



Ontological Fun and Games

The Ontological Argument is the strangest of the traditional arguments for God. Anselm argues in the following way

1. God (if he exists) is 'that than which no greater can be conceived.' (It is not possible to think of anything that would be greater than God)
2. Everyone (even the atheist) has an idea of God that they understand in their mind.
3. However God cannot be 'that than which no greater can be conceived.' (TTWNGCBC) if he only exists in our minds, in order to be truly 'the greatest' he would have to also exist in reality.
4. So if you understand the idea of God you realise that he must exist



Task A: Anselm

1. A friend offers you the choice between a real £10 note and an imaginary £10 note. Which is greater?
2. Harder: Explain how this may link to Anselm's argument



Task B: Gaunilo

1. Draw a perfect holiday island and briefly describe its features.
2. Suppose your friend says to you, 'Now that you have drawn this, it must be a real place.' Are they right or wrong? Why, why not?

Task C: Descartes

1. Draw a 3 sided shape and then draw a triangle. What do you notice?
2. What is the relationship between triangles and 3 sides? Is the relationship necessary or contingent?
3. Harder: Descartes argues that existence is one of the necessary properties of God. (It is part of his definition) Is he right?

Task D: Kant



1. Write a short job advertisement for a new Religious Studies teacher.
2. Did your job advertisements mention that the new teacher must 'exist'? Why is this something that isn't usually mentioned?
3. The Principal comes to see you looking concerned. 'We have two good candidates; the only difference I can see is that one has existence and one does not.' How would you answer?

