

EXPLORING SECULARISM THEME 1 (CORE PRINCIPLES)

This is a reference document for searching resources by the key questions. For example if a teacher is planning a question that asks “What is secularism?” they can look up resources which may be useful and find a secularist perspective. Alternatively you can:

- [Match these questions to subject areas](#)
- [A secularist perspective on these questions](#)

KEY QUESTION	RESOURCES	SUBJECT AREAS	SECULARIST PERSPECTIVE
What is secularism?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.01 What is secularism? (Part 1) – Presentation • 1.02 What is secularism? (Part 2) – Introduction • 1.03 Viewpoints on religion and secularism (part 1) – Religion and me • 1.04 Viewpoints on religion and secularism (part 2) – Religion and others • 1.15 Different types of secularism (part 3) – The Secular Charter • 1.19 Glossary 	<p>Main</p> <p>Politics Religion and belief education</p> <p>Other</p> <p>Citizenship SMSC Philosophy</p>	<p>Secularism refers to a range of different ideas and practices which seek to balance freedom of (and from) religion with other rights. In its broadest sense secularism is the idea that religious beliefs and identities should not be privileged or discriminated against. From this the sociologist of secularism and religion Jean Baubérot argues that three key principles emerge...</p> <p>For the rest of a secularist perspective on this key question see Exploring Secularism: A guide for teachers, page 4, column 1</p>
Is secularism a religion?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.01 What is secularism? (Part 1) – Presentation • 1.02 What is secularism? (Part 2) – Introduction 	<p>Main</p> <p>Politics Religion and belief education</p> <p>Other</p> <p>Citizenship SMSC Philosophy</p>	<p>No. Secularism is an approach to religion and to issues where religion interacts with the rights of others. It involves no theological or supernatural claims and has no holy books, priesthood or commandments. Secularism is consistent with a variety of religious, non-religious and irreligious traditions. As an analogy, feminism is an approach to gender...</p> <p>For the rest of a secularist perspective on this key question see Exploring Secularism: A guide for teachers, page 4, column 2</p>

<p>Is secularism a form of atheism, agnosticism or humanism?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.01 What is secularism? (Part 1) – Presentation • 1.02 What is secularism? (Part 2) – Introduction • 1.19 Glossary 	<p>Main</p> <p>Religion and belief education</p> <p>Other</p> <p>Politics</p>	<p>No. Many people who identify as atheist or humanist are also secularists, although secularism does not require someone to accept atheism or humanism...</p> <p>For the rest of a secularist perspective on this key question see Exploring Secularism: A guide for teachers, page 4, column 2</p>
<p>Who is a secularist?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.03 Viewpoints on religion and secularism (part 1) – Religion and me • 1.04 Viewpoints on religion and secularism (part 2) – Religion and others • 1.18 Why secularism? (Part 2) – Viewpoints 	<p>Main</p> <p>Politics Religion and belief education</p> <p>Other</p> <p>Citizenship SMSC Philosophy</p>	<p>In a sense most people are at least somewhat secularist, in that few people support outright theocracy (rule by a religious class or by religious dogma) and most people place at least some importance on freedom of and from religion. Despite disagreements, most people at least broadly accept that “because my religion says so” isn’t a good enough reason ...</p> <p>For the rest of a secularist perspective on this key question see Exploring Secularism: A guide for teachers, page 5, column 1</p>
<p>How do secularists think about religion?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.01 What is secularism? (Part 1) – Presentation • 1.03 Viewpoints on religion and secularism (part 1) – Religion and me • 1.15 Different types of secularism (part 3) – The Secular Charter 	<p>Main</p> <p>Religion and belief education</p> <p>Other</p> <p>Politics Citizenship SMSC Philosophy</p>	<p>Secularists hold a range of views on religion. They may hold a positive or negative view of religion in general, or of specific religions. Secularists are generally very aware of the potential for religion to be manipulated as a force for harm, and are sceptical of unchecked religious power. Secularists view religious decisions as personal – meaning freedom of religious belief is seen as absolute...</p> <p>For the rest of a secularist perspective on this key question see Exploring Secularism: A guide for teachers, page 5, column 1</p>

<p>How do secularists think about decisions?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.01 What is secularism? (Part 1) – Presentation • 1.04 Viewpoints on religion and secularism (part 2) – Religion and others • 1.05 Viewpoints on religion and secularism (part 3) – Obama, Abraham and Isaac • 1.06 How do secularists think about decisions? (Part 1) – Public reason giving • 1.07 How do secularists think about decisions? (Part 2) – The Lemon test • 1.08 How do secularists think about decisions? (Part 3) – You’re the town council • 1.10 Religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination (part 2) – What are they? 	<p>Main</p> <p>Politics Religion and belief education Citizenship</p> <p>Other</p> <p>SMSC Philosophy</p>	<p>Secularists draw a distinction between decisions which affect the individual, which most believe only need to be justified in terms of their own moral code, preferences or worldview – and decisions which affect the rights of others, which they believe must be justified in terms of rational, shared principles. This manifests itself most clearly in terms of religion, as secularism was a reaction to religious rule and inter-religious conflict. Secularists do not believe religious claims are sufficient justification to make rules which...</p> <p>For the rest of a secularist perspective on this key question see Exploring Secularism: A guide for teachers, page 5, column 1</p>
<p>Why do people support or oppose secularism?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.05 Viewpoints on religion and secularism (part 3) – Obama, Abraham and Isaac • 1.12 Religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination (part 4) – The paradox of tolerance • 1.13 Different types of secularism (part 1) – Berlinerblau’s “six types” • 1.14 Different types of secularism (part 2) – Secularism around the world • 1.17 Why secularism? (Part 1) – Competing concepts • 1.18 Why secularism? (Part 2) – Viewpoints 	<p>Main</p> <p>Politics Religion and belief education</p> <p>Other</p> <p>Citizenship SMSC Philosophy</p>	<p>Arguments for and against secularism are diverse; they might be either principled or practical. Proponents of secularism view it as the best guarantor of religious freedom and the best means to foster a fair and open society, in which people of all religions and none can live together as equal citizens. Generally people oppose secularism because they believe there are good reasons to privilege religion, they do not recognise religious privilege or they think secularism unfairly restricts religion.</p> <p>Through exploring different viewpoints both for and against secularism, these resources help students to make up their own mind.</p> <p>For the rest of a secularist perspective on this key question see Exploring Secularism: A guide for teachers, page 5, column 2</p>

<p>Where does secularism come from?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.14 Different types of secularism (part 2) – Secularism around the world • 1.16 Where does secularism come from? • 1.18 Why secularism? (Part 2) – Viewpoints 	<p>Main</p> <p>Religion and belief education</p> <p>Other</p> <p>Philosophy History</p>	<p>This is a controversial question. All major religious traditions (as well as non-religious philosophical traditions such as humanism) have their own history of secularist thought. People in most societies have had thoughts about the role or appropriate sphere of authority of either god(s)...</p> <p>For the rest of a secularist perspective on this key question see Exploring Secularism: A guide for teachers, page 5, column 2</p>
<p>What different types of secularism are there?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.13 Different types of secularism (part 1) – Berlinerblau’s “six types” • 1.14 Different types of secularism (part 2) – Secularism around the world • 1.15 Different types of secularism (part 3) – The Secular Charter 	<p>Main</p> <p>Politics Citizenship</p> <p>Other</p> <p>Geography Religion and belief education</p>	<p>There are many different approaches to secularism and they can be characterised in different ways. Some approaches focus more on either freedom of or freedom from religion, some have different ideas about what spheres of...</p> <p>For the rest of a secularist perspective on this key question see Exploring Secularism: A guide for teachers, page 5, column 2</p>
<p>What are religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.06 How do secularists think about decisions? (Part 1) – Public reason giving • 1.08 How do secularists think about decisions? (Part 3) – You’re the town council • 1.09 Religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination (part 1) – Basic principles • 1.10 Religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination (part 2) – What are they? • 1.11 Religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination (part 3) – How do we address them? • 1.12 Religious privilege, tolerance and discrimination (part 4) – The paradox of tolerance • 1.19 Glossary 	<p>Main</p> <p>Politics Religion and belief education Citizenship</p> <p>Other</p> <p>SMSC Philosophy Fundamental British Values</p>	<p>Privilege, tolerance and discrimination are key concepts within sociology and social justice. They are also key to secularism, and to arguments for or against a secularist approach.</p> <p>Privilege describes the benefits and advantages held by one group relative to another, which are the result of power dynamics.</p> <p>Privileged groups often view the imposition of their values as natural or normal. Because religious privilege is so normalised, many people have difficulty...</p> <p>For the rest of a secularist perspective on this key question see Exploring Secularism: A guide for teachers, page 5, column 2</p>