

Using Texts in KS4 and KS5

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RE-Juvinating and RE-Inspiring RE Conference 2021

This will be the second slide
which will have 3 SACRE Logos
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#ReReRE2021





Using texts

At KS4 and KS5

Breakout room

Where do you currently use religious texts with students?

What would like students to get from engaging with religious texts?

Selecting texts

A close-up photograph of a hand reaching into a row of Bibles. The Bibles have various covers: one is purple with gold lettering, another is brown with gold lettering, and a third is blue with gold lettering. The word 'HOLY BIBLE' is visible on the spines of several of the books. The hand is positioned over the brown Bible, appearing to select it.

In the Chat:
Are there any texts that you currently use with your KS4 or 5 classes that students engage with?

1 key factor in tackling texts is selecting the texts that are appropriate.

At KS4 choosing a text that relates to various parts of the course is particularly helpful. For example, if studying Christianity, Genesis 3 has a wide ranging impact on Christian belief. By spending the time on this text students should be able to make those connections about Sin, Jesus, Atonement etc.

At KS5 it is usually about selecting the relevant section of a text for students to tackle as this is often where students struggle.



Which texts to choose?

Many of the exam boards have suggested texts/resources to use.
E.g. this one for AQA GCSE RS A:

https://www.aqa.org.uk/resources/religious-studies/gcse/religious-studies-a/teach/resource-list?fbclid=IwAR1wnqZZiw1hknZtiF12zkNKGg1v2QAH_a8BJLpCF7Hcqk6KBReL8vKUJLs

And for Edexcel/Pearson there is a separate one for each religion:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-gcses/religious-studies-a-2016.coursematerials.html#%2FfilterQuery=category:Pearson-UK:Category%2FTeaching-and-learning-materials>

Engaging with religious texts

- One of the biggest factors is really engaging students with the texts.
- Often we rely on memorising abstract quotes rather than looking at where the quote comes from, the context purpose etc.
- By engaging more fully in texts students can grasp a much greater understanding and use texts more effectively. This can really help in their analysis and evaluation.
- It also can help students remember them too! Particularly where it comes from.



Thinking about texts

Where does it come from?

Is it a primary or secondary source?
Is it a published text?
Is it digital – if so where is it from? Look at the address - .com .org etc. what might this tell you?
Do we know the source of this text?

Who wrote it?

Who is the author? Do we know?
Do we know anything about them?
Did they belong to any groups or organisations?
What was their situation like?

Purpose

What is the purpose of this text?
Why was it written?
Who was it written for?

Perspective

What is the author's point of view?
When was it written?
What geographical area is it from?
Is it biased?

Type

What format is it?
Is it an academic text?
Is it reliable?
Is it supported by evidence? Does this matter?

What does it say?

What are the key points made?
How does it relate to our topic?

What would you ask?

Is you could ask the author a question, what would it be?
What questions do you have about this text?

How do we engage students with the text itself?

- Before tackling the big philosophical and theological issues in a text it can be helpful to establish what we actually know about the material.
- Starting with some thinking questions can encourage students to consider the context of the text which can then build far greater depth of understanding of the text.

Example of a way to do this:

- In groups (covid allowing!) Give students post it notes and ask students to allocate a heading and try to write as much detail as possible. Make sure to emphasise that 'we don't know' is a perfectly acceptable answer! Or encourage them to guess.
- Then ask all students to tackle the task in the yellow box at the bottom.

Let's try this out

In groups have a go at answering some of the questions about the texts on Google Jamboard.

Breakout room: 5 minutes

Google jamboard:

<https://jamboard.google.com/d/1MW4IDR6vNYltVuzkoYY7r7YImBdGEsxkyO1PjOLM7gY/edit?usp=sharing>



What did you think?

Text 1: Katha Upanishad
(Hinduism)

Text 2: Quran, 2:177
(Islam)



What about if we don't have the time for this kind of activity?

Here are 2 other strategies that can be done very quickly!

Exploring texts through questioning

Literal questions

- Who was the source created by?
- What do you know about them? (Consider age, gender, social position, occupation, religious beliefs, etc.)
- When was the document written?
- What was happening at the time? (Consider significant events, political environment, common prejudices, social norms, etc.)



Inferential questions

- 'Why did the creator of the source produce it? (Consider whether it was to make money, influence people, tell their side of the story, record an event, criticise someone, etc.)
- 'Who might have been the intended audience for the source?
- How do you think the creator wanted the audience to respond?
- How do you think people did respond?

Evaluative questions

- 'Does the source show any bias? Is the creator of the source trying to present only one of many perspectives? What words/ phrases suggest bias?'
- 'Are there any parts of the source that seem to be inaccurate?'
- 'Does the source that you are looking at support, or contradict, what you already know/have learnt about?'

Using a worksheet

<p>What are the key points/message?</p>		<p>Who was it aimed at/produced for?</p>
<p>What was happening at the time?</p>		<p>How might it be used/understood today?</p>
	<p>Who wrote it?</p>	

Breakout room discussion

How do you explore texts with your students? What strategies might you use?

Chunking texts



- If you are using longer texts, teaching students how to ‘chunk’ them is a really helpful way to approach the task.
- Give students the text and ask them to skim read it. Whilst they do that they should:
 - Highlight/underline unfamiliar words
 - circle key terms, people, places or events that they think might be important
 - Try to identify what the main topic is

Then ask students to divide the text into 3-10 sections (depending on the length of the text)



Chunking texts

- Once they have divided it up they should then read each section closely.
- For each section they should
 - read the words and sentences around the unfamiliar words underlined to help define unfamiliar words
 - lookup the meaning of unknown words/you might go through these as a class
 - Write a short sentence to summarise each section
- They should then read through their summary sentences and summarise the whole text in one single sentence. (sometimes it can be fun to give them a word limit!)

Lets have a go!

Use the arrows to move to task 2 on the Google Jamboard.

Breakout room: 5 minutes

Google jamboard:

<https://jamboard.google.com/d/1MW4IDR6vNYltVuzkoYY7r7YImBdGEsxkyO1PjOLM7gY/edit?usp=sharing>



Text: HUMANAE VITAE 1968

Quick summaries – particularly useful for KS5

Author information:	
Five sentences summarising the main points	
3 key quotations	
2 questions raised by this text	

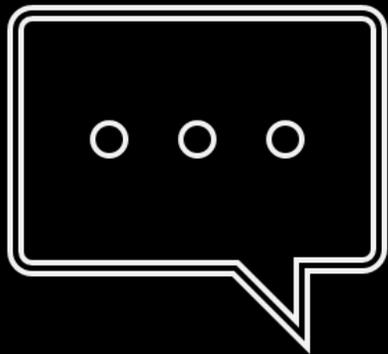
Using texts with lots of unfamiliar vocabulary

Word	Your guess	Definition

Before looking at the text:

- Give students a grid like the one below with a list of key words from a text.
- Ask them to tick the ones they think they know and guess the definition
- Share their ideas and add the correct definition

Breakout rooms



What are the challenges in using texts with students?



How might we overcome these?

A more dynamic approach (requires a bit more time!)

Before giving students the text ask them to create a character that in some way relates to the text. E.g. if my text was the 10 commandments I might tell my students a little bit about the context of the time.

Students should include in their character design factors such as:

- age
- gender
- social class
- family status
- occupation
- level of education
- significant experiences they've had in their life.



Then introduce the source to the students. Read though it together.

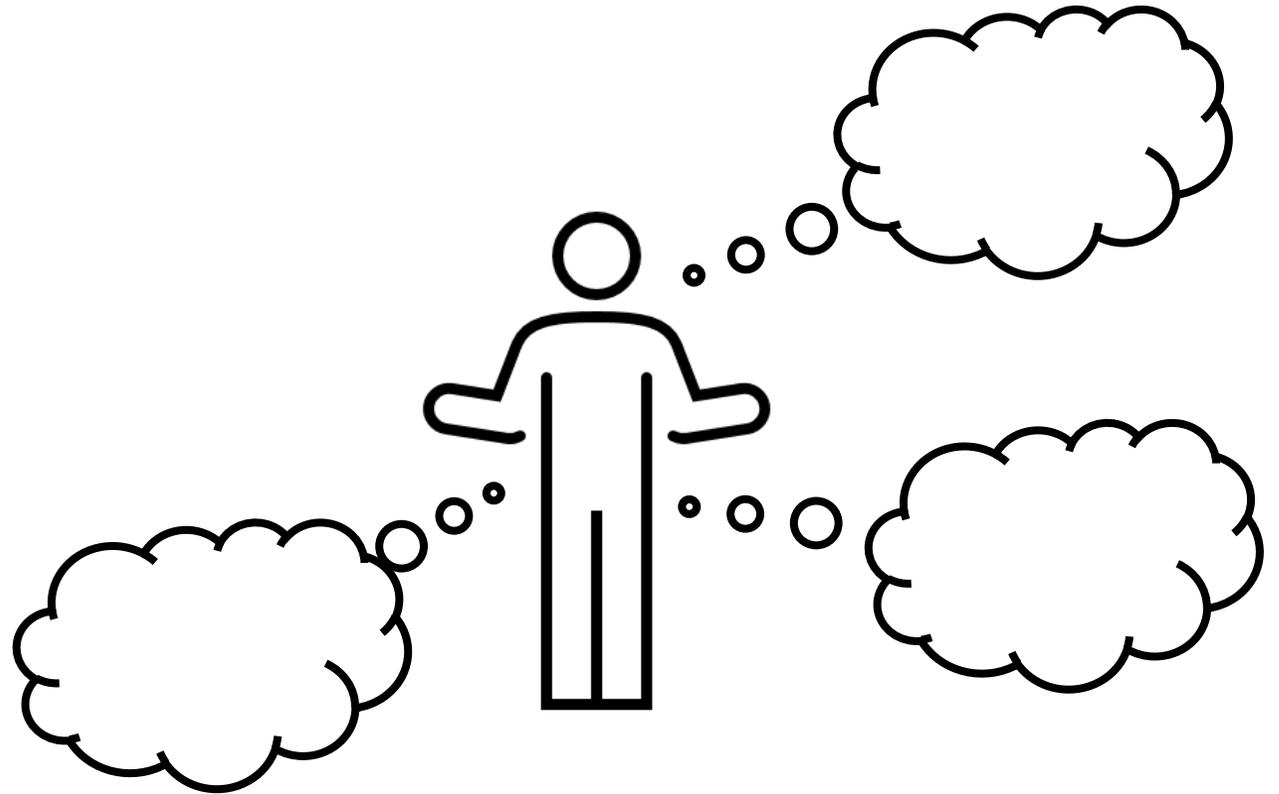
Students should then consider how their character might react to this text.

You could give them some sentence starters such as:

- They might feel...
- They might say...
- They might do...
- They might react by...
- They might believe that...

You could even give them a person outline to do this on!

- Make a worksheet with person in the middle and thought bubbles around the outside



To take this a step further you could set up a debate. Pose students a question related to the text and ask students to respond from their character's perspective.

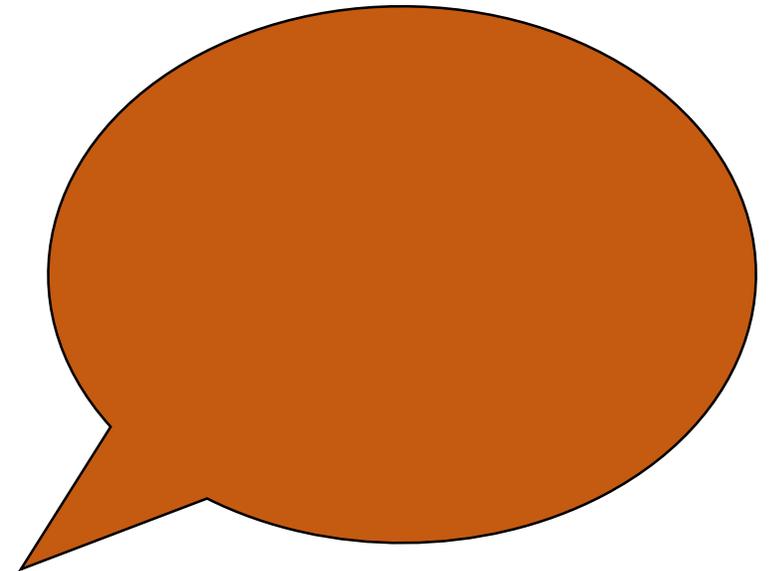


Drawing out quotations

How can we use religious texts to draw out useful quotations to use in exam answers?

Example task:

- Read Genesis 1
- Answer these questions using a quote to support each point:
- What does the text say about humans?
- What does the text say about animals?
- What does the text say about the natural world?
- What does the text say about God?
- What does the text say about creation of the universe?

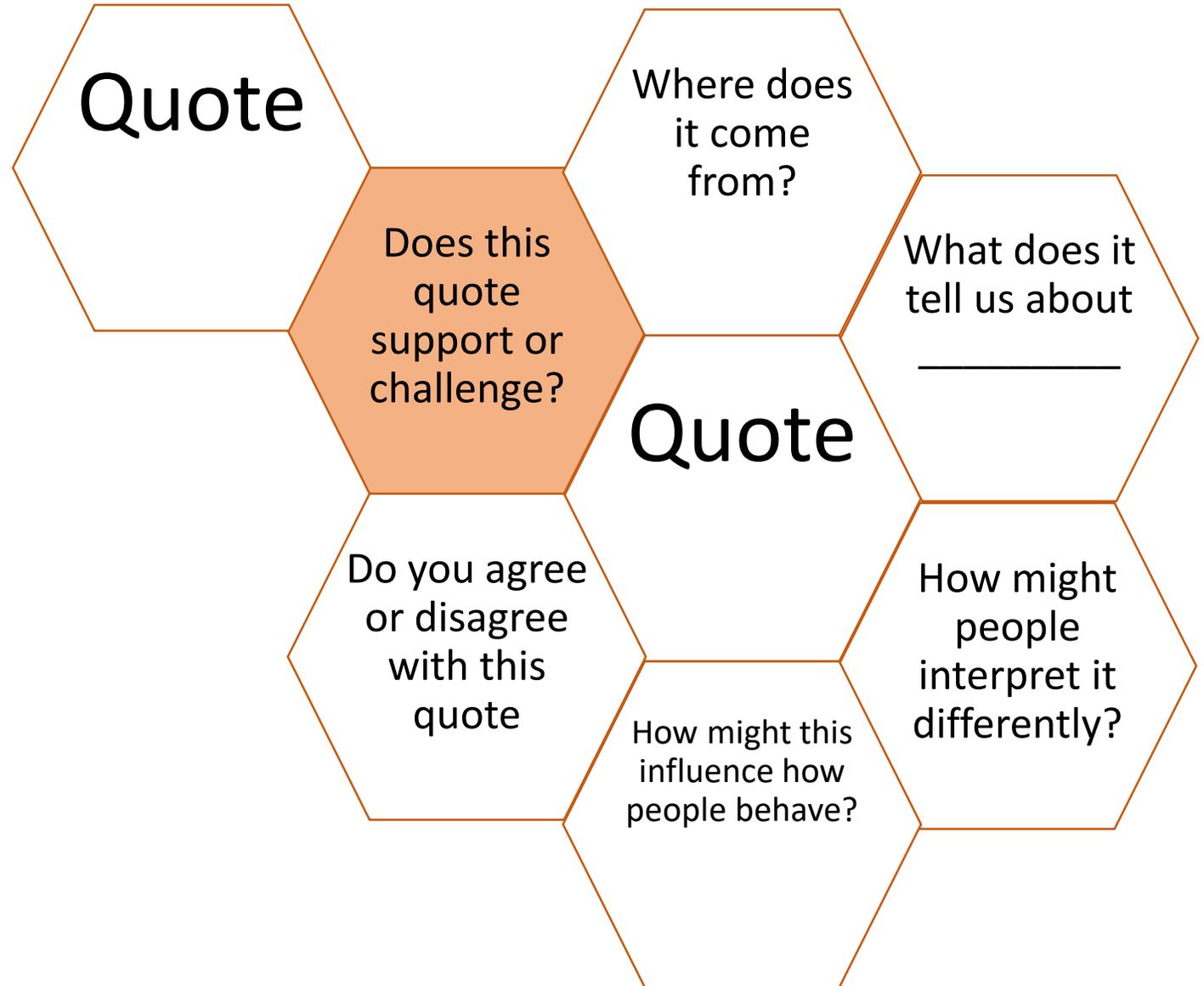


Analysing quotes

Once students have drawn out quotes/if you are giving students quotes on a particular topic it can be helpful to analyse them

This is one method I use with Year 10/11

Each student is given a sheet of blank hexagons. Then they use these to create something similar to the diagram here:



Exam boards: Do students need to know specific references for texts?

Generally, no. However, most give certain texts that students must be able to identify e.g. John 1:1

AQA require students to state the source of wisdom in 5 markers at KS4 to get the 5th mark.

OCR requires students to include sources of wisdom in their answers. These do not have to be direct quotations but must state the source.

The key thing is that the source of wisdom is relevant and is integrated into the answer. Having a deeper understanding of where the quotes come from can really help students achieve this integration.

At A-level references to scholarly approaches and sources of wisdom are required. However, for most exam boards unless included on the specification requirements, students do not need to memorise references.

Breakout room



How do you encourage students to use Sources of wisdom?



Do you have any strategies for helping students to remember them?



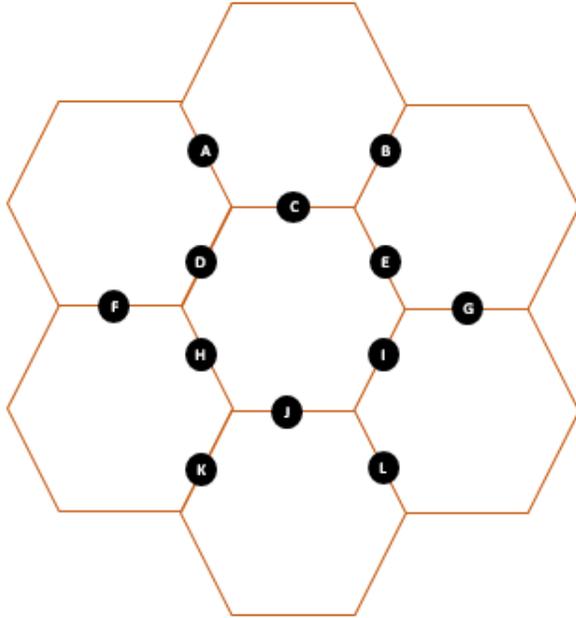
Other useful ideas for KS4 and 5

- <https://www.bl.uk/sacred-texts>



Making Links

Place a key term in each of the hexagons and add a brief definition. In the boxes underneath explain how each of the key terms might be connected to each other.



A	B	C	D	E	F
G	H	I	J	K	L

Making key word links worksheet

This is a useful worksheet to encourage students to make connections between key ideas using key terms.

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Thank you!

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