# Title: The Problem of Evil and Suffering.

**Key Questions:** How do I cause/contribute to suffering? Do people sometimes cause their own suffering? How can I help in that situation?

**Key Concepts:** Suffering, the problem of evil and suffering, illusion, God’s will, free will.

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| **Learning objectives** | **Activities** | **Resources** |
| LO: to consider the suffering that is seen in the world and how this links to the problem of evil. | Ask students to quietly reflect upon the evil and suffering they see in the world or have faced in their own lives.  Ask them to think about:  What caused the suffering?  How does it make you feel?  What questions does it make you want to ask?  How do you or others cope with this suffering?  In groups provide students with a news article (have a different article for each group) that shows suffering in the world. Ask them to discuss the questions above linking them to the story they have.  Feedback  Explain to students that suffering can be divided into two types –  Natural Suffering: suffered caused by the natural world that humans have no control over for example earthquakes.  Moral Suffering: suffering caused by people.  What type of suffering was discussed in their news article?  In pairs ask students to discuss the question “Suffering makes it impossible to believe in God.” What arguments can they come up with for and against this statement?  Ask students to join with another group to feedback their ideas.  Give students a copy of the Epicurean paradox.  "Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is not omnipotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Then whence cometh evil? Is he neither able nor willing? Then why call him God?"  Discuss what this means. Give them a simplified version and ask them to design a flow chart to express these ideas.  Ask students to discuss what responses religious people might give to this problem.  Feedback  Explain you will look at these in more detail in the rest of the unit. | Contemporary articles on suffering. BBC News is a useful site for this.  <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news>  Dictionaries or word lists. |