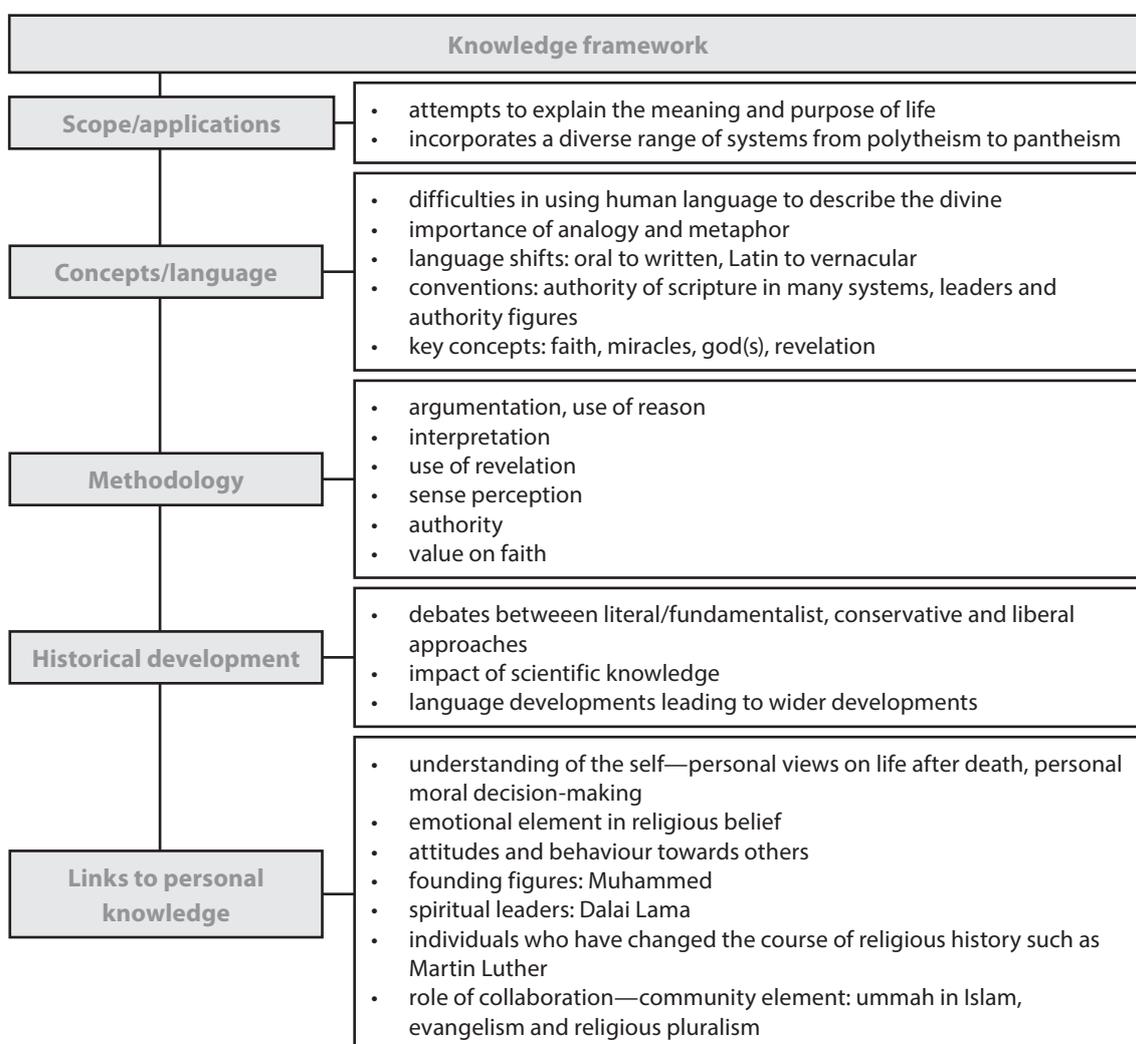


Religious knowledge systems

How do we decide between the competing claims of different religious knowledge systems? Can there ever be a basis for religious knowledge that is independent of the culture that produces it? Is atheism as much a matter of faith as religious belief?

Religious knowledge systems offer answers to fundamental questions about the meaning and purpose of human life. This area of knowledge incorporates a diverse range of different beliefs and systems; for example, varieties of theism, pantheism and polytheism. Some people believe that there is one true religion whereas others, known as religious pluralists, argue that the different religions are just different reflections of the same underlying truth. Religious knowledge has both a shared and personal dimension and offers a concrete context, within the TOK classroom, to explore the links between the two.

Religion is often regarded as a sensitive area in which discussions should be had with caution, in part because people have very personal and deeply held convictions regarding religious matters. However, for many people their religion has a major impact on how they understand the world, permeating their thinking and influencing their understanding of other AOKs, for example, the idea that ethics and religion are inextricably linked. In any case, for many, religion provides a backdrop to all the other knowledge they have.



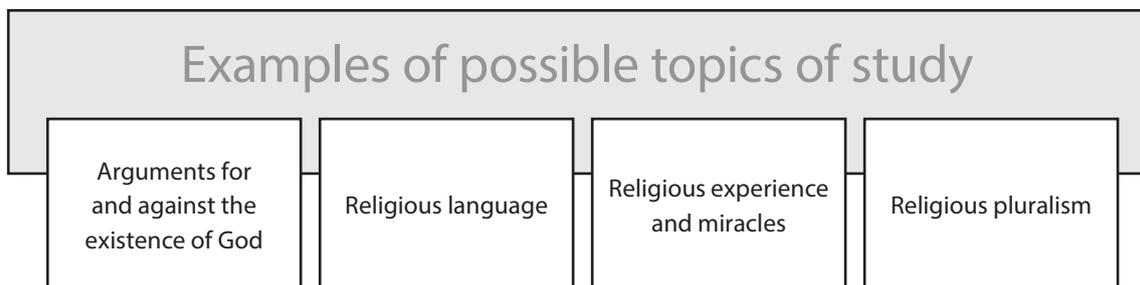
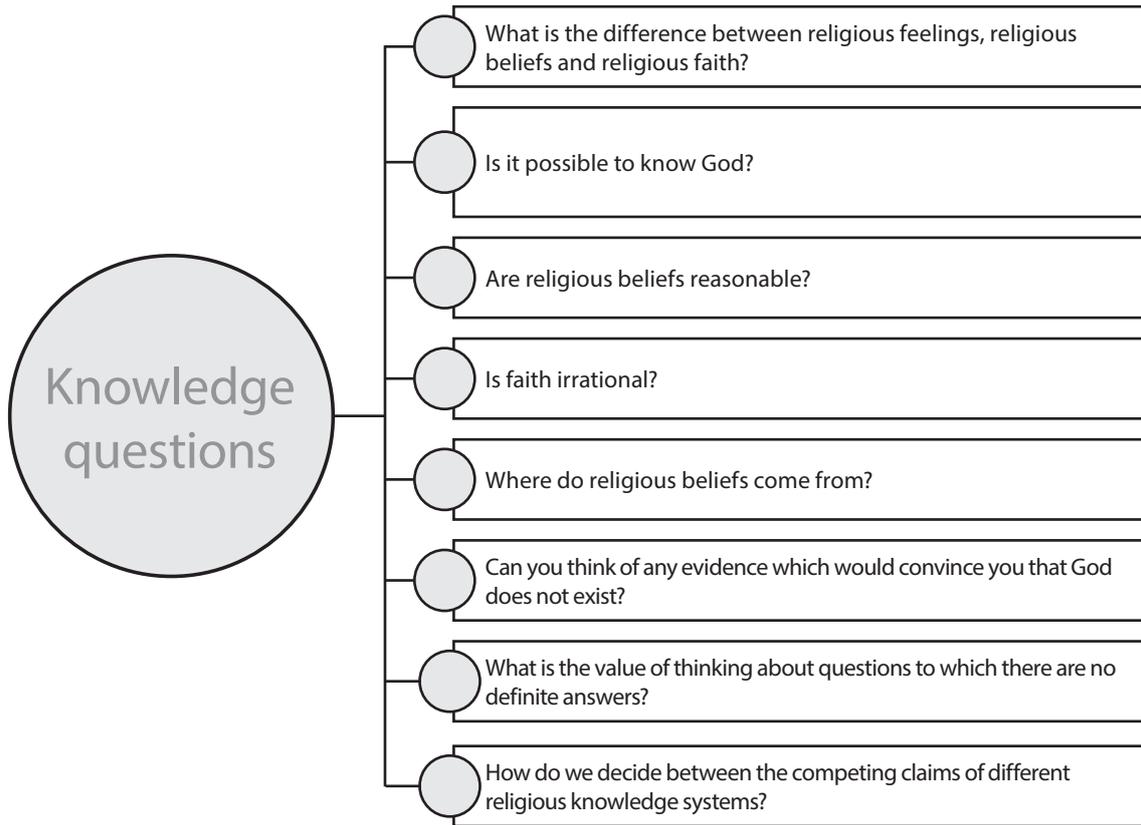


Figure 17