Omnipotence

1	Issue	Can God create a rock too heavy to lift?
2	Descartes	Yes – God can do everything, including logically impossible things. God is not limited by logic and can perform miracles
3	Aquinas	God can only do what is logically possible. A square circle is meaningless
4	Vardy	God intentionally limits God's power to allow humans freewill.

Time

1	God is eternal – Boethius	• Eternity is the 'simultaneous possession of boundless life'. We know this as different to temporal existence, as we live from moment to moment. • God is infinitely present to himself and time has no meaning or influence on God.
2	God is eternal – Anselm	Four Dimensionalist Approach • Rejects the idea that the only time that exists is the present. Only humans experience time like this • Time is a dimension, as is space • God is present everywhere and every*when*. God is present at every moment of time, all the time.
3	God is everlasting – Swinburne	• God engages with people in the Bible and so cannot be eternal as God changes. • It is incoherent to suggest God is presently in the past, present and future. • God is everlasting; there at the start of time and will be there until the end of time.

Omniscience

1	Divine knowledge and temporal existence	<u>Can God know the future that hasn't happened yet?</u> • Geach: God is like the grand master of chess. Novices (humans) can make some moves but ultimately, the master is in control • Schleiermacher: God knows us like a best friend and can accurately predict our future.
2	Divine knowledge and freewill	<u>If God knows the future, are my choices free or necessary?</u> • Boethius: God has knowledge of the future as his present. God knows our future choices as our future choice, hence we are free • Anselm: God has time as a dimension, not a progression. The future changes for us but not God. We are still free

Benevolence

1	Issue	Can God punish us and allow evil if benevolent?
2	Euthyphro Dilemma	Does God command what is good because it is good, or does God's command make it good? The first separates goodness from God and the second allows arbitrary goodness
3	Covenant	God formed the covenant out of love… does it exclude some people unfairly?

Key Vocabulary

Attribute	Quality or descriptor
Arbitrary	Random
Benevolence	All-loving
Covenant	Legal and divine promise between God and Abraham
Divine fore-knowledge	God knows what will happen before it does
Eternity	Separate to time and timeless
Everlasting	Within time, but spanning from beginning to end
Four dimensionalist	God is everywhere, every*when*
Freewill	The agent is autonomous
Immutable	Changeless; implies perfect
Just	Fair; implies right and wrong
Omnipotence	All-powerful
Omniscience	All-knowing
Self-imposed limitation	God intentionally restricts God's power to allow human freedom
Temporal existence	Subject to time, change and decay

This Philosophy unit reinforces discussion from arguments for the existence of God. Remember that Plato and Aristotle also explored these issues with the Form of Good and Prime Mover.

A02 Discussion
• If God is 'that than which nothing greater can be thought'. which answer for the attributes fits this best?
• How far is this a game of language rather than a discussion around ontology?

Omnipotence

1	Issue	
2	Descartes	
3	Aquinas	
4	Vardy	

Time

1	God is eternal – Boethius	
2	God is eternal – Anselm	
3	God is everlasting – Swinburne	

Omniscience

1	Divine knowledge and temporal existence	
2	Divine knowledge and freewill	

Benevolence

1	Issue	
2	Euthyphro Dilemma	
3	Covenant	

Key Vocabulary

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