

**FURZE  
PLATT**  
SENIOR SCHOOL



# A-Level Religious Studies

# The Course Breakdown:

- 9 hours a fortnight
- 6 hours with Miss Stirling
  - Paper 1: Philosophy of Religion.
  - Paper 3: Developments in Christian Thought (DCT)
- 3 hours with Miss Dowell
  - Paper 2: Religion and Ethics

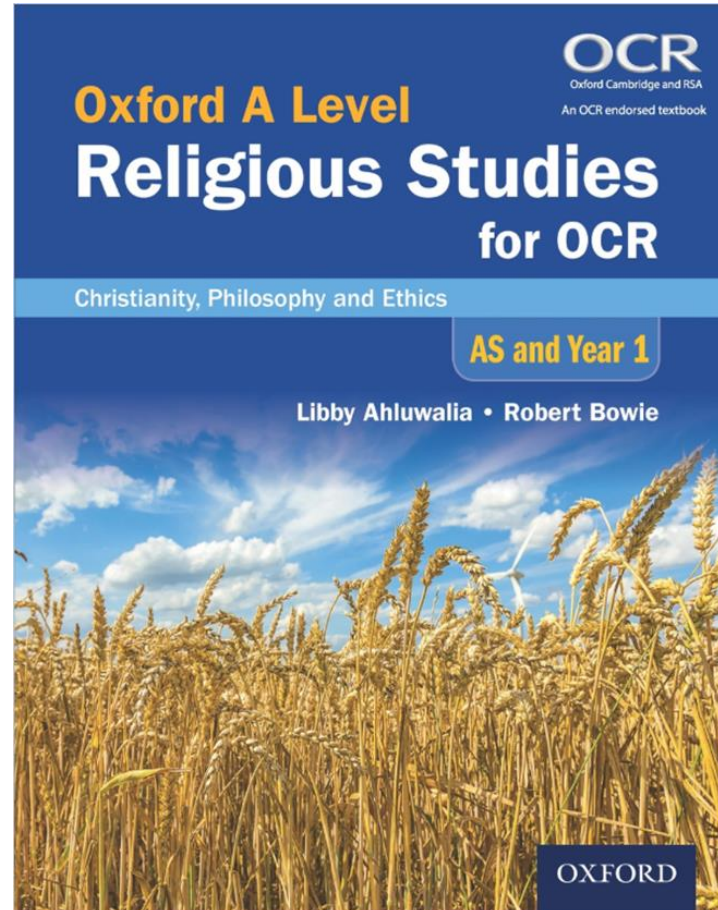
# The Exam:

- This will take place in summer 2027!
- You will have 3 exams (Philosophy, Ethics and DCT)
- Each exam is 2 hours long
- For each exam you will answer 3 questions out of a choice of 4.
- Each question is marked out of 40.

## Kit List:

- You will need 3 lever-arch folders.
- Name them: Philosophy, Ethics and DCT.
- You will need dividers for each topic.
- Bring in your summer transition work on day 1.
- Textbook for Year 1.
- Revision guides.

# Year 1 Textbook:

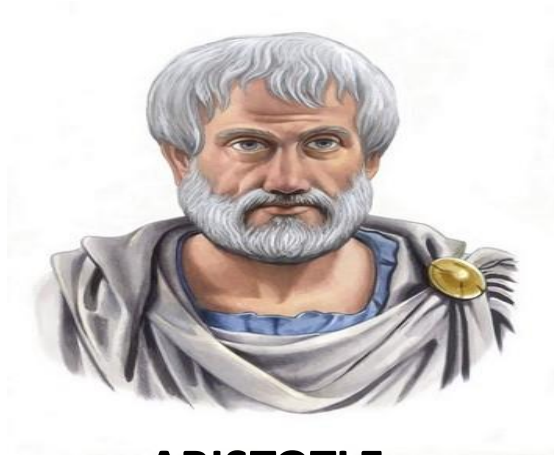


# Useful Pointers:

- Date and title every piece of work you complete. Trust me...
- Date any hand-outs you are given.
- Complete additional reading.
- You can borrow the textbooks and revision guides at any time but they are kept in school only.

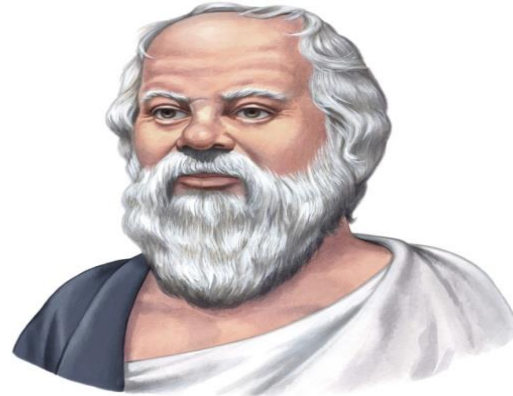
# Starter - Who came first?

Read carefully and put these founding fathers of philosophy into chronological order.



**ARISTOTLE**

- Travelled to Athens to study under Plato
- When Plato died Aristotle opened his own school called the Lyceum
- He wrote on a much wider range of subjects than his teacher



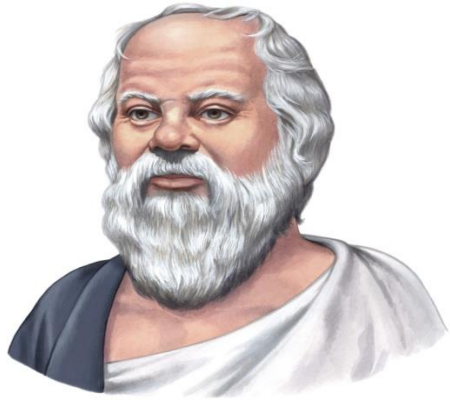
**SOCRATES**

- Left no writings
- Served as an informal mentor to Plato and Xenophon



**PLATO**

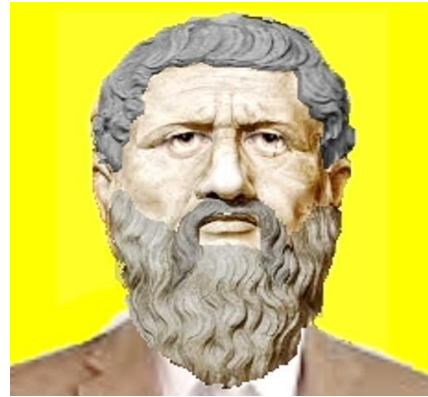
- Wrote many books in the form of dialogues or conversations i.e. Socratic method.
- Mentions Socrates in most of these.
- Founded a school known as the Academy



## SOCRATES

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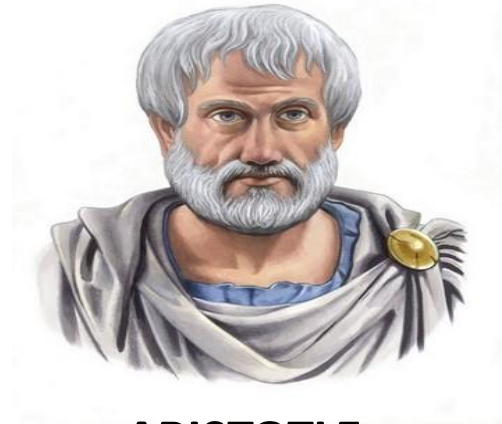
• 469- 399 BC



## PLATO

- Wrote many books in the form of dialogues or conversations i.e. Socratic method.
- Mentions Socrates in most of these.
- Founded a school known as the Academy

• 427 – 347 BC



## ARISTOTLE

- Travelled to Athens to study under Plato
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- He wrote on a much wider range of subjects than his teacher

• 384 – 322 BC



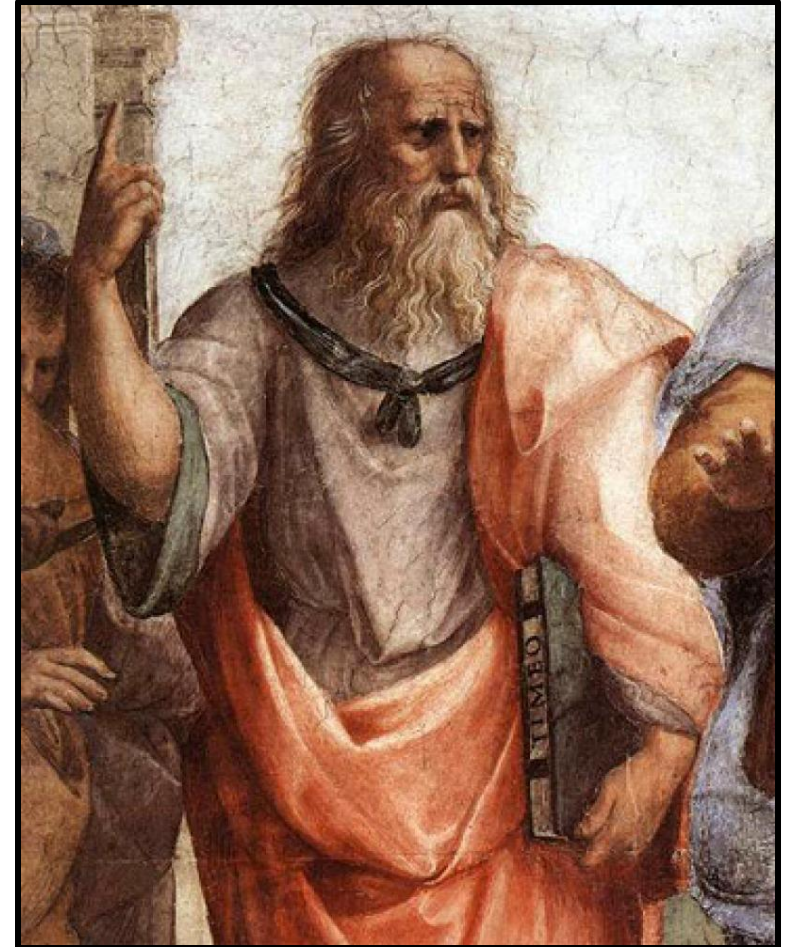
# Introduction to Plato

## Learning Objective:

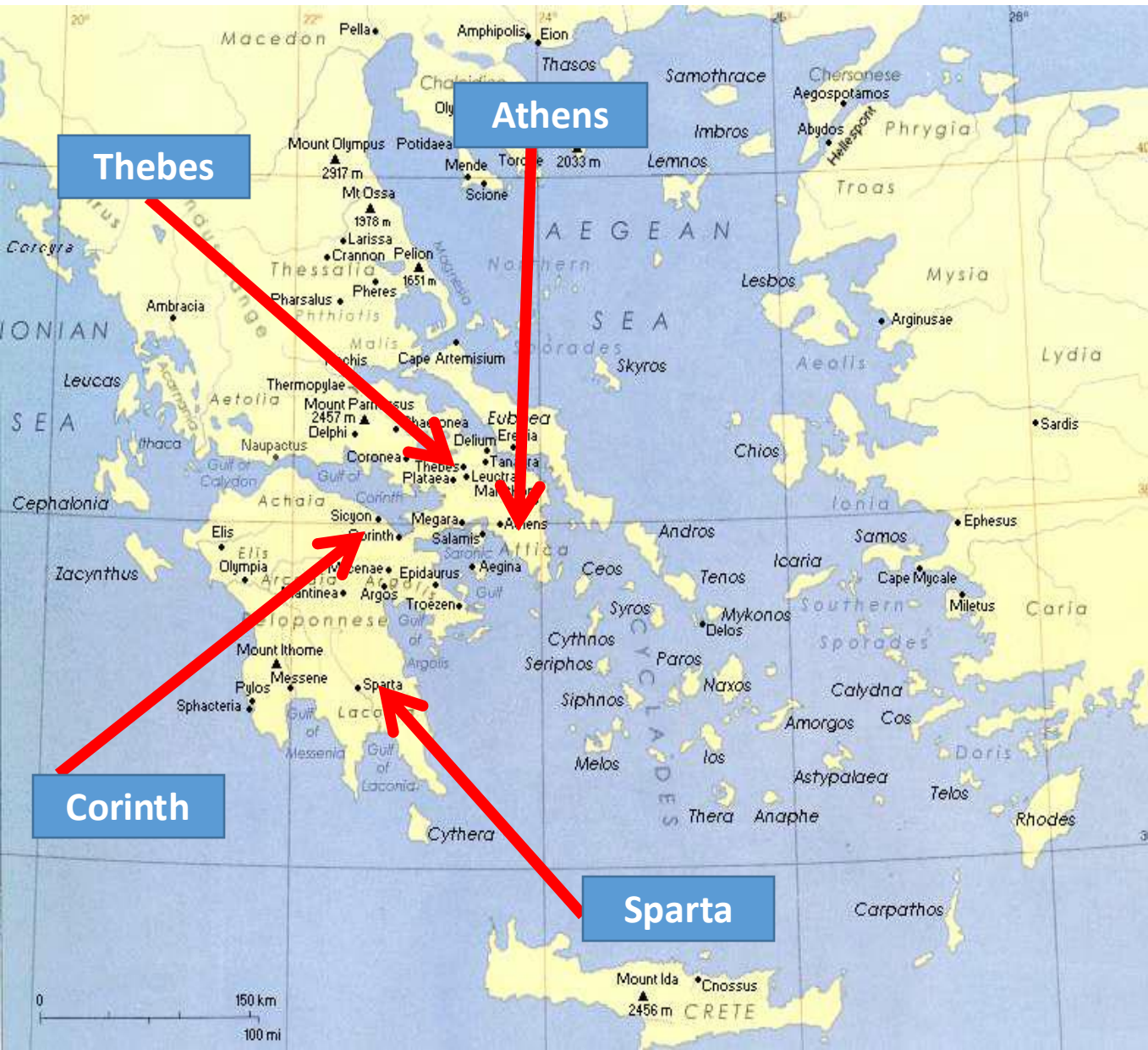
To understand the historical context of Plato and his writings

## Learning Outcomes:

- To introduce the Philosophy course, and explain prior understanding of Plato from the summer homework
- To explain who Socrates was, and how he influenced Plato
- To understand who Plato was, and his key writings



# The world into which Plato was born



Plato was an Athenian. In Athens there was a strong tradition of men sitting around engaged in discussions.

Athens had been a very successful political state. However, it eventually lost the 27 year long Peloponnesian war with Sparta.

The Spartans replaced democracy with a band of 30 tyrants who made decisions. One of these was Plato's uncle.

# Chronology: Life of Plato

- Cut out the chronology cards
- Place them in the correct order to show significant events in the life of Plato
- Create a timeline on A3 paper
- Glue them on when you're happy with the order (or you can wait until we go through them!)
- Annotate: Which events do you think had the most significant effect on Plato's life?
- Why?

- **Plato** was born around the year 428 BC in Athens. He had two older brothers Glaucon and Adeimantus, and a sister, Potone. Plato's birth name was Aristocles, and he gained the nickname Platon, meaning broad, because of his broad build. He studied at a gymnasium owned by Dionysios, and at the palaistra of Ariston of Argos.
- Approx 407 BC Plato met Socrates. As Socrates' disciple, Plato adopted his philosophy and style of debate, and directed his studies toward the question of virtue and the formation of a noble character.
- 404 BC war with Sparta ended. The Spartans removed the Athenian democracy and placed 30 tyrants in charge. Two of these were relatives of Plato who tried to convince him to take a political role. These tyrants severely reduced the rights of Athenian citizens and killed over 1500 of her people. Plato quickly turned hi back on this.
- 399 BC Socrates is sentenced to death for corrupting the youth (encouraging them to think in new ways). Athenian law allowed a convicted citizen to propose an alternative punishment to the one called for by the prosecution and the jury would decide. Instead of proposing he be exiled, Socrates suggested he be honoured by the city for his contribution to their enlightenment and be paid for his services. The jury was not amused and sentenced him to death by drinking a mixture of poison hemlock. Up to this point Plato had been considering a career in politics but he was so disgusted at the actions of the cities leaders that he devoted the rest of his life to philosophy.

- After Socrates's death, Plato travelled for 12 years throughout the Mediterranean region, studying mathematics with the Pythagoreans in Italy, and geometry, geology, astronomy and religion in Egypt
- In 388 BCE Plato returned to Athens and founded the Academy, often described as the first university. It provided a comprehensive curriculum, including astronomy, biology, mathematics, political theory, and philosophy.
- In 367 BC Plato was invited to be the personal tutor to Dionysus II, the new ruler of Syracuse. Plato accepted the invitation, but found on his arrival that the situation was not conducive for philosophy. He continued to teach the young ruler until 365 BC when Syracuse entered into war. Plato returned to Athens, and it was around this time that Plato's famous pupil Aristotle began to study at the Academy.
- In 347 Plato died, leaving the Academy to his sister's son Speusippus. The Academy operated until 529 AD, when it was closed by Roman Emperor Justinian I, who feared it was a source of paganism and a threat to Christianity.

# Who was Plato influenced by?

## 1. Obviously Socrates

\* Socrates was convinced that our souls - where virtues and vices are found - are vastly more important for our lives than our bodies or external circumstances. Like Socrates, Plato was a **DUALIST** who believed that the body and soul existed separately from each other but are somehow linked. The material world in which we live is constantly changing and the spiritual world of the souls is unchanging.



Dualism – the belief that humans are made of two distinct parts

1. mind/soul (immaterial)
2. Body (physical)

# Who was Plato influenced by?

## 2. Heraclitus

**\*"You can never step in the same river twice"**

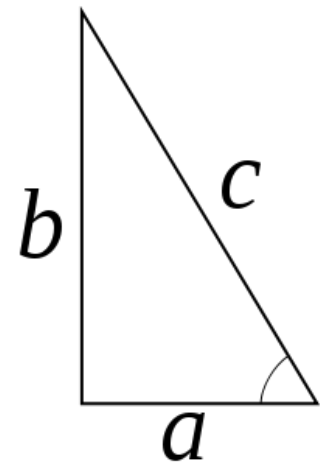
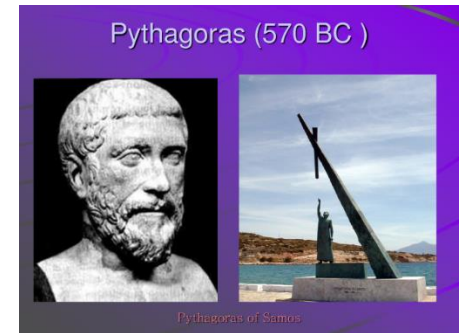
Plato wants to understand the world through reason. He is searching for Truth (as his teacher before him). But he cannot accept that Truth could change. The physical world as he understood it could not provide this Truth. It was in a state of constant flux and so any truth found in this realm would be subject to change. It was this along with the concept of dualism that led him to think that there must be a spiritual world that was unchanging which held the ultimate truths and knowledge.

# Who was Plato influenced by?

## 3. Pythagorus

\* Second only to Socrates is the influence of Plato's confrontation with Pythagoreanism. To put it in a nutshell, Plato converted to Pythagoreanism: to belief in the immortality of the soul; to a conviction that mathematics held the key to an understanding of reality; to the idea that politics might after all, be reshaped by philosophy and philosophers.

[Schofield ]



# Other important information about Plato

- **Absolutist** – the ethical belief that there are absolute standards against which moral questions can be judged, and that certain actions are right or wrong, regardless of the context of the act.
- **Rationalist** - The belief that knowledge is based on the use of reason. Reality has a logical structure that we can ‘work out’ using our reason.
- We do not gain knowledge through our senses (**Empiricism**) because this constantly changes and cannot be trusted. We use our minds to remember information that has been part of us since birth because our soul has been in the spiritual world (**innate knowledge**).

# 3 - 2 - 1

- 3 new things you have learned today
- 2 things you want to find out more about
- 1 thing that you need clarified

