Arguments concerning God’s existence:

➜ The argument from first cause
Everything in the universe is caused, i.e. brought into existence, by something else. These causes in turn have something that caused them, and so on back up the chain of causes. Eventually there must be something that started off the chain and which is dependent on nothing else as its cause. This thing is the ‘first cause’, and the first cause is God.

➜ The argument from design
This argument states that the world is so complex and intricately fitted together that it could only be the result of design, rather than random chance. If this is the case, it is logical that there is a designer, and this designer is God. The examples of the complexity of the human eye and the intricate workings of a clockwork watch have been famously used to illustrate this argument in the past.

➜ The argument from experience
There are different types of religious experience, which may persuade those who experience them that God exists. These range from seeing God’s hand in the blooming of a flower or the beauty of a sunset, to witnessing a breach in the laws of nature (a miracle) or experiencing a direct encounter with God, such as the one claimed by Saul on the road to Damascus.

➜ The problem of evil
The argument goes that if God cannot stop evil, he is not all-powerful. If he can stop evil but chooses not to, then he is not good. If he could stop evil and chose to do so, then there would be no evil in the world...but there is, therefore he does not exist. A possible Christian defence against this argument is that it assumes that there are no good reasons why God might choose to delay dealing with evil. Christians believe that one day Jesus will return to judge the world and put everything right. However, once he does this, it will not only mean the end of evil, but also the passing of the last chance for people to put their faith in Jesus and be saved.

➜ The argument from morality and conscience
If there is no God and we are the product of blind chance, then there can be no such thing as morality. The fact that we instinctively have a sense of right and wrong is incompatible with a random origin to human life. Our moral sensitivity points towards the existence of some external basis for determining morality, and the source of our sense of right and wrong is God.

➜ Pascal’s Wager
This takes as its starting point the assumption that logical reasoning is incapable of determining whether or not God exists. If this is the case, we are left with an uncertain wager. If you place your bet on God existing, and you are wrong you lose nothing (whether you believed in him or not, you still cease to exist). If you place your bet on God not existing, you gain nothing for being right, but stand to lose everything - heaven, eternal life - if you are wrong. Pascal concluded that to bet on the side of God was to stand to win everything and risk losing nothing, but to bet against him was to win nothing and risk losing everything. Pascal’s wager cannot be used to force belief, but is often cited as an incentive to seek God out.