

### 5. Religious Language: Negative, Analogical or Symbolic

Learners will study different views about the understanding of religious teachings, and compare the significant ideas presented in works of two key scholars

Topic	Content	Key Knowledge
Religious language: Negative, Analogical or Symbolic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the apophatic way – the <i>via negativa</i></li> <li>cataphatic way – the <i>via positiva</i></li> <li>symbol</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the argument that theological language is best approached by negation</li> <li>the understanding of religious language in terms of analogy, with reference to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aquinas’s analogy of attribution and analogy of proper proportion</li> </ul> </li> <li>understanding of the language of religious expression in terms of symbol, with reference to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tillich’s view of theological language as almost entirely symbolic</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<p>Learners should have the opportunity to discuss issues related to different views of religious language, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>comparison of the usefulness of the above approaches to religious language</li> <li>whether or not the apophatic way enables effective understanding of theological discussion</li> <li>whether or not Aquinas’ analogical approaches support effective expression of language about God</li> <li>whether or not religious discourse is comprehensible if religious language is understood as symbolic</li> </ul>	
	<p><b>Contextual references</b></p> <p>For reference, the ideas of Aquinas and Tillich listed above can be found in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aquinas, <i>Summa Theologiae</i> I.13</li> <li>Tillich, <i>Dynamics of Faith</i>, Part 3</li> </ul> <p><b>Suggested scholarly views, academic approaches and sources of wisdom and authority</b></p> <p>Learners will be given credit for referring to any <b>appropriate</b> scholarly views, academic approaches and sources of wisdom and authority, however the following examples may prove useful</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ayer, A. J. (2001) <i>Language, Truth and Logic</i>, Dover Publications</li> <li>Swinburne, R. (1997) ‘God-talk is not evidently nonsense’ in Davies, B. (2000) <i>Philosophy of Religion: a guide and anthology</i>, Oxford University Press</li> <li>Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy, <i>Religious Language</i>, <a href="http://www.iep.utm.edu/rel-lang/">http://www.iep.utm.edu/rel-lang/</a></li> </ul>	