

## Humanism

**Holy book:** Humanists do not follow a holy book.

**Name of people:** Humanists

**The first humanist:**  
Francesco Petrarca

**Place of worship:** Humanists do not have a place of worship.



## Significant Beliefs:

### Humanism

- Humanists have no belief in an afterlife, and so they focus on seeking happiness in this life. They rely on science for the answers to questions such as creation, and base their moral and ethical decision-making on reason, empathy, and compassion for others.
- Humanists believe humans make their decisions based on reason, empathy and a concern for others and you should not harm other people or living things.
- Humanists give money and their time generously and regularly to an average of 6 charities each. Humanists tend to plan their giving rationally and selectively, but also respond generously to emergency appeals and street collections.

### Christianity

- Most Christians strongly believe that death is not the end. Instead, they believe in the immortality of the soul and the possibility of life after death.
- Christians believe anger is not a sin, but it is what you do with that anger that becomes a sin. Christianity teaches non-violence as Jesus said "Blessed are the peacemakers" and told others to turn the other cheek in the face of violence. Christians are told to love their enemies and love each other.
- Christians believe you should give food to the hungry, shelter to the homeless and clothes to the poor.

### Sikhism

- Sikhism teaches that the soul reincarnates when the body dies. Sikhs do not believe in an afterlife that is either heaven or hell.
- Sikhs believe that violence is wrong because it hurts innocent people. Sikhs believe people should be tolerant of each other and their beliefs. Sikhs believe who gives charity will receive it back in ten-folds.

### Islam

- Muslims believe that when they die, they will stay in their graves until the Day of Judgement, where they will be raised from their graves and brought before Allah and judged on how they lived their lives. They will then enter heaven or hell.
- Muslims do not agree with using force. They believe there is a grave danger of provoking harm to others. That harm will backfire on the inflictor. Islam forbids anger and states Muslims should control themselves when they are angry.
- Islam states Muslims should give their wealth away selflessly and remember that every blessing they have in this life comes from God and they should not hoard their wealth.

### Hinduism

- Most Hindus believe that humans are in a cycle of death and rebirth called samsara. When a person dies, their atman (soul) is reborn in a different body. Some believe rebirth happens directly at death, others believe that an atman may exist in other realms.
- Hindus condemn violence and war, and believe anger leads to the cause of self-destruction.
- Charity is an important belief for Hindus who that they regularly practise. For Hindus, charity is not done to get something back, but for pure goodness.

### Judaism

- Jewish scripture has very little to say on matters of life after death. This is because Judaism puts far greater focus on people's actions and purpose in their earthly lives than on speculating about what might happen after people die. For many Jews, thinking about whether there is reward, punishment or even any sort of afterlife at all, is unimportant.
- Judaism believes certain types of war are ethically justifiable but there must be genuine attempts to make peace and avoid conflict.

## Worship:

### Humanism

- Humanists do not have a regular place of worship. They do, however, hold talks, lectures and discussion groups all around the country.
- Humanists do not own buildings which are places of worship. They meet for a variety of reasons. Humanists who choose to meet with other humanists today can do so freely. They meet in each other's homes or in public spaces. Their meetings vary according to the interests of the group but might include discussions on ethical subjects, or planning social events or fund-raising for charities, but not worship or prayers. The meetings are important to their members as spaces where they can meet like minds and find support for their humanist worldview.

### Islam

- Muslims have prayer positions and believe praying gives them a feeling of connection to Allah, and to all the other Muslims around the world. Muslims describe praying as refreshing, drawing their mind and their lives back onto the most important thing in life, God. Being constantly reminded of Allah throughout the day, reminds them for what is important in their life and helps them straying from the path.

## Christianity

- Christians talk to God through prayer. Christians talk about asking for guidance, being grateful, asking for help and how praying can be like talking to a friend.
- Prayer is communication with God. We do this by praising Him, confessing our sin before Him, thanking Him and asking Him for our needs and desires. Prayer is communion with our Creator. When we pray, we engage in loving fellowship with the Maker of heaven and earth.

## Sikhism

- Sikhs are expected to always remember God's name. Therefore, worship is part of their daily life and routine. They worship in the home by saying and hearing prayers and meditating on God's name.

## Hinduism

- Hindus believe you should not base your prayers around begging God for something. The prayer for thanksgiving is much more powerful.
- Hindus believe you do not pray to God to run after you to satisfy your selfish desires. You are supposed to do your work as efficiently and skilfully as possible.

## Judaism

- For many Jews the synagogue is an important place of worship. Synagogue services remind Jews that they are part of the worldwide Jewish community.
- Worshipping is important to Jews as it gives them an opportunity to reflect on the Torah.

## Stories:

### Humanism

- "The Story of Charles Bradlaugh – The Boy Who Left Home" (See Dudley Agreed Syllabus page 116)
- "The Story of Charles Bradlaugh – The Parliamentary Struggle". See Dudley Agreed Syllabus page 117)

### Christianity

- "The story of Adam and Eve" Genesis 2:4-25 and 3:1-24.
- "The parable of the Good Samaritan" Luke: 1-24.
- "The woman found guilty of adultery" John: 8:1-11.
- "The man with the withered hand" Mark: 3:1-6

### Sikhism

"The story of Guru Gobind Singh"

### Islam

- "The Saving of Balal"
- "Muhammad and Utba's Offer"
- "The Emigration from Makkah to Madinah"
- "Sa'd ibn Ubadah and the taking of Makkah"
- "Muhammad and the story of Wahshi"

### Hinduism

- "The story of Rama and Sita".

### Judaism

"The story of God creating the world in six days"

## Fasts and Festivals:

### Humanism

- For humanists, the importance of festivals and holidays is about the opportunity to be with friends and family that they bring. Family celebrations such as birthdays are celebrated too.
- Humanists celebrate festivals, even ones that are religious in origin, in secular ways. They may well exchange cards and presents and family traditions, but they will probably not join in with the more religious elements of some festivals.
- Human Rights Day is important to many humanists because they value human rights and shared human values. The anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin is important because he provided an alternative explanation for the way life evolved that made it possible for people in the 19th century to envisage life without religion. How humanists mark these occasions will depend on the cultures and societies they belong to and on individual preferences.

### Islam

- Eid al-Fitr marks the conclusion of Ramadan. Muslims worldwide celebrate this happy event by attending special prayers in mosques. Togetherness and a sense of community are fostered when friends and families get together for dinners and gift giving.
- The festival of sacrifice, Eid al-Adha honours Prophet Ibrahim's obedience to Allah's will. The custom of offering an animal as a sacrifice represents Prophet Ibrahim's willingness to offer his son. Giving away the meat to loved ones and the underprivileged is a reminder to be kind and giving.
- Muslims also fast in the month of Ramadan. It is a time for self-examination, prayer, acts of charity, reading the Quran and fasting from sunrise to sunset.



## Hinduism

- Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights, is the most popular of all the festivals from South Asia. It is also an occasion for celebration by Sikhs. The festival of Diwali extends over five days because of the lights, fireworks and sweets involved, it's a great favourite with children. The festival celebrates the victory of good over evil, light over darkness and knowledge over ignorance, although the actual legends that go with the festival are different in different parts of India.

## Christianity

- In the UK, Christmas is celebrated in both a religious and a secular way. There are church services with carols on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day as Christians thank God for his gift of Jesus. Christmas is a national holiday and many Christians, as well as many non-religious people and people of other faiths, have parties with food and gifts.
- Christian churches often run events for those in need over the Christmas period, as the idea of Christmas is to spread love and peace. For example, a church might provide a space to give food and temporary shelter to people in need.
- Easter begins with Lent, which is the name given to a period of 40 days leading up to the day of *resurrection*.
- The week leading up to the resurrection is known as Holy Week and there are special services held in Christian churches across the week: Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday.
- Christians also take part in Lent. During Lent, many people decide to give something up that they love - perhaps chocolate or sweets.
- Others might decide to take up something, like helping out more with chores at home or trying to do nice things for their family and friends.

## Sikhism

- Vaisakhi is a Sikh harvest festival that shows gratitude and thanks for the harvest of food and crops that year. It also involves prayers for future crops. It became significant following the actions of Guru Gobind Singh.
- As well as including prayers for crops, in India Vaisakhi is celebrated through: large fairs, sporting competitions and bhangra dancing and folk music.
- Diwali is a festival that is celebrated throughout India by both Hindus and Sikhs. It is a festival of lights, symbolising good overcoming evil. For Sikhs, it is a celebration of freedom.

## Judaism

- There are many holy days in Judaism, with the most important being *Rosh Hashanah*, which is the Jewish New Year, and *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement.
- It is a time for Jews to reflect on their year, including their good deeds and their bad deeds.
- Jews spend time in the *synagogue* with prayers being said and parts of the *Torah* read.

## People of Faith:

### Humanism

- Charles Bradlaugh

### Islam

- Prophet Muhammad

### Christianity

- Jesus

### Sikhism

- Guru Nanak

### Hinduism

- Siddhartha Guatama

### Judaism

- Moses

Questions we'll ask you throughout the unit to check your knowledge and understanding.

What is your own view regarding the afterlife in comparison to other religions and non-religious worldviews?

"Can a person be truly religious but never go to a church, a mosque or a temple?"

In what way can a fast or festival be of religious or spiritual benefit to people?