

The **Happy Human** is used by many humanist organisations as a symbol for Humanism.



**'Happiness is the only good...
the time to be happy is now, and the
way to be happy is to make others so.'**
Robert Ingersoll, American Humanist (1833 – 1899)



UNDERSTANDING HUMANISM

What sort of world do humanists want?

- Humanists believe that human beings alone are responsible for improving our quality of life.
- They campaign for a **secular state**. This is a country in which everyone has freedom of belief, and no religion or belief has any privilege over any other.
- They fight against prejudice and discrimination and believe everyone deserves **human rights** and **equal opportunities**.
- They do not believe in any divine justice in an afterlife so work for **justice** in this life.



Humanism:
Think for yourself,
act for everyone



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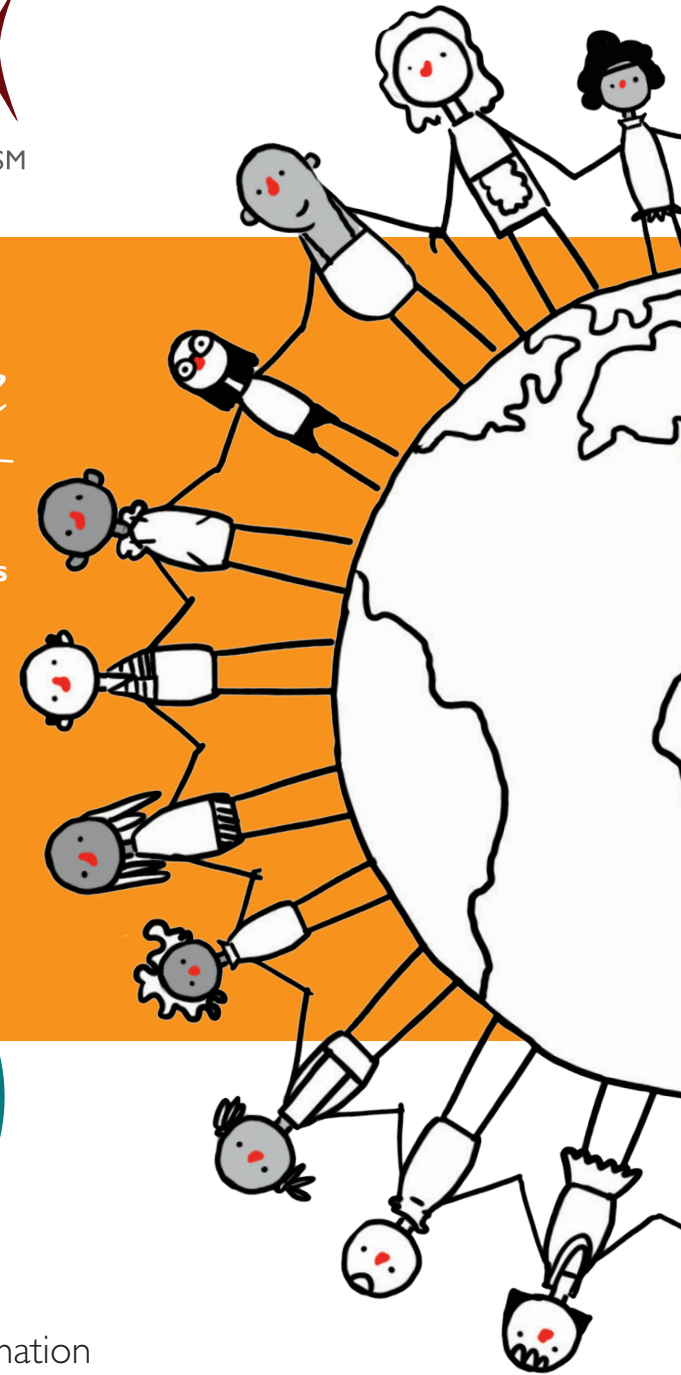
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What is Humanism?

Humanism is a **non-religious approach to life** shared by millions of people in the UK. It is the product of over 2500 years of human thought and conversation about how human beings should live.

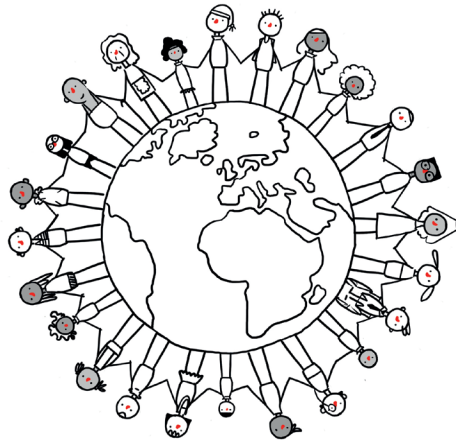
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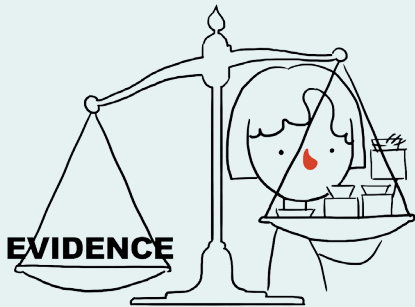


What do humanists value?

Humanists **value all human beings**. They celebrate both our **diversity** and our **shared values**. They believe we should think about **human wellbeing and happiness** first when making decisions about how to treat each other. They are optimistic about human potential and **celebrate our many achievements** (artistic, scientific, and social). They also place great value on the natural world.



How do humanists answer questions about the world?



- Humanists believe **the world is a natural place**. They try to use **reason, evidence, and science** to help them to understand it.
- They do not have any sacred texts or figures of authority. Instead, **everything is open to question**.
- Humanists do not see any persuasive evidence to believe in anything supernatural, including a god or gods. They are therefore either **atheists** or **agnostics**.
- They do not believe that the universe or human beings were created. Instead, they look for **scientific explanations** for where we came from.

Does life have any meaning?

Humanists see no good evidence for an afterlife and so believe we should **make the most of the one life we know we have**. For humanists there is no single 'ultimate' meaning of life, external to us. Instead, it is up to us to **make our own lives meaningful**. We are free to decide how we live, so long as we do not cause harm to others. We should aim to find what makes us happy and fulfilled and we should support others to do the same.

Many humanists take the opportunity to recognise and celebrate landmarks in people's lives, and **humanist celebrants** conduct naming ceremonies, weddings, and funerals for the non-religious.

How should I treat other people?

Humanists don't believe that answers to questions about how we should behave come from somewhere outside humanity (e.g. from a god or gods). Instead they believe **the origins of morality lie in human beings**. Our understanding about how we should treat each other has evolved from the way human beings have learned to live together in groups.

Humanists believe human beings are capable of working out for themselves the difference between right and wrong by using **empathy, compassion, reason, and respect for the dignity of all persons**. Instead of following unquestionable moral rules, they believe we should consider the potential **consequences** of our actions, and take into account the **rights and wishes** of those affected.



Many humanists admire and try to live by 'The Golden Rule':

'Treat other people as you'd want to be treated in their situation.

Do not treat others in a way you would not like to be treated yourself.'