

**in support of**

**AGREED SYLLABUS**

**for**

**RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**in**

**DURHAM 2020**

**PREPARED BY**



**Information and Support**

**for Schools**

North East Humanists is a partner group of Humanists UK.

We have our own local Education Panel and school speakers trained by Humanists UK.

We can come into schools to present lessons, lead assemblies, contribute to inter-faith events and advise staff.

This document and other information are available through our website

<https://www.northeast-humanists.org.uk/education/>

 

If you would like further advice, or are interested in having a Humanist school speaker, please contact us at:

education@northeast-humanists.org.uk

You can also book a visit through the Humanists UK website

[www.understandinghumanism.org.uk/](http://www.understandinghumanism.org.uk/)

This is version 2.0 of the Additional Guidance and was published September 2022. It has been amended to be inline with the updated HUK Understanding Humanism website.

**Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in Durham 2020**

**Additional Guidance for Humanism 2022**

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| **Table of Contents** |

[Foreword 4](#_Toc114033248)

[Introduction 5](#_Toc114033249)

[**Purpose of the Additional Guidance** 5](#_Toc114033250)

[**Who the Guidance is For** 5](#_Toc114033251)

[**The National Context** 6](#_Toc114033252)

[**Why Humanism?** 6](#_Toc114033253)

[How to Use the Additional Guidance 7](#_Toc114033254)

[Additional Guidance for Humanism KS1 8](#_Toc114033255)

[Additional Guidance for Humanism KS2 9](#_Toc114033256)

[Additional Guidance for Humanism KS3 11](#_Toc114033257)

[Additional Guidance for Humanism KS4 14](#_Toc114033258)

[Appendix 1 18](#_Toc114033259)

[Understanding Humanism Resources from Humanists UK 18](#_Toc114033260)

[Appendix 2 19](#_Toc114033261)

[Inclusive Assemblies 19](#_Toc114033262)

[Appendix 3 20](#_Toc114033263)

# **Foreword**

I am delighted to endorse this additional guidance for Humanism. Embracing non-religious worldviews within the RE curriculum is actively threaded through the updated Durham Agreed Syllabus which in turn deeply influences and impacts other Agreed Syllabi across areas of the North East.

This is a very practical document cleverly designed to engage with key questions from the Agreed Syllabus as well as raising sub-questions which can be given strong consideration in an enquiry based RE curriculum. Linked to these key questions are some themes central to humanism which are supported with teaching resources and very practical examples of activities that can develop learning and promote good progress.

Curriculum review and establishing its rationale is of current strategic importance within education. The opportunity of a new Agreed Syllabus provides additional impetus for colleagues to ensure the embedding of non-religious worldviews such as Humanism. Colleagues are reminded to give thought and consideration to ensure breadth and depth across the curriculum and this document reaffirms that.

Key vocabulary has been identified throughout this guidance which promotes a strong literacy focus and the content underpins the requirements of external accreditation such as GCSE’s. It is essential for pupils to embrace non-religious worldviews such as humanism in order to increase their knowledge, understanding and awareness in our society as well as meeting benchmark expectations - showing progression in their learning over time.

I would therefore like to thank North East Humanists for the thoughtful production of this guidance. It is a document which will actively support non-specialist coordinators of RE in the primary phase in undertaking their role in introducing and exploring non-religious worldviews such as Humanism. It also allows Heads of RE within the secondary phase opportunity to reflect carefully and appropriately resource an exciting and engaging curriculum.

At the centre of this is the opportunity to shape the educational experience of a child, making them reflective as well as critical thinkers about a variety of questions and values as humans that we seek to understand.

Andrew Copson

Chief Exec Humanists UK

President Humanists International

# **Introduction**

## **Purpose of the Additional Guidance**

The purpose of the Additional Guidance is to provide RE teachers with easy-to-use information and ideas in order to teach about Humanism within the context of the Agreed Syllabus. The Agreed Syllabus provides a curriculum plan and schemes of work for each Key Stage, including post 16, and focusses on six core religions. Humanism and other world views are woven into sections throughout, rather than being addressed separately. Thematic studies for each Key Stage provide cross-cutting topics for interfaith study.

The Understanding Humanism website provides teachers with core knowledge as a basis for curriculum planning and a wealth of teaching resources prepared by Humanists UK as well links to other sources. There is also a guide to using the website.

[Core knowledge » Understanding Humanism](https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/core-knowledge/)

[Understanding Humanism](https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/)

[How to use Understanding Humanism » Understanding Humanism](https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/teaching-about-humanism/how-to-use-understanding-humanism/)

However, navigating and selecting from these could be a time-consuming process. So, these Guidelines are designed to provide shortcuts to some of the most relevant and useable resources for an initial study of Humanism.

The Guidelines are also important because ‘*the study of Humanism will often differ from the study of religions. It is a worldview without a holy text or founding figure, with no festivals, compulsory rituals, places, or objects of worship, prayers, hymns, or structures of authority. To understand Humanism, it is necessary to explore certain philosophical questions and Humanist approaches to them. Although Humanists share many beliefs and values, they do not all agree about everything. In fact, debate is at the heart of Humanism. But it requires more than that. It also involves an understanding of Humanism as a lived belief with impact on people’s lives in our modern, pluralistic, and often confusing world.’* (Humanists UK)

## **Who the Guidance is For**

The Guidance is for teachers in Durham and in other North East Local Authorities who have purchased an adapted version of the syllabus for their use. It could also be useful for teachers using other Agreed Syllabuses, since many of the key questions and topics will be the same or very similar.

The Guidance is structured around each Key Stage. It will be readily useable by all phases: Primary, Middle, and Secondary. Teachers, perhaps particularly those with a coordinating role for RE, will find it helpful for curriculum design, but all staff teaching RE should find it helpful.

Additionally, the Guidance will be of interest to members of SACREs and staff of Local Authorities concerned with the quality of, and support for, RE.

## **The National Context**

Schools are required to include the study of non-religious views throughout all Key Stages. The 2013 Religious Education Council Framework for RE refers to religion and worldviews. The inclusion of non-religious worldviews in RE is widely considered to be best practice. Much more recently, in September 2018, the Commission on Religious Education published their report ‘Religion and Worldviews: The Way Forward’. This influential report proposes a new National Plan for RE which is centred around the proposal that the subject be called *Religion and Worldviews.* The report expects all pupils to:

*……. learn about worldviews and concepts including Humanism, secularism, atheism, and agnosticism, including the various experiences of those who identify as having ‘no religion’.*

Whilst the National Plan has yet to be fully implemented, the overall direction for the development of RE is widely accepted. This is echoed in Wales by the Welsh Government decision in 2020 to consult on a plan to rename RE to ‘Religions and Worldviews’. Currently, GCSE syllabuses are proving less flexible in content, but the basic principles to address non-religious worldviews as appropriate apply nonetheless.

## **Why Humanism?**

This vision for RE is in the context of changing social attitudes and beliefs. According to the latest British Social Attitudes Survey, conducted by the National Centre for Social Research and published in July 2019, 52% of the population identifies as non-religious. This percentage rises to 75% amongst younger people. A significant proportion of the non-religious, although not identifying as Humanists, share many of the Humanist principles and values.

*‘Studying Humanism can contribute towards schools’ goals, and Ofsted requirements, of ensuring the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural (SMSC) development of young people, and the study of fundamental British values. It can help students to recognise that non-religious people have as much potential to explore questions of meaning and value as religious people, and that morality has a role to play in our lives independently of religion. The study of a non-religious worldview, and what makes it distinct from religious worldviews, can help enable students to recognise, appreciate, and celebrate diversity. It also allows young people the opportunity to discover how Humanist and non-religious thinking have helped to shape our country’s culture and identity. For many Humanists, liberty, democracy, and the rule of law are human values, not just British values, and the study of Humanism allows young people a wealth of opportunities to explore the merits of and challenges to each.’* (Humanists UK)

The latest version of the Ofsted Framework places greater emphasis on a student-centred curriculum design, with less emphasis on statistics and more on the quality of the curriculum. Conversation with staff and pupils are a major source of evidence. SMSC is seen as important for pupils to develop reflective views on beliefs and respect for all religions and worldviews. Studying Humanism clearly has a contribution to make to these.

# **How to Use the Additional Guidance**

This Guidance should be read alongside core sections of the Agreed Syllabus. Particularly important are the elements of RE: Knowledge and Understanding and Critical Thinking. Expectations by Key Stage should be applied to pupil learning about Humanism, just as it is to religions.

The Additional Guidance is organized around four Key Stages in charts with four columns.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Column One: | Questions from the Question Bank in the Agreed Syllabus |
| Column Two: | Additional Humanist questions drawn from the Understanding Humanism resources |
| Column Three: | Links to relevant Core Knowledge Areas available on the Understanding Humanism website (see lists in the Appendices) |
| Column Four: | Examples of activities mostly from the Understanding Humanism Themes / Perspectives, and a few other sources. |

Additionally, there are suggestions for key vocabulary.

Once teachers have used the web links in columns three and four, the suggested resources and activities are easily accessible. These links contain other resources and activities which teachers may also want to explore and use.

Links to other sources, such as the BBC and YouTube, go directly to the resource.

Over the four Key Stages, resources and activities are drawn from all the Understanding Humanism themes. The recommended activities become more intellectually demanding over the four Key Stages, building on prior knowledge and increased maturity. This guidance, therefore, attempts to provide sound coverage, taking account of progression.

**Appendices**

Appendix 1 provides comprehensive lists of the core areas of knowledge, Themes and Perspectives available on the Understanding Humanism website.

Appendix 2 provides links to inclusive assemblies which may be useful for broadening Collective Worship.

Appendix 3 is a background paper from North East Humanists ‘Worldviews and RE Syllabuses’

**Questions and Feedback**

We welcome questions, comments, and suggestions. We do plan to review and update this document periodically so please send us your queries or useful ideas. These can be sent to North East Humanists via email to

education@northeast-humanists.org.uk.

# **Additional Guidance for Humanism KS1**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Agreed Syllabus Question | Additional Humanist Questions | Understanding Humanism Themes / Perspectives | Examples of Activities, Videos, and Presentations |
| How do Humanists express their beliefs?  | What do Humanists believe? | What is Humanism?<https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/area/what-is-humanism/> | Discussion using ‘What is Humanism?’ PPT presentation and the happy human symbol.Read ‘Here We Are’ by Oliver Jeffers.  |
| Discover and Explore Humanism at KS1<http://www.northeast-humanists.org.uk/education> | Use collection of objects to illustrate what is important to Humanists. Discover and Explore Humanism lesson plan by Laura Fitzsimons.[www.northeast-humanists.org.uk/education](http://www.northeast-humanists.org.uk/education) |
| What makes humans special? | Human Beings<https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/area/human-beings/> | Human beings are curious and try to answer big questions. See PPT Human nature has two sides. See Two Wolves story. |
| What do Humanists celebrate? | The One Life<https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/area/the-one-life/> | Watch film of naming ceremony and use associated activities. |
| How do Humanists believe we can be happy and help others to be happy?  | The One Life<https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/area/the-one-life/> | Class activity: Ingredients of happiness.See PPT  |
| What books do Humanists read? | See book ‘What is Humanism?’ and list of children’s books. <https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/books-for-children/> | Explain humanists don’t have one book, they read many books. Read some stories from the listed books. |
| Key vocabulary Humanist, happy human, happiness, special, kindness, community, celebration, curiosity, questions, evidence |

# **Additional Guidance for Humanism KS2**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Agreed Syllabus Question | Additional Humanist Questions | Understanding Humanism Themes / Perspectives | Examples of Activities, Videos, and Presentations |
| What can we learn about religious diversity in our area, e.g. Humanism?How and why do people show care for others?How do people express belonging? Why do people use rituals in their lives? | How do we decide what to believe? | What is Humanism?https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/What-is-humanism\_-overview-7.pdf | Presentation. What is Humanism PPFilm.https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/znk647h/articles/zmqpkmnFilm. When did I become a humanistAdapt /simplify |
| Theme: Knowledge and Beliefhttps://understandinghumanism.org.uk/area/understanding-the-world/https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/area/human-beings/ | Activity; Humanism through objectsThe trial; Discuss ‘good evidence’ Happy humanist template. What makes a Humanist a Humanist. View a Fossil, what does it tell us?Briefly discuss evolution; what do children know about it and what evidence there is.  |
| Why don’t humanists believe in God? | Theme: atheism and agnosticismhttps://understandinghumanism.org.uk/area/atheism-and-agnosticism/ | Discussion around Humanist need for evidence, but tolerance of people’s beliefs.Invisible pencil-eating monster. Adapt for group activity. Compare and contrast Humanist and religious beliefs |
| How do we believe we can lead a good life? | Theme: Ethics and the golden rule<https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/area/humanist-ethics/>  | Presentation: Humanist ethics ppActivities: Moral dilemmas The sweet shop Assessment sheet. Multichoice questions (adapt)  |
| What do we value in life? | Theme: Humanist Valueshttps://understandinghumanism.org.uk/area/what-is-humanism/https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Society-overview-7.pdf | Read Oliver Jeffers book with links to Humanist beliefs and values.The starfish story. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-qClChUdlfI |
| What are our views on happiness? | Theme: Happiness meaning and purposehttps://understandinghumanism.org.uk/area/the-one-life/ | Activities Happy Humanist activity Ingredients of happinessDiscuss; How do you and others try to endeavour to make other people happy. Film; Philip Pullman on life and death. |
| Theme: Freedom and responsibility<https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/area/society/> | Film on the rights of the child. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PiNm-iyaZOY |
| What do celebrations tell us about the things humanists value? | Theme: Celebrations and ceremonieshttps://understandinghumanism.org.uk/area/humanist-ceremonies/ | Film: What is a Humanist ceremony? AnimationFilm <https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/res_films/naming-ceremony/> |
| What books do humanists read? | See book What is Humanism  |  |
| Key vocabulary Humanism, Humanist, humanity, atheist, agnostic, science, evidence, reason, curiosity, ethics, evolution, natural selection, big bang, happy human, golden rule, human rights, empathy, morality, respect, responsibility, critical thinking, the good life, mortality, dignity, celebrant, pastoral support, secularism, soul, materialism. |

# **Additional Guidance for Humanism KS3**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Agreed Syllabus Question | Additional Humanist Questions | Understanding Humanism Core areas / Perspectives | Examples of Presentations Activities and Videos  |
| What does it mean to live as a Humanist? | What is Humanism?What are the key beliefs of Humanism? | Core area: Understanding Humanism <https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/area/what-is-humanism/> | PPT presentation: ‘What is Humanism?’Films. Activities. Assessments |
| Is there evidence of God’s existence? | Does God exist? | Area: Atheism and Agnosticism<https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/area/atheism-and-agnosticism/?age=11> | PPT presentation with class activities.Assessments Link to BBC film: A is for Atheism.<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/class-clips-video/religious-studies-ks3-a-is-for-atheism/zdkcwty> |
| Is death the end? | What happens after death? | Core area: The One Life<https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/area/the-one-life/> | PPT presentationActivities Films AssessmentsSee especially films by humanist celebrants. <https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/res_films/funerals-stories-and-sadness/> |
| What does it mean to be human? | Does life have any meaning? Is happiness the most important thing in life? What is ‘the good life’? | Core area: The One Life<https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/area/the-one-life/> | PPT presentation: The one lifeFilm: Ingredients of the good life <https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/res_films/what-are-the-ingredients-of-the-good-life/>Activity: The river of life |
| How can the arts express beliefs and spirituality? |  | Core area: The One LifeHumanism and music: film of Frank Turner song. <https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/res_films/humanism-and-music/> | Lesson plans from Amnesty International about musicians who have contributed to human rights. <https://www.amnesty.org.uk/files/yhrs_lesson_1_case_studies__worksheets_2014.pdf> |
| Where does authority lie? | What makes something right or wrong? | Core area: Humanist Ethics <https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/area/humanist-ethics/> | PPT presentation: Humanist ethicsCartoon film: What makes something right or wrong?<https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/res_films/what-makes-something-right-or-wrong-2/> |
| How do people make moral decisions? | Do Humanists have rules to follow? | Core area: Humanist EthicsHow do we know what is right and wrong?<https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/area/humanist-ethics/> | Film of several Humanists addressing the question<https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/res_films/how-can-we-know-what-is-right-and-wrong/> |
| How do Humanists deal with moral dilemmas? | Group activity: Moral dilemmas.<https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Moral-dilemmas-11.pdf> |
| What does justice mean? | A fair punishment? | Perspective: No materials at present.  |  |
| Where did the universe come from? | What is known and what is theory | Core area: Human Beings <https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/area/human-beings/>Core area: Understanding the World<https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/area/understanding-the-world/> | PPT presentationThe Galaxy Song from The Meaning of Life. www.youtube.com/watch?v=SqwasQiJ54wEvidence for the Big Bang <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9f_i87aHKoo>Models of the Universe. [www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mgn5GOCCgLw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mgn5GOCCgLw) PPT presentationCartoon film: How do we know what is true? <https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/res_films/how-do-we-know-whats-true/> |
| Can religion and Science mix? | Can science prove or disprove the existence of God? | Core area: Understanding the World <https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/area/understanding-the-world/><https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/uhtheme/knowledge-and-belief/> | How do we know what is true? <https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/films/how-do-we-know-what-is-true/>BBC Bitesize <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zx7634j/revision/1>Beliefs and evidence card game |
| Key vocabulary Humanism, Humanist, humanity, atheist, agnostic, science, evidence, reason, curiosity, ethics, evolution, natural selection, big bang, happy human, enjoyment, golden rule, human rights, equality, empathy, morality, respect, responsibility, critical thinking, consequences, the good life, mortality, dignity, celebrant, pastoral support, secularism, soul, materialism |

# Additional Guidance for Humanism KS4

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Agreed Syllabus Question | Additional Humanist Questions | Understanding Humanism Themes / Perspectives | Examples of Activities, Videos, and Presentations |
| Is death the end? | Does death make life more meaningful? | Theme: Meaning and Happiness [The One Life » Understanding Humanism](https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/area/the-one-life/)[The Big Questions » Humanists UK](https://humanists.uk/humanism/the-big-questions/) | PPT presentation: The One LifeFilms:Steven Fry<https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/res_films/what-should-we-think-about-death-2/>Philip Pullman:<https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/res_films/philip-pullman-on-life-and-death/> |
| What should we think about death? | Theme: Life and Death [The One Life » Understanding Humanism](https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/area/the-one-life/) |
| What makes us Human? | Does life have any meaning?What is the good life? | [Human Beings » Understanding Humanism](https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/area/human-beings/)[The One Life » Understanding Humanism](https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/area/the-one-life/) | PowerPoint:Human beings Video: Cultural transmission. (BBC)[www.youtube.com/watch?v=mrWPSP35gUk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mrWPSP35gUk)Video: What does it mean to be me? (BBC)[www.youtube.com/watch?v=qpXNRrtuo38](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qpXNRrtuo38) |
| Why do people suffer? | Why do bad things happen? | Theme: Atheism, Agnosticism, and Humanism <https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/area/atheism-and-agnosticism> | Several films/animations. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=111&v=qJYycge3eFc><https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WiufsmxiUiU> |
| What does the word evil mean? | Perspective: Problem of Evil <https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Gods-problem-of-evil-Humanist-perspective.docx><https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Gods-the-problem-of-evil-Humanist-Perspective.pptx> | Questions for discussion on page 7. PPT presentation: The problem of evil. |
| What is it like to live a faith? | What is like to live as a Humanist? | Theme: What is Humanism [What is humanism? » Understanding Humanism](https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/area/what-is-humanism/) | A selection of short films to stimulate discussion or individual research:What does Humanism mean to Humanists?When did you decide you were a Humanist?Who are Humanists?An Introduction to Humanism. |
| Can we respect and have tolerance for all faiths and beliefs? | What kind of world do Humanists want?What political concepts are important for Humanists? | Theme: Society[Society » Understanding Humanism](https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/area/society/)[The importance of dialogue » Understanding Humanism](https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/res_films/the-importance-of-dialogue/) | Interfaith Events. Please contact us (education@northeast-humanists.org.uk) for a trained Humanist school visitor. |
| Should religion and politics mix? | What is secularism?Why is it important? | Theme: Secularism and Society [Society » Understanding Humanism](https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/area/society/) | What is secularism and why is it important?A selection of short films. |
| Why might people borrow religious beliefs and practices? | How can I be good? | Theme: Ethics [Humanist Ethics » Understanding Humanism](https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/area/humanist-ethics/)Perspectives: Ethics; Golden Rule; Evolution of Morality | Activities: Moral dilemmas? |
| Why should we avoid prejudice and unfair treatment or discrimination? | Perspective: Discrimination and Prejudice <https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Discrimination-and-Prejudice-Humanist-Perspective.docx> | Questions for discussion on page 4 |
| How do we make moral decisions? | How do Humanists decide how to behave?Can we be good without a god?What is the aim of morality?Has morality evolved?How can we respond to moral dilemmas? | Theme: Ethics [Humanist Ethics » Understanding Humanism](https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/area/humanist-ethics/)Perspective: Ethics and the Evolution of Morality <https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Ethics-Evolution-of-morality-Humanist-Perspective.docx> | Lesson Plan: How do Humanists deal with moral dilemmas? |
| Harm no living thing? | Can animals suffer?Should there be such a thing as animal rights?How should we treat animals?How can we contribute to animal welfare? | Perspective: Animal Welfare and Vegetarianism<https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Animal-Welfare-and-Vegeterianism-Humanist-Perspective.docx><https://humanism.org.uk/campaigns/public-ethical-issues/animal-welfare/> | Class debate on questions posed in this perspective.Alternatively, please contact us (education@northeast-humanists.org.uk) for a trained Humanist school visitor. |
| Do rituals matter? | What would you want to promise to a new baby?What makes a good marriage and a good wedding?What responsibilities do parents & children have to each other?What would you like to be remembered for? Can a funeral be a celebration? | Humanist Ceremonies <https://humanism.org.uk/ceremonies/> Perspective: Celebrations and Ceremonies <https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Celebrations-and-ceremonies-Humanist-Perspective.doc> | Compare ceremonies from different worldviews.Plan a ceremony for a naming, a wedding or a funeral. |
| Key vocabulary kindness, respect, rights and responsibilities, empathy, compassion, ceremonies, ritual, death and mortality, funerals, eulogy, reflection, conscience, constraints, consequences, freedom, atheism, agnosticism, secularism, Humanism, meaning of life, happiness, autonomy, values, morality |

# **Appendix 1**

# **Understanding Humanism Resources from Humanists UK**

<https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/>

The resources are now arranged into six Core Areas of Knowledge:

 What is Humanism?

 Human Beings

 Understanding the World

The One Life

Humanist Ethics

Society

These are supported by themes:

 Atheism and Agnosticism

 Global Humanism

 History and Influence

 Data

 Humanist Ceremonies

Humanist Perspectives on contemporary issues are being added to and include:

 Abortion

 Animal Welfare

 Dialogue

 Environmental Issues

 Euthanasia

 Faith Schools

 Organ donation

 War and Peace

Finally, there is information about:

 Assemblies

Books

Films

Core Knowledge

# **Appendix 2**

# Inclusive Assemblies

The legal requirements for Collective Worship are quite separate from those for RE, as are the inspection processes. Within that framework schools may wish to broaden the content of their assemblies to be more inclusive.

Humanists UK have prepared two assemblies, one for KS1/KS2 and one for KS2/KS3.

These are available on the Understanding Humanism website:

[Assemblies » Understanding Humanism](https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/assemblies/)

There is also one specifically for world Humanist day on June 21st

World Humanist Day, 21st June

[What-is-humanism-Assembly-KS3-and-4-1.pdf (understandinghumanism.org.uk)](https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/What-is-humanism-Assembly-KS3-and-4-1.pdf)

The website below provides links to many organisations providing themes and materials suitable for assemblies for each Key Stage:

[Assemblies for All » Humanists UK](https://humanists.uk/education/assemblies-for-all/)

Here are some examples:

A Promise to the world’s young people (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child) <https://unicefuk.app.box.com/s/idsajp6cg8hoi6jbnf524w9hdky85wfq/file/224862606327>

[Science and technology | Assemblies For All](https://assembliesforall.org.uk/themes/science-and-technology/)

[The environment | Assemblies For All](https://assembliesforall.org.uk/themes/the-environment/)

[Humanitarian issues | Assemblies For All](https://assembliesforall.org.uk/themes/humanitarian-issues/)

[Human rights | Assemblies For All](https://assembliesforall.org.uk/themes/human-rights/)

[Values and emotions | Assemblies For All](https://assembliesforall.org.uk/themes/values-and-emotions/)

[Women and girls | Assemblies For All](https://assembliesforall.org.uk/themes/women-and-girls/)

Alternatively, please contact us (education@northeast-humanists.org.uk) for trained Humanist School Visitors to lead assemblies.

# **Appendix 3**

**Worldviews and RE Syllabuses**

**Kate Hinton**

 

**What is meant by Worldviews**

The English word ‘worldview’ is a translation of the German term *weltanschauung* which is associated with German philosophers such as Kant and Hegel. It can be described as a philosophy of life or an approach to life. Others describe it as a lens to make sense of the world or a model of the world and our place in it.

It has been proposed that a worldview encompasses answers to very basic and universal questions now linked to six main branches of philosophy

What do I know? (epistemology)

How do I know it? (logic)

Where do we come from? (metaphysics)

What is good? (ethics)

What is beautiful? (aesthetics)

How do we act? (political philosophy)

Drawing from a number of sources and summarised in several publications / websites, a world view should seek to:

explain the nature of the world; give us direction; tell us what to value; tell us how to act; explain what we can know; provide consistency and coherence to the story we tell ourselves; incorporate facts that we encounter; explain how things function; tell us why we are the way we are; yield insights into our feelings and emotions; tell us how to organise politically; help us choose future paths; uncover the origins of the universe and life itself; give us meaning and purpose; answer questions about gods and other mysteries; tell us what is good, what is truth, and what is beauty; help us feel less terrified of death; shed light on our joys and sorrows; guide us through our darker hours.

**Personal and Institutionalised Worldviews**

It is widely recognized that every individual has a personal worldview, although it may often be held unconsciously and only brought to the surface in times of crisis or uncertainty. Many worldviews are organized and shared among particular groups and sometimes embedded in institutions and their associated practices.

Hence the distinction between personal and institutional worldviews.

Personal worldviews may well draw extensively from institutionalised views but are also likely to be influenced by family, friends, sense of identity, social and justice contexts, stories in books and on screen, education, plus direct life experience.

Personal views are not fixed and individuals may change their worldview over time in the light of experience and reflection. This may mean that they also change their religious beliefs and affiliations.

**Why worldviews now**

The importance of worldviews became increasingly clear during the 20th Century, partly because of the increasing contact between cultures and the increasing amount of information, as well as mis-information, readily available to us.

Recent reviews of the RE curriculum in England and Wales, particularly the CORE Report 2018 Religion and Worldviews, recognize that it needs to reflect the contemporary society, including the diversity of religious beliefs and the increased interaction between people of different religions/worldviews. Additionally, the fact that a great many people (maybe as many as 50% of the British population) identify as not belonging to a religion presents a rather different context.

**How worldviews are categorized**

There is some variation in the way worldviews are categorized and which are appropriate to study. This usually includes:

the main institutional religions - Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Sikhism

non-religious worldviews which address philosophical questions as listed above, such as Humanism, Confucianism, existentialism

NB Atheism, agnosticism and political belief systems are not included here as worldviews, since they do not address the philosophical questions above. They may, however, be studied as important concepts of a different kind.

A fuller diversity of religious and non-religious worldviews may also draw from:

globally important beliefs and worldviews, some ancient, some living, from China, Japan, Australia and New Zealand, African countries, the Americas.

**Implications for curricular**

The worldview approach is seen as representing a paradigm shift or a reframing of the curriculum rather than the adding of a lot more content, although some additional content is likely to be needed in relation to non-religious worldviews which have rarely been included in the past.

Increasing numbers of syllabuses in the North East, as well as nationally (over 90%), now include Humanism as the main example of a non-religious worldview. The Newcastle syllabus is one such example.

**Newcastle Agreed Syllabus**

**Religion and Worldviews: A Journey of Discovery**

The title in itself indicates the shift towards a worldview approach and this is made clear in all the requirements of the syllabus such as:

‘Programmes of study must reflect the different ways in which religions and worldviews can be understood, interpreted and studied, including through a wide range of academic disciplines, and through direct encounter and discussion with individuals and communities who hold the worldviews. Programmes of study must reflect the complex, diverse and plural nature of worldviews.’

The syllabus requires specific religions and non-religious worldviews to be taught at different Key Stages, as well as others that may be taught. Humanism is compulsory at KS2 and KS3.

Throughout the syllabus the term ‘religions and worldviews’ is used. There are repeated requirements to make comparisons between them, rather than to teach them all separately, and to draw out the significance of particular beliefs and practices in terms of their contribution to a worldview.

**Ofsted Research**

 In a recent Ofsted Research Review of religious education three types of knowledge are identified as the pillars of progression:

The evolution of society’s religious and non-religious landscape highlights that it is all the more important for pupils to build up accurate knowledge of the complexity and diversity of global religion and non-religion.

‘Getting better’ at RE both at primary and secondary level comprises knowing more and remembering more of these pillars as they are set out within the RE curriculum:

first, ‘substantive’ knowledge: knowledge about various religious and non-religious traditions

second, ‘ways of knowing’: pupils learn ‘how to know’ about religion and non-religion

third, ‘personal knowledge’: pupils build an awareness of their own presuppositions and values about the religious and non-religious traditions they study

In high-quality RE curriculums, these 3 types of knowledge are not artificially separated from each other. For example, when subject leaders plan a sequence of specific content and concepts for pupils to study, they also need to consider the most appropriate methods that pupils need to know to study that content.

**Implications for teachers**

In order to make this paradigm shift teachers need to :

* be well informed about the range of religions and worldviews that are included in the syllabus they teach
* be aware of and articulate their own worldview
* limit the influence of their worldview on their teaching
* know how to encourage pupils to reflect on worldviews and articulate their own.

There is no one way to go about this and individual teachers can select an approach that feels comfortable for them.

The philosophical questions in the first paragraph above provide plenty of opportunities for self-reflection. The sources listed below also provide questions and ideas as ways of exploring and articulating personal beliefs.

**Sources**

CORE Report 2018 Religion and Worldviews

<https://www.commissiononre.org.uk/final-report-religion-and-worldviews-the-way-forward-a-national-plan-for-re/>

Newcastle Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2020-25

<https://www.servicestoschools.org.uk/Services/1605>

Ruth Flanagan NASACRE Virtual training session (PPT presentation)

<https://nasacre.org.uk/file/nasacre/1-261-workshop-g-worldviews-nasacre-may-2021-participant-view-ruth-flanagan.pdf>

Humanists UK Guide to non-religious worldviews (brief paper)

<https://understandinghumanism.org.uk/teaching-about-humanism/what-is-and-isnt-a-worldview/>

Ed Gibney What Can Evolution Teach Us About Humanism? (PPT Presentation)

<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/335603101_What_Can_Evolution_Teach_Us_About_Humanism>

Nobody Stand Nowhere Short animation about worldviews from Theos <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AFRxKF-Jdos>

Trevor Cooling World views in Religious Education (short video)

<https://www.reonline.org.uk/research/research-of-the-month/what-does-the-shift-to-worldview-mean-for-teachers/>

Ofsted Research Review Series - Religious education (lengthy report)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-review-series-religious-education/research-review-series-religious-education>

Julian Baggini How the World Thinks (whole book) [World of Books](https://www.wob.com/en-gb/books/julian-baggini/how-the-world-thinks/9781783782307?gclid=CjwKCAiApfeQBhAUEiwA7K_UHwDCu_7xegFV75e_mCRO76F11bb4o2q0q7rMMTfBTOeVi5Ub2FwDWBoCAkgQAvD_BwE)