**Our World:**

**Key Concepts:**

**Creation** – making something deliberately, for a purpose. Most religions teach that God created the world for a purpose

**Dominion** – being in charge of the world for God. Some religions teach that God gave humans a responsibility to manage the world on his behalf

**Environment** – the natural world all around us: plants, insects, animals and humans. Most religions believe that God created the world and everything in it. Religious people may see these as God’s creation

**Humanity** – caring for other human beings. Many religions teach that it is expected that humans will care for each other, and show kindness to others

**Soul** – the part of humans that lives on after the body has died. Some religions teach that there is a spiritual side of life that lives on after physical death. The part of humans that allows them to connect and relate to God

**Stewardship** – To look after and care for the world on behalf of the creator. Most religions teach that humans have a God-given responsibility to look after the world

**Key Words: CHRISTIANITY:**

**Awe** – completely overwhelmed by a sense of God’s presence

**Creation** – making something deliberately for a purpose. Most religions teach that God created the world for a purpose

**Dominion** – being in charge of the world for God (Christian and Jewish)

**Duty** – something that a person is required or obliged to do

**Natural resources** – (general) raw materials – air, land, water, wood, natural gas, oil, minerals, wildlife etc, that are used by human, some are renewable, others are not

**Responsibility** – duties you should carry out such as looking after others and the world

**Talents** – something that a person is good at doing a skill or ability

**‘In the image of God**’ – Christian belief that humans are created in the image and likeness of God, they share something of God’s character

**HINDUISM:**

**Ahimsa** – not killing – non - violence to any living thing, the belief that all life is sacred and should be respected

**Anandi** – that which has no beginning

**Atman** – soul, the real self. At death it does not die it moves on to another body. The Hindu belief that all living things, plants, animals, humans have a soul. A part of God **(Brahman)** exists in the soul

**BRAHMAN** – the ultimate reality, or the supreme universal spirit from which everything comes and into which everything dissolves

**Brahma** – a Hindu deity, who is known as the creator god; one of the **Trimurti** with Vishnu and Shiva

**Dharma** - all embracing term that is central to Hindu beliefs, it refers to the natural law and also describes religious duty

**Karma** – refers to the law of cause & effect i.e. actions have consequences

**Moksha** – the goal of all Hindus, a state of salvation & freedom; when the **atman (soul)** **is liberated and set free from the continuous cycle of birth and death and is reunited and becomes one with BRAHMAN**

**Shiva** – one of the Trimurti, Hindu deity, known as the destroyer or Lord of the Dance. He is responsible for searching out the old and obsolete and destroying it in order that new life and growth can take place

**Vishnu –** Hindu deity, one of the Trimurti known as the preserver (one of the **Avatars** – one who comes to the earth in times of crisis and can take on different forms to preserve and protect it

**Religious teachings on the beginning of the universe and creation:**

**Christian:**

God created the world out of nothing **(ex nihlo**) and it was fundamentally good

God created the world in 6 days

There is a purpose to existence

Human beings have a special relationship to God and the world

**Hindu:**

Creation in Hinduism is **anandi** – that which has no beginning. However, there is a cycle to existence

Things come to life (birth) – and Brahma creates all life

Lives are led through growth and development – and Vishnu sustains all things

Things come to an end (death) and Shiva brings things to their end at the appropriate time

The object of life is to live so as to obtain moksha – release from the endless cycle of existence

**What does science say about creation?**

**Big Bang Theory:**

The world began with a **‘big bang’** 14 billion years ago. First the universe began to expand. Then it cooled down, forming the stars, the Earth and other planets. The universe continues to expand and cool today, just as it did then. This is just a theory though, and not all scientists believe it. It gives no detail about **WHY** the world was created. Some Christians accept **God** as the cause of the ‘Big Bang’.

**Theory of Evolution:**

**Charles Darwin (1809-1882)** argued that life began in simple forms and evolved into more complex forms of life we see today. Some Christians and Jews see this as a problem because it **rejects** the idea of **God’s** **divine intervention** in the creation process. It also rejects the idea that God created humans in his own image. Some Christians believe that God is behind the **process of evolution.**

**Evaluation questions on creation and the beginning of the universe:**

**These are often asked in the c) and e) questions. Below are both religious and non-religious views you could include in your answers**

**How did the universe begin?**

I believe God created everything that is in the world and that it was originally good

Brahman created all life

The universe has always existed with life cycles changing

There must be some sort of creator; it just seems too hard to believe that everything happened all by itself

Scientific investigation has shown that the world and other planets came from the ‘Big Bang’

As far as human and animal life is concerned there is plenty of evidence that life evolved gradually over millions of years

Even if there was a ‘Big Bang’ and a process of evolution, there must have been something that started it all off, and I believe that is God

For me there is no doubt that God is the cause or creator of the universe

**EXAM QUESTION:**

‘**How the world began does not affect a person’s life’. Do you agree?** Give reasons or evidence for your answers showing that you have thought about more than one point of view. You must refer to religious beliefs in your answer

**Remember** – to gain full marks you need to include a range of moral and religious teaching in your arguments and include religious and general specialist terms

**On the one hand:**

If the world had a purpose in its beginning; that can affect the way a person lives their life

Believing that the world was created for a purpose can bring different values into a person’s lifestyle

Most religions have some teaching about the beginnings of the world, and so these affect believers in considering their beliefs and values

Views about how the world began lead to considerations about its future – and these can affect the choices people make

**On the other hand:**

Whatever was the cause or beginning was a long time ago and does not affect the way a person lives now

Explanations about how the world began do not provide practical help for difficulties in life

The choices people make about their lives and actions are made because of needs, situations and family backgrounds

**The place of humankind in the world:**

**Key religious teachings:**

**General:**

**All religions teach that humans are to:**

Have sexual relationships and children

Take responsibility for the world and others in it

Live lives that are useful and worthwhile

Use their talents to care for others and the world

**Christianity:**

**Humans are to:**

Serve God and live for him

Obey God

Enjoy the world and its fruits/resources

Look after the world for God

**Hinduism:**

**Humans are to:**

Perfect wisdom, heart and mind

Live so as to fulfil **dharma**

Practice **ahimsa (non-violence)**

Amass good **karma**

Gain **moksha**

**WHY ARE WE HERE?**

**Both Christians and Hindus believe** – to try to make the world a better place

**BELOW ARE BOTH RELIGIOUS AND NON RELIGIOUS VIEWS THAT YOU COULD USE IN ANSWERS RELATING TO QUESTIONS ON ‘WHY ARE WE HERE’?**

**Christianity:**

To become a good steward by protecting the earth & animals

To worship & obey God

To serve God

To respect yourself & others

To work to reduce poverty

To have children **(Be fruitful & multiply Genesis 1 v 28)**

To marry & have a sexual relationship

We cannot answer the question as to why humans exist, it is more important to make the most of the life we have

Humans were created to know and love God, to look after other people, and to care for the world

God put humans on the earth to look after it for him

As humans we should try to make the world a better place

The most important reason for humans existing is to care for the world and the creatures that are in it

**Hinduism:**

To respect all life, because all living things have an **atman (soul)**

To care for the environment

To maintain peace

To do the right thing **(Hindus practice dharma moral duty)** to others

To marry & have a sexual relationship and have children

To reach **Moksha** – the final state of existence

Practice **ahimsa**

Perfect wisdom of the heart and mind

**What makes us human?**

Human beings are different from animals because they are made in the image and likeness of God

In some ways humans are very animal-like; but in many ways they are also very different from animals

Our conscience, which lets us know the difference between right and wrong

Humans are a complex mix of body, mind, personality and soul – you cannot separate any one from the other

 It’s not just our physical bodies that make us human; it is all the extras, like minds that think and decide, and experiences that we reflect on

**Humanity:**

Religions teach that human beings are unique and different from all other animals; they can think, apply knowledge, have morals, a sense of right & wrong and can read and write

Humans need to show kindness, compassion and care for each other **CHRISTIANS** would add another important difference between humans and animals which is **REVELATION** – humanity is created in God’s image, capable of religious belief, behaviour and having a conscience and a soul

**EXAM TIP:**

**In questions about the use of talents, try to ensure that you explain how the talents that people have can be used within a religious community, for worshipping, witnessing to others, or helping those who are in need**

**HOW CAN WE USE OUR TALENTS?**

People can choose to exercise the skills and abilities they seem to have naturally, and they can learn and develop new skills too

You can use the skills you have to better your own life or to make your community and world a better place for everyone

Do something useful that helps others and benefits you too

Some people only use their talents for their own gain

Anyone can put their talents to use, doing the things they like doing, and doing them well

**WHY SHOULD WE USE OUR TALENTS?**

If God gives you a talent or ability, you should use it thankfully, and bring pleasure or benefit to others

Failing to use an ability you have is a real waste and an insult to others

If you don’t use a talent you might lose it altogether

Not everyone can do everything for themselves, so they rely on others to provide a skill they have not got

It is important to share our different skills and talents with each other

**HOW SHOULD WE USE NATURAL RESOURCES?**

God has given humans the responsibility of caring for the world, so we should use natural resources wisely

The natural resources of the world are there for us to enjoy and make life better

Being a steward or guardian of the world brings with it the responsibility to be careful in using the resources the world contains

We cannot just take, we have to put back

Natural resources are not limitless, so we should be careful to ensure that what we use is replaced for the future

**SOUL; Christianity**

The soul is eternal – lives on after death

The part of human nature that is not just physical

Spiritual aspect of human nature – the real you

A reflection of the image of God in human form

The part that allows humans to relate to God

**SOUL Hinduism**

The soul is eternal

At death the soul moves on to another body **(re-incarnation)**

Called the **Atman**

Every living thing has a soul

A part of **Brahman,** the **Supreme Universal Spirit** exists in the soul

At **Moksha** the soul is **liberated**, set free from **Samsara,** **the cycle of** (**life)** and is **re-united and becomes one** with **Brahman**

**Animal Rights – Christianity:**

Animals are living creatures that God created and gave purpose to. They must be treated with kindness and respect. Humans were given the responsibility as stewards to look after animals

Treat animals with kindness

Are respected but can be used to benefit mankind as long as their suffering is considered

Although given dominion (Genesis 1) humans should carry out their stewardship responsibilities carefully and not abuse animals

Treating animals with kindness & respect shows thanks to God for his provision

Vegetarianism is a matter for individuals themselves to decide

How we treat animals will reflect on us

**CATHOLIC CHURCH** tolerates animal testing if it benefits humans

**Quakers** are **opposed** to animal testing, zoos, hunting and the wearing of fur

All religions believe animals are part of God’s creation and therefore should be treated with kindness and respect

**Hinduism:**

They have feelings and souls (atman) and therefore are worthy of respect

Practising ahimsa is important – not harming any living thing

Special honour is given to the cow it is sacred in Hinduism because it proves a range of resources, (dung for fuel, food such as milk, butter, yoghurt, gee for worship and works in the fields

Many Hindus are vegetarian

Many Hindu gods such as Ganesha, the elephant headed god and Hanuman the monkey god have appeared on earth in the form of an animal

**Hindu beliefs about killing and eating animals:**

Many Hindus are vegetarian because they believe in ahimsa (non violence) towards any living thing

The cow is sacred for Hindus and is treated with reverence & respect

When animals die their souls are reincarnated which means they move into other life forms

Hindus believe that karma (all actions) results in consequences. If a Hindu causes pain or death to an animal they will expect to experience pain in the future

**HOW SHOULD ANIMALS BE TREATED?**

Animals are living creatures and should be treated with respect like any other living thing

God created animals, and gave humans the responsibility of caring for them

Humans have dominion (charge) over animals so they are there to serve and be of use to humans

Animal life is valuable; but should never be placed above the value of human life

Animals are a lower form of life, but should still be treated well

**EXAM QUESTION – ‘Religious people should campaign for animal rights.’ Do you agree? give reasons and evidence for your answers showing you have thought of more than one point of view. You must refer to religious beliefs in your answer**

**On the one hand:**

Campaigning is designed to convince people that animals have rights

Animals share the world with humans and deserve their cause and rights to be raised

Most religions teach that humans have responsibility for caring for the world

**On the other hand:**

Most religions have teachings about the need to care for and respect animals

Most religions also teach the importance of respecting people’s beliefs when they differ from their own

It is not right to expect everyone else to accept and follow your own beliefs

**Care for the world and the environment:**

**GENERAL:**

Most religions have ideas about:

The need to care for the world

The importance of protecting and preserving resources and the environment

**Christianity:**

Humans should:

Live in partnership with God & Creation

Exercise responsibility given by God to look after the world

Preserve and conserve the resources of the world and the environment

Give thanks to God for his provision

**Hinduism:**

All living beings have an atman so need to be respected and cared for

It is everyone’s duty or dharma to practise harmlessness and seek good karma through good actions

It is Shiva’s role to destroy things when the time is right so humans should not try to take over his role

**YOU MUST BE AWARE OF**:

**The work of Chico Mendes (Christian rainforest protection)** [www.chicomendes.com](http://www.chicomendes.com)

**And Vrindavan (Hindu deforestation prevention project)**

[www.mathura-vrindavan.com](http://www.mathura-vrindavan.com))