

EXPLORING SECULARISM



CORE PRINCIPLES TEACHER RESOURCE PACK



Theme 1. Core Principles

The contents of this module will help students explore the following questions:

- What is secularism?
- Is secularism a religion?
- Is secularism a form of atheism, agnosticism or humanism?
- Who is a secularist?
- How do secularists think about religion?
- How do secularists think about decisions?
- Why do people support or oppose secularism?
- Where does secularism come from?
- What different types of secularism are there?
- What are religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination?

List of resources in this theme

1.01	What is secularism? (Part 1) – Presentation	4
1.02	What is secularism? (Part 2) – Introduction	5
1.03	Viewpoints on religion and secularism (part 1) – Religion and me	7
1.04	Viewpoints on religion and secularism (part 2) – Religion and others	9
1.05	Viewpoints on religion and secularism (part 3) – Obama, Abraham and Isaac	11
1.06	How do secularists think about decisions? (Part 1) – Public reason giving	14
1.07	How do secularists think about decisions? (Part 2) – The Lemon test	17
1.08	How do secularists think about decisions? (Part 3) – You’re the town council	19
1.09	Religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination (part 1) – Basic principles	23
1.10	Religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination (part 2) – What are they?	25
1.11	Religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination (part 3) – How do we address them?	29
1.12	Religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination (part 4) – The paradox of tolerance	32
1.13	Different types of secularism (part 1) – Berlinerblau’s “six types”	35
1.14	Different types of secularism (part 2) – Secularism around the world	40
1.15	Different types of secularism (part 3) – The Secular Charter	47
1.16	Where does secularism come from?	49
1.17	Why secularism? (Part 1) – Competing concepts	56
1.18	Why secularism? (Part 2) – Viewpoints	61
1.19	Glossary	65
	Additional resources	67

1.01 What is secularism? (Part 1) – Presentation

BACKGROUND	<p>This resource can be used either as a primer for a wider exploration of secularism or to give a short overview of key secularist issues. It is suitable for assembly, while resource 1.02 is more suitable for a classroom discussion.</p> <p>The stimulus material sets out some of the things that secularists notice about religion and society that lead to the foundations of secularism, which are defined. The exercises explore students' pre-existing knowledge and invite discussion.</p>
SUBJECTS	Politics Religion & Belief Education Citizenship SMSC Philosophy
KEY QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is secularism? • How do secularists think about religion? • How do secularists think about decisions?
LEARNING OUTCOMES	<p>Basic</p> <p>Students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the basic definition of secularism. • Understand the concerns and basic questions that secularism seeks to address. • Understand the relevance of secularism to subjects they are familiar with. • Offer basic opinions on the key concerns. <p>Advanced</p> <p>In addition to the basic learning outcomes, students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer opinions on the concerns and basic questions that secularism seeks to address, drawing on a range of examples. • Understand the relevance of secularism to key social debates.
LINKS	Resource page: ExploringSecularism.org/101-what-is-secularism-part-1-pr
STIMULUS	<p><i>Stimulus #1 (What is secularism?)</i></p> <p>See slideshow</p>
EXERCISES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Review Stimulus #1 (What is secularism?)</i> • Run through the slideshow, pausing to invite contributions from or discussions among the audience at appropriate intervals.
TAKE IT FURTHER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A class could put on their own version of this assembly, expanding on the presentation to explain the key questions secularism seeks to address. • Split the class into groups of 4–5. Each should do a short presentation on one of the key questions in this theme. If the students are older or more able then they should also answer questions from the rest of the class.

1.02 What is secularism? (Part 2) – Introduction

BACKGROUND	<p>This resource can be used either as a standalone overview of secularism or as a primer for a wider exploration.</p> <p>The stimulus material sets out some of the things that secularists notice about religion and society that lead to the foundations of secularism, which are defined. The exercises explore students' pre-existing knowledge and invite discussion.</p>
SUBJECTS	Politics Religion & Belief Education
KEY QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is secularism? • Is secularism a religion?
LEARNING OUTCOMES	<p>Basic</p> <p>Students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the basic definition of secularism. • Understand the concerns and basic questions that secularism seeks to address. • Understand the relevance of secularism to subjects they are familiar with. • Offer basic opinions on the key concerns. <p>Advanced</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to the basic learning outcomes, students should demonstrate they can: • Offer opinions on the concerns and basic questions that secularism seeks to address, drawing on a range of examples. • Understand the relevance of secularism to key social debates.
LINKS	Resource page: ExploringSecularism.org/102-what-is-secularism-part-2-in
STIMULUS	<p><i>Stimulus #1 (Things we notice)</i></p> <p>When we talk about religion in society, lots of people notice things like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People have different worldviews and ideas about how best to live. • These often include disagreements over religion or irreligion. • Some ideas about how best to live are compatible or widely shared despite different worldviews. • Some ideas about how best to live are incompatible with or exclusive to certain worldviews. • Religion or irreligion can be used to inspire positive social actions. • Religion or irreligion can be used to inspire negative social actions. • Some people experience unfair advantages because of religion. • Some people experience unfair disadvantages because of religion. • People's ideas of what gods want often coincide with their own desires or moral preferences. • Making particular beliefs about religion required or favoured over others has led to bad outcomes. <p>Once we notice these things, there are lots of different ideas about how we should respond. One of these ideas is called secularism.</p> <p><i>Stimulus #2 (What is secularism?)</i></p> <p>Secularism refers to a range of different ideas and practices which seek to balance freedom of and from religion with other rights. In its broadest sense secularism is the idea that religious beliefs and identities should not be privileged or discriminated against. From this Jean Baubérot (a sociologist of secularism and religion) argues that three key principles emerge:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Separation of religious institutions from state institutions and a public sphere where religion may participate, but not dominate. 2. Freedom to practise your faith or beliefs without harming others, or to change it or not have one, according to your conscience. 3. Equality, so that your religious beliefs or lack of them doesn't put others at an advantage or a disadvantage.

People who support or oppose secularism interpret this in a range of different ways and have lots of different ideas about why this makes societies fairer or not.

Because different people can have different ethical stances informed by their worldviews, secularists believe:

- Personal ethical preferences arising from religious, non-religious or irreligious convictions should not be presumed to be of more or less worth.

So

- Personal ethical preferences aren't sufficient to compel others. Rules which affect others need to be justified.

And

- We can persuade people to agree with our personal ethical preferences, but we can't force them to.

So

- Sometimes we need to protect people from having others' personal ethical preferences imposed on them.

Stimulus #3 (What does "secular" mean?)

"Secular" means religiously neutral or unrelated to religion e.g. brushing your teeth is a secular activity.

Beyond this simple definition, "secular" is a contested adjective. It comes from a Latin word *saecularis* or *saeculum* meaning "the world", "generation" or "age". Many religious traditions draw a distinction between the temporal and the divine, or the worldly and the spiritual, considering that both have their place. In some contexts, secular is used to mean non-religious.

Potential meanings of secular:

- Being unrelated to religion
- Being related to worldly, practical or temporal concerns
- Being non-religious
- Being irreligious
- Being related to secularism
- Being justified in non-religious (rather than religious or irreligious) terms

EXERCISES

- Set up the slide show or handouts. Students should not look at the definitions until asked.
- **Review Stimulus #1 (Things we notice)** and ask the related question.
- **Q1.** *What is secularism?* Note down on a whiteboard or flipchart some of the answers, grouping them under themes.
- **Review Stimulus #2 (What is secularism?)** and ask the related questions.
- **Q2.** *What do you think of this definition?* Discuss how it accords with their initial thoughts.
- **Q3.** *How is secularism relevant to this subject? I.e. why might you be discussing secularism in Politics, RE or Citizenship Studies?*
- **Q4.** *What does "secular" mean?*
- For **Q4**, note some responses on a whiteboard or flipchart, grouping them under themes.
- **Review Stimulus #3 (What does "secular" mean?)** and ask the related question.
- **Q5.** *What do you think of this definition?*
- For **Q5**, discuss how students' answers accord with their initial thoughts.
- **Q6.** *How might the difference between secular and non-secular be relevant to this subject?*

TAKE IT FURTHER

- Write down any additional questions which might emerge related to "What is secularism?" and explore them as a group.
- Find three alternative definitions of secularism and discuss the differences.

1.03 Viewpoints on religion and secularism (part 1) – Religion and me

BACKGROUND	<p>This can build on a primer or serve as the basis for an exploration of secularism and secularist views on religion and society. The stimulus involves six viewpoints on religion and society, along with an explanation of why they might be considered secularist or not. The exercise invites discussion on the range of views, and students' own views.</p> <p>Resource 1.03 and 1.04 are very similar – though 1.04 focuses on wider social aspects. They can be combined or used interchangeably.</p>
SUBJECTS	Politics Religion & Belief Education Citizenship SMSC
KEY QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is secularism? • Who is a secularist? • How do secularists think about religion?
LEARNING OUTCOMES	<p>Basic</p> <p>Students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand a range of viewpoints related to secularism, drawing on basic principles. • Express a viewpoint, compared and contrasted with the examples. <p>Advanced</p> <p>In addition to the basic learning outcomes, students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critically reflect on a range of viewpoints related to secularism, drawing on basic principles and outside knowledge. • Extrapolate how a range of viewpoints related to secularism might impact views on wider social issues.
LINKS	Resource page: ExploringSecularism.org/103-viewpoints-on-religion-and-s
STIMULUS	<p><i>Stimulus #1 (Viewpoints)</i></p> <p>a. “I’m not religious, but I think it’s good to have an established church with strong links to the state because we’re a Christian country. Whether or not you are Christian, having a Christian state preserves our culture, provides a strong moral compass and helps protect against foreign ideas.”</p> <p>b. “My Islamic religion is very important to me, but I think people need to be able to form their own beliefs. Too often religious arguments are used to impose conservative views on others. That’s not my version of Islam and I don’t think it should be the basis for laws.”</p> <p>c. “Belief in gods is ridiculous. That’s why I’m an atheist. Religion is harmful and we should restrict its spread, by promoting atheism in schools, closing churches and banning all religious books or preaching.”</p> <p>d. “I’m an evangelical Christian and I don’t believe that same-sex relationships are as valid as straight ones. My blog explains why I don’t think people should have any sexual relationships outside of heterosexual marriage. But it’s up to the Church to preach morality, not for the police to enforce it. What people choose for themselves is their business, and I don’t think my opinions should be forced on anybody.”</p> <p>e. “I’m an atheist and think believing in gods is silly. I’d like to spread atheism and discourage religion through my YouTube channel and social pressure. People who want to be religious should have that right and not be discriminated against, so the government shouldn’t push atheism.”</p> <p>f. “I’m a Christian and I think it is very important that my values are promoted in schools. Unless you have a Christian basis and values in education, that education will impose atheism. Most people realise there is no other truth but God, and the government should acknowledge this. It’s fine if you’re not religious, but you should keep quiet about that or expect to be ostracised for attacking our religious values.”</p>

Stimulus #2: (Are the viewpoints secularist?)

The clearest secularist answer here is **#b**, but both **#d** and **#e** are also secularist. Two of these statements come from people who are religious believers. But for a secularist that is up to them. All that matters is whether religion (or irreligion) is forced on others by the government.

Viewpoint #a, though it comes from a non-religious person, is not secularist, because they think the church and the state should have strong links. They might have all sorts of reasons why they think religion (Christianity in particular) should be privileged.

Viewpoint #b, from a Muslim, is secularist, because they don't think any version of religion (or religion in general) should be imposed on anybody else.

Viewpoint #c, comes from an atheist. But this person would impose their views on everybody else and would restrict religious freedom. Secularists would strongly oppose this.

Viewpoint #d, is similar to the second – and largely secularist. They are a deeply religious person who respects the rights of others not to be religious and they don't think religion should be legally privileged, so they are a secularist.

Viewpoint #e, is similar to the fourth and largely secularist. They are non-religious with strongly anti-religious views, but they don't want them imposed on others.

For both **viewpoints #d** and **#e** some secularists could have concerns over “social pressure”. Many forms of social pressure are part of promoting your views and changing people's minds in a pluralistic society. But other forms of social pressure could lead to privilege or discrimination.

Viewpoint #f, is definitely not from a secularist. They are deeply religious (not a problem) but they want to impose that on everybody else and use the power of the state and the education system to make everybody else share their views (a big problem for secularists).

So, you can be a religious secularist (e.g. **#b** or **#d**), or anti-secularist (e.g. **#f**). You can also be a non-religious secularist, which is very common (e.g. **#e**), or a non-religious anti-secularist; this is less common, but not unheard of (e.g. **#a** or **#c**).

EXERCISES

- Set up the slideshow or handouts. Students should not look at Stimulus #2 until instructed to do so.
- (Re)introduce students to the basic definition of secularism.
- **Review Stimulus #1 (Viewpoints)**
- As a class, in groups or individually students should answer the first two questions:
- **Q1. Is this viewpoint secularist? (a-f)**
- **Q2. Why do you agree or disagree with this viewpoint? (a-f)**
- **Review Stimulus #2 (Are the viewpoints secularist?)**
- Invite group or individual feedback.

TAKE IT FURTHER

- Find or imagine examples of two secularist and two non-secularist viewpoints, which people might hold.
- How do you think these viewpoints will affect these people's views on other issues?
- Script or act out a roleplay involving people holding two of the example viewpoints. They could be discussing a social issue, or could both be being interviewed about the role of religion in society.

1.04 Viewpoints on religion and secularism (part 2) – Religion and others

BACKGROUND	<p>This can build on a primer or serve as the basis for an exploration of secularism and secularist views on religion and society. The stimulus involves six viewpoints on religion and society, along with an explanation of why they might be considered secularist or not. The exercise invites discussion on the range of views, and students' own views.</p> <p>Resource 1.03 and 1.04 are very similar – though 1.04 focuses on wider social aspects. They can be combined or used interchangeably.</p>
SUBJECTS	Politics Religion & Belief Education Citizenship SMSC
KEY QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is secularism? • Who is a secularist? • How do secularists think about decisions?
LEARNING OUTCOMES	<p>Basic</p> <p>Students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and categorise a range of viewpoints related to secularism, drawing on basic principles. • Express a viewpoint, compared and contrasted with the examples. <p>Advanced</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to the basic learning outcomes, students should demonstrate they can: • Critically reflect on a range of viewpoints related to secularism, drawing on basic principles and outside knowledge. • Extrapolate how a range of viewpoints related to secularism might impact views on wider social issues.
LINKS	Resource page: ExploringSecularism.org/104-viewpoints-on-religion-and-s
STIMULUS	<p><i>Stimulus #1 (Viewpoints)</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. “We’re a Christian country and have earned the privileges religion has. In a democracy, if most people want Christian services provided then why should non-religious services be imposed? I like having prayers in school and at the start of meetings; if you don’t like them then don’t turn up.” b. “It’s a problem when the government picks and chooses between religions. But as long as each religion is treated equally then why shouldn’t religion as a whole be promoted? Religious freedom means being able to practise your religion, so this should be supported by the state.” c. “Religion might inform people’s personal values, but when we come together as a group to make decisions that affect all of us, decisions should be made based on reason and evidence, not just personal feelings. Otherwise what basis do we have to say your personal religious feelings should trump mine?” d. “Religion is the only basis for morality and so should be the basis of our laws and decisions. If people don’t follow my religion it harms our society, which we all have an interest in preventing. If a law isn’t consistent with religion, then it can’t be moral and forcing people to follow immoral laws is wrong.” e. “The only way to ensure no religion is treated more favourably than others is to completely ban religion from public life. If you want to be religious you should keep that in your home, along with any religious symbolism or claims. People guided by personal religious ideas have nothing to contribute.” f. “Everyone should have the right to practise their personal religion or belief, but this should never be imposed on others. The government should stay out of people’s religious beliefs and shouldn’t support religious practices or beliefs. This requires the state and its services to be religiously neutral.”

Stimulus #2 (Are the viewpoints secularist?)

- a. This is a common objection to secularism; it mixes a majoritarian and traditional argument. Such approaches tend to be more favoured by groups in a privileged position.
- b. This could be seen as a model of secularism, although it is generally outside the mainstream (for secularists). The problem with trying to treat all religions with equal state support is that religions are not homogeneous groups. Such approaches tend to give more power to religious leaders and to exclude the non-religious.
- c. This is a mainstream secularist position. Different secularists might interpret this differently.
- d. This is almost the opposite of a secularist position, as they are advocating for all laws and decisions which affect others to be based on religion. Depending on how that is interpreted, it might be a democracy limited by religious rules or an outright theocracy.
- e. This could be seen as an extreme form of secularism, so far outside any mainstream approach that most secularists wouldn't recognise it as such. Secularists believe religion shouldn't be privileged in public life (so shouldn't play a formal role in public services or government) but don't believe it should be restricted, except where necessary to protect other rights. Most secularists think people guided by religious, irreligious or non-religious personal beliefs contribute to society, but that decisions which affect the rights of others shouldn't be based on religion or purely personal preferences.
- f. This is a mainstream secularist position. Different secularists might interpret this differently.

EXERCISES

- **Review Stimulus #1 (Viewpoints).** Use handouts or slide show.
- As a class, in groups or individually ask students to complete the first five questions.
- **Q1.** *What do you think of this viewpoint (a-f)?*
- **Q2.** *Who do you think might hold this viewpoint (a-f)?*
- **Q3.** *Why (a-f)?*
- **Q4.** *Is this viewpoint (a-f) secularist or not?*
- **Q5.** *Why (a-f)?*
- Ask students (individually or in groups) to sort the viewpoints into an order using whatever criteria they like. (The physical handouts might be better for this.) Then ask the next set of questions.
- **Q6.** *Place the viewpoints in an order of your own choosing. Why did you put the viewpoints in this particular order?*
- **Q7.** *Do you think religion should influence the rights of others?*
- **Q8.** *Where would your view fit in the order you've created?*
- If desired, **review Stimulus #2 (Are the viewpoints secularist?)** and invite feedback/discussion.

TAKE IT FURTHER

- Think of 3 questions to ask people that hold each of the 6 viewpoints.
- Script or act out a roleplay involving people holding two of the example viewpoints. They could be discussing a social issue or both be being interviewed about the role of religion in society.
- Find examples of historical, public or political figures who hold similar viewpoints.

1.05 Viewpoints on religion and secularism (part 3) – Obama, Abraham and Isaac

BACKGROUND	This resource can be used to build on 1.03 and/or 1.04, as a transition to 1.06-1.08 or as a standalone. This stimulus is an extract from Barack Obama’s 2006 keynote speech on faith and politics (delivered at the Call to Renewal’s <i>Building a Covenant for a New America</i> conference) on the topic of religion in politics. The exercise encourages students to reflect on how people with different religious views can live and make decisions together in a democratic society.
SUBJECTS	Politics Religion & Belief Education Citizenship SMSC Philosophy
KEY QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do secularists think about decisions? • Why do people support or oppose secularism?
LEARNING OUTCOMES	<p>Basic</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students should demonstrate they can: • Understand how a longer political argument seeks to address the concerns of a range of listeners based on their viewpoints on secularist principles. • Compare and contrast their own views with the arguments of the source material. <p>Advanced</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to the basic learning outcomes, students should demonstrate they can: • Extrapolate how others might view the content of a political argument, based on their viewpoints on key secularist principles. • Critically reflect on the arguments of the source material, comparing and contrasting them to their own. • Reflect on how the secularist principles expressed in the stimulus would relate to decision-making and key social debates, drawing on a range of outside knowledge.
LINKS	<p>Resource page: ExploringSecularism.org/105-viewpoints-on-religion-and-s</p> <p>Other links: A transcript is available at: https://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/28/us/politics/2006obamaspeech.html</p> <p>YouTube link to start of extract: https://youtu.be/BFeGY5gbpCM?t=1719 – full video is over 40 minutes</p>
STIMULUS	<p>There is a shorter and longer extract of the speech, but the discussion questions work with either. For the “take it further” activities, or your own interest, you might want to read or watch the full speech.</p> <p>Stimulus #1 (Speech extract part 1)</p> <p>This is an extract from Barack Obama’s 2006 keynote speech on faith and politics (delivered at the Call to Renewal’s Building a Covenant for a New America conference) on the topic of religion in politics.</p> <p>This brings me to my second point. Democracy demands that the religiously motivated translate their concerns into universal, rather than religion-specific, values. It requires that their proposals be subject to argument, and amenable to reason. I may be opposed to abortion for religious reasons, but if I seek to pass a law banning the practice, I cannot simply point to the teachings of my church or evoke God’s will. I have to explain why abortion violates some principle that is accessible to people of all faiths, including those with no faith at all.</p> <p>Now this is going to be difficult for some who believe in the inerrancy of the Bible, as many evangelicals do. But in a pluralistic democracy, we have no choice. Politics depends on our ability to persuade each other of common aims based on a common reality. It involves the compromise, the art of what’s possible. At some fundamental level, religion does not allow for compromise. It’s the art of the impossible. If God has spoken, then followers are expected to live up to God’s edicts, regardless of the consequences. To base one’s life on such uncompromising commitments may be sublime, but to base our policy making on such commitments would be a dangerous thing. And if you doubt that, let me give you an example.</p>

We all know the story of Abraham and Isaac. Abraham is ordered by God to offer up his only son, and without argument, he takes Isaac to the mountaintop, binds him to an altar, and raises his knife, prepared to act as God has commanded.

Of course, in the end God sends down an angel to intercede at the very last minute, and Abraham passes God's test of devotion.

But it's fair to say that if any of us leaving this church saw Abraham on a roof of a building raising his knife, we would, at the very least, call the police and expect the Department of Children and Family Services to take Isaac away from Abraham. We would do so because we do not hear what Abraham hears, do not see what Abraham sees, true as those experiences may be. So the best we can do is act in accordance with those things that we all see, and that we all hear, be it common laws or basic reason.

Stimulus #2 (Speech extract part 2)

Finally, any reconciliation between faith and democratic pluralism requires some sense of proportion.

This goes for both sides.

Even those who claim the Bible's inerrancy make distinctions between scriptural edicts, sensing that some passages – the Ten Commandments, say, or a belief in Christ's divinity – are central to Christian faith, while others are more culturally specific and may be modified to accommodate modern life.

The American people intuitively understand this, which is why the majority of Catholics practise birth control and some of those opposed to gay marriage nevertheless are opposed to a constitutional amendment to ban it. Religious leadership need not accept such wisdom in counselling their flocks, but they should recognize this wisdom in their politics.

But a sense of proportion should also guide those who police the boundaries between church and state. Not every mention of God in public is a breach to the wall of separation – context matters. It is doubtful that children reciting the Pledge of Allegiance feel oppressed or brainwashed as a consequence of muttering the phrase “under God.” I didn't. Having voluntary student prayer groups use school property to meet should not be a threat, any more than its use by the high school Republicans should threaten Democrats. And one can envision certain faith-based programs – targeting ex-offenders or substance abusers – that offer a uniquely powerful way of solving problems.

So we all have some work to do here. But I am hopeful that we can bridge the gaps that exist and overcome the prejudices each of us bring to this debate. And I have faith that millions of believing Americans want that to happen. No matter how religious they may or may not be, people are tired of seeing faith used as a tool of attack. They don't want faith used to belittle or to divide. They're tired of hearing folks deliver more screed than sermon. Because in the end, that's not how they think about faith in their own lives.

Stimulus #3 (Binding of Isaac)

The three largest monotheisms (Judaism, Christianity and Islam, often called the Abrahamic religions) believe there was a prophet called Abraham, who was favoured by their god and who revealed his (God's) will to the world. Both Jewish/Christian and Islamic traditions have some version of the parable of “The Binding of Isaac”, where Abraham's willingness to kill his son in obedience to his god's wishes demonstrates his (Abraham's) obedience, and is rewarded.

Jewish/Christian tradition: Genesis 22

From Wikipedia:

“At some point in Isaac's youth, Abraham was commanded by God to offer his son up as a sacrifice in the land of Moriah. The patriarch travelled three days until he came to the mount that God told him of. He then commanded the servants to remain while he and Isaac proceeded alone into the mount. Isaac carried the wood upon which he would be sacrificed. Along the way, Isaac asked his father where the animal for the burnt offering was, to which Abraham replied “God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt offering”. Just as Abraham was about to sacrifice his son, he was interrupted by the angel of the Lord, and he saw behind him a “ram caught in a thicket by his horns”, which he sacrificed instead of his son. For his obedience he received another promise of numerous descendants and abundant prosperity.”

	<p>Islamic tradition: Suras 37 – The Aligners</p> <p>In most Muslim traditions Abraham is instructed by God to sacrifice his other son Ishmael, though the Quran doesn't name the son and other traditions disagree.</p> <p>From Wikipedia:</p> <p><i>“The general narrative pertaining to Ishmael in Islamic literature describes the sacrifice either as a test or as part of a vow. Some versions tell of the devil trying to stop God’s command from being obeyed by visiting Hagar, Ishmael, and Abraham. Every time the devil says Abraham is going to sacrifice Ishmael, each person answers that if God commanded it, they should obey. Eventually, Abraham tells Ishmael about the order and Ishmael is willing to be sacrificed and encourages Abraham to listen to God. Often, Ishmael is portrayed as telling Abraham some combination of instructions to bring his shirt back to Hagar, bind him tightly, sharpen the knife, and place him face down, all so that there will be no wavering in the resolve to obey God.</i></p> <p><i>“As Abraham attempts to slay Ishmael, either the knife is turned over in his hand or copper appears on Ishmael to prevent the death and God tells Abraham that he has fulfilled the command. Unlike in the Bible, there is no mention in the Qur’an of an animal (ram) replacing the boy; rather he is replaced with a ‘great sacrifice’ (Zibhin azeem).”</i></p>
<p>EXERCISES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a class, review Stimulus #1 (Speech extract part 1). Also review Stimulus #2 (Speech extract part 2), if desired. It might be best to watch a video using the link and give students the handout. • As a class, groups or individually, go through the questions. • Q1. Summarise the key themes and arguments of the speech extract. • Q2. Is this speech advocating secularism? • Q3. If yes, then what type? If no, then why not? • Q4. “Democracy demands that the religiously motivated translate their concerns into universal, rather than religion-specific, values”. Why do you agree or disagree? • Q5. “Politics depends on our ability to persuade each other of common aims based on a common reality.” Why do you agree or disagree? • Q6. What is the significance of the Abraham and Isaac parable in this speech and what does it say about the relationship between religion and politics? • Q7. In this speech a story generally interpreted to be about the value of obedience to a god is reinterpreted to illustrate a view that obedience to a god isn’t a sufficient justification. What do you think about reinterpreting parables like this? • Q8 Why do you think Senator Obama chose this particular parable to make this point? • If you decided to focus the questions only on the first part of the speech, now might be an opportunity to review Stimulus #2 (Speech extract part 2) and invite general discussion. • You might wish to review Stimulus #3 (Binding of Isaac) and invite general discussion if students are unfamiliar with this parable. Students can also reference this stimulus to assist with Q6, Q7 and Q8.
<p>TAKE IT FURTHER</p>	<p>For these activities you should read or watch the full speech.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imagine you are giving a speech on the role of religion in politics. Half of the audience will be part of the Religion is Great Society and half will be members of the Religion is Awful Club. What will your speech be and how will it address the concerns of both groups? • Try to find three examples of speeches addressing the theme of religion in politics. At least one should be from a secularist perspective and at least two should come from the UK. Compare these speeches to the extract. What are the similarities and differences? • Find contemporary news coverage of this speech. What were some of the positive and negative responses? • Find examples of UK opinion polls on the role of religion in politics. Write a short report or news story on your findings.

1.06 How do secularists think about decisions? (Part 1) – Public reason giving

BACKGROUND	<p>The resource uses the principles of “public reason giving” and the “veil of ignorance” as proposed by John Rawls to introduce the idea of secularist reasoning: decisions, whether motivated by religion or not, need to give an argument that is open to all. The stimulus defines these principles and gives examples, which students explore and critique in the exercises.</p> <p>This resource (along with or instead of 1.07) makes a good primer for 1.08.</p>
SUBJECTS	Politics Religion & Belief Education Citizenship SMSC Philosophy
KEY QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do secularists think about decisions? • What are religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination?
LEARNING OUTCOMES	<p>Basic</p> <p>Students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and articulate the principles of public reason giving and their relevance to how secularists and others think about decisions. • Apply the principles of public reason giving to basic theoretical situations. <p>Advanced</p> <p>In addition to the basic learning outcomes, students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critically reflect on the principles of public reason giving and their relevance to how secularists and others think about decisions, drawing on a range of examples. • Explore how the principles of public reason giving relate to key debates on social issues involving religion in society, drawing on a range of examples.
LINKS	<p>Resource page: ExploringSecularism.org/106-how-do-secularists-think-abo</p> <p>Other links: https://ethicsunwrapped.utexas.edu/glossary/veil-of-ignorance</p> <p>https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Rawls</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A8GDEaJtbq4</p>
STIMULUS	<p>Stimulus #1 (7B’s Sandwiches)</p> <p>Class 7B have done so well on their RE test that Mrs Butcher has decided to reward them with a big plate of bacon sandwiches. However, six students have a moral conviction which means they don’t want to eat them.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Yvette is Jewish; she doesn’t want to violate a widely held Jewish belief that pork products aren’t Kosher and shouldn’t be eaten. Tayyab is Muslim; he doesn’t want to violate a widely held Islamic belief that pork products aren’t Halal and shouldn’t be eaten. Sasha is Christian; she’s come to believe that eating meat is a sin and her god doesn’t want her to. This belief isn’t shared by most Christians. Patrick is an atheist; he believes that the only reason people accept meat eating is because of religious influence, and that the only rational diet is pescetarianism. Veronika is a lifelong vegan; veganism is an important part of her life and central to her ethical and dietary decision making. Toby decided this morning that eating meat is ethically wrong after visiting a farm on the weekend and reading about the pork industry. <p>Because different people can have different ethical stances informed by their worldviews, secularists believe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal ethical preferences arising from religious, non-religious or irreligious convictions should not be presumed to be of more or less worth. <p>So</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal ethical preferences aren’t sufficient to compel others. Rules which affect others need to be justified. <p>And</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We can persuade people to agree with our personal ethical preferences, but we can’t force them to.

So

- Sometimes we need to protect people from having others' personal ethical preferences imposed on them.

Stimulus #2 (A Theory of Justice)

When it comes to decisions where religion affects the rights of others, arguments for or against a secularist approach tend to focus on fairness. However, we often disagree over what's fair.

Secularists draw a distinction between decisions which affect the individual – which they believe only need to be justified in terms of their own moral code, preferences or worldview – and decisions which affect the rights of others – which they believe must be justified in terms of rational, shared principles. This doesn't mean that people can't be motivated by religion or irreligion, but that their arguments need separate justification.

John Rawls (1921–2002) was a moral and political philosopher who considered such problems. Among other things Rawls was interested in fairness and how we could make fair decisions that affect all of us. One of the things that Rawls thought about is our natural tendency to think of ourselves as rational, and to feel stronger about unfairness which disadvantages us (discrimination) than about unfairness which advantages us (privilege).

Rawls wrote a lot about justice and moral thought experiments to try and come up with fair ways to make decisions. Among these ideas, two are particularly relevant to secularism: “public reason giving” and the “veil of ignorance” (sometimes called “the original position”).

In the veil of ignorance experiment (in *A Theory of Justice*, 1971) we try to get around our natural tendency to base our ideas of fairness on what benefits us. To do this we imagine we have stepped behind a veil of ignorance; behind this veil we don't know anything about our personal circumstances. We don't know if we are rich or poor, religious or not, short or tall, man or woman, gay or straight or black or white.

Rawls imagined that if we had to make decisions from behind this veil that they would be fair. For example, if we didn't know whether we were rich or poor, we would surely not design a world where the rich ate the poor. If we didn't know whether or not we believed in any particular gods, then would we make a law that privileged, or discriminated against belief in deities?

In his book *Political Liberalism* (1993) Rawls thought about what it meant for the state to make fair decisions in the context of citizens who deeply disagree on philosophical, religious, and moral issues. Rawls argued that public policy decisions should be based on “public reasons” that are broad principles that reasonable people can agree on, rather than “non-public reasons” – which are more akin to personal preference.

From the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy: “*Public reason requires that the moral or political rules that regulate our common life be, in some sense, justifiable or acceptable to all those persons over whom the rules purport to have authority.*”

Stimulus #3 (Poker and Solitaire)

Imagine Jamila is playing solitaire (a single person card game) when she notices that a card which should be face down has accidentally been shuffled face up. Knowing what this card is might make it easier for Jamila to win the game, Jamila needs to decide whether to carry on playing or to reshuffle the cards. We might disagree about what the fair thing to do is, but this decision only seems to affect her.

Next imagine Jamila and George are playing poker against each other. When shuffling the cards George accidentally sees a card he shouldn't have, and this knowledge might be an advantage. George wants to keep playing, but Jamila wants to reshuffle the cards and start again.

Again, we might disagree about what the fair thing to do is, but this time the decision will affect other people. Jamila and George try to agree a fair way of deciding.

First Jamila says they should reshuffle the cards and points to a passage in her *Poker Bible* – an authoritative, some might say holy book – to support her case. George disagrees and points out that the passage is open to interpretation, and in any case, he doesn't think the *Poker Bible* is authoritative – he prefers the *Bible of Poker*.

Next George says they should get an authority figure to make the decision for them, and they should ask the inventor of poker – Tod. But Jamila says Tod isn't here right



now, and she's not even sure Tod did invent poker. George replies that he knows Tod really well, Tod's his mate and he's studied Tod's ways. If Tod was here, George is sure Tod would say to play on.

"Well," says Jamila, "I think I'm more important than you and more trustworthy. So, we should reshuffle the cards."

"That's not fair," George retorts. "I'm just as important as you and I think I'm just as trustworthy." At this point the friends are in serious disagreement.

George calmly explains why he thinks it would be fair to carry on playing, but Jamila equally calmly explains why she thinks they should reshuffle. Both feel the other only thinks their decision is fair because it might benefit them.

Stimulus #4 (Are we behind the veil?)

In other resources we considered some common things that secularists and others notice about religion and society, one of which was:

- People's ideas of what gods want often coincide with their own desires or moral preferences.

Many secularists (whether or not they are religious, and whether or not they believe that particular gods exist) argue that we are in fact behind a veil of ignorance of sorts. They argue that when someone suggests a course of action based on their belief that either a god or a religion wants it, we can't know if this is true, and so must assess the course of action on its own merits.

EXERCISES

- As a primer you might want to watch the video on the veil of ignorance from *Ethic Unwrapped*, or the YouTube video from the *Open University*, before going over the stimulus materials.
- You might also wish to **review Stimulus #1 (7B's Sandwiches)** and invite general discussion, before moving onto the second stimulus. Discuss the difference between personal decisions and those that affect others. This scenario is also used in resource 1.11.
- **Review Stimulus #2 (A Theory of Justice)** and the first four questions:
- **Q1.** *How do you think Rawls' idea of the veil of ignorance and public reason giving might help us make fairer decisions?*
- **Q2.** *What might be some problems or disagreements with this approach?*
- **Q3.** *If you were behind the veil of ignorance, would you want government decisions to be based on religion?*
- **Q4.** *Why or why not?*
- **Review Stimulus #3 (Poker and Solitaire)** and questions five and six:
- **Q5.** *In the Jamila and George story, how might they use the veil of ignorance thought experiment to try and decide what is fair?*
- **Q6.** *How is this story an analogy for decisions that affect the rights of others, particularly those that involve religion?*
- **Review Stimulus #4 (Are we behind the veil?)** and discuss.

TAKE IT FURTHER

- Create a poster to explain the principles of the veil of ignorance and a veil of ignorance thought experiment.
- Research a critique of Rawls' idea of the veil of ignorance and public reason giving. Do you find it compelling? Why or why not?
- Read the Wikipedia article on John Rawls for a summary of his major theories on fairness and justice, with links to more detailed explanations.
- Find a representation of the veil of ignorance in popular culture. For example this Dr Who episode:
<https://io9.gizmodo.com/the-great-hero-of-the-doctor-who-anniversary-special-is-1470394088>
- Contrast the use of "public reason" in the work of Immanuel Kant, John Rawls and a third philosopher of your choice. How might each of their interpretations be used to support or oppose secularism?

NOTES

You might want to skip the exercise and just have a general discussion of the stimulus, which encourages students to reflect on how people of differing worldviews can reason with each other.

1.07 How do secularists think about decisions? (Part 2) – The Lemon test

BACKGROUND	This resource uses the example of the “Lemon test” (an American legal principle) to further explore the basics of secularist decision making. The stimulus provides the history and basic principles of the Lemon test, along with theoretical examples. The exercise invites discussion and reflection on these examples of secularist reasoning. The resource can be used alongside or instead of 1.06 to prime students to consider implications of secularist reasoning in 1.08.
SUBJECTS	Politics Religion & Belief Education Citizenship SMSC Philosophy
KEY QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do secularists think about decisions?
LEARNING OUTCOMES	<p>Basic</p> <p>Students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how secularists think about decisions which affect the rights of others. • Reflect on how this process of thinking about decisions impacts on a range of simplistic examples involving religion and the rights of others. • Compare and contrast this approach to their own and others. <p>Advanced</p> <p>In addition to the basic learning outcomes, students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extrapolate how this process of secularist thinking about decisions would impact views on a range of social issues involving religion and the rights of others.
LINKS	<p>Resource page: ExploringSecularism.org/107-how-do-secularists-think-abo</p> <p>Other links: Video exploring the Lemon v Kurtzman trial https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ekoS74nZakg</p> <p>Wikipedia article on the trial https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lemon_v._Kurtzman</p>
STIMULUS	<p>Stimulus #1 (The Lemon test)</p> <p>Secularists share the desire to balance freedom of and from religion with other rights when making decisions which affect the rights of others. Different secularist thinkers articulate this in different ways and take different approaches.</p> <p>One example of a secularist approach is known as the Lemon test. While secularists might not necessarily use such language (it after all comes from a specific example), it illustrates the sort of moral, political and legal philosophy which secularists use.</p> <p>The background to the Lemon test was a 1971 court case in the United States of America called Lemon v. Kurtzman. The USA is a legally secularist country – its constitution forbids the government from either establishing or prohibiting religion. You might be interested in the full background of the case, but in summary the Supreme Court considered two laws which allowed public money to be used to fund teaching at religious schools. Arguments were made on both sides.</p> <p>The lawyers for David Kurtzman argued that the law treated all private schools (religious or not) equally and not to allow this would violate his religious freedom.</p> <p>The lawyers for Alton Lemon argued that being forced as a taxpayer to fund religious teaching violated his religious freedom and violated the separation of church and state.</p> <p>The Court eventually decided that the laws were unconstitutional. They set out a test by which they and future courts would consider whether laws related to religion would be constitutional, i.e. whether they would be secularist by neither unfairly advantaging nor disadvantaging people based on religion.</p> <p>The test had three parts (or prongs) and a law or policy would have to pass all three to be allowed, or to be considered fair from a secularist viewpoint.</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Purpose Prong: the law or policy decision must have a secular purpose, i.e. it might have purposes related to religion, but it must also have a purpose unrelated to religion/irreligion. 2. The Effect Prong: the law or policy decision must not have the principal or primary effect of advancing or inhibiting religion. 3. The Entanglement Prong: the law or policy decision must not result in an “excessive government entanglement” with religion.
EXERCISES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You might wish to watch the linked YouTube video as a primer. • Review Stimulus #1 (The Lemon test), as a class or in groups discuss each of the three prongs of the Lemon test and address the first three questions: • Q1. <i>Is something like the Lemon test a fair test (or tests) for laws or policy decisions which affect all of us?</i> • Assign groups one of the three examples (Example 1: A requirement for all schools to teach evolution Example 2: A ban on blasphemy Example 3: government funding of a new religious temple). Ask the related question. • Q2. <i>Pick one of the examples of a proposed a new law or policy above; does it pass each stage of the Lemon test?</i>
TAKE IT FURTHER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a poster explaining the Lemon test. • Hold a mock debate based on the proposed laws in question 2.
NOTES	<p>Notes on the potential laws for question 2</p> <p>Teaching evolution</p> <p>Purpose Prong: Teaching the scientific consensus theory on the diversity of life on earth has a clear educational purpose. While evolution is a contentious issue in some inter/irreligious debates, it is not scientifically controversial. One can debate whether specific scientific topics should be in the curriculum, but this debate can take place without any religious or irreligious claims.</p> <p>Effect Prong: Teaching evolution may have effects on people’s religious or irreligious views. It might undermine religious beliefs about creationism (though these can be promoted outside schools) and be favoured by irreligious groups. But both of these are distinctively secondary effects – the primary effect being education.</p> <p>Entanglement Prong: As the law applies to state institutions it does not create an excessive governmental entanglement. It would if it applied to teaching in religious institutions. There is some entanglement because some state institutions e.g. faith schools have a religious ethos.</p> <p>Banning blasphemy</p> <p>Purpose Prong: Blasphemy is fundamentally a religious concern and the purpose of blasphemy laws is to give religious ideas, institutions or identities privileged protections. This primary purpose is anti-secular. It might be dressed up in other secular purposes such as promoting tolerance or social cohesion.</p> <p>Effect Prong: There might be secondary effects, e.g. lessening insulting or offensive behaviour and restricting free expression unrelated to religion or irreligion. But the primary effect would be the restriction of speech about religion. This would inhibit alternative religious and irreligious views, while advancing the preferred view.</p> <p>Entanglement Prong: By judging what is and isn’t blasphemous the state would be intrinsically entangled with religious judgements.</p> <p>Government funding religious temple</p> <p>Purpose Prong: The primary purpose of this is to fund a religious institution which is not a secular endeavour. It might have other secular purposes such as supporting the secular functions of the building.</p> <p>Effect Prong: The primary effect of having your religious building state funded is to advance your religion. It might have secondary effects related to the non-religious functions of the building.</p> <p>Entanglement Prong: Entanglement is created by the state funding of the religious building, but how deep or long running this entanglement will be is unclear.</p>

1.08 How do secularists think about decisions? (Part 3) – You’re the town council

BACKGROUND	This stimulus and exercise take three simplified fictional examples involving religion and politics, designed to get students thinking about the application of basic secularist principles –explored in previous resources or introduced here – and their view on them. Students consider how in a democratic society people of different religions or beliefs can come together to make fair decisions.
SUBJECTS	Politics Religion & Belief Education Citizenship SMSC
KEY QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do secularists think about decisions? • What are religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination?
LEARNING OUTCOMES	<p>Basic</p> <p>Students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how a range of viewpoints are informed by how people think about decisions involving religion and the rights of others. • Categorise, compare and contrast these viewpoints with their own. <p>Advanced</p> <p>In addition to the basic learning outcomes, students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critically reflect on how a range of viewpoints are informed by how people think about decisions involving religion and the rights of others. • Extrapolate how secularist and non-secularist reasoning impacts other decisions involving religion and the rights of others.
LINKS	Resource page: ExploringSecularism.org/108-how-do-secularists-think-abo
STIMULUS	<p><i>Stimulus #1 (An introduction to Bradlaughton)</i></p> <p>The town of Bradlaughton has several major religious groups. Bradlaughtonians generally get on well together, but in the past there has been conflict with some in the various groups wanting the town run along their religious views. The town council want everyone to be able to live, work and participate in Bradlaughton without anyone’s religion being imposed or restricted. There are three contentious issues on the agenda of tonight’s meeting involving religion and the town. Each of the votes have been tied 3 vs 3. You have been asked to cast the deciding votes.</p> <p>Listen to the arguments of your fellow councillors, decide if they are secularist or not, which you agree with, and how you’ll vote.</p> <p><i>Stimulus #2 (Agenda items)</i></p> <p>Agenda item 1: Speed limits</p> <p>The Church of the One True Speed (COTS) has a large number of followers in Bradlaughton. They believe one of their gods wants everyone to drive at 26.5 mph and have led a long campaign for the speed limits in the town to be changed. They have produced a report arguing for the health and safety benefits of the 26.5 mph speed. The vote is “yes” to change the limit or “no” to keep it the same.</p> <p>The councillors’ viewpoints</p> <p>Councillor Scarlet (votes yes): “I am not a member of the Church of the One True Speed, but the COTS have been involved in our town for a long time, they are the largest religious group in Bradlaughton and are very active in charity activities. It would be undemocratic not to set the speed limit to 26.5 mph as they ask.”</p> <p>Councillor Mustard (votes yes): “I don’t have much time for the Church of the One True Speed, but this argument isn’t about their religious beliefs. The report we’ve heard about doesn’t make any purely religious arguments. It is concerned with health and safety and makes a secular argument for a 26.5 mph speed limit.”</p> <p>Councillor White (votes yes): “I am a long-standing member of the Church of the One True Speed. To say that we can’t drive at the speed God intended is an attack on our religious freedom. As our prophet clearly said, ‘sinners drive their automobiles at 20 mph, though the righteous speed at 26.5’. Don’t force us into sin.”</p>



Councillor Green (votes no): “I have tried to set my membership of the Church of the One True Speed aside, though it does inform my morality. I feel it is wrong to force my beliefs on others without a good reason. The prophet’s words on driving speed are open to interpretation and could be speaking of a metaphorical speed. In any case I don’t think it is the town council’s job to legislate against sin.”

Councillor Peacock (votes no): “I take issue with the report really being a religiously neutral argument. Although it tries dressing up the arguments for a 26.5 mph speed limit in language about health and safety, the underlying arguments are all basically religious. Investigators not coming from a religious perspective agree that 26.5 mph is far too fast and unsafe for a town like Bradlaughton.”

Councillor Plum (votes no): “The reason we shouldn’t make the speed limit 26.5 mph is because it is supported by the Church of the One True Speed, whose religion was stated by the fraudster Speedy Gonzales when he was caught driving over the limit. Obviously, the speed limit should be 20 mph; all other religions agree on that.”

Agenda item 2: School teaching

The Temple of Teifi are a small group in the town of Bradlaughton, whose members have a history of being discriminated against. One of their theological beliefs is that the moon is made of Teifi cheese and that they will one day travel there to share the bounty among all humankind. For both observing and non-observing members of the Temple, Teifi cheese has an important role in social gatherings and ceremonies. Representatives of the Temple have argued for the “Teifi Theory” to be taught alongside the theory that the moon is made of rock in science classes. Vote “yes” to teach this alternative theory or vote “no” to keep things as they are.

The councillors’ viewpoints

Councillor Scarlet (votes yes): “The Temple of Teifi are a marginalised group; we shouldn’t be further marginalising them by unfairly excluding their theory of the moon from science classes. To exclude their belief simply because it is religious is to privilege the majority’s view of what should and should not be taught.”

Councillor Mustard (votes yes): “As a member of the Temple of Teifi’s science committee I have studied the real scientific evidence on the moon and can indeed confirm it is made of cheese. The atheistic bias towards liking rocks explains their misconstruing the evidence to argue for their theory. Let the students learn both ideas and make up their own minds.”

Councillor White (votes no): “The Temple of Teifi just want their ridiculous moon theory taught so they can promote their foreign ideology of excessive cheese eating. This will undermine the moral fabric of our town.”

Councillor Green (votes yes): “The division between science and religion is put up by those that want to drive religion out of society. If we start saying that the Temple can’t have their views taught in schools, then they might be forced out of schools along with everyone else that wants to practise their religion. The moon being made of cheese is true for children from Temple families.”

Councillor Peacock (votes no): “Many cultures and religious groups have their own myths about how the moon was formed, and it is right that these should be covered in RE lessons, but these are not science and we shouldn’t give in to religious demands for their beliefs to be taught as if they were.”

Councillor Plum (votes no): “Schools should absolutely not teach anything about the moon being made of cheese as it is clearly false. Furthermore, schools should actively teach how harmful this nonsense is and the Temple of Teifi’s after-school class should be shut down if they continue to teach this cheesy claptrap.”

Agenda item 3: Birthdays

The Church of Birthdays believes in rebirth and that everyone should celebrate every day as their birthday. You can’t enter the church without a birthday hat on and some followers insist on only eating birthday cake. They want to make birthday hats a mandatory part of the school uniform. Vote “yes” to make this change; vote “no” to oppose it.

The councillors' viewpoints

Councillor Scarlet (votes no): "I am a member of the Church of Birthdays and practise it in my own way. I don't need church elders or the town council telling me what to wear to show I am living a moral life according to the teachings of my faith."

Councillor Mustard (votes no): "In the Temple of Teifi we celebrate birthdays with cheese on toast. I don't want another religion being forced on our children. We should ban birthday hats completely from public places."

Councillor White (votes yes): "Religious freedom means that sometimes accommodations have to be made; as long as these do not burden the running of the school, or harm the rights of others then they should be made."

Councillor Green (votes no): "I always wear a birthday hat when visiting their church out of respect, but that's their space where they get to decide the rules. A school needs to be inclusive for everyone with the rules based on common principles."

Councillor Peacock (votes yes): "No matter your religion or belief, there are good reasons to make birthday hats part of the school uniform that are entirely unrelated to their religious significance."

Councillor Plum (votes yes): "I'm not a member of the Church, but I really like birthdays. They're my happiest day of the year and if they make people happier then why not make them part of the school uniform?"

Stimulus #3 (A secularist viewpoint)

A secularist viewpoint (Agenda item 1: Speed limits)

Councillor Scarlet's viewpoint could be seen as secularist as they are not arguing on religious grounds but are making a majority argument. However, it isn't very secularist to argue that just because a big religion says something it should get its way, we don't know that all members of the Church support this belief, and we don't know what effect it will have on other people's rights. **Councillor Mustard** is making a secularist argument because they are saying the decision should be based on the evidence, not on the religious beliefs or identities of different people. **Councillor White** is definitely not making a secularist argument because their argument is based just on their religious beliefs. These may be okay for them, but what about others who don't share these beliefs? **Councillor Green** seems to be making a secularist argument; they have their beliefs but draw a line between religious rules they follow and rules that everyone should follow. Our personal beliefs inform our morality and how we look at all sorts of questions. But can we really look beyond our own personal views? **Councillor Peacock** is making a secularist argument very similar to **Councillor Mustard's**. But they disagree over whether the evidence really does justify the new speed limit, or whether the evidence is being twisted to suit someone's pre-existing belief. **Councillor Plum's** argument doesn't seem very secularist; they are making their view of the religion the core of the argument. Should the town council be in the business of arguing about religious beliefs? Is arguing that a religious belief is wrong different from saying that it should be set aside to focus on secular (not related to religion) arguments?

A secularist viewpoint (Agenda item 2: School teaching)

Councillor Scarlet's view isn't very secular. Secularists seek to include all groups including marginalised groups by making sure they have the same rights, not by treating their beliefs as special. If the Temple's view was being excluded because it was religious that wouldn't be secularist, but in reality, it is being excluded from a science class because it isn't scientific, and those arguing for its inclusion are doing so because it is religious. **Councillor Mustard** seems to be making a secular argument claiming to be based on science, not religion. But is this really the case? **Councillor White** isn't making a secularist argument as their opposition to the cheese theory being taught is based on who is proposing it and their religious identity. **Councillor Green** isn't making a very secular argument as they're saying religious views should be taught because they are religious. Green's view also assumes that members of the Temple and children from Temple backgrounds will share the same views. **Councillor Peacock** is making a secular argument as they are treating different religious ideas equally but saying they shouldn't be given any special weight, such as being equated with scientific ideas. **Councillor Plum's** views are complicated; they don't want a false belief being taught in science classes, but should schools actively challenge religious beliefs, and what about religious organisations teaching about their own beliefs?

A secularist viewpoint (Agenda item 3: Birthdays)

Councillor Scarlet is making a secularist argument. When the demands of religious leaders are privileged it can shut down debate and disagreement within that religion. **Councillor Mustard**'s argument is mixed. Not wanting a religion forced on you is very secularist but wanting religious practices that don't harm you or others banned, isn't. **Councillor White**'s argument is also complicated; different secularists might disagree over the extent to which accommodations need to be made to balance freedom of and from religion, but they don't acknowledge the difference between an optional accommodation and the compulsory uniform. **Councillor Green** is making a classic secularist argument based on the idea that groups should be able to set their own internal rules but not force them on others. **Councillor Peacock**'s argument is complicated; it seems to be secularist in that it seems to apply to everyone equally regardless of their religious belief, but they don't provide any detail to justify this. **Councillor Plum**'s argument is complicated; it isn't based on religion, but they seem to be arguing on the basis of what they'd personally like, rather than why this should apply to everyone else.

EXERCISES

- **Review Stimulus #1 (An introduction to Bradlaughton).** Read the introduction to the class before splitting into groups, each to go over one or two of the examples (Agenda items) depending on time.
- Groups **review Stimulus #2 (Agenda items).**
- Instruct the groups to discuss their example(s) and the first four questions.
- **Q1.** Are each of the Councillor's arguments secularist or not?
- **Q2.** Why or why not?
- **Q3.** How would you cast the deciding vote?
- **Q4.** Why?
- Ensure sufficient time is left for feedback and discussion.
- Give students the secularist viewpoint handout and give the groups time to discuss the final questions.
- Groups **review Stimulus #3 (A secularist viewpoint).**
- **Q5.** Does the secularist viewpoint change your view on either the best way to vote, or the views of the Councillors?
- **Q6.** Why or why not?
- If there is time, you can conduct a final class vote on each of the examples.

TAKE IT FURTHER

- Create your own decision for Bradlaughton Town Council. Write the background and think of a range of both secularist and non-secularist arguments for the councillors to make.
- Create a short roleplay to act out one of the discussions or your own example.
- Write a news story for the *Bradlaughton Gazette* covering the events above. It should feature quotes from the different councillors and residents.

1.09 Religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination (part 1) – Basic principles

BACKGROUND	This is a primer resource designed for younger students to make the ideas of religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination more accessible. The stimulus explores these concepts through accessible metaphors. In the exercises students reflect on how we recognise unfairness which advantages or disadvantages us.
SUBJECTS	Politics Religion & Belief Education Citizenship SMSC Fundamental British Values
KEY QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination?
LEARNING OUTCOMES	<p>Basic</p> <p>Students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and offer their opinions on the basic principle of privilege. <p>Advanced</p> <p>In addition to the basic learning outcomes, students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider how examples of privilege – including religious privilege – are relevant to the subject they are discussing.
LINKS	Resource page: ExploringSecularism.org/109-religious-privilege-toleranc
STIMULUS	<p><i>Stimulus #1 (Headwinds and mosquitos)</i></p> <p>Headwinds and tailwinds</p> <p>If you've done a lot of cycling, you've probably experienced the phenomenon of headwinds. This is when the wind is blowing you backwards, wind and rain might be going in your face and you have to work extra hard to get where you're going.</p> <p>If you have time, search for "headwinds" in Google Images. Then do a search for "tailwinds". What differences do you notice?</p> <p>Tailwinds are harder to visualise. Cyclists tend not to notice a tailwind (when the wind is blowing behind them) as much. When you are cycling with a tailwind, the wind is giving you a little boost, making it easier to get where you're going. This doesn't mean you don't still need to put the effort in, but it is easier. When cycling with a tailwind behind you, the air resistance from your speed can feel like a headwind in front of you.</p> <p>If you imagine a 15-minute cycle ride with a tailwind behind you, you are likely to hit a few pockets of air where there is briefly a headwind blowing against you. The odds are that you'd be more likely to notice and be unhappy about these brief headwinds.</p> <p>A variety of sociological and psychological studies back this up. But we can also think about our own experiences. If you're a sports fan you're likely to be upset when you feel a referee makes a bad decision against your team. You might accuse them of bias or favouritism. But if the referee makes a bad decision <i>in favour</i> of your team, you might not feel so strongly. If you have siblings and share the housework, you might remember all the times you had to clean their dishes; you probably don't remember the time you left your plate in the sink and they had to clean up for you.</p> <p>Mosquitos and loitering</p> <p>You might have heard of something called a "mosquito device". These are marketed as anti-loitering devices and they emit a very high frequency noise that is uncomfortable, sometimes painful, for young people (and pets), but generally cannot be heard by older people. This is because of changes in hearing as we get older.</p> <p>Imagine there is a group of young people who like to hang out around a public bench outside a shop. From their point of view, they are experiencing a 'benefit' of one of the few places to hang out with their friends.</p> <p>From the shop owner's point of view there is a harm in the young people's monopolisation of the space; it could put off customers. So, the shop owner wishes to purchase a mosquito device to discourage this loitering.</p> <p>The shop owner experiences the benefits of the device, but not the harms. They do experience the harms of the young people hanging out outside the shop, not the benefits to that social group. For the young people this is reversed.</p>



Based on their different power positions and experiences, the shop owner and the young people are likely to have very different feelings over whether the use of the device is fair.

Privilege and discrimination

When we talk about privilege and discrimination in a social context, we're talking about unfair advantages or disadvantages which affect groups of people based on their shared (or perceived to be shared) characteristics.

Examples might be racism, sexism, classism, ableism etc. There are all sorts of ways that society is set up to advantage or disadvantage particular groups. These can be complicated and overlapping, and they might not apply to everyone in that group, so speaking in generalisations can be problematic.

One area of privilege and discrimination involves religion. There are many ways in which individuals within religious groups (and those groups themselves) experience unfair advantages (privileges) or disadvantages (discrimination) based on religion.

For example, based on his membership of a religious group, James may experience **discrimination** by:

- Being turned down for a job because an employer is prejudiced against that group.
- Being the subject of unfair police suspicion based on actions of other members of the group.

He may also experience **privilege** by:

- Societal taboos against criticising his religious views.
- Special exemptions to the law for his religious group.

And that's only looking at how society treats that group. There may also be internal dynamics of privilege and discrimination. For example: within John's religious group, the views of men might be given greater weight or authority (**privilege**). But if John was a homosexual and LGBT people were the victims of prejudice within that group, then he might be the victim of discrimination.

EXERCISES

Exercise part #1

- Place a wastepaper bin on the desk at the front of the classroom. Ask students to scrunch up a piece of scrap paper into a ball.
- Stress that for this activity silence must be maintained.
- Sitting in their chairs each student gets one attempt to throw their scrunched up paper into the bin.
- Ask students to close their eyes and hold up their hands if they got their paper ball into the bin.
- Ask them to open their eyes and look around.
- Ask students to close their eyes and hold up their hands if they thought this was fair.
- Ask them to open their eyes and look around.
- **Q1.** Why are students at the back of the class less likely to think this was fair?
- **Q2.** Why are we better at recognising unfairness that disadvantages us, than those that advantage us, or disadvantage other people?

Exercise part #2

- **Q3.** What is a headwind?
- **Q4.** What is a tailwind?
- **Review Stimulus #1 (Headwinds and Mosquitos)**
- Do a Google Image search for headwinds and tailwinds.
- Invite discussion

1.10 Religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination (part 2) – What are they?

BACKGROUND	<p>Concepts of religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination are central to secularism. They come up in other resources and can be brought up in almost any discussion of religion in public life. Resources 1.10 and 1.11 address these directly and encourage students to engage with different viewpoints on these central terms.</p> <p>The resource contains three stimuli; the first defines these key terms, the second provides examples and the third compares privilege and discrimination. The exercises assess students' background knowledge and invite discussion of the examples and differing opinions on the key concepts.</p>
SUBJECTS	Politics Religion & Belief Education Citizenship SMSC Fundamental British Values
KEY QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination?
LEARNING OUTCOMES	<p>Basic</p> <p>Students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the basic principles of religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination. • Identify and comment on the role of religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination in simplistic examples of conflicts involving religion and the rights of others. <p>Advanced</p> <p>In addition to the basic learning outcomes, students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critically reflect on the principles of religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination, drawing on a range of outside examples. • Offer nuanced comments on the role of religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination in a range of social debates involving religion and the rights of others.
LINKS	Resource page: ExploringSecularism.org/110-religious-privilege-toleranc
STIMULUS	<p><i>Stimulus #1 (Principles)</i></p> <p>What are religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination?</p> <p>Privilege, tolerance and discrimination are key concepts within sociology and social justice. They are also key to secularism, and to arguments for or against a secularist approach.</p> <p>Privilege describes the benefits and advantages held by one group relative to another, which are the result of power dynamics.</p> <p>Privileged groups often view the imposition of their values as natural or normal. Because religious privilege is so normalised, many people have difficulty identifying it. To get around such “privilege blindness” we need empathy. If you are comfortable with one form of religion being imposed, how would you feel if it was another religion or belief system?</p> <p>“When you’re accustomed to privilege, equality feels like oppression.” – Anonymous</p> <p>Tolerance is the ability or willingness to allow practices or opinions that one differs from, dislikes or disagrees with. Synonyms include: forbearance, toleration, sufferance, liberality, open-mindedness, lack of prejudice, lack of bias, broad-mindedness, liberalism and pluralism. In terms of religion, tolerance is the ability to practise your religion or belief without interference and without impinging on the rights of others; in this way tolerance is not and cannot be absolute.</p> <p>Discrimination is the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people. Religious discrimination would be laws or practices which treat people unfairly or restrict their freedom because of religion or belief – either the religion or belief of the person being treated unfairly, or that of the person practising the unfair treatment.</p> <p>Privilege and discrimination can be seen as a horseshoe, as privilege for one group or idea inevitably means discrimination for alternative groups and ideas that are relatively disadvantaged by not receiving this privilege. For example, privileging group A in school admissions discriminates against group B as they are moved towards the back of the line.</p> <p>Many people are beneficiaries of privilege in some ways and victims of discrimination in others.</p>



Stimulus #2 (Examples)

In this stimulus you will examine six examples where religion impacts public life.

Example A: Bishops in the House of Lords

The UK House of Lords is an unelected chamber. That means most members hold their position – and can vote on laws that affect all of us – after being appointed. An exception to this (the appointment, not the voting) is the “Bishops’ Bench” – twenty-four bishops and two archbishops of the Church of England hold seats in the House of Lords based on their church offices.

Example B: Article 9 of the Human Rights Act

Article 9 of the Human Rights Act (which is also Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights) states:

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.
2. Freedom to manifest one’s religion or beliefs shall be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

Example C: Equality Act

The Equality Act sets the standard for equality and anti-discrimination law in Great Britain (Northern Ireland has its own version). It sets out the conditions where it is legal or illegal to treat people differently based on their “protected characteristics”. Among these are religion and belief and sexual orientation. That means that it is generally illegal for a business like a shop, restaurant or taxi company to refuse to serve someone because they are a member of a group the business owner doesn’t like.

For example, Barry the baker could refuse to sell Cindy a croissant because Barry doesn’t like Cindy. This would be legal. But if Barry refused to sell Cindy a croissant because Barry didn’t like women, or didn’t like gay people, or didn’t like Christians, or didn’t like Asian people, or didn’t like people with disabilities or didn’t like old people, this would all probably be illegal.

Example D: Blasphemy laws

Blasphemy is defined in the Cambridge Dictionary as “something that you say or do that shows you do not respect God or a religion”. Generally, the term is applied by different groups to describe beliefs or statements they have a theological disagreement with, because either they differ on interpretations of a religion, or criticise religious ideas and institutions. Blasphemy laws can take the form of laws banning insulting religions or causing religious offence.

The common law offences of blasphemy and blasphemous libel were abolished in England and Wales in 2008. As of 2018, blasphemy remains a common law offence in Scotland and Northern Ireland although these laws are probably not enforceable.

Elsewhere in the world, blasphemy laws are enforced, and in some theocracies carry the death penalty. Some people would like to see blasphemy laws introduced or other laws against insulting religions, though very few advocate such extreme penalties.

Example E: Non-stun slaughter

Animal welfare legislation in the UK requires all animals to be stunned before slaughter in order to minimise suffering. The only exemption is for religious communities to meet Jewish and Muslim religious dietary preferences.

Example F: Separation of church and state

Many countries have a formal legal requirement for religious and state institutions to be separate. Others have the opposite (i.e. they require the state to maintain religious institutions). Others have something in between. Perhaps the clearest example of a country with a formal separation of church and state is the USA, whose constitution’s First Amendment reads:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

Stimulus #3 (Privilege or discrimination?)

Imagine Kya and Lola are two students of equal ability who are running against each other in the final race of the school sports day. Mr Kelly the PE teacher is Lola's father and wants her to win, so gives her a 10m head start. This could be considered an example of tolerance if the advantage was earned in some relevant way (e.g. the rules of the race could agree that the runner with the best score in qualifying gets a head start) or necessary to offset another advantage (e.g. on a circular track, athletes on the outside lane would need to run further if they started in line).

The question is, has Mr Kelly:

- a. Privileged Lola by giving her a 10m advantage **or**
- b. Discriminated against Kya by giving her a 10m disadvantage

Often whether we describe something as privilege or discrimination is simply a matter of emphasis.

For example: A law which discriminates against atheist citizens would be an example of religious privilege (because it would give the religious a comparative advantage). A law which privileged religious citizens would be discriminatory against non-religious citizens (because it would deny them a comparative advantage).

What follows are ten statements, five of which secularists generally consider to be examples of religious privilege and five of which secularists generally consider to be examples of religious discrimination.

Privilege

- a. The views of religious leaders are treated with greater weight because they are assumed to be of higher moral value or to be representative of large groups.
- b. There are many religious exemptions to laws ranging from animal welfare legislation to employment law.
- c. Religious based conscientious objections are often given greater weight than those based on other personal preferences.
- d. Societal taboos protect religious beliefs or practices from criticisms levelled at non-religious or irreligious comparisons.
- e. Certain positions in public office or employment are reserved for people of specific religions.

Discrimination

- f. Some people are insulted or attacked because of their religion or lack of religion.
- g. Some people are turned down from certain jobs because of their religion or lack of religion.
- h. In some places the practices of certain religious or irreligious groups are banned without good justification.
- i. In some places it is illegal to hold certain religious or irreligious views.
- j. Some people refuse to serve others because of their religious beliefs.

EXERCISES

- Divide a whiteboard into six segments, with three columns and two rows. In the top three boxes write the terms: Privilege, Tolerance and Discrimination.
- Ask the class **Q1**. *What do these terms mean to you: a) privilege, b) tolerance, c) discrimination?* Write down some key words or phrases in the boxes.
- In the bottom three boxes put the terms: Religious privilege, Religious tolerance and Religious discrimination.
- Ask the class **Q2**. *What do these terms mean to you: a) religious privilege, b) religious tolerance, c) religious discrimination?* Write down some key words or phrases in the boxes.
- **Review Stimulus #1 (Principles)** and invite general discussion.
- **Review Stimulus #2 (Examples)** as a class, in groups or individually and answer the next two questions
- **Q3**. Are each of the examples **(a–f)** religious privilege, tolerance or discrimination?
- **Q4**. Why? **(a–f)**
- After discussion see if you can place each example into one of the columns.
- **Review Stimulus #3 (Privilege or discrimination?)** and invite general discussion.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q5. For each of the examples of religious privilege (a–e), rephrase this so it is an example of religious discrimination. For each of the examples of religious discrimination (f–j), rephrase this so it is an example of religious privilege. • As a class discuss, or individually answer the final questions • Q6. Do you agree that this is an example of religious privilege (a–e) or discrimination (f–j)? • Q7. Why or why not? (a–j)
TAKE IT FURTHER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a poster called “10 rules for religious tolerance”. What will these rules be? Who will create/enforce them? How will they affect people with different religious/irreligious views? • Review the viewpoints in resources 1.03 and 1.04 (<i>Viewpoints on religion and secularism (part 1) – Religion and me and (part 2) – Religion and others</i>). Are each of these people advocating for religious privilege, tolerance or discrimination? • What role does religious privilege, tolerance or discrimination play in the speech in resource 1.05 (<i>Viewpoints on religion and secularism (part 3)</i>)? • Review the councillors’ arguments in resource 1.08 (<i>How do secularists make decisions? (part 3)</i>) What role does religious privilege, tolerance or discrimination play in each of their viewpoints? • Create a poster to illustrate the concepts of religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination. • Think of three examples of religious or religion-related practices which are privileged, tolerated or discriminated against. Why is this the case? What would it look like if they were treated differently (e.g. if a practice that is currently privileged were tolerated, or a practice that is currently tolerated were discriminated against)?
NOTES	<p>The <i>Take it further</i> activities in this resource are shared with 1.11 (<i>Religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination (part 3)</i>)</p> <p>For any aspect of religious or irreligious practice considered in RE, Politics or Citizenship Studies, students could explore how the practice is affected by religious privilege, tolerance or discrimination in their own and different societies.</p> <p>Alternatively, the role of religious (or other) privilege, tolerance and discrimination can be explored in practical case studies and examples such as those attached to Theme 3 (Equality and human rights) or Theme 4 (Secularism, religion and society: key debates).</p> <p>Notes on Stimulus #3</p> <p>The following are examples of how the statements could be rewritten to change the emphasis between religious privilege and discrimination or vice versa:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The views of those who are not religious leaders are treated with less weight because they are not assumed to be of higher moral value or to be representative of large groups. b. There are many exemptions to laws ranging from animal welfare legislation to employment law that benefit the religious. c. Conscientious objections based on non-religious personal preferences are not given as much weight as those based on religious beliefs. d. Societal taboos mean those criticising religious beliefs or practices are treated harshly compared to those criticising non-religious or irreligious practices. e. Certain positions in public office or employment are closed off for people of specific religions or who are non-religious. f. Some people have the advantage of not being (or being less likely to be) insulted or attacked because of their religion. g. Some people have an advantage when applying for certain jobs because their religion or belief is more favoured, or less disliked. h. In some places certain religious or irreligious groups have the privilege of not having their practices banned, when comparable practices are. i. In some places the law supports specific religious or irreligious views. j. Some people are able to refuse to serve others because of their religious beliefs, while being unlikely to be refused service because of theirs.

1.11 Religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination (part 3) – How do we address them?

BACKGROUND	<p>Concepts of religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination are central to secularism. They come up in other resources and can be brought up in almost any discussion of religion in public life. Resources 1.10 and 1.11 address these directly and encourage students to engage with different viewpoints on these central terms.</p> <p>The resource contains three stimuli. The first explores how students might experience religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination. The second explores how these may influence viewpoints on religions and society. The third explores how they might impact on our views of others.</p>
SUBJECTS	Politics Religion & Belief Education Citizenship SMSC Fundamental British Values
KEY QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination? • How do secularists think about decisions?
LEARNING OUTCOMES	<p>Basic</p> <p>Students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the basic principles of religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination. • Identify and comment on the role of religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination in simplistic examples of conflicts involving religion and the rights of others. <p>Advanced</p> <p>In addition to the basic learning outcomes, students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critically reflect on the principles of religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination, drawing on a range of outside examples. • Offer nuanced comments on the role of religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination in a range of social debates involving religion and the rights of others.
LINKS	Resource page: ExploringSecularism.org/111-religious-privilege-toleranc
STIMULUS	<p>Stimulus #1 (An RE lesson)</p> <p>During an RE lesson, students have learnt about the role of worship in different religious traditions (and considered non-religious analogues such as personal reflection). They are then split into three groups and asked to consider ways in which worship is affected by religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination.</p> <p>The first group discusses the religious privilege in compelling, or giving special support to, worship. Dominic points out worship being an official part of school assemblies.</p> <p>The second group discusses the religious tolerance in allowing people to worship freely e.g. the quiet room where students can go to pray or reflect over their lunch break and Rima shares her experiences of going to church on a Sunday.</p> <p>The final group discusses how religious discrimination can affect worship. Paige shares her experience of their synagogue being vandalised, leaving them unable to attend prayers.</p> <p>When the groups feed back, there is some disagreement over whether the groups have put the different examples of practice into the right categories, and over whether it is fair or unfair for different practices to be tolerated.</p> <p>Susanna feels some examples don't fit neatly into religious privilege, tolerance or discrimination. The teacher says this can be thought of as a continuum and the class discuss how other examples fit perhaps on a left-to-right scale.</p> <p>The next week the class have a history lesson about conscientious objection, perhaps considering those that have refused to fight in wars or practised civil disobedience motivated by religious or irreligious beliefs. This brings the discussion round to conscientious objection and what it means in today's society.</p> <p>The class generally agree that people should not be forced to do something against their conscience, but disagree on what exactly this means and how it applies to different situations. This could bring up some issues that require careful handling, particularly as it relates to equality and the rights of others.</p>



Stimulus #2 (Viewpoints)

Return to the viewpoints from resource 1.04 (*Viewpoints on religion and secularism (part 2)*)

- a. "We're a Christian country and have earned the privileges religion has. In a democracy, if most people want Christian services provided then why should non-religious services be imposed? I like having prayers in school and at the start of meetings; if you don't like them then don't turn up."
- b. "It's a problem when the government picks and chooses between religions. But as long as each religion is treated equally then why shouldn't religion as a whole be promoted? Religious freedom means being able to practise your religion, so this should be supported by the state."
- c. "Religion might inform people's personal values, but when we come together as a group to make decisions that affect all of us, decisions should be made based on reason and evidence, not just personal feelings. Otherwise what basis do we have to say your personal religious feelings should trump mine?"
- d. "Religion is the only basis for morality and so should be the basis of our laws and decisions. If people don't follow my religion it harms our society, which we all have an interest in preventing. If a law isn't consistent with religion then it can't be moral and forcing people to follow immoral laws is wrong."
- e. "The only way to ensure no religion is treated more favourably than others is to completely ban religion from public life. If you want to be religious, you should keep that in your home, along with any religious symbolism or claims. People guided by personal religious ideas have nothing to contribute."
- f. "Everyone should have the right to practise their personal religion or belief, but this should never be imposed on others. The government should stay out of people's religious beliefs and shouldn't support religious practices or beliefs. This requires the state and its services to be religiously neutral."

Stimulus #3 (7B's Sandwiches)

Class 7B have done so well on their RE test that Mrs Butcher has decided to reward them with a big plate of bacon sandwiches. However, six students have a moral conviction which means they don't want to eat them.

- Yvette is Jewish; she doesn't want to violate a widely held Jewish belief that pork products aren't Kosher and shouldn't be eaten.
- Tayyab is Muslim; he doesn't want to violate a widely held Islamic belief that pork products aren't Halal and shouldn't be eaten.
- Sasha is Christian; she's come to believe that eating meat is a sin and her god doesn't want her to. This belief isn't shared by most Christians.
- Patrick is an atheist; he believes that the only reason people accept meat eating is because of religious influence, and that the only rational diet is pescetarianism.
- Veronika is a lifelong vegan; veganism is an important part of her life and central to her ethical and dietary decision making.
- Toby decided this morning that eating meat is ethically wrong after visiting a farm on the weekend and reading about the pork industry.

After some discussion various other students suggest the following:

- a. All the students should have to eat the sandwiches.
- b. None of the students should have to eat the sandwiches.
- c. Yvette shouldn't have to eat the sandwich because it goes against Judaism. But the others should.
- d. Tayyab shouldn't have to eat the sandwich because Muslims face religious discrimination that the others don't.
- e. Yvette, Tayyab and Sasha shouldn't need to eat the sandwiches because they all have a strong religious objection, but the others just have their personal preferences.
- f. Yvette, Tayyab, and Veronika shouldn't have to eat the sandwiches because their objections are central to their worldview.
- g. Patrick, Veronika and Toby shouldn't need to eat the sandwiches because their objections are based on their own reasoning, rather than just religion.

	<p>h. Yvette and Tayyab shouldn't have to eat the sandwiches, because objections to eating pork are mainstream in Judaism and Islam. But Sasha should, because the idea that meat eating is a sin is fringe within Christianity.</p> <p>i. Veronika shouldn't have to eat the sandwiches because of her life long objection. But Toby's objection is recent and wishy-washy.</p>
<p>EXERCISES</p>	<p>Questions for Stimulus #1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Stimulus #1 (An RE lesson) as a class or in groups answer questions one to five: • Q1. <i>How does our view of what counts as religious privilege, tolerance or discrimination affect our view on the place of religion in society?</i> • Q2. <i>Why might people disagree over whether something is religious privilege, tolerance or discrimination?</i> • Q3. <i>Why do you think that religious privilege is good or bad for a fair society?</i> • Q4. <i>Why do you think that religious tolerance is good or bad for a fair society?</i> • Q5. <i>Why do you think that religious discrimination is good or bad for a fair society?</i> • Q6. <i>Write down between six and ten examples of religious or religion-related practices.</i> • Q7. <i>Does our society treat these examples of religious practice with religious privilege, tolerance or discrimination?</i> • Q8. <i>For each example in Q7, how does this affect different people's rights?</i> • Review Stimulus #2 (Viewpoints) in groups and discuss the next questions. Alternatively split groups between stimulus parts 2 and 3. • Q9. <i>How might different people's viewpoints on religious privilege, tolerance or discrimination influence their thoughts on social issues?</i> • Q10. <i>How might different people's viewpoints on religious privilege, tolerance or discrimination be influenced by their own background and experiences?</i> • Review Stimulus #3 (7B's Sandwiches) in groups and discuss the next questions. • Q11. <i>Why are each of the objections (a–i) an example of religious privilege, tolerance or discrimination?</i> • Q12. <i>Each of these six student's moral preferences is consistent. What would happen if they had inconsistent or opposing moral preferences?</i>
<p>TAKE IT FURTHER</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a poster called "10 rules for religious tolerance". What will these rules be? Who will create/enforce them? How will they affect people with different religious/irreligious views? • Review the viewpoints in resources 1.03 and 1.04 (<i>Viewpoints on religion and secularism (part 1) and (part 2)</i>). Are each of these people advocating for religious privilege, tolerance or discrimination? • What role does religious privilege, tolerance or discrimination play in the speech in resource 1.05 (<i>Viewpoints on religion and secularism (part 3)</i>)? • Review the councillors' arguments in resource 1.08 (<i>How do secularists make decisions? (part 3)</i>). What role does religious privilege, tolerance or discrimination play in each of their viewpoints? • Create posters to illustrate the concepts of religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination. • Think of three examples of religious or religion-related practices which are privileged, tolerated or discriminated against. Why is this the case? What would it look like if they were treated differently (e.g. if a practice that is currently privileged were tolerated, or a practice that is currently tolerated were discriminated against)?
<p>NOTES</p>	<p>For any aspect of religious or irreligious practice considered in RE, Politics or Citizenship, students could explore how the practice is affected by religious privilege, tolerance or discrimination in their own and different societies.</p>

1.12 Religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination (part 4) – The paradox of tolerance

BACKGROUND	<p>This resource is aimed at older (KS5) students as it requires critical engagement with more complicated ideas regarding tolerance. The stimuli explore philosophical perspectives on the so called “paradox of tolerance” – that in the interest of tolerance we must tolerate some forms of intolerance, but not others – and practical examples of how secularists and others address these questions.</p> <p>This can be combined with 1.06 for an in-depth look at religious tolerance and secularist reasoning.</p>
SUBJECTS	Politics Religion & Belief Education Citizenship SMSC Fundamental British Values
KEY QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination? • Why do people support or oppose secularism?
LEARNING OUTCOMES	<p>Basic</p> <p>Students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the paradox of tolerance and how this can inform views on secularism. <p>Advanced</p> <p>In addition to the basic learning outcomes, students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critically engage with the paradox of tolerance, relating it to a range of real social issues.
LINKS	Resource page: ExploringSecularism.org/112-religious-privilege-toleranc
STIMULUS	<p>Stimulus #1 (The paradox of tolerance)</p> <p>The so-called “paradox of tolerance”, was first described by a philosopher called Karl Popper in his 1945 book: <i>The Open Society and Its Enemies Vol. 1</i>:</p> <p><i>“Less well known is the paradox of tolerance: Unlimited tolerance must lead to the disappearance of tolerance. If we extend unlimited tolerance even to those who are intolerant, if we are not prepared to defend a tolerant society against the onslaught of the intolerant, then the tolerant will be destroyed, and tolerance with them.—In this formulation, I do not imply, for instance, that we should always suppress the utterance of intolerant philosophies; as long as we can counter them by rational argument and keep them in check by public opinion, suppression would certainly be unwise. But we should claim the right to suppress them if necessary even by force; for it may easily turn out that they are not prepared to meet us on the level of rational argument, but begin by denouncing all argument; they may forbid their followers to listen to rational argument, because it is deceptive, and teach them to answer arguments by the use of their fists or pistols. We should therefore claim, in the name of tolerance, the right not to tolerate the intolerant.”</i></p> <p>Popper is not saying that we should abandon tolerance or have no tolerance for intolerance. But that in the interest of preserving overall tolerance we might have to limit tolerance in specific instances.</p> <p>The philosopher John Rawls (see resource 1.06) agrees with Popper that society should tolerate intolerant behaviour in order to avoid the greater intolerance of oppression, but society has a reasonable right of “self-preservation” that can supersede the principle of tolerance. He said:</p> <p><i>“While an intolerant sect does not itself have title to complain of intolerance, its freedom should be restricted only when the tolerant sincerely and with reason believe that their own security and that of the institutions of liberty are in danger.”</i></p> <p>In this case we can replace “tolerance/greater tolerance” with “liberalism/greater liberalism” or “fairness/greater fairness”.</p>

Stimulus #2 (The paradox of religious tolerance)

So, how does this apply to secularism and religious tolerance?

Secularists recognise that people with different worldviews can have very different ideas about how to live a good life, that these might occasionally be in conflict, and that they might include intolerant views and practices.

Secularists recognise that religion can have positive and negative manifestations, and believe that preventing religious privilege or discrimination can prevent most of these negative manifestations. But to do this can require limits on religious tolerance, in order to protect greater tolerance.

This limit on religious tolerance is reflected in Article 9 of the Human Rights Act having two separate clauses, which state:

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.

2. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs shall be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

If religious tolerance or freedom were unlimited there would only be the need for the first clause. You will notice that neither clause creates a duty on the state to encourage religion.

Stimulus #3 (Examples)

In the following example we consider three reasonably common negative manifestations of religion. That is not to suggest that all religions, or all of any one religion manifests itself in such ways, or to that extent, or that irreligious beliefs can't manifest in similarly negative ways.

Example a. Homophobia

Some religious groups have homophobic beliefs, i.e. they believe that natural human sexualities (other than heterosexual) and gender identities (other than male or female) are immoral and should be prevented.

In the interest of religious tolerance, we might tolerate the following intolerant behaviours:

- Publishing books or delivering lectures on why being LGBT is wrong.
- Not being friends with LGBT people.
- Not having LGBT clergy (priests, imams, rabbis etc.).

In the interest of religious tolerance, we might not tolerate the following intolerant behaviours:

- Publishing books or delivering lectures advocating violence against LGBT people.
- Refusing to provide goods or services to LGBT customers.
- Refusing to hire LGBT candidates for a job.

Example b. Restrictions on blasphemy

Some religious groups believe that it is wrong to say or think certain things that go against their religious beliefs or criticise or disrespect figures in their religion.

In the interest of religious tolerance, we might tolerate the following intolerant behaviours:

- Preaching that people who commit blasphemy will go to Hell.
- Banning people who commit blasphemy from being a member of the religion.
- Not being friends with people whose religions they consider blasphemous.

In the interest of religious tolerance, we might not tolerate the following intolerant behaviours:

- Preaching that people who commit blasphemy should be violently attacked.
- Passing laws banning blasphemy.
- Refusing to provide goods or services to customers whose religions they consider blasphemous.



Example c. Unscientific beliefs

Some religious groups subscribe to beliefs that they might view as theologically true or even believe are scientifically accurate, but are from a scientific perspective factually wrong, e.g. the world being 6,000 years old.

In the interest of religious tolerance, we might tolerate the following intolerant behaviours:

- Preaching that unscientific beliefs are in fact true or scientific.
- Persuading followers to make ethical decisions in accordance with those unscientific beliefs.
- Refusing to be friends with followers of religions (or non-religious worldviews) that do not share these unscientific beliefs.

In the interest of religious tolerance, we might not tolerate the following intolerant behaviours:

- Teaching that unscientific beliefs are in fact true or scientific in schools.
- Making those unscientific beliefs the basis of laws or policy.
- Refusing to provide goods or services to customers who follow religions (or non-religious worldviews) that do not share these unscientific beliefs.

EXERCISES

- Discuss the first question as a class.
- **Q1.** Should religious tolerance be limited?
- **Review Stimulus #1 (The paradox of tolerance)**
- Invite general discussion.
- **Review Stimulus #2 (The paradox of religious tolerance)**
- **Q2.** *Why does a tolerant society require (or not require) limits on religious tolerance?*
- **Q3.** *How does secularism address the paradox of tolerance?*
- **Q4.** *How do critics of secularism address the paradox of tolerance?*
- **Q5.** *Why should a concern for religious tolerance lead us to support or oppose secularism?*
- **Review Stimulus #3 (Examples)**
- **Q6.** *In the examples (a-c), what intolerance would be caused if the intolerant behaviours were outlawed?*

TAKE IT FURTHER

- Create a poster describing the paradox of tolerance.
- Write a short story or roleplay which illustrates the paradox of tolerance.
- Write a short essay entitled: "In the interest of religious tolerance, religious intolerance should be tolerated."

1.13 Different types of secularism (part 1) – Berlinerblau’s “six types”

BACKGROUND	In this resource students explore and reflect on six different approaches to, or models of, secularism identified by sociologist of religion and secularism, Jacques Berlinerblau, including their strengths and weaknesses. Students can consider how very different approaches to the questions that secularism raises can come about from similar starting principles. They compare these models to the guarantees of freedom of belief in the Human Rights Act and Convention on the Rights of the Child.
SUBJECTS	Politics Citizenship Religion & Belief Education
KEY QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What different types of secularism are there?
LEARNING OUTCOMES	<p>Basic</p> <p>Students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare and contrast a range of approaches to secularism. • Offer a viewpoint on the positives and negatives of different approaches to secularism, drawing on basic source material. <p>Advanced</p> <p>In addition to the basic learning outcomes, students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer a viewpoint on the positives and negatives of different approaches to secularism, drawing on contemporary examples and outside knowledge. • Extrapolate from the source material how a range of approaches to secularism would impact on social issues involving religion and the rights of others.
LINKS	Resource page: ExploringSecularism.org/113-different-types-of-secularism
STIMULUS	<p>The stimulus for this resource draws on sociologist of religion and secularism, Jacques Berlinerblau’s definition of and six types of secularism. Use the slideshow or handouts.</p> <p>Stimulus #1 (Two necessities)</p> <p>Berlinerblau</p> <p><i>“Secularism is a political philosophy, which, at its core, is preoccupied with, and often deeply suspicious of, any and all relations between government and religion. It translates that preoccupation into various strategies of governance, all of which seek to balance two necessities: (1) the individual’s need for freedom of, or freedom from, religion, and (2) a state’s need to maintain order.”*</i></p> <p>– Prof. Jacques Berlinerblau, director of the Program for Jewish Civilization at Georgetown University.</p> <p>* The phrase “maintain order” might seem out of place in the definition as it encompasses a wide range of secularist models throughout history. The phrase “ordered liberty” has fallen out of common use and can be summed up as the freedom of the individual to act being limited when it might undermine “order”, which could be taken to mean the social order, the rights of others, or the rule of law.</p> <p>The six types</p> <p>From this, Berlinerblau argues that there are six main types of secularism. These are differentiated by their approach to the “two necessities”.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Separationism Disestablishmentarianism <i>Laïcité</i> Accommodationism Non-cognisance State Sponsored Atheism <p>There are overlaps between the different types and terminology varies.</p>

Stimulus #2 (The six types)

THE SIX TYPES

a. Separationism

Background: Separationism is the idea that “Church” (read religious institutions) and “State” (read government and public institutions) should be separate institutions and not interfere in each other’s running and spheres of influence. As well as in enlightenment philosophy, we can trace these ideas in the works of numerous Jewish, Christian and Muslim theologians and philosophers. Separationism can also be understood in a wider sense as the separation of religious and state interests and the idea that the state shouldn’t aid or restrict religion.

Positive view: By separating religious and state institutions, you remove the ability of the state to interfere in religious practices and the ability of religious institutions to use the state to impose their practices or beliefs.

Negative view: Critics argue that religious and state institutions can have a positive relationship working together, and that if assured of dominance, larger state religions are more secure and able to advocate for minority religious rights. Others question why religious institutions specifically should be separated from the state and why states shouldn’t reflect the religious makeup and concerns of their citizens. In addition, such models can be criticised for focusing too much on religious institutions at the expense of addressing other ways the use or misuse of religious power might undermine individuals’ or society’s freedom of and from religion.

Necessity (1) freedom of/from religion: Such models see the state’s involvement in religion as the principle driver of restrictions on religious freedom. They argue that freedom from state control of religion (or vice versa) provides freedom for individuals to make their own religious choices.

Necessity (2) ordered liberty: Such models see the entanglement of religion with the affairs of the state as undermining the state’s secular function which is to maintain ordered liberty. Separationism traditionally saw competition for control of the state as being a key driver of interreligious conflict. Proponents of this model argue that where the state dictates religious matters, it imposes on the ordered liberty of individuals, and where religious matters impose on the state, it undermines the state’s ability to maintain ordered liberty.

b. Disestablishmentarianism

Background: Disestablishmentarianism is very similar in its concern over disentangling state and religious institutions, but usually it is specifically concerned with the disestablishment of formal state religions. For that reason, the positive/negative views and approaches to the two necessities are basically the same as for separationism.

Where disestablishmentarianism differs from separationism is the additional concern and debate over what should belong to the state or the religion when religious institutions have been owned or funded by the state as part of establishment. For example, when the Anglican Church was disestablished in Wales, the Church in Wales was no longer able to directly tax the population. However, the properties which such taxes (tithes) helped fund were kept by the Church.

c. *Laïcité*

Background: This is strongly associated with the French model of secularism which emerged alongside republicanism in reaction to abuses committed by religious and aristocratic authorities. It is best understood as the idea that there is a fiercely secular public realm, which needs to be enforced, to maintain separation from religion and religious conflict.

Positive view: In countries with a strong *Laïcité* tradition it is often an important part of national cultural identity and has often been successful in preventing internal religious conflicts. Such models have a strong focus on egalitarianism and a positive view of citizens as holders of rights and responsibilities.

Negative view: Critics argue that *Laïcité* leads to an obsession with religion and desire to legislate about religion that prioritises homogeneity over pluralism. Some argue that its emergence in such a specific cultural context leaves it inflexible and unable to respond to cultural change.



Necessity (1) freedom of/from religion: *Laïcité* heavily favours freedom from religion in the public sphere, relegating freedom of religion largely to the private sphere or personal practice.

Necessity (2) ordered liberty: Such systems are suspicious of overt religious manifestations that are seen as potential sources of conflict or competing authority. *Laïcité* sees participation in a particular form of secular citizenship as an important responsibility which allows rights to be granted.

d. Accommodationism

Background: All models of secularism are accommodationalist to an extent. But what is referred to as “Accommodationism” is the belief that religion is a public good that can be promoted by the state as long as it doesn’t unfairly privilege one religion over any others. In this view the state should respond to traditional conflicts caused by and between religions by making religious organisations partners in the delivery of services and the maintenance of order.

Positive view: The need to appeal for state support can moderate religions, leading to them being more managerial and service-oriented and less evangelical. With less of a need to compete for new converts, religions are freer to work together, and a less turbulent religious marketplace reduces the likelihood of religious upheavals. The state is able to harness religions’ potential for social good – alleviating a welfare burden on the state – while gaining influence over religious communities.

Negative view: While reducing interreligious conflict, such policies can increase oppression within communities by setting religious community leaders up as gatekeepers. Such policies undermine the principle of equality before one unified law. Such policies do not well accommodate small religious communities and the religiously unaffiliated or nonreligious. Such policies can encourage politicians to appeal to religious blocs rather than individuals or cross-community initiatives.

Necessity (1) freedom of/from religion: Such models generally prioritise freedom of religion over freedom from religion, and see such rights as more communal than individualist. Proponents of such models argue that they moderate the negative aspects of religion that citizens might need freedom from.

Necessity (2) ordered liberty: In such models, religious institutions and leaders are seen as key in maintaining order within their in-group, alongside rather than in competition with the state’s own maintenance of order.

e. Non-cognisance

Background: This is the idea that the state doesn’t take “cognisance” of religious concerns, but dons a “veil of ignorance” which blinds it to these. The state can recognise things like religious freedom and religious discrimination (where it has a secular interest in them) but aims to be neutral on (or blind to) theological issues.

Positive view: This means that the state treats religious organisations and irreligious organisations equally. The state treats the secular concerns of all citizens, whether religious or not, equally.

Negative view: A problem with this could be that because of traditional religious privilege and discrimination, the secular concerns of certain religious groups, leaders or organisations end up being given more or less attention. Others might question why religious (or irreligious) concerns should be excluded from public policy making. Others question the legitimacy of differentiating between religious or secular concerns.

Necessity (1) freedom of/from religion: In effect it aims to separate religion and state (and vice versa) while maintaining a state role in protecting freedom of and from religion. Because the state is non-cognisant of purely religious concerns it can’t act on them or be used to impose on them.

Necessity (2) ordered liberty: This model restricts the state to maintaining rights and policies that can be articulated in a secular manner. This sees the scope of ordered liberty as being defined to those restrictions and protections that can be secularly justified.



f. State Sponsored Atheism

Background: Some states have adopted official policies of promoting atheism or outlawing religious practices or institutions. Most advocates of secularism do not consider this to be a form of secularism – particularly as such states have usually targeted religion to avoid rivalry with their own official dogma.

Positive view: Religion has often been a source of disruption and conflict. States which mandate atheism might hope to escape such conflicts and create a more homogeneous nation with a unified worldview.

Negative view: Such states have tended to be extremely repressive and operate functionally similarly to theocracies. It is unreasonable to expect groups (particularly marginalised or minority groups) to abandon religious and closely related cultural practices and beliefs.

Necessity (1) freedom of/from religion: This form of secularism (if it can be considered one) is not generally concerned with freedom *of* religion, however it could be considered an extreme attempt to maintain freedom *from* religion. Some such states (like the theocracies they mirror) might make limited accommodations for religious freedom where it is not in conflict with state order.

Necessity (2) ordered liberty: This model prioritises order above other concerns. Such models usually have an extremely limited concept of ordered liberty, in which adherence to a specified worldview is seen as essential for order.

Stimulus #3 (Freedom of thought, conscience and religion)

Article 9 of the Human Rights Act (which is also Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights) states:

1. *Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief, in worship, teaching, practice and observance.*
2. *Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs shall be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.*

Article 14 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) says:

1. *States Parties shall respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.*
2. *States Parties shall respect the rights and duties of the parents and, when applicable, legal guardians, to provide direction to the child in the exercise of his or her right in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child.*
3. *Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals, or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.*

<p>EXERCISES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Stimulus #1 (Two necessities) and invite general discussion of the first three questions: • Q1. <i>What do you think of Berlinerblau's definition of secularism?</i> • Q2. <i>Is there anything Berlinerblau's definition misses out?</i> • Q3. <i>What do you think of the terms for Berlinerblau's six types of secularism? (a-f)?</i> • Review Stimulus #2 (The six types) and individually or in groups go through questions four to seven. • Q4. <i>What are the strengths and weaknesses of each type (a-f) of secularism?</i> • Q5. <i>How does each type of secularism (a-f) approach Berlinerblau's first of "two necessities"? – balancing freedom of and from religion.</i> • Q6. <i>How does each type of secularism (a-f) approach Berlinerblau's second of "two necessities"? – ordered liberty.</i> • Q7. <i>Does the UK follow any of these models of secularism, or a synthesis of more than one?</i> • Review Stimulus #3 (Freedom of thought, conscience and religion) and in groups or individually address the final questions. • Q8. <i>How does Article 9 of the Human Rights Act address the first of Berlinerblau's "two necessities"? – balancing freedom of and from religion.</i> • Q9. <i>How does Article 9 of the Human Rights Act address the second of Berlinerblau's "two necessities"? – ordered liberty.</i> • Q10. <i>How does Article 14 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child address the first of Berlinerblau's "two necessities"? – balancing freedom of and from religion.</i> • Q11. <i>How does Article 14 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child address the second of Berlinerblau's "two necessities"? – ordered liberty.</i>
<p>TAKE IT FURTHER</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Find an interview of Berlinerblau discussing the six types of secularism. • Find a critical and a positive review of Berlinerblau's book <i>How to be Secular</i>, which discusses these models of secularism. • Divide a piece of paper into six rows and three columns. How does each of Berlinerblau's six types of secularism affect religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination?
<p>NOTES</p>	<p>For questions 4, 5 and 6 students should be expected to go beyond a simple restatement of the stimulus material. Students should be able to offer their own opinion and analysis, with older and more able students expanding on this.</p> <p>Students might notice that the Human Rights Act (like many laws) uses "his" to represent the singular, while the Convention on the Rights of the Child uses the more inclusive "his or her". In both cases the rights belong to everyone regardless of sex or gender. This is an example of the idea of men being framed as the default – especially when we talk about rights. This could be an opportunity to discuss privilege, but that might be going down a rabbit hole.</p>

1.14 Different types of secularism (part 2) – Secularism around the world

BACKGROUND	This resource encourages students to learn about and reflect on how eight different countries approach secularism and the relationship between religion, individuals and society. Students compare and contrast these approaches to the UK and to international guarantees of freedom of belief. The stimulus provides background information on the countries along with positive and negative viewpoints.
SUBJECTS	Politics Citizenship Geography Religion & Belief Education SMSC
KEY QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What different types of secularism are there? • How do these differences relate to political and historical circumstances? • Why do people support or oppose secularism? • Where does secularism come from?
LEARNING OUTCOMES	<p>Basic</p> <p>Students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare and contrast a range of approaches to secularism. • Offer a viewpoint on the positives and negatives of different approaches to secularism, drawing on basic source material. • Identify how different societies’ approaches to secularism impact on religion and the rights of others in that society. <p>Advanced</p> <p>In addition to the basic learning outcomes, students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer a viewpoint on the positives and negatives of different approaches to secularism, drawing on contemporary examples and outside knowledge. • Extrapolate from the source material how a range of approaches to secularism would impact on social issues involving religion and the rights of others.
LINKS	Resource page: ExploringSecularism.org/114-different-types-of-secularis
STIMULUS	<p>Stimulus #1 (8 country cards)</p> <p>USA Positive viewpoint (Positive viewpoint OH)</p> <p>The country’s intellectual founders were very aware of the potential for conflicts and persecution resulting from religious control of states and sought to create a secular republic in which the government could make no law “respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof”. This effectively established the separation of religious and state institutions and formed the basis for the country’s religious pluralism. Despite a strong and diverse tradition of religiously motivated politics, the state is not meant to favour one religion over others or religion over irreligion.</p> <p>USA Critical viewpoint (Critical viewpoint LM)</p> <p>Critics of the country’s approach to freedom of and from religion come from different directions. In the view of some critics, while claiming not to favour one religion over others, the state allows for the religious motivations of the majority to form public policy, while not truly protecting freedom of and from religion for religious and non-religious minorities, resulting in marginalisation. Others argue that the separation of religion and state creates competition between religions, which drives polarisation.</p> <p>USA Model of secularism (Model of secularism SS)</p> <p>Essentially the country operates a “free market” approach in which a plurality of religious institutions and denominations compete, with no one denomination officially privileged over any other. In theory the state acts as an honest broker and establishes the parameters within which this competition takes place. No religion has any formal power in the public sphere, but the state is not hostile to religion and many political groups in government pursue policies motivated by religion. The country has traditionally taken a separationist approach to secularism with a separation of church and state. In recent history the country has taken a more accommodationalist approach, with the state partnering with and supporting religious organisations without officially privileging any one particular denomination.</p>

USA Country description (Country description NU)

This federal republic is the second largest democracy in the world. The executive branch is headed by the president who is formally independent of both the legislature and the judiciary. The legislature is bicameral (it consists of two chambers of congress). Republicanism, formal belief in equality and freedom of speech have long been established national political values. Taken together, Christian denominations form the largest religious groups, with significant and diverse religious and non-religious minorities.

India Positive viewpoint (Positive viewpoint XP)

This country has a long history of religious diversity. Many centuries ago the first emperor to unite the country promoted tolerance and observed that “one should listen to and respect the doctrines professed by others”. The British Empire claimed to bring a new equality before the law for all, regardless of religion. At independence in 1947, this country was declared to be a secular state. Its first leader, who was not religious, saw secularism as the route to modernity. The constitution provides for “liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship, equality of status and of opportunity”.

India Critical viewpoint (Critical viewpoint EK)

This country has faced difficulties over reconciling the separation of state and religion with the principles of freedom and equality of religion. The state has intervened in religious practices and institutions on a number of occasions, for example, in making laws to protect the conditions of life of those deemed untouchable in the caste system. Similarly, laws to create a uniform civil code clashed with Sharia law as practised by some Muslims. Recently there has been a resurgence of Hindu nationalism, which is challenging what it sees as “pseudo-secularism”. The prime minister has talked of “cleansing” the country of “foreign” religions like Islam and Christianity and challenging the place of secularism in the constitution.

India Model of secularism (Model of secularism AX)

Whereas other models of secularism focus on protecting religion from the state, or individuals from religion, this country’s model seeks to protect different religious groups from each other. This concern is rooted historically in the cultural value of religious pluralism. The approach is fundamentally accommodationalist in that the government treats religious organisations as partners.

India Country description (Country description CX)

With 1.025 billion citizens, this country is the biggest democracy in the world. It is a federal parliamentary republic. It has a ceremonial president as head of state and a prime minister as head of government. The constitution defines the powers of both central and state governments. There is a bicameral legislature, consisting of an upper house representing the states of the federation and a lower house which represents the people as a whole. Hindus form the significant religious majority, with a significant Muslim minority. Christian and other religious and non-religious groups form smaller minorities. Given the country’s large size, religions with relatively small percentages of the population still represent numerically large groups.

Turkey Positive viewpoint (Positive viewpoint RS)

This country was the first Muslim majority country to declare itself secular. For six hundred years it was at the heart of the extensive Islamic Ottoman empire and its leader, the sultan, was both a political and a religious figure. All sultans claimed to be “caliphs”, divinely ordained to inherit the authority of Muhammad. But the Ottoman empire collapsed after the First World War and the country’s new leader ended theocratic rule, abolished the caliphate and brought in secularist reforms, declaring the country “*laiklik*”. The present constitution declares “individuals are equal without any discrimination before the law, irrespective of... philosophical belief, religion and sect, or any such considerations” and also “everyone has the right to freedom of conscience, religious belief and conviction”.



Turkey Critical viewpoint (Critical viewpoint MK)

In practice this republic does not have freedom and equality on grounds of religion or belief. Certain Muslim sects are prevented from opening mosques or publicly manifesting their religion. There is a government ministry to control religious institutions. In the past sixty years of democracy, the secularism of the modern state's founding father has been diminished. Culturally the people do not value secularism as much as the ethnic nationalism in Ataturk's original vision. The election of Recep Tayyip Erdogan and his AKP party in 2002 began a further retreat on secularist values and a move towards making this an Islamic country with an explicitly religious constitution.

Turkey Model of secularism (Model of secularism DU)

The country is a case study in the introduction of secularist institutions by a powerful leader but without the full support of the vast majority of ordinary people. Its model of secularism is similar to *Laïcité*, with a focus on protecting the individual from religion, and separationism, with a focus on protecting state institutions from religion. The model is largely associated with the urban class and the political elite. Consequently, over time the population has used the democratic processes secularism introduced to vote for parties with anti-secularist agendas.

Turkey Country description (Country description BF)

This country is a parliamentary representative democratic republic with a prime minister as head of government and a president as head of state. The prime minister is chosen by the president. The president is elected every four years on the principle of universal suffrage and does not need to be a member of parliament. A reform was passed in 2017, substantially increasing the powers of the president. The overwhelming religious majority is Muslim (with Sunnis the largest group and a significant minority of Shias); there are also other small religious and non-religious minorities.

UK Positive viewpoint (Positive viewpoint OC)

17th century thinkers from this country, notably John Locke, were instrumental in establishing Enlightenment ideas of the separation of church and state. Although this never formally happened in this country, the power and influence of the established church has in practice massively declined and secularist values are mainstream in this country's culture. Less than two percent of the population choose to attend established church services in any given week, and there is a strong commitment to freedom of speech. In 2012 the monarch as supreme governor of the established church declared that it "has created an environment for other faith communities and indeed people of no faith to live freely." During the 20th and 21st centuries, progressive liberation movements secured rights for range of marginalised groups including women and religious, ethnic and sexual minorities.

UK Critical viewpoint (Critical viewpoint PU)

Religious organisations exercise control over approximately one third of state funded schools and use this platform to lobby for religious interests. The country still has the same established church with the monarch still as its head as well as being head of state. The state continues to be involved in the appointment of church bishops, some of whom have ex officio places in the legislature through membership of the upper house of parliament, the House of Lords.

UK Model of secularism (Model of secularism OZ)

The country is an example of the slow development of secularism over centuries. With the powers of the established religion being reduced over time, other denominations acquired equality before the law and a culture of tolerance grew eventually to include all faiths as well as non-religious and irreligious worldviews. From the latter 20th century, the country has emphasised more secular democratic principles such as pluralism and human rights. In other ways the state has become more accommodationalist, with religious organisations receiving support and privilege but specific denominations being treated more favourably.

UK Country description (Country description NI)

This country is a constitutional monarchy with an established church and a parliamentary democracy. It is actually a union of countries comprising four members, three of which have devolved parliaments or assemblies. The role of the monarch as head of state is largely ceremonial, with real power being exercised by the prime minister, who is conventionally the leader of the largest political party in the House of Commons. The largest religion or belief group are the non-religious, hovering at around 50% with a significant Christian minority and other smaller religious minorities.

China Positive viewpoint (Positive viewpoint TW)

From the philosopher Confucius onwards, this country has had a long cultural history of scepticism and “this-worldliness”. It now has the world’s largest non-religious population. The country’s communist government is officially atheist, but unlike in the erstwhile communist Soviet Union, religion is not banned, and religious freedom is nominally protected. A 2015 Gallup poll revealed that 61% of the population are convinced atheists, 29% were “not-religious”, and just 7% claimed to be religious. Official recognition is given to five religions: Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Catholicism and Protestantism.

China Critical viewpoint (Critical viewpoint ZZ)

In authoritarian communist states, Marxism often operates in the same way as religion does in theocracies. A specific ideology of the state is exclusively promoted as the only permitted orthodoxy of belief, with freedom and equality denied to other religious or non-religious worldviews. Despite the constitutional promise of freedom of religion in the country, in fact all religions and alternative non-religious worldviews are subject to severe restrictions and state controls. In order to be a member of the Communist Party, an individual must not have a religious affiliation. Freedom of thought and expression are very restricted.

China Model of Secularism (Model of secularism US)

While the country incorporates some aspects of separationist secularism, it is in practice not really a secular state. It has a cultural background of irreligion in thought and practice, but since 1949 it has been to varying extents a dogmatic authoritarian state largely promoting a particular brand of Marxist atheism. Religious organisations are highly regulated and restricted where they are seen as a challenge to the state ideology.

China Country description (Country description YJ)

This is a socialist republic run by a single party, the Communist Party. No other parties are permitted. The offices of President (head of state), General Secretary of the Communist Party and Chairman of the Central Military Commission have been held simultaneously by one individual since 1993, giving him *de jure* and *de facto* exclusive power over the country. The large majority of the population is non-religious or follows traditional, folk religious or spiritual traditions. There is a significant Buddhist minority and there are smaller minorities of Christians, Muslims and other religions. Given the country’s large size, religions with relatively small percentages of the population still represent numerically very large groups and are the majority in some provinces.

Saudi Arabia Positive viewpoint (Positive viewpoint LO)

National law does not *officially* require all those living in the country to adhere to a specific religion and government policy *theoretically* allows other religions to be practised in private. Some argue that the ideological view of the state best reflects that of its citizens (formal citizenship can only be held by Sunni Muslims) and provides a basis for an ordered society.

Saudi Arabia Critical viewpoint (Critical viewpoint AA)

Non-Muslims, foreign Muslims and others whose beliefs are held not to conform to the official interpretation of Sunni Islam are vulnerable to discrimination, harassment, detention and imprisonment. Freedom of speech is vigorously suppressed. Blasphemy and apostasy are punishable by death. Women do not have the same rights as men. A version of Sharia is rigidly enforced as law, and public corporal and capital punishments, including crucifixions, floggings, amputations and beheadings are common. Religious and state powers are inextricably intertwined.



Saudi Arabia Model of secularism (Model of secularism LD)

As both a constitutional and practising theocracy, the state takes an almost completely anti-secularist approach to freedom of and from religion. In recent years however, there have been some signs of movement towards modernity in the social position of women, who are now allowed to drive for example, and also a curtailing of the intrusive activities of the religious police. While religious and non-religious groups other than the approved religion face severe persecution, there have been some efforts towards accommodating them.

Saudi Arabia Country description (Country description XV)

This country is an Islamic theocratic monarchy with an official religion of Sunni Islam forming the basis of laws. The royal family dominate the political system and balance authoritarianism at home with now a more open image abroad. Partly this is driven by the need to find alternative businesses in the face of the depletion of the country's oil reserves, which have been its main economic driver. Citizens are overwhelmingly Sunni Muslim, but analyses of the religious make-up of the country does not include the large population of foreign workers living in the country.

France Positive viewpoint (Positive viewpoint PA)

The 18th century European Enlightenment was promoted by many of this country's philosophers, who argued against the authoritarian dogmatic control over national political and social institutions exercised by the Roman Catholic Church, in close cooperation with the aristocracy. In 1789, a revolution swept away the old régime of church and monarchy in its entirety. The concept of *Laïcité* emerged as a republican ethic to protect the rights and freedom of conscience of every citizen from religious interference. The current Fifth Republic is built on the rigid separation of church and state. Freedom of religion and belief are seen as purely private matters.

France Critical viewpoint (Critical viewpoint MU)

Laïcité, seen as the underpinning of this republic's key values of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, has at its heart a historical antireligious animus. This has led some to see this country as "militantly secular". In 2010, the government implemented a ban on the wearing of the Muslim burka in all public spaces. This was much criticised internationally as a violation of individual liberty.

France Model of secularism (Model of secularism HH)

The country's model of secularism has a focus on shared values and identities. Freedom of religion is considered primarily to be a matter for the private sphere, with freedom from religion dominating the public sphere.

France country description (Country description WH)

This country has a hybrid presidential/parliamentary system of government. The president is head of state and shares power with a prime minister, chosen by the president who is the head of government. Democratic elections are held for members of the National Assembly, the lower house. The upper house, the Senate, has senators elected by an electoral college of local elected officials from across the country. This country has a nominal Christian majority, with a significant non-religious minority. There are smaller minorities of other religious groups, with Muslims being the largest of these. As part of its commitment to the separation of religion and state, the government does not collect official statistics on citizens' religious views.

Pakistan Positive viewpoint (Positive viewpoint YZ)

This state was created in 1947 after it won independence from British colonial control. Although intended as a country mainly for Muslims, it began in principle as a secular state. Its founding ruler, Jinnah, told his people: "You may belong to any religion or caste or creed. That has nothing to do with the business of the state. We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one state." Earlier he had said, "Religion should not be allowed to come into politics. Religion is merely a matter between man and God." Very quickly however, Islamic influence over government began to grow, although religious minorities were given freedom to profess and practise their faiths, something which is still formally guaranteed by the constitution.



	<p>Pakistan Critical viewpoint (Critical viewpoint ZD)</p> <p>This nation was originally divided into two separate countries, East and West. But in 1971 the eastern part became a separate country, and popular support for Islamist parties in the remaining western part increased. Subsequently, under various leaders, aspects of Sharia law were progressively introduced. The second prime minister, Khawaja Nazimuddin declared: "I do not agree that religion is a private affair of the individual, nor do I agree that in an Islamic state every citizen has identical rights, no matter what his caste, creed or faith be." Freedom of speech about religion continues to be severely restricted by harsh blasphemy laws carrying the death penalty.</p> <p>Pakistan Model of secularism (Model of secularism JK)</p> <p>The country makes minimal accommodations for freedom of and from religion, but in practice the dominant religion is closely tied with the state and enforced on citizens.</p> <p>Pakistan Country description (Country description MZ)</p> <p>Under the 1973 constitution, the country is called an Islamic Republic. Officially it is a federal multiparty parliamentary democracy, but army generals have always exerted considerable power over government policies. During the 20th century, several military coups were staged which overthrew democratic regimes. The overwhelming majority of the population are Muslim, with small religious and non-religious minorities.</p>
<p>EXERCISES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are eight matching sets each containing: a positive viewpoint card, a critical viewpoint card, a model of secularism card and a country description card. • Divide the class into groups, each with between 3 and 5 matching sets, shuffled up (print copies as necessary). Between the groups all eight countries should be covered. • You might need to vary how many copies you make of each card, and how many sets you hand out to each group depending on size. Use the reference guide below to ensure that each group has complete sets. • You might or might not want to put the names of the eight countries on the board before starting. • Groups review Stimulus #1 (8 country cards). • Observe as groups sort the cards into sets and question them on their thinking. This should address the first two questions: • Q1. <i>Sort the cards to complete the set for each country.</i> • Q2. <i>Which country do you think this set is referring to, and why?</i> • After sufficient time reveal the correct matching sets and discuss the remaining questions. • Q3. <i>Did you correctly match the set?</i> • Q4. <i>Why or why not?</i> • Q5. <i>How is this country's approach to secularism similar or different to others?</i> • Q6. <i>Do you agree with the positive viewpoints on this country's approach to secularism?</i> • Q7. <i>Why or why not?</i> • Q8. <i>Do you agree with the critical viewpoints on this country's approach to secularism?</i> • Q9. <i>Why or why not?</i>

<p>TAKE IT FURTHER</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As members of the United Nations, all six countries have said they will abide by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Compare and contrast each country's approach to secularism with their responsibilities under Article 18 of the declaration <i>"Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."</i> Of these six countries only Saudi Arabia abstained on the vote to ratify the declaration, claiming that Article 18 was not consistent with Islam. • Look up Mandarin, Chinese, Turkish, French, Urdu, Hindi and Arabic words most analogous to the English word secularism. They might not be direct translations and there might be multiple translations. What do the usages of these words tell us about the different approaches to secularism in the countries above? • Divide into groups. Each group should pick one of the eight countries and create a poster or presentation on how this country approaches secularism or the relationship between religion, society and the state. The presentation/poster should include the strengths and weaknesses of the country's approach. • How does each country's approach to secularism affect religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination? 																																
<p>NOTES</p>	<p>Quick reference guide to the sets</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>OH Positive viewpoint (USA)</td> <td>TW Positive viewpoint (China)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>LM Critical viewpoint (USA)</td> <td>ZZ Critical viewpoint (China)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SS Model of secularism (USA)</td> <td>US Model of secularism (China)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NU Country description (USA)</td> <td>YJ Country description (China)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>XP Positive viewpoint (India)</td> <td>LO Positive viewpoint (Saudi Arabia)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>EK Critical viewpoint (India)</td> <td>AA Critical viewpoint (Saudi Arabia)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>AX Model of secularism (India)</td> <td>LD Model of secularism (Saudi Arabia)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>CX Country description (India)</td> <td>XV Country description (Saudi Arabia)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>RS Positive viewpoint (Turkey)</td> <td>PA Positive viewpoint (France)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MK Critical viewpoint (Turkey)</td> <td>MU Critical viewpoint (France)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DU Model of secularism (Turkey)</td> <td>HH Model of secularism (France)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>BF Country description (Turkey)</td> <td>WH Country description (France)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>OC Positive viewpoint (UK)</td> <td>YZ Positive viewpoint (Pakistan)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PU Critical viewpoint (UK)</td> <td>ZD Critical viewpoint (Pakistan)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>OZ Model of secularism (UK)</td> <td>JK Model of secularism (Pakistan)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>NI Country description (UK)</td> <td>MZ Country description (Pakistan)</td> </tr> </table>	OH Positive viewpoint (USA)	TW Positive viewpoint (China)	LM Critical viewpoint (USA)	ZZ Critical viewpoint (China)	SS Model of secularism (USA)	US Model of secularism (China)	NU Country description (USA)	YJ Country description (China)	XP Positive viewpoint (India)	LO Positive viewpoint (Saudi Arabia)	EK Critical viewpoint (India)	AA Critical viewpoint (Saudi Arabia)	AX Model of secularism (India)	LD Model of secularism (Saudi Arabia)	CX Country description (India)	XV Country description (Saudi Arabia)	RS Positive viewpoint (Turkey)	PA Positive viewpoint (France)	MK Critical viewpoint (Turkey)	MU Critical viewpoint (France)	DU Model of secularism (Turkey)	HH Model of secularism (France)	BF Country description (Turkey)	WH Country description (France)	OC Positive viewpoint (UK)	YZ Positive viewpoint (Pakistan)	PU Critical viewpoint (UK)	ZD Critical viewpoint (Pakistan)	OZ Model of secularism (UK)	JK Model of secularism (Pakistan)	NI Country description (UK)	MZ Country description (Pakistan)
OH Positive viewpoint (USA)	TW Positive viewpoint (China)																																
LM Critical viewpoint (USA)	ZZ Critical viewpoint (China)																																
SS Model of secularism (USA)	US Model of secularism (China)																																
NU Country description (USA)	YJ Country description (China)																																
XP Positive viewpoint (India)	LO Positive viewpoint (Saudi Arabia)																																
EK Critical viewpoint (India)	AA Critical viewpoint (Saudi Arabia)																																
AX Model of secularism (India)	LD Model of secularism (Saudi Arabia)																																
CX Country description (India)	XV Country description (Saudi Arabia)																																
RS Positive viewpoint (Turkey)	PA Positive viewpoint (France)																																
MK Critical viewpoint (Turkey)	MU Critical viewpoint (France)																																
DU Model of secularism (Turkey)	HH Model of secularism (France)																																
BF Country description (Turkey)	WH Country description (France)																																
OC Positive viewpoint (UK)	YZ Positive viewpoint (Pakistan)																																
PU Critical viewpoint (UK)	ZD Critical viewpoint (Pakistan)																																
OZ Model of secularism (UK)	JK Model of secularism (Pakistan)																																
NI Country description (UK)	MZ Country description (Pakistan)																																

1.15 Different types of secularism (part 3) – The Secular Charter

BACKGROUND	This resource is aimed at older students who have already explored different approaches to secularism and the key questions which secularism seeks to address. The stimulus and exercises use the example of the NSS Secular Charter to explore how different secularists translate basic principles into approaches to some of the biggest issues involving the relationship between religion, individuals and society.
SUBJECTS	Politics Religion & Belief Education Citizenship SMSC
KEY QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is secularism? • How do secularists think about decisions? • What are religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination?
LEARNING OUTCOMES	<p>Basic</p> <p>Students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore an example of a mainstream approach to secularism in the UK. • Offer basic criticisms of this approach. <p>Advanced</p> <p>In addition to the basic learning outcomes, students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extrapolate how an approach to secularism would impact on the role of religion in society and the rights of others. • Offer criticisms of this approach which draw on a range of examples and outside sources.
LINKS	Resource page: ExploringSecularism.org/115-different-types-of-secularism
STIMULUS	<p><i>Stimulus #1 (The Secular Charter)</i></p> <p>The National Secular Society’s Secular Charter reflects the mainstream model of and approach to secularism in Britain. But there are different models and secularists will disagree on how such principles should be applied.</p> <p>The charter promotes a secular democracy, where:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> There is no established state religion. Everyone is equal before the law, regardless of religion, belief or non-belief. The judicial process is not hindered or replaced by religious codes or processes. Freedom of expression is not restricted by religious considerations. Religion plays no role in state-funded education, whether through religious affiliation of schools, curriculum setting, organised worship, religious instruction, student selection or employment practices. The state does not express religious beliefs or preferences and does not intervene in the setting of religious doctrine. The state does not engage in, fund or promote religious activities or practices. There is freedom of belief, non-belief and to renounce or change religion. Public and publicly-funded service provision does not discriminate on grounds of religion, belief or non-belief. Individuals and groups are neither accorded privilege nor disadvantaged because of their religion, belief or non-belief.
EXERCISES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Stimulus #1 (The Secular Charter) and invite feedback on each clause (or split the class into groups each looking at a couple of the clauses). • Q1. Do you agree with this clause? (a–j) • Q2. Why or why not? (a–j) • Q3. How would this clause affect religious privilege, tolerance or discrimination? (a–j) • Q4. Is this the case or not in the UK? (a–j)

TAKE IT FURTHER

- Find other examples of secularist organisations that have a charter or other statement of principles. How do these differ, and how does this affect their approach to secularism and religious privilege, tolerance or discrimination?
- Write your own charter for secularism and religious tolerance. It might be a charter for your school, club or country. Create a poster for this, or for the Secular Charter above.

1.16 Where does secularism come from?

BACKGROUND	This is a standalone resource that can be used as a primer for a wider exploration of secularist history in theme 6 resources. The stimulus explores how different societies and periods in history have considered the core questions which secularism seek to address. In the exercise, students compare and contrast these societies and their versions of secularist thought. Some questions in the exercise examine specific stimuli, or can be used to compare any two stimuli.
SUBJECTS	History Religion & Belief Education Philosophy
KEY QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where does secularism come from?
LEARNING OUTCOMES	<p>Basic</p> <p>Students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how views on the role of religion in society have impacted the development of secularist thought in a range of settings. <p>Advanced</p> <p>In addition to the basic learning outcomes, students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare and contrast the role of secularist thought in key historical contexts.
LINKS	Resource page: ExploringSecularism.org/116-where-does-secularism-come-f
STIMULUS	<p><i>Stimulus #1 (Secularism through the ages)</i></p> <p>In this resource we are going to look at a selection of snapshots and broad historical concepts that have contributed to the development of secularism as we see it today. This is simplified by necessity and can't capture the variety of secularist thought that has developed in different cultures or times in history.</p> <p>People have probably been asking themselves questions central to secularism since societies first became complicated enough to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a significant diversity of opinions on how to live a good life, and/or have a good afterlife. • Have a clerical class with a position of power based on their perceived religious authority. <p>Throughout the ancient world we can find examples of thinkers and philosophers who questioned religious authorities, hierarchies and orthodoxies. Just because people were thinking about questions central to secularism, doesn't mean they were secularists. Religion and its role in society might have been too different from how it is today for us to meaningfully call thinkers or movements secularist.</p> <p><i>Stimulus #2 (Empires)</i></p> <p>Empires and states throughout most of history haven't been particularly concerned with the rights of individuals or minorities. Many had official religions or privileged the religions associated with their ruling class. Most empires have gone through periods of enforcing certain religious views that they deemed important to the order and stability or spiritual health of the empire.</p> <p>On the other hand, large empires tend to have a diversity of religions within their borders and many practised some form of what the Mongol Empires would go on to call "Celestial Insurance". This was a limited form of religious tolerance that allowed religious groups to practice their religions as long as they also pray or act for the empire's best interest and maintain its laws.</p> <p>In the specific example of the Mongol Empire, subject peoples kept their religions but were required to pray for the health of the Khan. From the Khan's point of view, he would benefit from the protection of the deities of his subject people and they would not be tempted, as a result of having their religion suppressed, to rebel against the Empire.</p> <p>During Muhammad's lifetime and the early Islamic empires, Muslims signed peace treaties with various groups who were permitted to maintain their religious practices. In return, these groups were required to pay a tax and not to disrupt the growing empire by challenging its secular or religious claims to authority.</p>



In the Roman Empire, subject peoples were required to make offerings and pay taxes to the state. Many Jews objected to this, but refusing to pay would be treason.

In the biblical narrative (Matthew 22:21), the Jewish religious authorities seek to trick Jesus into advocating treason by asking him whether Jews (at this time Christianity hadn't split from Judaism) should pay these taxes. Jesus asks his questioners to produce a Roman coin, and asked whose face was on it. They answered, "Caesar's," and he responded: "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's". This, along with "My kingdom is not of this world," (John 18:36) is interpreted as reflecting a traditional division in Christian thought by which state and church have separate spheres of influence.

Stimulus #3 (Reformation)

The Protestant Reformation is far too complex a subject to cover here, but had a huge impact on political and religious thought in Europe throughout the 16th and 17th Centuries. It unleashed political and religious turmoil and horrific religious conflict as rival sects of Christianity attempted to establish their supremacy. Such was the level of conflict at times that some people thought it was a sign of the end times. It would exacerbate conflicts in which millions died, many for their beliefs, and would lead to the establishment of state churches in many European states. Despite all this, the reformation helped lay the foundations of religious and political liberalism.

As there isn't time here to go into huge depth, we will concentrate on one thinker, Martin Luther.

Martin Luther

Born in Germany in 1483, Martin Luther was a professor of theology, a priest and leading figure in the Reformation. A lot of his theology and religious criticism isn't relevant here, but Luther was a fierce critic of the Catholic Church's abuses of power and relationships with Europe's rulers, which he felt furthered their earthly, rather than spiritual ambitions.

Many credit Luther with starting the Reformation, when he posted his famous *Ninety-five Theses* to the door of churches in Wittenberg – this criticised the Church's sale of indulgences and would eventually see him excommunicated.

As the Reformation gathered steam there were increasing conflicts between the Catholic Church and various Protestant Christian sects for the control of nations and city states across Europe.

While Luther was primarily concerned with issues of theology, he made significant contributions to contemporary Christian views on the relationship between secular and religious authority. In his 1518 sermon (*The Two Kinds of Righteousness*), Luther argued that Christians should follow righteousness *coram deo* (in the eyes of God or faith) and *coram mundo* (in the eyes of the world, civil or legal righteousness).

While this sort of worldly or secular righteousness was not in Luther's view worthy of salvation, it was still a moral duty. Lutheranism (the branch of Protestant Christianity most associated with his legacy) developed the "two kingdoms doctrine". This was the belief that that the church should not exercise worldly government, and princes should not rule the church or have anything to do with the salvation of souls.

In a letter to the Duke of Saxony, Luther wrote:

"God has ordained the two governments: the spiritual, which by the Holy Spirit under Christ makes Christians and pious people; and the secular, which restrains the unchristian and wicked so that they are obliged to keep the peace outwardly... The laws of worldly government extend no farther than to life and property and what is external upon earth. For over the soul God can and will let no one rule but himself.

Therefore, where temporal power presumes to prescribe laws for the soul, it encroaches upon God's government and only misleads and destroys souls. We desire to make this so clear that everyone shall grasp it, and that the princes and bishops may see what fools they are when they seek to coerce the people with their laws and commandments into believing one thing or another."



Stimulus #4 (Enlightenment)

The Enlightenment (also known as the Age of Enlightenment or the Age of Reason) was an intellectual and philosophical movement that dominated the world of ideas in Europe during the 18th Century, though its roots lay in the scientific revolution of the 17th Century and the Reformation of the 16th.

The Enlightenment questioned traditional sources of religious, moral, political and intellectual authority. A range of thinkers began to view reason as the primary source of authority and legitimacy and came to advance ideals like liberty, progress, tolerance, fraternity, constitutional government and separation of church and state.

The Enlightenment, like the Reformation, is a hugely complicated period which, depending on your view, might stretch over more than a century. We only have space to consider four thinkers in this period and their contribution to the development of secularist thought: Locke, Voltaire, Kant and Jefferson.

John Locke

Born in England in 1632, John Locke was an early though influential enlightenment philosopher. A lot of his work revolved around “social contract” theory and theories regarding how property and rights could emerge from nature.

In *On the Difference Between Civil and Ecclesiastical Power* (1674) Locke distinguished between two spheres of concerns or authority; civil and religious society. The first was the realm of the state, and the second of the church.

In the aftermath of religious conflicts following the Reformation, Locke wrote a series of pieces that would become *Letters Concerning Toleration*. In it he makes three central arguments for religious toleration: (1) Earthly judges, the state in particular, and human beings generally, cannot dependably evaluate the truth-claims of competing religious standpoints; (2) Even if they could, enforcing a single “true religion” would not have the desired effect, because belief cannot be compelled by violence; (3) Coercing religious uniformity would lead to more social disorder than allowing diversity.

Locke believed that human nature was created by God and characterised by reason and tolerance. For Locke, the only way a Church can gain genuine converts is through persuasion and not through violence. This relates to his central conclusion, namely, that the government should not involve itself in the care of souls. From this he reasoned that civil societies could come together to address common concerns.

However in reality Locke’s toleration for Catholics and atheists was far more limited. He believed that while Catholics should be free to practice their religion, their loyalty to Rome was a threat to state order in protestant countries.

Voltaire

If you’ve heard of Voltaire (real name François-Marie Arouet), you might have heard the quote “I disapprove of what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it”. This actually comes from his biographer Evelyn Beatrice Hall almost a century after his death, but many feel it sums up Voltaire’s views.

Born in France in 1722, Voltaire would go on to be a prolific writer, historian and philosopher famous for his wit. Like many leading thinkers of this time Voltaire was a deist – he believed that a god had created the rules of nature (including human nature), but that these were governed by reason, while the god played no role in human affairs.

In *A Treatise on Toleration* (1763) Voltaire argued for freedom of religion, freedom of speech, and separation of church and state.

“It does not require great art, or magnificently trained eloquence, to prove that Christians should tolerate each other. I, however, am going further: I say that we should regard all men as our brothers. What? The Turk my brother? The Chinaman my brother? The Jew? The Siam? Yes, without doubt; are we not all children of the same father and creatures of the same God?”

Voltaire’s fiction and non-fiction work often focussed on abuses of power by religious and aristocratic authorities, who presented their self-interest as the will of God.



Immanuel Kant

Kant was a German philosopher considered a central figure in modern philosophy. He was born in 1724. Much of his work concerned ontology (studying being) and epistemology (studying knowledge).

Kant was religious, but criticised religious abuses of power and hierarchies. He believed that religion should be constrained by rationality, and that rationality properly understood supported a certain type of religion:

“An inner disposition lying wholly beyond the civil power’s sphere of influence”.

He appealed for “public use of one’s reason” to describe a common mode of deliberation, though much of his work focussed on the limits of reason.

Kant described his liberal view of the state as: “Freedom (independence from being constrained by another’s choice), insofar as it can coexist with the freedom of every other in accordance with a universal law”. He therefore argued that the state should hinder actions that themselves would hinder the freedom of others. However he also thought that the state should allow “all vices that do not contradict the civil covenant between citizens” and that this meant “permitting any irreligious behaviour”.

Thomas Jefferson

Jefferson was born in Virginia in 1743 and would go on to be the United States’ third president. He was one of the intellectual leaders of the USA’s founding and instrumental in the development of the constitution’s first amendment, which guaranteed separation of church and state.

The phrase “separation between church and state” is generally traced to an 1802 letter by Thomas Jefferson, addressed to the Danbury Baptist Association in Connecticut, and published in a Massachusetts newspaper. Jefferson wrote:

“Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between Man & his God, that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship, that the legitimate powers of government reach actions only, & not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should “make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,” thus building a wall of separation between Church & State. Adhering to this expression of the supreme will of the nation in behalf of the rights of conscience, I shall see with sincere satisfaction the progress of those sentiments which tend to restore to man all his natural rights, convinced he has no natural right in opposition to his social duties.”

Stimulus #5 (“Great men of history”)

When we consider the broad history of thought that led to the development of modern secularism in the European and later British tradition, we realise that many of the thinkers are white, European, Protestant men. The ability to contribute to public debates has often been restricted to certain groups, and some people’s contributions are more likely to be preserved for history because of their privileged status.

But if you want to learn more about the development of secularist thought, it would be negligent not to consider the development of secularist ideas by other thinkers, including those in various Arabic, African, American, Indian and Asian traditions.

By the standards of today, few people would describe Locke and Luther as tolerant, liberal or secularist. Locke helped lay the intellectual foundations for political liberalism, yet he supported slavery and colonialism. Luther helped lay the intellectual foundations for religious liberalism, yet he had very clear and dogmatic ideas on the correct way to live and on who was going to end up in Hell.

If you met them today you might think they were bigots, yet their ideas helped inform many of the freedoms and tolerances we enjoy today. It is for this reason that some people argue that liberal secularism owes its foundations to Protestant Christianity. Others argue these ideas would have developed anyway.

Whenever a social idea comes along, it tends not to have one source, but is influenced by the events of its day and ideas that people have thought about for a long time before.



Stimulus #6 (The 19th Century)

Secularism in the UK has a long history and was influenced by the historical setting discussed above. The development of modern British secularism starts with the freethinkers of the 19th Century. Again because there isn't a space for an in-depth look at all these speakers we are going to focus on three thinkers in particular: Richard Carlile, George Jacob Holyoake and Charles Bradlaugh.

The Victorian Age, while one of huge technological and social progress, saw a lot of authoritarianism as the authorities sought to put down radical and working class movements which might upset the status quo.

Richard Carlile

Richard Carlile was the first person to establish a permanent secularist and campaigning organisation in the UK and was the most prominent British campaigner for freedom of thought and expression in the first half of the 19th Century.

Carlile was born in 1790. He moved to London as a young man and was soon involved in radical politics. In 1817 he took over a radical publishing business and was soon in trouble for reprinting parodies of church services. For this Carlile was imprisoned for four months without trial.

In 1819 he witnessed the Peterloo massacre – when the army attacked a huge crowd of peaceful protesters in Manchester. After publishing criticisms of those responsible he was again imprisoned for a week.

That year he was also prosecuted for publishing Paine's *The Age of Reason*. He was sentenced to three years (later extended to six) in Dorchester prison and fined £1,500 – a huge sum at the time.

George Jacob Holyoake

Holyoake, born in 1817, is thought to have created the term secularism – though secularist thought had been around for a long time in different names.

As a young man he found it difficult to progress as a teacher due to his socialist views.

He joined the Birmingham Reform League in 1831 and the Chartists in 1832 before moving to Worcester to become a full-time socialist lecturer in 1840.

In 1842 he was visiting his friend Charles Southwell (imprisoned for blasphemy) and was himself imprisoned for blasphemy after a lecture in which he suggested that “the deity should be put on half-pay” and added that “I flee the Bible as a viper, and revolt at the touch of a Christian.”

His prison sentence made Holyoake a radical hero, and he settled in London where he founded various newspapers, despite taxes designed to shut down such publications.

By 1851 Holyoake began to use the word “secularist” to describe himself and his followers. He defined secularism as “a code of duty pertaining to this life, founded on considerations purely human”.

Holyoake continued to lecture throughout the country and as time passed his views began to mellow. By the late 1850s his leadership of the secularist movement was being challenged by the young and hugely energetic Charles Bradlaugh, who was more eloquent, more radical and a better organiser.

Charles Bradlaugh

During the mid-19th Century, Charles Bradlaugh would rise to lead the British secularist movement, founding the National Secular Society in 1866.

Charles Bradlaugh was born in 1833. His upbringing was orthodox and as a youngster he was appointed as a Sunday School teacher by Rev. John Graham Packer. After writing to the reverend for advice regarding biblical inconsistencies he was removed from his post and soon renounced his religious beliefs.

In the years that followed, he began to write and lecture, although he struggled to make a living, eventually enlisting in the army. He was sent to Ireland where the misery he saw made a lasting impact. When he returned to London, Bradlaugh edited freethought newspapers including the *National Reformer*.

By 1880 Bradlaugh had emerged as undisputed leader of the secularist cause and the leading radical of his time, regularly attracting audiences of thousands. His books and pamphlets on a variety of radical themes commanded huge sales and he was known nationally for his campaign to publish Charles Knowlton's birth control pamphlet.



As a constitutionalist, Bradlaugh was convinced that the way to change society was through parliament. In 1868 he first stood for election for the Northampton constituency which was then a single constituency electing two MPs. He chose Northampton, a town of shoemakers, for the radical traditions associated with that trade.

In 1880 Bradlaugh was elected to Parliament as an MP for Northampton. He was re-elected to this seat four times in the early 1880s, but each time he was blocked from taking the seat he was elected to, because he was an atheist. On one occasion he was taken into custody and confined to the prison room of the clock tower for refusing to withdraw from the chamber. After being re-elected again in 1885, he was eventually allowed to take his seat in 1886.

Stimulus #7 (The 20th Century)

In many ways the 20th Century was a high watermark for secularism. New independent nation states which emerged from the breakup of empires or were liberated from European imperialism following the world wars, generally saw secularism as being aligned with modernity. Many placed formal separations of religion and state along with other guarantees of religious freedom in their constitutions.

Both world wars had seen genocide of religious and ethnic groups and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights enshrined freedom of belief. This contributed to the rise of human rights discourses as the dominant way of describing conflicts between different groups and interests in society. Most liberal democracies enshrined increasingly expansive protections for equality and human rights. These both protected freedom of belief, and the rights of minority groups that had previously had others' religions forced on them.

During the 20th Century liberal democracy became the norm across much of the developed world. Alongside this there were social liberation movements which sought to address how privilege and discrimination had marginalised some groups, while keeping others in power.

The 20th Century also saw the imposition of state mandated atheist worldviews in communist countries such as the People's Republic of China and the USSR.

In the UK, momentum for constitutional disestablishment – at least in England – declined in the 20th Century. While social changes undermined religious privilege, religious organisations played an increasing role in the expanding state.

On the other hand, several factors led to increased secularism on a social level. Immigration increased religious diversity and the rise of mass communication led to increased irreligion with religious beliefs being increasingly personalised. All of these contributed to a decline in the idea of the nation having a single accepted religious authority or outlook.

EXERCISES

- **Review Stimulus #1 (Secularism through the ages)** and invite feedback.
- You might then wish to review some or all of the stimuli, depending on your time and focus. **Q1** can be used as long as you have examined two or more stimuli (in addition to **Stimulus #1**) for **Q2** and **Q3**, **review Stimulus #2 (Empires)**. For **Q4**, **review Stimulus #3 (Reformation)**.
- You might wish to skip over specific sections to concentrate more on others.
- These questions can be set as a homework task, and students can be encouraged to look up additional sources on each of the featured historical figures.
- **Q1.** *Compare and contrast the historical snapshots above. What are the similar factors that led people in these different settings to consider questions that are core to secularism?*
- **Q2.** *Does “Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s” provide a Christian based argument for secularism?*
- **Q3.** *What are the similarities and differences between the idea of “Celestial Insurance” or empires permitting subject people to maintain their religious practices and modern ideas of religious tolerance?*
- **Q4.** *What are the similarities and differences between the two kingdoms doctrine and modern secularism?*

TAKE IT FURTHER	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research the development of secularist thought in a historical context not covered above. Make use of at least two primary sources.• Write a short essay supporting or opposing the claim that secularism is an intrinsically Protestant Christian worldview.• Write a short essay on the topic of why India and Pakistan were founded with secularist constitutions.
NOTES	<p>Resource 1.14 provides insight to the development of secularist thought in different countries. Many of the thinkers mentioned above are quoted in the viewpoints examined in resource 1.18.</p> <p>You might wish to use extracts of the stimulus material in this resource if you are examining early Christian thought on the separation of church and state, the Reformation, Enlightenment or 19th or 20th Century history.</p>

1.17 Why secularism? (Part 1) – Competing concepts

BACKGROUND	<p>This resource is aimed at older (KS5) students, though is accessible for younger groups. It can be used as a review for students who have already completed a wider study of secularism, or they can be used as an alternative approach to give a basic overview of secularism and key debates.</p> <p>The stimulus considers the key question of why some people support or oppose secularism, by looking at key concepts they might disagree on, exploring around the disagreements.</p>
SUBJECTS	Politics Religion & Belief Education Citizenship SMSC Philosophy
KEY QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do people support or oppose secularism?
LEARNING OUTCOMES	<p>Basic</p> <p>Students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare and contrast competing views of key concepts related to secularism. • Understand how these views might lead others to support or oppose different models of secularism. <p>Advanced</p> <p>In addition to the basic learning outcomes, students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critically reflect on competing views of key concepts related to secularism, relating them to examples of real debates.
LINKS	Resource page: ExploringSecularism.org/117-why-secularism-part-1-compet
STIMULUS	<p><i>Stimulus 1 (Things we notice)</i></p> <p>When we talk about religion in society, whether they are religious or not, and whether they support or oppose secularism, people tend to notice things like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People have different worldviews and ideas about how best to live. • These often include disagreements over religion or irreligion. • Some ideas about how best to live are compatible or widely shared despite different worldviews. • Some ideas about how best to live are incompatible with or exclusive to certain worldviews. • Religion or irreligion can be used to inspire positive social actions. • Religion or irreligion can be used to inspire negative social actions. • Some people experience unfair advantages because of religion. • Some people experience unfair disadvantages because of religion. • People's ideas of what gods want often coincide with their own desires or moral preferences. • Making particular beliefs about religion required or favoured over others has led to bad outcomes. <p>Once we notice these things, there are lots of different ideas about how we should respond. Secularism is just one response (or range of responses)</p> <p><i>Stimulus #2 (Key concepts for supporters and opponents)</i></p> <p>People who support or oppose secularism generally have competing interpretations of certain key concepts. The same can be seen in other disputes over political or social worldviews. For example: John and Sasha might both value fairness and oppose oppression, but if they have different interpretations of these concepts, this might lead to John or Sasha supporting very different policies or approaches.</p> <p>In philosophy, we might consider how different philosophers (and their supporters or opponents) have interpreted certain key concepts such as: free will, justice and aesthetics.</p>

Throughout *Exploring Secularism*, you will have encountered key questions (e.g. What is religious discrimination?) and seen that people's answers to these questions can lead them to support or oppose secularism, and that both secularists and critics of secularism often find the same questions to be of great importance.

One approach to understanding why some people support or oppose different forms of secularism is to consider different answers to these questions. Another is to consider differing interpretations of key concepts.

Concept 1: Secularism

As you have seen, there are different models (or concepts) of secularism, which range from the mainstream to the extreme fringe. Supporters or opponents of secularism might have a particular model (or range of models) in mind.

Consider Berlinerblau's "six types" (see resources 1.01 and 1.13). If a supporter of disestablishmentarianism was arguing with an opponent of state-sponsored atheism, they would find it difficult to reach an agreement.

Concept 2: Liberalism and Pluralism

Liberalism is a wide-ranging political concept which focuses on protecting and enhancing the freedoms of individuals. Liberalism is concerned with a balancing act between the need for governments to protect individuals from harm, and the need to restrain governments from interfering in personal freedom.

Supporters and opponents of secularism might disagree on whether certain courses of action that secularism (or conversely a lack of secularism) leads to, are on balance more liberal or illiberal either intrinsically, or in their outcomes.

See resources 1.03 and 1.04.

Liberalism is closely tied to the concept of pluralism – though they are not synonymous and under some conceptions might be in conflict. In philosophy, pluralism is "a theory or system that recognises more than one ultimate principle". It can also be defined as "a condition or system in which two or more states, groups, principles, sources of authority, etc. coexist". A pluralistic society is generally conceived as one where people are free to pursue their own – often conflicting – versions of "the good life".

See resources 1.03 and 1.05.

Concepts of liberalism or pluralism which might lead people to support secularism include:

- A secularist framework allows different groups to pursue their own concepts of "the good life", while ensuring these do not negatively impact on the rights of others.
- Religions need to be as free as other organisations, cultures and ideas to rise and fall in the "marketplace of ideas"; this is central to pluralism.
- (Accommodationist secularism) the state should support all religious or non-religious groups to live their version of "the good life".
- While religious power or privilege might have some liberal consequences, it is on balance more liberal to restrict this.

Concepts of pluralism which might lead people to oppose secularism include:

- Different religions have conflicting visions of "the good life" that are not reconcilable with a single secular legal authority or set of rules.
- Without state support or special accommodations, certain forms of religion would not be sustainable.
- Pluralism is not desirable or should be placed below the importance of the state supporting the "correct" religious (or irreligious) worldview.
- While religious power/privilege might have some illiberal consequences, it is on balance more illiberal to restrict this.

Concepts of pluralism which might lead people to oppose secularism include:

- Different religions have conflicting visions of "the good life" that are not reconcilable with a single secular legal authority or set of rules.
- Without state support or special accommodations, certain forms of religion would not be sustainable.
- Pluralism is not desirable or should be placed below the importance of the state supporting the "correct" religious (or irreligious) worldview.



- While religious power/privilege might have some illiberal consequences, it is on balance more illiberal to restrict this.

Concept 3: Democracy

All theories of liberal democracy (of which secular democracy is a subset) propose some form of limited democracy, i.e. where there are constraints on what a simple majority can do, this acts to constrain majoritarianism. For example, some democracies may require the people to express their will through elected representatives rather than referenda, or might have some laws which require a supermajority (e.g. 75%) to change.

See resource 1.12

Concepts of democracy which might lead people to support secularism include:

- Democracies are limited in the interests of protecting minorities and individuals. Such limits include protecting freedom of and from religion.
- Democratic arguments against secularism are undermined in increasingly religiously diverse and non-religious countries such as the UK.
- Bringing religious decisions within the scope of democratic decision-making violates individual conscience.

Concepts of democracy which might lead people to oppose secularism include:

- Governments should reflect the religious make-up and concerns of citizens. Just as a majority left-wing country would expect to have a left-wing government, a majority Christian country would expect a Christian state.
- It is wrong to exclude religiously motivated policies from the scope of democratic decision-making.
- Democracy is not desirable or is less important than the state promoting the “correct” religious (or irreligious) worldview.

Concept 4: Public reason

See resources 1.06, 1.07 and 1.08 to understand how public reason giving (although the term is relatively modern) is of central concern to secularists and their critics.

From the Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy: “Public reason requires that the moral or political rules that regulate our common life be, in some sense, justifiable or acceptable to all those persons over whom the rules purport to have authority.”

Concepts of public reason which might lead people to support secularism include:

- Translating concerns into public reason is the only fair way to overcome differences which themselves might not be rationally reconcilable.
- Religious or irreligious motivations are not a good basis for state actions, unless these can be translated into non-religious concerns which are open to rational debate.
- If a religious (or irreligious) cause is justified, then expressing this justification through public reason shouldn't be a barrier.

Concepts of public reason which might lead people to oppose secularism include:

- Not all religious concerns can be translated into those that can be expressed as public reasons, or open to rational debate.
- The concerns of marginalised groups have historically been excluded from privileged groups' concept of public reason or debate.
- The decision to include or exclude certain concerns from public reason can be subjective and controversial.

Concept 5: Gods' will

Many people and societies have believed that gods have revealed their wills to humans, through natural processes, religious or political institutions, personal revelation, religious texts or traditions or the application of human reasoning. At its core, secularism is sceptical of religious power and of people or institutions claiming the authority to speak for gods. Ideas about the will of gods are therefore as central to secularism in their own way as public reason.

See resources 1.05 and 1.06.

Concepts of gods' wills that might lead people to support secularism include:

- People tend to conflate gods' wills with their own, which should encourage scepticism.
- We can never be sure if we (or others) have correctly interpreted gods' wills, so we should act in accordance with public reasoning.
- Gods' wills act on human minds, so we can exercise public reasoning.
- Gods do not exist and therefore do not have wills.
- Gods' wills are intrinsically unknowable or are not currently known.
- Gods are non-interventionist and so do not have wills or opinions which concern humans.
- Gods' wills exist but are not authoritative and should not be privileged over humans' wills.
- A god or gods specifically wills a secularist society, or the freedom of a secularist system is best able to bring about a society consistent with gods' wills.

Concepts of gods' wills that might lead people to oppose secularism include:

- A god or gods will a society which privileges certain religious authorities, ideas or institutions.
- The privileging of certain religious authorities, ideas or institutions is necessary for a society to understand or implement a god or gods' will.
- Privileging religious authorities, ideas and institutions has benefits for society, whether or not gods exist or have wills which are knowable.

Concept 6: Religion as a public good (or public bad)

Supporters and opponents of secularism might disagree on whether religion is a public good. This is particularly relevant to accommodationalist models of secularism; see resource 1.12. For example, education might be a public good (whether or not all members of the public directly benefit from it) and air pollution might be a public bad (whether or not all members of the public are directly harmed by it).

Concepts of religion as a public good which might lead people to support secularism include:

- Religion is so personal that it can only be considered a private and not a public good or bad.
- Religion can be a public good or a public bad, but state support or privilege leads to negative outcomes.
- Religion is best able to be a public good within the freedom afforded by a secularist system.

Concepts of religion as a public good which might lead people to oppose secularism include:

- Religion (or a specific religion) is more likely to act in the public good when privileged or supported by the state.
- Religion (or a specific religion) is an intrinsic public good that should be supported by the state.
- Religion (or a specific religion) is a public bad and should be suppressed by the state.

Other competing concepts

The six concepts explored above are not an exhaustive list. There are other broad concepts and many specific examples that supporters and opponents of secularism might disagree on, some of which come up in other resources of *Exploring Secularism*. For instance:

- Different people have different conceptions of which actions or justifications are **religious, non-religious** or **irreligious**.
- There are many different interpretations of **freedom of and from religion**, which are explored elsewhere.
- There are many different interpretations of what counts as **privilege, tolerance** or **discrimination**.

<p>EXERCISES</p>	<p>For this topic it is best to allow discussion to flow freely. You might wish to simply give students time to review Stimulus #1 and #2 and absorb it before discussion. Alternatively, you might wish to have a general discussion of the question before turning to review Stimulus #1 and #2.</p> <p>Potential discussion or essay questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Q1. Should liberalism and pluralism lead us to support or oppose secularism? • Q2. Should democracy lead us to support or oppose secularism? • Q3. Should public reason giving lead us to support or oppose secularism? • Q4. Why does your view of gods' wills lead you to support or oppose secularism? • Q5. Should religion having positive and/or negative effects lead us to support or oppose secularism?
<p>TAKE IT FURTHER</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain how a supporter and opponent of secularism might view each of the contested concepts in the stimulus and how that might influence their other views. • Stage a class debate on one of the following motions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "This class believes that secularism is the fairest approach to freedom of religion and belief". - "This class believes that anyone who opposes theocracy is some sort of secularist." - "This class believes that secularism is on balance more liberal/pluralistic than religious privilege." - "This class believes that to the victors go the spoils; religious rules can be imposed democratically." • Students on the debate team should draw on the perspectives above as well as their own, and other students should ask questions and vote. • Contrast the use of "public reason" in the work of Immanuel Kant, John Rawls and a third philosopher of your choice. How might each of their interpretations be used to support or oppose secularism?

1.18 Why secularism? (Part 2) – Viewpoints

BACKGROUND	This resource covers a wide range of political and philosophical figures and their views on secularism. Through this resource students will gain an understanding of the diversity of secularist thought and stimulate the formation of their own viewpoints.
SUBJECTS	Politics Religion & Belief Education Citizenship SMSC Philosophy
KEY QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is a secularist? • Why do people support or oppose secularism? • Where does secularism come from?
LEARNING OUTCOMES	<p>Basic</p> <p>Students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand, compare and contrast a range of viewpoints on secularism. <p>Advanced</p> <p>In addition to the basic learning outcomes, students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critically reflect on a range of viewpoints on secularism. • Extrapolate from the source viewpoints why the range of authors might support or oppose forms of secularism.
LINKS	Resource page: ExploringSecularism.org/118-why-secularism-part-2-viewpo
STIMULUS	<p>Stimulus #1 (Viewpoints)</p> <p>Secularism Quotes a–t</p> <p>a. The good of the people must be the great purpose of government. By the laws of nature and of reason, the governors are invested with power to that end. And the greatest good of the people is liberty. It is to the state what health is to the individual. (<i>Author #4 – Denis Diderot</i>)</p> <p>b. (This organisation) aims to raise awareness within British Muslims and the wider public of democracy – particularly secular democracy, helping to contribute to a shared vision of citizenship (the separation of faith and state, so faiths exert no undue influence on policies and there is a shared public space). (<i>Author #10 – British Muslims for a Secular Democracy</i>)</p> <p>c. I swear by my religion. I will die for it. But it is my personal affair. The state has nothing to do with it. The state would look after your secular welfare, health, communications, foreign relations, currency and so on, but not your or my religion. That is everybody’s personal concern! (<i>Author #11 – Mahatma Ghandi</i>)</p> <p>d. We cannot, and should not, protect our country’s children from being brought up by ultra-conservative religious parents but we can, and should, ensure that they go to a school where they learn about other religions, about humanism, about living without religion and are given the confidence that people of all faiths and none are treated equally under the law. (<i>Author #12 – Professor Susan Blackmore</i>)</p> <p>e. We establish no religion in this country, we command no worship, we mandate no belief, nor will we ever. Church and State are, and must remain, separate. All are free to believe or not to believe, all are free to practise a faith or not, and those who believe are free, and should be free to speak or and act on their belief. (<i>Author #19 – Ronald Reagan</i>)</p> <p>f. You must understand that secularism is our tradition, our choice. [...] I thank the grand imam of Al Azhar for indicating that in a secular and non-Muslim state, it is the duty of everyone to respect the law. [...] There are no rights without duties, and if the Muslims of France have the same rights as other believers, they have the same duties. (<i>Author #13 – Nicolas Sarkozy</i>)</p> <p>g. If there were only one religion in England there would be a danger of despotism. If there were two they would cut each other’s throats, but there are thirty and they live in peace and happiness. (<i>Author #3 – Voltaire</i>)</p> <p>h. A man’s ethical behaviour should be based effectually on sympathy, education, and social ties; no religious basis is necessary. Man would indeed be in a poor way if he had to be restrained by fear of punishment and hope of reward after death. (<i>Author #16 – Albert Einstein</i>)</p>

- i. Secularism does not mean rejection of all religions. It means respect for all religions and human beings including non-believers. *(Author #20 – Dalai Lama)*
- j. The spirit or the conscience might belong to God but the body belongs to the state. *(Author #6 – Jean-Jacques Rousseau)*
- k. My people are going to learn the principles of democracy, the dictates of truth and the teachings of science. Superstition must go. Let them worship as they will, every man can follow his own conscience provided it does not interfere with sane reason or bid him act against the liberty of his fellow men. *(Author #14 – Mustafa Kemal Ataturk)*
- l. Modern society requires and deserves a truly secular state, by which I do not mean state atheism, but state neutrality in all matters pertaining to religion: the recognition that faith is personal and no business of the state. *(Author #9 – Professor Richard Dawkins)*
- m. The legitimate powers of government extend to such acts only as are injurious to others. But it does me no injury for my neighbour to say there are twenty gods, or no god. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg. *(Author #5 – Thomas Jefferson)*
- n. Oppose anything that trespasses on the secular line of the separation of church and state, because civilization begins where the separation of church and state begins. There are no exceptions to that in any country. So it's in the general interest, as well as your own, that we patrol that line with great vigilance. *(Author #15 – Christopher Hitchens)*
- o. There is a twofold society, of which almost all men in the world are members, and from that twofold concernment they have to attain a twofold happiness; viz. that of this world and that of the other; and hence there arises these two following societies, viz. religious and civil. *(Author #1 – John Locke)*
- p. Secular knowledge is manifestly that kind of knowledge which is founded in this life, which relates to the conduct of this life, conduces to the welfare of this life, and is capable of being tested by the experience of this life. *(Author #8 – George Jacob Holyoake)*
- q. No one may be disturbed on account of his opinions, even religious ones, as long as the manifestation of such opinions does not interfere with the established Law and Order. *(Author #18 – Déclaration des Droits de L'Homme et du Citoyen)*
- r. The purpose of government is purely material – the prevention of in-fighting and disorder between people. This is its only justification. *(Author #2 – Thomas Hobbes)*
- s. God has ordained two governments; the spiritual, by which the Holy Spirit produces Christians and righteous people under Christ; and the temporal, which restrains the un-Christian and wicked so that – no thanks to them – they are obliged to keep still and to maintain an outward peace. *(Author #7 – Martin Luther)*
- t. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed. That has nothing to do with the business of the state. We are starting with this fundamental principle that we are all citizens and equal citizens of one state. Religion should not be allowed to come into politics. Religion is merely a matter between man and God. *(Author #17 – Muhammad Ali Jinnah)*



List of Authors 1–20

1. **John Locke**
17th century English philosopher commonly referred to as the Father of Liberalism.
2. **Thomas Hobbes**
Englishman who published his most famous book, *Leviathan*, in 1651. Argued that political power must be representative and based on the consent of the people.
3. **Voltaire**
French Enlightenment philosopher noted for his advocacy of freedom of religion, freedom of speech and the separation of church and state.
4. **Denis Diderot**
Prominent 18th century French thinker during the Enlightenment, an associate of Jean Jacques Rousseau.
5. **Thomas Jefferson**
American Founder Father who was the principal author of the Declaration of Independence and third president of the US from 1801 to 1809.
6. **Jean Jacques Rousseau**
An 18th century Genevan philosopher famous for his ideas about the basis of society as a social contract.
7. **Martin Luther**
Born in 1483 priest and monk Martin Luther was a seminal figure in the Protestant Reformation. He rejected several teachings and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. In particular he famously attacked the selling of indulgences.
8. **George Jacob Holyoake**
Nineteenth century newspaper editor who coined the term secularism in 1851.
9. **Richard Dawkins**
An English evolutionary biologist who published the bestselling book *The God Delusion* in 2006.
10. **British Muslims for a Secular Democracy**
A charitable organisation of Muslims founded in 2006 by Nasreen Rehman and Yasmin Alibhai-Brown dedicated to supporting secularism in the UK.
11. **Mahatma Ghandi**
An Indian activist who led the Indian independence movement against British rule. He inspired movements for civil rights and freedom across the world.
12. **Susan Blackmore**
Noted psychologist interested in the study of consciousness.
13. **Nicholas Sarkozy**
French politician who served as president of France between 2007 and 2012.
14. **Mustafa Kemil Ataturk**
Turkish army officer, revolutionary and founder of the Republic of Turkey. Was its president from 1923 until 1938. Strong advocate of secularism.
15. **Christopher Hitchens**
Anglo-American author and columnist who was one of the four “New Atheists” together with Richard Dawkins, Daniel Dennett and Sam Harris.
16. **Albert Einstein**
Renowned German-born theoretical physicist who developed the theory of relativity.
17. **Muhammed Ali Jinnah**
Lawyer, politician, committed secularist and founder of Pakistan. After Indian independence in 1947 he was its first governor-general.
18. **Déclaration des droits de l’homme et du citoyen**
A human civil rights document from the French Revolution approved by France’s National Constituent Assembly in 1789.
19. **Ronald Reagan**
American actor turned politician who became the 40th president of the US from 1981 to 1989.
20. **Dalai Lama**
Leading monk of the Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism, widely perceived as a global spiritual figure.

<p>EXERCISES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Print off the secularism quotes (a–t) from the stimulus and the list of authors of the quotes (1–20). • Review Stimulus #1 (Viewpoints). • Briefly discuss the authors to ensure that students have some idea of who they are and what they represent. • Break up into groups to try to match the 20 quotes with the 20 authors. Make clear that the value of this task lies in the group discussion rather than whether the answers arrived at are accurate. • Q1. Match the quotes (a–t) with their authors. • Go through and reveal the correct matches and invite discussion of the final questions. • Q2. Did you correctly match this quote (a–t) and author? • Q3. Why or why not?
<p>TAKE IT FURTHER</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does knowing more about the author of the quote change your view of what they are saying? Why or why not? • Think about the different reasons that people have for supporting secularist ideas in different historical, geographical and political contexts. Sort these quotes into groupings based on these. • Encourage students to find out more about these authors and their views on secularism and freedom of and from religion. • Find five additional positive and negative (ten in total) quotes about secularism from political, philosophical or historical figures.
<p>NOTES</p>	<p>Answer key</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Author #4 – Denis Diderot b. Author #10 – British Muslims for a Secular Democracy c. Author #11 – Mahatma Gandhi d. Author #12 – Professor Susan Blackmore e. Author #19 – Ronald Reagan f. Author #13 – Nicolas Sarkozy g. Author #3 – Voltaire h. Author #16 – Albert Einstein i. Author #20 – Dalai Lama j. Author #6 – Jean-Jacques Rousseau k. Author #14 – Mustafa Kemal Ataturk l. Author #9 – Professor Richard Dawkins m. Author #5 – Thomas Jefferson n. Author #15 – Christopher Hitchens o. Author #1 – John Locke p. Author #8 – George Jacob Holyoake q. Author #18 – Déclaration des Droits de L’Homme et du Citoyen r. Author #2 – Thomas Hobbes s. Author #7 – Martin Luther t. Author #17 – Muhammad Ali Jinnah

1.19 Glossary

BACKGROUND	This resource makes use of the glossary to explore a basic understanding of key terms and their use in real life conversations about secularism, religion and belief. This can be done either in class using the slideshow or as individuals or groups using the worksheets. This resource can be used to round out a study of Theme 1 – Core Principles, as a quick overview or for reference.
SUBJECTS	Politics Religion & Belief Education Citizenship SMSC
KEY QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is secularism? • Is secularism a form of atheism, agnosticism or humanism? • What are religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination?
LEARNING OUTCOMES	<p>Basic</p> <p>Students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and correctly use a range of key terms related to secularism. <p>Advanced</p> <p>In addition to the basic learning outcomes, students should demonstrate they can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and use a range of key terms related to secularism in a variety of contexts. • Explore how competing understandings of key terms impact debates regarding secularism, religion and the rights of others.
LINKS	Resource page: ExploringSecularism.org/119-glossary
STIMULUS	<p><i>Stimulus #1 (Glossary)</i></p> <p>a. Atheism</p> <p>Atheism is the lack of a belief in gods, and therefore an atheist is someone who does not have a belief in any gods. They might or might not actively believe that particular gods don't exist. Atheists might follow the practices of a religion for cultural or spiritual reasons and some religions which do not include a belief in gods might have atheist members.</p> <p>A theist is someone who believes in one god (monotheism) or multiple gods (polytheism). A theist might or might not regard themselves as part of a religion.</p> <p>b. Apostasy</p> <p>Apostasy is the abandonment or renunciation of a religious or political belief, principle or identity. People can be labelled as apostates for holding alternative versions of religious or political beliefs. Apostasy and apostates are generally considered pejorative and apostates suffer discrimination in many cases. Some people self-identify as apostates in order to celebrate its positive connotations for independent thinking or to rob the label of its power as an insult.</p> <p>c. Blasphemy</p> <p>Blasphemy is defined in the Cambridge Dictionary as “something that you say or do that shows you do not respect God or a religion”. Generally the term is applied by different groups to describe beliefs or statements they have a theological disagreement with, because either they differ on interpretations of a religion or criticise religious ideas and institutions.</p> <p>d. Humanism</p> <p>Traditionally “humanist” has been a label applied to people or worldviews that are primarily concerned with the ethical value and agency of human beings, or that emphasise reason over dogma or superstition in decision-making.</p> <p>Although many religious traditions have strong histories of humanist thought, the label generally applies nowadays to people or worldviews which are non-religious. So a humanist is someone who believes humans are capable of being ethical and moral without religion or a god. The term “secular humanism” might be used to emphasise the non-religious nature of modern day humanism.</p> <p>Most forms of contemporary – and many forms of historic – humanism include support for some form of secularism.</p>

e. Liberalism

Liberalism is a very wide ranging political, philosophical and social concept. This means that people with very different and conflicting opinions on how society should be run can still be liberals, or advocates of liberalism.

Liberalism is an idea that takes protecting and enhancing the freedom of individuals to be the central problem of society. Liberals typically believe that rules and restrictions are necessary to protect individuals from being harmed by others, but they also recognise that excessive rules or restrictions can pose a threat to liberty.

Liberalism generally values pluralism and the freedom of individuals and groups to seek their version of the good life.

f. Pluralism

A pluralistic society is one where people with different or competing views on how to live, are largely able to live according to these views. Pluralism can be descriptive, i.e. it could mean the existence of different types of people, who have different beliefs and opinions, within the same society. Alternatively it might be normative, i.e. it could mean the belief that the existence of different types of people within the same society is a good thing.

g. Privilege

Privilege exists when a group, ideology or identity is given special treatment because of differences in power related to other groups.

h. Privilege blindness

Privilege blindness refers to being unaware of privilege because of being so accustomed to something being treated specially. When an advantage or special treatment is normalised, people who benefit from it (and others) start not to notice it, or think of it as normal, natural or the default.

i. Religiopolitical

This is an adjective which refers to issues, worldviews or movements which combine religion and politics.

j. Religious privilege

Religious privilege exists when a group, ideology or identity is treated specially for religious reasons, e.g. a law that treats two similar ideas or people differently because of the religious nature of one of them.

k. Secular

“Secular” means religiously neutral or unrelated to religion, e.g. brushing your teeth is a secular activity.

Beyond this simple definition, secular is a contested adjective. It comes from a Latin word *saecularis* or *saeculum* meaning “the world”, “generation” or “age”. Many religious traditions draw a distinction between the temporal and the divine, or the worldly and the spiritual, considering that both have their place. In some contexts, secular is used to mean non-religious.

l. Secularisation

Secularisation is a label that has been applied to many historical and contemporary processes. It can refer to the transfer of religious assets to secular organisations, the trend of many western countries’ populations to become less religious, the decline in religious interest or ideas, the removal of religious ideas or symbols from certain spheres or the disentanglement of religious concerns from everyday life.

m. Secularism

Secularism is a political approach which aims to balance freedom of and from religion with other human rights. Its main principles are that religion should not be privileged or discriminated against by the state. There are many different models of secularism. A secularist might or might not be personally religious or non-religious.

n. Theocracy

Theocracy could refer to a worldview that believes religious rules should govern most areas of life, or a system of government where either authority derives from religious positions, or a religious ideology or organisation runs the state.

o. Theocratic


This is an adjective describing something as being related to theocracy. It might be applied to ideas, e.g. “the idea we should ban blasphemy is theocratic”, or movements, e.g. “the ‘Ban Blasphemy Party’ is theocratic”.


<p>EXERCISES</p>	<p>Slideshow variant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Stimulus #1 (Glossary) one term at a time • After revealing each term, but before revealing the definition, ask the first two questions. • Q1. <i>What does this term mean? (a-o)</i> • Q2. <i>Why might it be relevant to this subject? (a-o)</i> • Reveal the definition of the term and ask the final questions. • Q3. <i>What do you think of this term's definition? (a-o)</i> • Q4. <i>Did it match your definition? (a-o)</i> • Q5. <i>Why or why not? (a-o)</i> <p>Work sheet variant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review Stimulus #1 (Glossary) by handing out sheet 1, containing the list of terms (a-m) and ask Q1 and Q2, to be answered individually. • Review Stimulus #1 (Glossary) by handing out sheet 2, containing the list of terms and definitions (a-o). • Invite feedback. • Individually or in groups answer the final questions.
<p>TAKE IT FURTHER</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use each of the terms in a sentence. • Write a short script featuring two or more people discussing religion and politics. Within at least eight lines of dialogue, at least four of the above terms should be used in the correct context. • What do you think might be some of the misconceptions/confusion/conflict over these terms? • Independently research these terms. Try to use a variety of sources. How are they used in different contexts? Are there disagreements over their definitions? • Are there any other terms that should be included in the glossary? What are they and what are their definitions? • Create a poster display for this glossary to explain them to other students. • Try to find translations (these might not be literal) of the terms in the glossary in other languages.

Additional resources


Additional resources and stimulus material for this module can be found at ExploringSecularism.org/core-principles


Published by National Secular Society
25 Red Lion Square, London, WC1R 4RL
Company limited by guarantee. Registered in England No. 1418145

 www.secularism.org.uk

 admin@secularism.org.uk

 [@NatSecSoc](https://twitter.com/NatSecSoc)

 facebook.com/NationalSecularSociety

 020 7404 3126