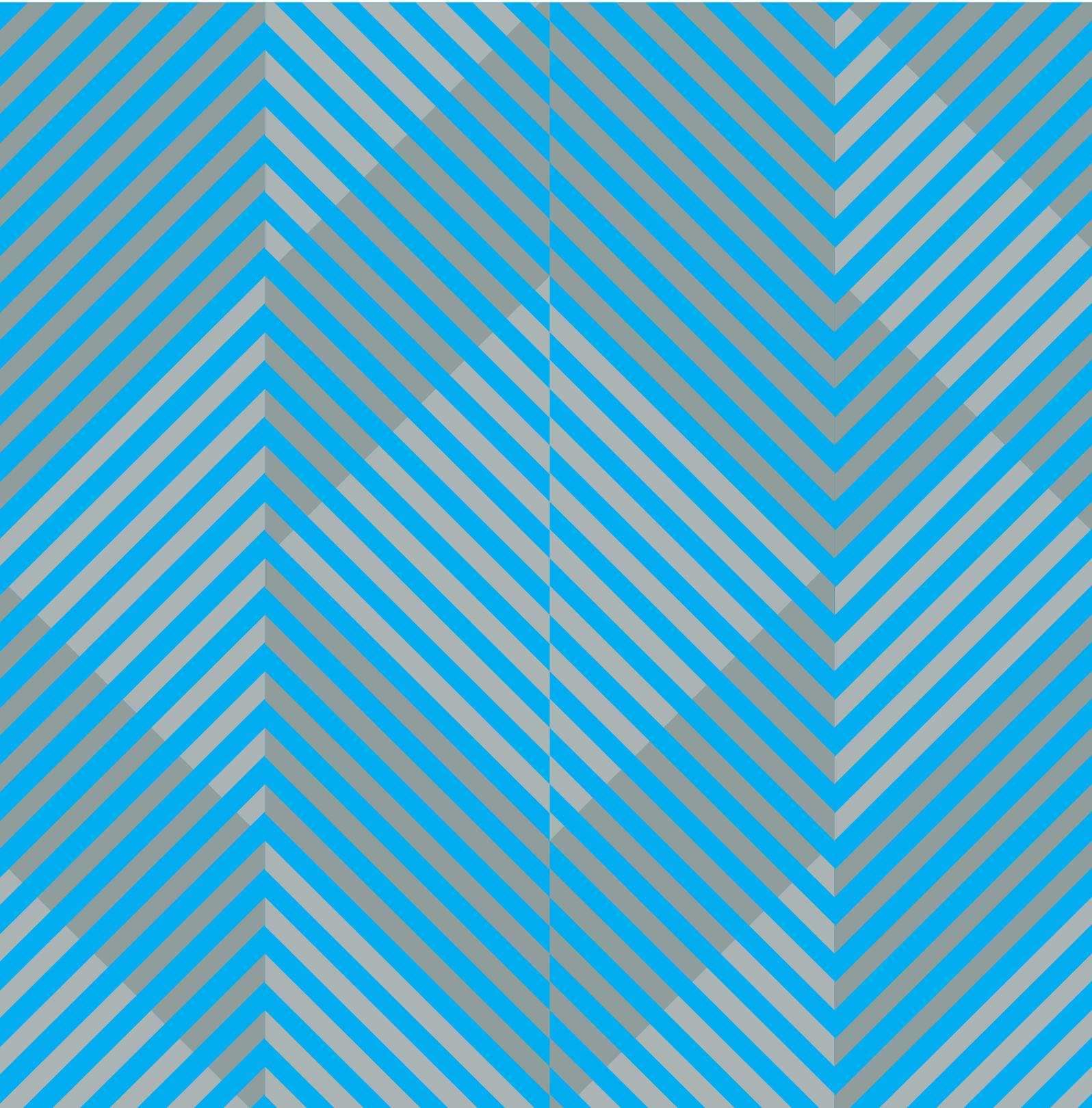


EXPLORING SECULARISM



SECULARISM, ART & LITERATURE FACTSHEET



Exploring Secularism is all about questions which arise in a pluralist society where people have different beliefs. The resources advocate asking these questions; they are not a manifesto of answers. It is for students to explore a range of answers to these questions and come up with some of their own.

Art and literature have played an important role in every human rights and social change movement including secularism. Societal discussions such as the right balance between freedom of and from religion are often explored through the arts. Different arts and literature can both reinforce religious privilege and discrimination, and challenge it through providing expression for new ideas and promoting tolerance.

Questions to explore in this theme:

Key question	Main subject area(s)	Other subject area(s)
How does art challenge religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination?	Arts	Religion and belief education SMSC
How does literature challenge religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination?	English Literature	Religion and belief education SMSC

Tips for exploring this theme:

You can find a basic secularist perspective on the core questions raised in this theme in our guide for the teachers at exploringsecularism.org/why-explore-secularism

You can find further resources and exercises related to this theme at exploringsecularism.org/secularism-art-and-literature

Students can be encouraged to seek out works of art and literature which offer perspectives on the key questions across multiple *Exploring Secularism* themes. Going through a book together or sharing thoughts on a work of art in a non-judgmental space can be rewarding. Students could be encouraged to reach out directly to artists or authors through social media.

Contemporary works of literature which explore questions related to secularism, theocracy and freedom of and from religion, include:

- *The Handmaid's Tale*, by Margaret Atwood
- *VOX: Silence Can be Deafening*, by Christina Dalcher
- *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, by Azar Nafisi
- *Christian Nation: A Novel*, by Frederic C. Rich
- *Persepolis*, by Marjane Satrapi

BannedBooksWeek.org.uk provides information on books that have been censored, banned or have suffered calls for their removal or restriction from libraries, schools, bookshops or public circulation. These include many that have been accused of challenging religious privilege or morality.