

Name: _____

Date: _____

Islam

About 1.5 billion people practice Islam. Islam is an Arabic word that means “surrender to God.” Believers in Islam are called Muslims, or “those who surrender.” Muslims adhere to the teaching of Mohammad, who Muslims believe was the last of a series of holy prophets that included Abraham, Moses, and Jesus.

Mohammad lived about AD600 in what we now call Saudi Arabia. Mohammad was a merchant by trade, but often he visited a cave to think. According to Islamic tradition, an angel began to appear in the cave. The angel presented Mohammad with a series of messages. When Mohammad told people about the messages, he became well known in his area. Eventually, Mohammad's followers collected the messages and gathered them into a book known as the Quran. The Quran is the holy book of Islam. The Quran has been translated into many languages, but many Muslims believe that the only true version of the Quran is written in Arabic. This is why the Arabic language spread throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Often non-Arab Muslims will learn Arabic as a second language.

The Islamic house of worship is a mosque. Muslims gather in mosques on Friday afternoon for prayers. The prayers are often led by an Imam. An Imam is an Islamic cleric.

The Five Pillars of Islam are the duties faithful Muslims must practice. They are the statement of faith (shahada), daily prayers (salat), fasting (sawm), charity (zakat), and pilgrimage (hajj).

- **Shahada** is the statement of faith. It states that “there is no God but Allah and Mohammad is his messenger. Allah is the Arabic word for God.
- **Salat** are daily prayers. To Muslims every day is holy. Faithful Muslims will stop whatever they are doing and bow down to pray five times every day.
- **Sawm** decrees that faithful Muslims fast between

dawn and dusk during the holy month of Ramadan. To fast means to abstain from eating. Ramadan is sacred because it is the month in which the Quran was revealed to Mohammad. Muslims use a lunar calendar, so Ramadan falls at different times each year.

- **Zakat** requires Muslims who are capable to share a portion of their wealth with others.
- **Hajj** is the requirement that faithful Muslims with the financial means should visit Mecca sometime during their life.

Mecca is a holy city to Muslims because it is the site of the Kaaba, a small shrine that Muslims believe to be the most sacred spot on earth. Muslims orient themselves toward the Kaaba during their daily prayers. Every Muslim who makes the pilgrimage to Mecca walks around the Kaaba seven times. Islamic tradition states that a part of the Kaaba was originally white, but it became black by absorbing the sins of the millions of pilgrims who have kissed and touched it.

The two primary branches of Islam are Sunni and Shia. The branches formed after the death of Mohammad about a disagreement over who should become caliph. The caliph is the leader of the faith. 85% of Muslims belong to the Sunni branch of Islam. The Shia comprise the majority of the population of Iran southern Iraq, Bahrian and Azerbaijan and include a substantial minority of the population in several Muslim nations.

Sharia is an Arabic term that means path. It is the path that faithful Muslims believe they must follow. The Sharia is based on the teaching of the Quran and the collected sayings of Mohammad. In addition to religious practice, Sharia law advises Muslims on morality, economics, hygiene and diet. There has been a movement in many Muslim nations to replace civil laws with Sharia, but Saudi Arabia and Iran are the only nations that closely adhere to Sharia law.

Answer in complete sentences

*1. What does “Islam” mean? Why are believers in Islam called Muslims?

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Fill in the Blanks

Islam means “s__r__e__d__r to G__.” Believers in Islam are called M__s__i__s. Muslims believe that an a__g__l visited an *A__b prophet named M__h__m__ad about AD610. A p__o__h__t is a messenger from God. Mohammad’s followers collected the angel’s m__s__a__es and gathered them into a book they called the Q__r__n. Today, the Quran is the h_____ book of Islam

Muslims practice the "Five P__l__a__s of Islam. The *Shahada* is the d__c__a__a__i__n of f__i__h that “there is only one G_____ and M__h__m__ad is his m__s__e__g__r The *Salat* the S__c__nd Pillar of I__l__m. It is the requirement that believers pray f_____ times every day to *Allah. *Zakat* is the Third Pillar of Islam. *Zakat* requires Muslims to give d__n__t__o__s to the p_____. Many Muslims contribute at least 2.5% of the income to *c__a__i__y. The Fourth Pillar of Islam *Sawm*, requires that Muslims fast, or refrain from e__t__ng or d__i__k__ng during the holy month of R__m__d__n. Ramadan is the month when Muslims believe the Q__r__n was r__v__a__ed to M__h__m__ad The Fifth Pillar of Islam is the *Hajj*, or p__l__r__m__ge. Every Muslim with the financial r__s__u__c__s should attempt to visit the h_____ city of Mecca at least once in their l__f__t__me.

Mecca is the site of the Kaaba, a small s__r__ne that Muslims believe is the most s__c__ed spot on earth. Muslims face the K__a__a during their daily p__a__e__s. Muslims also walk around the Kaaba s__v__n times when they make the H_____ to M__c__a.

Answer in complete sentences

*2. Why do Muslims honor Mohammad?

*3. Explain how faith in Islam made Arabic a world language.

*4. What is the Kaaba? Why do Muslims orient themselves toward the Kaaba when they pray?

*5. What is the Sharia?

*Higher order question, any reasonable answer will be accepted.

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