

Exercise Sheet 7.3.4a: Arguments for or against the Existence of God

Look at some reasons for/against the existence of God (on this sheet). In your exercise book write two paragraphs and include the following:

(a) copy the one argument that convinces you the most (only consider the sentences in bold) and explain why you think it is a good argument.

(b) copy the one argument you find least convincing and explain why you think it is a bad argument. How will you respond to this argument?

Note: The questions in each box may help you complete the exercise Extension: Write down your own argument to convince others that God exists or doesn't exist

A. God exists because the beauty and complexity of the world mean that someone has designed it

- Think of a watch. How will you describe the inside of a watch? Has someone made it or was it created by chance? Why?
- Think of the world. How is the world beautiful and complex? (think of specific examples) In your opinion has someone made the world it or was it created by chance? Why?

B. God exists because the world cannot come from nothing

- Think of a tree. Where does it come from? Can you go back in time to trace the origins of this tree?
- People say that everything, like the tree, has to come from something, and all events are linked to each other, like the parts of the chain are connected together. They say that you cannot make something out of nothing and that if you trace the origins of the world to the very beginning you will find God

C. God exists because people have experienced his presence

- Some people claim that they have had a religious experience such as a miracle, a vision, an out-of-body experience or a prayer to God answered. They argue that these experiences provides us with evidence for the existence of spirit, beyond this material world and are therefore proof that God exists.
- Think of the feelings people might have during their religious experience (see example above). Are they real? Do they tell us about God?

D. God doesn't exist because a good and powerful God would not allow people to suffer

- Some people have the following argument. They 'If God is all-powerful, is kind, and knows past, present and future, why is there suffering in the world? They conclude that the existence of pain and suffering in the world proves that God doesn't exist
- Can you give your own explanation for the existence of suffering that allows for God's existence?

E. There is no evidence for the existence of God

- A popular argument is that there is no scientific evidence that proves God's existence. For example, the 'Creation stories' found in religious texts are not supported with research findings and they are not proved in the laboratories. Additionally, science might have different ideas about how the world was created such as the big-bang theory or Darwin's theory of evolution.
- What do you know about these scientific theories? Do they really provide evidence that God is not the creator of the world?