

# The Teleological (design) Argument

## What you need to know:

The design argument from analogy (as presented by Hume).  
William Paley's design argument: argument from spatial order/purpose.  
Richard Swinburne's design argument: argument from temporal order/regularity.

## The design argument from analogy (as presented by Hume)

- P1:** Throughout nature there is evidence of parts working together towards an end with incredible accuracy.  
**P2:** In this way, the universe resembles a machine, as machines also consist of parts working together towards an end with incredible accuracy.  
**P3:** Effects that are similar have causes that are similar.  
**P4:** Machines are caused by human designers possessing thought, wisdom and intelligence.  
**C1:** The universe must be caused by a designer of nature possessing thought, wisdom and intelligence that are proportional to the grandeur of the universe.  
**C2:** God exists.

## William Paley's design argument: argument from spatial order/purpose

- P1:** Anything that has parts organised to serve a purpose is designed.  
**P2:** Nature contains things which have parts that are organised to serve a purpose.  
**C1:** Therefore, nature contains things which are designed (from Premises 1 and 2).  
**P3:** Design can only be explained in terms of a designer.  
**P4:** A designer must: (a) be or have a mind;  
and (b) be distinct from what is designed.  
**C2:** Therefore, nature was designed by a mind that is distinct from nature (from Premises 3 and 4).  
**C3:** Therefore, such a mind ('God') exists.

## Possible Exam Questions

Outline the design argument from analogy, as presented by Hume. (5 marks)  
Outline Paley's design argument from spatial order/purpose. (5 marks)  
Outline Swinburne's design argument from temporal order/regularity. (5 marks)

Compare and contrast Paley's and Hume's versions of the design argument. (12 marks)  
Compare and contrast Paley's and Swinburne's versions of the design argument. (12 marks)  
Compare and contrast Swinburne's and Hume's versions of the design argument. (12 marks)  
Does the argument from design prove that God exists? (25 marks)

## Richard Swinburne's design argument: argument from temporal order/regularity

- P1:** The universe as a whole contains temporal order/regularities of succession (ie the regular and universal fundamental laws of nature).  
**P2:** There are two possible hypotheses:  
(H1) temporal order has a scientific explanation;  
(H2) temporal order has a personal explanation (eg explaining the singing of song over time in terms of the singer's intentions).  
**P3:** (H1) fails: science can only explain the existence of regularities of succession in terms of more fundamental regularities of succession. So, we cannot give a scientific explanation of the temporal order displayed in the fundamental laws of science (science cannot itself explain why the fundamental laws of science exist as they do).  
**P4:** (H2) can explain (fundamental) scientific regularities of succession. They are similar to regularities of succession produced by human agents (the singing of the song), and so, by analogy, are produced by rational agency.  
**P5:** The agency in question would have to be of immense power and intelligence, free and disembodied, which is to say God.  
**C1:** Therefore, God exists.

## Key Terms

**Spatial order:** the way items are arranged according to their physical position or relationships.

**Temporal order:** the way items are arranged over time..