

## Excerpts of student responses regarding Humanity: Spring 2016

“One such quality is the the tendency to question of niche in the universe. Humans inherently toy with the ideas of existence asking why we are here and how we got there...In the humanity of questioning existence there is a second human quality that comes when a person “finds an answer” to these questions: People believe they are right. The righteousness of humanity, violence and war, religion and science, political allegiance and secularism.”

“Humanity is feeling. It is emotion, raw and intense. Being able to feel so strongly, so passionately, so unapologetically. Humanity is connection. Connection to your self, to the world, and to other people. I have grown up in a generation that prides itself on its ability to be closed off and cold. All too often you are chastised for “catching feelings” or becoming too involved.”

“Secondly, the idea that humans have a thirst for knowledge is part of what makes us human. If you had no motivation to work, or your mind didn’t force you to wonder about things outside of your current knowledge, our world would never change... We don’t simply accept answers, we search to uncover them for ourselves, and that’s essential to what makes humans human.”

“When I think about humanity, I think about all the different people of this world. There are major differences between all of us. The color of our skin, the language we speak, the way we are brought up and privileges that separate us are just some of those differences. There are many ways to describe humanity. Humanity is obviously different from other existing creatures in this world. But two of those major differences that come to mind are race and culture...humans have a say in race and culture...the society a person is raised in, which is composed of people like them, created a mold for culture and race.”

“In order to be human you have gender and sex...Many of us think gender and sex are the same thing, but they are not. Gender is not being a man or woman. It’s about the roles you play in life.. Most woman, for example like to cook and clean while the man would want to work a lot. Just because you are born a girl or boy does not mean you can’t switch gender roles.”

“A quality that stands out to me when I think of humanity if value. Every person has some sort of value or belief.”

“Another trait specific to being human is an awareness of time, this...is what gives humans a sense of urgency and mindset to do things.”

“In today’s society, culture can be described as virtually anything. From popular fashion trends, to the latest music hits, culture can virtually be anything that unites a particular society together. This is vital in showing what it means to be human because it shows the immense diversity our

species can have. Depending on what country, region, or city you've grown up in, your own idea of culture can be different from other people."

"Humanity is the most dominant of species of all on earth. Humanity is known to be the caretaker of the earth because it is the only species intelligent enough to do so."

"What would the human race be without innovation? If he had no internet, no cable, no cell phones, no source of communication? All those resources contribute to who we are today...both the little children and the elderly cannot survive without technology. These resources have shaped the human race. All of this came from our special innovative qualities."

"Humans are the only species that [has] as formulated language to express any emotion..."

"A lack of humanity can be clearly found when we go against this basic principle of equality and treat one another poorly. Neglect, harm, and hatred are examples of emotions and behaviors we exhibit as humans that violate the meaning of humanity."

"From my perspective there are a couple of things that stand out as key factors that differentiate ourselves from non-human animals, and those things are the ability to lead an ecosystem and to progress over time...It is our ability to rationalize and make sense of the world around us that puts us on top..."

"I think love and fear are two are two features that set us apart from the mammals. I do admit that other animals may experience fear and love but I believe these two verbs mean so much more to human beings than they do animals. To animals fear is fight or flight. To humans fear is the difference between taking chance or playing it safe. Love to animals is scientific and primal, but to humans love is a complex, layered thing. You can love your best friend a different way than your mother, your mother a different way than your husband."

"The capacity to stretch our minds beyond the understanding of ourselves is the fabric of human beings. Our curiosity...pushes [us] forward. It is intertwined in our DNA to ask "why?" "what?" "where?", and "when?"

"I would define humanity as careless. We do not think about how we influence each other and what we do to the planet and how that will impact the next generation...most people are superficial and selfish. However, I have witness[ed] selfless acts as well."

"...two of humanities key qualities is the existence of selflessness and a gray area in the concept of decision making. Not every person is selfless, in fact, most aren't, but the idea that as a species we're able to put aside our selfish nature and perform acts of kindness for no gain of our own makes us human. It goes against our selfish nature brought by the eat or be eaten period of humanity...other animals decisions are very black or white, our ability to recognize, understand, and in some cases act our a gray area solution is a key to us being human."

“...what makes something or someone human is the complexity of thought, the way in which we as humans increase our own complexity is by seeing from alternate perspectives, to communicate with others and weight their ideas and experiences next to our own.”

“To be human...involves the Seven Deadly Sins that only humans possess...[and] our instinctive need to know how and why things work. (pride, greed, gluttony, envy, lust, wrath, sloth)

“By having the ability to think critically humans are able to overcome problems in day-to-day life by engaging with others to share their experiences or by solving their problems themselves.”

“What it means to be human is that you engage in society by bringing forth some kind of intent to either better it or contribute to it...One quality...is that you need to be making some kind of income...proof of humanity is the simple fact of written language.”

“A major quality of being human is the ability to learn collectively and expand on ideas and ideology...other creatures...do not pass knowledge throughout decades or keep records of their discoveries”

List other ideas below that either expand upon or challenge the info we have generated so far.