

Vocab Deep Dive

Syncretism

DEFINITION: The combining of two or more religions/belief into one hybrid religion with different ideas/values **USE:** Syncretism can be used to unite two different types of religions, making a government/empire/etc. stronger through a shared religion. This would be pretty useful in today's conflict between different sects of Muslims. **EXAMPLE:** An example was is Mahayana Buddhism, which was more popular in China than India. People practicing Mahayana Buddhism also incorporated their own cultures into the religion – for example, in Mongolia, people incorporated magical elements into the religion.

Eschatology

DEFINITION: The part of religion that has to do with the “end” – be it a person, an age, or humanity as a whole **USE:** Eschatology can be used to convince people to give more to a *certain* Catholic Church so that they can have a better afterlife. **EXAMPLE:** A lot of churches used this in the Middle Ages to get more money from people.

Henotheistic

DEFINITION: Someone who worships one god but accepts that there might be other gods. **USE:** This term is used to describe people who think all gods are equal and made up of the same essence. **EXAMPLE:** Hindus worship Vishnu or Shiva, but they acknowledge that all gods are made up of the same essence.

Sect

DEFINITION: A religious group that split from a larger group of people and has different beliefs than the majority of the group. **USE:** Sects are used to identify all the different beliefs prevalent in one religion. **EXAMPLE:** The Sunni and Sh'ia Muslim sects, which have had a conflict against each other for centuries.

Agnostic

DEFINITION: A person that doesn't deny/claim that God exists (he/she doesn't know and never will know) **USE:** Used to classify people who reject the concept of religion altogether because it isn't believable nor unbelievable **EXAMPLE:** Christian agnostics don't believe in anything but the basic principles of Christianity.