

The A level in philosophy, ethics and religion is an interesting course where you study the ideas of many great philosophers like Aristotle and Kant.

Reading around the topics we study in class is very important for developing understanding. It is also the hallmark of a student that will be successful at A Level. In preparation for this it's a good idea to read a novel which explores the ideas of philosophers. There is a choice of two books (see reverse). Both are available on Amazon, and either, or both, are a great starting point.

During the course you discuss and evaluate the ideas of philosophers. So make notes that outline the ideas of the philosophers you read about and any thoughts you have on this. These do not have to be detailed, but it will help you to get into the swing of taking notes independently, thinking for yourself and give you an aide memoire.

I recommend you read the book for enjoyment first, popping sticky notes in places you would like to return to for taking notes after you finish.

<p>Sophie's World by Jostein Gaarder</p>	<p>Philosophy and Ethics</p>	<p>This book leads you through a history of the great philosophers right through to the modern age. With Sophie, the reader is encouraged to question the world around themselves. The teacher-pupil structure enhances the plot, whose mysteries will keep you wondering to the last page.</p> <p>‘One day fourteen-year-old Sophie Amundsen comes home from school to find in her mailbox two notes, with one question on each: "Who are you?" and "Where does the world come from?" From that irresistible beginning, Sophie becomes obsessed with questions that take her far beyond what she knows of her Norwegian village. Through those letters, she enrolls in a kind of correspondence course, covering Socrates to Sartre, with a mysterious philosopher, while receiving letters addressed to another girl. Who is Hilde? And why does her mail keep turning up? To unravel this riddle, Sophie must use the philosophy she is learning—but the truth turns out to be far more complicated than she could have imagined.’</p> <p>This is less than £3 used on Amazon, but you may also be able to pick it up in a charity shop, the library or it may be lurking on a bookshelf at home – it was a bestseller several years ago.</p>
<p>The Sage Train: Philosophy Comes to Life by Nicky Hansell</p>	<p>Philosophy and Ethics</p>	<p>Friedrich Nietzsche is dead. Not only that, but he's lost and alone, climbing a mountain with no one to talk to. So, when he spies someone coming towards him, he's delighted. Surely this man is important; someone who walks his own path? The writer, G. K. Chesterton, is no Nietzschean hero. But he does have a knapsack of food. It's not long before some of history's greatest ever philosophers are seen winding their way towards them. The unlikely pair decide to visit the Sages; not in heaven but as they were on earth and embark on an extraordinary journey. Travelling with them, we meet the greats and see what their lives were about. Did you know, for example, that Thomas Hobbes was so scared of spirits that he slept with his servant at night, or that the great Immanuel Kant went for the same walk every day, so precisely that his neighbours could adjust their clocks? A blend of biography, philosophy and fiction, The Sage Train introduces the reader to the minds of these and other luminaries; Aristotle, John Stuart Mill, the pleasure seeker Aristippus, A J Ayer, Aquinas and Baruch Spinoza. Within each Sage's story the philosophy comes to life, allowing the reader to compare the ideas and how useful they still are today. Hailed as a triumph by teachers, students and dinner party guests, this book has a humorous, accessible tone that makes abstract ideas seem easy and shows how philosophical questions remain at the core of our lives.</p> <p>This book is a little more expensive, and you are unlikely to find it in a charity shop. This is approximately £10 on Amazon.</p>