

# Humanism essay example

[Parts of the World](#), [Europe](#)



Humanism refers to learning and teaching approach that places emphasis on human values, interest and concerns. It can also be defined as a philosophy of thought that is predominated by human interest. It began in Italy in the fourteenth century and lasted through up to seventieth century. On the other hand, scholasticism refers to middle age teaching and learning approach that relied heavily on the teachings and philosophies of medieval philosophers which include St. Augustine and Aristotle. This approach focused on use of reasoning in finding answers to theological questions and debates. It was grounded on the beliefs that there exist universal truths which cannot be explained through human experiences.

There were two forms of humanism witnessed during the renaissance age. These were Italian or southern humanism and northern humanism. Italian humanism came before northern humanism. Consequently, northern humanism borrowed many characteristics from Italian humanism. However, there were distinct differences in the focus of Italian and northern humanism. Italian humanism was more preoccupied with the establishment of secular values than religious values of the church. It was characterized by rejection of religious doctrines and forms of thinking. On the contrary, northern humanism was religious. It focused on entrenchment of spirituality and true Christian values.

Protestant reformation was majorly fuelled by northern humanists. The main focus of northern humanism was to reform the church and rid it off the perceived hypocrisy and unresponsiveness. Consequently, the quest of northern humanists was religious in nature. They wanted a society that reflected the teachings of the New Testament and founding religious leaders.

Its proponents emphasized on the reconciliation of Christianity and humanism which provoked the clamor for church reformation. Humanist such as Erasmus published works that criticized the church through writings which were popular with many Northern Europeans. His work together with the work of other humanist such as Thomas Moore led to the formation of protestant movements that were opposed to how the church was run.

Apart from northern humanism, there are many other factors that led to church reformation in the sixteenth century. These included political and philosophical factors. On political front, there was growing preference of state over church powers. Consequently, the influence of pope was diminishing in many European countries. Some leaders saw this as opportunity to install themselves as both religious and state heads. For instance, King Henry made himself the leader of Church of England to remove the church influence over his personal life. Again, the philosophy of individualism was growing in Europe. It meant that Christians had to read bible and interpret it by themselves rather than church leaders.

Consequently, they became more enlightened about biblical teachings. The church reformation succeeded in many countries such Germany, England, Norway, Switzerland and Denmark. These countries installed their own religious system with the backing of their leaders.

The role of protestant reformation in the establishment of development of capitalism was first investigated by German sociologist, Max Weber.

Although his findings were rejected by some historians, Weber produced enough evidence linking protestant reformation values and free economy characteristics. Protestant reformist taught about the virtues of hard work

and advantages of future gratification. The doctrine of Calvinism emphasized on individualism, self discipline, savings, reinvestments and honesty. These attributes laid ground for establishment of capitalism or free market economy in the 19th Century.

Before reformation the church controlled the politics of Europe. The pope had influence over the entire Roman Empire and ruled through bishops. After reformation the church power reduced significantly in countries such as England, Denmark, Switzerland, Germany, and Holland. Power was secularized and ‘divine monarchs’ were replaced with political leaders. The church officials became subordinates of state officials and the new structure of state was established in the countries that rejected church’s rules. The new states began to focus on growth and competition. These countries emerged as economic powerhouses driving the growth of Europe. These are referred to as Western European countries.