



THE WEEK AHEAD

RAMADAN MUBARAK!

THAT means 'happy' or 'blessed Ramadan', by the way. Muslims everywhere are going without food and drink from sunrise to sundown (known as fasting) during Ramadan. It ends in June with the holy festival of Eid al-Fitr (pronounced eed al feeter), which means 'the festival of the breaking of the fast'. But what else does Ramadan involve? And why is it so important to Muslims?

Unlike the calendar used in the West (the Gregorian calendar), which bases dates around the sun, Ramadan is set by the Islamic calendar, which bases its months around the movement of the moon. Ramadan changes dates each year, since the Islamic calendar is 11 days shorter than the Gregorian one.

Ramadan is always the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, as that was the month when the Qur'an (or Koran, the holy book for Muslims) is said to have been first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad.

Muslims live their lives based around the Five Pillars of Islam, one of which is fasting. The other pillars are faith, prayer, charity and making the pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca.

Fasting is said to bring Muslims closer to Allah (God), although not everyone has to do it. If you're young, old, poorly, pregnant or not feeling healthy enough to do it, then you should miss it.

Those who are fasting will often have a meal (known as the suhoor) just before dawn, and another (known as the iftar) directly after sunset.

At the end of the fast, when the sun has gone down, families and friends will get together for iftar to break their fast. A popular food choice for the iftar is dried dates as they're high in energy, although more recently the drink Vimto has become popular, too!



RAMADAN
15 MAY – 14 JUNE

RAMADAN FAQs

Can you brush your teeth during a fast?

While a very small number of Muslim scholars aren't sure, it's almost universally considered to be fine – as long as you're not eating the whole tube! Some Muslims will instead chew a miswak, which is a type of tooth-brushing twig.

Can you eat in front of someone who's fasting?

Eating in front of someone who is fasting is okay, and generally this won't bother Muslims. However, it's polite to ask before you chow down, as watching someone eat is pretty rough when you've not had a thing for hours!

How do you know when it's sunrise/sunset?

Times are posted outside mosques, and you can Google it, too. You'll have to be careful, though, as eating anything just one minute too early or too late will break the fast.

What if you accidentally eat/drink something in the middle of the day?

As long as it was completely accidental, it's all okay!

Questions on 'The Week Ahead: RAMADAN MUBARAK!'



GLOSSARY

Ramadan Mubarak – A greeting commonly used during Ramadan. Mubarak means 'blessed', so saying this to another person wishes them a 'Blessed Ramadan'.

Gregorian calendar – The most commonly-used civil calendar in the world. It is based around the sun and divides the time it takes the Earth to orbit the sun into 365.25 days.

Eid al-Fitr – An important Muslim holiday that marks the end of Ramadan.

Islamic calendar – A calendar used by Muslims to determine the proper days of Islamic holidays and rituals. It is based on the monthly cycles of the shape of the sunlit portion of the moon.

1. Find the facts:

The religion whose followers observe Ramadan	
The date that Ramadan started this year	
The holy festival marking the end of Ramadan	
The date the holy festival will start this year	
Length of Ramadan	_____ month/s

2. What do Muslims around the world do during Ramadan?

3. What is the purpose of fasting during Ramadan?

4a. Why does Ramadan take place in the ninth month of the Islamic calendar?

4b. Why does the date of Ramadan change every year?

5a. Which Muslims don't have to fast during Ramadan?

5b. Why do you think this is?

6. What is **suhoor** and what is **iftar**?

Suhoor	
Iftar	

7. Why are dried dates and the drink Vimto popular choices for iftar?

8. Why is it very important to know the exact times of sunrise and sunset during Ramadan?

9. Why has the journalist used 'Ramadan Mubarak!' as the headline for the article?

10. What do you think are the challenging aspects of observing Ramadan and what do you think are the benefits? If you are a Muslim and observe Ramadan yourself, you could include your personal experience here, if you wish.

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Extension Activities

A) RESEARCH TASK

Sunrise to sunset fasting times Fasting during Ramadan is very important to followers of Islam, as it is one of the five pillars of their faith. Muslims will fast for a whole month from 15 May – 14 June this year. The fast takes place every day from sunrise to sunset. Investigate sunrise and sunset times at these six capital cities around the world at this time of year, and calculate the daily fasting time in each country.

<p>London, UK Time of sunrise: __: __ Time of sunset: __: __ Day length (fasting time): _____</p>	<p>New Delhi, India Time of sunrise: __: __ Time of sunset: __: __ Day length (fasting time): _____</p>	<p>Jakarta, Indonesia Time of sunrise: __: __ Time of sunset: __: __ Day length (fasting time): _____</p>
<p>Ankara, Turkey Time of sunrise: __: __ Time of sunset: __: __ Day length (fasting time): _____</p>		
<p>Jeddah, Saudi Arabia Time of sunrise: __: __ Time of sunset: __: __ Day length (fasting time): _____</p>		
<p>Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Time of sunrise: __: __ Time of sunset: __: __ Day length (fasting time): _____</p>		

B) WRITING TASK

Ramadan diary entry Imagine you are a young adult and have completed your first ever day fasting during Ramadan. You woke up before sunrise to eat breakfast with your family, then had your normal busy day, but didn't eat again until sunset.

Write a diary entry describing your day and your feelings. If you are a Muslim and observe Ramadan yourself, you could include your personal experience here, if you wish.

Teacher Answers

AIM OF THE NEWS COMPREHENSIONS: News reports are unique non-fiction texts. Being real, they naturally engage students, and with the range of topics that are covered, help to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the wider world outside the classroom. The reports are ideal for short, focused comprehension or discussion activities. Along with the opportunity to find fascinating facts and appreciate the opinions of those involved, there is plenty to be inferred and deduced to understand in more depth what is being reported. Like authors, journalists play with language, so news 'stories' are rich nuggets of text to investigate and provide the opportunity for literacy programmes.

TEACHER ANSWER GUIDE: The teacher answers are intended to provide a guide to the reading skill each question is practising. Suggestions are given for a starting point for responses that students would be expected to give at the start of KS3. Further suggestions then give fuller, more developed responses that students will work towards by the end of KS3, in preparation for the non-fiction elements of GCSE English language.

LOOK AT 'THE WEEK AHEAD: RAMADAN MUBARAK!'

1. Find the facts:

READING SKILL – Find and explain information

(NC 2a)

Expected response:

The religion whose followers observe Ramadan – Islam

The date that Ramadan started this year – 15 May

The holy festival marking the end of Ramadan – Eid al-Fitr

The date the holy festival will start this year – 14 June

Length of Ramadan – One month

2. What do Muslims around the world do during Ramadan?

READING SKILL – Find and explain information

(NC 2a)

Starting point:

They fast.

Development:

They fast from sunrise to sunset.

3. What is the purpose of fasting during Ramadan?

READING SKILL – Find and explain information

(NC 2a)

Expected response:

- Muslims believe that fasting brings them closer to Allah.

4a. Why does Ramadan take place in the ninth month of the Islamic calendar?

READING SKILL – Find and explain information

(NC 2a)

Starting point:

- Because Muslims believe it is the month that the Prophet Muhammad first revealed the Qur'an.

Development:

- The Qur'an is the central religious text in Islam. Muslims believe it to be the words of Allah as revealed by the Prophet Muhammad. The month that this text is thought to have been revealed is a very significant holy time for Muslims. As a result, fasting during Ramadan provides an opportunity for them to feel closer to Allah at this holy time.

4b. Why does the date of Ramadan change every year?

READING SKILL – Find and explain information

(NC 2a)

Starting point:

- Because it is based on the Islamic calendar, which is shorter than the Gregorian calendar.

Development:

- The Islamic calendar is 11 days shorter than the Gregorian calendar because it is a lunar calendar, not a solar calendar. As Ramadan is based on the Islamic calendar, it falls on a different day on the Gregorian calendar each year.

5a. Which Muslims don't have to fast during Ramadan?

READING SKILL – Find and explain information

(NC 2a)

Expected response:

- Young people, elderly people, the sick and the pregnant.

5b. Why do you think this is?

READING SKILL – Infer information based on own knowledge

(NC 6, 7 & 8)

Example response:

- In Islam necessity is more important than restriction. So, people are only expected to undertake fasting if they are fit enough to do so. Fasting could be dangerous for someone who is already sick, so it is necessary for them to eat. Therefore the sick individual does not have to restrict themselves.

6. What is suhoor and what is iftar?

READING SKILL – Find and explain information

(NC 2a)

Expected response:

- suhoor – The meal eaten before dawn during Ramadan
- iftar – The meal eaten after sunset during Ramadan.

7. Why are dried dates and the drink Vimto popular choices for iftar?

READING SKILL – Infer information and justify with evidence from text

(NC 2c & 8)

Starting point:

- Because they are high in energy.

Development:

- This quick dose of energy helps to revive Muslims who have been fasting all day.

8. Why is it very important to know the exact times of sunrise and sunset during Ramadan?

READING SKILL – Find and explain information

(NC 2a)

Starting point:

- So that Muslims know when to fast.

Development:

- Because eating a minute too late in the morning or too early in the night breaks the fast.

8. Why has the journalist used 'Ramadan Mubarak' as the headline for the article?

READING SKILL – Recognise effects of language choices

(NC 2f & 3)

Starting point:

- 'Ramadan Mubarak' is a saying commonly used by Muslims during Ramadan. The journalist used this as the headline to introduce the reader to the central topic of the article – Ramadan.

Development

- Furthermore, because 'Ramadan Mubarak' is a greeting, it works well as a headline for the article, effectively welcoming the reader to the piece and encouraging them to read on.

10. What do you think are the challenging aspects of observing Ramadan and what do you think are the benefits?**If you are a Muslim and observe Ramadan yourself, you could include your personal experience here, if you wish.**

READING SKILL – Develop personal ideas from reading news stories

(NC 6, 7 & 8)

Example response:

- I think it must be very challenging to go all day without eating – you must get very hungry and weak if you are not used to eating very little all day. However, I think a benefit of this must be that you prove to yourself that you can show self-control and also demonstrate your piety and commitment to Islam.