Year 9– Worldviews—What is ethics?

Key words	
Absolutism	View that certain actions are always good or bad.
Altruism	Selfless actions done without thought or expectation of a reward.
Dualism	The belief that humans have both a physical body and non-physical part such as a soul.
Ethics	Philosophical study of right and wrong.
Hedonic Calculus	A way of calculating which actions are right and wrong
Materialism	Belief that humans are only physical - i.e. a body
Morality	Ideas or principles about what is right and wrong.
Relativism	View that whether an action is good or bad depends on the situation.
Thought Experiment	An imaginary scenario invented to examine the consequences of a philosophical idea
Utilitarianism	The theory that the best action is the one that creates the greatest good for the greatest number of people
Will to Power	Term used by Nietzsche to describe a natural human desire for strength and power.

1. What is ethics?

Ethics is about our sense of right and wrong, our morality.
It is thought by some to be a natural thing, others do not agree because our morality has changed a lot over the years.
For example—Spartans used to leave babies that they thought were weak on a hillside to die. We would not find this acceptable today.

2. What makes us human?

Dualism	Materialism
~ Humans are spiritual beings. ~ Or mind or soul is a separate part of us. ~ Our thoughts, memories and opinions are what makes us who we are. ~ When we die something happens to our mind/ soul/energy.	~ Humans are only physical beings. ~ Our mind is not a separate part of us. ~ Our thoughts, memories and opinions are the movements of our physical body. ~ When we die, we decay and no separate part of us lives on.

Gilbert Ryle criticised dualism saying that it was like a ghost in the machine. Saying there is no invisible force inside us.
However this would mean things like, right and wrong, truth and meaning do not exist as they are not physical things.

3. How should we live if God is dead?

Friedrich Nietzsche - the idea of God was no longer needed because science now answered difficult questions about human life instead of religion. Nietzsche said you know you are living a good life if you would be happy to repeat your life in the exact same way.

Agree	Disagree
Human nature is motivated by 'will to power'.	Humans are not just motivated by 'will to power'.
It doesn't make sense to follow Christian morality if you don't believe in God.	People do not have to be Christians to agree with ideas of Christian morality.
A more healthy, natural society would be created which rewarded the strong.	Society would be damaged if people simply followed their natural instincts.

4. Are goodness and pleasure the same?

Jeremy Bentham - Utilitarianism
- Humans are motivated by two things: avoid pain & experience pleasure.
- More pleasure than suffering = good
- More suffering than pleasure = bad
- **Hedonic Calculus:** pleasure–pain = utility (usefulness)
- Some negative actions being good!

John Stuart Mill - Qualitative Utilitarianism
The quality of pleasure that matters.
Higher pleasure such as 'Shakespeare' is more valuable than lots of any pleasure.

Robert Nozick
Humans want more than just 'pleasure'.
They want to do an be things i.e. brave, intelligent.

5. What should we do with the runaway train?

Philippa Foot wanted to find out if our morality was consistent, *thought experiments* were used. Is there more to it than the number of people affected?

Runaway train - most would sacrifice the one person for the five.	**The Surgeon** - most would not sacrifice the one healthy person for the five.
The Judge - most would not sacrifice an innocent person to save five hostages.	Driverless cars face many of the same issues. If there is a crash how will the car decide?

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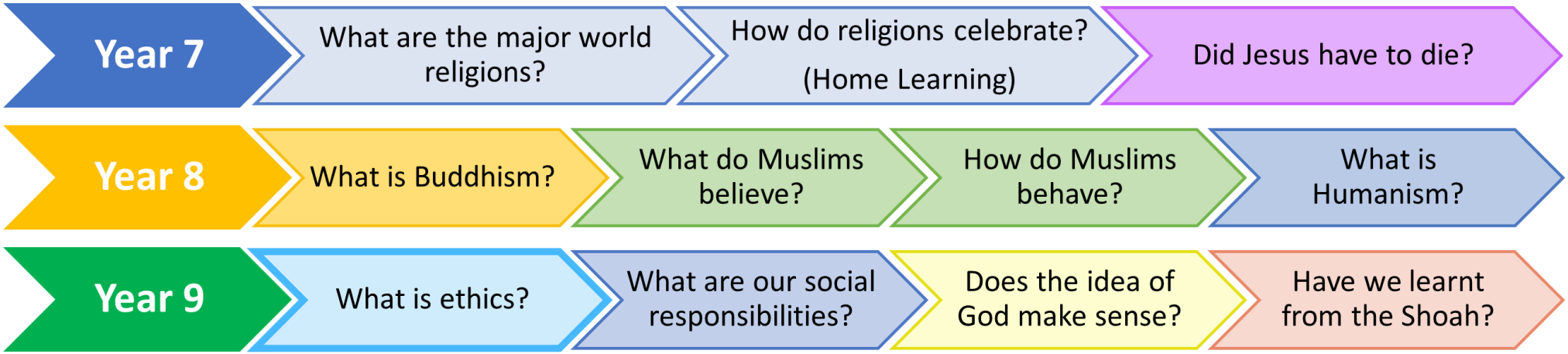
AIM: This unit of work is to get you thinking about how we make choices, how do we decide what is right and wrong? There are many ways that we can decide the best choice in different dilemmas.

You will compare these beliefs to those you have already studied: This unit helps build a foundation for the rest of the year, you will use some of the things you learn in the following units **'what are our social responsibilities?'** you will reflect on previous learning of how other worldviews may decide what is right and wrong.



This knowledge organiser gives you the basic information for this unit. There are different ways that you can use your knowledge organiser - **you should not just copy from the knowledge organiser.**

Below are a range of activities you could do, you do not need to do them all. Select the things that you think will help you remember the information. Don't worry if one doesn't work, try a different way until you find an activity that works for you. Some activities are harder than others, chose one that challenges you, if you find one too hard try a different one.

- Use the 'Look, cover, write and check' strategy.
  - **Look:** Look at and read a section for a few minutes.
  - **Cover:** Cover that section/put away the sheet.
  - **Write:** Write anything you can remember from what you just read.
  - **Check:** Check what you have written then correct/add in anything missing.
  - **Repeat:** Repeat this with each section until you can remember it all.
- Write a basic recall quizzing questions. Leave it overnight and try to answer them the next day.
- Write yourself or a partner some quiz questions. Quiz each other or swop your questions to see if you can answer each other's questions.
- Write a letter/blog/article to someone explaining a key idea or concept.
- Get your parents/carers to test you.
- Create mind maps or flashcards.
- Create fact files for each key area.
- Summarise each section in your own words.
- Get sticky with your learning: write out key points from the KO as you read over it on post-it notes.
- Write your own challenging questions using the command words below then, write an answer for these questions.
  - **explain** (say why/how something is done)
  - **compare** (what do two or more things have in common/ different),
  - **evaluate** (weigh up positives and negatives, arguments for and against).
- Draw images and annotate/label them with extra information.
- Put the key words from your KO into new sentences.
- Give yourself spelling tests or keyword definition tests.
- Think about the big picture – why is knowing specific information important to you/other people/society/companies/science/technology?
- Think about the big picture – are there any links in the content on your KO to anything that you have watched on TV, read about or heard in the news?