

Religion and Society: future-course general preparation

Supported preparation only; actual school choices and assessed work remain separate

A definition is a criterion

Each definition stresses a different feature, so it includes different practices.

- State the criterion; test what it implies.
- Academic description, not devotion.

Definitions and frameworks of religion: source representation

Original source / task evidence

Task: one definition requires a deity; another emphasizes practices and community.
Explain why they may classify the same activity differently.

Separate what is stated from the interpretation.
Contextual definitions

A definition decides what counts: state which one you use.

Worked: one activity, two definitions

- 1 **Classify** the same activity falls in or out
- 2 **Examine** context, participants' meanings, purpose
- 3 **Limit** no universal definition from one invented case

Decision

Different criteria give different classifications.

Your turn: test the deity criterion

A meaningful communal practice makes no deity claim. Does it count?

- Pause and answer.
- Follow the criterion, not your instinct.

Review: the criterion decides

Excluded by one criterion, included by the other.

- A test of consequences and purpose.
- It classifies no real tradition.

Four lenses, four pieces of evidence

Each concept asks its own question of the source.

- One evidence link per concept.
- Not four labels on one observation.

Change, identity, interpretation and power: source representation

Original source / task evidence

Original case: a community changes meeting format; members debate whether it preserves their practice; a committee chooses the final rule. Analyse all four concepts.

Separate what is stated from the interpretation.
Four concepts in a source

One case, four lenses: change, identity, interpretation, power.

Worked: the meeting-format case

Concept	Evidence in the case
change	the new meeting format
identity	debates over membership
interpretation	rival accounts of 'preserved'
power	the committee sets the rule

Your turn: everyone votes

In a second community all members vote. Is power now equal?

- Pause and answer.
- Compare with committee-only rule.

Review: votes and real power

Formal authority

voting spreads the decision

Practical power

agenda control, eligibility
information, whose proposals

Shape of a focused inquiry

An approved issue, a course concept, relevant evidence.

- Compare origin, method, purpose, scope.
- Keep uncertainty and your position visible.

Conceptual inquiry and reflexivity: source representation

Original source / task evidence

Task: a committee leaflet and one member's account disagree about who shaped a decision. Plan an inquiry without fabricating engagement.

Separate what is stated from the interpretation.
Inquiry method and source evaluation

When sources disagree, plan to test both, and never invent the evidence.

Worked: two sources disagree

- 1 **Question** how was authority exercised here?
- 2 **Sources** minutes, document purpose, voluntary accounts
- 3 **Distinguish** formal rules from practice
- 4 **Limit** one source or one dissenter settles nothing

Decision

Compare the sources; never invent engagement.

Your turn: no minutes

The minutes are unavailable. What can the leaflet and one account support?

- Pause and answer.
- Fit the claim to the sources.

Review: a narrower, honest claim

Can conclude

the public justification

one reported experience, attributed

Cannot conclude

every decision

hidden motives

Check yourself

Attendance changes after a new local service and migration. How do you investigate meaning?

- Several causes, not one.
- Ask what attendance means to people.