

TEACHER GUIDE:

Teaching Students How to State an Opinion



CANOLFAN GENEDLAETHOL
ADDYSG GREFYDDOL CYMRU
NATIONAL CENTRE OF
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR WALES

National Centre of Religious
Education for Wales



PRIFYSGOL
BANGOR
UNIVERSITY

Step-by-Step Teaching Ideas



1 Stating Your Belief Clearly

- **Explanation:** Students often write vaguely (“I kind of agree...”). They need a clear stance.
- **Activity Idea - Sentence Frames:**
 - Give students prompts:
 - “I believe that... because...”
 - “My values lead me to think...”
 - “I agree/disagree with the statement since...”
 - Outcome: Students practise starting with a confident, clear statement.

2 Giving Reasons and Evidence

- **Explanation:** A belief without explanation = weak justification. Reasons may come from personal experience, ethical principles, or ideas studied in class.
- **Activity Idea - The ‘Because, So’ Chain:**
 - Students practice expanding their beliefs with reasoning:
 - “I believe forgiveness is important **because** it prevents hatred, **so** it helps society live peacefully.”
 - Encourage 2-3 strong reasons rather than many weak ones.

3 Reflecting on Religious and Non-Religious Perspectives

- **Explanation:** Students should show they’ve listened to other views and considered them.
- **Activity Idea - “Which Matches?” Task:**
 - Students tick which religion/non-religious perspective is closest to their own belief.
 - They explain: “My view is similar to Humanism because...”, or “I disagree with Hindu ideas on karma because...”
 - This helps them connect personal beliefs to the studied material.

Step-by-Step Teaching Ideas



4

Justifying Your Choice Against Alternatives

- **Explanation:** Real justification means explaining why their belief makes most sense to them, even when other views exist.
- **Activity Idea - The “But” Technique:**
 - Model sentences:
 - “Some Christians believe in life after death, **but** I find the scientific explanation more convincing because...”
 - “Hindus believe in karma and rebirth, **but** I believe we only live once, because...”
 - This shows awareness of alternatives while strengthening their own position.

5

Structuring the Justification

- **Explanation:** Students need a clear, examiner-friendly format.
- **Activity Idea - Three-Part Structure:**
 1. **My belief** - State it clearly.
 2. **My reasons** - Give 2-3 developed reasons with “because” or “so” to extend.
 3. **Link to others** - Mention at least one religious and one non-religious perspective: either agreement, partial agreement, or contrast.
- Provide sentence starters:
 - “I believe that... because...”
 - “This links to [religion/non religious view] as they also teach...”
 - “However, I find this unconvincing because..”

6

Developing a Mature Tone

- **Explanation:** Justifying values should be reflective, not dismissive of other.
- **Activity Idea - Rewrite the Tone:**
 - Give harsh phrasing:
 - “Religious people are wrong because there’s no evidence.”
 - Students rewrite to keep it respectful:
 - “I disagree with religious teachings because I find scientific explanations more convincing.”
 - This builds balanced and examiner-friendly writing.

Step-by-Step Teaching Ideas



Extension/Challenge Activities

- **Two-Sided Justification:** Ask students to write from two different positions before deciding which one reflects their belief best.
- **Counterargument Practice:** Write one reason someone might disagree with them, then respond to it.
- **Exam Simulation:** Provide a past-paper statement, ask them to write their own justified view in one paragraph, then peer assess for clarity, reasoning, and reference to wider perspectives.

Teacher Reminders

- Encourage students to go beyond “I believe this because I do” - always demand a **reason**.
- Encourage them to link back to the religious and non-religious perspectives they studied earlier.
- Remind students: justification is not about being “right” but about showing **reasoned reflection**.
- Scaffold with sentence starters until students gain confidence writing independently.