



# Supporting Teachers to Develop Disciplinary Knowledge in RE

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## Session Overview and Outcomes

The [Ofsted RE research review](#) (2021) states that the RE curriculum should support students to develop three distinctive types of knowledge: substantive knowledge, ways of knowing (*also known as disciplinary knowledge*) and personal knowledge. This session will explore ways in which we can support training and early careers teachers to build explicit teaching of disciplinary knowledge into the RE curriculum. It will provide some examples and suggested resources to support this in practice.



### Expected Learning Outcomes

Clarity on the ways in which disciplinary knowledge is distinct from substantive and personal knowledge in RE

Understanding of ways to support mentees with professional learning and development, and learning and teaching in RE



## Core Content and Early Careers Framework

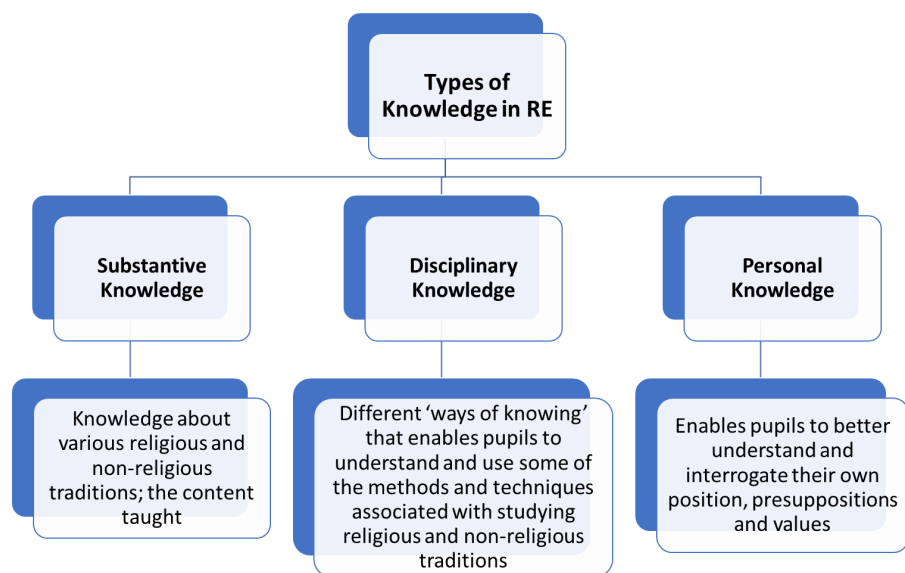
**Standard 1:** High Expectations

**Standard 2:** Promote Good Progress

**Standard 3:** Demonstrate Good Subject and Curriculum Knowledge

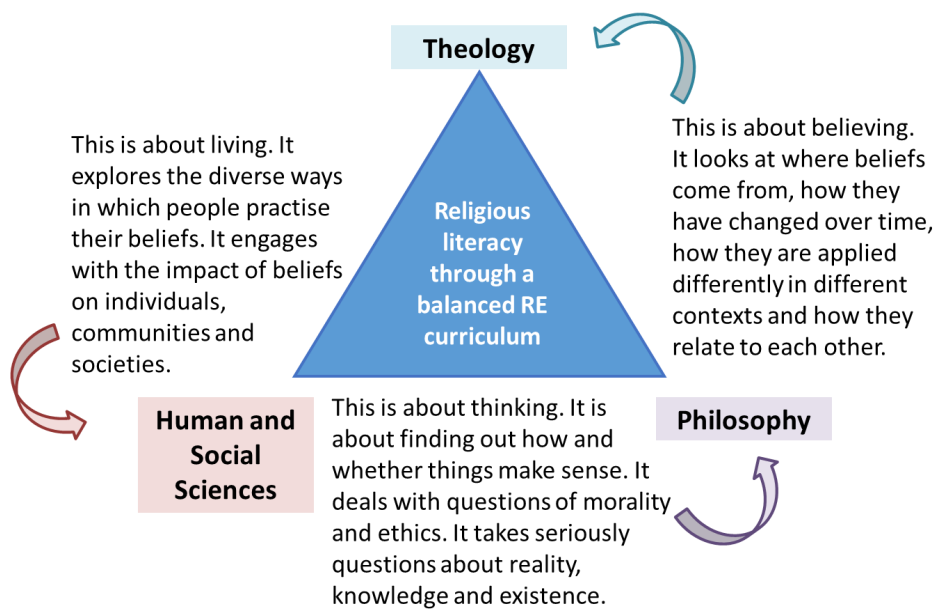
**Standard 4:** Plan and Teach Well-Structured Lessons

### Notes



Disciplinary Knowledge in RE

Asking specialist questions and using specialist methods/tools/skills to answer these questions



Theology <i>Believing</i>	Human/Social Sciences <i>Living</i>	Philosophy <i>Thinking</i>
<b>Q:</b> questions about beliefs and the sources of authority from which people derive their beliefs <b>S:</b> interpretation of sources of authority (hermeneutics)	<b>Q:</b> questions about the ways in which context affects ways of living <b>S:</b> analysis of data that shows ways in which context affects ways of living (surveys, interviews, case studies, maps, historical sources, etc.)	<b>Q:</b> questions about the different ways in which humans seek knowledge/wisdom <b>S:</b> reasoning (thought experiments, deductive/inductive reasoning, via negative, scepticism, etc.)

## What Sorts of Questions Do Theologians Ask?

Who am I? Who are we?

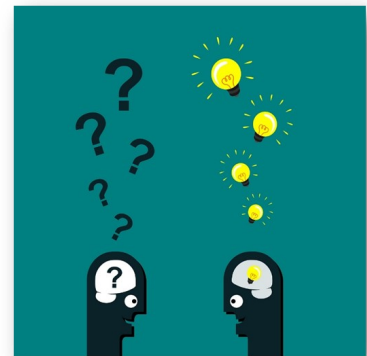
What do I/we/they believe about why is the world the way it is?

What do I/we/they believe about God or an Ultimate Reality?

How do I/we/they know how to live?

What do I/we/they believe is my/our/their purpose in life?

What do I/we/they believe happens when I/we/they die?



## What Methods do Theologians Use?

Textual interpretation (hermeneutics)

Analogy

Analysis

Argumentation



### Sources of Authority: The Bible

Not a single book

There is not only one Bible

The texts in the Bible were composed over a long period of time

The Bible has many authors and editors, most anonymous

Context matters!

The Bible was originally written in languages unfamiliar to most readers today

Most contemporary readers 'believe' in it



### Sources of Authority: The Qur'an

Apostles' Creed (120-250 CE)

Nicene Creed (381 CE)

Chalcedonian Creed (451 CE)

Statements of faith in Christian denominations

Believed to be the *kalam Allah*

Written in Qur'anic Arabic

Initially addresses the Arabas of Makkah, later addresses Jews and Christians in Medina

Believed to have been revealed to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) between 610 and 632 CE – most revealed in Makkah, some (after the *hijrah*) in Medina

114 surahs and ayas (number, order and division decided later) – starts with longest, moves to shortest

Difference between Islamic Studies and Muslim scholarship



Hermeneutics: The Apostles’ Creed

How can we link this text to our wider knowledge?	How might this text influence Christians today?
How might some Christians interpret this text?	How might some non-Christians interpret this text?
What is the context?	What are the key points being made?
<div><p><b>The Apostles' Creed</b></p><p>I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.</p><p>I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.</p><p>I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.</p></div>	
Who is the audience?	What key terms are used?
Is this teaching for all Christians for all time?	How does this fit into the biblical narrative?
Do these ideas make sense?	What questions do you have about the text?

# Hermeneutics: The Qur'an

## Islamic Studies Approach

*Historical/critical emphasis influenced by western biblical studies*

### **The Throne Verse (Al-Baqarah 255)**

Allah! There is no god worthy of worship except Him, the Ever-Living, All-Sustaining. Neither drowsiness nor sleep overtakes Him. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Who could possibly intercede with Him without His permission? He fully knows what is ahead of them and what is behind them, but no one can grasp any of His knowledge—except what He wills to reveal. His Seat encompasses the heavens and the earth, and the preservation of both does not tire Him. For He is the Most High, the Greatest.

#### **Isaiah 40.28**

Have you not known? Have you not heard?  
The LORD is the everlasting God,  
the Creator of the ends of the earth.  
He does not faint or grow weary;  
his understanding is unsearchable.

#### **1 Chronicles 29.11**

Yours, O Lord, are the greatness, the power, the glory, the victory, and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and on the earth is yours; yours is the kingdom, O Lord, and you are exalted as head above all.

## Muslim Scholarship Approach

*Literary/aesthetic emphasis*

### **The Throne Verse (Al-Baqarah 255)**

God (*Ilahu*) - there is no god except Him (*la 'ilaha 'illa huwa*) -

1. Is the Living One, the Sustainer (*l-hayyu l-qayyum*).
2. Neither drowsiness befalls Him for sleep (*naum*).
3. To Him belongs what is in the heavens and on the earth (*fi s-samawati wa-ma fi l-ard*).
4. Who is it that may intercede with Him except with His permission?
5. He knows that which is before them and that which is behind them,
4. And they do not comprehend anything of His knowledge except what He wishes.
3. His throne embraces the heavens and the earth (*as-samawati wa-l-'ard*)
2. And He is not wearied by their preservation,
1. And He is the Exalted, the Supreme (*wa-huwa l-'aliyyu l-'azim*).

**What types of questions do we ask about qur'anic texts?**

**How might asking literary rather than critical questions change activities in the classroom?**

**What are the implications of looking at the Qur'an through a western lens?**

## Writing Like a Theologian

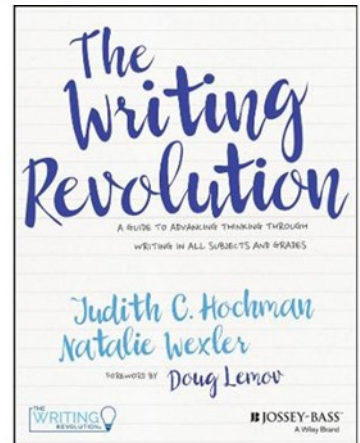
### Because, But, So...

The story of Rama and Sita is very important to some Hindus **because...**

The story of Rama and Sita is very important to some Hindus, **but...**

The story of Rama and Sita is very important to some Hindus **so...**

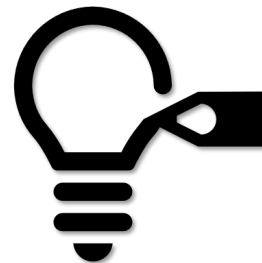
@JosephKinnaird



Identify a topic on your RE curriculum and select some core knowledge/key concepts/key vocabulary

Use the 'because, but, so' structure to create some sentence stems for your pupils

Model some possible answers using these sentence stems



...because

...but

...so

## What Sorts of Questions Do Human / Social Scientists Ask?

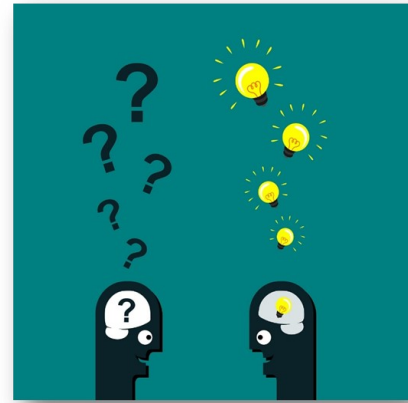
Who/where/when/what is this?

Am I looking at an individual or a group?

What type of information am I engaging with? How might this affect the way I engage with it?

What is the source of this information? How might this affect the way I engage with it?

How does context affect how people engage with, respond to or interpret this thing?



## What Methods do Human / Social Scientists Use?

Observation/case study

Survey

Interviews

Analysis:

Data (e.g. Census data)

Maps

Historical sources

Photographs

Objects/artefacts

Buildings



## Data Analysis

94.1% responded to question on religion

Drop in those identifying as Christian (59.3% to 46.2%)

Increase in those identifying as non-religious (25.2% to 37.2%)

Theos – [who are the 'nones'?](#)

Lois Lee – [Understanding Unbelief](#)





**Notes**

## What Sorts of Questions Do Philosophers Ask?

Why is there something rather than nothing?

Does 'God' exist?

How do we live a 'good' life?

How do we know?

How do I/we/they reason or think about...?

Is this a good argument? Why / why not?

Is this good evidence? Why /why not?



## What Methods do Philosophers Use?

Reasoning (deductive and inductive)

The *via negativa*

Scepticism (doubt)

Thought experiments



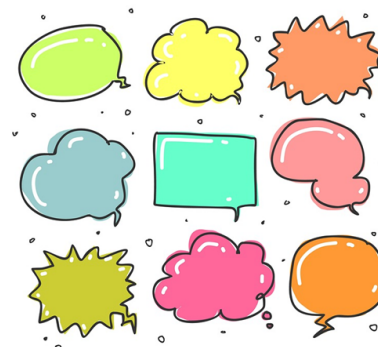
## Developing Oracy

Socratic method

Thunks

'What if...?'

Faith and Belief Forum RADIO Principles



<b>R</b>	Respect
<b>A</b>	Active Listening
<b>D</b>	Dialogue, not Debate
<b>I</b>	'I' Statements
<b>O</b>	Oops and Ouch

**Notes**

## Supporting Colleagues

What makes a great teacher?

1. Understanding the content
2. Creating a supportive environment
3. Maximising opportunity to learn
4. Activating hard thinking

**What might this look like when supporting colleagues to deliver effective RE?**

<https://www.cambridgeinternational.org/Images/584543-great-teaching-toolkit-evidence-review.pdf>

### Coaching: Reflective Listening

- Repeating
- Rephrasing
- Reflecting feeling



### Coaching: Questioning Skills

- Closed questions
- Open questions

### Coaching: Summary of Session

- Opportunity to articulate key areas of change
- Support *and* challenge

**Notes**

## Further Support and Guidance

[Ofsted RE Research Review \(2021\)](#)

[Nobody Stands Nowhere – Theos Animation](#)

[Balanced RE Overview](#)

[Balanced RE Self-Audit Tool \(Primary\)](#)

[RE:Online – Curriculum Support](#)

[RE:Online Worldviews Knowledge](#)

[Using Knowledge Organisers in RE](#)

[Religious Worldviews – Key Concept Overviews](#)

[Assessing Pupil Progress in RE Guidance](#)

[Disciplines: A new Direction for Assessment?](#) (Dawn Cox)

[Personal Knowledge and RE](#) – Nikki McGee

Theology (Believing)	Human/Social Sciences (Living)	Philosophy (Thinking)
<a href="#"><u>The Visual Commentary on Scripture</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>BBC World Service: Heart and Soul</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Philosophy in KS2</u></a> (John Semmens)
<a href="#"><u>Writing Like a Theologian</u></a> (Joe Kinnaird)	<a href="#"><u>A World Map of Religions</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Thunks</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Cambridge in Your Classroom</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Teachers' Access to Census Data</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Cambridge in Your Classroom</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Teachers and Texts</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Christianity in the UK</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>The Philosophy Foundation</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Bible Gateway</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>The World as 100 Christians</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Philosophy4Children</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>The Qur'an</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Global Christianity over the last century</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Royal Institute of Philosophy YouTube Playlist</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>The Hadith</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Virtual Tours of Places of Worship</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>BBC Ideas</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>Tanakh</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Inclusive Judaism Image Library</u></a>	<a href="#"><u>Open University 60-Second Adventures in Thought</u></a>
	<a href="#"><u>Bayt al Fann: Islamic Art and Culture</u></a>	
	<a href="#"><u>Everyday Muslim</u></a>	

## Key Priorities and Actions

1.

2.

3.



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