith live;
 - The major controversies within and between them;
 - The different interpretations that individuals or groups may make.
- An opportunity to engage with ethical questions, which begin in Year 7 and increase in complexity across the key stages.
- A curriculum that is representative, diverse and inclusive. The diversity of beliefs and practices within the major world faiths is reflected, and students see the role of diverse men and women in the origins and growth of each faith.
- A curriculum that is mostly theological in nature, but also introduces aspects of social sciences and philosophy as appropriate. These approaches are taught and embedded across units, rather than taught discretely.
- A conceptual progression from Year 7 to Year 11 (i.e. a five-year curriculum), given United Learning's ambition for all students to study Religious Studies at GCSE.
- A curriculum that is collectively enough, through deep understanding of selected content, rather than an attempt to cover all religious and non-religious traditions.
- A focus on mostly religious – as opposed to secular and non-religious – traditions, given the limited time that Religious Studies often occupies. However, there are ample opportunities to explore non-religious perspectives, including Humanism, particularly in the philosophical discussions in Year 9 and KS4.
- A focus more on Christian beliefs and practices, particularly the Church of England, over the five-year curriculum. This reflects United Learning's overall objectives and the statutory requirements of Religious Education.



Overview of the United Curriculum

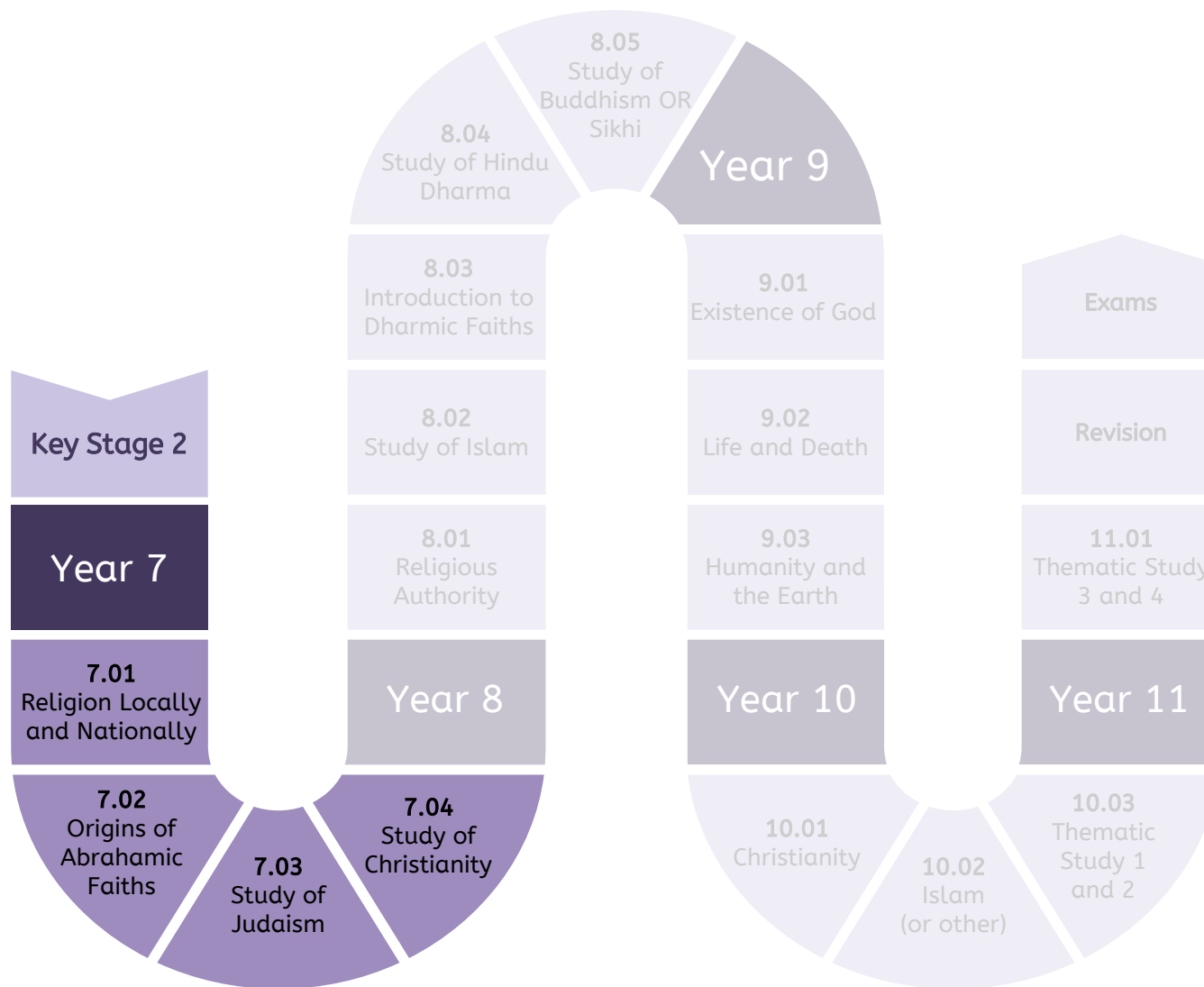


The United Curriculum is planned to cover 32 weeks each year. This allows 6 weeks to identify and fill gaps and revise for and sit assessments. The number in brackets after each unit title is the proposed number of lessons in that unit.

	Autumn (12 weeks)		Spring (10 weeks)		Summer (10 weeks)
Year 7	7.01 Religion Locally and Nationally (3)	7.02 Origins of Abrahamic Faiths (9)	7.03 Study of Judaism (10)		7.04 Study of Christianity (10)
Year 8	8.01 Religious Authority (2)	8.02 Study of Islam (10)	8.03 Introduction to Dharmic Traditions (3)	8.04 Study of Hindu Dharma (7)	8.05 Study of Buddhism OR Sikhi (10)
Year 9	9.01 Philosophical Study: Existence of God (12)		9.02 Philosophical and Ethical Study: Life and Death (12)		9.03 Ethical Study: Humanity and the Earth (10)
Year 10	10.01 Christianity: Beliefs & Practices (12)		10.02 Islam (or Other): Beliefs & Practices (10)		10.03 Thematic Study 1 and 2 (10)
Year 11	11.01 Thematic Study 3 and 4 (12)		Revision		Exams

Note, Year 8 and Year 9 are indicative only and subject to change, pending consultation with HoDs in 2024/25 and 2025/26 ahead of first teaching from September 2025 (Year 8) and September 2026 (Year 9).





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Progression in the United Curriculum



In the United Curriculum, students will encounter major world religious and non-religious traditions. They will encounter **substantive knowledge** through depth studies as well as philosophical and ethical studies that consider religious and non-religious perspectives. (Note, students will study Buddhism OR Sikhi in depth. Humanism and other non-religious traditions are encountered across the curriculum).



Judaism



Christianity



Islam



Hindu
Dharma



Buddhism



Sikhi



Humanism



Other Non-
Religious
Traditions

Within each tradition, students will revisit key **threads**, as listed below. These threads serve two purposes. Firstly, they provide a consistent conceptual framework (or schema) that students can use to organise their knowledge from religious studies. Secondary, it makes it easier for students to make connections between the various religious and non-religious traditions.

Note, some of these threads are only relevant to religious traditions.

Origins of the Faith

Religious Authority

Beliefs about the
Nature of God

Beliefs about
Creation

Beliefs about
Morality

Beliefs about
Afterlife

Key Practices

Diversity of Beliefs
and Practices





Students will also develop **disciplinary knowledge** across the curriculum. Disciplinary knowledge is embedded with substantive knowledge rather than taught in discrete units or lessons.



Theology



Philosophy



Social Sciences

The final strand of knowledge is **personal knowledge**. This should be planned throughout the curriculum. However, there is no one place where personal knowledge may be developed for all students. Teachers and schools should plan appropriate opportunities to reflect their cohort. Example opportunities that *may* be taken are outlined [here](#).

Note that, unlike other subjects, there is no National Curriculum for Religious Studies. As such, it is not possible to assume that all students have a consistent font of knowledge from Key Stage 2. The Key Stage 3 curriculum therefore makes very few assumptions about prior knowledge. Schools should consider the RE curriculum of their feeder schools and adapt the Key Stage 3 curriculum accordingly, to ensure that students build on their prior knowledge appropriately.



A Note About Vocabulary



Vocabulary has been chosen carefully in the United Curriculum. The rationale for these choices are outlined below. However, **schools should adapt and edit as required**. For example, schools should consider the preferred vocabulary of religious groups in their school and in their wider community and ensure that this vocabulary is reflected in what students are taught.

Hindu Dharma or Hinduism?

There are many resources and groups that use the name Hinduism. In fact, many followers use the term Hinduism themselves.

The term 'Hindu' originated from the ancient Persians, who referred to the people living near the Sindhu (Indus) River as "Hindus." This geographic term eventually came to be associated with the religious and cultural practices of the people in that region.

During British colonial rule in the nineteenth century, the term "Hinduism" was used to categorise and systematise the diverse practices, beliefs, and philosophies observed in India. This classification was influenced by the British attempt to understand and manage Indian society through a lens familiar to them – an 'ism' – often modelled on Christian frameworks.

Recognising the colonial legacy of the term, there has been a move towards using terms that are more reflective of the indigenous understanding. "Sanatana Dharma," meaning "eternal duty," is one such term that emphasises the timeless and universal aspects of the tradition. "Hindu Dharma" similarly stresses its ethical and duty-based aspects.

In the United Curriculum, it is referred to as Hindu Dharma. This helps with recognition, since Hinduism is still commonly used, but is a move toward a more accurate and respectful representation of the tradition.

Sikhism or Sikhi?

As with Hinduism, Sikhism is widely used and recognised.

Also like Hinduism, Sikhism is a term coined by the British. Sikhi aligns more with the original linguistic and cultural context.

In the United Curriculum, we have chosen to use Sikhi.

Jewish person or Jew?

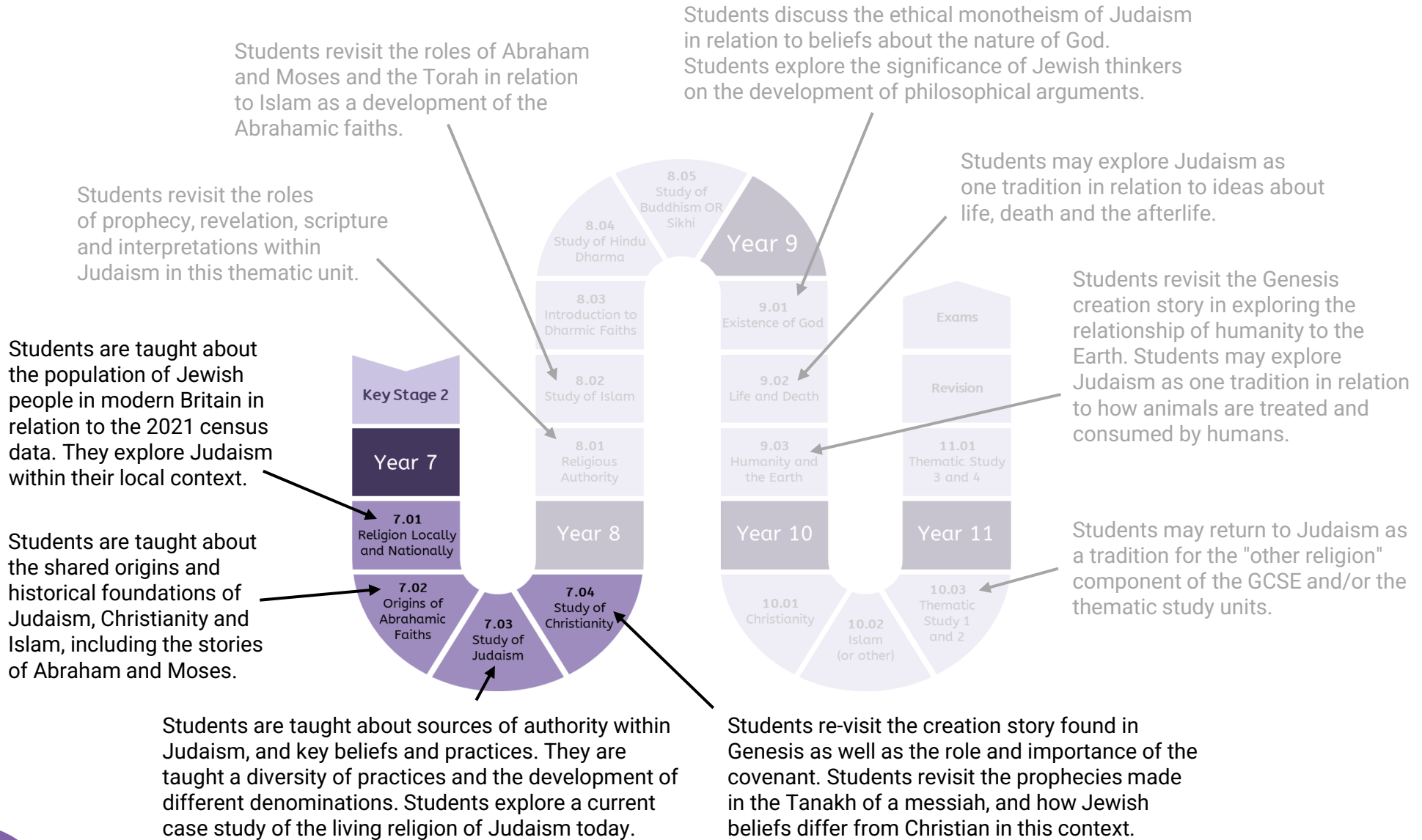
While members of the religion of Judaism call themselves Jews, sometimes the term Jew has been used as a racial slur (think Shakespeare's Shylock, the money lender). The United Curriculum resources will tend to use the term Jewish person or member of the Jewish community.





Judaism

Note: Years 8-11 are indicative only.





Christianity

Note: Years 8-11 are indicative only.



Students revisit the roles of Abraham, Moses and Jesus and the Torah and Gospels in relation to Islam as a development of the Abrahamic faiths.

Students revisit the roles of revelation, scripture, authority and interpretations within Christianity in this thematic unit.

Students are taught that the largest religious group in England and Wales is Christian, and students explore Christianity within their local context.

Students are taught about the shared origins and historical foundations of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, including the stories of Abraham and Moses.

Students are taught about sources in authority in Judaism, which form the Old Testament for Christianity. Students explore the Genesis creation story, and prophecies relating to the coming Messiah. Students are taught the significance of the Exodus story and Pesach festival today.

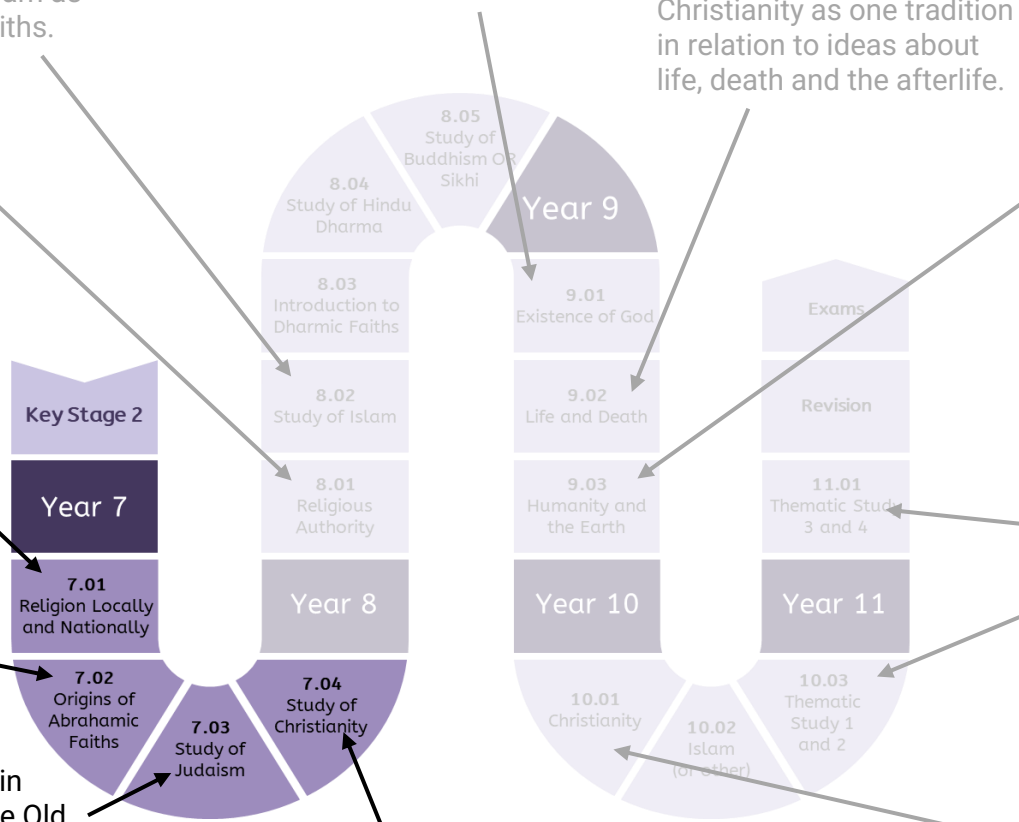
Students discuss the nature of God within Christianity and the classical arguments given from key Christian thinkers around God's existence.

Students may explore Christianity as one tradition in relation to ideas about life, death and the afterlife.

Students revisit the Genesis creation story in exploring the relationship of humanity to the Earth. Students may explore Christianity as one tradition in relation to how animals are treated and consumed by humans.

Students will revisit Christian teachings and practices in relation to all thematic units of study chosen. A diversity of views within Christianity for each of these themes will be explored.

Students will revisit key Christian beliefs and practices and explore these in greater depth.



Students are taught about sources of authority within Christianity, and key beliefs and practices. They are taught a diversity of practices and the development of different denominations. Students explore a current case study of the living religion of Judaism today.



Islam

Note: Years 8-11 are indicative only.



Students are taught about the sources of authority, prophecy, scripture, role of interpretation and traditions within Islam. Students are taught about the historical setting of the development of the two schools of thought: Sunni and Shia Islam. Students will encounter modern-day examples of the lived religion through case studies and ethical discussions.

Students are taught about the population of Muslims in modern Britain in relation to the 2021 census data. Students explore Islam within their local context.

Students are taught about the shared origins and historical foundations of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, including the stories of Abraham (Ibrahim) and Moses (Musa).

Students are taught about the Torah (Tawrat) as a source of authority, which they will later see is one of the Holy Books of Islam.

Students are taught about the Gospels as a source of authority, which they will later see is Injeel, one of the Holy Books of Islam. They are also taught the story of Jesus (Isa).

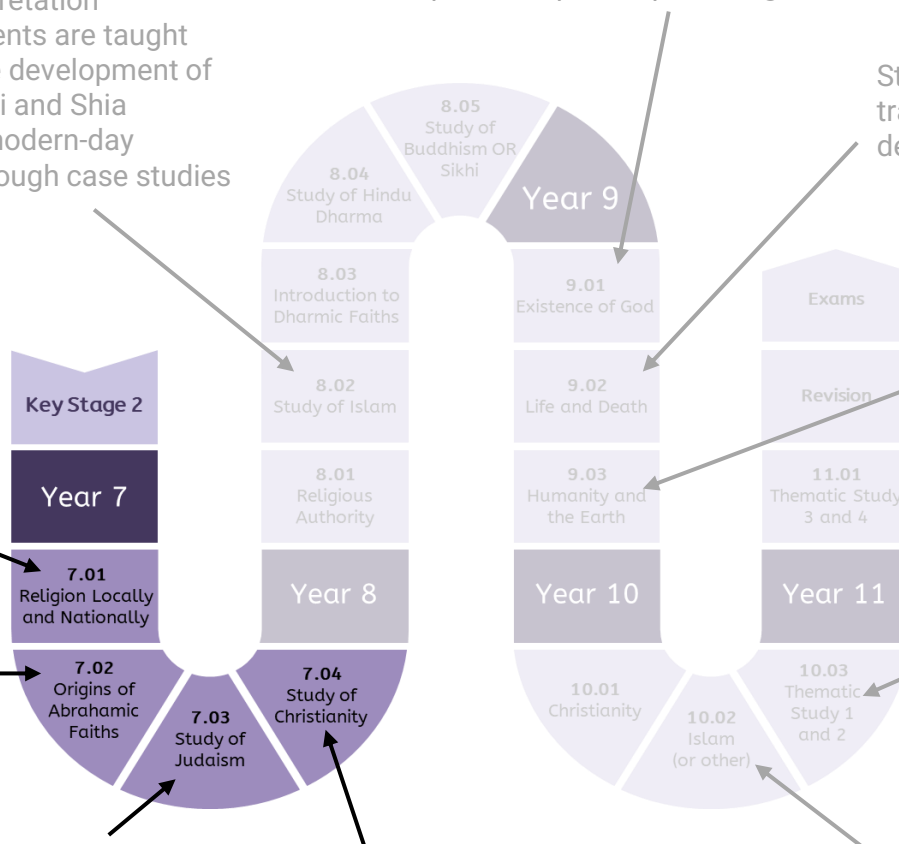
Students discuss the monotheism of Islam (Tawhid) in relation to beliefs about the nature of Allah. Students explore the significance of Muslim thinkers on the development of philosophical arguments.

Students may explore Islam as one tradition in relation to ideas about life, death and the afterlife.

Students may explore Islam as one tradition in relation to how animals are treated and consumed by humans.

Students may return to Islam as a tradition for the "other religion" component of the GCSE and/or the Thematic study units.

Students may return to Islam as a tradition for the "other religion" component of the GCSE and cover key beliefs and practices within the schools of thought in the faith (Sunni and Shia).





Hindu Dharma

Note: Years 8-11 are indicative only.



Students are taught about the sources of authority, core concepts, diversity of beliefs and practices held within the Hindu Dharma. Students will encounter modern-day case studies of the lived religion. Students will apply the principle of ahimsa to ethical discussions today.

As part of studying the nature of God, students will revisit ideas around polytheism and monotheism, God and Brahman.

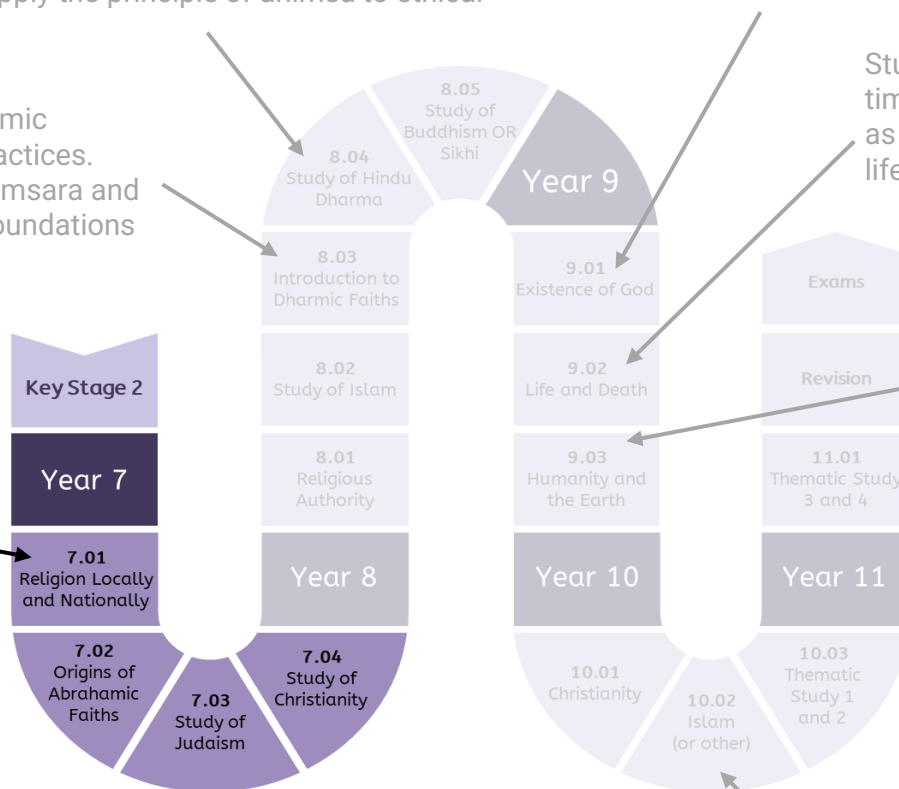
Students are taught about the Dharmic approach to religion, beliefs and practices. The concepts of dharma, karma, samsara and cyclical time are taught to lay the foundations for the depth studies to follow.

Students revisit concepts of dharmic time, reincarnation, karma and moksha as one tradition in relation to ideas about life, death and the afterlife.

Students are taught about the population of Hindus in modern Britain in relation to the 2021 census data. Students may explore Hindu Dharma within their local context.

Students revisit the concepts of reincarnation, karma, dharma and ahimsa as part of the exploration of humanity's relation to the Earth. Students may explore Hindu Dharma as one tradition in relation to how animals are treated and consumed by humans.

Students may return to Hindu Dharma as a tradition for the "other religion" component of the GCSE and/or the thematic study units.





Buddhism

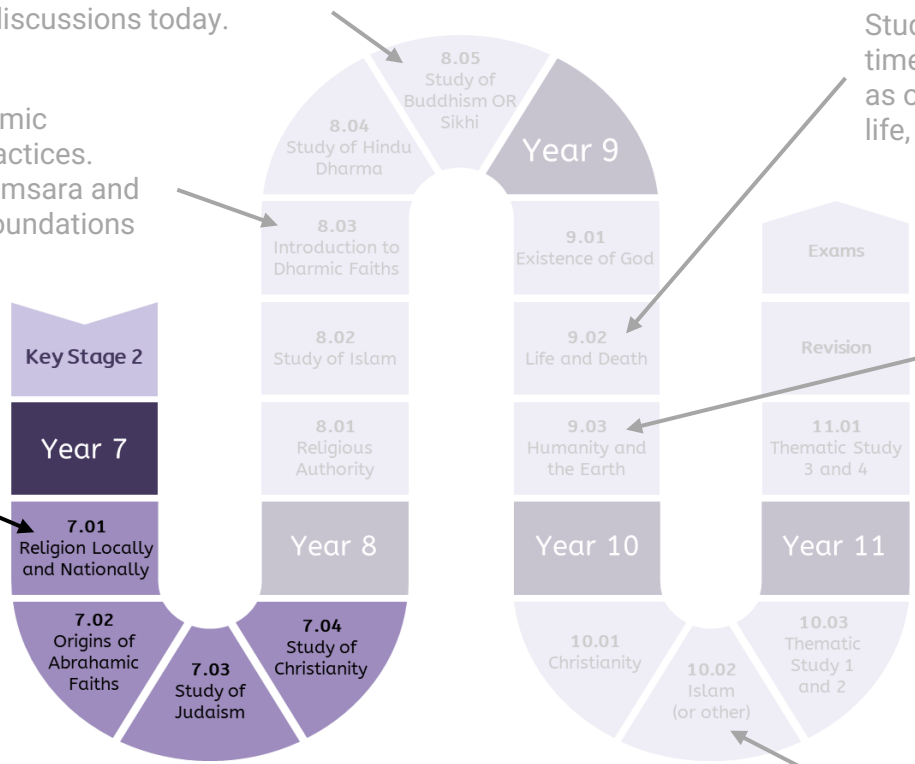


*Note: Years 8-11 are indicative only.
Some schools may choose to teach Sikhi instead of Buddhism.*

Students are taught about the sources of authority, core concepts, diversity of beliefs and practices held within Buddhism. Students may encounter modern day case studies of the lived religion. Students will apply the principles of metta and karuna to ethical discussions today.

Students are taught about the Dharmic approach to religion, beliefs and practices. The concepts of dharma, karma, samsara and cyclical time are taught to lay the foundations for the depth studies to follow.

Students are taught about the population of Buddhists in modern Britain in relation to the 2021 census data. Students may explore Buddhism within their local context.

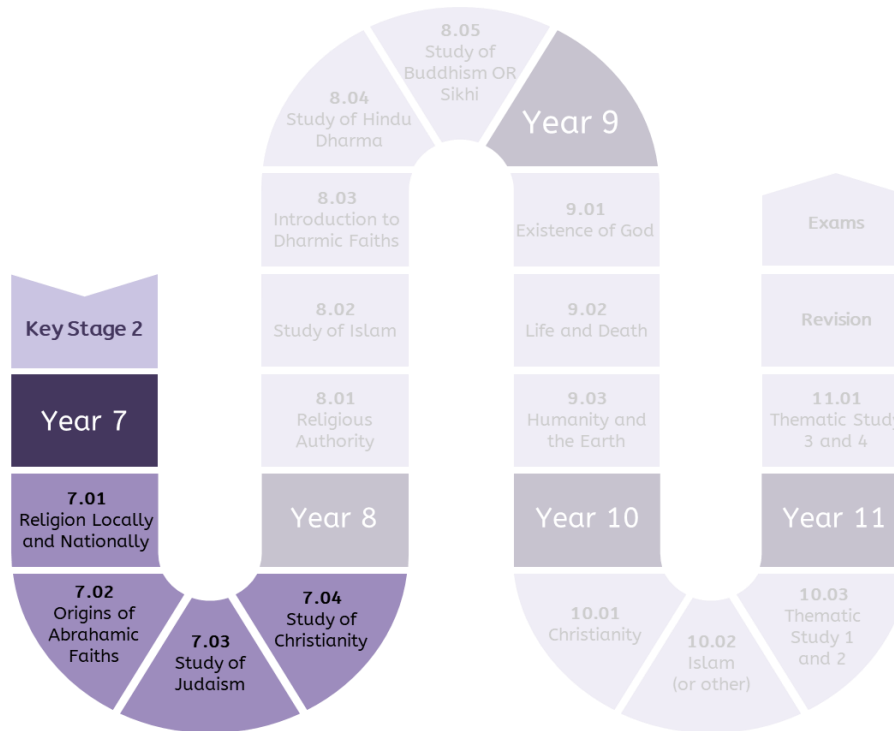


Students revisit concepts of nirbanna time, reincarnation, karma and moksha as one tradition in relation to ideas about life, death and the afterlife.

Students revisit the concepts of reincarnation, karma, dharma, metta and karuna as part of the exploration of humanity's relation to the Earth. Students may explore Buddhism as one tradition in relation to how animals are treated and consumed by humans.

Students may return to Buddhism as a tradition for the "other religion" component of the GCSE and/or the thematic study units.







Non-Religious Traditions, Including Humanism

Note: Years 8-11 are indicative only.



Students explore diverse non-religious (including Humanist) views on religious authorities such as scripture, prophecy and tradition.

Students explore authorities which may shape the belief, practices and life of a non-religious (including Humanist) person.

Students are taught about the numbers of non-religious people who answered the "What is your religion?" question in the 2021 census.

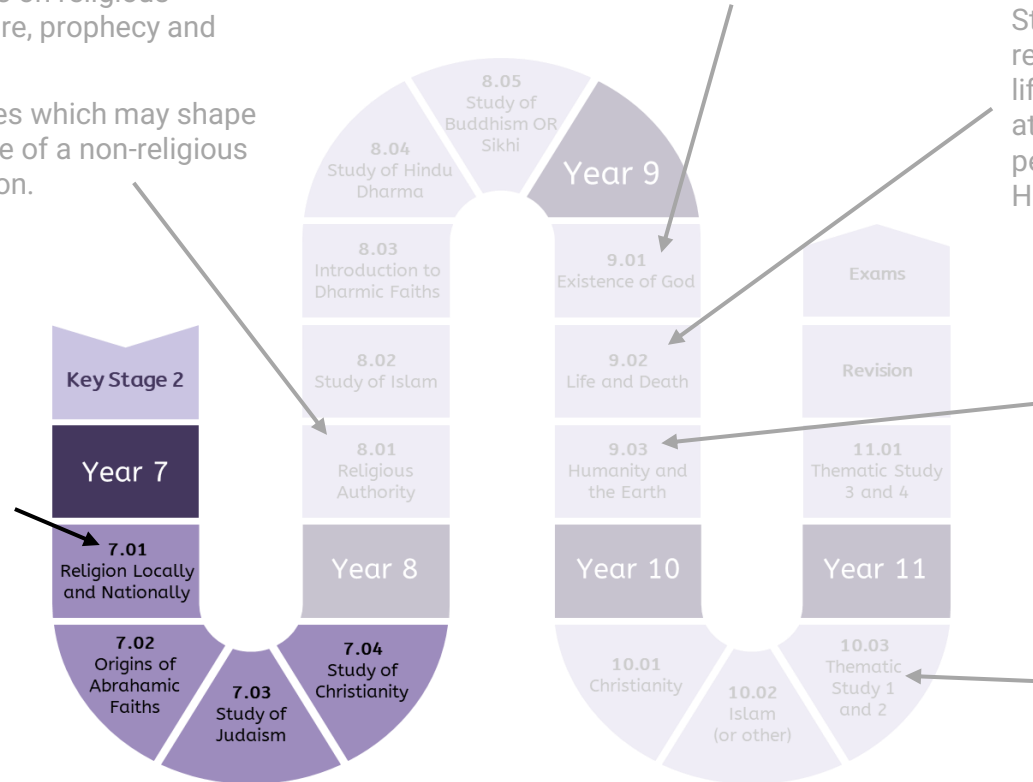
Students are taught that this number has increased in the last two censuses that took place. Students explore reasons for this (focusing on migration) and how some people may have belief in a god or power but not a religion.

Students are taught about the challenges posed to the traditional arguments for the existence of God. Students explore responses from religion to those challenges.

Students are taught the response to questions around life, death and the afterlife from at least one non-religious perspective (which may include Humanism).

Students are taught the responses to questions around humanity's relation to the Earth from at least one non-religious perspective (which may include Humanism).

Non-religious (including Humanist) views may be included with the thematic studies components of the GCSE course.



Origins of the Faith

Note: Years 8-11 are indicative only.



Students are taught that the Hindu Dharma contains a wide variety of traditions and foundational narratives. Students will encounter the formation of Hindu Dharma through the key texts and practices that hold significance to Hindus today.

In a similar way to 7.01, students are taught the historical foundations of Dharmic faiths in India and the beliefs that connect them.

Students revisit the roles of Ibrahim, Musa, Isa and are taught the life of Prophet Muhammad and his role as the Final Prophet in Islam. They are also taught about the roles of Abu Bakr and Ali in succession after the Prophet Mohammed's death.

Students are learnt the foundational narrative of the life of Siddhartha Gottoma: the Buddha. Students are taught about the Four Noble sights, Four Noble Truths and the Eight-Fold Path in relation to his life and teachings. Alternatively, students will be taught the origins of Sikhi.

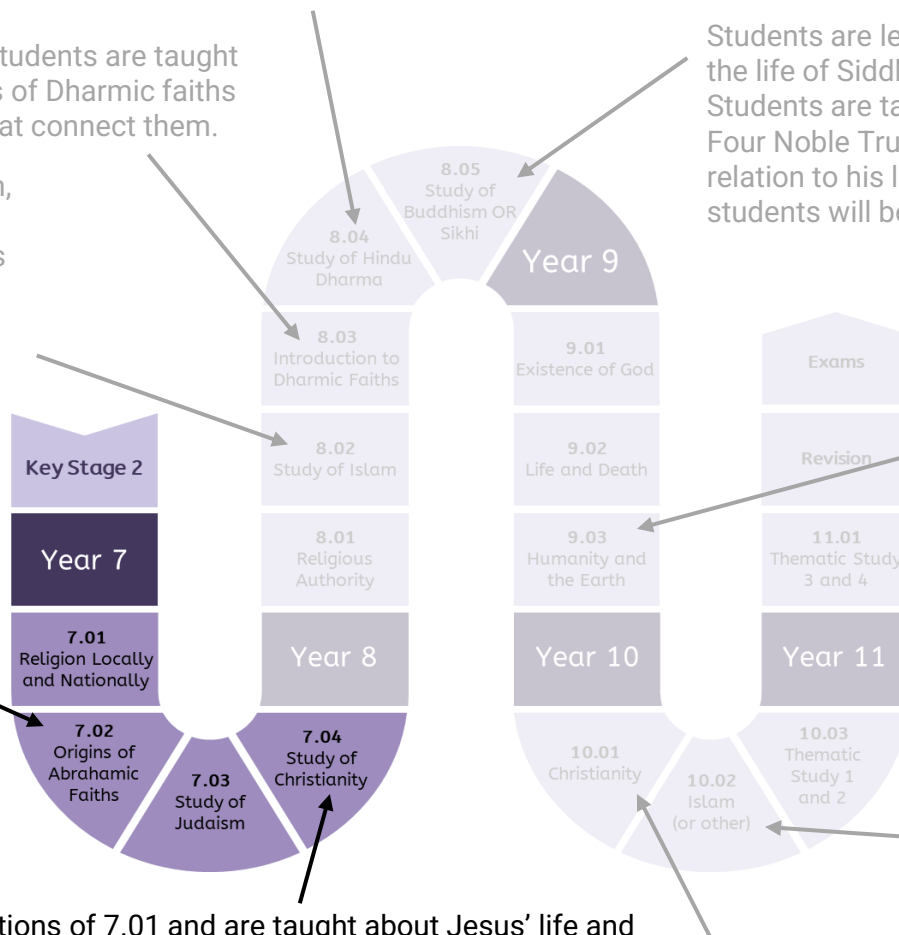
Students are taught about the shared origins and historical foundations of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, including the stories of Abraham and Moses. They are also introduced to Jesus and Prophet Muhammad.

Students build on the foundations of 7.01 and are taught about Jesus' life and teachings in greater depth. Students are taught about the establishment of the Christian Church with St Peter and the Great Commission, focusing particularly on the work of St Paul. Students are taught about the Nicene Creed and later development of Catholicism and Protestantism with the Reformation.

Students consider the arguments for and against the existence of God, and how atheists and agnostic people may consider these arguments.

Students are taught the history and practices of a wider range of Muslim practices from both Sunni and Shia traditions, if Islam is the other religion chosen.

Students are taught the history and practices of a wider range of Christian denominations, including Orthodox and non-conformist denominations.



Religious Authority

Note: Years 8-11 are indicative only.



Students are taught about significance of the Qur'an as the word of Allah, as well as the significance of other writings such as the Hadith. They are taught about Sunni and Shi'a differences in the context of Muhammad's succession.

Students are taught about the ancient writings within the Hindu Dharma, including Vedas, Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. Students consider the diverse ways these texts are interpreted.

Students will review literal and symbolic interpretations of Jewish and Christian scripture and Apostolic succession from 7.03 and 7.04, ahead of their study of Islam, in which they consider the succession of Prophet Muhammad.

Students will consider non-religious views on the nature of religious authority and other authorities that non-religious people may have in their lives.

Students are introduced to the idea that scripture is considered by some to be the words of God, using the example of the revelation to Moses at Mount Sinai.

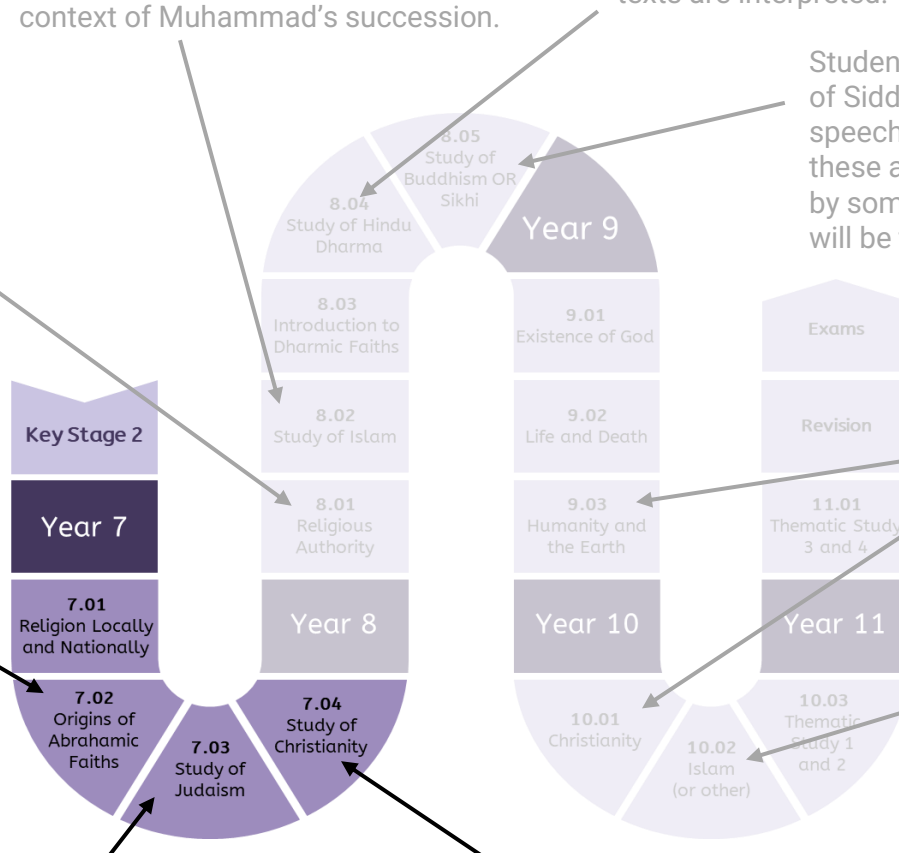
Students are taught about the Tanakh and the authorship of the three sections (Torah, Nevi'im and Ketuvim), and why these words hold authority. They are also taught about the different authority of the Talmud to some Jewish people. They will be introduced to the idea of literal and symbolic interpretation of scripture.

Students are taught about the sutras of Siddhartha Gottoma (the Buddha) as his speeches recorded by early followers, and how these are found within the "Pali Canon" accepted by some Buddhists today. Alternatively, students will be taught about authority within Sikhi.

Students broaden their knowledge of holy books and their use for supporting beliefs within Christianity. Students are taught other sources of authority, such as the Apostle's Creed and the Book of Common Prayer.

Students broaden their knowledge of holy books to include Tawrat, Zaubr, Scrolls of Ibrahim, and Injeel, in addition to the Qur'an and Hadith.

As with the Tanakh, students are taught about the structure, significance and authorship of the Bible. Through studying the Catholic and Church of England Churches, students are taught about the relative authority of the Pope and other religious leaders. (This prepares students for Year 8 History and study of the Reformation).



Beliefs About the Nature of God



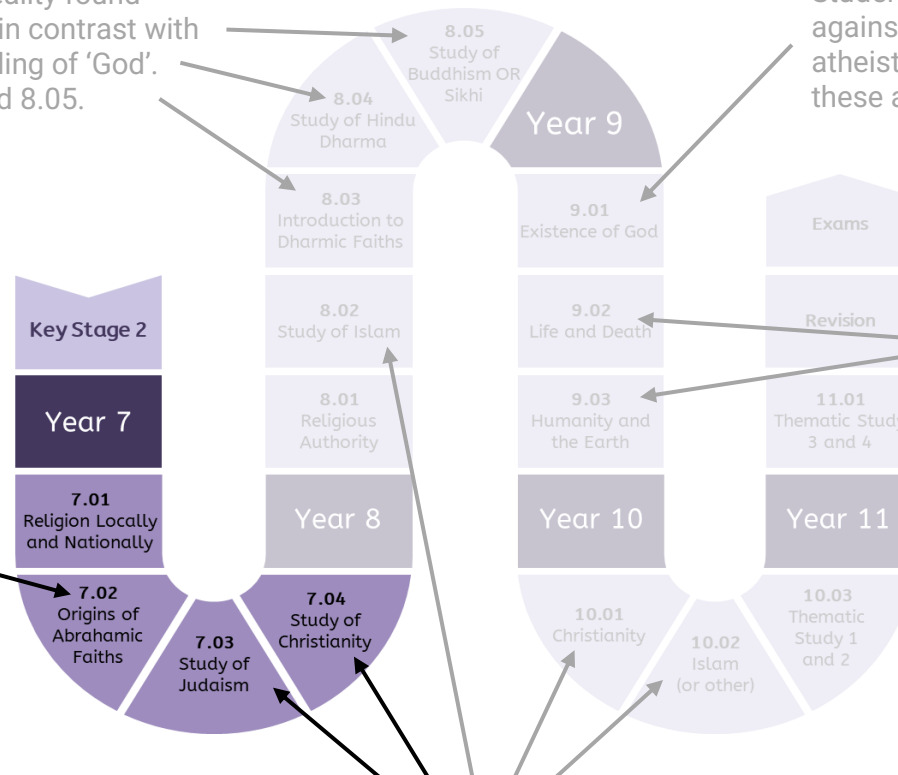
Note: Years 8-11 are indicative only.

Students are taught about the different approaches to Ultimate Reality found within Dharmic traditions, in contrast with the Abrahamic understanding of 'God'. This is revisited in 8.04 and 8.05.

Students consider the arguments for and against the existence of God, and how atheists and agnostic people may consider these arguments.

Students are taught that Abraham and other prophets made a covenant with one, all-powerful God, often in the context of polytheistic societies.

Students revisit the concept of the Abrahamic Creator God and Ultimate Reality – as well as atheist perspectives – in the contexts of life, death and the Earth.



Students regularly revisit and reinforce the idea that Judaism, Christianity and Islam are all monotheistic faiths with one, all-powerful Creator God. In Christianity, students are taught about the Nicene Creed and significance of the Trinity.

Beliefs About Creation

Note: Years 8-11 are indicative only.



Students will be taught about the Dharmic view of time (eternal cycle) and how this relates to ideas around creation in these faiths.

Students will be taught about beliefs within the Hindu Dharma around the nature of Brama and the roles of the Trimurti in creation.

Students will explore themes of creation within Buddhism through the concept of dependant arising. Students will also explore how the story of the 'poisoned arrow' relates to discussions of creation. Alternatively, students will study Sikh narratives of creation.

Students will be taught about the role of Adam within Islam as the first Prophet and some key differences between the Islamic and Judeo-Christian creation narratives.

Students will revisit literal and symbolic interpretations of the Judeo-Christian creative narrative through discussions of the nature of "truth" found in religious scriptures.

Students will likely have been taught about the Judeo-Christian narrative of creation in Key Stage 1 and/or 2.

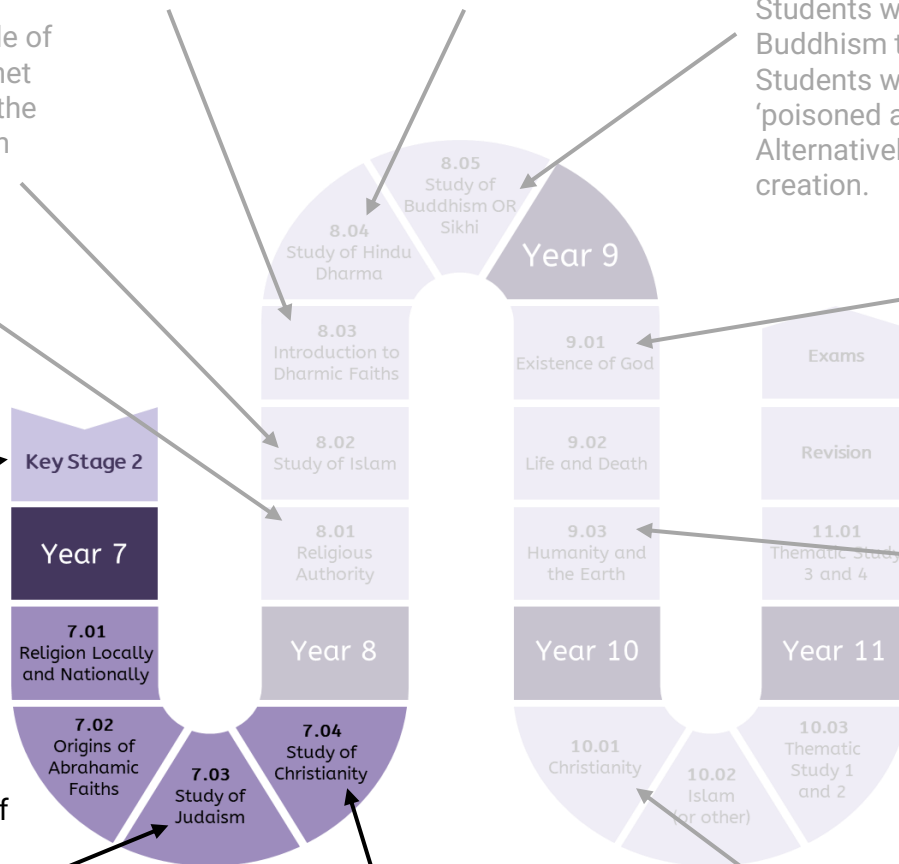
Students are taught (or potentially revisit from Key Stage 2) the story of creation, as found in Genesis in the Torah. Students are taught about Tikkun Olam in an ethical study, which lays foundations for discussions around humanity's role in caring for the God's creation in 9.03.

Students revisit and reinforce the creation narrative found in Genesis, and are taught about the inclusion of Jesus at creation in the Gospels.

Students are taught the design and first cause arguments, alongside the (simplified) Big Bang Theory, as part of the arguments for and against the existence of God.

Students revisit creation narratives within Abrahamic and Dharmic traditions in the context of humanity's position on Earth. They consider these alongside speciesism and non-religious perspectives.

Students revisit literal and symbolic interpretations and then consider how literal, metaphorical, liberal and fundamentalist approaches to interpreting the Bible shape people's beliefs about creation.



Beliefs About Morality

Note: Years 8-11 are indicative only.

Students are taught about the importance of dharma as the moral and ethical duties that each person has. Students will explore the theme of ahimsa (non-violence) and how this relates to morality and ethical codes.

Students are taught the five pillars of Islam, and will focus on practices of prayer, fasting and modesty.

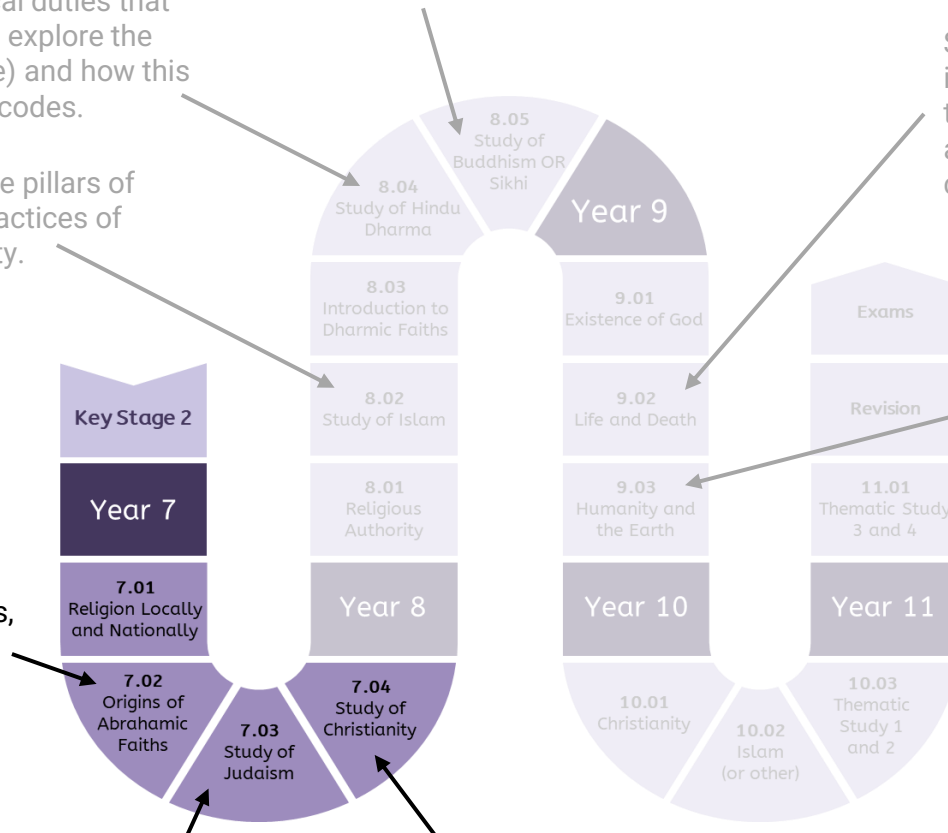
Students are taught about Abraham's covenant with God, the revelation to Moses of the Ten Commandments, Leviticus, and Jesus' Sermon on the Mount as ways that followers should live moral lives.

Students build on 7.01 and are taught about the significance of the Torah, the 613 mitzvot and how some Jewish people interpret the Talmud as a way of living according to them. Students consider Tikkun Olam in the context of living a good life.

Students are taught about the Eightfold Path as guidance for how to live a moral and ethical life. Students will explore the themes of metta and karuna around compassion and loving kindness towards others. Alternatively, students will consider Sikh beliefs about morality.

Students revisit ways of living a good life in Abrahamic and Dharmic traditions, are taught some non-religious perspectives, and consider the purpose of life in the context of eschatology.

Students are taught the creation narratives and humanity's position on Earth within Abrahamic and Dharmic traditions, and how humans should live a good life in the context of the Earth.



Beliefs About Afterlife

Note: Years 8-11 are indicative only.

Students are introduced to key Islamic beliefs about life after death, including the existence of Jannah and Jahannam. Students will explore how the key practices of prayer and fasting relate to the aim of a Muslim's life to go to Jannah after death.

Students are taught that, within the Dharmic view of life and death, life is in an eternal cycle of samsara and that humans can hope to achieve freedom from this, after death, through achieving moksha.

Students will build on their knowledge of Samsara from 8.03 and 8.04 whilst being taught about the Buddhist aim of achieving Nirbanna through Enlightenment. Alternatively, students will study Sikh beliefs about life after death.

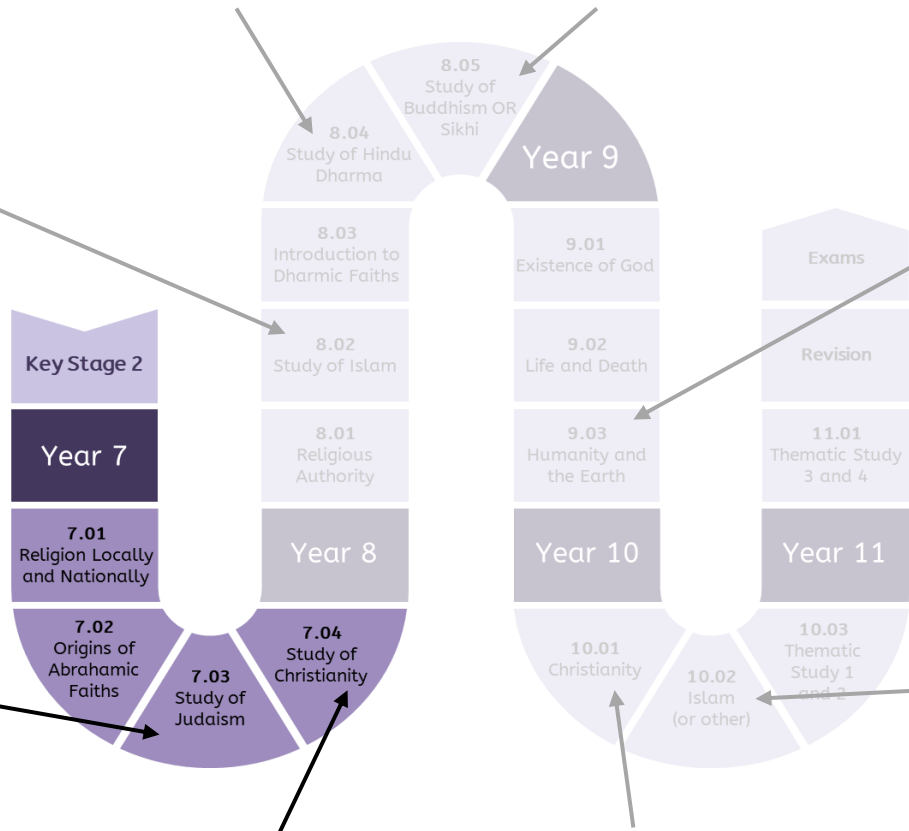
Students are taught that Jewish beliefs about what happens after death are varied, and that the focus of many Jewish people is on living a good life.

Students are introduced to key Christian beliefs about life after death, including judgement day and heaven and hell.

Students are taught liberal and fundamentalist views of heaven and hell, as well as different understandings of purgatory.

Students revisit eschatological beliefs in Abrahamic and Dharmic traditions. They will consider the concept of the soul and life after death from a non-religious perspective.

Students are taught about Akirah and different Muslim beliefs about life after death and funeral rituals. They consider the role and importance of Isa in the End Times and Shi'a beliefs about the Immamate and the final, Hidden Imam.



Key Practices

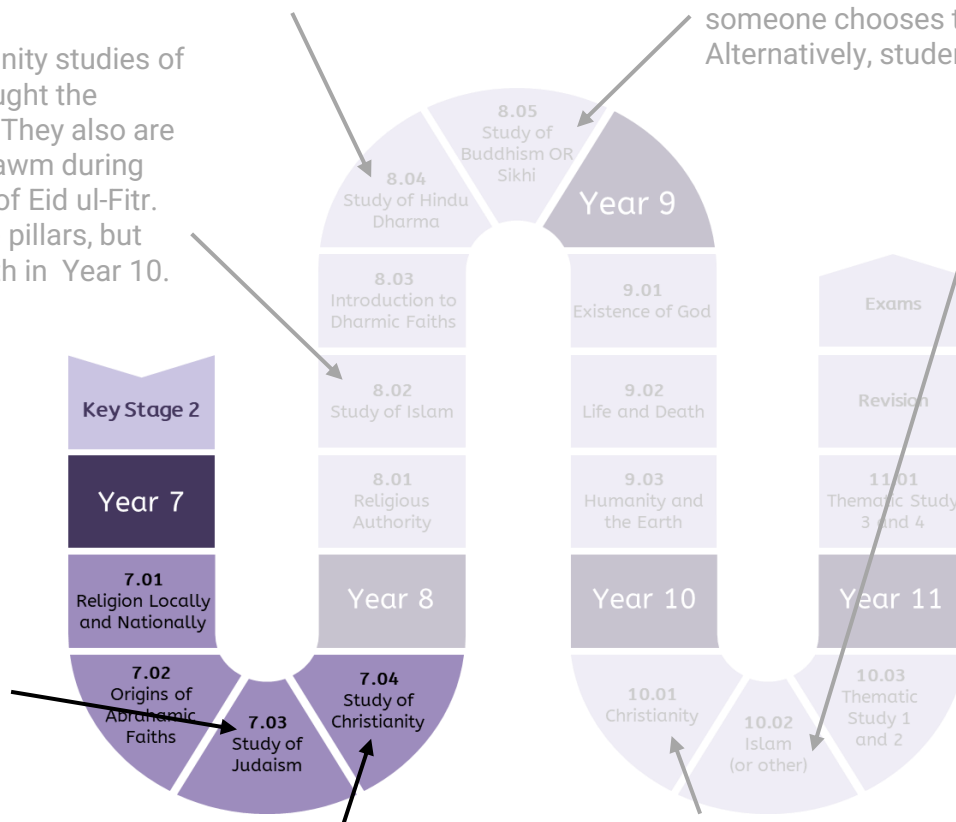
Note: Years 8-11 are indicative only.



Students are taught about the nature and significance of puja, Holi and Diwali, as well as the practice of Pilgrimage through the case study of the Kumbha Mela in Haridwar.

Students are taught about the nature and significance of meditation within the Eightfold Path of Buddhism as well as the practice of "Taking Refuge" when someone chooses to become a Buddhist. Alternatively, students will learn key practices in Sikhi.

As in the Judaism and Christianity studies of 7.03 and 7.04, students are taught the importance of prayer in Islam. They also are taught about the practice of Sawm during Ramadan and the celebration of Eid ul-Fitr. They are introduced to the five pillars, but only learn about all five in depth in Year 10.



Students are taught about Jewish prayer, the role of the synagogue, Shabbat, Bar/Bat Mitzvah and Pesach.

Students revisit Jewish Pesach in the context of the narrative of Jesus' crucifixion. Students revisit the Jewish prayer of the Amidah through consideration of Jesus' instruction of the Lord's Prayer. They are taught a range of Christian practices, including celebrations at Christmas, and the significance of some sacraments (focusing on Eucharist and matrimony) to some Christians.

If Islam is chosen as the 'other' religion, students revisit practices from 8.02 and then are taught a wider range of Islamic practices, including the festival of Id Ul Adha in remembrance of Prophet Ibrahim, Hajj in remembrance of Hajera, Eid Ul Ghadeer and Ashura in remembrance of Imams Ali and Hussein (in Shia Islam).

Students are taught about all of the five pillars (in Sunni Islam) and 10 Obligatory Acts (Shia Islam) and the diverse ways these may be practised by Muslims today.

Students are taught a wider range of Christian practices building on the units before. These include the nature of – and variety within and between denominations of – worship and prayer, evangelism, mission, supporting of families, the sacraments, supporting the worldwide church and responding to persecution.

Diversity of Beliefs and Practices



Note: Years 8-11 are indicative only.

Students are taught the diverse range of ways in which puja, Holi and Diwali are practised across the world.

Students are taught the diverse ways that Buddhism (or Sikhi) is practised across the world, including in the UK.

Students are taught the different perspectives of Sunni and Shi'a Muslims. They also see the diversity in practice in Ramadan and approaches to modesty across the world.

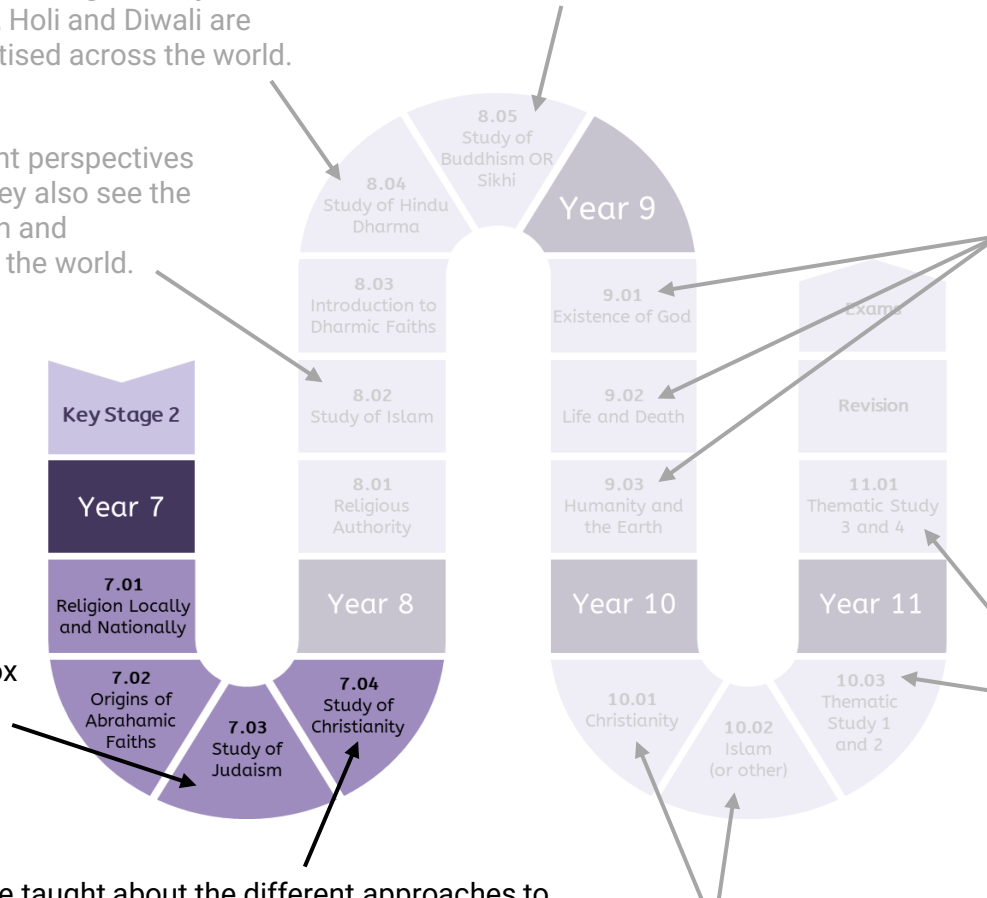
Across all the thematic studies in Year 9, students see the diverse range of perspectives that exist within and across religious and non-religious traditions, and how they may shape people's decisions about their actions in life.

Students are taught about the different interpretations of scripture in Reform and Orthodox traditions. They also see the diversity of practice within each tradition, focusing on Shabbat, Pesach and Bar/Bat Mitzvah.

Students are taught about the different approaches to sacraments and religious authority in Catholicism and Church of England. They also see the diversity of practices in Christmas celebrations and administering sacraments.

Students continue to see the diverse ways in which Christians and Muslims practise their faith.

Students continue to see the diverse ways in which Muslims and Christians engage with thematic issues.





Disciplinary Approach: Theology

Note: Years 8-11 are indicative only.



Students use the tool of theology to explore the Dharmic approach to faith and the origins and development of these ideas.

Students use the tool of theology with increasing sophistication and independence to explore the traditions of Hindu Dharma and Buddhism through considering the key narratives, authorities, beliefs and practices found within them.

Students use the tool of theology to explore the key narratives, beliefs and practices within Islam.

Students use the tool of theology to consider different forms of authority found within religious and non-religious traditions.

Students are taught about the traditional arguments given for the existence of God within the monotheistic faiths and the authority behind these claims.

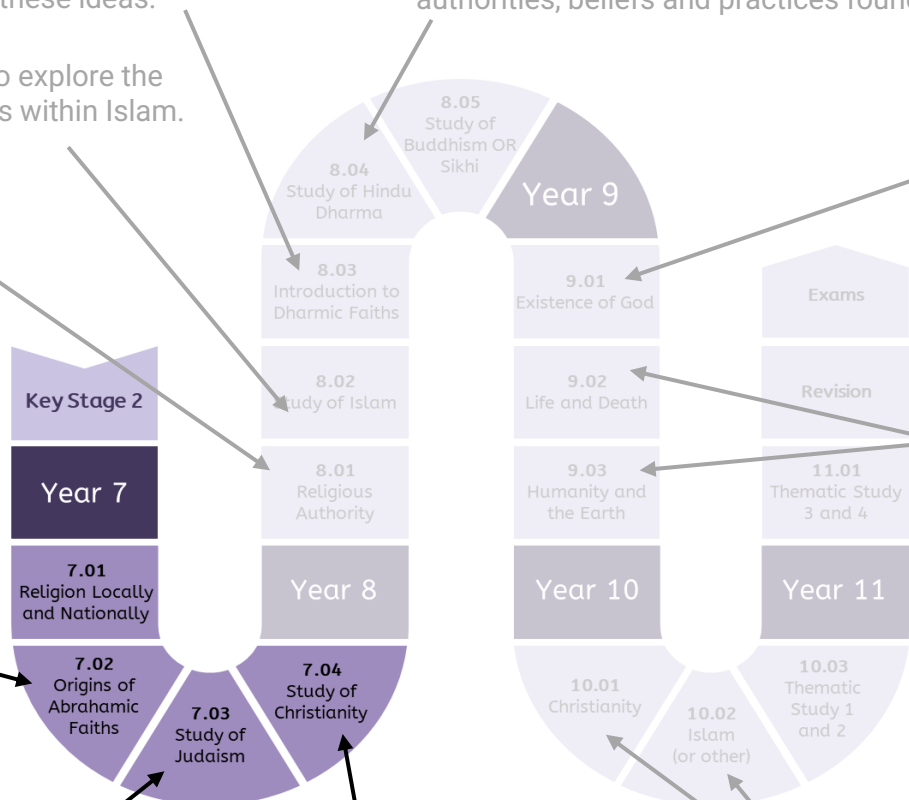
Students will use the tool of theology to explore and evaluate the claims made by Abrahamic and Dharmic religions around the formation and purpose of life, and the relationship of humanity to the rest of the earth.

Students use the tool of theology whilst being taught about the shared origins of the Abrahamic faiths. They will explore the key theological ideas which underpin the development of these faiths.

Students use the tool of theology to explore the key narratives of Judaism, and consider the language, form and context of Jewish scripture.

Students use the tool of theology to explore the key narratives of Christianity, and consider the language, form and context of Christian scripture.

Students will further develop their knowledge of the key authorities, beliefs and practices within Christianity and one other religion.





Disciplinary Approach: Social Sciences

Note: Years 8-11 are indicative only.



Students will use the tools of social sciences to explore how Muslim teachings are practiced today in different settings, based on different interpretations, and how society may shape these.

Students use the tool of social sciences to investigate how religious authority is passed on through societies.

In an introduction to the tools of social sciences, students will consider data surrounding religious belief in modern Britain from the 2021 census. They will compare their local data to the national data and consider reasons why the number of each group is changing over time.

Students explore the case study of the city of Jerusalem and consider how the proximity of religious buildings show the connections between Abrahamic faiths.

Students use the tool of social sciences to consider how the teachings and moral principles of Judaism and Christianity are being lived out today, in different modern situations, and how society may shape these.

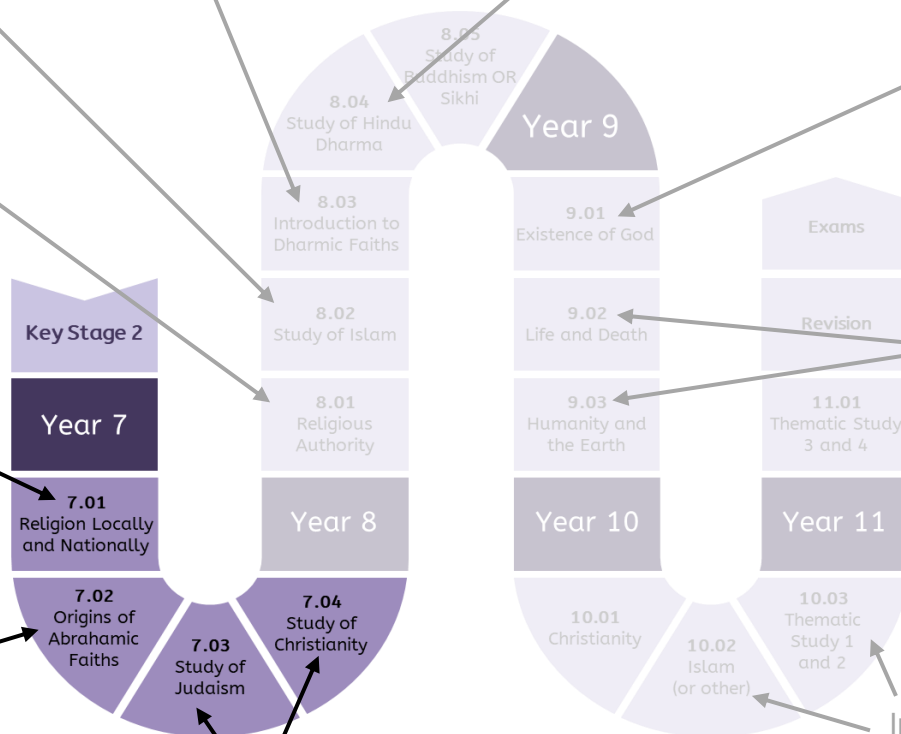
Students explore the case study of Varanasi, India, where different Dharmic faiths co-exist, and see how those faiths interact with the society in which they around.

Students use the tools of social sciences with increasing sophistication to consider how the teachings and moral principles within the Hindu Dharma and Buddhism are being lived out today and how society may shape these.

Students will use the tools of social sciences to consider more complex data around the beliefs about 'God', a higher power or ultimate reality that people hold in modern society.

Students use the tools of social sciences to consider the beliefs held around difficult topics like life, death and humanity's relationship to the Earth, and how these may influence – and be influenced by – the societies in which they are found.

In Year 10 and Year 11, students continue to use the tools of social sciences to consider how religions interact with the societies around them and through modern day case studies of religious communities and practices.



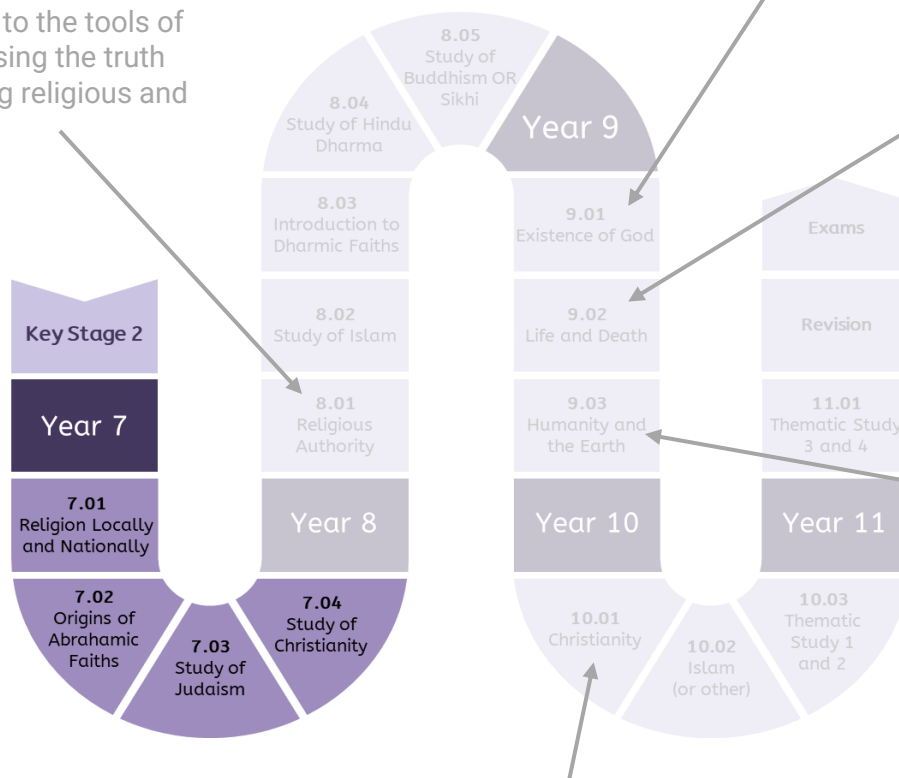


Disciplinary Approach: Philosophy

Note: Years 8-11 are indicative only.



Students are introduced to the tools of philosophy when discussing the truth claims made surrounding religious and secular authorities.



Students use the tool of philosophy to explore and evaluate the traditional arguments given for the existence of God within the Abrahamic faiths.

Students use the tool of philosophy to consider the nature of life, the nature of the mind, body and soul and life after death. They explore and evaluate ideas found within the Abrahamic, Dharmic and non-religious traditions (including Humanism) on this theme.

Students use the tool of philosophy to consider humanity's relationship with the Earth and evaluate the different approaches to this found in the Abrahamic, Dharmic and non-religious traditions studied (including Humanism).

In the religious units of Year 10 and Year 11, students will use the tool of philosophy to explore and evaluate truth claims made by Christianity and the other religions studied as well as discussions around the nature of God and/or the ultimate reality found within the tradition, building on 9.01.



Opportunities to Develop Personal Knowledge

Note: Years 8-11 are indicative only.



Students may consider the importance of social justice and fair treatment of people. They may consider their own presuppositions around the themes of modesty and religious laws.

Students may consider their own judgments of religious authorities and what things may be considered to have authority in their own lives.

Students may consider their own presuppositions about patterns of religious belief in their local area and modern Britain.

Students may consider their own presuppositions about the Abrahamic faiths and the commonalities between them.

Students may consider the importance of keeping promises, of family gatherings and rituals, and the role that rules and guidance may have in their own lives. They may consider their responsibility to repair the world.

Students may consider their own presuppositions about the Dharmic traditions and the commonalities between them. Students may reflect on how their view of time may influence their outlook on life.

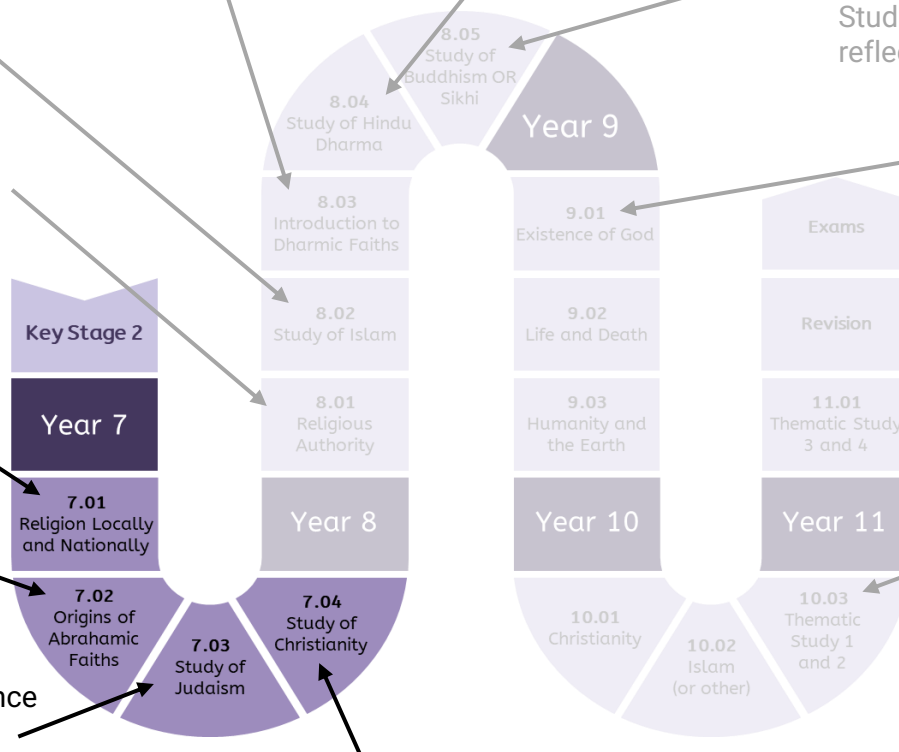
Students may reflect on the concept of good actions leading to good consequences in relation to their own lives. Students may consider the ways in which people can enact the principle of non-violence in their own lives.

Students may consider their own views on suffering and its causes and its solutions. Students may consider the role that quiet reflection can have for wellbeing.

Throughout the Year 9 units, students may consider their own views on the existence of God or a higher power, the origins and purpose of human life, the possibility of life after death, and humanity's relationship and responsibility for the rest of the world.

Through the Year 10 and Year 11 units, students may continue to reflect on how the themes of religion, belief and practices may relate to their own lives.

The thematic studies may allow students to consider their own views on the topics chosen and their broader understanding of and engagement with the world.



Summary of Each Unit



7.01: Religion Locally and Nationally

This short, introductory unit allows students to explore the current religious landscape of England and Wales and their local area. As a bridge between primary and secondary schools, they will review and build upon knowledge from KS2, and ensure that all students have the appropriate vocabulary of key faiths and non-religious traditions in Britain, including names of religious buildings and widely-used symbols.

Sequence of Lessons

1. Religion Nationally
2. Changes in Religion Nationally
3. Religion Locally

7.02: Origins of the Abrahamic Faiths

This unit teaches students the historical foundations of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. It teaches about the shared foundations of the Abrahamic faiths, and introduces the concepts of monotheism, covenants (of Abraham and Moses) and God's rules for humanity. These are built upon in the depth studies of each of the faiths.

The unit emphasises the significance of Jerusalem in the foundations of the Abrahamic faiths and its continued importance today (though without referencing current conflict).

Sequence of Lessons

1. Abraham's Covenant
2. Judaism – Exodus
3. Judaism – Leviticus
4. Christianity – Jesus and His Teachings
5. Christianity – Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection
6. Islam – Ibrahim in Arabia
7. Islam – Prophet Muhammad
8. The Significance of Jerusalem
9. Extended Writing





7.03: Study of Judaism

This depth study of Judaism builds from 7.02. Students explore the foundational scriptures of the Torah (including the creation narrative) and the Tanakh (including Esther, and the prophecy of the messiah). Students will consider how these may be interpreted differently (including literal and symbolic interpretations). They also consider diverse views on the importance of the Talmud. Students will build on their knowledge of the mosaic covenant through being taught about the mitzvot and the different ways these are followed today by different Jewish communities. Students consider key beliefs and individual and community practices including prayer, Shabbat and Passover, and they are taught the significance of the synagogue and ceremonies of Bar and Bat Mitzvah. Students will finally explore a current ethical issue of social justice through the lens of the Jewish concept of Tikkun Olam.

7.04: Study of Christianity

This depth study of Christianity also builds from 7.02. Students will be taught about the structure of the Bible (so they can make meaning of the scripture they will encounter in the lessons that follow) and will apply their understanding of literal and symbolic interpretations from 7.03. When revisiting learning from 7.02 about the birth, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus, students will be taught about the need for atonement and the Christian belief in Jesus as the prophesied messiah (introduced in 7.03). Students will also explore the Sermon on the Mount in greater depth. Students will then study the development of the Christian Church following the ascension of Jesus, including the roles of key apostles and leaders. Students will end the unit with a study of the key differences in beliefs and practices in Catholics and Protestant Church (providing the theological underpinning for studying the English Reformation in History, 8.01).

Sequence of Lessons

1. Torah
2. Tanakh
3. Interpreting the Torah and Tanakh and the significance of the Talmud
4. Daily prayer and weekly Shabbat
5. Pesach/ Passover
6. The synagogue and the Torah
7. Bar and Bat Mitzvah
8. Tikkun Olam and social justice
9. Case study
10. Extended writing

Sequence of Lessons

1. The Bible
2. Jesus' Birth
3. Jesus' Teachings: Sermon on the Mount
4. Jesus' Death and Resurrection
5. Ascension and the Great Commission
6. Establishment and Growth of the Church
7. Catholicism and Protestantism
8. The Sacraments
9. Case study
10. Extended Writing



Time to Teach



Curriculum Time

The United Curriculum is planned to cover **32 weeks each year**. This allows 6 weeks to identify and fill gaps and revise for and sit assessments.

The United Curriculum assumes **1 lesson per week**.

Lesson Lengths

In the optional lesson resources, each lesson is planned to last between 50 and 60 minutes. Many lesson resources contain 'additional' sections, which contain additional practice or additional content that will enrich students' knowledge.

Teachers should adapt the lesson resources to reflect the lesson lengths in their school and needs of their classes.





The diagram below reflects **one example** of how schools may choose to use the sequence history lessons over the course of the year. It assumes 1 lesson per week, as per the model curriculum timetable.

There are gaps to take account for inset days, missed lessons, and for additional gap filling or enrichment.

02/09/2024	09/09/2024	16/09/2024	23/09/2024	30/09/2024	07/10/2024	14/10/2024	21/10/2024	28/10/2024	04/11/2024	11/11/2024	18/11/2024	25/11/2024	02/12/2024	09/12/2024	16/12/2024	23/12/2024	30/12/2024	
	7.01: Religion Locally and Nationally							Half Term	7.02: Origins of Abrahamic Faith								Christmas Holidays	

06/01/2025	13/01/2025	20/01/2025	27/01/2025	03/02/2025	10/02/2025	17/02/2025	24/02/2025	03/03/2025	10/03/2025	17/03/2025	24/03/2025	31/03/2025	07/04/2025
7.03: Study of Judaism							Half Term	7.03 continued				Easter Holidays	

14/04/2025	21/04/2025	28/04/2025	05/05/2025	12/05/2025	19/05/2025	26/05/2025	02/06/2025	09/06/2025	16/06/2025	23/06/2025	30/06/2025	07/07/2025	14/07/2025	21/07/2025	28/07/2025
7.04: Study of Christianity						Half Term		7.04 continued					Summer Holidays		

The dates of the provisional mid- and end-of-year testing windows for 2024/25 are highlighted in grey.

Space has been left for revision and sitting the assessments (grey), as well as filling gaps after the assessment (white).



Adapting the United Curriculum Resources



See the **United Curriculum Handbook** on the curriculum website for general information about how resources could and should be adapted, and how teachers, HoDs and SLT can get the best out of them.

In Religious Studies specifically, schools should adapt the curriculum to embed more content from the local area, such as:

- Analysing local census data in 7.01.
- Sharing photographs of religious buildings in the local area in 7.01.
- Completing a survey or observation of people in the local area of the school in 7.01.
- Sharing photographs of ceremonies that have taken place in the local area, or inviting members of the local community to talk about the way they practise, particularly Shabbat, and Bar/Bat Mitzvah in 7.03: Study of Judaism; and Christmas and Eucharist in 7.04: Study of Christianity.
- Visit a local synagogue as part of 7.03: Study of Judaism; and or local Catholic and/or Church of England churches in 7.04: Study of Christianity.
- Invite speakers, perhaps recommended by local SACRE or [RE Hubs](#), to speak about relevant aspects of the curriculum.

Schools should also consider the religious education that students in their cohort have gained in primary school, and adapt the curriculum accordingly.

Schools should also decide which opportunities they will take to develop **personal knowledge**. Suggestions are outlined [here](#).





Formative Assessment

The United Curriculum contains resources to support teachers' ongoing assessment, such as:

- In-lesson quizzes within small steps of learning. These may be completed with mini whiteboards (to ensure the teachers can check the understanding of the whole class) and should be used to help the teacher decide whether the class are ready to move on to the next step, or whether there are gaps that need filling.
- Pre-learning checks, which help a teacher know whether students are secure in prerequisite knowledge before teaching a new unit. These should be done in advance of the unit (ideally digitally, ideally as homework) and should be used by teachers to help them plan to fill gaps as required.
- Post-learning checks, which help a teacher know whether students are secure in the main content of the unit. These should be done at the end of the unit, and should be used by the teachers to help them plan to address misconceptions before moving on.
- Opportunities for short and extended scholarly writing. Teachers should use students' writing to help them assess the extent to which students have grasped the key substantive and disciplinary knowledge.

Summative Assessment

The main summative assessment in the United Curriculum is the end-of-year assessment. See the Specification on the curriculum website for (a) the specific content that may be assessed and (b) the structure of the assessment.

