

KEYWORD	DEFINITION
Humanist	Someone who believes in the Humanist world view which is that there is no good and their actions are judged according to their views.
Secular	Not connected to religious or spiritual matters.
Religion	a particular system of faith and worship
Atheist	Someone who does not believe in God or gods.
Agnostic	Someone who needs proof for God's existence in order to believe God exists. Most agnostics would say that God doesn't exist because there is no evidence.
Worldview	A worldview is a system of thinking about how the world works and how people should behave in the world and toward each other. It is from this view that people develop beliefs, values, and the practices that guide their lives.
Moral	Someone who is moral, when faced with a right and wrong choice, would make a right choice and behave in an ethical way.
Ethical	The discussion around what is right and wrong.
Rational	Thinking about things clearly in a logical way, often using facts.
Theistic	Someone who believes in God or gods.
Empathy	Empathy: to understand and share the feelings of others.

Overview: The aim of this unit is to understand the beliefs and values that Humanists have. Humanists do not believe in God so this unit allows students to compare religious and not religious belief systems.

How do Humanists tell right from wrong?

Humanists do not believe in God or other supernatural beings and so do not believe that our knowledge of right and wrong comes from religious rules such as those found in scripture (e.g. the Bible).

They believe in the GOLDEN RULE which is to treat others as you yourself want to be treated. They think that you should always consider how your actions will affect other people and you should think about how you would feel in someone else's shoes or situation. Imagining how others feel is called EMPATHY.

Humanists believe that we should use our human nature to work out how to live, and that we should use REASON and EMPATHY when deciding on the what is right and wrong. Humanists therefore try to live a full and happy life and help others do the same and believe we should use our own human nature as a guide to good living.

Humanists DO NOT have an absolute morality as they do not have a strict set of rules (like the 10 commandments) that they must always follow.

How do Humanists know what is true?

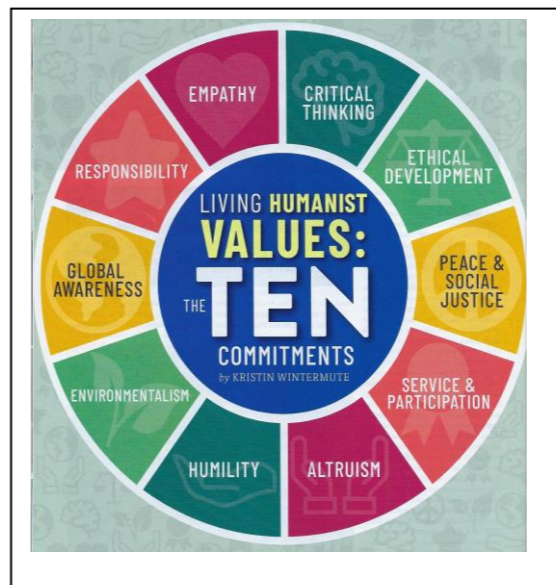
At the heart of humanism is the belief that REASON, and EVIDENCE are very important. They therefore believe that SCIENCE should be used to know what is true and what is false.

They do not believe in God as Humanists are atheist, believing there is no scientific evidence or proof that God exists. All truth is discovered by looking at the scientific evidence.

Humanism is a secular philosophy because it seeks to answer important questions about the world and the purpose of human life without any reference to God or the supernatural.

Humanism is a worldview that only uses science, evidence, reason and empathy to make sense of the world and to inform how they should act and care for others.

The humanism symbol represents a happy human race which is central to the humanist philosophy.



Meaning and purpose of life for Humanists

Humanists believe this is the only life we have as there is no scientific evidence for life after death. They believe there is no ultimate meaning in life, rather humans decide their own meaning and purpose, and this will differ from one person to the next.

Humans should try to live a full and HAPPY life and help others do the same.

A humanist may find purpose in spending time with their family, acquiring knowledge, or trying to make the world a better place for future generations.

Humanist Ceremonies and Milestones

Baby Naming and Welcoming: To celebrate the birth of their baby, humanists often hold these non-religious ceremonies. Parents state their love and commitment to the child, and some name 'guide-parents.' A tree may be planted to grow with the child.

Weddings: Humanists who wish to spend their lives together can commit to one another in non-religious wedding ceremonies. They often exchange vows and have poetry/prose readings.

Funerals: Humanists believe that we only have one life, and so celebrating one's life when it ends is particularly important. Humanist funeral officiants try to find out as much about the person as they can, to capture their life and personality.