

ISLAM IN THE WORLD KS4

THE MOSQUE

BAITUL FUTUH MOSQUE, CROYDON

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

1) Baitul Futuh Mosque, Croydon

This mosque in Croydon is the main mosque for Ahmadiyya in the UK. The phrase 'Baitul Futuh' means 'house of victories' in Arabic. The mosque was completed in 2003 at a cost of £15 million. This money was raised entirely by the Ahmadi community. The building can house around 4,000 people. It extends below ground to maximise space.

Baitul Futuh is also the mosque for the local Ahmadiyya population. As well as prayer and community activities, the mosque organises support for those struggling with homelessness locally and other charitable work, as well as hosting schools groups, other faiths, journalists and anyone who wants to learn about the Ahmadi community.

In 2013 the mosque hosted the UK's largest Eid celebration, with 15,000 people attending.

Watch clips of the mosque from the Channel 4 series, 'Britain's Largest Mosque':

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xD-ABXrK_ak

The whole complex includes the mosque itself and an administrative block. The mosque has a silver dome of stainless steel and a 35m minaret. Inside the mosque, the dome is covered in hand-painted calligraphy from the Qur'an. There are two huge prayer spaces. The exterior walls of the mosque are marble tiles.

The administrative centre includes offices, an Islamic book shop, a library and gallery, a media space for recording videos and radio broadcasts, halls for different community purposes, a kitchen a dining hall, guest rooms and wash-rooms.

2) Who are the Ahmadiyya?

The Ahmadiyya have been declared as 'non-Muslim' by mainstream Sunni countries, such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Algeria and Saudi Arabia. However the Ahmadi community describe themselves as an 'Islamic revival movement', meaning a movement within Islam that wants to refresh the religion to support and inspire a whole new generation of people around the world. There are two Ahmadi groups around the world, but we will focus on the largest group whose headquarters is the Baitul Futuh Mosque in Croydon, referred to here as the Ahmadiyya.

Ahmadiyya started in the Punjab region of North India in the late 19th Century. The founder was a man called **Mirza Gulam Ahmad**. He was a religious teacher who travelled widely in the Punjab region and gained a wide following. He taught that Islam was the best way for society to live in a just and ethical way, and encouraged people to live as Muslims. He was very popular, although he also made enemies, because he taught some aspects which are at odds with majority Islamic beliefs.

The majority group of Ahmadiyyas, or people who follow Ahmad, see him as a minor prophet. The word used in Arabic for a prophet is *nabi*. The Ahmadiyya believe that Ahmad was sent from God with a new interpretation of the Qur'an. Ahmad did not receive a new holy book from God. There have been many prophets in Islamic belief (the Qur'an states there have been 24,000). Most of these receive guidance from God as how to support humans in living a good life, these are the *nabi*. A select few receive a holy book from God, and these are the 'messengers' or *rasul*. Muhammad is a *rasul* because he received the Qur'an. Crucially, in Islam he is also seen as the 'last messenger'. After Muhammad there will be no more holy books. The Ahmadiyya view Ahmad as a *nabi* but not a *rasul*.

The smaller group of Ahmadiyya do not make this claim, seeing Ahmad as the Renewer of his age. This is based on a tradition that a Renewer will be sent to revive Islam every century. These became called the Lahori Ahmadiyya and are now few in number. The larger group of Ahmadiyya can be called the Qadiani Ahmadiyya because Ahmad came from Qadian in North India, but this is often used as a negative term by those who disagree with the idea that Ahmad could be a prophet.

The Khalifa (steward) of the Qadiani Ahmadiyya lives in Southfields, Wimbledon. They are a persecuted community in Pakistan and many Islamic countries. Persecution in Pakistan lead previous Khalifa to seek refuge in Britain, where their headquarters is the Baitul Futuh Mosque. This group apply four titles to Ahmad: the Messiah, a *nabi*, the Mahdi and Jesus resurrected. These are explained below.

In the Baitul Futuh mosque are photographs of Ahmad in several locations labelled 'The Promised Messiah'. The Messiah, as in Judaism and Christianity, is the saviour sent from God. The Ahmadiyya describe Ahmad as the Messiah. The implication is that those who refuse to acknowledge and follow Ahmad as the Messiah are in error, a view which is highly contentious to other Muslim groups.

The second title used is that of *Nabi* or Minor Prophet. The Ahmadi claim is that the 'Seal of the Prophets' title used of Muhammad in the Qur'an refers to his being the bearer of the last Message. However a later *Nabi* could be sent with a new interpretation of the Last Message. Mainstream, Islamic belief is that Muhammad was the last of any kind of prophet. This is the claim on which the Ahmadiyya are usually attacked. However for the Ahmadiyya, as for all Muslims, Muhammad is a central and beloved figure. They do not see Ahmad as superior to Muhammad.

A third title used about Ahmad is that is the 'Mahdi' ('the guided' in Arabic). The Mahdi is a figure who will appear near the end of the world to fight evil and injustice. Over the centuries there have been many claimants to being the Mahdi from both Shi'a and Sunni groups. For the Ahmadiyya, the Mahdi and Messiah are the same figure- the figure who comes as a saviour towards the end of time, to fight for justice.

Finally, Ahmad is described as 'Jesus Resurrected'. Mainstream Islamic belief holds that Jesus (the prophet known as Isa in Arabic), was taken, alive, from the cross by God and spirited away to heaven. Isa/ Jesus will return towards the end of time. Seeing Ahmad as Jesus Resurrected reflects a different belief. Ahmadiyya believe that Jesus was not crucified, but travelled to India and eventually died of natural causes. The Ahmadiyya in Srinagar care for his grave. Therefore the Ahmad who taught in the 19th Century is a resurrected form of Jesus.

With thanks to Dr Chris Hewer for this information, www.chrishewer.org

3) Imam Sabah

Imam Sabah Ahmedi is one of the UK's youngest imams, and an imam at this mosque.

Here is a clip of Imam Sabah Ahmedi: <https://youtu.be/qJKswAN9Gcw>

Find out more about Imam Sabah: [About Me \(theyoungimam.com\)](http://About Me (theyoungimam.com))

4) Persecution of the Ahmadiyya

This is a summary of the ways Ahmadiyya are persecuted around the world. They have been subjected to violence and rejection since the group emerged in the late 19th Century.

Pakistan Has declared Ahmadiyya to be non-Muslim in law. Ahmadiyya do not have legal rights in Pakistan. 100s were killed in 1953 and 1974 during riots. In 2010 Ahmadiyya mosques were attacked in a massacre that left 84 dead.	Algeria In 2016 the Ahmadiyya were refused permission to register as a religion. A mosque was raided and shut down. Ahmadis were arrested and publicly called heretics and a threat to society. In 2017 they were declared non-Muslim.	Saudi Arabia In 2006- 7 Saudi Arabi tracked down and deported 60 Ahmadi foreign workers. They are banned from entering the country and performing the Hajj. In 2012 the government arrested two Ahmadiyya citizens. They are still in jail, accused of abandoning Islam.
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Afghanistan The Ahmadiyya have always been persecuted in Afghanistan, some were imprisoned and some executed. Since 1942 association with Ahmadiyya has been a capital offence. No Ahmadiyya remain in Afghanistan today (or not publicly).	Bangladesh Ahmadi are subject to violence. They are described as unbelievers. Some have been killed. In 2003 a mosque was occupied. In 2004 Ahmadi publications were banned. In 2019 Ahmadiyya in Bangladesh were attacked by Islamic state.	The UK In 2016, Ashad Shah (Ahmadi) was killed by Tanveer Ahmed (Sunni) in Scotland. In 2016 leaflets calling for death to Ahmadis were found in a London mosque. In 2009 Muslims in Walsall protested against an Ahmadi mosque opening.
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BAITUL FUTUH MOSQUE, CROYDON

TEACHING IDEAS

- Read about the physical features of the Baitul Futuh mosque. Find out about features all mosques have (a minaret, a dome, a prayer hall, wash rooms)- is the Ahmadiyya mosque any different?
- Read about the other work conducted in the building- such as the bookshop, library, kitchen, etc. Are students surprised that so much other activities go on in the mosque? It is not just for prayer.
- Create a factfile for the Baitul Futuh mosque to explore its particular context. Students complete a poster or leaflet answering these points: who, where, when, what?
- Make a Venn diagram to show the beliefs that Ahmadiyya share with majority Islamic groups (Sunni and Shi'a). Show what beliefs only the Ahmadiyya hold. To help students make this comparison, use this resource setting out the Ahmadiyya main articles of faith: <https://www.ahmadiyya-islam.org/islam/six-main-articles-of-faith/> Compare to the 5 Roots of Faith (Shi'a) and the 6 articles of faith (Sunni).
- Return to the Baitul Futuh mosque- how different is it to other mosques in the world? Is it the same or are there any differences in an Ahmadiyya mosque?
- Look at the information about persecution of the Ahmadiyya around the world. What seem to be the patterns of persecution? Students could highlight any of these features: declaring Ahmadiyya non-Muslim, refusing the Ahmadiyya religious freedom, violence, scapegoating, exile, intolerance.
- If you want more countries which persecute the Ahmadiyya (the list is long), use this Wikipedia link: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Persecution_of_Ahmadis#:~:text=The%20Second%20Amendment%20to%20the,the%201974%20Anti%2DAhmadiyya%20riots.
- You could align these countries with a world map.
- Can students think of any other groups who have experienced this sort of treatment? For example the Jews in Nazi Germany were treated in this way. Students will know of others. Reflect on the way human communities seem to treat those perceived as outsiders or different. Ask students to think about where they think this tendency comes from.
- Watch clips about Imam Sabah. Better still, visit the mosque and meet him! Does Imam Sabah ever talk about the persecution his people experience? What do students think about his general upbeat and friendly tone? What do they think his aim is? Do they think he is brave to become a public figure when his group is subject to violence overseas and in the UK?

2: AL- AZHAR MOSQUE, SOUTH SHIELDS

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

This concerns the visit of the world-famous African American boxer Muhammad Ali to a small mosque in South Shields, North East England, in 1977. Muhammad Ali visited the town of South Shields in 1977 to have his marriage blessed in the mosque there. The Al-Azhar Mosque serves the Yemeni community of South Shields, who had settled in the area around the First World War to work for the Merchant Navy. In the lessons on jihad you will find further information and teaching resources about Muhammad Ali.

A short documentary details this moment, showing footage of Ali and his wife in South Shields and the pride of the local Yemeni community to welcome this dazzling figure to their mosque. You can buy a documentary about this visit created by photographer and artist Tina Ghavari. The price on Vimeo is £10.
<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1357160/> (watch the trailer on IMDB for free)
<http://bridgeandtunnelproductions.com/product/the-king-of-south-shields/> (production company website, Bridge and Tunnel Productions, selling the full documentary).

Below are You Tube clips to find out more about the visit [if any links are broken, search online for 'Muhammad Ali South Shields mosque']

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a9GRRiSFnaw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HsYzK9EEXjs>

AL- AZHAR MOSQUE, SOUTH SHIELDS

TEACHING IDEAS

- Look at images online of the Al- Azhar mosque today. This is a large building which has been built as the Yemeni community has grown since they arrived in the UK from the late 1800s.
- Find out about Yemen, a country at the tip of the Arabian peninsula, opposite East Africa. Look at images of the landscape and towns. Talk about how different it must have been for the Yemenis who first settled in the UK in the 19th Century.
- Muhammad Ali won the World Heavyweight Boxing title in 1964 and became a global figure. By 1977 he was admired as an incredible athlete, and an African American Muslim. His early life was hard. Born black in the Southern USA, where segregation was still legal, Ali (then known as Cassius Clay) had to survive racism, exclusion and violence. The Yemeni community of South Shields, on the North East coast of England, would also face racism and exclusion. Talk about how Yemeni- heritage Muslims from South shields would have felt to see Muhammad Ali welcomed to their mosque.
- Watch the trailer for the Bridge and Tunnel documentary, 'The King of South Shields'. What questions are raised for students? List these and try to answer them, researching online if necessary. If you decide to buy the full documentary, you might find many of students' questions answered.
- Create a fact-file of the Yemenis of South Shields using this article:
<https://www.chroniclelive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/history-south-shields-yemeni-community-9678954> (if this link is broken, search online for 'Last of the Dictionary Men' and 'Layla al- Sayadi'. This is an exhibition and a Yemeni-heritage UK woman who preserve historical evidence of the South Shields community).
- Create a welcome invitation to everyone in South Shields to come and meet Muhammad Ali at the mosque.

WOMENS' DRESS

1: IRANIAN HIJAB PROTEST

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

On 27th December 2017 a young woman called Vida Mohaved stood on a street in Tehran, Iran, holding her hijab, a length of white cloth, away from her, on a stick. The street corner she stood on is called Enghelab Street, or Revolution street in English. Mohaved became known as 'the girl from Enghelad Street'. She was arrested and imprisoned for a month. She held a second protest, on October 28th 2018. This time she was arrested and jailed for a year, on the charge of corruption and prostitution for refusing to wear her hijab.

Iran has been ruled by a religious Shi'a establishment since the Islamic revolution in 1979. Iran's official title is the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Supreme Leader is Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, a religious leader and also the supreme political leader. He makes decisions on matters of the economy, education, defence, and so on that must be compatible with Islamic law. The ruling council of law-makers are all Islamic legal scholars. Since the revolution all women must cover all hair and skin in public, apart from the hands and face. This means a compulsory hijab. Women without their hijabs in public risk beatings or arrest by the 'morality police'.

In September 2022 a young woman called Mahsa Amini was arrested for 'bad hijab', some of her hair was visible under her headscarf. She died in the police station, reportedly from being beaten. This sparked waves of grief, rage and protest around the country. Crowds of men and women chanted 'women, life, freedom'.

Data cited by the Tony Blair Institute shows wide opposition to the compulsory hijab.

- 78% of Iranians aged 20 and 29 do not support it
- 68% of Iranians aged 30 and 49 do not support it
- 74% of Iranians aged over 50 do not support it

Reference to full article: <https://institute.global/policy/protests-and-polling-insights-streets-iran-how-removal-hijab-became-symbol-regime-change>

In fact, the compulsory hijab has always been unpopular. On 8th March 1979, weeks after the Islamic revolution, 100,000 women protested against the compulsory hijab. Since 2014 resistance has increased. From 2017 women in Iran have taken part in 'White Wednesdays'. They post images of themselves under this hashtag either wearing white as a symbol of protest, or not wearing their headscarf. Since 2017 women have also removed their hijabs in public, risking violence and arrest. By law a woman can be sentenced to up to 15 years in prison, as well as receive whipping and fines as punishments for not wearing or incorrectly wearing (with a strand of hair showing) the hijab.

More information in this BBC article: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-40218711>

Men also join hijab protests and support women's freedom to choose what to wear. When women tear off and burn their hijabs in the streets, men have surrounded them to make sure they are protected. Young men have started wearing hijab, sometimes accompanying bare-headed female friends and relatives. This is a way to subvert a rule that only applies to women. Men report the hijab is uncomfortable and inconvenient, and wearing it all day makes them understand it as a form of control.

You can find more information about Iranian men's support of women in this BBC blog:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/blogs-trending-34404030>

2: PROUD TO WEAR THE HIJAB

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

These notes are taken from an article, 'I proudly wear a hijab, Forget the stereotypes - it's a sign of style and strength' by Rubina Khan, published in the Guardian, 01.02.2023

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2023/feb/01/i-proudly-wear-a-hijab-forget-the-stereotypes-its-a-sign-of-style-and-strength>

Rubina Khan lives in London, she is a writer and works to empower women and girls. She says she is proud to wear the hijab, and sees it as a symbol of women's strength and style.

Did you know 1st Feb is World Hijab Day? It was founded by Nazma Khan in the USA in 2013. Today 190 countries take part in publicly celebrating the hijab. However many Islamophobic attacks in the West seem to involve the hijab. A 2019 research paper from Nottingham Trent University reports an increase on attacks on women wearing the hijab. The charity 'TellMama', which supports British Muslims with Islamophobia, reports that in 2018 85% of Islamophobic attacks were related to the hijab. This means women and girls wearing hijab are shouted at, attacked or their veil removed in public in the UK.

Boris Johnson has described hijabi-wearing women as 'bank robbers' and 'letterboxes'. Both the Netherlands and Switzerland have burqa bans, where women cannot wear Islamic dress in public. These are examples of a

negativity surrounding Islamic female dress in Western nations. However there are also moves towards a more inclusive society, for example, both British Airways and the Met police have developed hijabi-friendly uniforms for their female Muslim workers. Halima Aden, a US model who wears the hijab, is presenting an image of positivity and pride to other hijabi women and girls in the Western world.

This True Tube video contains lots of information about the hijab, including different interpretations of the hijab and the duties of Muslim men to dress and behave modestly: <https://www.truetube.co.uk/resource/hijab-me/>

IRANIAN HIJAB PROTEST

TEACHING IDEAS

- Start by showing pictures of Iranian women burning their hijabs in public, or removing them and holding them out in public. Ask students to brainstorm what they think is happening here.
- Search for hashtags 'white Wednesdays' and 'my stealthy freedom'; to see up-to-date images and words. Can students decode what these women (and men) are saying with their actions?
- Find out about Vida Movahed, or the 'girl from Enghelab Street'. Why is her action so challenging? The name of the street is 'Revolution street' in English, do the class think Vida Mohaved is engaging in her own form of revolution?
- Why is the street called 'Revolution Street'? Teach that in 1979 Iranians toppled their Shah, or king, in favour of Islamic rule. Find some images from this time online. Ever since then the country has been ruled by a Shi'a religious establishment, meaning the country is run according to Shi'a Islamic principles. The theocratic government insists women wear headscarfs. If they go out on public without them they run the risk of being savagely beaten by the 'morality police'. Summarise the revolution that Enghelab Street commemorates.
- List all the ways women in Iran are showing their objections to the compulsory hijab. Which of these actions seem radical and revolutionary, which seem quite mild to students? Discuss how even small actions taken against an oppressive power form can require huge courage, and attract increased oppression
- The Iranian- American writer and analyst Karim Sajdapour tweeted '**The essence of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 15 seconds. "Although the 1979 revolution in Iran is often called an Islamic revolution, it can actually be said to be a revolution of men against women". Nobel Laureate Shirin Ebadi.**' (Tweeted on September 20th, 2022). Break this Tweet down. Karim Sajdapour is quoting Shirin Ebadi, who is an Iranian lawyer and human rights activist who founded a Human Rights Centre in Iran. Discuss what Ebadi is saying. The video accompanying Sajdapour's Tweet shows 'morality police' viciously beating women on the street- this might not be appropriate for your class so be warned. Ebadi is passionately proud of her country and wants to develop towards greater freedom and fairness within an Iranian context, as Iranians, and true to Islam. She sees the Islamic Republic as distorting Islam, especially with regards to women. Discuss Ebadi's position: she does not want to abandon Islam or a distinctive Iranian identity on the road to freedom. She wants a better Iran.
- Define 'Allyship'. Could Karim Sajdapour's tweet be an example of allyship? find other examples of men's allyship to women in the examples and information given. Do the class think that to achieve greater rights and freedoms for women will require men to also fight for this?
- How can Western governments show allyship to the women of Iran?
- Women in Iran are also not allowed to dance or sing in public. They cannot travel abroad or obtain a passport without the permission of a male 'guardian'. In court a woman's testimony is worth half that of a man's, they lose custody of their children if they divorce and are not allowed into football stadiums. Do the class agree that this is a 'revolution of men against women' as Shirin Ebadi describes it? Brainstorm the benefits for a male-dominated society in keeping women in an inferior, controlled position. Can the class make sense of this tendency? Why has male domination of women in all societies on earth perpetuated?

PROUD TO WEAR THE HIJAB

TEACHING IDEAS

- The title of Rubina Khan's article is 'forget the stereotypes'- what are the stereotypes?

- Search online or social media for ‘~World Hijab Day’- what sort of images and words can you find? How is the hijab presented?
- Show images of European women who cover their heads- hats, nuns, bakers and people with other jobs. Women in churches have traditionally covered their heads. Discuss if the hijab is different.
- look up images of Halima Aden- do students agree she looks strong and stylish in hijab?
- look up images of British Airways and Met uniform with hijabs. What does this tell us about the hijab in UK society?
- Find out about the hijab and its roots in Islam. Is it in fact compulsory? Does the Qur’an say anything about the hijab, or is it a traditional Islamic cultural expectation? Use the True Tube video ‘Hijab and Me’ (linked above). Ask groups to make a fact file about the hijab. Show what is Qur’anic, and what is cultural or personal interpretation.
- Collect reasons why women do choose to wear their hijabs using the True Tube video and article summary
- Compare these reasons why women choose to wear the headscarf, to the Iranian women who do not want to. Are they different reasons? Are the reasons both about choice?
- Compare the Iranian government’s enforced hijab to the Islamophobia Muslim women in the West face around the hijab. Can students find any connections between these forms of power? Are they both based on assumptions about women and what they should do? Are they different forms of power, one pro-Islam and one anti-Islam?
- Imagine a conversation between a Western person who does not like seeing women wearing the hijab in the street, and an Iranian government worker who believes women’s hijabs should be enforced. What are their arguments based on?

JIHAD

The materials given below are to extend and deepen thinking about jihad. Here is basic information about jihad from the BBC Bitesize website. Reference: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zj626yc/revision/8>

Jihad

Jihad means to strive or struggle. It has two meanings for Muslims. It is both a struggle for faith and a struggle against evil.

Greater jihad

Greater jihad is the personal, inner struggle to be a good Muslim and to improve spiritually. It is a constant duty and is seen as an act of worship.

Greater jihad involves striving to:

- follow the Five Pillars
- forgive others
- work for social justice
- Study the Qur’an
- help those in need
- avoid negative traits, for example greed and laziness
- avoid temptations such as alcohol

The following quote shows that greater jihad is a personal struggle, and that a believer is individually responsible for being a good Muslim: *‘No bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another.’* (Qur’an 35:18)

Lesser jihad

Lesser jihad is about defending Islam from threat. While the majority of Muslims see their religion as one of peace, sometimes Muslims have found it necessary to take up arms against enemies when they or other Muslims

have been persecuted. The Qur'an says: *'Permission [to fight] has been given to those who are being fought, because they were wronged. And indeed, Allah is competent to give them victory.'* (Qur'an 22: 39)

While the Qur'an allows violence to defend Islam, it warns against going beyond the limits of what is necessary for this defence: Fight in the way of Allah those who fight against you but do not transgress. Indeed, Allah does not like transgressors. (Qur'an 2:190)

Any form of war must be approved by a religious leader, fought in self-defence, and not used to either convert people to Islam or gain land.

Strict rules exist about how lesser jihad can be carried out. For instance:

1. It must be in defence of Allah.
2. No harm must be done.
3. Peace must be restored.
4. Mercy must be shown.

Islam teaches that lesser jihad can never be used to justify terrorist attacks.

Jihad for Muslims in Britain

Muslims in Britain are members of a minority religion, so there may be more challenges for them in terms of greater jihad than there are for Muslims living in countries where most people are Muslims. For instance, it may be difficult to pray five times each day around other activities such as school, sports clubs and other commitments. It may also be tricky to resist food during Ramadan when everyone else is enjoying their lunch.

In addition, some people may have been misled by media stories referring to jihad in terms of terrorist acts. This means that Muslims in Britain may face prejudice based on misunderstandings of what jihad means.

1: CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION **INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS**

Students explore Muhammad Ali's refusal to fight in the Vietnam war and then consider if it can be defined as jihad. The year was 1967. Ali had been drafted into fighting in the Vietnam war. He was by then a famous and successful boxer. He refused to fight on the basis of his Muslim faith. He saw the war as an act of racially-motivated aggression. He stated:

'It has been said that I have two alternatives, either go to jail or go to the army. But I would like to say there is another alternative. And that alternative is justice.

All information, lesson plans and resources can be found as part of the 'Islam as a Worldview' project:

<https://www.reonline.org.uk/resources/islam-as-a-worldview-muhammad-ali/>

Start with the document titled 'Muhammad Ali lesson plan' and scroll down to lesson 3, 'Muhammad Ali the Conscientious Objector' (p. 6). There you will find information. The separate PPTs and resources are all found on the link. They are clearly numbered and labelled.

CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION **TEACHING IDEAS**

Once you have explored Muhammad Ali's refusal to fight in Vietnam, and the impact this had on his career, these teaching ideas link Ali's conscientious objection to jihad.

- List reasons for Ali's refusal to fight. Does he mention any Islamic beliefs or teachings?
- Compare Ali's reasons for refusing to fight to when warfare meets the terms of jihad. Is there overlap? Is Ali refusing to fight in the Vietnam war because it does not meet the principles of jihad?

- Do the conditions of jihad permit any modern war? In groups, consider a different conflict. For example: the current Syrian civil war, Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the UK and US's invasion of Afghanistan after 9/11.
- Discuss whether all Muslims should refuse to fight in a war that is not jihad.
- Return to the Iranian women's hijab protest information. Using the definition, discuss if these women are engaged in jihad.

2: ISLAMOPHOBIA

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Students will find out some information and data about Islamophobia in the UK, and then explore whether standing up to Islamophobia could be jihad for Muslims.

a) How are Muslims Represented in the Media?

This is a way in to talk about Islamophobia in the UK. The Muslim Council of Britain (MCB) has a 'Centre for Media Monitoring' to monitor how British media outlets are talking about Islam and Muslims. Data from a recent report shows how the UK media constructs Islam in largely negative ways. The information below gives details.

b) What is Islamophobia and where does it come from?

After finding out about how the modern British media represents Islam and Muslims, students can further explore a history of Islamophobia in Europe, to investigate the ancient roots of this modern form of discrimination. This information is found below in a reproduction of two pages from: *Contemporary Moral Issues* (2002) by Joe Jenkins, pp. 78- 79

Representations of Muslims and Islam in the British Media

In a 320-page report for the Centre for Media Monitoring at the Muslim Council of Britain, Faisal Hanif explores British Media's Coverage of Muslims and Islam (2018–2020).

The research involved daily monitoring, between October 2018 and September 2019, of 34 British media websites and 38 television channels using keyword searches, leading to the identification of 47,818 articles and 5,512 broadcast clips referring to Muslims and/or Islam.

The articles and clips were then compared to **five metrics** to determine whether they were positive or negative in nature. These are the metrics (meaning measurements):

1. Association with negative aspects or behaviour
2. Misrepresentation of Muslim belief, behaviour or identity
3. Generalisations about Muslim belief or behaviour
4. Lack of due prominence to a Muslim voice, identity or perspective
5. Misleading or irrelevant imagery or headlines

Findings

- 59% of the articles were found to incorporate negative references to Muslims or Islam
- 21% were judged antagonistic and 14% biased
- 60% of online media articles and 47% of TV news associate Muslims or Islam with negative behaviours
- 1 in 5 articles about Muslims or Islam had a focus on terrorism
- Local news sources are less likely to be biased or negative, national are more likely
- Right-wing, anti-Muslim statements go unchallenged

In his conclusion, Hanif argues that 'a large section of the media still favours voices that echo colonial era tropes which see Muslims as dangerous fanatics, terrorists and misogynists whilst giving preference to voices which regurgitate these tropes.'

The report concludes with the proposal that Muslims should not receive any special treatment at the hands of the media. Rather journalists should depict Muslims consistently as for other social groups.

Media comments

Emma Tucker Editor, The Sunday Times

'I welcome this report - in the full knowledge that it contains criticisms of the press, my own paper included. Some of those criticisms are valid.

Anyone who takes note of the bylines on our articles will be aware that the days of newspapers being produced exclusively by men of white British heritage are already over. We still have a way to go but increasingly, the people making the decisions in the newsroom are a more accurate reflection of the public they serve.'

'In December 2019, the outgoing chair of the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO) said: 'I speak for myself, but I have a suspicion that [Muslims] are from time to time written about in a way that [newspapers] would simply not write about Jews or Roman Catholics'. This, coupled with studies by Cambridge University and Leicester University which respectively concluded that mainstream media's reporting about Muslims is contributing to an atmosphere of rising hostility towards Muslims and fuelling hate crime in Britain, is sufficient evidence to acknowledge that there is a problem that needs addressing.'

Report author, Faisal Hanif

Alison Phillips Editor-in-Chief, The Mirror

'This report by the Centre for Media Monitoring shows how much we as journalists must question ourselves and the work we are producing in relation to reporting of Muslims and Islam.

Chasing clicks by being deliberately antagonistic and provocative does our profession a disservice. It is possible to craft an argument without resorting to lazy stereotypes or exploiting ungrounded fears about a particular community. A sensitivity towards others does not diminish your journalistic skills or somehow undermine the sacred idea of objectivity - it can only enhance the quality of your work. Everyone who works in the media has a duty to ensure the content they create is fair and responsible.'

38 Social harmony:

ISLAMOPHOBIA

'And they ill-treated them (Believers) for no other reason except that they believed in Allah.'

Qur'an, Surah 85–8

Islamophobia – a definition

Today, the West has coined a new phrase *Islamophobia* to describe an old phenomenon – the hatred of Islam and Muslims. This gives the impression that either it is a recent problem or that Muslims are to blame for generating the fear of Islam that Islamophobia implies. Islamophobia, however, existed even when there were no Muslims living in Europe. The history of Europe has been shaped by its interaction with Islam, its misrepresentation and prejudices about Islam and indeed, its wars against Islam.



KEY IDEA

To understand a prejudice you need to go to its roots.

Power struggle

Christianity was the major power in much of the world until Islam burst onto the scene. As Islam spread, reactions appeared from both Christians living under Muslim rule and outside it. Christianity feared a loss of its followers to Islam and felt a need to respond.

Christian spin

The response from Christianity was a military one. The *Crusades* (1095–1291) were brutal

wars fought against Muslims. But even before the *Crusades*, the distortion of Islam by some Christian writers had begun by false propaganda and misrepresentation. This prepared the European masses for a 'holy war'.

The West's current image of Islam is rooted in early themes developed by Christian writers and artists. These have survived to become popular stereotypes.

The media as it was then, in the form of Christian writers, focused their attack on the character of the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh). The Qur'an and the facts about the Prophet's life were distorted. If the Prophet's character could be destroyed, the Qur'an would be proved a forgery. Thus the revelations of the Qur'an are described as 'epileptic fits' of a man 'possessed by demons'.

Books about Muhammad (pbuh) were given titles like *Demoniacus* to reinforce this message. In most works he is described as a robber, adulterer, a murderer, who schemed himself into power and spread it through violence. Elsewhere, he is described as Satan or the Antichrist. This early tendency continued and found its way into popular medieval literature. One scene from Dante's *Inferno* sums up early European attitudes to Islam; in his 'vision', Dante is walking through the circles of Hell. Muhammad (pbuh) is placed in the circle next to Satan.

Attacks on Muslim morality

The Christian Churches could only accept their own view of marriage – one partner for life. Muslim views were deliberately distorted from verses in the Qur'an and the number of wives permitted was exaggerated. The general argument was that Islam permitted sin and could therefore not be a 'Godly religion'.

Today, similar themes have been re-worked. Islam is now criticized for its lack of flexibility on sin. Islam is 'harsh' on adulterers and has 'primitive' attitudes to sex before marriage and homosexuality. Islam 'oppresses' women, and 'forces' them to wear hijab (see Unit 57). Islamic punishment of criminals is 'savage'. Muslims are 'fanatics' or 'fundamentalists' intent on destroying Western civilization.



▲ 'Muslims have been demonised and attacked in Britain for 30 years'

Treason?

Christians who negotiated with Muslim rulers in the past, in England, were suspected and accused of treason. Contacts with Muslims and Jews were not allowed. Christians were forbidden to work in Muslim and Jewish households. Muslims and Jews could not hold any position of public authority. They also had to wear distinct clothing so that they didn't mix. They were forced to accept missionaries to be converted to Christianity.

The Religions of the Book

The truth is that Islam has much in common with Christianity and Judaism and indeed comes from the very same roots in the Tenakh. They are called 'the Religions of the Book'. Judaism, Christianity and Islam all look back to the Prophet Abraham (c. 1800 BCE) as their founder, and Islam reveres Moses and Jesus as prophets of God. Muhammad (pbuh) taught a return to the pure **monotheism** – the belief in only one God – originally taught by Abraham.

The problem arises over the recognition by Jews and Christians of Muhammad (pbuh) as a prophet of God. Islam teaches that Allah (God) communicates with humankind through a series of divinely guided messengers. Muslims believe that all nations and peoples have their own prophets and that Muhammad (pbuh) was the last messenger sent by God to the Arabs. But Jews and Christians do not accept that Muhammad (pbuh) was the last prophet and the Jews do not accept that Jesus was a genuine messenger of God either.

So in some sort of idiot 'Punch and Judy show', Jews, Christians and Muslims fight each other over nobody-remembers-what, each cycle of violence and killing storing up hatred and the desire for revenge, until the whole nightmare cycle starts up once again.

FOR DISCUSSION

'Muslims have been demonized, shunned, misunderstood and attacked in America and Britain for 30 years. White people have never really wanted to live near us. We haven't been "cool" in the way Afro-Caribbeans have. They say it's a tolerant society, but I don't want tolerance; that just means putting up with something, often reluctantly. I'd rather you learnt about Islam. The problem is that most of Britain doesn't understand Islam.'

Aki Nawaz, head of Nation Records and the man behind the band *Fundamental*

ISLAMOPHOBIA

TEACHING IDEAS

- Start by showing students the MCB's Centre for Media Monitoring website: <https://mcb.org.uk/initiatives/media-monitoring/>. Have a look at some of their Tweets (@MuslimCouncil). Ask students to suggest why the **Muslim Council of Britain** needs to put time and money into having a **centre for media monitoring**. Make sense of these words and phrases.
- Read about Faisal Hanif's report. Make sure students know what data was gathered and how. What does the data tell us about how Muslims and Islam are represented in the British media?
- Ask the class to say whether they think representations of Muslims in the media is better than they thought, about what they expected, or worse than they thought
- Ask students to find and highlight information in the report that; (a) surprises them, (b) does not surprise them, (c) makes them worried, (d) gives them hope. Explain why.
- Read the Joe Jenkins pages about the history of Islamophobia. Make notes on where Joe Jenkins suggests Islamophobia comes from.
- Watch this Business Insider clip about the spread of Islam: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AvFl6UBZLv4>
- Display this quote from the author (not the actor) Tom Holland. By the mid 8th Century CE (the 700s): '...the lands that for centuries had constituted the great wellsprings of the Christian faith: Syria and Palestine, Egypt and Africa... the Mediterranean was now a Saracen [Arab] sea. Its waters were perilous for Christians to sail. The world was cut in half. An age was at an end' (Tom Holland, *Dominion*, 2020, p. 227).
- Discuss if the European/ Christian antagonism towards Islam was originally about influence and power.
- Identify the ways the medieval Christian writers demeaned and denigrated Islam, Muhammad, Muslims, etc. Make a list (if this is not too upsetting for Muslim students).
- Ask the class if they can see any of these themes in the modern media, based on Faisal Hanif's report.
- Discuss: *is fighting Islamophobia jihad for Muslims today?* Give information from this lesson to answer the question.
- Watch Suhaiymah Manzoor- Khan's poem: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G9Sz2BQdMF8>
- Discuss: *Is Suhaiymah Manzoor- Khan doing jihad?*

PRAYER

PRAYER AS UNIVERSAL

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Two scholars of Islam below comment on the universal nature of Islam. However Islam is lived by Muslims all over the world at a local level, through language, culture, customs and tradition. How far can Islam be said to offer a unifying experience, and how far is it a localised phenomenon? We will explore this question through the example of Islamic prayer.

'An Arab friend of mine tells the story of her engagement to her South Asian future husband. The prospective fathers- in- law, who had never met, had to speak to each other by means of an international phone call to formalize the matter. Neither spoke the other's native language, both spoke some English- but not especially well- and neither was familiar with the other's culture. The Arab gentleman was a self-declared agnostic, while the South Asian practiced a semi- observant sort of traditional piety of the variety I once heard characterised by the expression, 'he says his prayers just often enough to keep his wife happy!' Needless to say, given this state of mutual foreignness, my friend was more than a little apprehensive as to how the conversation would unfold. 'what

happened?’ she asked her father as soon as it was over, ‘Did you understand each other?’ ‘Of course we understood each other,’ he replied, ‘We are both Muslims’.

Shahab Ahmed, *What is Islam?*, 2017, p.4

In this quote Daniel W. Brown is talking about prayer in the mosque. He notes, *‘What goes on once the worshipper enters the sacred space and joins other worshippers for prayer is remarkably uniform... believers face the same direction, toward Mecca, they recite the same passages of the Qur'an that generations of Muslims have recited, and they follow a prescribed pattern of movements and prostrations that have remained uniform for centuries. The ritual prayer, in other words, is a universal aspect of Muslim experience, even for those Muslims who may have abandoned it. It is a ritual that any Muslim, whether Sunni or Shi'ite, whether from the tenth century or the twenty-first, will immediately find familiar not just in broad outlines but in specific details’*

Daniel W Brown, *A New Introduction to Islam*, 2009. P. 12- 13

Croydon Mosque and Islamic Centre

Every mosque in the world will have its own story. This is the story of the Croydon Mosque and Islamic Centre. Originally the Muslim community in Croydon were Indian-heritage people who had settled in East Africa before moving to the UK, as well as Pakistani and Indian people. Now the Croydon Muslim community also contains people originally from Somalia, Turkey, Afghanistan, the Middle East and Bosnia.

In the mid- 1960s, Muslims in Croydon gathered in the basement of a house to pray. This street underwent development and the Muslim community moved in 1970. They moved to their current premises in 1978, and this building is now called the Croydon Mosque and Islamic centre.

The building contains a prayer hall, the mosque, and also lots of space for community activities, such as a madrassah, a youth club, meetings and celebrations.

The first imam was an Indian-born scholar called Maulana (a title) Yusuf Ismail Patel. The mosque is aligned with the Deobandi movement within Islam, a Sunni group which originated in India and is popular in Pakistan, Bangladesh, India and Afghanistan today.

Members of the Croydon community who had lived in Kenya requested a *qari*- someone who can recite the Qur'an according to the proper requirements. This is now a feature of the mosque.

Shah Abdullah of Saudi Arabia donated £100,000 to the mosque, the community itself has donated and raised £100,000 so far for a wide range of rebuilding work, including a women's centre.

References: <https://www.croydonmosque.com/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Croydon_Mosque

Shi'a Prayer Times

Prayer for Suni Muslims must happen over the day at 5 stages: Fajr (before dawn), Zuhr (afternoon), Asr (late afternoon), Maghrib (after sunset) and Isha (night time). Shi'a Muslims are able to combine the Zuhr and Asr prayers, and if necessary, combine the Maghrib and Isha prayers as well. Shi'a groups accept that humans should pray 5 times a day, as based on Qur'anic teaching. They consider that combining prayers meets the requirement to pray 5 times, as each prayer is still made separately.

In Islamic mythology, Muhammad ascended to heaven and was informed by God that Muslims should perform *salat* (prayer) 5 times a day. This is called Muhammad's Night Journey. This is mentioned in Qur'an chapter 17.

Also in this chapter are many instructions as how humans should live in a way that pleases God. Prayer is mentioned in verses 78 and 79:

Qur'an 17: 78- 79 (Saheeh International translation)

Establish prayer at the decline of the sun [from its meridian] until the darkness of the night¹ and [also] the Qur'ān [i.e., recitation] of dawn.² Indeed, the recitation of dawn is ever witnessed.

And rise at 'the last' part of the night, offering additional prayers, so your Lord may raise you to a station of praise

Reference: <https://quran.com/17/78?translations=17,18,20,21,85,22,95,101,102>

Read more about the Night Journey and prayer on Chris Hewer's GCSE guidance: <https://chrishewer.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/2-3-B-1.pdf>

PRAYER

TEACHING IDEAS

- The information about the Croydon mosque gives an outline of one Muslim community in South London. The information is straightforward to source online. Conduct similar research about a mosque in your area, what historical or cultural information can you find? Has it been rebuilt over the years, was it in a different building, are there plans for the future? Has the demographic changed over the decades?
- Once you have found out about the cultural make-up of your local mosque, display a map of the world. Find your region, town or city, locate the site of the mosque. Place pins around it to show where the local Muslim community originally hails from, such as from Pakistan, Nigeria or Bosnia.
- Create a timeline to show the stages of development of your mosque from whenever it was first established to the present.
- Find out about prayer times at your local mosque. Muslim prayer must happen over the day at 5 stages: Fajr (before dawn), Dhuhr (afternoon), Asr (late afternoon), Maghrib (after sunset) and Isha (night time). Write down the times this week of the 5 prayers. These are the times in your region of Western Europe- they will be different in other parts of the world.
- Draw or print out an image of the earth. Ask students to write out the names of the prayers in the middle of the earth image (Fajr, Dhuhr, Asr, Maghrib, Isha). Write on the outside the prayer times of the local mosque this week, label this with your region. Ask groups to do some research. Can they find out prayer times this week in a different region, such as Arabia, East Africa, West Africa, North Africa, the Indian Subcontinent, Indonesia, etc? They should find the name of a mosque, where it is, and the published prayer times for this week, and share this information. Groups can add one or two additional prayer times from different regions to their earth image.
- Read the Dan Brown quote together- what are students' reactions to the idea that Muslim prayer is universal to Muslims all over the world, and has remained unchanged for centuries?
- The Croydon mosque, as the majority of mosques in Britain, is Sunni. Sunni groups generally pray each prayer separately, whereas Shi'a groups are generally permitted to combine two prayers at the same time. Read Qur'an 17: 78- 79. Count each prayer time called for in the Qur'an. Do students count 3 or 5 prayer times? Listen to reasons why.
- Shi'a Muslims are able to combine their 5 prayers into 3 prayer times and Sunni Muslims generally pray each prayer time separately. Discuss if this represents a difference in *belief*, or do both Sunni and Shi'a believe the same thing about prayer? Discuss if this is a difference in *practice*, or the same practice with a small variation. Gather different reasons.
- Define the word *ummah*: the worldwide Muslim community. This was originally instituted by Muhammad to bring warring Arabian tribes together, united in their devotion to One God, and overcoming their differences. The word in Arabic means 'community'. It is different to another Arabic word, *sha'b*, meaning 'nation'. Write these two words down. The *ummah* refers to people brought together because of their shared beliefs, whatever their cultural or geographical differences. Ask the class to choose 3 beliefs from their knowledge of Islam that all Muslims share, such as Tawhid, revelation and afterlife.
- Return to the Daniel W. Brown and Shahab Ahmed quotes about the universality of Islam. Look at the map of your local mosque with (potentially) many different geographical origins of the community. Does 'Islam' feel like one *ummah* to students- a set of shared beliefs which transcend culture and geography, or does it feel like a *sha'b*, a 'nation' of people with shared cultural roots.

EID CELEBRATIONS

EID AROUND THE WORLD

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Below are two questions around Eid ul- Adha and Eid ul- Fitr for your class to engage with. These are general questions. If you can research into your local Muslim community, via the mosque or local contacts, these are good questions to discuss with any visitors or representatives. Your mosque might answer pupils' questions by email, even if a visit cannot be arranged. The aim is to compare aspects of the Eids that are features of your local community with practices and customs around the world.

The questions in the 'Prayer' section about Islam as universal or local would also be relevant to explore here.

1: Eid ul-Adha: can someone be Muslim and vegan?

This is a critical question to focus on the sacrifice at Eid ul-Adha. The information concerns two Muslim women, Mara and Sumaya, who have decided to become vegan.

Read about their reasons in the BBC article: [Vegan and Muslim: Why I kept my plant-based diet secret from my family - BBC Three](https://www.bbc.com/news/health-55888888)

This article is summarised below.

You might also find a Guardian article interesting, where Remona Ali shares some vegan iftar dishes for Muslims fasting in the month of Ramadan, or Veganadan. Some Muslims are breaking their fast with plant-based meals: <https://www.theguardian.com/food/2019/may/30/you-are-what-you-eat-ramadan-for-vegans>

Eid ul-Adha, or the 'feast of sacrifice', is celebrated at the end of the Hajj pilgrimage by Muslims all over the world. The festival recalls the prophet Ibrahim who was willing to give everything to God, including his son, Ismail. Muslims slaughter a lamb to represent the lamb God substituted for Ibrahim's son at the moment of sacrifice. Some of the meat is shared among poorer member of the community, or given as donations to the mosque to distribute. The festival can also be called 'Eid ul- Qurban' in Arabic. 'Qurban' also means 'sacrifice' but the original Arabic word is 'closeness', rather than 'offering', as in 'Adha'. Both these words can be used to describe the feast of sacrifice. In Judaism and Christianity a similar Hebrew word for 'sacrifice', 'korban', is used, but this implies a burnt offering. In other words, something is destroyed and offered up to God. Whereas in Islam, the quirbani (sacrifice) is consumed or used by the human community, especially to support the poor and needy.

2: Eid ul-Fitr: a Great British Eid

Eid celebrations are not required in the Qur'an. The Qur'an calls for certain actions, such as zakat, fasting, prayer and belief in Tawhid, but not an Eid celebration. Traditionally Eid ul -Fitr is seen as a celebration instigated by Prophet Muhammad. Therefore Eid ul-Fitr, the festival to mark the end of the fasting month of Ramadan, is seen as following in the prophet's footsteps and by his example, but not a Qur'anic instruction.

Eid features in the Hadith, the recorded sayings and actions of the Prophet. This is from the Hadith of Sunan Abi Dawud:

"Holy Prophet came to Madinah, the people had two days in which they used to entertain and amuse themselves. He asked: "What are these two days?" They said: "We used to amuse ourselves and take pleasure in these two days during the Days of Ignorance (jahiliyyah). The Messenger of Allah said, "Allah has substituted for you something better than these two; the Eid of Adha (sacrifice) and the Eid of Fitr."

References:

<http://quransmessage.com/articles/eid%20FM3.htm>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eid_al-Fitr

https://www.quranexplorer.com/blog/events/eid_ul_fitr_in_islam

Eid ul- Fitr Around the World

Follow these links to find out about different Eid customs around the world.

<https://www.arabiaweather.com/en/content/the-most-beautiful-customs-of-muslims-around-the-world-on-the-blessed-eid-alfitr>

<https://www.hindustantimes.com/lifestyle/festivals/eidulfitr-2021-5-unique-eid-traditions-that-are-followed-around-the-world-101620965559392.html>

EID AROUND THE WORLD

TEACHING IDEAS

1: Eid ul-Adha: can someone be Muslim and vegan?

- Read the articles about Muslims who are totally vegan (BBC article) or vegan in Ramadan/ Veganadan (Guardian article). Highlight reasons for why Muslims adopt a plant-based diet. Create a list of different reasons.
- Collect any objections people have to a Muslim being vegan- are there religious reasons why it is not seen as acceptable? Are there any non-religious objections?
- What reasons are given for those who believe it is acceptable for Muslims to be vegan?
- Make sure students know about the meaning of Eid ul-Adha, the 'feast of sacrifice'. Ask someone to 'hot seat' a Muslim person who is vegan all the time, or vegan at Ramadan. Invite the class to ask questions about whether they can be vegan at Eid ul- Adha. Does the festival necessitate slaughtering a lamb and eating meat, to represent Abraham's sacrifice? If a plant is eaten, does that represent enough of a sacrifice? Or is the point to give to the community, and therefore any nutritious food could be given?
- Design questions to ask a local Muslim, either a visitor, a teacher or parent who is prepared to discuss this, or on a visit to the local mosque.
- Find out about what food the local Muslim community eat at iftar, and at Eid ul-Adha. You could check out local restaurant menus, call the mosque or Islamic centre, or find local Islamic charities. Is it mostly meat-based, vegetarian or vegan? Are local Muslim people noticing a change towards more vegetarian or vegan meals?
- Discuss whether Muslims can be vegan at Eid ul-Adha, using evidence from these lessons.

2: Eid ul-Fitr: a Great British Eid

- Ask the class to guess if Eid ul- Fitr is in the Qur'an? (No, it is not.) Ask the class if the festivals of Easter or Christmas in the bible? No, they are not. Discuss in groups why communities come together to have festivals, even if they are not required by religious teachings.
- Ask local Muslim visitors, colleagues or students what they think the community gains from the Eid celebrations. What are the benefits for the community?
- Read about different Eid customs around the world. Ask your local Muslims if there are any customs that have arisen for Muslims in the UK, or in your area. Do they eat a particular food because they can source it in the UK? Have Muslims brought food and customs from other countries, which are now part of British Muslim Eid celebrations? Etc
- Research British Muslim Eid ul-Fitr celebrations, such as in big cities like Birmingham or London, as well as in your local area.
- Choose one of the customs from around the world (using web links given). Show to your students. Can students detect common actions that all communities share? Do some customs seem quite unusual? Create an Eid card featuring your chosen custom. Research some information about Islam in that country, region or culture; what sort of Islam, how many Muslims in the area, what is the language of the area, what is the land like, what sort of government do they have, what is the region well-known for? Add these details to the Eid card. Hang all cards in the classroom to make a colourful display of Eid around the world.
- Identify what should be at the core of an Eid ul- Fitr festival, whatever country it happens in.
- Ask students if it is ok for Eid customs to arise in different countries and regions as Eid is not in the Qur'an?

- Design a '**Great British Eid**' in groups: what would it look like? What food would people eat, what clothes would be good for the British climate, what would Eid decorations look like, what festivities could British Muslims engage in to celebrate and commemorate? For example, an Eid 'advent calendar' to count down the days of Ramadan, or a John Lewis 'Eid advert' like the hotly anticipated John Lewis Christmas advert. What snacks could the shops sell to celebrate Eid ul-Fitr, like hot cross buns, Easter eggs, Christmas yule logs and mince pies?

Can you be Vegan and Muslim?

This is a summary of this BBC article: [Vegan and Muslim: Why I kept my plant-based diet secret from my family - BBC Three](#)

Can you be vegan and Muslim? Sumaya and Mara think so, but often have to defend their beliefs.

Rahil Sheikh, BBC Asian Network 15 January 2020

What?! You are vegan?...VEGAN?!... What's next... taking off your hijab?!" That's how Sumaya's mum reacted when she told her she was vegan.

Sumaya grew up in a Somali-Muslim family, and meat had been a huge part of her family's diet. "Breakfast, lunch and dinner all we ate was meat, meat and more meat!" she says.

At 15, Sumaya started to become concerned about the amount of meat she was eating and its impact on her health, and felt like she needed to make a change.

"At this point, I was pretty desperate. I couldn't even walk up the stairs without being breathless, so I was now sold on veganism," she continues. "After trying it out for a couple of months, I felt great."

Mara, 23, is a Muslim and vegan from Birmingham. "Being Muslim, we must treat animals well before we eat them," Mara tells me. "I just don't think that in today's society that's happening, so we shouldn't be eating meat if we can't guarantee the animals will be treated well."

Mara grew up in a Pakistani-Muslim family and ate meat regularly. She never gave it much thought until a few years ago when she watched a documentary on Netflix called *What the Health*. The pro-vegan documentary was released in 2017 exploring the impact meat and dairy consumption has on our health. After watching it, Mara immediately went vegan. After she cut out animal products, she began taking an interest in animal rights. "Animal cruelty is not in line with Islam," she says. "The sacrificial tradition during Eid al-Adha can make things difficult for Muslim vegans, but I know some who, instead of sacrificing an animal, will instead use their time to help others or give to charity instead. And that's what I'll do too."

Is being vegan compatible with Islam? Can you be Muslim and Vegan?

In Islam, eating meat is regarded as **halal**, which means Muslims are allowed to do it. Some Muslims believe that rejecting what has been allowed by the word of God is haram (the opposite of halal – against the wishes of God).

Sayful Ahmed, 33, an imam from the Islamic Centre in Scunthorpe, says choosing to be vegan does not compromise Islamic belief. "If the question is, is a Muslim doing something wrong and against their religion if they choose to only eat a plant-based diet? The answer is simply, not at all. The requirement in Islam is that what you eat must be halal and tayyub (Arabic for wholesome and pure). A vegan diet is both of those things."

As for sacrificing an animal at Eid al-Adha, Sayful says you don't have to actively perform a sacrificial slaughter yourself, but instead you can give money to a charity, as many Muslims in the UK already do. This does not solve the problem of animal slaughter at Eid however.

Back to Sumaya, she says her parents eventually came round to her veganism and have reduced their meat consumption, following her lead. The fight was worth it for her, but Mara tells me there is a lot more that needs to be done to make veganism a more appealing option for the wider Muslim community. "The older generation... didn't really learn about veganism growing up, whereas we have more access to information. In a culture where we respect the word of our elders, it can be difficult to tell them why we are right in choosing this path for ourselves, despite what they think".