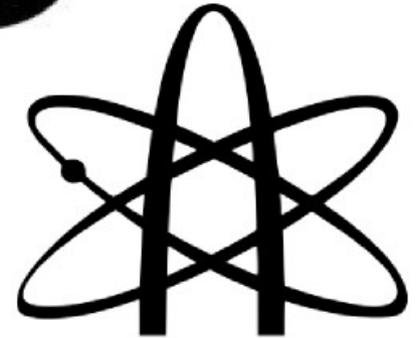
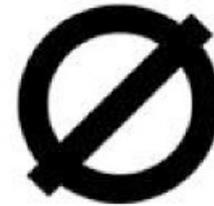
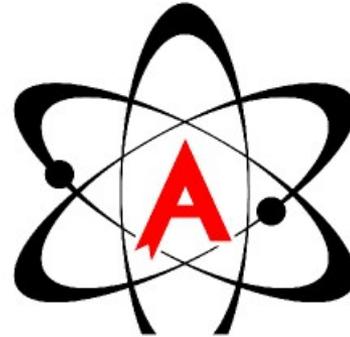


# Atheist symbols



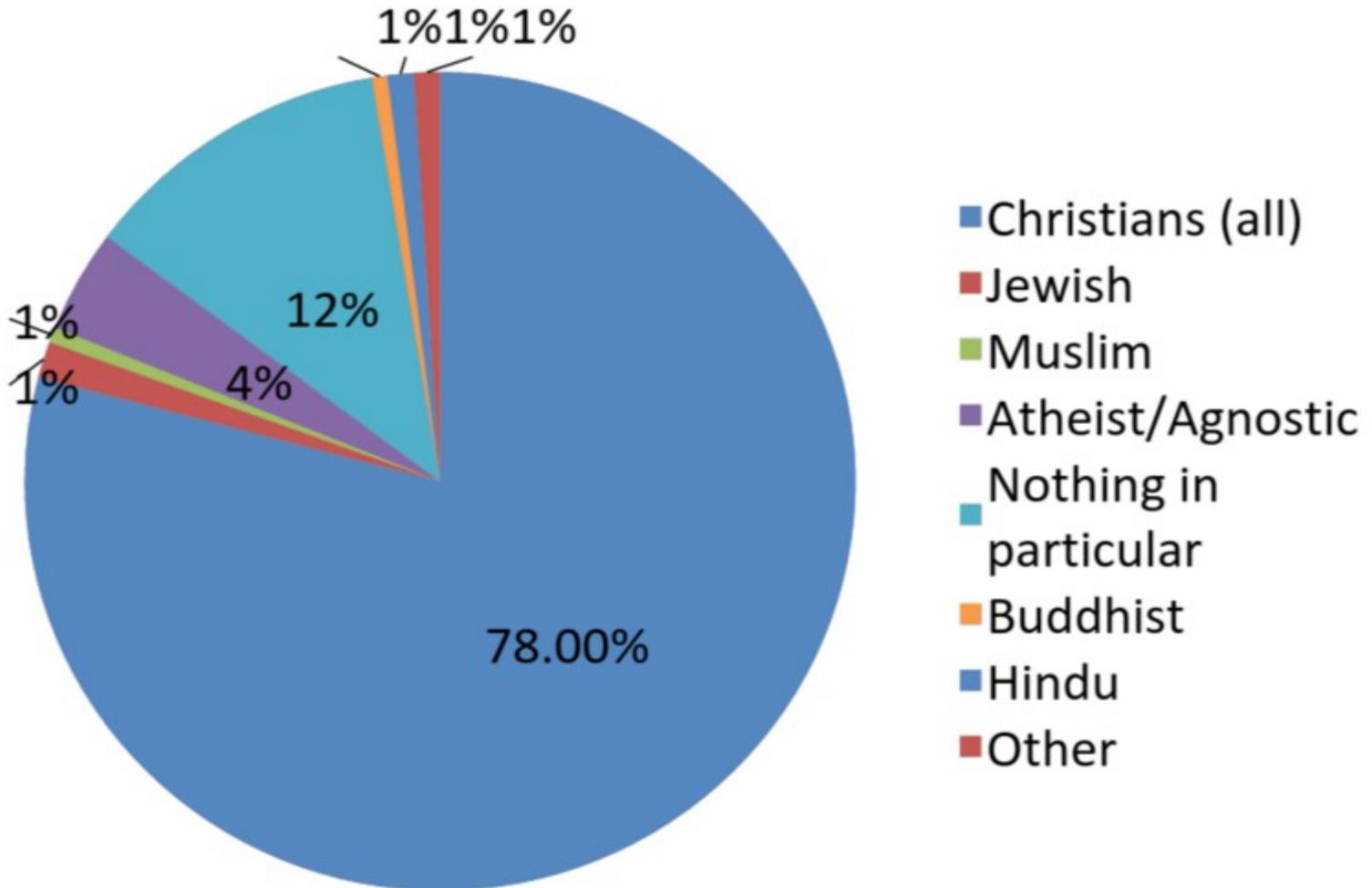
Atheism

What is it?

# Atheism Defined

- Atheism [ey-thee-iz-uhm] -noun
  - : a lack of belief in a god or gods.
- Atheism deals with belief, not knowledge.
- Atheism makes no positive claims.

- Percent of Atheists in the U.S. population.



# Degrees of Atheism

- Strong Atheists- I believe that No gods exists
- Weak Atheists- I have no belief in any gods
- Anti-theist- I am opposed to all religions.
- Agnostic- Used by many to mean a “fence-sitter” or undecided.

# Misconceptions about Atheism

- Atheism is a religion.
- Atheists don't believe in anything.
- Atheists hate god.
- Atheists worship the devil.
- Atheists are unhappy angry people.

- Atheists just need to hear the “good news”.
- Atheists that have lost their faith were never true believers.
- Atheists have no morals
- Atheists want to take away peoples faith.
- Atheism leads to other societal woes.
- Atheists don't exist.

# History of Atheism

- Earliest form of the Word recorded in 600 B.C. in ancient Greek.
- 1566 first recorded use of Atheist. (French)
- Late 1700's was first used as a self description.
- In the 1840's the first major self-avowed American Atheists were Elizabeth Cody Stanton and Susan B. Anthony. Both were active in women's Suffrage.
- 1885 -Col. Robert Ingersoll was elected the president of the American Secular Union. This was the first organized secular organization in America. Mark Twain was one of the first members.

# History of Atheism

- 1859-Darwin published his world changing book “On the origin of species”
- Mid-1800’s to the first world war, Atheist and Secularist’s were involved in many social issues:
  - Abortion, slavery, contraception, suffrage
- 1925- Scope’s Monkey trial was the beginning of the culture wars in America.
- 1957- In the height of the red scare the mere accusation of being an Atheist was enough to get you arrested. This time also saw “In God we Trust added to all American currency and the words Under God added to our pledge of allegiance.
- Early 1990 the internet allowed for a resurgence of Atheism

# Famous Atheist

- Carl Sagan
- Angelina Jolie
- Brad Pitt
- Bill Mahr
- Douglas Adams
- Woody Allen
- Bruce Lee
- Seth MacFarlane
- Ron Reagan
- Keanu Reeves
- Gene Roddenberry
- Penn & Teller
- Eddie Vedder
- Andy Rooney
- Pat Tillman
- Lance Armstrong
- Katherine Hepburn
- George Carlin
- Jodie Foster
- Howard Stern
- Jamie Hyneman
- Julia Sweeney
- Larry King
- Robert Heinlein
- James Cameron
- Will Wheaton
- James Lipton
- Bill Gates
- Eddie Izzard
- Joss Whedon
- Billy Joel
- John Malkovich
- Ernest Hemingway
- Jack Nickolson
- John Lennon
- Warren Buffet
- Mark Zuckerberg
- Kevin Bacon
- Your Neighbor.....

# Doubt, Faith, Belief

- Who has the burden of proof?
  - The person making the claim
- What is the default position?
  - Skeptical inquiry based upon doubt

- **Belief**

- Holding something to be true based on reasons and evidence, both good and bad

- **Faith**

- Holding something to be true, without the requirement of evidence

- **Can we choose our beliefs?**

- Not a feigned belief, but one that is truly held
- Can belief be turned on and off like a switch?

# Skeptical Inquiry

- Scientific method
  - Observable, measurable, empirical evidence subject to specific principles of reasoning
- Burden of Proof
  - The claimant must prove the claim being made
- Standards of evidence
  - Evidence must be sufficient
- “I don't know” is a *scientific* position

# Carl Sagan's “Baloney Detection Toolkit”

from “Demon Haunted World” by Carl Sagan

- Wherever possible there must be independent confirmation of the facts.
- Encourage substantive debate on the evidence by knowledgeable proponents of all points of view.
- Arguments from authority carry little weight (in science there are no "authorities").
- Spin more than one hypothesis - don't simply run with the first idea that caught your fancy.
- Try not to get overly attached to a hypothesis just because it's yours.

# Baloney Detection Kit, Continued

- Quantify, wherever possible.
- If there is a chain of argument every link in the chain must work.
- Occam's razor - if there are two hypotheses that explain the data equally well choose the simpler.
- Ask whether the hypothesis can, at least in principle, be falsified (shown to be false by some unambiguous test). In other words, it is testable? Can others duplicate the experiment and get the same result?

# Logical Fallacies

- A logical fallacy is an error of reasoning.
  - Recognizing a logical fallacy will help you judge the quality of an argument
- Fallacies:
  - Ad hominem - attacking the arguer and not the argument
  - Argumentum ad ignorantiam - claims that something is true because it has not been proven false, or that a premise is false because it has not been proven true.
    - An argument from incredulity is also an argument from ignorance

# Logical Fallacies - Continued

- Post hoc, ergo propter hoc - "it happened after so it was caused by" - confusion of cause and effect.
- False dichotomy - a situation in which only limited alternatives are considered, when in fact there is at least one additional option.
- Non sequitur - "it does not follow" - the logic falls down.
- Slippery slope - unwarranted extrapolation of the effects
- Straw man – misrepresenting or caricaturing your opponent's position to make it easier to attack
- Begging the question – assuming an answer in the way the question is phrased.

# Arguments for the existence of God

- The cosmological argument argues that there was a "first cause", or "prime mover" who is identified as God.
- The teleological argument argues that the universe's order and complexity are best explained by reference to a creator God. It starts with a rather more complicated claim about the world, i.e. that it exhibits order and design. This argument has two versions: One based on the analogy of design and designer, the other arguing that goals can only occur in minds. The theory of Intelligent design proposes that certain features of the universe and of living things are the product of an intelligent cause.

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- The argument from complexity / design
- The Anthropic Principle or Fine-Tuned argument
- The Moral Argument argues that the existence of objective morality depends on the existence of God.
- The argument from near-death experiences.
- Pascal's Wager states -if you don't believe and are wrong you pay the ultimate price; however, if you believe and are wrong then you have lost nothing. Therefore Believe.
- Belief in god is universal across all cultures.

# Arguments against the existence of god

- The problem of evil contests the existence of a god who is both omnipotent and omnibenevolent by arguing that such a god should not permit the existence of evil or suffering. The theist responses are called theodicies.
- The destiny of the unevangelized, by which persons who have never even heard of a particular revelation might be harshly punished for not following its dictates.
- The argument from poor design contests the idea that God created life on the basis that lifeforms, including humans, seem to exhibit poor design.
- The argument from nonbelief contests the existence of an omnipotent God who wants humans to believe in him by arguing that such a god would do a better job of gathering believers.
- The argument from parsimony (using Occam's razor) contends that since natural (non-supernatural) theories adequately explain the development of religion and belief in gods, the actual existence of such supernatural agents is superfluous and may be dismissed unless otherwise proven to be required to explain the phenomenon.
- The analogy of Russell's teapot argues that the burden of proof for the existence of God lies with the theist rather than the atheist.

# Arguments against the existence of god continued

- The omnipotence paradox suggests that the concept of an omnipotent entity is logically contradictory, from considering a question like: "Can God create a rock so big that he cannot lift it?" or "If God is all powerful, could God create a being more powerful than itself?"
- The problem of hell is the idea that eternal damnation for actions committed in a finite existence contradicts God's omnibenevolence or omnipresence.
- The argument from free will contests the existence of an omniscient god who has free will — or has allotted the same freedom to his creations — by arguing that the two properties are contradictory. According to the argument, if God already knows the future, then humanity is destined to corroborate with his knowledge of the future and not have true free will to deviate from it. Therefore our free will contradicts an omniscient god. Another argument attacks the existence of an omniscient god who has free will directly in arguing that the will of God himself would be bound to follow whatever God foreknows himself doing throughout eternity.
- A counter-argument against the Cosmological argument ("*chicken or the egg*") takes its assumption that things cannot exist without creators and applies it to God, setting up an infinite regress. This attacks the premise that the universe is the second cause (after God, who is claimed to be the first cause).

- The "no reason" argument tries to show that an omnipotent and omniscient being would not have any reason to act in any way, specifically by creating the universe, because it would have no needs, wants, or desires since these very concepts are subjectively human. Since the universe exists, there is a contradiction, and therefore, an omnipotent god cannot exist.
- The "historical induction" argument concludes that since most theistic religions throughout history (e.g. ancient Egyptian religion, ancient Greek religion) and their gods ultimately come to be regarded as untrue or incorrect, all theistic religions, including contemporary ones, are therefore most likely untrue/incorrect by induction. It is implied as part of Stephen F. Roberts' popular quotation: "I contend that we are both atheists. I just believe in one fewer god than you do. When you understand why you dismiss all the other possible gods, you will understand why I dismiss yours."

# Resources

- [www.cvaas.com](http://www.cvaas.com)
- [www.talkorigins.com](http://www.talkorigins.com)