









## Unit U2.11 What does it mean to be Humanist in Britain today?







The **principal aim of RE** is to explore what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live, so that pupils can gain the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to handle questions raised by religion and worldviews, reflecting on their own ideas and ways of living.

<b>Learning outcomes</b> (intended to enable pupils to achieve end of key stage outcomes):	<b>Ways of knowing</b> e.g.	<b>Suggested content for learning:</b> <b>Teachers can select content from these examples</b> , and add more of their own.
<p>Teachers will enable pupils to achieve some of these outcomes, as appropriate to their age and stage, so that they can:</p> <p><b>Make sense of belief:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify some data around numbers of non-religious people and specifically Humanists using, for example, Census data</li> <li>Identify some of the core values that motivate some Humanists to strive to make the world a better place</li> <li>Give examples of reasons why Humanists value science and why they reject the existence of God</li> </ul> <p><b>Understand the impact:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give examples of ways in which Humanists put their beliefs and values into practice</li> <li>Give evidence and examples to show some differences in how people can be non-religious, including Humanists and others</li> </ul> <p><b>Make connections:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Think, talk and ask questions about what motivates Humanists to do good in the world, in the absence of religious teachings or rules, and without belief in a higher power or an afterlife</li> <li>Make connections between belief and behaviour in their own lives, in the light of their learning.</li> </ul> <p>NOTE: these outcomes are amended, to reflect the change of key question and suggested content.</p>	       	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the Census 2021 data (see p. 150) and notice the number of people who say they have no religion in response to the question: ‘What is your religion?’ Sociologists call these people ‘Nones’ – they are not saying what they believe or how they live, but simply that they do not regard themselves as having any religion. In England and Wales in 2001 this was 15%; in 2011 it was 25%, and in 2021 it was 37% – 22 million people. The non-religious worldviews of these 22 million people will be extremely varied, including a range of beliefs and ways of living that may include religious or spiritual elements. However, a number of these ‘nones’ will identify as Humanists, holding a Humanist worldview. Note that scholars sometimes distinguish between Humanists (who may have deliberately chosen to identify as Humanist, joining an organization like Humanists UK, and agreeing with core Humanist codes of belief and ethics) and humanists (who may have similar beliefs and ethics but without the affiliation with such groups).</li> <li>Building on prior learning (see units 1.9, 1.10, L2.11, L2.12 and U2.10) recall what pupils know already about Humanisms and Humanists (e.g. Happy Human symbol; baby naming, wedding and funeral ceremonies; the golden rule; activism in terms of looking after the environment). Introduce Humanism using this animation from Humanists UK <a href="https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/res_films/one-life-live-it-well/">https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/res_films/one-life-live-it-well/</a></li> <li>Humanists believe that the world and human beings have natural origins. Explore what this means, connecting with the scientific account in Unit U2.2. Explore why Humanists argue that science is the best way to find out more about how the world and people work. Link with science lessons, and examine the role of reason in science, in observing the world, posing a hypothesis, designing an experiment to test it, and analysing the data to see if it proves or disproves the hypothesis. Talk with pupils about what kinds of questions might be answered in this way (e.g. At what temperature does water boil? What happens when ice cream is taken out of the freezer? How can we cure this illness?) and those that can’t (e.g. How are you feeling right now? What is the right thing to do in this situation? Is there a god?). One can still use reason to address these questions, even if they are not scientific questions.</li> <li>Humanists reject the idea of knowledge being ‘revealed’ by a supernatural being. Consider some reasons why Humanists reject the existence of God (e.g. brought up in non-religious home, cannot find evidence for god, suffering proves there cannot be a [good] god, ancient beliefs do not help make society better or people happier, people just believe in God as a comfort, religions are made up by humans, religions are often causes of conflict, science – not ancient myths – provides the most reliable route to knowledge, etc.). Which do pupils think is most compelling? Talk with a Humanist to find out about their beliefs and ways of living, including roles Humanists sometimes perform as celebrants, for example (<a href="https://humanists.uk/education/schoolspeakers/">https://humanists.uk/education/schoolspeakers/</a>)</li> <li>Humanists believe that this is the one life we have, so we should make thoughtful choices about how to live, in a way that helps us and others to flourish. Ask pupils for their suggestions for the best guidelines to achieve this. Compare with some Humanist codes, such as the Amsterdam Declaration (<a href="https://tinyurl.com/yb4t88wm">https://tinyurl.com/yb4t88wm</a>) or ReThink prizewinners <a href="http://www.atheistmindhumanistheart.com/winners/">www.atheistmindhumanistheart.com/winners/</a></li> <li>Connect with learning from Unit U2.10 and ask pupils to reflect on which values they share with Humanists – remembering that distinction between H/humanists: e.g. freedom, truth, happiness, reason, empathy, love, justice, curiosity, equality, friendship, peace etc. What actions would pupils expect of people who have these values? How far do pupils’ personal worldviews reflect a humanist worldview, if not a Humanist worldview?</li> </ul>

## Appendix 1: Three new units of work





### Key question L2.13: How do people from religious and non-religious communities celebrate key festivals?

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<b>Learning outcomes</b> (intended to enable pupils to achieve end of key stage outcomes):	<b>Ways of knowing</b> e.g.	<b>Suggested content for learning:</b> Teachers can select content from these examples and add more of their own.
<p>Teachers will enable pupils to achieve some of these outcomes, as appropriate to their age and stage, so that they can:</p> <p><b>Make sense of belief:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and describe some core beliefs, values and stories remembered at festivals.</li> </ul> <p><b>Understand the impact:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make simple links between stories, teachings and values behind festivals and how people remember these when celebrating.</li> <li>Describe how people show what is important to them at a festival in how they mark it.</li> <li>Identify some differences in how people within and between different religious and non-religious worldviews celebrate festivals (e.g. different approaches to celebrating Christmas).</li> </ul> <p><b>Make connections:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raise questions and suggest answers about how far beliefs and different practices studied might make a difference to how pupils think and live.</li> </ul>	     	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Think about times in their own lives when pupils remember and celebrate significant events/people, and why and how they do this. Are there similarities and differences in practices across the class? Why might this be?</li> <li>Be a Religious Studies (RS) investigator: provide pupils with inference grids with pictures showing some Christmas celebration practices, religious and secular. Ask questions about what pupils can see, what they guess is happening, and questions they would like to ask.</li> <li>Be a Religious Studies investigator: choose a series of Christmas practices to explore, at least one celebrated at church and one from home e.g. nativity service, Christingle service, decorating the house, carol singing. Find out information about how, why and by whom these are done. Plan one of these activities e.g. a nativity service, explaining why certain parts of the celebration happen, who might join in or not join in.</li> <li>Be a Sociology investigator: look at information about how many people in the UK celebrate Christmas and how they say they celebrate. What is interesting or surprising? Create a questionnaire as a class to find out how people celebrate Christmas and what is important to them about Christmas. Ask a variety of people from different religious and non-religious worldviews. Analyse the results. Can pupils see any patterns? Do lots of people give similar information in their response? Are all the responses different?</li> <li>Compare answers gathered on the celebration of Christmas using the two disciplines. How were they different or similar? RS can help us to look at evidence to find out how Christians celebrate at Christmas; when we look through an RS lens, we are not asking about the truth of Christian beliefs, we are exploring what people do, think and say. In Sociology we can look at data (e.g. on how Christmas is celebrated in the UK) from large groups of people, or small groups or individuals.</li> <li>Choose another festival from another religious or non-religious worldview to study and apply similar strategies e.g. look at a Jewish festival such as Chanukah or Sukkot and how that is celebrated by religious and secular Jews and Jewish people from different communities.</li> <li>Explore the benefits of celebration to religious communities by asking some local believers: why do they keep on celebrating ancient events?</li> <li>Consider questions about the role of festivals in the life of Britain today: Is Comic Relief Day a bigger festival than Easter? Should everyone be allowed a day off work for their festivals? Is Christmas for Christians or for everyone? Can the real meaning of a festival be preserved, or do the shops and shopping always take over? Is there a 'real' meaning of a festival?</li> </ul>






## Key question U2.13: What can be done to reduce racism? Can religion help?

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<p>Teachers will enable pupils to achieve some of these outcomes, as appropriate to their age and stage, so that they can:</p> <p><b>Make sense of belief:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe examples of ways in which people use texts/teachings to make sense of responses to racism and how to approach the challenges it presents.</li> </ul> <p><b>Understand the impact:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make clear connections between the challenges racism presents and how people of religious and non-religious worldviews respond to these, both within and beyond their own communities.</li> </ul> <p><b>Make connections:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interpret case studies of how people holding both religious and non-religious worldviews have approached racism, reflecting on and articulating lessons people might gain from these.</li> <li>Offer a reasoned response to the unit question, with evidence and examples, expressing insights of their own.</li> </ul>	      	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This unit investigation enables pupils to learn in depth from some key concepts, case studies and teachings about religion and racism, developing rich knowledge and challenging bias. Please note that only putting one anti-racist unit into your curriculum syllabus will not be sufficient to address wider societal issues. RE should always be open and should choose a diversity of examples across all units.</li> <li>Full resources for the unit are available free from NATRE: <a href="http://www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/anti-racist-re/primary-classroom-resources/">www.natre.org.uk/about-natre/projects/anti-racist-re/primary-classroom-resources/</a></li> <li>Discover and think about the meanings of some key ideas about racism and religion by studying some people who have given their lives to reducing prejudice and hatred.</li> <li>Learn in depth and detail about the statues of Colston and Wesley in Bristol.</li> <li>Consider how music, film, prayer, art and other forms of expression have been used in struggles against racism.</li> <li>Enable pupils to think for themselves about the ways that scriptures encourage religious people to treat all humans with dignity, respect, equity or love – and consider reasons why this does not always happen.</li> <li>Learn that early Christian traditions include important stories about human unity, even though the Christian church has sometimes been complicit in racism.</li> <li>Learn that Prophet Muhammad taught his followers to set racial difference aside.</li> <li>Ask good questions about racism and equality, discussing how religion could make more positive contributions to justice.</li> <li>Consider some questions, such as: can prayer help reduce racism? Does God care about racism? Why are religious people sometimes racist even though they preach love for all? Is it only religious people who fail to live up to their ideals?</li> <li>Create a work of art and commentary on it, expressing pupils' reactions to the idea that 'we have far more in common than keeps us apart'.</li> <li>Pupils weigh up their own learning in relation to their own ideas about equity, justice and race.</li> </ul>

## Key question U2.14: Green religion? What do religious and non-religious worldviews teach about caring for the Earth?

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<b>Learning outcomes</b> (intended to enable pupils to achieve end of key stage outcomes):	<b>Ways of knowing</b> e.g.	<b>Suggested content for learning:</b> Teachers can select content from these examples and add more of their own.
<p>Teachers will enable pupils to achieve some of these outcomes, as appropriate to their age and stage, so that they can:</p> <p><b>Make sense of belief:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and explain at least three examples of ways in which people from religious and non-religious worldviews respond to environmental issues.</li> <li>Describe examples of ways in which people use religious texts/sources of authority to respond to environmental issues.</li> </ul> <p><b>Understand the impact:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make clear connections between what people from religious and non-religious worldviews believe about the world and environment and how this impacts their actions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Make connections:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reflect on and articulate lessons people might gain from beliefs about the environment and people's responses to environmental issues they have studied, recognising that people may think differently about these.</li> <li>Consider and weigh up different ideas about and responses to environmental issues and use this reasoning to help articulate personal responses on caring for the world.</li> </ul>	    	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This unit investigation enables pupils to learn in depth about issues of climate change, environmental protection and the future sustainability of the planet, in the light of teaching and practice from different religions.</li> <li>Use a case study about Greta Thunberg to introduce the issues of climate justice. From her story, what can pupils tell about her personal worldview? What matters most to her? Greta is non-religious. Use this case study to enable pupils to think about the meanings of some key questions: whose world is this? Why do humans pollute their own earth? Why do extinctions matter? Can we care better for our planet? Who is most at risk from environmental change? Does the Earth belong to God? If some people believe the Earth does belong to God, how should they live?</li> <li>Learn in detail about key concepts such as khalifa (Islam), stewardship (Christianity), Bhumi (goddess in Hindu Dharma) and Tu B'Shevat (Jewish) which have implications for care of the earth. Connect these ideas to words and stories from sacred texts.</li> <li>Learn about the work of projects such as the Jewish Ecological Coalition, Islamic Relief's tree-planting, the Hindu Bhumi Project, Christian projects Eco Church or Operation Noah. Consider some reasons why these projects may need to grow and influence their traditions more strongly. Should religions be greener? <a href="http://www.smquakers.org.uk/local-meetings/hereford/">Talk to a Quaker from the local area www.smquakers.org.uk/local-meetings/hereford/</a>.</li> <li>Learn in detail about examples of creative expressions of green spirituality from different faiths in works of art, music, drama, prophecy and activist protests or actions: what are the spiritual roots of such expression, and what impacts can they have?</li> <li>Find out about connections between ancient wisdom in holy texts and some ways religious people have become 'climate justice activists'.</li> <li>Discuss what must happen for people and planet to survive and re-balance the ways humans have exploited the earth. What kinds of behaviour, belief and expression does the world need now? Weigh up different responses as we face the crisis of climate justice.</li> </ul>