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GRADE 12 2022

Religion Studies

SECULAR WORLDVIEW
SELF STUDY GUIDE
BOOK 2

basic education
Department: Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Second Chance Matric Support Programme

2030 NDP

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1. Introduction

The declaration of COVID-19 as a global pandemic by the World Health Organisation in 2020, led to the disruption of effective teaching and learning in all schools across South Africa.

Many learners, across all grades, spent less time in class due to the phased-in reopening of schools, as well as rotational attendance and alternative timetables that were implemented across provinces, to comply with social distancing rules. This led to severe teaching and learning time losses. Consequently, the majority of schools were not able to complete all the relevant content prescribed in Grade 10-12 in accordance with the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement.

In order to mitigate and intervene against the negative impact of COVID-19, as part of the Recovery Learning Plan for Grades 10-12, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) worked in collaboration with Subject Specialists from various Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) to develop this Self-Study Guide for learners in Grade 12.

The content in this study guide is critical towards laying a strong foundation to improve your performance in this subject.

The main aims of this study guide is to:

- Assist learners to improve their performance, by revising and consolidating their understanding of the topic;
- Close existing content gaps in this topic; and
- Improve and strengthen understanding of the content prescribed for this topic.

This study-guide is meant as a self-study guide for learners and therefore should be used as a revision resource to consolidate learning at the end of a particular topic taught in class.

Learners are encouraged to complete the exercises and activities to test their understanding and to expose themselves to high quality assessment.

This study guide can also be used by study groups and peer learning groups, to prepare for the final NSC examination in this subject.

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2. How to use this Self Study Guide?

This study guide covers 9 of the topics that pose the most challenges in the examinations. Please also note the remaining topics that are set out in the CAPS. This Self-Study Guide includes the following topics:

- History and present dynamics of inter-religious relationships in South African, African and international communities
- Religion in areas of recent conflict in South Africa, Africa, and the world
- Analysis of secular worldviews with reference to the definition of religion and universal dimensions of religion: atheism, agnosticism, humanism, and materialism
- Religion and the natural sciences
- Religious freedom, human rights, and responsibilities
- Normative Sources
- Internal Differentiation
- Central Teachings
- Social Issues

This is a Self-Study Guide that is designed to explain the concepts and content that is examinable in Religion Studies Paper 1 and Paper 2. It also provides explanations of the common action/command verbs used in the Question Papers and how to use these to analyse and understand what you are required to do to respond to a question. It also provides quick tips on how to approach specific content in an exam situation in order to save time.

The booklets have been designed to provide simplified notes and a variety of questions sourced from various past question papers. Instead of providing responses for all questions, the Self Study Guides assist with the analysis and interpretation of questions. This is to ensure that learners focus on studying the content instead of the questions. Learners are also reminded that the same content may be tested in different ways. Therefore, it is important to understand the command verbs and to have both conceptual and content knowledge.

A second package of the Self Study Guide labelled the Revision Package focuses on subject specific key concepts as examined over a period of 6 years and sourced from past Question Papers. There are 12 sets of questions/activities and Marking Guidelines provided to guide you and assist with revision and exam preparation. You are expected to answer these questions without looking at the responses. You may do a self-assessment after you have completed answering the questions.

Additional to this Self Study Guide learners are expected to:

(a) Know current affairs or topical issues in the media that are relevant to Religion Studies
(b) Use of past NSC papers – (Thutong and past papers on your internet search engine)
(c) Use the 2021 Examination Guidelines (Thutong – Religion Studies Exam Guideline)
(d) Use various textbooks, newspapers and other sources such as internet

Lastly, Religion Studies is designed to test critical thinking, application of knowledge and provision of advice or solutions from a religious perspective. Therefore, a good grounding in the prescribed knowledge, skills and values in Religion Studies is essential.

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3.TOPIC: SECULAR WORLD VIEWS

3.1 BACKGROUND TO SECULAR WORLDVIEWS

In this **section we will be looking at the analysis** of secular worldviews in Grade 12. We need to ask: ***how and why the world views came into existence:***

- The movement toward secularism has been in progress during the entire course of modern history and has often been viewed as being anti-religious.
- Society's laws were shaped around religious beliefs for centuries. While the concept of secularism has deep historical roots, the term secularism itself dates only to the 19th century, when it was coined by British reformer George Jacob Holyoake.
- Most people, in ancient times, believed that a society would only be peaceful if everyone believed in the same religion. Most countries in the world were ruled by emperors, kings, queens and other nobilities.
- Secularism emerged in the West, especially as a consequence of the **Reformation**.
- In the 16th century, Martin Luther set in motion certain changes that led to the splintering of Christianity (the reformation causing a split between Catholic and Protestant in Christianity).
- Overthrowing the political domination of the Catholic Church opened the possibility that state and church could operate in separate realms.
- This in turn led to decades of religious wars in Europe. Various Christian groups fought for **dominance**. At that time the Church was very influential, both politically and socially.
- Most countries were not democratic, and these rulers used the Church to establish their power. In return, religious leaders also influenced rulers to promote their interpretation of beliefs. Catholics and Protestants imposed on each other, one or other form of their Christianity.
- People started to seek for a state where there would be **religious tolerance**. The intellectuals came to a conclusion that religion was divisive rather than uniting.
- A government which was based purely on reasoning and on an understanding of human nature was then the solution.
- The Prince of Orange (Netherlands) was one of the first persons to advocate a split between church and state. He believed that social and political peace can only be achieved if the foundation of the state was free of religion. Thus, government and morality were divorced from religion.

Before we can start with an analysis of the different worldviews we first need to understand what secularism is. We will discuss the origin and development of secularism. This will be followed by a discussion of the different varieties of secularism namely, humanism, materialism, agnosticism and atheism. Furthermore, we will look at the relationship and responses between these worldviews and religion.

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3.2 KEY CONCEPTS YOU SHOULD KNOW

CONCEPT	MEANING
Secularism	The principle of separation of the state from religious institutions. It could also be the morals and principles of an individual which may not necessarily be religious.
World View	An ideology, a philosophy or a belief system about how the world should function.
Atheism	The belief that there is no God, Supreme Being or divine entity.
Agnosticism	This means that the existence or non-existence of God cannot be proven.
Humanism	Human matters take priority and are more important than supernatural or divine matters.
Materialism	Only physical elements are real and there is no spiritual or supernatural world.
Religion	The belief in and worship of a Supreme Being or controlling power, especially a personal God or gods.
Conventional religion	Religious beliefs based on tradition.
Reformation	The action or process of reforming an institution or practice. A 16th-century movement for the reform of abuses in the Roman Church ending in the establishment of the Reformed and Protestant Churches.
Intellect	The faculty of reasoning and understanding objectively, especially with regard to abstract matters.
Intellectual	A person who engages in critical thinking, research, and reflection about the reality of society, and who proposes solutions for the normative problems of society.

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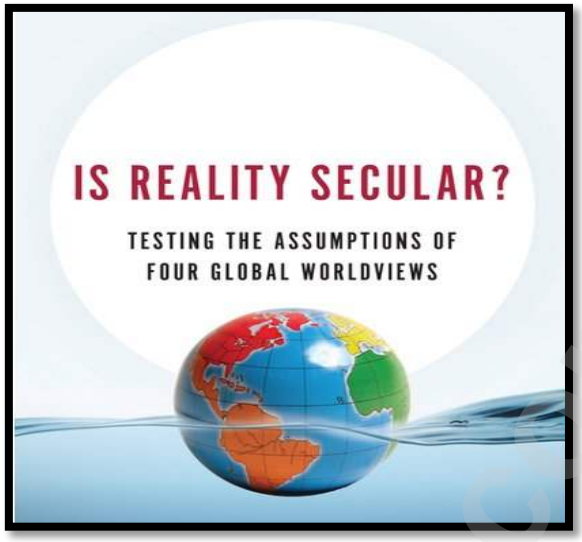
3.3 SECULARISM



Source: secular worldviews images - Bing images

What is Secularism?

- Secularism is a belief system that rejects religion, or the belief that religion should not be part of the affairs of the state.
- It further reasons that government and **morality** should not be based on religion. It does not reject religion.
- It means that religion does not get the final say on morality or government. Instead, secularism sees human **intellect** as the solution to all challenges.
- Secularism in itself does not wish to challenge the beliefs of any particular religion or belief, but merely to provide a framework for a democratic society.
- An example of secularism is the principles of separation of church and state and of keeping religion out of the public school system.

Secularism:

- supports ethics based on reasoning about human nature, without referring to God or gods.
- calls for **equality** so that believers and non-believers are all treated equally with regards to freedom of thought, speech and beliefs.
- advocates freedom of speech, and freedom of religion.
- understands the universe without appealing to religious explanations, such as **Creationism** myths.
- excludes **conventional** religion as a foundation for life and law.
- is the separation of religious institutions from state institutions? Religion may participate but not dominate.
- is the freedom to practice one's faith/belief without harming others. Also to change it or to not have a certain faith/belief.

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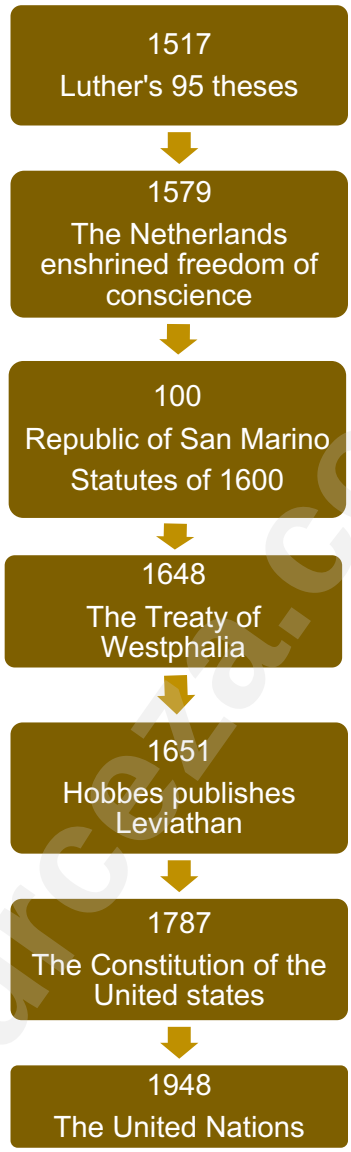
The emergence of secularism



- In 1517 Luther's thesis, condemning the excesses and corruption of the Roman Catholic Church was nailed to the Church door. Due to this shift in powers, various wars escalated.
- By 1646, the Treaty of Westphalia ended thirty years of war. This was significant for the development of new political systems and secularization to take effect.
- Hobbes published his Leviathan in 1651 which argued that the absolute power of the sovereign was ultimately justified by the consent of the governed. This meant that to obey the sovereign in all matters would guarantee peace and security.
- The United States of America placed in its constitution in 1787 the doctrine of separating religion from the state. Religion was regarded suppressive and the increasing educated class started to disregard religious authorities.
- In the Netherlands in the early 1600s, people expressed freedom of religion and secular law became the dominant law by the 1700s.
- The republic of San Marino is believed to have the oldest surviving Constitution in the world

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3.4 Religious response to secularism

Christianity

- Christianity quickly adapted and thoughtful, intellectual Christians doesn't see conflict between Christian teaching and a secular state. They justify this stance with the saying of Jesus, that one should "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's, and unto God what is God's."

Islam

- Islam has a comprehensive system of regulations that govern every facet of life. Those who practice traditional Islam will adhere to Islamic laws (sharia) in matters of commerce, etiquette and even marriage law. These laws are not enforced by the state, and therefore observing them is purely a matter of faith.
- There are Muslims who choose to follow secular law, even where it contradicts Islamic law. This is more common in the West.
- On the other hand, Islamists cast secularism as a completely foreign doctrine imposed on the Islamic world by colonial powers.
- They hold up traditional Islamic society as an ideal model reflecting religious principles guiding the community in all areas of life, including politics.
- It is important to note that Islamic law has not changed at all, and Muslims have never questioned it.

Hinduism

- Secular thinking has always been part and parcel of the Hindu spiritual order. It is therefore this influence that shaped Mahatma Gandhi's views.
- Although a political persona, Gandhi, while sticking to the Hindu religion, was a firm believer in the oneness of all religions.
- Ghandi said, "For me the different religions are beautiful flowers from the same garden or they are branches of the same majestic tree."

Buddhism

- Secularism caused the formation of distinct streams, which we may call 'Classical Buddhism' and 'Secular Buddhism.' Within classical Buddhism they adhere to the **heritage** of Asian Buddhism. The latter is a re-visioning of the ancient teachings intended to fit the secular culture of the West.

African Traditional Religion in South Africa

- The **emergence** of secularism resulting in South Africa becoming a secular state after 1994 opened up space for ATR and other marginalised traditions to have a public voice and profile.
- This led to ATR gaining more public prominence.

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3.5 SECULAR AND NON-SECULAR STATES

Secular states contributed to a diplomatic period by the signing of the Treaty of Westphalia. This settled most of the European religious conflicts in 1648. The Treaty was important for Western political and religious history; because it was the first time that the nation state was recognised, independent of religion.

This led to less violent conflicts in, or between secular states. Because people in secular states are free to follow any religion of their choice. Soon after this change in Europe happened, **intellectuals** started to advocate that social peace and harmonious governance are only possible if the lead is not taken from religious principles.

Features of a secular state:

- It promotes **freedom of religion**.
  In a secular constitution, all religions may practise and worship in their own ways but must not infringe on the religious rights of others.
- It promotes **religious tolerance**.
  Religious and non-religious people can live in peace without the fear of being discriminated against.
- **Governance is not based on religion**.
  Religious ideas about social justice and morality may have some influence from religion, but the laws should not be based on religion.
- **Religion cannot dictate terms on the laws of the state.**
- **There is peace** because all religions are recognised as being equal.
- **In state functions**, such as the inauguration of the president, **all religions participate**.

Influence of secularism on the South African Constitution

- The Constitution of South Africa is not based on any religious teachings.
- The Constitution of South Africa promotes equal recognition of all religions.
- The Constitution also promotes religious freedom.
- Secularism helped South Africans to design a constitution that promotes religious tolerance.
- Freedom of religions, beliefs and opinion are enshrined in the Constitution.
- In the South African Constitution, morals and ethical values are based on reasoning and not on religious teachings.
- There is no state religion.

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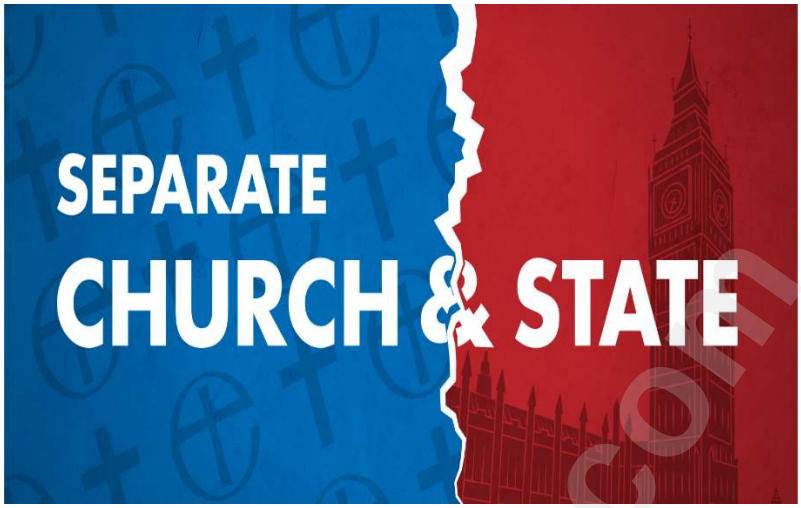
Do we still find Non-Secular States?



Source: what is a non secular state? - Bing images

- There are 96 secular countries around the world. Europe has the most secular countries at 33, followed by Africa with 27.
- Some countries claim to be secular but have non-secular tendencies such as references to religion in national anthems or flags.
- Secular states can be any form of government, from democracy to absolute monarchies.
- In studies of religion, modern democracies are generally recognized as secular due to freedom of religion principles and the lack of expertise of religious leaders in political assumptions.
- It is believed that most societies become increasingly secular due to development and progress, not through a dedicated movement for secularism
- The United States is often considered to be "constitutionally secular."
- The U.S. Constitution states that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise of most religions."
- The extent of separation between the U.S. government and religion continues to be debated.
- While the U.S. is a self-described secular state, there are still references to religion in the pledge of allegiance.
- France, Mexico, South Korea, and Turkey are all considered constitutionally secular, although their secularism varies.
- For example, secularism in India includes state involvement in religions, while secularism in France does not.

Source: https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/secular-countries

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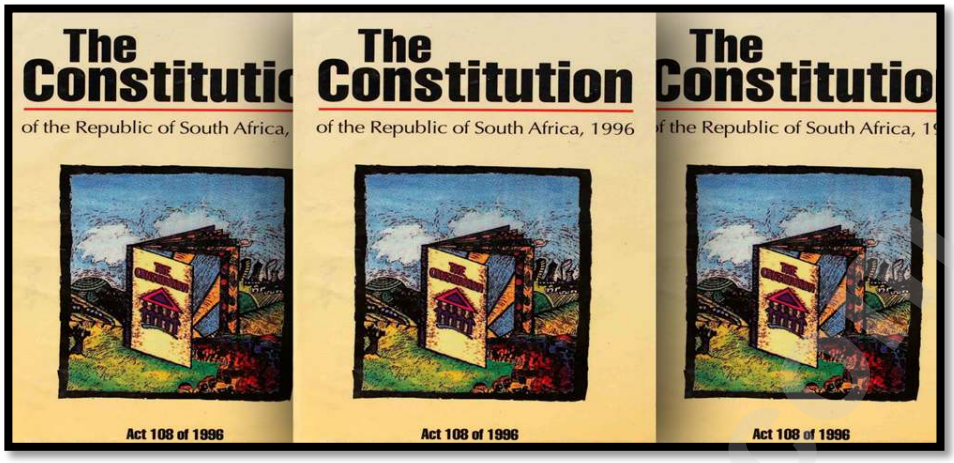
3.6 SECULARISM AND SOCIETY

Secular State – e.g. South Africa



Source: constitution of sa images - Bing images

In our beautiful rainbow nation of South Africa, we have The Constitution of which is not based on any religious teachings. The Constitution of South Africa promotes equal recognition of all religions and also promotes religious freedom. Secularism helped South Africans to design a constitution that promotes religious tolerance. Freedom of religions, beliefs and opinion are enshrined in our Constitution and morals and ethical values are based on reasoning and not on religious teachings. There is no state religion.

- **South Africa** is a secular state with a diverse religious population. Its constitution guarantees freedom of religion. Many religions are represented in the ethnic and regional diversity of the population.
- Chapter 2 of the Constitution of South Africa, the Bill of Rights, contains a number of provisions dealing with religious freedom.
- *Section 9,* the equality clause, prohibits unfair discrimination on various grounds including religion and requires national legislation to be enacted to prevent or prohibit unfair discrimination.
- *Section 15* states that everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief and opinion. This section also allows religious observances in state and state-aided institutions, provided they follow public authority rules, they are conducted on an equitable basis and attendance is free and voluntary; and provides for the recognition of religious legal systems and marriages that are not inconsistent with the Constitution.
- *Section 31* protects the right of persons belonging to a religious community to practise their religion together with other members of that community, and to form, join and maintain voluntary religious associations.

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3.6.1 Non-Secular State – e.g. Saudi Arabia

- To be a non-secular state means they declare themselves as a nation of a particular religion and many impose that religion on its citizens. They are not neutral. It is also called a state religion (Grade 11).
- Generally, in non-secular states laws are made based on a particular religion. That particular nation will not encourage other religions for spreading.
- Support from government for the specific religion varies from country to country. In some cases, those that follow the state endorsed religion will receive privileges, like reduction in taxes etc.
- Where there is strong support for the state religion one might find the government supporting religious persecution of non-state religions.
- An example of a non-secular state is Saudi Arabia, which is officially a Muslim country. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is an Islamic absolute monarchy in which Sunni Islam is the official state religion based on firm Sharia law. The government does not provide legal recognition or protection for freedom of religion, and it is severely restricted in practice.
- Most Saudis are Sunni, and a Shia minority accounts for about 10-15% of the population. The legal system is based on Sharia, Islamic law, derived from the Quran and the Islamic prophet Muhammad's traditions.
- However, it should be noted that there is more tolerance towards other religions and laws in the modern times. It remains a State-religion.
- Another example of a non-secular state is The Vatican, where Roman Catholicism is the religion of the state.

In a nutshell:

Characteristics of secular and non-secular states

Secular State	Non secular state
A Secular state means you are free to worship as you wish and the country does not associate with one religion or impose that religion on its people. They are neutral.	Non-secular state means they declare themselves as a nation of a particular religion and many impose that religion on its citizens. They are not neutral.
Freedom of religion, all religions are treated equally.	The country declares itself as a nation of a particular religion.
Equality: One religion does not dominate another religion	Country whereby any religion, controls any aspect of the state's behaviour.
Citizens are free to belong to any religion of their choice.	Many countries impose that specific religion on its citizens

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3.7 How does secularism impact the moral values in society?

3.7.1 Morality

- In order to answer this question, we need to first understand the meaning of moral values.
- ***Morals***, **also known as moral values**, are the system of beliefs that emerge out of core values.
- Values are the foundation of an individual person's ability to judge between right and wrong. Values include a deep-rooted system of beliefs that guide a person's decisions.
- They form a personal, individual foundation that influences a particular person's behaviour.
- Moral values therefore are specific and context-driven rules that govern a person's desire to be good.
- They can be shared by a larger population, but a person's moral code may differ from others' depending on their personal values.

Source: Morality - Bing images

- We can also talk about the morality of a society.
- ***Morality*** is the standard of society used to decide what is right or wrong behaviour.
- The importance of being in agreement with standards of right or good conduct.
- Society uses these standards in order to decide what is right and wrong behaviour.

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3.7.2 The different influences of religion and secular worldviews on morality:

RELIGION ON MORALITY
➢ In religious society there is an emphasis on personal moral development. ➢ All religious lectures emphasize that better personal behaviour is required. ➢ All religions teach that one is rewarded for good deeds and evil has negative consequences. ➢ When religious people say 'morals', they mean living according to teachings of their sacred books. ➢ Continual repetition and internalization of laws and rules from childhood helps to improve morality. ➢ Religions have a vast amount of literature about the path a person may take for moral reformation. ➢ All religions teach that having sex before marriage is sin/taboo. That positively influences moral behaviour of the community. ➢ What we call 'morals' today were originally the teachings of religious leaders.

WORLDVIEWS ON MORALITY
➢ Humans can make choices based on reason. ➢ Reality gives us a standard by which we can distinguish good and bad; therefore, morality is a real phenomenon. ➢ It is not hard to imagine a society that has no religion but has a morality as well as a legal system. ➢ There are also people who have high moral values but have no religious belief. ➢ In contrast, there are religious leaders who are immoral. ➢ 'Utilitarian outlook' is a popular ethical position wherein the morally right action is defined as that action which affects the greatest amount of happiness or pleasure for the people. ➢ According to secular worldviews the knowledge of right and wrong is innate in people. ➢ People cannot get along if they permit perjury, theft, murder, rape etc. ➢ Secular moral realists claim that they do good for the sake of doing good and happiness. There is no need for a god. ➢ Morality is about making choices based on independent judgment and any belief system that undermines that core responsibility is immoral.

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3.7.3 The possible impact of secularism on society can be summarised as follows:

POSITIVE IMPACT OF SECULARISM ON SOCIETY
➢ Secularism promoted the development of the Bill of Human Rights that promote moral values. ➢ Moral values are promoted through the Constitution in secular states. ➢ People of different faiths are able to coexist and help each other during difficult times because one religion does not dominate another. ➢ There is no need for sacred texts to develop a moral code. The rule of law will enforce moral values ➢ This does not mean that people who hold a secular worldview do not have morals and values. ➢ Secularism instils a sense of self awakening. ➢ Some people do not belong to any religion, but still have a deep concern for their soul or spirit, thus developing high moral values. ➢ Families have the responsibility of developing moral values in their children. This can be done independently of religion. ➢ Secularism has contributed through secular states to end religious wars, thus restoring human dignity.

NEGATIVE IMPACT OF SECULARISM ON SOCIETY
➢ Society relies on the faculty of reason in order to make decisions. ➢ They ignore the authority of the Supreme Being. ➢ They rely on reason, evidence and scientific approach in dealing with life. ➢ They undermine the dictates of sacred texts. ➢ Religious places of worship are no longer respected. ➢ The majority of youth do not attend religious celebrations and rituals, because these are not based on human reasoning. ➢ Secular humanists put more emphasis on liberal views of human rights than traditional religious beliefs. ➢ As a result there is an increase in social challenges, such as crime and teenage pregnancy, which result from a degeneration of moral values.

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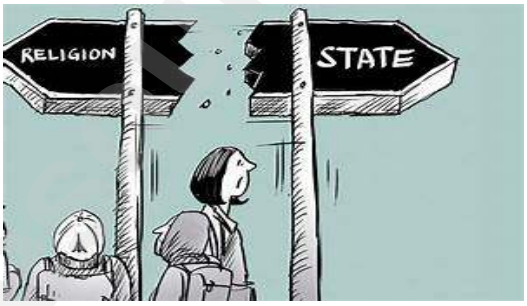
3.8 IMPACT OF SECULAR WORLDVIEWS ON RELIGION

3.8.1 The positive impact of secular worldviews on religion:

- A secular worldview leads to the separation of religion and state.
- Democratic governments are developed due to secular world views which become the highest law and order.
- Society can debate and question their beliefs as secularism promotes freedom of speech and beliefs.
- Religions cannot impose their beliefs on others, preventing the domination of one religion over others.
- It promotes freedom of speech – Community members and adherents have the freedom to question religious authorities without being condemned.
- It promotes freedom of conscience and belief.
- It provides a framework of principles and ethical guidelines for life.
- Most religious people adapt to the secular view by accepting the separation of religion and the state.
- Secular views led to the development of science and technology in society.
- Secular views led to the development of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



3.8.2 Negative impact of secular worldviews on religion:

- It undermines the role of religion.
- People start leaving religions / religious practices / religious beliefs for secular views
- Religious leaders / authorities lose their influences over adherents.
- Religions become less important when worldviews dominate.
- It provides an alternative set of norms and values.
- The conflicting values create confusion in society.
- Religions appear outdated and unappealing to younger generations.
- Institutions such as marriage and family life are seen as less important, since they were traditionally based on religious teachings.

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3.9 THE VARIETY OF WORLDVIEWS FOUND IN SECULARISM

Secularism can manifest in different forms. We will discuss four of them for the purposes of Religion Studies in Grade 12, namely secular humanism, agnosticism, atheism, and materialism:

3.9.1 SECULAR HUMANISM

SECULAR HUMANISM

- Secular humanism is a non-religious worldview rooted in science, naturalistic philosophy, and humanist ethics.
- Rather than faith, doctrine or mysticism, secular humanists use reason, compassion, and common sense to find solutions to human problems.
- Humanists promote universal values such as integrity, benevolence, fairness and responsibility.
- They believe that with reason, an open marketplace of ideas, goodwill, and tolerance, progress can be made towards building a better world for all as well as future generations.

Source: secular humanism images - Bing images

Secular Humanism refers to the doctrine that human matters takes priority and are more important than supernatural or divine matters. Secular humanism is just one form of humanism.

3.9.2 Historical development (Origin)

The term generally applied to the overreaching social and intellectual philosophies of the **Renaissance** era, in which the beauty of the individual was elevated to pre-eminence. During the Middle Ages, between about the 3rd and 13th centuries, life and culture were primarily focused on the Church and religion. However, people became less interested in thinking about God, the afterlife, and the saints and more interested in thinking about themselves, their natural world, and the here and now. Enlightenment philosophers like Hobbes and Hume's influences help the spread of humanism through Europe and America. During the age of enlightenment, science, reason, and intellectualism advanced. God was no longer the starting point to understand the world, but the mind.

It was first used as a concept in the 1950s. The term 'humanism' was originally a religious term. In the Renaissance a humanist was anyone who studied classical literature and education. In the 19th century the meaning of 'humanism' shifted to mean 'atheism' to most English speakers.

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Secular humanism originated because particular philosophers needed to put forth their own theory which would replace religion. This was followed by the formation of the Council for Secular Humanism in 1980. The council issued a declaration reflecting its members' beliefs, called *'a Secular Humanist Declaration*'.

The 25th anniversary of the Council for Secular Humanism was celebrated in 2005. It was during the celebration that the World Congress that the secular humanists called for a new Enlightenment. The new Enlightenment was meant to spread to the Middle East and other parts of the world.

3.9.3 The core elements of Secular Humanism

The core elements of humanistic thought are education, **reason**, individualism, and a strong belief in the universal human nature.

- Humanists believe education plays a fundamental role in forming human nature.
  This movement initially encouraged people to use their intellect to understand scripture. Later, it became secular and non-religious.
- Humanism are opposed to religious education in schools, mostly because they are opposed to **indoctrination**.
- Humanism is strongly based on reason. They believe reasoning and the scientific method are the means of finding truth.
- The greatest argument of humanist philosophy is human autonomy. This means that people must become their own person. Their beliefs and actions must be the result of their own reasoning.
- Beliefs must be tested. All dogmas, ideologies and traditions should be tested individually. Nothing should be accepted merely on the basis of faith.
- There should be a continuous search for the objective truth.
- More concern is placed on ‘life now’ rather than focus on the ‘afterlife’.

3.9.4 Humanism was influenced by the following movements/religions

The Renaissance, the Reformation, the treaty of Westphalia, the writings of Thomas Hobbes and the signing of the constitution of the United States.

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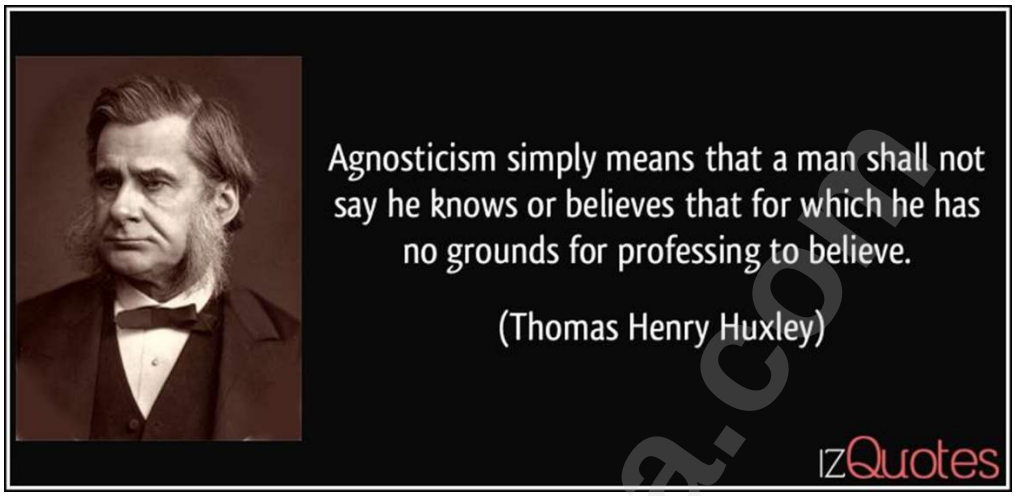
3.10 AGNOSTICISM

People who subscribe to this view are called *Agnostic*s. They believe that it is impossible to prove the existence or the non-existence of God.



Source: agnosticism images - Bing images

3.10.1 Historical development (Origin)

Agnosticism was used by Thomas Henry Huxley in a speech at a meeting of the Metaphysical Society in 1869 to describe his philosophy. Huxley stated that "A wise man…proportions his belief to the evidence." He rejected all claims of spiritual or mystical knowledge. He was of meaning that there are always uncertainty and doubt about the universe. Thomas Huxley supported Charles Darwin's evolution theory and thus agnosticism was born. Darwin's theory of human evolution challenged the idea of a supreme Creator.

3.10.2 The core elements of Agnosticism

The following is important to remember regarding agnosticism:

- This term was first used by a philosopher called TH Huxley in 1869.
- Agnosticism refers to uncertainty about God.
  The existence of God cannot be proved nor disproved.
- Agnostics are sceptical of religious teachings.
  They reject religious doctrine; especially religions that claim they have spiritual knowledge.
- They argue that humans cannot comprehend such a thing as a divine power.
  The existence of God is beyond human understanding.

3.10.3 Agnosticism was influenced by the following movements/religions

- Darwinism, The Rig Veda, The age of Enlightenment and the uncertainty at the time.

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3.11 ATHEISM

In its broader sense atheism is a rejection of any belief in the existence of **deities**. An Atheist holds the position that there is no God, Supreme Being or divine entity. There are two types we will discuss later. Within atheism we find two degrees of atheism, namely ***Soft Atheism*** and ***Strong Atheism***. We will discuss these more under the core elements.

3.11.1 Historical Development (Origin)

The idea of not accepting a creator god can already be found as early as the 6th century BCE in religions like Hinduism, Jainism and Buddhism. Atheistic schools are found in early Indian thought and have existed from the times of the historical **Vedic** religion. The actual term '*atheism'* emerged first in the 16th century, due to the spread of free thought and the increase in criticism of religion. The first individuals to identify themselves using the word **'atheist'** lived in the 18th century during the Age of Enlightenment.

3.11.2 Fundamentals of Atheism

Atheists reject the belief that divine or supernatural powers exist. Atheists often turn to science to explain the nature of the universe rather than relying on faith. There are different degrees of atheism.

Soft or neutral atheism:	Strong or positive atheism:
• They do not actively reject the existence of a supernatural being.	• They believe that, there is evidence to support their atheistic views.
• In some cases, soft atheists reject both theism and strong atheism. • They feel that both of these views depend on proof to support their claims.	• This is because they feel both world views depend on proof to support their claims.

Many people are atheists because they think there is no evidence for God's existence - or at least no reliable evidence. They argue that a person should only believe in things for which they have good evidence.

Modern atheists proclaim:

- that evil and suffering in the world refute a God who is all-powerful, all-loving and all-knowing.
- that it is impossible to prove that God exists.
- that belief in God or supernatural beings is **unscientific**.
- that science is the answer for questions about the world and creation.

3.11.3 Atheism was influenced by the following movements/religions

- Classical Greece and Rome. Eastern religions such as Buddhism, Jainism and Taoism.
- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were well known Atheists in the 18th century.
- They advocated for a communist political system that was against organised religion.

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3.12 MATERIALISM

The belief that only the physical elements are real and that there is no spiritual or supernatural world is called *materialism*. Also called physicalism. Materialism holds the view that all facts are causally dependent upon physical processes, or even reducible to them.

3.12.1 Historical development

This world view originated in various areas within Europe and Asia. It originated during the Axial Age from 800 to 200 BCE. Expressions of materialism can be found in ancient Indian philosophy, Buddhism and Confucianism. In the west the concept of materialism can be found as early as 5th century BCE. Greek philosophers already believed that the world consists of nothing but atoms in empty space. Materialism was revived in the 18th century.

Baron d'Holbach (1723–1789) claimed that initially nothing existed except nature (matter). An elaboration of the concepts of materialism was made by Karl Marx during the 19th century. Marx included human history and economic activity into materialism. It was at this time that the Protestant movement was gaining ground in Europe. This emboldened secularists, including materialists, to develop worldviews other than religion.

3.12.2 Core elements of Materialism

- Materialism propagates that nothing exists but nature.
- Any being that is viewed as beyond nature is a creature of imagination.
- Materialism forbids its followers to subject themselves to any spiritual dependency.
- New terms were developed:
  - Dialectical materialism
    Matter is regarded as the fundamental cause of everything.
  - Historical materialism
    Economics and the relationships between workers and owners as the basic structure in the community are referred to as historical materialism.
- Contemporary physicists and neuroscientists are challenging materialist explanations of reality.

3.12.3 Materialism was influenced by the following movements/religions

Materialism was influenced by Buddhism, Confucianism, ancient Indian philosophy and Greek philosophy.

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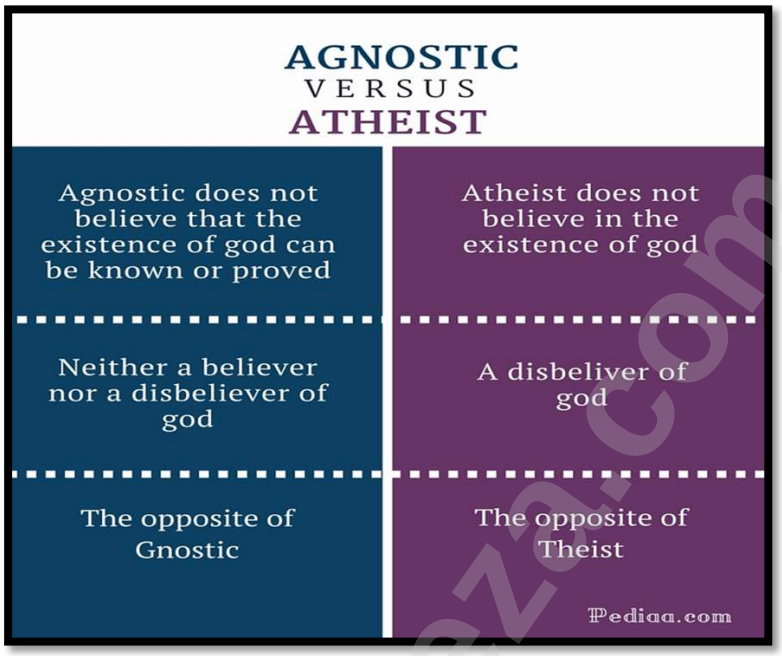
3.13 SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

3.13.1 Atheism and Agnosticism



Source: agnosticism vs atheism images - Bing images

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN ATHEISM AND AGNOSTICISM
❖ The two are similar in that they deny religious beliefs/influence. ❖ They believe that ethics governing society should be based on human reasoning. ❖ They are committed to using rational methods of inquiry (scientific reasoning). ❖ They teach non-discrimination on the basis of religion. ❖ They subscribe to the Secular Humanist Declaration. ❖ They believe in separation of Church/religion and state.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ATHEISM AND AGNOSTICISM
❖ Their difference is in the degree to which they deny religion. ❖ Atheism denies the existence of a divine being/God. ❖ Some atheists simply doubt the existence of a supreme being. ❖ Agnosticism asserts that it is not possible to prove or disprove the existence of a God. ❖ Agnostics believe that there is always some uncertainty and doubt when trying to understand the universe. ❖ Since the knowledge of humans is not complete, it is not useful to try to prove or disprove the existence of God.

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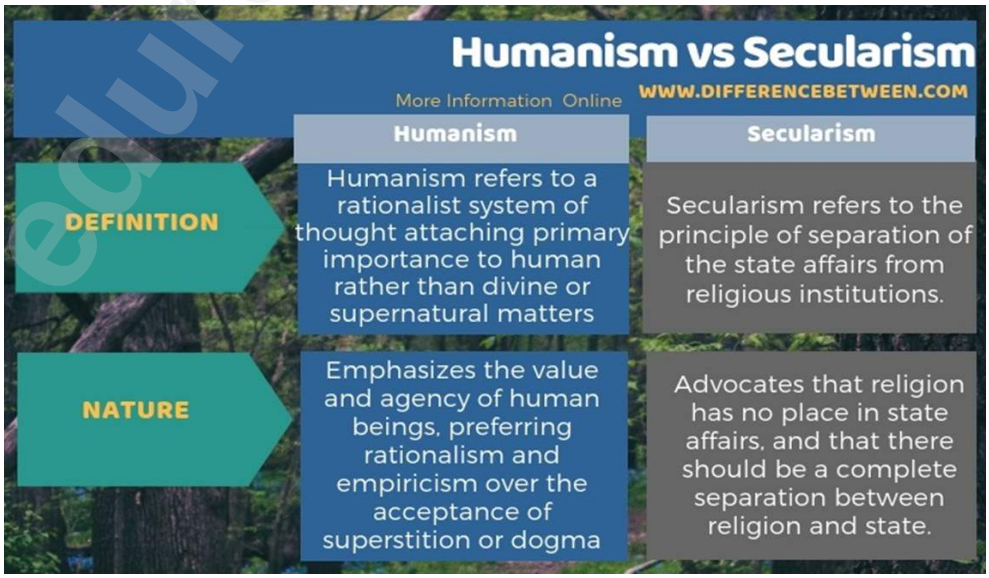
3.13.2 Humanism and Materialism

SIMILARITIES
❖ Both rejects spiritual dependency
❖ Both are strongly based on reason.
❖ They believe reasoning and the scientific method are the means of finding truth
❖ Karl Marx had an influence in both thoughts.
❖ Both argues that nothing should merely be accepted based on faith.

DIFFERENCES
❖ Secular humanism attaches prime importance to humans.
❖ Materialism is a worldview that believes that matter is the only reality.
❖ There are many different forms of humanism, all having in common a belief that attaches prime importance to human intellect/reasoning.
❖ Materialism is a concept used to describe human history in terms of dialectical materialism and historical materialism.
❖ Secular humanism developed in the direction of a liberal view of human rights.
❖ Secular humanism is not particularly anti-religion.
❖ Materialism is incompatible with religious worldviews, which are rooted in belief in either a deity or some kind of spiritual reality.
❖ Since the knowledge of humans is not complete, it is not useful to try to prove or disprove the existence of God.

Below is a comparison between humanism and secularism:



Source: DIFFERENCES BETWEN HUMANISM AND MAERIALISM - Bing images

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3.14 ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES AND EXAM SKILLS

Activities and possible questions

The purpose of this section is not to provide you, the learner, with questions and marking guidelines. Rather it is to show the questions that could possibly be asked. We will then look at the skills required to answer these questions in an exam paper.

According to the examination guidelines and the CAPS documents, one must be able to analyse the secular world views (atheism, agnosticism, humanism and materialism). Also important is the origin, purpose and influencing factors regarding these world views.

The activities below serve to provide examples of how the content on Science and Religion could be examined. The questions below were taken from past year papers. Instead of providing answers to the questions, you will be guided on:

- how to analyse the question/s, and
- how to answer the question/s

1 What is meant by **secular worldviews**? (May 2016)

How to answer this question:

- This question may be examined in a straight forward manner where you are required to explain the concept of secular worldviews.
- Remember that secular worldviews are associated with **RELIGION and the STATE.**
- The words '**what is meant**' should guide you to provide a short **definition type** answer.

2 **Explain** the *term* **secular humanism** with reference to the statement above. (Feb 2017) / **Discuss** the *concept* of **secularism** as a worldview. (May 2020)

How to answer this question:

- These questions are clear and direct.
- The words '**term'** and '**concept'** shows that it is a **definition** question.
- Make sure to check the **mark allocation**!
- Questions stating '**explain'** and '**discuss'** normally calls for an **elaboration** on the fact.
- With the first question keep in mind the specific worldview which is **secular humanism**.
- In the second question it is the concept of **secularism** in general.
- ***Secular Humanism*** refers to the doctrine that human matters takes priority and are more important than supernatural or divine matters. Secular humanism is just one form of humanism.
- **Secularism** is a belief system that rejects religion, or the belief that religion should not be part of the affairs of the state.

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3 **Name** and **discuss** the teachings of any **ONE** secular worldview. (May 2018; Nov 2018; Nov 2021)

How to answer this question:

- You can **choose** the secular world view you would like to discuss.
- So the very first thing is to decide which secular world view you will be using in your discussion.
- Name = Now **write the name** of the world view you have chosen.
- Discuss = You can now continue to discuss (write details about) the teachings of the world view you named.

  NB! Make sure the discussion fits the name of the world view you have chosen.

4 Write **FOUR facts** on any **TWO** of the **secular world views** listed below: (May 2020)

- Atheism
- Agnosticism
- Secular humanism
- Materialism

How to answer this question:

- For this question you need to have an understanding of 2 issues, namely
  - **FOUR facts** need to be given
  - on **ANY TWO** secular world views
- The first step will be to decide on the TWO secular world views that you know the best. Choose the two you can remember the most facts about.
- **Write the names** of the TWO you have chosen in your answer book followed by FOUR **facts under each name**.

5 **Name** ONE secular world view and **discuss** its origin. (Nov 2020) / **Discuss** the origin of **secularism**. (May 2018) / **Discuss** the historical origin of Western **secular humanism**. (Feb 2017)

How to answer this question:

- This question requires two actions.
- First name **ONE** secular worldview – the secular world view is NOT specified. Therefore, you can choose **ANY world view.**
- Or in the case of question 2 and 3 it gives the specific world view.
- Once you have identified the secular world view, you have to **discuss** the origin of that secular world view. This could also be called the development of the world view.
- Discuss means the that both questions simply require that you give back the knowledge that you have about how these views developed.

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6 **Compare** the teachings of any **ONE secular worldview** with the teachings of **any ONE religion** you have studied. (Nov 2019)

How to answer this question:

- First identify 2 topics in this question:
  - **One secular world view -** the secular world view is NOT specified. Therefore, you can choose **ANY world view.**
  - **One Religion you have studied** - the religion is NOT specified. Therefore, you can choose **ANY religion**
- A **comparison requires** that you provide the **similarities and differences** between the world view and the religion you have chosen.
- Other ways this question could be asked are:

  Name any TWO secular world views. State any SIX similarities and FIVE differences between the two world views. (May 2016) / Name any TWO secular world views and discuss the differences between them. (May 2019)

7 **Describe** any **ONE secular world view** and state whether **you agree or disagree** with its teachings. **Give reasons** for your answer. (Feb 2017)

How to answer this question:

- First **identify One** secular world view.
- **Describe** means that you must **give a detailed account** of the world view.
- You must state whether you agree or disagree with these teachings.
- Remember to provide reasons for your answers!

8 How has secularism **contributed** to the establishment of **religious tolerance** in the world? (May 2018)

How to answer this question:

- Clarify the term secularism.
- Give the definition of religious tolerance.
- Now discuss how secularism **influenced** religious tolerance.
- You can also refer to whether the influence was **positive or negative**.

9 How has the **establishment** of **secular states** led to the **prevention** of **religious wars**? (May 2020)

How to answer this question:

- **What is** a secular state? What is religious wars?
- Now discuss in what way has the forming of secular states helped to prevent religious wars.

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10 What **influence** did secularism have on the current **South African Constitution**? (Nov 2018)

How to answer this question:

- You need to start by referring to the Bill of Rights in the constitution.
- Then show how secular thought on freedom of religion and thought influenced the constitution.

11 Do you think secularism has a **negative impact** on the moral values of society? Give reasons for your answer. (Nov 2018)

How to answer this question:

- The questions **specifically** states 'negative impact'.
- You need to first state whether you **agree or disagree** with statement.
- Your **reasons need to support** your yes or no answer.

12 **Discuss** the **advantages and disadvantages** of secularism on society. (Nov 2021) / **Critically evaluate** the impact of secularism on the religious community. (Nov 2020)

How to answer this question:

- These two questions are the two sides of a coin.
- In the first one you need to look at secularism and society.
  - What does secularism say about society and morality?
  - What are the advantages (positive impact) on society?
  - What are the disadvantages (negative impact) on society?
- In the second one you need to look at secularism and the religious community.
  - **Critically evaluate means that you must give both the positive and the negative impact**.
  - What is the positive impact secularism have on religious communities?
  - What is the negative impact secularism have on religious communities?
- **Make sure that you refer to both sides of the argument**. See page

13 Critically **evaluate** the **impact of secularism** on the **religious community**

How to answer this question:

- In this question the response that you provide should address both the positive and negative impacts of secularism on the **religious community.**
- **You should also provide a personal opinion on your evaluation of the impact of secularism.**
- See the explanation on **page 15** of this bundle for the impact of **secularism on religion.**

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14 What is the **impact of secularism on society**?

How to answer this question:

- In this question the response that you provide should address both the positive and negative impacts of secularism **on society.**
- See the explanation on **page 14** of this bundle for the impact of **secularism on society**.

15 Elaborate on the **positive contributions** that secularism has **made to religions**.

How to answer this question:

- The response that you provide should address the **positive impacts of secularism** on the **religious community**.
- See the explanation on **page 14** of this bundle.

16 Discuss the **origin of secularism**

How to answer this question:

- The response that you provide should address **how secularism came about**.
- See the explanation on **page 6** of this bundle.

17 How has **secularism contributed to** the establishment of **religious tolerance** in the world?

How to answer this question:

- The response that you provide should address the **positive impacts of secularism** on **religion.**
- See the explanation on **page 15** of this bundle.

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