Here are 9 reasons why humanities matter. What’s your number 10?

Did you know that over two-thirds of humanities majors get jobs in the private sector? Did you know that almost 60% of U.S. CEOs have degrees in the humanities? Did you know that the humanities receive less than 0.5% of federal research money in the U.S. and only about 1% in Europe?

I didn’t know these things either until I saw the list of winners of the 2013 Digital Humanities Awards and had a good look at an infographic called The Humanities Matter!
There’s research on the impact of the humanities; there’s evidence demonstrating how studying the humanities benefits society, employers and individuals.

I’ll list here nine arguments that the humanities are important. While you read them, try to think of what you would fill in as number 10.

1. The humanities help us understand others through their languages, histories and cultures.
2. They foster social justice and equality.
3. And they reveal how people have tried to make moral, spiritual and intellectual sense of the world.
4. The humanities teach empathy.
5. They teach us to deal critically and logically with subjective, complex, imperfect information.
6. And they teach us to weigh evidence skeptically and consider more than one side of every question.
7. Humanities students build skills in writing and critical reading.
8. The humanities encourage us to think creatively. They teach us to reason about being human and to ask questions about our world.
9. The humanities develop informed and critical citizens. Without the humanities, democracy could not flourish.

I believe these claims and I know they are based on solid research. I see much more, too. For example, I
think that innovations based on research results in the natural sciences and medicine are more likely to be successful if their implementation is carried out in collaboration with humanists.

But for now, let me just say one more thing. The arguments in the list above are quotes. They come from an exciting infographic put together by some creative researchers working in a whole new field called Digital Humanities.

And that leads me to my 10th reason: If it weren’t for the humanities, we couldn’t have the digital humanities!

What’s your best reason for thinking the humanities are important? If you have one you like, send me a tweet or put it in a comment below, and if I get enough, I’ll include it in a new blog post!

While you’re thinking about that, enjoy a much cooler presentation of the nine reasons the humanities matter — along with many more important numbers, too.

The infographic you see below was made by Melissa Terras, Ernesto Priego, Alan Liu, Geoff Rockwell, Stéfan Sinclair, Christine Hensler, and Lindsay Thomas over at 4humanities.org. Enjoy!
The Humanities are academic disciplines that seek to understand and interpret the human experience, from individuals to entire cultures, engaging in the discovery, preservation, and communication of the past and present record to enable a deeper understanding of contemporary society. The Humanities encompass literature, classics, ancient and modern languages, history, philosophy, media studies, the fine and performing arts, and other related subjects. It can be a challenge to show the benefits the Humanities bring; in this infographic, we gather available evidence to show the Humanities matter!

Presented by 4Humanities and UCL Centre for Digital Humanities

**WHAT THE HUMANITIES DO**

*The Humanities are about what it is to be human.*

- They foster social justice and equality
- They teach empathy
- They teach us to weigh evidence skeptically, and consider more than one side of every question
- The Humanities encourage us to think creatively. They teach us to reason about being human and to ask questions about our world
- The Humanities develop informed and critical citizens. Without the Humanities, democracy will not flourish
- The value of the Humanities is more often in the questions posed than in the answers given

Understanding others in the world through their:

- LANGUAGES
- HISTORIES
- & CULTURES

Humanities students build skills in:

- writing
- critical reading
Humanistic study is not formulaic.

One only needs to turn on the news to see that we need the skills and knowledge of the humanities in:

understanding other cultures,
being able to communicate effectively,
realising the ramifications of history, and
analysing human behaviour.

The Humanities are more important to global society than ever.

THE CRITICS SAY...

Critics accuse the Humanities of lacking cultural or economic relevance.

They say the Humanities have no purpose.

They say our academic work is inaccessible to the public.

They say that Humanities students are not immediately employable.

They say in times of economic recession resources should not be spent on the study of the human condition.

They say the Humanities are in crisis.

BUT THE EVIDENCE SHOWS...

A 2012 survey of 652 U.S. born Chief Executive Officers and Heads of Product Engineering showed almost 60% had degrees in the Humanities.

A study of 100 FTSE companies' CEOs showed that 34% had a Science and Technology background.

31% had a Science and Technology background.
In 2011, of the 650 UK Members of Parliament

- 5% had a vocational degree
- 10% had a scientific qualification
- 65% had an Arts, Humanities or Social Science degree
- 20% unknown

It has been estimated that the economic importance of UK universities amounts to £45bn.

The total annual economic benefit to the UK from non-UK Arts and Humanities students is approximately £2.7 billion per year.

Over two thirds of Humanities and Social Science graduates enter the private sector, primarily the financial and business sectors, followed by wholesaling and retailing.

These sectors represent some of the fastest growing areas within the economy.

On average, Humanities graduates have a comparable employment rate to graduates with other degrees.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>2006 Canadian Census</th>
<th>Employment Rate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Employment</td>
<td>94.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History graduates</td>
<td>94.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of graduates in Theology and Religious Studies</td>
<td>96.4%</td>
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In 2008 – the year the recession hit – those who were employed in Canada were:

- 95% of Engineering graduates
- 91% of Humanities and Social Science graduates
- 94% of Health Workers
- 90% of those with only a high-school diploma
- 94% of Graduates of fine and applied arts programs
- 84.1% of those with only “some” high school
Skills of Humanities students are in demand from employers:

- 89% want effective oral and written communication
- 81% want critical thinking and analytical reasoning
- 75% want employees to analyze and solve complex problems
- 75% wanted employees to connect choices to ethical decisions.

Despite these benefits, in the USA in 2010, just 0.45% of federal research money went to the Humanities.

Between 2007 and 2013, European Commission Funding to the Social Sciences and Humanities was just 1.06% of their total research budget of £55.51 bn.

CULTURE IS IMPORTANT...

- 76% of people think their lives are richer for having the opportunity to visit or view the historic environment.
- 88% of people believe that it is important in creating jobs and boosting the economy.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Every year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55%</td>
<td>of people read works of fiction, including novels, plays and short stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>buy a novel, play or poetry for themselves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25%</td>
<td>read biographies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>read poetry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4%</td>
<td>write poetry</td>
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We need to understand the role culture plays in people’s lives: this is the role of the Humanities.
My interest in moving universities towards balance encompasses gender equality, the communication of scientific results, promoting research-based education and leadership development more generally. Read more

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