

How do inspirational people impact on how Humanists live today?

History of Humanism

Humanism has been part of human thought for thousands of years. It is a non-religious way of thinking that focuses on being kind, using science, and making the world better. It holds at its core a belief in reason, questioning and science. Humanists approach life by focussing on human achievement, scientific discoveries and making decisions based on personal values.

Key Beliefs

Humanists often live their lives based on the following key beliefs:

1. There is no evidence of a god - science gives answers to many things previously considered to be caused by a god e.g. the formation of life
2. We have one life – we need to make the best of it
3. It is our responsibility to treat humans and other living things kindly, fairly and positively
4. We need to take personal responsibility for our actions
5. We have the potential to achieve great things which will benefit humanity and future generations
6. value freedom, empathy, reason and human rights
7. Humanists respect people's right to hold their own beliefs; however they are opposed to human rights being violated which can happen in some societies, some of which may be governed by religious law.

Key people who have influenced Humanist views

- **Charles Darwin** left an eternal legacy in his work on evolution which explains the way that living things have developed and changed over time.
- Some of **Einstein's** views match those of a Humanist. He believed that all individuals have:
 - **Agency:** Everyone can make their own decisions which will influence what happens to them.
 - **Conscious Perception:** Everyone has a unique way of seeing things and by paying attention to detail individuals can learn, create memories and make decisions.
 - **Ethical Responsibility:** Everyone and everything is connected and so we have a responsibility to be kind, not just to our friends, but to all people and animals.
- **Alice Roberts** is a modern-day example, who has been an important advocate (someone who speaks up for) Humanists UK.

Previous questions studied

