

An Introduction to Philosophy		✓
The Cosmological Argument for the Existence of God	Thomas Aquinas asked us to look at our universe and ask, 'how did it all start?'. He said that everything in the natural world has a first cause (the <i>Cosmological Argument</i> is also known as the <i>First Cause Argument</i>). The order and pattern in the universe suggests that it must have been started by something and he believed that something was God . Something or someone made the 'Big Bang' go bang!	
Criticisms of the Cosmological Argument	<p>The cosmological argument depends on the central principle that 'nothing comes from nothing':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perhaps the universe had no beginning. • Perhaps the universe just started and there was nothing that <i>made</i> it start. • If it is claimed that everything must be made, and made by <i>God</i>, then it is fair to ask, 'Who made <i>God</i>?' <p>Thomas Aquinas said 'God just is.' He called Him the prime mover or the uncaused causer.</p>	
The Falling Dominoes Analogy	In this particular argument, we use falling dominoes as an analogy. An analogy is a comparison between one thing and another, typically for the purpose of explanation or clarification. <i>God</i> is compared to the person who pushes over the first domino setting off a chain reaction of cause and effect.	
The Design Argument for the Existence of God	William Paley said that when you look at a watch you can see ingenious design. The watch has been designed for a purpose-to tell the time. Looking at the natural world, you can also see ingenious design - the human eye, heart, a bird's wing, all seem to be designed to carry out a purpose. Just as the watch has a designer, then so must things in the natural world. The designer of our world must be <i>God</i> .	
Criticisms of the Design Argument	<p>The design argument does not prove that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That there was only one <i>God</i>. Perhaps there are many gods. • The <i>God</i> who did the designing still exists. Perhaps <i>God</i> has died or has abandoned us. <p>Charles Darwin's <i>theory of evolution claims</i> that living things have adapted over time. The most successful organisms are those that have adaptations which promise survival in the environment in which the organism lives. After millions of years, the adaptations look like complex design.</p> <p>John Stuart Mill pointed out that there are many mistakes in nature and if <i>God</i> was all-powerful why would he design a world with so many apparent mistakes?</p>	
The Moral Argument for the Existence of God	<p>Hastings Rashdall believed that humans in-built knowledge of right and wrong must come from somewhere. He believed that <i>God</i> placed moral law inside people.</p> <p>Cardinal John Newman said our conscience is also evidence of the existence of <i>God</i> because we often feel we are responsible to a higher authority (<i>God</i>!).</p> <p>Jackie Pullinger says that when a person chooses to give up their own time and energy to help others this is evidence of <i>God</i>. Only people who believe in life after death would live in such a way.</p>	
Criticisms of the Moral Argument	<p>Edward Wilson says that moral knowledge has evolved as a way of protecting humans. He says we are programmed like computers to make the right choices for our survival.</p> <p>Sigmund Freud said we are taught moral knowledge by our parents. This is called social conditioning. Our conscience is not <i>God</i>'s voice inside our head. It is the voice of the moral lessons we learnt when we were very young.</p>	

The Religious Experience Argument for the Existence of God	<p>Some people believe that they have had <u>religious experiences</u> from God .They believe these experiences are proof of God existence. Some people have experiences that are so powerful they convert from being a non-believer to a believer and then devote their whole lives to God's work. Some argue that even without proof of the experience itself, the fact that people then convert and dedicate their life to carrying out God's work, is proof of God's existence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mystical experiences- Some people experience a 'sense of God', such as awe and wonder, feel a presence, hear voices or have out of body experiences. • Visions - Some say they have seen spirits or visions of heaven, Jesus, Mary, Saints, or guardian angels. • Ecstatic or charismatic experiences- others have feelings of ecstasy which they believe to be the holy spirit inside of them. 	
Criticisms of the Religious Experience Argument	<p>Some people believe that religious experience is too <u>subjective</u> (personal) to be evidence. The experience is influenced by a person's own thoughts, experiences, beliefs and emotions. One-off, <i>private</i> sightings or experiences of God do not provide reliable evidence. Ideally the experience should be repeated numerous times and witnessed by others (observable).</p> <p>Religious experience cannot be tested scientifically.</p> <p>Bertrand Russell, a twentieth century philosopher, said that these experiences may only be real in the mind of the person. He believed that the <u>unconscious mind</u> can create visions or experiences which people believe are real.</p>	
Subjective	<p>Subjective information or writing is based on personal opinions, interpretations, points of view, emotions and judgment. It is often considered ill-suited for scenarios like news reporting or decision making in business or politics.</p>	
Objective	<p>Objective information or analysis is fact-based, measurable and observable.</p>	
The Problem of Evil and Suffering in the World	<p>If God is all-knowing then he knows about all of the suffering that occurs. If God is all-powerful, then God must have the power to stop evil things from happening. If God is all-loving, then God must want to stop evil and suffering. So why is there evil and suffering in the world?</p>	
Natural Evil	<p>Suffering caused by natural disasters e.g. Tsunami, earthquake, illness/diseases.</p>	
Moral Evil	<p>Evil caused by human actions e.g. crime, terrorism, war.</p>	
The Cruel World Explanation	<p>John Stuart Mill said that even though humans are responsible for evil actions (moral evil), nature itself is responsible for far more evil, through disease, natural disaster etc.(natural evil). Mill also pointed out that the people who suffer these disasters are mostly the poor. For this reason, Mill thought that belief in God was unreasonable.</p>	
Dualism	<p>Dualism is the name given to the battle of good versus evil. Some believe that good and evil exist in the universe like two evenly-matched opponents. Sometimes "good" is winning the battle, but other times "evil" seems to be winning (that's when disasters etc. happen).</p>	
The Free Will Argument	<p>God made humans different to animals (in the <u>image of God</u>) and gave them the gift of free will. God wants people to choose him but if he forced them to choose him they would be like robots, programmed to obey God. By giving humans free will, however, He knew that some would <u>choose</u> to do evil in the world. For example, Adam and Eve chose to disobey God by taking the fruit from the forbidden tree.</p>	
Evil as a Lesson	<p>Some believe that God made man immature and imperfect, needing to grow and learn. They believe we cannot truly understand goodness if we don't understand evil. God allows evil to happen, to help us to learn.</p>	
Evil as a Test of Faith	<p>Some believe that evil exists to test our faith in God. Many Christians for example dedicate their lives to charities, voluntary work and missions to alleviate the suffering in the world caused by evil.</p>	

<p>The Miracles Argument for the Existence of God</p>	<p>A miracle happens when the laws of nature are by-passed, causing a supernatural event to take place. Augustine, and many others, believed that as well as the miracle of creation all around us, God allows <u>supernatural</u> miracles to act as <u>signs</u> pointing to Him.</p> <p>There are many examples of miracles recorded in the Bible, Jesus performed 4 types of miracles including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • healing miracles e.g. Jesus cured people of illness like leprosy and blindness. • raising the dead e.g. Jesus raised Lazarus after he had been dead for 4 days. • miracles over nature e.g. Jesus turned water into wine and calmed a storm. • exorcisms e.g. Jesus 'drove out demons' from those who were believed to be 'possessed' on a number of occasions. 	<p><u>E</u></p>
<p>Arguments Against Miracles</p>	<p>David Hume wrote a book <u>against</u> miracles. Hume argued that miracles; <i>violate the laws of nature</i> which we all experience. He said miracles are very unlikely to have happened, even if the testimony is convincing. <i>Often people are deceived, lie for personal gain or are mistaken.</i> To accept a miracle you would have to believe it is <i>more likely</i> that the laws of nature have been bypassed than a person being deceived, lying or mistaken.</p>	
<p>Do miracles still happen?</p>	<p><u>Lourdes</u> in France became a place of Christian pilgrimage, after a 14 year old girl called Bernadette Soubirous said she had had 18 visions of The Virgin Mary here. She became a devoted nun and was later made a Saint.</p> <p>The waters at Lourdes are thought to be healing and the grotto where Bernadette had her visions became known as a place of miracles. There have been over 6500 claims of healing miracles here. The Catholic Church is careful to authenticate any miracle claims and has officially only of the miracles.</p> <p>In 2005 they recognised 67 declared Anna Santaniello as the 67th person to be cured of her illness, by bathing in the water at Lourdes. She was found to be completely free of the heart disease and Bouillaud's disease (a lung disease), that she had been suffering from and remained healthy into old age.</p>	