[What is humanism? - Humanists International](https://humanists.international/what-is-humanism/?msclkid=7ceea3bb71ca1550ed9fc60dc4663e41)

**What is humanism? Are you a humanist?**

**Find out more about the rational, ethical worldview that is humanism.**

Across the world, the number of non-religious people is growing all the time. It is estimated there are 1.1 billion people in the world who are religiously unaffiliated, which means they identify as atheists, agnostics or describe their religion as “nothing in particular.”

* Humanists are non-religious people who strive to lead fulfilling, meaningful and ethical lives, using reason and empathy to guide their decisions and actions.
* Humanists base their understanding of the world on reason and science, rejecting supernatural or divine beliefs.
* Humanists reject all forms of racism and prejudice, and believe in respecting and protecting everyone’s human rights, including the right to freedom of religion and belief.
* Humanists believe we have a responsibility to respect and care for one another and the natural world.

While the definition of humanism may vary slightly between organizations and groups, the [**Amsterdam Declaration**](https://humanists.international/what-is-humanism/the-amsterdam-declaration/) serves as the [**definitive guiding principles of modern humanism**](https://humanists.international/what-is-humanism/the-amsterdam-declaration/) for everyone in our global community.

If you hold similar values, we would encourage you to [**sign up for the Humanists International newsletter**](https://humanists.international/sign-up-for-the-newsletter/) to find out more. You can also find your local humanist group or organization below. Often people who are new to humanism don’t realize there is a global community of like-minded people out there to connect with.

Humanists International is made up of [**more than 130 Member organizations and associated groups**](https://humanists.international/about/our-members/) across the globe. You can find your nearest group [**here**](https://humanists.international/about/our-members/explore-our-members/?civiwp=CiviCRM&q=civicrm/profile/map&map=1&gid=19&reset=1).

**Aspects of Humanism** There are several aspects or components of Humanism. Most of these elements can also stand alone (for example, you can be an atheist but not believe in right and wrong, then you wouldn’t be a humanist). Humanists are likely to agree with most of the following claims, at least in their broad intent.

**We live in a natural world**

There are no gods or ghosts, disembodied spirits or immortal souls. There is no divine realm. Of course there are strange or as yet unanswered questions about the world, but as we gain knowledge and understanding then previously unexplained phenomena are always brought into the “natural world”, or can be understood “under the laws of nature” (or however you like to think of it)*.* This view is also sometimes known philosophically as **naturalism**.

Naturalism usually entails **atheism** (dissent from the existence of a God or gods) or at least some form of **agnosticism** (the idea that the existence of gods is unknown or unknowable, or even a meaningless question).

**We learn about the world using conjecture, reason and experience**

Humanists agree that we can learn about the world through the use of reason and scientific method, or conjecture tested against logic and empirical evidence. In other words, the world is amenable to rational investigation. This position is sometimes called **rationalism**.

As rationalists, humanists value **free inquiry**, in that they reject artificial limits on investigation. Rationalism also embodies **freethought**: it focuses on knowledge which people can share and test as one community, rather than the acceptance of authority, tradition, or dogma.

**We must make the most of the one life we have**

**We give our lives meaning and purpose.**Not believing in an afterlife, or any “divine purpose” for the universe, humanists focus on making **meaning and purpose** for themselves, on living a **good life**in the **here and now**.

**Morality arises from human nature and culture**

Human beings were not suddenly blessed with love and reason at some point in the past by an external power! Rather, **our nature as deliberating, social beings evolved over time**. We are able to **empathise**with others, and reason about **fairness**, and**justice** and **how societies work**(or when they don’t work!).

**What is morally right promotes welfare and fulfillment**

What is the moral sphere (or “right and wrong”, “good and bad”, morality or ethics)?

For humanists, there are moral ‘rights and wrongs’ because of who we are as human beings, including the needs and desires we share, and the needs and desires of individuals; because we interact with each other, and can deliberate over what we do; and because our actions affect both ourselves and others *normatively*. In other words: we can hinder or help others, make people sad or happy, we can impoverish the lives of others or enrich them, live life with dreary fatalism or with human flourishing. **The answers to moral questions are here in the world, in ourselves, others, and our relationships, not in some mystical beyond.**