

## Atheism and agnosticism: overview (age 7+)

Knowledge outcomes: students should learn the following about atheists and agnostics		
An atheist is somebody who does not believe in a god	An agnostic is somebody who says we cannot know whether a god exists or not	Humanists are atheists and agnostics who believe we can lead good and happy lives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Atheists don't see any persuasive reason or evidence to believe in a god</li> <li>• The evidence of suffering in the world makes many atheists find it hard to believe in an all-powerful, good god</li> <li>• Atheists don't believe a god created human beings, but believe human beings invented gods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People can be more or less confident about their belief, or their absence of belief, in a god</li> <li>• Many atheists are also agnostic – they accept we can't know for certain, but they don't think that there is a good reason to believe</li> <li>• It is impossible to prove something does not exist</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowing someone is an atheist or agnostic doesn't tell you anything else about how they live their life</li> <li>• Many atheists and agnostics believe it is important people know that it is OK not to believe in a god</li> <li>• Humanists believe that it is possible to lead good, happy, and meaningful lives without the need to believe in a god</li> <li>• Around half of the UK are atheists or agnostics</li> </ul>

**Key vocab:** belief, knowledge, atheist, agnostic, humanist, theist, certain, possible, probable, evidence, faith, proof

### Introduction

- Explain that many people don't believe in a god and that you are going to explore some of the words used to describe these people and some of the reasons why they don't believe.

### Atheism, agnosticism, and humanism

- Discuss what the words 'certain', 'probable', and 'possible' mean and how they are used.
- Carry out the ['Belief in god' scale activity](#) to explore the words 'atheist' and 'theist' and discuss the different levels of conviction people might have in their beliefs. You could follow this up by asking students to place quotes from real people on the scale.
- Share the [Atheists, agnostics, and humanists information sheet](#), discuss the meanings of the different words, and explore some of the reasons some people might not believe in a god.

### Digging deeper:

- Carry out the [Invisible pencil-eating monster activity](#) or the [Invisible gardener activity](#) and ask the students whether it is possible to prove that something does not exist.
- You could also explore the problem of suffering further by carrying out the [The Epicurean paradox activity](#).

### The bus campaign

- Carry out the [Bus campaign activities](#) and discuss the purpose, response, effectiveness, and appropriateness of the campaign.

### Summary and assessment

- Share and discuss the [Multiple-choice questions](#).
- Carry out the [Fill in the blanks activity](#).
- Review the knowledge outcomes above.