

Humanism through objects

Look at the objects below. Use what you have learned about humanism to describe how each object might link to the core features of a humanist approach to life. How might they represent humanist beliefs, values, and goals?

An artist's manikin



A magnifying glass



A pencil



A heart



A globe



Humanism through objects: notes for teachers

These objects are not 'humanist objects'. They are not important to humanists in the same way that a cross might be for Christians or a menorah for Jews. However, they can help illustrate some of the core features of a humanist approach to life, and help students to learn (and remember) about humanism in a more tangible way. This activity could be used following an introduction to humanism or at the end of a unit to help assess what the students have learned.

Possible connections between the objects and humanist beliefs

Artists manikin

- We are made from natural materials
- We are limited in terms of what we can do
- We have the potential to shape ourselves into who we want to be

Magnifying glass

- We should look for evidence to help us answer our questions
- Science gives us the best way of understanding the world
- Curiosity can be a pleasure

Pen

- We should be the authors of our own lives – free to write our own stories
- Human beings are creative – this enables us to solve problems and can bring us joy
- Our capacity to share knowledge and ideas is something to be celebrated
- We should have freedom of speech and expression
- We should seek conversation before conflict

Heart

- We should be kind and compassionate
- We should use empathy when thinking about how to treat other people
- The connections we make with other people are important
- The origins of morality lie inside us, not outside

Globe

- The world is a natural place
- Our place in the cosmos is small and fragile, but it is important to us
- We should take care of our planet - it is the only one we have
- We have the potential to make the world a better place
- Responsibility for making the world a better place lies with human beings alone
- We should think about everyone around the world as human beings first and focus on what we share rather than how we differ
- We should work for universal human rights and freedoms