

## LITERACY LIFELINE - GCSE -Religion and life

### TOP TIPS

Use **capital letters** and **full stops** in your sentences.

Use **paragraphs** to organise longer pieces of writing.

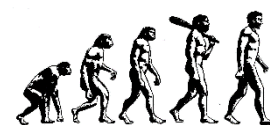
Take care with all **spelling** and **punctuation**.

**ALWAYS** write God with a capital letter!

Word/phrase	Meaning
Abortion	Deliberate expulsion of a foetus from the uterus with the intention to destroy it
Afterlife	Beliefs about what happens after we die to ourself/soul
Animal rights	The idea that animals should have rights because of respect for life
Awe	An overwhelming feeling of amazement or wonder, often a feeling of reverence with a link to God
Big Bang theory	The scientific view of how the universe began
Charles Darwin	The man who put forward the theory of evolution in the 19 <sup>th</sup> Century
conception	When the sperm fertilises the egg leading to a pregnancy
conservation	To repair and protect animals and the environment
creation	The belief that God created the world/universe from nothing
dominion	The idea that humans have power or control over all of creation
environment	The surroundings in which we live, the world around us
euthanasia	Mercy killing - ending someone's life as an act of kindness, e.g. if they are terminally ill or suffering greatly. Can be voluntary (if they have asked for it) or involuntary (if they are unable to ask, but you think it is what they would want, or what is in their best interests).
Evolution	Gradual change in the genetic characteristics of a species
Fossil fuels	The Earth's natural substances that are used for fuel, i.e. coal, oil and gas
hospice	A place that cares for the dying
hypothesis	A proposed explanation for something
Natural resources	The resources that the Earth produces by itself, without the intervention of humans, e.g. water, oil, trees
Natural selection	The idea that weaker creatures naturally die out over time and the strong survive. An important part of the theory of evolution.
Pesticide	Chemicals uses to kill insects on crops
Pro-choice	The view that women should be able to choose to have an abortion if they want one
Pro-life	The view that abortion is wrong and the right to life of the unborn baby is more important than the mother's right to choose.
Quality of life	The measure of how good or comfortable life is.
Right to die	The belief that humans should have the right to make their own decisions about their death
Sanctity of life	The belief that life is special and holy because it is created by God
Science	Knowledge coming from observed regularity in nature and experimentation
stewardship	The duty to look after the world and be responsible for caring for it
Sustainable energy	Renewable resources like wind, solar and wave power.



## The Origins of the World



The **Book of Genesis** in the **Bible** tells Christians that **God created the world in 6 days**.

**Scientific evidence** suggests the universe began with the **Big Bang** and life on Earth developed through **evolution**.

Some Christians believe that the Bible story is **completely accurate** and the world began just as it says. This is because they **trust the Bible as it is the Word of God**. They believe God could do this because he is **all-powerful, all-knowing and all-loving**.

Some Christians accept scientific ideas about how the universe began, but think the **Bible shows us the truth that God is behind it all** or has guided the development of life on Earth. The Creation story was written thousands of years ago as a simple way of explaining the idea that God created the world.

**Big Bang Theory** is based on **evidence** that the **universe is expanding** and is **running out of energy**. This makes scientists think that there must have been an **initial burst of energy and matter** that brought the universe into being.

The **Theory of Evolution** is linked to Charles Darwin. He used **evidence of how living things have gradually changed** over millions of years to show that life on Earth has not always been the same as it is now. Different species **gradually adapt** to be better at survival.

### What do Christians think about caring for the environment?

**Stewardship** means taking good care of the world and of life.

Christians believe:

God made them **stewards** of the world, so they have a duty to look after it well.

God created the world and loved his creation, so it is important to look after it all.

God gave humans **dominion**, or control, over all living things, which means we have a great responsibility to care for them.

### Is religion or science more important in explaining the world we live in?

Religion is important because...

it can explain things that science cannot, such as why there is life at all.  
it can give us a sense of purpose, hope or comfort.

Science is important because...

it helps us to understand how the world works.  
it is based on evidence and experiments so we can trust it.

*We could say they do different things, so maybe both are just as important!*

## Awe and Wonder

Some Christians think that if we have **dominion** over the world, that means we can use it in any way we like.

This is the feeling of **spiritual appreciation of the beauty and complexity of the world**, such as you might get from **seeing a rainbow or a beautiful sunset, or looking at the stars**. This makes Christians feel **closer to God** as they appreciate the world he has created and they **want to care for it and protect the beauty of nature**.

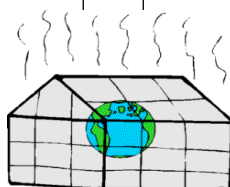
# ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES



**Global warming** is the way in which the Earth's atmosphere is heating up. Most scientists think it is caused by the **greenhouse effect**. Some think it is either not really happening, or is caused by natural factors.

## What is the greenhouse effect?

- Gases like **carbon dioxide** and **methane** have the effect of **creating a layer which traps the sun's energy** inside the Earth's atmosphere.
- This causes the **atmosphere to heat up**.
- **Increased use of fossil fuels** like coal, oil and gas has resulted in more carbon dioxide being produced.
- **Deforestation** means less carbon dioxide is used up by trees.



## What problems does it cause?

- **Rising sea levels** due to water expanding as it warms up, causing flooding.
- **Melting of polar ice caps** adds to sea levels and changes the environment for animals who live there. Weather patterns affected by warmer air - **more hurricanes and droughts**
- **Animals may die out** as their habitat changes and people need to migrate to more habitable areas.
- **Plant species could die out**.

**Deforestation also destroys habitats!**

**Solutions?** The international Kyoto Protocol is a treaty which governments have signed to agree to cut carbon emissions. Laws are passed to encourage reductions in fossil fuel use in industry and individuals are encouraged to cut down on what they use. But businesses and consumers want cheap energy and alternatives are expensive. Developing countries want to produce more so they can catch up with the developed world. So progress is slow.

**Pollution** is caused by the way we deal with waste products in a way which damages the environment. There are rules about how waste is disposed of, but they are not always followed.



- Rubbish, industrial waste and nuclear waste are dumped/buried in landfill sites. It takes many years for some materials to break down and when they do, chemicals are released into the ground and water systems which are harmful to plants, animals and humans, causing diseases such as cancer.
- Sewage is pumped into rivers and seas and contaminates them with poisonous chemicals.
- Burning fuels, such as petrol in cars, produces gases which pollute the air.
- Accidents happen, such as the Chernobyl nuclear reactor meltdown and oil tankers sinking at sea, which release harmful chemicals.

**Natural resources** are running out!

- Non-renewable resources like coal, oil, gas, rocks and minerals will not be replaced when they are used up.
- We are using them faster than ever as we are more industrialised.
- The Earth's population is increasing rapidly, so there are more people who need them.
- We need to conserve resources by using less, finding alternatives and recycling.
- Using **sustainable resources** like wind or solar power will help, but is expensive and not always reliable.



Laws like the charge for carrier bags can reduce waste.

The Earth is running low on resources - what can we do?



## Do individuals have a duty to protect the environment?

Yes because	No because
<p>Christians believe <b>the world is God's creation</b> and we should care for it as <b>he put us in charge</b>.</p> <p>Jesus said we should <b>love our neighbour as ourselves</b>, so we must make sure that the resources we have are shared fairly and our actions do not affect the environment in a way which could harm others.</p> <p>We are the ones causing most of the damage, so we have a duty to put it right.</p> <p>We are the most intelligent species so we are the only ones who can do anything.</p> <p>The Earth is our home, we need to look after it!</p>	<p>Scientists will find a way to solve the problems in the future, so we don't need to worry.</p> <p>There have been environmental disasters in the past, like the Ice Age, and the world has survived them, so it will survive again.</p> <p><b>God gave us control over the world</b>, so it is ours to do what we want with.</p> <p>Each of us can't make much difference on our own, so there is no point trying.</p> <p>Businesses have a right to make a profit without worrying about their environmental impact.</p>

The National Trust Formby Squirrel Reserve is an example of a conservation project near us!



### What else can we do?

**Sustainable development** means finding ways to develop that can be longlasting and will not impact on the environment.

**Conservation** means preserving or protecting an area or a species, for example by repairing damage or giving it protected status.

### Putting beliefs into action

Christians believe that **God will judge them when they die** and wants them to care for the environment, so they will do what they can to **please God**. Christian charities like **Christian Aid** and **CAFOD** are involved in projects to protect the environment in developing countries and help those who are affected by environmental disasters. **Operation Noah** is a Christian organisation that campaigns on environmental issues.



Religious people believe that **animals are part of God's creation** and **all life, including animal life, is sacred**. Both Christians and Muslims believe that **God or Allah gave us dominion over animals**, so we can use them for food, clothing and for work. But **we must treat them kindly and with respect as part of God's creation**.



Christians and Muslims might choose to buy only free range eggs, because they think battery farming methods are cruel and unnecessary.



### Do animals have rights?

Yes because	No because
<p>They are living creatures just like us.</p> <p>Humans are animals and we have rights!</p> <p>They can feel pain and should be protected from it.</p>	<p>They are not as intelligent as humans.</p> <p>They don't have responsibilities in the same way humans do.</p> <p>They don't have a sense of right and wrong like humans do.</p>

## Should we eat meat?



**Eating meat** is not forbidden for Christians. Traditionally, there are times when a Christian may not eat meat, such as on *Good Friday*, out of respect for **Jesus' sacrifice on the cross**.

Should we all be vegetarian?	
Yes because	No because
<p>Farming methods that produce the meat we eat are often cruel.</p> <p>Animals are living creatures just like us - it is wrong to eat them.</p> <p>A vegetarian diet can be very healthy - there is no need to kill animals for food.</p>	<p>We are omnivores, so meat is a natural part of our diet.</p> <p>There is <b>nothing in the Bible or Qur'an</b> to say we can't eat meat.</p> <p>Meat contains protein which is an important part of a healthy diet.</p> <p>God/Allah gave us dominion over animals to use for our benefit, which includes for food.</p>

## Animal experimentation



Scientists use animals to test a range of products including cosmetics and toiletries, household cleaners and medical treatments. There are very strict laws in the UK about how tests and experiments can be carried out, but they inevitably cause animals to suffer. Do we have the right to use animals in this way to benefit humans?

### Christians believe

Humans are the only creatures made in God's image, so our needs take priority over animals.

Jesus healed many people, so experiments to find cures or treatments for illnesses are important.

Animals are part of God's creation, so experiments should be kept to a minimum and every effort should be made to reduce animal suffering'



### Muslims believe

The Qur'an says that 'Whoever saved the life of one man, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind' so experiments that can save lives are acceptable.

Muhammad said that animals should not be killed without a just cause so experiments can only be carried out for important reasons, e.g. for medical cures but not to test cosmetics.

Muhammad punished a man who stole birds' eggs, which shows it is wrong to cause suffering to animals.



Should we experiment on animals?	
Yes because	No because
<p>UK law says new drugs have to be tested on animals first. We could not find new lifesaving treatments if we did not do the tests.</p> <p>God gave us dominion over all of creation, so we can use animals to benefit humans.</p>	<p>Animals and humans are different, so the results may not be the same. This means the experiments could be pointless.</p> <p>Scientists can now experiment on human tissue so there is less need.</p> <p>Animals can feel pain too. Experiments often cause suffering which is cruel.</p>

**EXAM TIP** Remember that you need to be able to explain beliefs and reasons in detail. Practice adding an extra sentence to include more detail in the beliefs and reasons you are revising.

# The value of human life

**Sanctity of life** is the belief that life is holy or special because it is a gift from God.

**Quality of life** is the measure of how good or comfortable life is.

Christians and Muslims both believe that **life is a gift from God or Allah** and should therefore be **treated with great respect**. Human life is particularly special because we are the **highest form of creation**. **Only God or Allah can decide when life ends** and it is **wrong to take human life**.



## Abortion

This means deliberately ending a pregnancy so that the foetus will not survive.

In the UK, an abortion can be granted up to 24 weeks into a pregnancy, providing that 2 doctors agree that there is a good reason. Reasons include

- danger to the mother's physical or mental health if the pregnancy continues
- possible bad effects on the life of the mother's existing family if the baby is born
- the baby is likely to be disabled

Abortion can be carried out up to full term if

- it will save the mother's life
- the baby is likely to be severely disabled.



When do you think that life begins?

**This matters because...** if life has begun, then abortion is killing. If it has not begun, then abortion is not killing.

An important question for abortion is **When does life begin?** -  
at conception?  
when the baby has developed to a certain level?  
when the baby can survive outside the womb? (viability)  
when the baby is born?

### Christian beliefs about abortion

**All Christians** think that abortion is **wrong** because they believe in the **Sanctity of Life**, but not all agree about whether it should ever be allowed.

**Roman Catholics** believe that it is **always wrong**, UNLESS it is to **save the life of the mother** because life begins at conception, so abortion is like murder, but if the intention is to save the mother's life, it is the lesser of two evils.

**Modern Protestants** think it can **sometimes be allowed in the early weeks of pregnancy** because the foetus is not truly alive then. Sometimes abortion is the **kindest thing to do for the mother** and Jesus taught we should show loving kindness to others.



### Muslim beliefs about abortion

**Muslims** believe that abortion is **wrong** because **life is a gift from Allah**, who has a plan for us all. **Abortion is ending a life that Allah has planned.**

**Some Muslims** will accept **early abortions** if it is to **prevent harm to the mother** as they believe the **foetus does not get a soul until up to 120 days of development**, so it is not fully alive until then.



## Should abortion be allowed?

Yes because	No because
<p>the foetus is not alive yet, so we are doing nothing wrong.</p> <p>a woman has the right to choose what happens to her own body.</p> <p>it can prevent further suffering e.g. if a woman is pregnant as a result of rape, or if a baby is likely to be very disabled.</p>	<p>the foetus is alive and all human life is precious.</p> <p>there are other options such as adoption which don't involve killing.</p> <p>The foetus has a right to life and deserves to be protected.</p>

# E u t h a n a s i a

**Euthanasia** means helping someone to die in an easy or gentle way as an act of mercy if they are facing a painful or difficult death.

**Active euthanasia** means doing something deliberate to directly cause death.

**Passive euthanasia** means ending lifesaving treatment so the patient will die more quickly

**Voluntary euthanasia** means helping someone to die if they have asked for you to do it.

**Involuntary euthanasia** means helping someone to die when they are unable to ask for themselves, but those close to them believe it is what they would want or is in their best interests.



### Case Study - Lynn and Kay Gilderdale

Lynn had been seriously ill for many years and her condition was getting worse. She asked her mum, Kay, to help her by handing her a drug which she used to inject herself and as a result, she died.

Kay was put on trial for attempted murder, but the jury decided she was innocent as she had acted out of love to help her daughter end her suffering.



### The law and euthanasia

**Euthanasia is illegal** in the UK, except for *passive euthanasia*, which is when doctors simply don't try to save a patient's life when they are dying.

**Suicide is not illegal, but assisted suicide (helping someone else to take their life) is against the law.**

In a recent vote in Parliament, MPs decided against making euthanasia legal in the UK, although it is legal in some other countries.

**Hospices** such as *Jospice* can offer an alternative to euthanasia. They specialise in caring for the dying, and making their last days and weeks as peaceful and pain free as possible, so there is no need to be afraid of facing a difficult death.





### Christian beliefs about euthanasia

All Christians think that any action to take a life is usually **wrong** because they believe in the **Sanctity of Life**, and one of the Ten Commandments is "Do not murder".



Roman Catholics believe that **active euthanasia is always wrong**, because life is a gift from God that should not be taken lightly.

Many Christians also think it is wrong because they believe that **good can come out of suffering**, and our suffering might be part of God's plan.

Many Christians **accept passive euthanasia** because **there is nothing in the Bible against it**.

Some Christians think that quality of life is important, so they **will accept euthanasia** if the patient has little or no **quality of life**. They think we should follow Jesus' example and show compassion to those who are suffering.

### Muslim beliefs about euthanasia

Muhammad said a man who helped a friend to die would not get into Paradise so Muslims think euthanasia is wrong.

Our lives are a gift from Allah, who has a plan for us, so active euthanasia is wrong because it is taking life early and Allah may still have plans for us which include our final days.

The Qur'an says 'It is Allah who gives you life, then gives you death' which means that passive euthanasia is acceptable to some Muslims because it is leaving it up to Allah when you die.

In the Qur'an it says 'Whoever takes the life of one man, it is as if he took the life of all mankind' which means that Muslims think it is very wrong to kill and therefore euthanasia is wrong.

### Should active euthanasia be made legal in the UK?

#### Yes because

we don't let animals suffer in this way, we should offer the same kindness to humans. it's our life, the law should respect our choices and allow people to help us die if we need help.  
helping people to end their suffering is a loving thing to do - **Jesus said we should love our neighbour as ourselves**.  
it is cruel to make people live on in suffering if they don't want to.

#### No because

the doctors might be wrong, the patient could get better.  
it could be used to disguise a murder.  
all life is precious. **The Bible and Qur'an forbid killing innocent people**.  
Hospices can offer an alternative way to help dying people to reduce suffering.

**EXAM TIP** When revising, make sure you learn religious beliefs and teachings that show you know different beliefs about an issue.



# Life after death?

All religions teach that there is life after death. Humans have soul that lives on after our bodies die and what happens after death is affected by the way we have lived our lives on Earth.

## Is there life after death?

Yes because	No because
<p>the Bible and Qur'an tell Christians and Muslims there is life after death</p> <p>both Jesus and Muhammad spoke about it</p> <p>there is evidence of near death experiences and mediums who say they can talk to the dead</p>	<p>there is no proof of it</p> <p>there is no proof that we have a soul that could live on</p> <p>if there is life after death, where would we go?</p>

### What do Christians believe about life after death?

Jesus was resurrected, so there is proof of life after death.

At the end of the world, God will raise us into a new body. This is known as **resurrection**.

In the Bible, Heaven is described as a place of peace and happiness, where there is no suffering.

Life after death goes on forever, because in the Bible it says '**In Heaven there will be no more dying**'.

Human life is so special that it cannot end when our bodies die. Our souls will live on.

Jesus said 'The only way to the Father is through me' so many Christians believe you have to be a Christian to go to Heaven.



In the **Parable of the Sheep and Goats** Jesus said that after we die, **God will judge us** and decide if we have been good enough to go to Heaven. This tells Christians that **only good people will go to Heaven**.



**Muslims** believe in life after death because the Qur'an tells them that Allah will judge them after they die and good people will go to Paradise. Muhammad spoke about Allah's judgement as well. They believe that at the end of the world, Allah will raise us all to a new life and consider all our deeds before judging us. The Qur'an tells them that only Muslims will get into Paradise.



### How does believing in life after death affect a religious person's life?

They will try to be as good as possible because they know God will judge them after they die.

They are encouraged to follow their religion because they think that only believers will get into Heaven or Paradise.

They want to be good enough to go to Heaven or Paradise because they believe it is a good place.

They are comforted by knowing that their loved ones who have died will live on.

They are less afraid of dying because they know life will go on.