

## Human beings: overview (age 11+)



**Big question:** What am I?

**Key vocab:** natural, the Big Bang, evolution, mortality, celebrate, responsibility, potential, wonder

<b>Knowledge outcomes:</b> Students should know about the following common features of a <b>humanist understanding of human beings</b> .		
<b>Looking to science for natural explanations of our origins</b>	<b>Recognising that human beings evolved positive and negative qualities</b>	<b>Believing that human beings have the potential to make the world a better place</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scientific explanations for our origins (the Big Bang theory, evolution by natural selection)</li> <li>The pursuit of natural explanations as answers to our questions</li> <li>The scientific story of our origins as a source of wonder</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Humans as evolved animals</li> <li>The belief we are made from matter (atoms) and have no disembodied spirit or soul</li> <li>The belief we are mortal - this is the one life we have</li> <li>Recognising our naturally evolved positive and negative instincts and capacities (e.g. empathy, reason, imagination)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The belief our capacities give rise to responsibilities (considering options, imagining alternatives, and making choices)</li> <li>Adopting a scientific but cautiously optimistic understanding of human beings</li> <li>Recognising our flaws and working to limit them where we can</li> <li>Trying to make the most of our potential and encouraging other people to do the same</li> <li>Celebrating our abilities and many of our achievements</li> </ul>

### Introduction

- Begin with the 'A humanist approach to life: a summary' slide to introduce/recap the core features of a humanist approach to life.
- Ask the students what word they can see inside the word 'humanism' (answer: 'human'). Explain that you are going to explore a humanist understanding of human beings: human origins, human nature, and human potential (where we come from, what we are, and where we might be going).

### Where do we come from?

- Share and discuss the Human beings: where do we come from? information sheet to explore the scientific story of our origins.
- Watch the Evidence of the Big Bang film featuring Brian Cox and discuss the humanist approach to relying on science to answer questions about our universe's origins and evolution: [youtube.com/watch?v=9f\\_i87aHKoo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9f_i87aHKoo)
- If students are unfamiliar with the theory of evolution, watch The theory of evolution film: [youtube.com/watch?v=BcpB\\_986wyk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BcpB_986wyk)

### What are we?

- Carry out activities 1 and 2 on the Human beings: good and bad activity to explore the positive and negative features of human beings, and the humanist understanding of human nature and belief in our potential.
- Digging deeper: share and discuss the Mortality information sheet to explore why humanists believe this is the one life we have. (Note: the resources in the One Life knowledge area will explore the consequences of this belief on the humanist approach to life.)

### Where are we going?

- Share and discuss the Human potential and responsibility information sheet to explore the humanist perspective on how we can best make use of our capacities.
- You could also share the What is a humanist understanding of human beings? information sheet.
- Digging deeper: watch The idea of cultural transmission (BBC Radio 4): An explanation of the way human beings can share knowledge and skills over generations and discuss the value humanist might see in this capacity: [youtube.com/watch?v=mrWSP35gUk&index=19&list=PLLiycLlICgPE0q9BiMexLFj-1rq9GUwX](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mrWSP35gUk&index=19&list=PLLiycLlICgPE0q9BiMexLFj-1rq9GUwX)
- Carry out activity 3 on the Human beings: good and bad activity, in which students will create an image of a human being that illustrates both the good and bad sides of our nature, then identify or highlight the features a humanist might think we should celebrate and promote.

### Summary and assessment

- Choose one or more of the following:
  - Share and discuss the Multiple choice questions.
  - Carry out the Fill in the blanks activity.
  - Ask students to complete the humanist responses activity.
- Review the knowledge outcomes above.
- Ask the students what questions they would like to ask a humanist.