



UNDERSTANDING HUMANISM
Resources for Education

What do humanists value?

Admiring symbolic buildings and natural beauty



How could you represent these words in a building?

Words connected with things humanists value

One life	Happiness	Friendship
Community	Humanity	Progress
Empathy	Science	The arts
Creativity	Freedom	Optimism
Curiosity	Evidence	Reason
Uncertainty	Democracy	Human rights
Social justice	Equality	The natural world
Human talents and capabilities	Human achievements	Making our lives meaningful

What might a humanist building look like?

How might it represent things that humanists value?

What might it have in common with and how might it differ from religious buildings such as a church, mosque, synagogue, or temple?

Some questions to think about:

- 1) Should a humanist building hug the Earth or reach for the stars?
- 2) Should a humanist building focus more on humanity or the natural world?
- 3) Should a humanist building reflect individual freedom or our connections with other humans?
- 4) Should a humanist building fit with the surroundings or stand in contrast to them? Does it depend on what the surroundings are (e.g. urban or natural)?

Humanist buildings?



Canada Water Library

Rooted in the ground but opening up to ambitious possibilities?



Telford Crematorium

The glass wall in the main assembly room allows mourners to gaze out at the surrounding natural landscape, to take comfort from it, and to feel at one with it.



Designs for a humanist retreat

Hannah Flory, Chris Gaunt, and John Cox, University of Liverpool

Design a humanist building

Design and draw a blueprint of a humanist building.

It must feature at least five features that represent things humanists value

It could be a school, a library, a crematorium, or something else.

Consider...

- a) Location: Where would it be?
- b) Exterior: What would the outside look like? What is the relationship between the inside and the outside? Should the exterior say something about the purpose of the building? How should the building be accessed?
- c) Interior: How would the rooms be organised inside and how might they be decorated?
- d) Other features: What else would there be inside and outside the building? Would there be any words, images, or symbols?
- e) Activities: What would the building be used for?