

Year 12 Induction Learning for A Level Religious Studies.

The soul: Ethical, philosophical and Buddhist thinking.

"An unexamined life is not worth living" Socrates

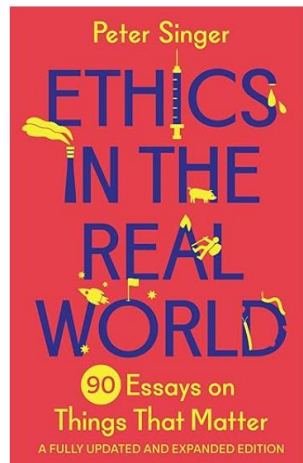


What is the soul and why does it matter if a soul exists or not?

You will be exploring the soul from **three** different perspectives.

Ethics.

Are insects conscious and do animals have souls?



Task 1: Read the attached article [Are insects conscious?](#) What questions does Singer raise regarding animal suffering and God? What was Descartes view on

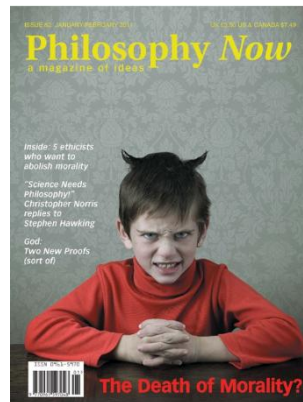
animal suffering? What is subjective experience? What do Jain monks sweep paths ([Insects in the Religions of India.pdf](#) this will tell you more).

Task 2: Do animals have souls, and should all non-human animals have rights? In this article [BBC - Ethics - Animal ethics: Animal rights](#), it discusses the above questions.

Summarise the case for and against animal rights. What is the view on animals having souls?

Explain your views on animal rights. Do you think non-human animals should be given more rights or not? Refer to the article to back up your views.

Philosophy.



The nature of the human soul has been the subject of religious belief and scientific investigation for millennia.

[On The Soul | Issue 82 | Philosophy Now](#) (from the above issue)

Task 1: Read the article above. It may be challenging and force you to consider thinking about the soul in a way never previously considered!

Task 2: Summarise what you have read in writing. What are the main points addressed. For example, 'the brain is no more than a neurological phenomenon, a trick the brain plays on the owner...'.

Task 3: Then, explain which of the arguments you find the most convincing that argue for a soul and which of the arguments you find the most convincing against the existence of soul.

Buddhism.



Anatta: The Buddhist observation and teaching that there is 'no self', that is, no substantial essence beyond the empirical self.

As you will see in the following article, anatta is often translated as no soul or no self. [Buddhism and anatta for induction 2025.pdf](#)

Task 1: Read the above article. What are the key learning points of the article, for example the three marks of existence? Why did the Buddha conclude there was no soul? What did Ajahn Chah, a Buddhist monk, compare human life too? What does empirical mean?

Explain the five skandhas.

Task 2: What is your opinion on the concept of anatta? Explain and provide evidence from the text to support your view if possible. Why might someone disagree with this opinion, what might their argument be that opposes yours?

Task 3: Do you find the teaching of 'emptiness' (sunnata/sunyata), a negative concept? Explain.

All articles needed are on SMSC Resources here [2025 Induction Learning Year 11](#)