Beliefs

VOCABULARY PRACTICE
UPPER-INTERMEDIATE | B2

Name: _____ Date: _____

1 Match each precise term with its definition.

1 secular ____	**a** not connected to or influenced by religion
2 doctrine ____	**b** an official set of beliefs or principles held by a group
3 orthodoxy ____	**c** the accepted, conventional set of beliefs within a tradition
4 heterodox ____	**d** departing from accepted or conventional beliefs
5 agnostic ____	**e** uncertain or non-committal about the existence of a higher power
6 zealotry ____	**f** extreme and uncompromising devotion to a cause
7 pluralism ____	**g** the coexistence of many different beliefs or groups within one society
8 dogmatic ____	**h** asserting beliefs rigidly, without allowing room for doubt
9 introspection ____	**i** careful, honest examination of one's own thoughts and motives
10 conviction ____	**j** a firmly held belief

2 Choose the word with the most suitable connotation.

1 For a society not influenced by religion: secular / theocratic.

2 For the conventional, accepted set of beliefs: orthodoxy / heresy.

3 For beliefs departing from convention: heterodox / mainstream.

4 For uncertainty about a higher power's existence: agnostic / devout.

5 For extreme, uncompromising devotion: zealotry / moderation.

6 For the coexistence of many belief systems: pluralism / uniformity.

7 For asserting beliefs rigidly without doubt: dogmatic / open to debate.

8 For careful examination of one's own motives: introspection / impulsiveness.

3 Complete the belief collocations with one word.

1 a _____ society (= not influenced by religion)

2 religious _____ (= an official set of beliefs)

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3 challenge _____ (= question the accepted, conventional view)

4 a _____ view (= departing from convention)

5 remain _____ (= uncertain about a higher power)

6 religious _____ (= extreme, uncompromising devotion)

7 genuine _____ (= careful self-examination)

8 a _____ stance (= rigid, unquestioning belief)

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4 Complete the case notes with words and phrases from the box.

agnostic | conviction | doctrine | dogmatic | heterodox | introspection | orthodoxy | pluralism | secular | zealotry

Case A: The country's constitution is explicitly 1 _____, separating religious institutions from government affairs.
Case B: The scholar's 2 _____ views were initially rejected by mainstream religious authorities defending traditional 3 _____.
Case C: She describes herself as 4 _____ rather than atheist, preferring uncertainty to a firm denial.
Case D: Critics warned that unchecked 5 _____ can lead individuals to justify extreme actions in the name of belief.
Case E: The community values religious 6 _____, welcoming a wide range of traditions to coexist peacefully.
Case F: He holds his beliefs with genuine 7 _____, yet avoids being overly 8 _____ when discussing them with others.
Case G: Years of careful 9 _____ led her to reconsider elements of official 10 _____ she had previously accepted without question.

5 Read the text and answer the questions briefly.

Living with religious pluralism

Modern societies increasingly grapple with how to accommodate genuine religious pluralism, balancing respect for deeply held convictions against the practical need for shared civic norms. Secular governance frameworks attempt to provide neutral ground where competing worldviews can coexist without any single orthodoxy dominating public life. This arrangement satisfies neither strict secularists, who sometimes view any religious influence in public affairs with suspicion, nor the devout, who may feel their convictions are treated as merely private preference rather than objective truth. Scholars of religious pluralism argue that sustainable coexistence depends less on resolving these underlying philosophical disagreements than on cultivating mutual respect despite them.

1 What do modern societies increasingly grapple with? _____
2 What do secular governance frameworks attempt to provide? _____
3 Who does this arrangement fail to satisfy fully? _____
4 How might strict secularists view religious influence in public affairs? _____
5 How might the devout feel their convictions are treated? _____

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6 What does sustainable coexistence depend on, according to scholars? _____

6 Rewrite each sentence using the word in capitals. Do not change the meaning.

1 The government is not influenced by religion. SECULAR _____

2 She is uncertain whether a higher power exists. AGNOSTIC _____

3 The community welcomes many different belief systems. PLURALISM _____

4 He insists on his views without allowing debate. DOGMATIC _____

OVER TO YOU

Write a 120-150 word account analysing how a society can balance religious pluralism with shared civic life, distinguishing observation from argument.

[ ] Use at least twelve target expressions. [ ] Control connotation carefully. [ ] Avoid unsupported assumptions.

ANSWER KEY

1 Precise terms

1 a 2 b 3 c 4 d 5 e 6 f 7 g 8 h 9 i 10 j

2 Connotation

1 secular 2 orthodoxy 3 heterodox 4 agnostic 5 zealotry 6 pluralism 7 dogmatic 8 introspection

3 Collocations

1 secular 2 doctrine 3 orthodoxy 4 heterodox 5 agnostic 6 zealotry 7 introspection 8 dogmatic

4 Case notes

1 secular 2 heterodox 3 orthodoxy 4 agnostic 5 zealotry 6 pluralism
7 conviction 8 dogmatic 9 introspection 10 doctrine

5 Reading - suggested answers

1 How to accommodate genuine religious pluralism, balancing respect for convictions against shared civic norms.
2 Neutral ground where competing worldviews can coexist without any single orthodoxy dominating public life.
3 Neither strict secularists nor the devout fully.
4 With suspicion.
5 As merely private preference rather than objective truth.
6 Cultivating mutual respect despite underlying philosophical disagreements.

6 Rewriting - possible answers

1 The government is secular. 2 She is agnostic.
3 The community embraces pluralism. 4 He is dogmatic.

Over to you

Answers will vary. Check lexical precision, appropriate connotation and separation of fact from inference.