

Key end points for this unit include:

To know that:

- Humanism is a way of seeing the world in a non-religious way.
- Humanists believe the world is a natural place.
- Many Humanists celebrate marriage with a non-religious wedding.
- A humanist naming ceremony marks the arrival of a new child in a non-religious way.
- Many Humanists' beliefs shape their behaviour.
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This unit introduces pupils to Humanism, a non-religious worldview that emphasises reason, empathy, and responsibility. It builds on earlier RE learning about creation stories (Year 3), culture and religion (Year 4), and prepares pupils for later study of philosophy and ethics (Year 6). The unit is sequenced to help children gradually deepen their understanding: beginning with the foundations of Humanist belief, moving through how Humanists view the natural world, exploring how they celebrate life events, and finally examining how Humanist values shape behaviour. Throughout the PKC RE curriculum, Humanism is referred to as a non-religious world view so that children can understand that some people's beliefs are formed without religion.

Lesson sequence:

During lesson 1, pupils are introduced to Humanism as a non-religious worldview. They learn that Humanists believe we have one life, that science is the best way to understand the world, and that empathy helps guide behaviour. Children will explore three key ideas of Humanism;

- The world is natural, and science is the best way to understand it. We should ask questions and look for evidence.
- We only have one life, so we should make the most of it — finding happiness and helping others to do the same.
- We should use empathy and think carefully about how our actions affect other people and animals.

Understanding these key ideas will provide foundational knowledge for the subsequent lessons in this unit.

In lesson 2, The Natural World, Children will be building on the idea that Humanists see the world as natural. Pupils explore how science provides evidence and answers to questions. They learn about scepticism and the importance of questioning claims. This develops their earlier understanding of Humanism by showing how Humanists apply their worldview to knowledge and discovery, reinforcing the theme of evidence and reason.

For lesson 3, Pupils extend their knowledge by seeing how Humanist beliefs shape ceremonies. They compare Humanist weddings with religious marriage ceremonies, recognising the absence of references to God and the emphasis on personal choice, equality, and community support. This lesson builds on the values introduced earlier (freedom, empathy, responsibility) and applies them to real-life contexts.

During lesson 4, children's knowledge progresses as pupils explore how Humanists celebrate new life. They learn that naming ceremonies focus on the child's freedom to discover their own beliefs, and the responsibility of family and friends to support them. This builds on the previous lesson's exploration of weddings, reinforcing how Humanist values are expressed through ceremonies and community connections. Children might like to connect what they've learned to their own experiences, teachers should offer opportunities for this.

For lesson 5, pupils return to the core beliefs introduced in Lesson 1, now applying them to moral decision-making. They learn that Humanists use empathy, reason, and shared human values to decide what is right or wrong, rather than relying on religious rules. This lesson consolidates earlier ideas about responsibility and the Golden Rule, showing how Humanist beliefs guide everyday behaviour. It builds on children's understanding of religious rules, such as the Ten Commandments, but helps children to see that Humanists are guided by human values.

In the final lesson, there is an opportunity to check for understanding. There are suggested assessment tasks including an opportunity for extended writing that draws together learning from across the unit. Through structured writing, children explain what Humanists believe, using key vocabulary and concepts encountered across the lessons. This final task demonstrates progression: pupils move from initial recognition of Humanism as a worldview to a coherent explanation of its beliefs, practices, and values.

Key Concepts: worldviews, Humanism, scepticism, freedom and responsibility, empathy and reason, morality

Key Vocabulary: worldview, Humanism, empathy, reason, scepticism, supernatural, celebration, marriage, wedding, naming ceremony, advice, morality