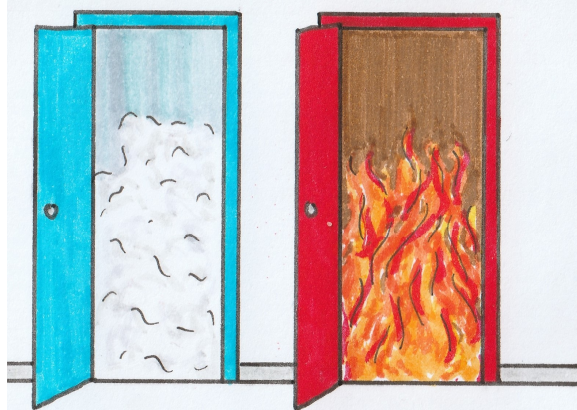


H

HEAVEN + HELL



The concept of hell seems medieval to some people: does a God of love punish sinners with eternal fire? But does human freedom mean that if there is heaven, there would have to be hell too?

What's it all about? Life after death

Many religions teach that the soul – the real you – can live beyond the grave. If that is true, where does the soul go? Heaven and hell are words in common use, but what do different Christians believe about these two Hs? In the contemporary world many Christians don't follow the medieval idea that hell is – literally – a place where some souls are burned forever. Maybe hell is more like a metaphor for the harm we do ourselves? Will a God of love send people to hell? Heaven is where God reigns eternally: the perfect divine kingdom. Purgatory, the place between heaven and hell, where your sinful soul can be purged, is part of Roman Catholic belief.

Jannah is the Muslim word for Paradise: the dead will lie in the ground until the Day of Judgment, when Allah will weigh up our hearts and lives, taking the good to Jannah.

Buddhist thinking is different: rebirth follows this life because of the attachments we gather through our bad actions, but our good actions and thoughts can help us towards a more virtuous rebirth. Being born human is a precious gift – don't waste it, or you'll be back. The end of the cycle of rebirth and attachment is Nirvana – bliss beyond this world, the state of enlightenment.

All religions do agree though that the way this life is lived will have an impact on the life beyond. Is it as if this life is a test, and death is results day?

Which religions and beliefs?

- Christians
- Muslims
- Buddhists

Clip available here: www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/religious-education-ks3-a-z-of-religion-and-beliefs-h-is-for-heaven-hell-other-afterlives/zrfp382

Key Questions

- What do different religions say about what happens when we die?
- Can you deduce ideas about afterlife from belief about God, e.g. that God is loving or merciful?
- Which is easier to believe in – heaven, hell or annihilation?
- There's no proof, but is there evidence for and against afterlife?

Classroom or homework task: evidence and arguments, but no proof

There are many different views about life after death, because no one can prove it except by dying! Here are 6 arguments, or claims to evidence about life beyond the grave. Give each one a mark out of 10 for its quality, then write them into a 'two sides of the coin' argument about afterlife.

Near Death Experiences, when someone comes back from the brink, are evidence that the soul lives on.	The soul or 'true you' is more than physical so it could possibly live without a body.	Humans have been convinced of life after death throughout their history. Maybe there is something in it.
Over 6 billion believe in life after death. They are not all stupid. That is about 85% of the world.	Religions disagree about the afterlife, weakening each other's claims to know what happens when we die	God has not given us pointless and meaningless lives: only an afterlife makes sense of this life.

Suggested outcomes: students can...

- Give an informed account of different beliefs about life after death in at least two religions;
- Give reasons for their views about whether a soul can live without a body, and whether humans have a soul
- Handle information to create 'double sided' arguments.

H is for Heaven and Hell

State which view is which in the three boxes below. Then give your own comments on this view.

Who says: "Our idea is that after death comes rebirth, which can be more virtuous if we have done good things in this life. Eventual liberation from this cycle of rebirth is called Nirvana. You can get to Nirvana through enlightenment."

Who says: "My religion teaches that God offers eternal life to humanity. I believe trusting God for eternal life will take us to heaven. To me the idea of hell is about rejecting God, goodness and love, not so much flaming pits."

Who says: "After death, our religion teaches we will lie in the grave until judgement day when God will take those who deserve it to Paradise forever. This life is a test: submit to God and pass the test."

My view about this idea:

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My view about this idea:

a. Near Death Experiences, when someone comes back from the brink, are evidence that the soul lives on.	b. The soul or 'true you' is more than physical so it could possibly live without a body.	c. Humans have been convinced of life after death throughout their history. Maybe there is something in it.
d. Over 6 billion believe in life after death. They are not all stupid. That is about 85% of the world.	e. Religions disagree about the afterlife, weakening each other's claims to know what happens when we die	f. God has not given us pointless and meaningless lives: only an afterlife makes sense of this life.

Is this a good quality point?
Give it a score out of ten.

a.	B	.c
d.	e.	f

Click here to research what thousands of young people think about life after death:

<http://old.natre.org.uk/db/profile2a.php>

"When this life is finished, it is possible or probably that there is another life."

Begin your essay here, and continue on another sheet. Explain with reasons both sides of the controversy about life after this life.