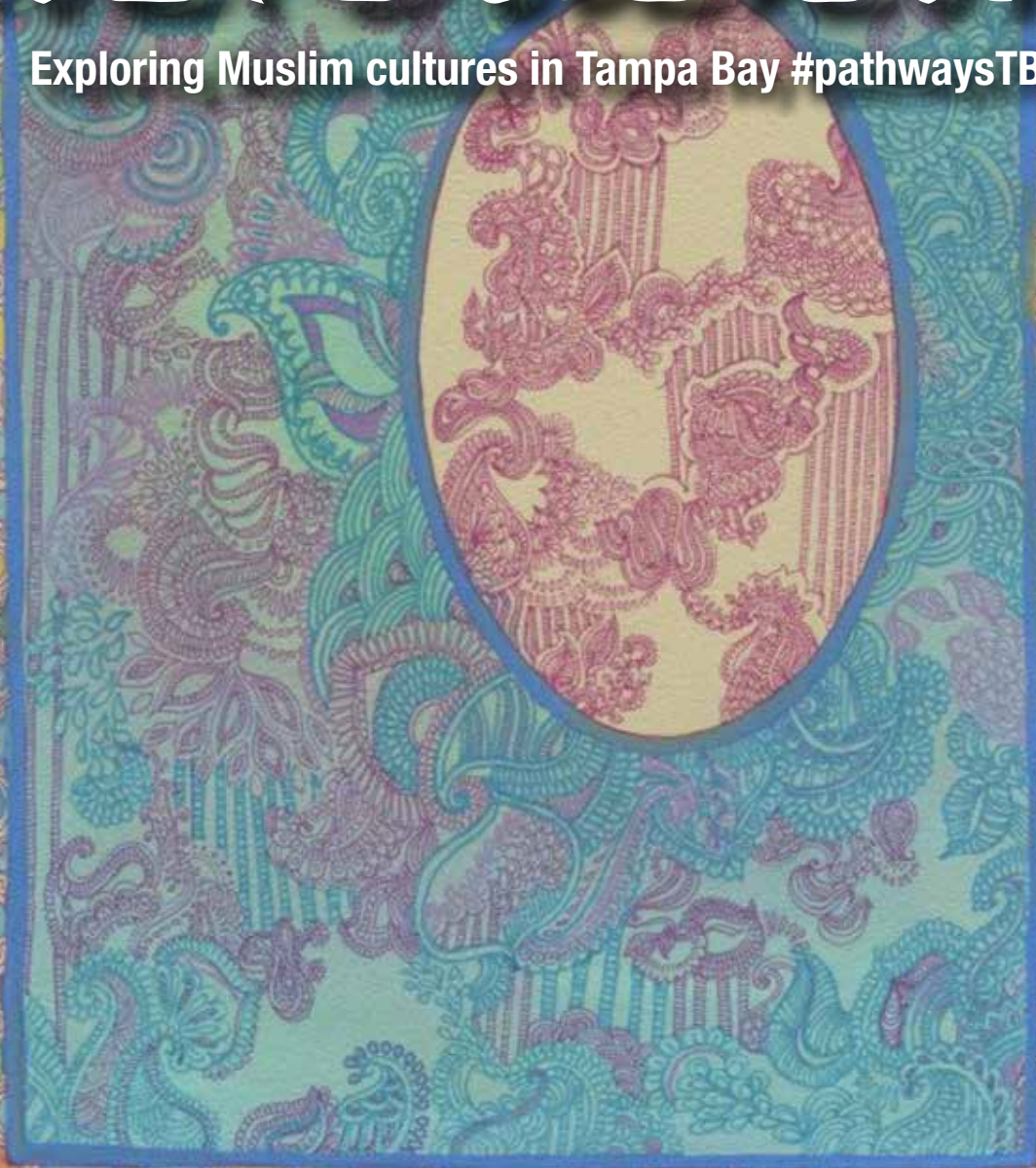



Pathways to Understanding

Exploring Muslim cultures in Tampa Bay #pathwaysTB



My thoughts



"I simply wish people knew that most of the information they receive on television (about) Muslims is misleading. It hurts me to see so many people hating on "Muslims," when in reality, real, true Muslims are nothing like the terrorists, or the evil people who claim to have Islamic intentions. Real Muslims are peaceful people who worship God. We may worship God differently than other religions, but it doesn't automatically make us terrible people. We are humans like everyone else. We are Americans like everyone else."

- Loyal Barakat, 14, American Youth Academy student

"I wish people understood that Muslims come from all parts of the world... People within the faith carry with them cultural practices and beliefs just as people of any faith do. It is often easier to stereotype a group of people if the group is scarce and you have a limited sample size to observe. I feel this happens often in the U.S. People meet one Muslim in their class or at work and assume that all Muslims are that way. This is absolutely not true. While Muslims share common values and hold certain views, many Muslims do come from different cultural backgrounds which make them who they are. Muslims have hobbies, jobs, go to school and also want to enjoy life. Don't be afraid to approach one and speak to (him or her)."

- Nisrin Dweik, 24, University of South Florida graduate



The dome mosaic of the Main Reading Room of the Library of Congress includes Islam, representing physics, among twelve seated figures symbolizing outstanding contributions to human progress and Western civilization. Photo by Carol Highsmith.



The North Wall Frieze of the Courtroom of the Supreme Court of the United States includes a depiction of the Qu'ran, representing Islamic Law, among other sculptures representing the development of law throughout human history. Photo by Steve Petteway.

Pathways To Understanding

tampabay.com/nie/pathways • #pathwaysTB

Pathways to Understanding: Exploring Muslim cultures in Tampa Bay
 The Tampa Bay region of Florida is home to tens of thousands of Muslims of African-American, South Asian, Middle Eastern, Eastern European, Central Asian and North African heritage. Despite the region's diversity, however, there is a lack of dialog and understanding between the Muslim and non-Muslim communities that can lead to misunderstanding, intolerance, stereotyping and conflict.

The goals of Pathways to Understanding are to foster understanding of the immense diversity and depth of Muslim cultures around the world and to promote meaningful interactions between Muslim and non-Muslim communities in Tampa Bay.

Pathways to Understanding will present an overview of Muslim culture, bust some myths about Islam and Muslims, explore the causes and consequences of prejudice and discrimination, and encourage youth to explore their own identities while fostering greater understanding of and respect for persons of different cultural backgrounds.

We invite you to join us in this journey of discovery and understanding. Use the hashtag #pathwaysTB to join the conversation online.

- 29 percent of Americans say they know nothing at all about Islam, and 57 percent say they know only a little.
 - 88 percent of Americans agree that "America was founded on the idea of religious freedom for everyone, including religious groups that are unpopular."
 - 95 percent of Americans agree that "All religious books should be treated with respect even if we don't share the religious beliefs of those who use them."
- Source: What it Means to Be American: Attitudes in an Increasingly Diverse America Ten Years After 9/11, The Brookings Institution and Public Religion Research Institute (2011)



St. Petersburg Muslims (from left) Rabia Sookdeo, 38, her brother, Aftab Sookdeo, 40 and their mother Ayesha Sookdeo at an Eid al-Fitr celebration in 2008. Photo by Lara Cerri, Times

What do we mean by Islamic culture?

"Islam, like Christianity, Judaism and other world religions, varies in its interpretations, rituals and practices. It is true that Muslims share certain fundamental beliefs... Yet, as the religion evolved after Muhammad's death and spread beyond Arabia into many different regions and cultures, ranging from Bosnia and China to Yemen and Zanzibar, it came to be interpreted in diverse ways. This diversity was the result of the core set of religious beliefs interacting in complex ways with the many different contexts in which Muslims lived. Each of these contexts is defined by multiple factors, including its history, cultural traditions, its social, economic, political structures, and its geography and physical location in the world."

- University of Texas at Austin Muslim Histories and Cultures Project
 Islam, like Judaism and Christianity, first began in the Middle East, but as it spread to other areas, local culture, geography, language and ethnicity greatly influenced its traditions and practices. Early influences included Bedouin nomads, Byzantine Christians and Persian Sassanians. Later, as Islam spread into North Africa, Eastern Europe, Central Asia and South Asia, it absorbed aspects of each of those regions' cultures.

In addition, Muslim communities arrived at different answers to various ethical, religious, philosophical, and political questions that arose in the centuries after the Prophet Muhammad's death, leading to the division of Islam into different schools of religious thought.

Despite this enormous diversity, the world's Muslims universally believe in one God, the Prophet Muhammad and the core practices of Islam, known as the Five Pillars.

As we examine Islamic culture, we will explore how Muslims of different traditions express their culture and faith in their daily lives.

Sources: Brookings Institution, Pew Research Center, University of Texas at Austin Muslim Histories and Cultures Project

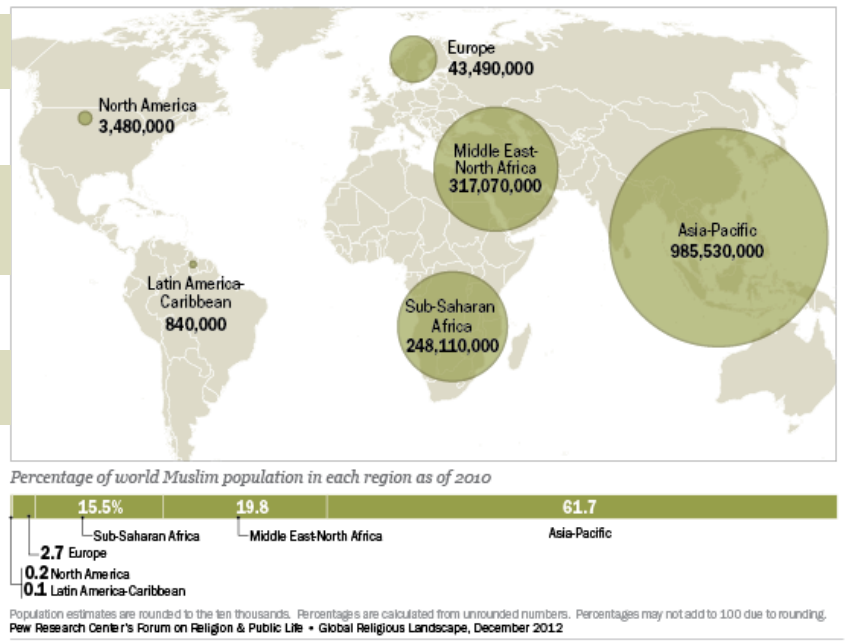
Islam in the world

- Islam is the second-largest religion in the world, with 1.6 billion followers. (1)
- About one-quarter of the world's population (23 percent) is Muslim. (2)
- The number of Muslims around the world is projected to grow to nearly 2.8 billion, or 30 percent of the world's population, by 2050. (3)
- Most of the world's Muslims live in Asia, the Middle East and Africa. (4)
- The Southeast Asian nation of Indonesia has the world's largest Muslim population. (5)
- In 2010, there were an estimated 2,770,000 Muslims in the United States. This is projected to grow to 8,090,000 by 2050. (6)

Sources: (1), (2), (3) The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050, Pew Research Center (2015); (4), (5) The Global Religious Landscape, Pew Research Center (2012); (6) Religious Composition by Country, 2010-2050, Pew Research Center (2015)

Regional Distribution of Muslims

Population by region as of 2010



Islam in America

There has been a Muslim presence in America for more than four centuries.

The first American Muslims were African slaves; an estimated 30 percent of Africans forced into slavery during the transatlantic slave trade to the United States were Muslim. Although denied freedom of religion, many slaves practiced their faith in secret and passed it on to their children through songs and stories.

Early American Muslims also included Moriscos (former Muslims forced to convert to Christianity) from Portugal and Spain who immigrated to Spanish colonies in the New World.

Larger-scale Muslim immigration from India and the Ottoman Empire to the United States began in the mid to late 19th century.

By the mid-20th century, many African-Americans whose Islamic heritage had been lost began to rediscover it, and in the late 20th century, greater numbers of Muslims from the Middle East and South Asia began to immigrate to America after changes in immigration laws.

In 2010, there were more than 2 million Muslims in the United States. By 2050, the population is projected to grow to more than 8 million, making Islam the second-largest religion in America.

American Muslims are the most racially diverse religious group in the United States. African Americans are the largest group, making up 35 percent of American Muslims. Muslims are of every race and ethnicity – you can't tell who is a Muslim and who isn't just by looking at him or her.

According to the Pew Research Center, 63 percent of Muslim Americans are first-generation immigrants to the United States, coming from more than 68 countries. 70 percent of those born outside the U.S. are U.S. citizens, a much higher rate of citizenship than among the overall immigrant population (47 percent).

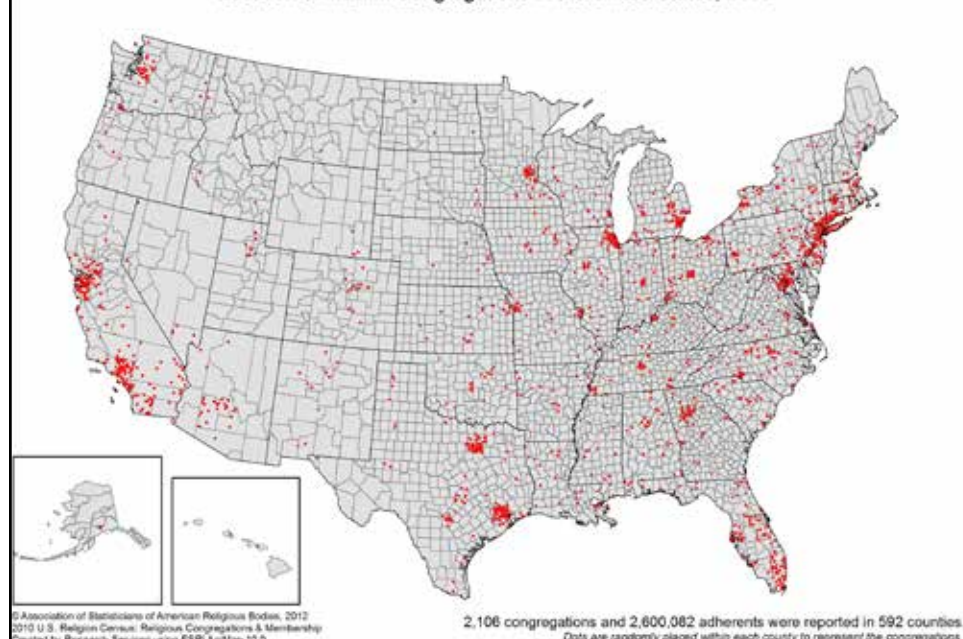
Sources: Encyclopaedia Britannica, Interfaith Alliance, PBS, Pew Research Center, Religious Freedom Education Project of the First Amendment Center, U.S. Department of State Bureau of International Information Programs

American Muslims – by the numbers

- 35 percent of American Muslims are African American, 28 percent are white, 18 percent are Asian and 18 percent are of other racial/ethnic backgrounds. (1)
- 20 percent of American Muslims are self-employed or own a small business. (2)
- 15,000 American Muslims currently serve in the United States military. (3)
- 39 percent of young Muslim Americans describe their political views as moderate, 28 percent as liberal and 20 percent as conservative. (4)
- American Muslim females are the second-most educated religious group in the country, after Jewish females. (5)

Sources: (1) *Muslim Americans: A National Portrait*, Gallup Center for Muslim Studies (2009) (2) *Muslim Americans: No Signs of Growth in Alienation or Support for Extremism*, Pew Research Center (2011) (3) U.S. Department of Defense (4), (5) *Muslim Americans: A National Portrait*, Gallup Center for Muslim Studies (2009)

Location of Muslim Congregations in the United States, 2010



Florida has the sixth-largest Muslim population in the United States, behind Texas, New York, Illinois, California and Virginia.

Source: 2010 U.S. Religion Census: Religious Congregations & Membership Study, Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies

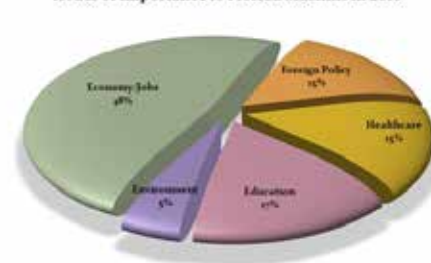


Indonesia, a non-Arabic-speaking country, is the world's largest Muslim-majority nation and the world's third-largest democracy. Although 87 percent of Indonesians are Muslim, Indonesia is a secular state with religious freedom.

Located in Southeast Asia between the Indian and Pacific Oceans, the Republic of Indonesia consists of 17,000 islands totaling almost three times the state of Texas in size.

Sources: BBC, CIA World Factbook, the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Washington, D.C., Michigan State University Asian Studies Center

Issues of importance to Florida Muslims in 2010



Issues of importance to Florida Muslims

In 2010, Emerge USA polled Florida Muslims on what political issues were of most importance to them. Mirroring the population at large, the economy was by far the most important, followed by education, healthcare and foreign policy.

Pathways to Understanding events

Pathways to Understanding will feature six youth leadership conferences and a community forum. Join us for the community forum on Thursday, May 12, 2016 at the Jimmie B. Keel Regional Library. Visit tampabay.com/nie/pathways for more details.

Journaling to self-awareness

Keeping a journal or writing a blog is a great way to learn more about yourself, your friends, your surrounding community and your thoughts about what you see and hear on a daily basis. As you read this publication, you will encounter some complex ideas and you may find yourself challenging your current way of thinking. Keep a journal of what you are learning during this unit of study. In your journal, record your thoughts about what you are reading and learning, as well as your thoughts about the world around you. One way to learn more about your world is by reading the daily newspaper. On the pages of the Tampa Bay Times, you can read about local, regional, national

and international news. To begin your journal, write about something that you have read in the *Times* that directly affects your life.

Going beyond the text Freedom of religion

People's faith traditions often define a significant part of their identity. In the United States, religious diversity is an integral part of our culture as a whole. In the U.S., religious freedom is protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. What does the term "religious freedom" mean to you? What is

religious freedom? Is religious freedom absolute? Write down your thoughts about this topic. Next, research this concept on the Internet. Write down the information you find. Look for articles, cartoons, advertisements or photos depicting religious freedom in the *Tampa Bay Times*. Discuss your ideas and what you have learned with your class.

Extension activity

Based on what you have learned, write a blog post discussing the following question: How does protecting freedom of religion guarantee all of our rights?

Source: The First Amendment and Freedom of Religion, Teaching Tolerance

INTRODUCTION TO ISLAM



What is Islam?

The word Islam means “submission to the will of God” in Arabic. Followers of Islam are called Muslims. They believe that Islam was revealed to a series of prophets, culminating in the Prophet Muhammad 1,400 years ago.

Like Judaism and Christianity, Islam is monotheistic: Muslims believe that there is only one God. In Islam, God, or Allah (the Arabic word for God) is omniscient (all-knowing) and omnipotent (all-powerful). Muslims believe that God is the creator of all things and of all humankind.

Islam teaches that God has sent prophets, or messengers, to humanity throughout history to gradually reveal the faith. Many of these prophets are also holy in Jewish and Christian tradition. Adam, Noah, Moses, Abraham, Aaron, Joseph, John and Jesus are all considered prophets in Islam. While Muslims believe that Jesus was an important prophet who performed miracles, they do not believe that he was the son of God. Muslims believe all the Prophets came to reinforce the same universal message: Peace through the worship of God.

Muslims also believe that certain Jewish and Christian scriptures (the Scrolls as revealed to Abraham; the Torah as revealed to Moses; the Psalms as revealed to David; the Gospel as revealed to Jesus) were divinely revealed in their original forms. The Qur’an, the holy book of Islam, refers to Jews and Christians as “People of the Book.” Muslims believe that the Qur’an, gradually revealed to the Muhammad over the course of more than 20 years, is literally the sacred word of God. While Muslims are commanded to respect the previous holy books, they follow the Qur’an because they believe it is the only book from God that has remained unchanged throughout the centuries.

In addition to the Qur’an, Islamic tradition and teaching draw upon the Hadith, the recorded sayings and teachings of Muhammad, for religious, moral and ethical guidance.

Muslims do not worship Muhammad, but they consider him to be the model of how all Muslims should live. The example of his life is called the Sunnah, and Muslims look to it for direction on social and legal custom and practice.

Islam is an enormously diverse religion, with several major sects whose traditions and practices differ from each other. In addition, Muslim communities around the world practice Islam within the context of their own histories and cultures. This means that there is significant variety in the way that Muslims understand and practice Islam. However, there are certain beliefs and practices that are shared by all Muslims, based on the Qur’an, Sunnah and Hadith.

Sources: BBC, Islamic Networks Group, the Islam Project, PBS, Sound Vision

The Six Major Beliefs

- **Belief in Allah as the one and only God** – Muslims believe that God is eternal, omniscient, and omnipotent. God has no parents, partners or children. God has no shape, form or gender.
- **Belief in angels** – Muslims believe that angels carry out God’s orders throughout the universe.
- **Belief in the Holy Books** – Muslims believe that God revealed holy scriptures, including the Torah, the Psalms, the Gospel and the Qur’an, to God’s messengers.
- **Belief in the Prophets** – Muslims believe that God has sent prophets to humanity throughout history. Muhammad is the final prophet, sent to reinforce and revive the message of the previous prophets.
- **Belief in the Day of Judgement** – Muslims believe that on the Day of Judgement, humans will be judged for their actions and rewarded or punished in heaven or hell after they are resurrected.
- **Belief in Predestination** – Muslims believe that God already knows everything that will happen and that human life is preordained. However, humans still have free will, since they do not share this knowledge and can still make choices freely.

The Five Pillars

The Five Pillars of Islam are five obligations that every practicing Muslim must perform. As in all faiths, the degree to which each individual adheres to these duties varies.

- **Profession of faith:** The first Pillar of Islam is for the believer sincerely to recite aloud in Arabic that “There is no god but God and Muhammad is His messenger.”
- **Prayer:** Practicing Muslims pray five times a day — at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset and nightfall. Before praying, a Muslim washes his or her face, hands and feet and then prostrates him or herself on the ground in the direction of the city of Mecca while praying.
- **Charity:** Muslims believe that all things belong to God and that wealth is only held in trust by human beings. Muslims are required to donate a percentage of their property to charity every year.
- **Fasting:** Muslims abstain from eating, drinking, smoking and other indulgences from dawn until just after sunset during the Islamic month of Ramadan each year.
- **Pilgrimage:** All Muslims who are physically and financially able must pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their lives. This pilgrimage is called the Hajj. Muslims who have completed the Hajj are known as Hajji. The Hajj is based around the Qur’anic tradition of the prophet Abraham.

Sources: BBC, Council on American-Islamic Relations, Encyclopaedia Britannica, the Islam Project, PBS, Sound Vision

الله

Allah is the Arabic word for God. The word Allah existed long before the founding of Islam: it has been found in pre-Islamic poetry and inscriptions. Arab speakers of many faiths, including Christians, use the word Allah to refer to God.

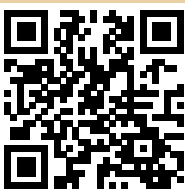


The Call to prayer

Five times each day, a person called a muezzin calls out the adhan, or call to prayer, to let Muslims know that it is time to pray.

Listen to Yusuf Islam (formerly Cat Stevens) perform the call to prayer:

Source: The Pluralism Project at Harvard University

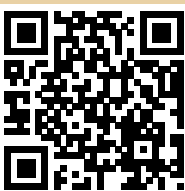


What is the Kaaba?

The Kaaba, the immense black cube familiar from news coverage of the Hajj, is the site towards which Muslims pray. Muslims believe that the Kaaba was originally built by the first man, Adam; destroyed in the flood which only Noah and his family survived; and rebuilt by Abraham and his son Ismail. It is considered the first mosque and the most sacred space in Islam. During the Hajj, pilgrims circle the Kaaba seven times, which symbolizes their entry into the divine presence.

Learn more about the Hajj by following PBS’s Virtual Hajj:

Source: Oxford Islamic Studies Online, PBS



Who was Muhammad?

Muhammad Ibn (son of) Abdullah was born in 570 in Mecca, an important center of commerce and trade in what is now Saudi Arabia. Orphaned at an early age, he worked in the caravan trade, becoming well known and respected for his business success, character and honesty. He was known as “al-Amin,” which means “the trusted one.”

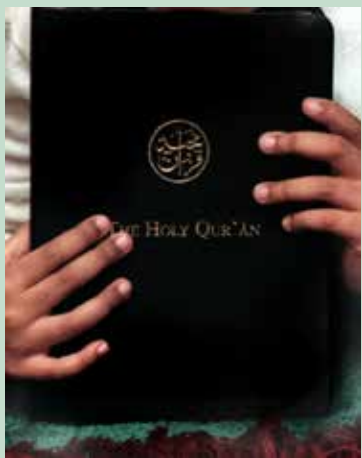
Muhammad often spent time meditating alone in the hills surrounding Mecca. According to the Qur’an, he was meditating in a cave on Mount Hira one night in 610 when he was visited by the angel Gabriel, who declared that he was chosen to be the Prophet of God and commanded him to “recite.” Muhammad began to recite the words that Muslims believe are the divine revelations of God. He continued to receive revelations for the rest of his life. These recorded words form the text of the Qur’an.

Muhammad began to preach what had been revealed to him. Although he steadily gained followers, most of Mecca’s tribal leaders opposed him. Muhammad’s monotheistic teachings were a threat not only to their polytheistic beliefs, but also to the tribal system of hierarchy and group loyalty.

After enduring years of persecution by tribal leaders in Mecca, Muhammad immigrated in 622 with many of his followers to the city of Medina, where he had been invited to make peace between feuding tribes and establish an Islamic society based on the Qur’an. This journey is called the Hijrah, or migration, and it marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar.

In 630, after the Meccans broke a treaty between the two groups, Muhammad returned to Mecca with a large following and, meeting no resistance, conquered it, extending Muslim rule over all of Arabia and uniting the Arab tribes under the new religion of Islam. The conquest of Mecca took place without bloodshed, and amnesty was granted to all Meccans, regardless of their religion. Muhammad died in 633.

Sources: BBC, the Islam Project, Oxford Islamic Studies Online, The Pluralism Project at Harvard University



A child holds the Qu’ran in 1998. Photo by Fred Victorin, *Times*

What is the Qur’an?

The Qur’an is the holy scripture of the religion of Islam. Muslims believe that it is the literal word of God, divinely revealed to Muhammad over more than two decades.

What is the difference between Sunni and Shia Muslims?

As with all major religions, Islam encompasses many different strands and traditions of faith within it. The two largest are called Sunni and Shia, and the division between them dates all the way back to the beginning of the faith.

Historically, their differences stem from the question of who would succeed Muhammad as leader of the Muslim community after his death in 633.

One group, who would become known as the Sunnis, saw the succession largely in political terms. They did not believe that Muhammad had appointed a successor before his death, and thus felt free to choose as ruler the person they believed best qualified. Their choice was a man named Abu Bakr, a friend of Muhammad and the father of Muhammad’s wife Aisha. Historically, Abu Bakr was chosen as Caliph, or leader.

However, another group, who would become known as the Shias, believed that Muhammad’s successor must come from his family line, and that God had chosen Muhammad’s son-in-law and cousin Ali as both his spiritual and political successor.

Both Sunni and Shia Muslims believe that Allah is the only God and that the Prophet Muhammad is his messenger. Both sects observe the Five Pillars and share the Qur’an as their holy book.

They are separated mainly by their different sources of knowledge and religious leadership. Shias view Ali as the first in a line of religious leaders, called Imams, who are the spiritual and political successors to Muhammad. Thus, in addition to the Qur’an and the Hadith, Shias look to the rulings of their Imams for religious guidance. In contrast, Sunnis do not regard the Imams as religious authorities.

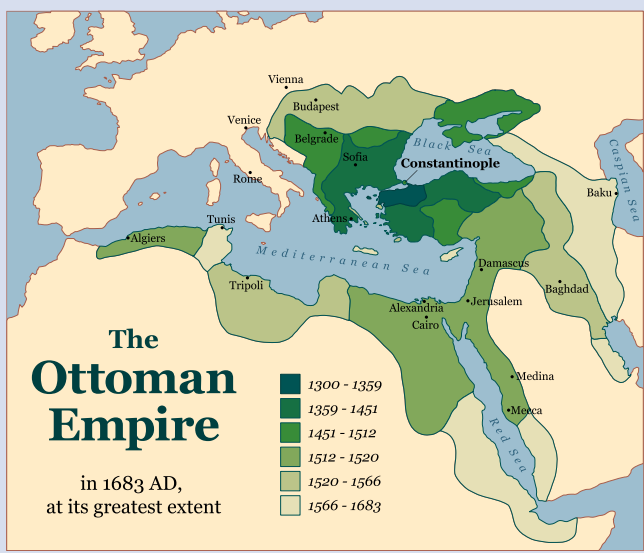
Today, Sunnis make up about 80 percent of the worldwide Muslim community. Shias are in the majority in Iran, Iraq, Bahrain and Azerbaijan. Large Shia communities also exist in Afghanistan, Albania, India, Kuwait, Lebanon, Pakistan, Qatar, Syria, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Yemen.

Not surprisingly, the Muslim community in the United States reflect Islam’s diverse religious traditions. According to the Pew Research Center, half identify as Sunni; 22 percent identify as Muslim without any particular affiliation; and 16 percent identify as Shia.

Sources: BBC, Islamic Networks Group, Pew Research Center, The Pluralism Project at Harvard University

Timeline: Islam in America

- 1527** Estevanico of Azamor, a Moroccan Muslim, arrives in Florida with the expedition of Spanish explorer Panfilo de Narvaez. He later joins expeditions to what would become Arizona and New Mexico.
- 1530** African slaves begin to arrive. Approximately 30 percent of African slaves in the United States would be Muslim.
- 1893** The first American mosque and mission is established in New York City by Mohammed Alexander Russell Webb, an early American convert to Islam.
- 1898** The first Arabic newspaper to appear in the United States, *Kawkab Amrika* (Star of America), begins daily publication.
- 1900** Muslims of Arab descent in Ross, North Dakota, gather in homes for the first recorded communal prayers held by American Muslims.
- 1907** Tatar immigrants from Poland, Russia, and Lithuania found the nation’s first Muslim organization, the American Mohammedan Society.
- 1908** Muslim Turks, Albanians, Kurds and Arabs from the provinces of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and other areas of the Ottoman Empire began to settle in North America in significant numbers.
- 1924** The Immigration Act of 1924 (Johnson-Reed Act) limits the number of immigrants allowed entry into the U.S. through a national origins quota. It completely excludes immigrants from Asia.



Ottoman Empire

The Ottoman Empire, founded in about 1300 by a Turkmen chief named Osman I, grew to be one of the most powerful empires in the world during the 15th and 16th centuries. At its height, the empire stretched from southeastern Europe, through the Middle East into North Africa. The Ottoman Empire lasted more than 600 years until its dissolution after World War I.

Source: Encyclopaedia Britannica

Going beyond the text Religions around the world

All religions are based on some type of sacred text and many people incorporate religion into their daily lives. Ask your teacher to divide your class into six groups. As a group, visit the British Library Web site at bl.uk/learning/cult/sacred/stories. Each group will explore one of six sacred texts through an interactive activity that presents stories from six world religions: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism. Write a summary of the stories’ characters, messages and historical references. Use quotations from the texts to illustrate your summary. Next, look in the *Tampa Bay Times* to find examples of how people incorporate religious practices into their daily lives. After you have completed the exploration, share what you have learned with the other groups.

Source: Taking a Closer Look at Religions Around the World, Teaching Tolerance

Language, Literature And Thought



Saira Hadi, 10, Samiyah Hadi, 9, both of St. Petersburg, and Yuliyani Stuckrath, of Indian Shores, read the Quran in 2015. Photo by Monica Herndon, *Times*

The Arabic language

Arabic is the native language of more than 200 million people around the world, the official language of 22 countries, and one of the United Nations' six official languages.

Believed to have started among nomadic tribes in the Arabian Peninsula in the second millennium B.C.E., Arabic remained a spoken language with little or no written form until the 7th century C.E. A member of the Semitic family of languages, it shares similarities with languages such as Aramaic and Hebrew.

Classical Arabic is the historical language in which the Qur'an is written and the basis for the language's syntax and grammar. Classical Arabic remains widely used by religious scholars. Although most Muslims aren't Arab and translations of the Qur'an into many languages exist, most practicing Muslims learn the Arabic language in order to read and recite the Qur'an in its original language.

Modern Standard Arabic, or MSA, is the modern form of Classical Arabic. Understood across the Arab world, MSA is what newspapers and books are written in.

There are considerable differences between written and spoken Arabic. Spoken Arabic differs greatly from country to country, and some dialects are even mutually unintelligible.

The Arabic language is written from right to left, and back to front. In addition to Arabic, several other languages use the Arabic alphabet, including Persian/Farsi, Urdu, Pashto and Kurdish.

Sources: American Association of Teachers of Arabic, BBC, PBS

Literature

Literature has always been held in high regard throughout the Islamic world. As Islam spread through the Middle East into Asia, North Africa and Spain, Islamic literature incorporated the diverse traditions of Arabic, Byzantine, Persian, Turkish, Urdu and African literatures.

Historically, poetry, essays and anecdotes were the literary forms of choice. Prose forms such as novels, short stories and plays are a modern addition to the literature.

The historical form of the literature, known in Arabic as *adab*, was a type of short narrative that was meant both to teach and to entertain. Typically, the *adab* combined advice about behavior or protocol with tales about stock characters such as rulers and judges. Originally a Persian genre, the *adab* was adopted into classical Arabic literature in the 9th century.

Source: Oxford Islamic Studies Online

Rumi: America's best-selling poet

Jalal ad-Din Muhammad Rumi, a Persian scholar and poet, was born in 1207 in what is now Tajikistan, although he lived most of his life in Turkey.

Rumi integrated poetry, music and dance into his religious practice, and composed many of his poems with the intent that they be sung, rather than recited. Rumi would often whirl while meditating or composing poetry. This is the origin of the Sufi order sometimes called whirling dervishes, who pray while performing a twirling ritual dance to the accompaniment of musical instruments.

Rumi's most famous work is the six-volume poem *The Masnavi*, written in couplets, which has influenced mystical thought and literature throughout the Muslim world. He spent the last twelve years of his life, until his death in 1273, dictating this masterwork.

Rumi's poetry remains well known, and he is one of the best-selling poets in America.

Sources: Academy of American Poets, BBC, Encyclopaedia Britannica

Previous Sufism

Sufism, or Islamic mysticism, is more accurately described as an aspect, rather than a sect, of Islam. Sufi orders can be found within Sunni, Shia and other Islamic traditions.

Sufism began as a rejection of the extravagant lifestyle practiced by some leaders during the Umayyad Empire (661–750 C.E.). These early Sufis strove to emulate Muhammad's simple lifestyle and spiritual life.

Sufis believe that Islamic knowledge should be learned from teachers and not exclusively from books. Sufis engage in meditative practices, including chanting, music and dancing, with the goal of purifying the heart from spiritual ills such as arrogance, greed, jealousy, malice and pride and filling the heart with love and constant remembrance of god, compassion and mercy.

Although relatively few in number, Sufism has helped to shape Islamic and Western philosophy, literature and history.

Watch a concert by the Sama Ensemble performing Sufi Muslim chants and songs in the Farsi language: [QR_Sama Ensemble here](#)

Sources: BBC, Encyclopaedia Britannica, The Pluralism Project at Harvard University

Scholarly & intellectual tradition of Islam

Islam has a long history of scholarship and invention. The two oldest surviving universities in the world, founded in 859 and 970 in Morocco and Egypt, were Islamic centers of learning.

In 830, the Abbasid ruler Al-Mamun established the "House of Wisdom" in Baghdad. Arab scholars translated ancient Greek, Persian and Indian works of philosophy and science into Arabic and built upon them to make important scientific and technological advances in the fields of architecture, astronomy, chemistry, mathematics and medicine.

- Astronomer and mathematician Al-Khwarizmi (770-840) wrote several books on arithmetic that would be influential for hundreds of years. His book *Kitab al jabr w'al-muqabala* is considered the founding text of algebra. The Arabic phrase "al jabr" in the book's title is the source of the modern word "algebra."
- Alchemist Jabir ibn Hayyan (722-815), known as the father of Arab chemistry, developed techniques including sublimation, distillation, crystallization, purification, oxidation and evaporation filtration that are still used by scientists today.
- Physician, surgeon and chemist Al-Zahrawi (936-1013) wrote a 30-volume medical encyclopedia that remained a leading medical text for more than 500 years, and designed more than 200 surgical instruments, including syringes, droppers, scalpels and forceps.
- Philosopher, physician and polymath Ibn Nafis (1210-1288) was the first to correctly describe pulmonary circulation, or the movement of blood from the right to the left side of the heart via the lungs, a revolutionary discovery.
- Astronomer and mathematician Al-Battani (858-929) made remarkably accurate astronomical



observations, refining existing values for the length of the year and of the seasons, for the annual precession of the equinoxes, and for the inclination of the ecliptic. He also improved Ptolemy's astronomical calculations by replacing geometrical methods with trigonometry.

- Physician Al-Razi (865-925) wrote two medical encyclopedias, *Kitab Al-Mansuri* and *Al-Hawi*, that became standard texts for Islamic and European medical students well into the 19th century. He is known as the greatest physician of the Islamic world.

Many scholars believe that this body of Muslim scholarship, imported into medieval Europe through Moorish Spain, was a crucial catalyst for Europe's emergence from the Dark Ages into the Renaissance.

Sources: British Medical Journal, Devlin's Angle (Mathematical Association of America), Encyclopaedia Britannica, Guinness Book of World Records, Museum of the History of Science, National Geographic, The Pluralism Project at Harvard University, Science Museum Brought to Life: Exploring the History of Medicine

Recommended reads

Here are some YA and adult books featuring Muslim American teens, as recommended by the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA), Goodreads and Kirkus Reviews:

Does My Head Look Big In This? by Randa Abdel-Fattah

When sixteen-year-old Amal decides to wear the hijab full-time, her entire world changes, all because of a piece of cloth.

Ten Things I Hate About Me by Randa Abdel-Fattah

For the past three years Jamie has hidden her Lebanese background from everyone at school. But now things are getting complicated...

American Dervish by Ayad Akhtar

A family drama centered on questions of religious and ethnic identity.

The Domestic Crusaders by Wajahat Ali

A day in the life of a modern, Muslim Pakistani-American family of six eclectic, unique members, who convene at the family house to celebrate the 21st birthday of the youngest child.

The Memory of Hands by Reshma Baig

A poetic collection of short stories about Muslims in America.

Ask Me No Questions by Marina Budhos

A novel about the trials a Bangladeshi girl's family faces as illegal immigrants in post-9/11 America.

Ahmed Deen and the Jinn at Shaolin by Yahiya Emerick

American Muslim teen Ahmad Deen travels to China – and finds a mystery.

Layla Deen and the Popularity Contest by Yahiya Emerick

A quiet, introverted American Muslim teenager's world is thrown into turmoil when the school runs a popularity contest – and someone wrote her name on the sign up list!

Dahling, if You Luv Me, Would You Please, Please Smile by Rukhsana Khan

A Muslim girl tries to appease the kids in her classroom.

Scarlett Undercover by Jennifer Latham

Whip-smart, determined, Black Muslim sleuth Scarlett has tested out of the last years of high school, founding a detective agency instead of going to college.

Habibi by Naomi Nye

A romantic novel about a young American girl who goes with her family to Palestine.

First Daughter: Extreme American Makeover by Mitali Perkins

When 16-year-old Sameera joins her father's presidential campaign, she finds the national spotlight blinding, especially when it's focused on her Pakistani roots.

BESTEST. RAMADAN. EVER. by Medeia Sharif

When a 15-year-old contemporary American Muslim from a "half-way religious" family opts to observe Ramadan, she has no idea how difficult and rewarding it will be.

When Wings Expand by Mehded Maryam Sinclair

In addition to the average trials of an adolescent, teenage Canadian Muslim Nur must deal with her mother's impending death from cancer.

to come

MS. MARVEL – Kamala Khan

Kamala Khan is a 16-year-old Muslim girl from New Jersey – who just happens to be a super hero.

Like many teenagers, Kamala straddles two worlds: that of her conservative Pakistani Muslim family and that of her high school peers. Her life got even more complicated when the Terrigen Mist swept over the Earth, revealing her super powers as Ms. Marvel.

Kamala balances the challenges of high school frenemies, family expectations, sibling rivalries and, oh yeah – super villains – as Jersey City's resident super hero and as a new member of the Avengers.

Super powers don't make Kamala's life easier – they make it even more complicated. But they also give her another, bigger arena in which to explore her identity as a woman, a first-generation American and a Muslim.

Did you know? Kamala Khan is not the first Muslim comic book character. Her predecessors just in the Marvel universe include Josiah al hajj Saddiq ("Josiah X") and Sirocco (real name unknown). Previous female Muslim characters include Sooraya Qadir ("Dust") and Veil (real name unknown).

Source: Marvel Comics

Going beyond the text **A common word between us and you**

In 2007, 138 of the world's most powerful Muslim clerics, scholars and intellectuals from all branches of Islam came together to write an open letter to the world's Christian leaders. In pairs, read "A Muslim Letter to Christians" by Emily Flynn Vencat of NEWSWEEK at cnpublishations.net/2007/10/12/muslims-appeal-to-christians. Think about the ideas presented in this letter and discuss them with your partner. Read the letters to the editor in the *Tampa Bay Times*. Discuss with your partner how these letters compare to the open letter. Create a graphic organizer – chart or Venn diagram – showing this comparison. Next, write your own letter to a religious or political leader you consider in a position to promote understanding, tolerance or peace between disparate groups or factions. Before you begin writing, create an outline showing the most important points to include. Share your outline and letter with your class.

Source: Taking a Closer Look at Religions Around the World, Teaching Tolerance

1930

The Nation of Islam is created in the U.S. by Wallace Fard. It is based on some Islamic ideas, but differs significantly from mainstream Islam in its core beliefs.

1933

Nation of Islam founder Wallace Fard is succeeded by Elijah Muhammad. The movement develops into a strong ethnic organization combatting white racism and converting African-Americans to a lifestyle influenced by Islam.

1934

The Mother Mosque, the first building built specifically to be a mosque, is established in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

1948

The state of Israel is created. Palestinian and Lebanese refugees flee to the United States.

1952

The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952 (McCarran-Walter Act) upholds the national origins quota system established by the Immigration Act of 1924, but relaxes the ban on Asian immigration and introduces preferences based on professional skills and family reunification.

1952

The U.S. military recognizes Islam as a religion; members of the armed forces can now officially identify themselves as Muslim.

1957

President Dwight D. Eisenhower and First Lady Mamie Eisenhower attend the dedication of the Islamic Center of Washington, D.C., a mosque and Islamic cultural center.

My thoughts

“My favorite Islamic holiday is Ramadan. It is a time where you truly test yourself mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually. It’s a challenge for sure. Some of my non-Muslim friends think I’m crazy when I say, “I don’t eat or drink from sunrise to sunset.” But it is so rewarding when you take that first bite of food at the end of a long day of fasting. You feel proud of yourself. It gives you the power to not allow your bodily urges to overcome you. And it softens your heart towards those who deal with a lack of food on a daily basis.”

- Nisrin Dweik, 24, University of South Florida graduate

“My favorite Islamic holiday is Ramadan, a month dedicated to fasting and worshipping Allah (God). I love walking into a mosque past sunset and finding dozens of Muslims worshipping. There is a captivating characteristic in people praying to Allah in middle of the night, a raw form of sincerity that seems unique to the month of Ramadan. Generally, my family will break fast together at home, follow our dinner with tea and then head over to the mosque.”

- Rahma Elmohd, 21, University of South Florida student

“My favorite Islamic holiday is Eid. After Ramadan Muslims celebrate Eid and all of our families get together for dinner to spend quality time. Also, the gifts that come with it!”

- Sarah Judeh, 14, Alonso High School student



Aminah Muhammad Ahmed and her children, 17-month-old Khalil Ahmed (left) and 5-year-old Fawziyah Ahmed (right) at The Masjid Al-Muminin in St. Petersburg in 2003. Ahmed converted to Islam from Catholicism in 1975. Photo by Lara Cerri, *Times*



HOLIDAYS AND CELEBRATIONS

Islamic calendar

The Gregorian calendar, the internationally accepted civil calendar, is based on the solar year – the time it takes the Earth to revolve once around the Sun.

Unlike the Gregorian calendar, the Islamic calendar is based on the lunar year. Each lunar month is one cycle of the Moon’s phases, beginning with the first visibility of the crescent Moon after the new Moon.

Since lunar months are shorter than solar months, the lunar year is about 11 days shorter than the solar year. This means that the months of the Islamic calendar shift with respect to the months of the Gregorian calendar. This is why Islamic holidays and observations such as Ramadan occur on different dates every year.

Sources: *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, Pew Research Center, United States Naval Observatory

Eid-ul-Adha

Eid-ul-Adha, the most important holiday in the Muslim calendar, marks the end of Hajj, the sacred pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca that all Muslims who are able are required to undertake at least once. It also commemorates the prophet Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice his son when he believed that God had commanded him to. This narrative plays a prominent role in all three major monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, although there are differences in the texts.

Eid-ul-Adha is important to Muslims because it recognizes Abraham’s complete obedience to

the will of God, and reminds them of their own submission to God. This is central to the faith: the word “Islam” in Arabic means submission to the will of God.

This holiday is typically celebrated with prayers, visits with family and friends, gifts and a special meal. Traditionally, Muslims who can afford it sacrifice a domestic animal and share out the meat with family, friends and the poor. Eid-ul-Adha is a four-day public holiday in most Muslim countries.

Eid-ul-Fitr

The second-most important holiday in the Islamic calendar, Eid-ul-Fitr celebrates the end of Ramadan, the month when practicing Muslims abstain from eating, drinking, smoking and other indulgences from dawn to sunset each day.

Ramadan is believed by Muslims to be the month in which the first verses of the Qur’an were revealed by God to Muhammad. This month of fasting is intended to foster compassion for the indigent, develop self-control and willpower against temptation, and cultivate a sense of spirituality, humility, forgiveness and community.

Each evening during Ramadan, Muslims gather after sunset with family, friends, neighbors and community members to share Iftar, a special evening meal that breaks the daily fast.

The three-day celebration of Eid begins when the first sight of the next month’s new moon is seen in the sky. Eid is celebrated differently around the world with everything from prayers to circuses, but most commonly with a special celebratory meal – the first daytime meal for a month – visits with family and friends, treats and gifts, and

special prayer services at mosques and at other gathering places. In most Muslim countries, the entire period of Eid al-Fitr is a national holiday.

Lailat al Qadr

Lailat al Qadr – “Night of Power” – commemorates the night during which Muslims believe that the Qur’an was first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad by Allah. Lailat al Qadr is traditionally celebrated on the 27th day of the month of Ramadan. Lailat al Qadr is spent praying for forgiveness and studying and reciting the Qur’an. Many Muslims will stay up all night on this night.

Ashura

The holiday of Ashura represents very different things for Sunni and Shia Muslims.

For Sunni Muslims, Ashura is a day of fasting modelled after the Jews of Medina. It commemorates Moses’ and the Israelites’ escape from captivity in Egypt.

For Shias, Ashura is one of the holiest days in the Islamic calendar, commemorating the martyrdom of Hussein ibn Ali, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad (whose death led to the split between Sunnis and Shias).

This is a solemn day of mourning and prayer for Shias, typically observed with mourning rituals and passion plays re-enacting the martyrdom.

Many Shias will make a special pilgrimage to Karbala, where Hussein died, on Ashura. Some Shia men pay tribute to the suffering of Hussein by flagellating themselves with whips or chains or cutting themselves. Other Shia leaders do not approve of this practice and organize Ashura blood drives instead.

Ashura is celebrated on the tenth day of the Islamic month of Moharram.

Milad un Nabi

Milad un Nabi, which falls on 12 Rabi-ul-Awwal of the Islamic calendar, marks the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad. Not all Muslims observe this holiday. Those who do commemorate it with family and public gatherings, where parents and religious leaders share stories about the life, character and teachings of the Prophet.

Jumma

In addition to the five daily prayers, practicing Muslims may attend communal prayers, which are held every Friday afternoon at the mosque. Attendance at Jumma is mandatory for men.

Lailat ul Bara’h

Lailat ul Bara’h (Night of Forgiveness) takes place two weeks before Ramadan, on the 15th night of the Islamic month of Shabaan. On this night, Muslims pray and seek forgiveness for their sins. Some may visit relatives’ graves. Charitable giving is also traditional. In some parts of the world, Lailat ul Bara’h is commemorated with fireworks.

Sources: BBC, CNN, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*,

ACTIVITY – Religious holidays and school calendars

Historically, school calendars in the United States have scheduled holiday breaks around major Christian and Jewish holy days. As the U.S. becomes increasingly ethnically and religiously diverse, members of various groups have requested that school boards recognize their holy days with time off. Some school systems in states including Connecticut, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York and Vermont give students at least one Muslim holiday off.

1 Case study: Montgomery County, Maryland

Until 2014, the school district of Montgomery County, Maryland closed school for the Christian holidays of Christmas and Easter and the Jewish holidays of Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah, and listed those religious holidays on its official school calendar.

In 2013, local Muslim leaders asked that equal recognition be given to at least one of the two major Muslim holidays, Eid-al-Fitr and Eid-al-Adha.

In response, Montgomery's Board of Education eliminated references to all religious holidays on the published calendar for 2015-2016.

Montgomery County schools will still be closed for the Christian and Jewish holidays, as in previous years. According to Board members, although those days happen to coincide with major Christian and Jewish holidays, the days off are not meant to observe those religious holidays but are either days the state requires schools to be closed or days that have shown a high level of absenteeism.

2 Case study: New York City, New York

Traditionally, New York City schools have closed on the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur and have scheduled school recesses during Christmas, Good Friday, Easter and Passover.

In 2009, local Muslim leaders asked city officials to close public schools on Eid-al-Fitr and Eid-al-Adha. The city council passed a nonbinding vote calling for the city and the state to create the two school holidays.

In 2015, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio announced that the 2015-2016 school calendar would recognize the Muslim holidays of Eid-al-Fitr and Eid-al-Adha as well as the Lunar New Year, a major holiday for Asian Americans, in addition to the Jewish holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and the Christian holiday of Good Friday.

3 Case study: Hillsborough County, Florida

Hillsborough County Public Schools traditionally closed for the major Christian holidays of Christmas, Good Friday and Easter and for the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur.

In 2004, local Muslims asked the school board to coincide days off with Eid-al-Fitr and Eid-al-Adha, as it historically had done for the Christian and Jewish holidays.

In response, the Hillsborough County School Board eliminated all religious holidays from the school calendar beginning with the 2007-2008 school year. The spring and winter breaks continued to coincide with the Christian holidays of Easter and Christmas.

For the next two school years, classes were scheduled on the Christian holiday of Good Friday, leading to fierce public debate. Parents and religious groups organized protests and mass absences. In 2008, 80 percent of students and 40 percent of bus drivers stayed home on Good Friday. By 2010, the mass absences had dropped by half, but 42 percent of students and 19 percent of bus drivers still stayed home.

In 2010, the Board voted to add a "non-student day" on Good Friday beginning with the 2010-2011 school year. Ever since, Good Friday has been scheduled as either a non-student day or a teacher conference day in Hillsborough County.



(From left) Sabrina Khalil, 12, Sarah Rahman, 13, Amin Khalil, Nadia Khalil, 12, Farah Khalil and Aliya Khalil, 10, break their fast by eating dates to begin their iftar during Ramadan 2008. Photo by Brian Cassella, *Times*

In small groups, read the news articles listed below and discuss the answers to the following questions:

1. Should religious holidays be school days off?
2. What factors should school and government leaders consider when deciding?
3. How do we balance the needs of students to participate in their religious traditions with laws that require students to attend school enough days a year to get a quality education?
4. What social and political aspects have come up regarding the question of Muslim holidays becoming school days off?
5. List the solutions the three school systems found to deal with the question of religious holidays. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each approach?
6. Approximately 10 percent of students in New York City schools are Muslim. How do the demographics in your school district compare to those in New York City? Are those demographics reflected in your school holiday calendar?

Based on the facts and opinions in the articles, which solution do you think has the best chance of working? Individually or in pairs, create a presentation designed to persuade your school board to adopt your solution. In the presentation, support your point of view with factual evidence and good reasoning. Consider presenting your evidence in the form of graphics, interviews and/or personal appeals.

Washington Post, "Holidays' names stricken from next year's Montgomery schools calendar"

http://www.washingtonpost.com/local/education/christmas-stricken-from-school-calendar-after-muslims-ask-for-equal-treatment/2014/11/11/f1b789a6-6931-11e4-a31c-77759fc1eacc_story.html

Wall Street Journal, "Muslims Press for School Holidays in New York City" <http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB125297372149610431>

New York Times, "New York City Adds 2 Muslim Holy Days to Public School Calendar"

http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/05/nyregion/new-york-to-add-two-muslim-holy-days-to-public-school-calendar.html?_r=2

Tampa Bay Times, "Drop religious holidays in Hillsborough schools, panel says"

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/education/drop-religious-holidays-in-hillsborough-schools-panel-says/909965>

Tampa Bay Times, "Schools study Good Friday attendance disparities"

<http://www.tampabay.com/news/education/schools-study-good-friday-attendance-disparities/430026>

Activity taken from: *The School Holiday Calendar*, Teaching Tolerance

1962

The U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, in *Fulwood v. Clemmer*, determines that Islam qualifies for constitutional protection and affirms the right of Muslim prison inmates to facilities for religious services.

1965

The Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965 (Hart-Celler Act) abolishes the national origins quota system and establishes a new immigration policy based on family reunification and attracting skilled labor to the United States.

1975

Wallace D. Muhammad, the son of Elijah Muhammad, takes over leadership of the Nation of Islam after his father's death and brings most of his followers into mainstream Islam. He later creates the Muslim American Society.

1977

Minister Louis Farrakhan, rejecting the reforms of W.D. Muhammed, reestablishes the Nation of Islam along its original philosophy.

1991

Imam Siraj Wahhaj, spiritual leader of the Masjid al-Taqwa community in Brooklyn, New York, becomes the first Muslim to offer the opening prayer in the United States House of Representatives.

The Islamic Cultural Center, the first building erected as a mosque in New York City, is completed.

Charles Bilal is elected mayor of Kountze, Texas, becoming the first Muslim to head a U.S. municipality.

1992

Imam W. Deen Mohammed, an African-American Islamic spiritual leader, becomes the first Muslim to offer the opening prayer in the United States Senate.

THE ARTS IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD

Visual Arts

“As it is not only a religion but a way of life, Islam fostered the development of a distinctive culture with its own unique artistic language that is reflected in art and architecture throughout the Muslim world.”

- Metropolitan Museum of Art

The tradition of visual arts and architecture in the Islamic world is exceptionally rich and diverse, drawing as it does upon the cultures of Africa, the Middle East, and Central and South Asia. According to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the term “Islamic art” not only describes art that is created in the service of the Muslim faith, but also art produced in the Muslim world and that created by Muslim artists. It covers a wide range of religious and secular artistic production, from intricate mosques and prayer rugs to household items and decorative fine arts.

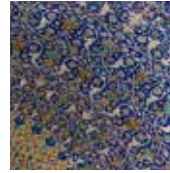
Artistic elements shared across the Islamic world include calligraphy and geometric, floral and vegetal patterns:

Calligraphy

Calligraphy is fundamental to Islamic art. Because Islam teaches that the Qur’an was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad in Arabic, the Arabic text of the Qur’an is sacred. The Arabic language thus holds a special significance across the Islamic world. Because it is associated with the written word of God, calligraphy is considered to be among the highest forms of art. However, not all Arabic calligraphy is religious. In addition to quotations from the Qur’an and other religious texts, calligraphic inscriptions can feature secular texts such as poetry or inscriptions praising leaders. Calligraphy can be found throughout the art and architecture of the Islamic world on metalwork, pottery, stone, glass, wood and textiles.

Geometric patterns

One of the most widely recognized characteristics of Islamic art is its use of geometric patterns. In Islamic art, geometric design is a primary art form, as opposed to other traditions where it is used mainly in borders or as a complement to a figural design. By creating complex, symmetrical, abstract patterns from repetition of simple shapes such as circles and triangles, artists strive to reflect the underlying order found in nature and the infinite nature of God.



Floral and vegetal patterns

Plant motifs and patterns have been used in Islamic art and architecture from the very earliest Islamic period, drawing on the artistic traditions of the Byzantine Empire, Coptic Egypt and the pre-Islamic Sasanian Empire of Iran. Over time, increasingly detailed abstract floral and vegetal designs became one of the most common decorative motifs across the Islamic world.

Figural design

The depiction of images of living beings is controversial in Islamic art. The Qur’an prohibits idolatry, or the worship of images. Although the Qur’an does not explicitly forbid figural imagery, the collection of religious law known as the Hadith are interpreted by some to do so. For this reason, figural imagery is usually found only in secular art and architecture. This is why cartoons depicting Muhammad are controversial and offensive to some Muslims.

Architecture

Traditionally, the most distinctive type of building in the Islamic world is the mosque, with its domes and minarets (a tall spire from which the call to prayer is issued).

The Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, built in 692, is usually considered to be the first example of Islamic architecture. Although the floor plan reflects Roman and Byzantine design, the interior decoration features the complex vegetal patterns and Arabic calligraphy that would become defining characteristics of Islamic art and architecture.



The Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem was built in 711. Featuring a large dome and four minarets, it is much more typical of subsequent Islamic architecture than the Dome of the Rock.



The Taj Mahal, the mausoleum of the wife of the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan, may be the most famous example of Islamic architecture in the world. Completed in 1648, it features a huge dome, four minaret-inspired towers and a white marble exterior decorated with floral and calligraphic designs.



The influence of Islamic architecture can be seen locally in the historic Tampa Bay Hotel (now the University of Tampa’s Plant Hall). Built in 1891, the building features six onion-domed minarets, four cupolas and three domes reminiscent of Moorish architecture.



Contemporary Islamic art

Contemporary artists – both Muslim and non-Muslim – draw inspiration from traditional Islamic art by using its techniques and incorporating its imagery to express their personal artistic visions.

Sources: AIA Florida, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Metropolitan Museum of Art, National Park Service, Oxford Islamic Studies Online, University of Tampa, Victoria and Albert Museum

Marium Rana

Marium Rana is a Pakistani-American visual artist who works primarily in ink and aqueous media. A graduate of Florida State University, she currently teaches fine art and art history in Tampa.

In 2011, Rana traveled to Pakistan to study traditional Mughal miniature painting. This technique includes painting with a brush made from one hair of a squirrel’s tail.

Currently, Rana is working on a series of paintings called A Place to Call Home. This series delves into the complexity of belonging to two different cultures and trying to make a home out of stories of places and moments one has not personally experienced.

Learn more about Marium Rana and view her artwork at mariumrana.com.



Peace House Productions

Peace House was founded in 2015 by two University of South Florida students, Ahmad Hussam and Nick Armero, with the mission of raising awareness and creating positive change.

Peace House has produced a number of videos and documentaries, including Drop Books Not Bombs, a documentary about Syrian refugees in Turkey, and Muslims Read Hate Comments, a video featuring Muslim Americans reading hate comments posted on a news article about a fire that destroyed a daycare center at a local mosque.

Their latest project is Salahadin, a historic drama about Salahadin Ayoubi, the celebrated 12th-century Muslim military and political leader. After a successful Kickstarter campaign that raised \$84,000 to produce a pilot, Peace House decided to seek additional funding to produce the series in full. They recently concluded an innovative social media campaign which secured a meeting with Netflix to pitch the series.

Learn more about Peace House Productions at peacehouse.us. Support their efforts to produce Salahadin by using the hashtag #NETFLIXListen on Facebook and Twitter.

Watch the official Salahadin trailer:



Music

There are both secular and religious musical traditions in the Islamic world. Music is an important part of celebrations, holidays and festivals in many Muslim cultures.

However, music also is a subject of debate in the Muslim world, because many interpret the hadith (the collected sayings of Muhammad) as cautioning against music and musical instruments.

All traditions of Islam accept the chanting of the call to prayer and of passages from the Qur'an, although this is not considered "music" in the same sense as popular or secular music. However, some Muslims believe that other music, especially instrumental music, is forbidden. In contrast, others accept music as permissible as long as it does not condone illicit behavior, such as drinking alcohol.

Many Muslims view music as a means of connecting with God or of promoting religious values. Religious or praise singing, often accompanied by drumming, is common in numerous cultures. Shia passion plays performed for the Ashura holiday often include songs. Practitioners of Sufism include not only chanting, singing and music, but also various forms of meditative dance in their worship – a musical tradition called dhikr.

Because the Islamic world encompasses so many different cultures, many styles of music have been practiced and are still found throughout it today. Contemporary Muslim artists draw inspiration from a myriad of traditional and contemporary sources.

Sources: Asia Society, Oxford Islamic Studies Online, UGA Virtual Center for Interdisciplinary Studies of the Islamic World

Yusuf Islam

American singer-songwriter Yusuf Islam, born Cat Stevens, began his musical career in the 1960s and topped the charts in the 1970s with songs such as "Wild World," "Morning Has Broken" and "Peace Train." Yusuf converted to Islam in 1977. In 2014, he was inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. Learn more about Yusuf Islam at catstevens.com.



Listen to "Peace Train":

Source: catstevens.com

Arooj Aftab

Pakistani-American singer Arooj Aftab calls her world fusion music "neo-Sufi." She draws inspiration from Sufi poetry, classical Sufi music and jazz. Trained in music production/engineering and composition at Berklee College of Music in Boston, Aftab released her debut album, *Bird Under Water*, in 2014. Learn more about Arooj Aftab at aroojaftabmusic.com.



Listen to "Yaad Piya Ki Aey":

Sources: aroojaftabmusic.com, Huffington Post

Ani Zonneveld

Malaysian-American Ani Zonneveld is a singer, songwriter, producer, and activist. In 2005, she wrote and produced the first Islamic pop album by a female singer, *Ummah Wake Up*, followed by an interfaith album titled *One*. Her latest album, *Islamic Hymns-Celebration of Life*, presents Islamic worship and devotional songs written and arranged in the Western classical scale. In 2006, Zonneveld co-founded Muslims for Progressive Values, a national grass-roots organization. Learn more about Ani Zonneveld at a-n-i.net.

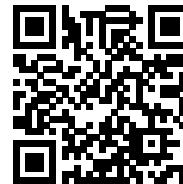


Listen to "In my soul":

Sources: a-n-i.net, International Museum of Women – Muslima

Mo Sabri

Mo Sabri is a Tennessee-born Muslim rapper and singer. Sabri's lyrics seek to educate listeners about Islam and to urge tolerance, respect and compassion towards all. His most famous song, "I believe in Jesus," teaches listeners that Muslims revere Jesus as a prophet. The music video for "I believe in Jesus" has been viewed more than 1 million times on YouTube. In 2013, Sabri attended the White House National Prayer Breakfast at the invitation of President Barack Obama. Learn more about Mo Sabri at Facebook.com/TheMoSabri.

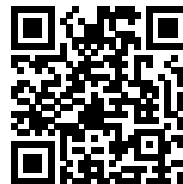


Listen to "I believe in Jesus":

Sources: Aslanmedia.com, johnsoncitypress.com, Religion News Service LLC

Kareem Salama

Egyptian-American Muslim country-western singer Kareem Salama was born and raised in a small town in rural Oklahoma. Salama's music, more spiritual than religious, is inspired by themes of tolerance, peace, home and family values. After two successful self-released albums, Salama's first mainstream worldwide album, *City of Lights*, was released in 2011. Learn more about Kareem Salama at kareemsalama.com.



Listen to "City of Lights":

Sources: kareemsalama.com, nytimes.com

Native Deen

Native Deen is a trio of African-American Muslims from Washington, D.C. whose music is a fusion of rap, hip hop and R&B. Native Deen's music is inspired by Islam, calling listeners to keep the faith, live better lives, and not to succumb to the pressures and temptations of modern society. They use only percussion instruments and synthetic sounds and have released two voice-only albums to accommodate traditional opinions on the use of musical instruments in Islam. Their single "My Faith My Voice" has been viewed more than 1,800,000 times on YouTube. Learn more about Native Deen at natedeeden.com.



Listen to "My Faith My Voice":

Sources: natedeeden.com

Yuna

Malaysian Muslim singer-songwriter Yuna began writing songs at the age of 14 and performing live while still in her teens. Her music, often compared to that of Adele and Norah Jones, blends contemporary pop, acoustic folk and soulful R&B. Yuna has won the Malaysian equivalent of the Grammys, the Anugerah Industri Muzik award every year since 2010. After four successful releases in Malaysia, Yuna released her first American EP, *Decorate*, in 2011. Her first full-length American album, *Yuna*, was released in 2012. Her latest album is *Nocturnal*, released in 2013. Learn more about Yuna at yunamusic.com.



Listen to "Live Your Life":

Sources: New York Times, yunamusic.com

1993

Captain Abdul-Rasheed Muhammad is appointed as the first Muslim chaplain in the U.S. military.

1996

First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton hosts the first Eid al-Fitr celebration at the White House.

1999

Osman Siddique is sworn in as the first Muslim U.S. Ambassador.

2001

The U.S. Postal Service issues the first stamp honoring a Muslim holiday, Eid al-Fitr.

2001

Terrorists from the militant organization Al Qaeda attack the World Trade Center and Pentagon, claiming to act in the name of Islam.

2006

Keith Ellison of Minnesota becomes the first Muslim elected to Congress.

Sources: Islamic Networks Group, HISTORY.com, PBS, The Pluralism Project at Harvard University, U.S. Department of State Bureau of International Information on Programs, U.S. Department of State Office of the Historian, The Washington Post



Elizabeth Rutemiller holds Andre Holmes, 1, at the 15th annual Tampa Bay Muslim Alliance Islamic Charity Festival in 2012. Photo by Carolina Hidalgo, *Times*

"I don't wear hijab on a regular basis. I only wear it to the mosque and for prayer... In my eyes, the hijab is a symbol of modesty... (and) "modesty" in different parts of the world means completely different things. For example, modesty (in reference to dress code) in the U.S is completely different than modesty in Saudi Arabia. Because the majority of the people in Saudi Arabia do cover their heads, a woman without a head covering in Saudi Arabia will likely be deemed "immodest" if she exits her home without her head covered. She will draw unnecessary attention to herself, and will likely be judged. In the U.S, where most people do not cover their heads; more attention is drawn to a woman who chooses to cover her head. I have a lot of respect for women who choose to cover themselves in Islam for the right reasons, but I also do not feel that one should be judged or discriminated against for choosing not to do so."

- Nisrin Dweik, 24, University of South Florida graduate

"I myself wear the hijab and I am proud of wearing it... Wearing the hijab is a way of showing who you truly are and that you are a Muslim and that you believe that there is no other god but Allah. That you are a Muslim woman in America, that you are stronger than others and don't care for what people will say about you for wearing it. The way you wear it expresses you. I wear it because it shows that I respect my religion and obey Allah and for the world to know that YES I am a Muslim woman and I am proud and there is nothing to be ashamed of."

- Zena Omer, (age), American Youth Academy student

"Growing up in America wearing hijab has never really been in issue... Honestly I love wearing it, it's a great way to spread knowledge about Islam and the hijab.

To me personally, wearing hijab gives me strength and courage. It lets me practice my religion proudly and it makes me stick out. I love when people are interested in the hijab and ask me questions about it, because it shows that they are interested in me and my religion. It shows that they want to know more about Islam and Muslims no matter what the media portrays us to be."

- Khadijah Kamarra, 18, Hillsborough Community College student

"The funniest question I think someone has asked me was in regards to the hijab: 'Do Muslim women shower in all of those clothes?' In case you are wondering, the answer is no."

- Nisrin Dweik, 24, University of South Florida graduate

CUISINE

Food is an integral part of culture. As The Globalist points out, "Next to breathing, it is the most basic of human needs. Mixed with culture and ethnicity, food is a powerful ingredient in human and foreign relations. It is how individuals and societies relate to one another."

In every culture on earth, food has significance as a shared tradition that defines cultural identity and brings families and communities together. Every season, holiday, religious observance and celebration has its own food.

In Islamic cultures, community is key to the food culture and communal meals are common, such as the daily Iftar during Ramadan, which can be either a family or community affair.

The diversity of Muslim cultures around the world means that Islamic cuisine offers a wide range of delicious dishes to try. Here are just a few, compiled by cook Elena Aiyad, to whet your appetite!

Sambal

Sambal is a traditional Indonesian chili sauce that is a staple at Indonesian tables. Almost every region in Indonesia has its own variation of this spicy-sweet-tangy condiment that is commonly used on broiled, grilled or roasted meats, fish and vegetables. This recipe is adapted from epicurious.com and the Permanent Mission of Indonesia.

Ingredients

- 1 large stalk of fresh lemongrass
- 2 fresh red chilies (such as huachinangos, jalapeños, or serranos), stemmed and very finely chopped. For a milder sambal, seed the chilies.
- 2 shallots, peeled and very finely chopped
- 3 teaspoons peanut oil
- 1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

Preparation

1. Cut off the hard bottom end and the green top of the lemongrass stalk, leaving a pale piece approximately 5 inches long. Discard the tough outer layers and chop very finely.
2. Transfer the lemongrass, chilies and shallots to a bowl. Add the oil, lime juice and salt to taste and stir well to combine. Let rest for 10 minutes before serving to allow the flavors to meld.

Want to find a halal restaurant near you?

Zabihah is the world's largest guide to halal restaurants and products. Visit zabihah.com to find restaurants near you.



Writer Molly Moorhead shares a Ramadan meal with the Iddou family of Ait Oumress, Morocco in 2006. From left, daughter Karima, mother Aicha and son Anouar gather to break the fast. Photo courtesy of Molly Moorhead

What is halal?

The Qu'ran sets out certain dietary standards for what foods Muslims may and may not eat. Halal is an Arabic word meaning lawful or permitted. The opposite of halal is haram, which means unlawful or prohibited. Halal and haram apply to all facets of Islamic life, but they have very specific meanings when applied to food.

Practicing Muslims may not eat pork or certain other animals. They must also ensure that any meat they do eat has been slaughtered and prepared using halal practices.

The Qu'ran forbids alcohol and intoxicants, which includes food ingredients containing alcohol. Sources: Council for American-Islamic Relations, Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America

Butternut Squash Tagine

This North African dish's name comes from the earthenware pot with a "hat" in which it is traditionally cooked. The variations of this dish are endless and may include vegetables, fruits and meats.

Ingredients

- 1 can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1 medium butternut squash, peeled and cut into 2-inch cubes
- 10 cherry tomatoes
- 1 onion, chopped
- 4 gloves of garlic, crushed
- ¼ cup olive oil
- ½ teaspoon each of cayenne pepper, cumin, paprika and turmeric
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 2 tablespoon tomato paste
- 2 cups water
- 2 tablespoons each chopped fresh parsley and coriander
- Salt to taste

Preparation

1. Heat the oil in a skillet or wok. Add the onion and cook until just transparent.
2. Add the garlic, cayenne, paprika, turmeric and cumin and cook for 30 seconds.
3. Stirring continuously, add the tomato paste, salt, sugar, tomatoes and chickpeas.
4. Add the water and squash. Simmer, covered, on very low heat for 35 minutes.
5. Serve over plain couscous or rice.

Circassian Chicken

This traditional dish from the Caucasus Region makes an exciting alternative to everyday chicken recipes.

Ingredients

- 1 pound boneless chicken breasts, cooked and shredded
- 1 ½ cups chicken stock, warmed
- 1 pita round
- 4 tablespoons olive or walnut oil
- 4 teaspoon paprika
- 1 cup walnuts
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 4 garlic cloves, peeled
- 4-5 green onions, chopped
- Juice of ½ lemon
- Parsley, chopped, to garnish
- 1/3 cup walnuts, chopped, to garnish
- Salt and ground black pepper to taste

Preparation

1. Heat the oil in a pan. Add the paprika and cook until its flavor is released. Remove from the heat and set aside.
2. Tear the pita round into pieces and soak in the warm chicken stock.
3. Process the walnuts, green onions, garlic, cayenne pepper, soaked pita, paprika oil and salt until it forms a paste. If needed, add chicken stock by the teaspoon to thin.
4. Arrange the shredded chicken on a platter. Top with the walnut paste and garnish with the chopped walnuts, chopped parsley, ground black pepper and lemon juice.
5. Serve with warm pita or on top of French baguette slices.

DRESS

What is hijab?

As in many other religions, Islamic law requires that both men and women behave and dress modestly. For example, Muslim men and boys are always to be covered from the navel to the knee, while Muslim women should wear loose-fitting, non-revealing clothing. However, immense differences exist in how different cultures, traditions and individuals interpret this requirement for modesty.

The word hijab comes from the Arabic for “cover” or “veil,” and is used to describe the head coverings worn by many Muslim women. Most Muslim women who choose to wear the hijab do so for religious reasons, but some wear it to express their cultural identity: many dress practices are cultural, rather than religious, traditions. This is the reason for the enormous diversity in acceptable Muslim dress across Islamic countries. The color of a woman’s hijab has no religious significance.

Just over one-third of American Muslim women (36 percent) always wear the hijab whenever they are out in public, and an additional 24 percent wear the hijab most or some of the time. 40 percent never wear it.

There are many different styles of Muslim female dress. Some of the most common are:

Hijab:

Most commonly worn by women in the West, this is a square scarf that covers the head and neck but leaves the face uncovered.



Dupatta:

This is a loose scarf that covers the head, chest and arms, worn in South Asia.



Shalwar kameez:

This is a two-piece outfit consisting of loose trousers covered by a long tunic, worn in South Asia by both men and women.



Chador:

This is a long cloak that wraps around the head and drapes to the feet, covering the entire body but leaving the face uncovered. The chador is common in Iran.



Abaya:

This is a loose black garment that covers the head and body. The abaya is common in Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates.



Niqab:

This is a face covering that covers the mouth and nose but leaves the eyes uncovered. The niqab is most common in Saudi Arabia.



Burka:

This covers the entire face and body, with just a mesh screen to see through. The burka is most common in Afghanistan.



Sources: BBC, Council for American-Islamic Relations, Pew Research Center, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill Center for Global Initiatives

Commonalities between religions

Many religions require their adherents to follow rules regarding modest dress. For example, in orthodox sects of Judaism, men cover their heads and married women cover their hair in public. Greek and Russian Orthodox Christian women also cover their hair in public, while in Sikhism, both men and women cover their hair in public. Hasidic Jews and some Christian denominations such as the Amish and the Mennonites have very specific dress codes that require both men and women to be completely covered in public.

Can you tell her religion from her head covering?

Take the online quiz at judaism-islam.com/quiz-can-you-tell-her-religion-from-her-head-covering.

Case study: Samantha Elauf

In 2008, 17-year-old Samantha Elauf scored well enough in an interview to be hired by clothing retailer Abercrombie and Fitch in Tulsa, Oklahoma. However, the store’s interviewers later discussed her head scarf, which one assumed she wore because of her religion, and decided not to offer her the job because it conflicted with the company’s dress code.

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) took up Elauf’s case. A jury found for Elauf and awarded her \$20,000. However, Abercrombie appealed that decision, saying the company was not liable because Elauf had never asked for a religious accommodation.

The case went all the way to the United States Supreme Court, which ruled for Elauf, agreeing with the EEOC that it was not necessary for Elauf to explicitly tell the interviewer about her religious practices in order to be protected by the federal antidiscrimination law known as Title VII. “Title VII forbids adverse employment decisions made with a forbidden motive, whether this motive derives from actual knowledge, a well-founded suspicion, or merely a hunch,” Justice Antonin Scalia said.

Abercrombie has changed its dress code and settled similar lawsuits since the 2008 incident. It now permits workers to wear hijab.

Case study: SAS

In 2010, France passed a law making it illegal to wear full-face coverings such as burkas or niqabs in public. Beginning in 2011, anyone in violation of the law would be fined €50 and/or required to take a citizenship course, while anyone forcing a woman to wear a niqab or burqa could be fined up to €0,000 and/or sentenced to a year in prison.

A 24-year-old French citizen known as SAS sued, arguing that the outlawing of the full-face veil was “inhumane and degrading, against the right of respect for family and private life, freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of speech and discriminatory”.

The French government asked the court to throw out the case, claiming that the law applied to any covering of the face in a public place, not solely the burka and niqab.

In 2014, judges at the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) upheld France’s ban, accepting the government’s argument that it encouraged citizens to “live together”.

Sources: The Guardian, Tampa Bay Times, Telegraph.co.uk, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill Center for Global Initiatives

Going beyond the text Media literacy

Muslim women’s dress is a hotly debated topic. Some view the hijab as a restriction on women, while others believe that the hijab allows women more freedom to express themselves. In Belgium, France and the Netherlands, it is illegal to wear full-face coverings such as burkas or niqabs in public. However, in countries such as Afghanistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia, women who are not fully covered are often harassed and can even be arrested. Write down your thoughts about this issue in your journal. Think about the concept of “forced veiling” and government-dictated uniforms. Does the western world embrace this concept? Look for examples of this in the *Tampa Bay Times*.

Extension activity

Use the *Tampa Bay Times* and the Internet to research opinions about hijab in America, France and elsewhere. The websites worldpress.org, newslink.org and allafrica.com are good places to start. Evaluate your sources by asking questions such as: Is there more fact or opinion?

Does the report or article set out to be factual, or is its purpose to present a point of view? How do you know?

How could the style of writing be described?

How does the use of language affect how you feel about the debate and its causes?

What images are used? Why were these images chosen? What effects do they have?

Who is providing information? Who has a voice?

Whose voices are missing?

Write a fully-developed essay about what you have discovered and learned. Share what you have learned with your class.

Sources: Oxfam, Education for Global Citizenship – A Guide for Schools and Oxford Islamic Studies Online, Lesson Plan: Islam and Women’s Dress

BUSTING MYTHS AND BUILDING UNDERSTANDING

MYTH: All Muslims are terrorists.

FALSE: Although some terrorist groups self-identify as Muslim, mainstream Muslims in the United States and around the world reject the ideology of Islamic extremism.

Following the 9/11 attacks and up to the present day, Muslim organizations around the world condemn violence and extremism. For example:

“We have consistently condemned terrorism and extremism in all forms and under all circumstances, and we reiterate this unequivocal position. Islam strictly condemns religious extremism and the use of violence against innocent lives. There is no justification in Islam for extremism or terrorism. Targeting civilians’ life and property through suicide bombings or any other method of attack is haram – prohibited in Islam – and those who commit these barbaric acts are criminals, not ‘martyrs.’”

- The Fiqh Council of North America

“We reaffirm our long-standing, unqualified condemnation of all acts of terrorism and all acts of violence committed against the innocent, and our denunciation of religious extremism and particularly the use of Islam to justify terrorism in any of its forms.”

- The Islamic Society of North America

“Muslims, therefore, are not only forbidden from committing crimes against innocent people, but are responsible before God to stop those people who have the intention to do so, since these people ‘are planting the seeds of corruption on Earth’.... The perpetration of terrorist acts supposes a rupture of such magnitude with Islamic teaching that it allows to affirm that the individuals or groups who have perpetrated them have stopped being Muslim and have put themselves outside the sphere of Islam.”

- Islamic Commission of Spain

Noted researcher Charles Kurzman, a professor of sociology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and co-director of the Carolina Center for the Study of the Middle East and Muslim Civilizations, has compiled a list of Islamic statements against terrorism at kurzman.unc.edu/islamic-statements-against-terrorism.

Sources: kurzman.unc.edu, Pew Research Center

60 percent of Americans feel that “Too many Americans think that all Muslims are terrorists.”

- *What It Means to Be American: Attitudes in an Increasingly Diverse America Ten Years After 9/11*, The Brookings Institution and Public Religion Research Institute

MYTH: Jihad means “holy war.”

FALSE: Mostly false. The Arabic word jihad literally means “struggle” or “effort.”

Most modern Muslims understand jihad as a believer’s internal struggle for spiritual self-improvement – the effort to live according to the Muslim faith as well as possible. This is known as the “Greater Jihad.”

The term jihad can also mean an outward struggle to defend or strengthen Islam. This is known as the “Lesser Jihad.” Most modern scholars define this as a struggle against oppressors or aggressors who commit injustice. It can involve military force, but it is not “holy war” in the sense of a crusade.

The misuse by extremists of the term jihad to describe or justify acts of terror or war is rejected by the vast majority of Muslims worldwide. Muslims around the world strongly reject violence in the name of Islam.

Sources: BBC, Interfaith Alliance, National Geographic, Pew Research Center, Religious Education Freedom Project of the First Amendment Center

MYTH: All terrorists are Muslim.

FALSE: Although terrorist groups who self-identify as Muslim pose a serious threat, the facts show that the majority of terror attacks in the U.S. and Europe are perpetrated by non-Muslims.

Since 9/11, there have been 24 attacks by Muslims, compared with 65 attacks associated with right-wing ideologies in the United States, according to the Global Terrorism Database maintained by the START Center at the University of Maryland.

The FBI report *Terrorism 2002-2005* found that between 2002 and 2005, 23 of 24 terrorist incidents in the U.S. were perpetrated by non-Muslim domestic terrorists active in the animal rights, environmental and white supremacist movements. Of terror plots prevented during the same period, 10 of 14 were planned by non-Muslim perpetrators, of which eight were involved with right-wing extremism. The report makes clear that this not a new trend: between 1980 and 2005, 94 percent of U.S. terror attacks were committed by non-Muslims.

According to a recent survey by The Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security, law enforcement agencies in the United States consider anti-government violent extremists, not radicalized Muslims, to be the most prevalent threat of political violence that they face.

The same is true in Europe: Europol’s 2015 European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report shows that the vast majority of terror attacks in Europe are perpetrated by non-Muslim separatist, anarchist and left-wing groups. In 2014, only two out of a total of 201 terrorist attacks – less than 1 percent – were classified as religiously inspired. Western European intelligence agencies estimate that less than one percent of their Muslim population is at risk for becoming radicalized.

Sources: Christian Science Monitor, Europol, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Global Terrorism Database, Pew Research Center, Triangle Center on Terrorism and Homeland Security

Double standard

Americans employ a double standard when evaluating violence committed by self-identified Christians and Muslims:

- 83 percent of Americans say that self-proclaimed Christians who commit acts of violence in the name of Christianity are not really Christians, compared to only 13 percent who say that these perpetrators really are Christians.
- 48 percent of Americans say that self-proclaimed Muslims who commit acts of violence in the name of Islam are not really Muslims, compared to 44 percent who say that these perpetrators really are Muslims.

Source: *What It Means to Be American: Attitudes in an Increasingly Diverse America Ten Years After 9/11* by the Brookings Institution and Public Religion Research Institute

MYTH: Myth: All Muslims are Arab.

FALSE: False. A Muslim is a follower of the Islamic religion. Muslims can be any ethnicity and nationality. Worldwide, the Southeast Asian nation of Indonesia has the world’s largest Muslim population, while African Americans make up the largest group of American Muslims.

Arab is a cultural term meaning a native speaker of the Arabic language or a person from an Arabic-speaking country in the Middle East or North Africa. Although the majority of Arabs are Muslim, about 5 percent practice other faiths, including Christianity and Judaism.

Sources: Cambridge Academic Content Dictionary, Encyclopædia Britannica, Pew Research Center

American Muslims: Facts vs. Fiction

This 11-minute film by Unity Productions Foundation provides data-based answers to the most frequent questions Americans ask about their Muslim neighbors.

Watch the film:



What is Sharia?

Sharia is an Arabic word meaning “the way” or “the path.” It spells out how practicing Muslims should lead their daily lives in accordance with Islamic law.

Sharia is based on the Qur’an and the interpretations of Muslim scholars over the centuries. Sharia is not a static or set collection of laws, but is interpreted differently in different countries and by different communities of Muslims.

Although most Muslim countries incorporate some aspects of sharia into their civil law, very few follow the extreme interpretations of nations such as Iran and Saudi Arabia, where harsh penalties such as stoning, flogging and amputation are allowed for offenses such as adultery and theft. More common are rules governing dress and behavior in public. Many countries follow a dual system, in which the government is secular but sharia courts exist for familial and financial disputes among Muslims. In most Muslim countries, non-Muslims are not expected to obey sharia.

In the U.S., the First Amendment to the Constitution guarantees religious liberty for all Americans and prohibits the government from establishing religious law. While U.S. judges sometimes consider Islamic law while making a decision (for example, recognizing a foreign marriage, divorce or custody decree), it would be illegal to establish Islamic courts.

Because American Muslims are so diverse, their understanding of sharia varies widely. As the Interfaith Alliance and Religious Freedom Education Project of the First Amendment Center point out: “For



Shafe Huda, center, of St. Petersburg, bows his head in prayer as he and other Muslim worshippers listen to a sermon given by Imam Haitham Barazanji in Lake Seminole Park in 1998. Photo by Joseph Garnett, Jr., *Times*

some, adherence to sharia means keeping some or all of the religious observances, such as prayer, fasting or charitable giving. For others, sharia also affects... matters such as marriage, divorce, dress, inheritance, business transactions and property.”

Sources: BBC, Council on Foreign Relations, Interfaith Alliance, Pew Research Center, Religious Education Freedom Project of the First Amendment Center



My thoughts

“Islam is not about hate. The phrase that we say often in Islam is ‘As-salamu alaykum’ which means ‘peace be unto you.’ We are about peace, not hate.”

- Amer Khalil, 19, Saint Petersburg College student

“People act like we are all terrorists because of the actions of extremists that are thousands of miles away. I wish people realized that every religion has extremists that do immoral things.”

- Adam Samee, 17, Clearwater Central Catholic High School student

“I wish people knew that radicalism exist in all belief groups. Just because it isn’t reported as much as Islamic radicalism is doesn’t mean it doesn’t exist. Take all that you hear about Islam through mainstream media with a grain of salt – or just ignore it and meet a Muslim for yourself.”

- Rahma Elmohd, 21, University of South Florida student

“Islam means peace as most will know
But peace is not what’s being shown
The stereotypes have falsely advertised lies
They’ve taken terrorism and named it Islam in disguise
The media nowhere portrays the truth
Instead they’ve focused on the wrongdoings of a few
So let me inform you of what a true Muslim is supposed to do.”

- Sewar Quneibi, 17, American Youth Academy student

Islamophobia

Tolerance: 1) A fair and objective attitude toward those whose opinions and practices differ from one’s own. 2) The commitment to respect human dignity.

- The Museum of Tolerance

Islamophobia: A dislike of or prejudice against Islam or Muslims, especially as a political force.

- The Oxford Dictionaries

According to the Pew Research Center, more than one-third of Americans have an unfavorable view of Islam and believe that Islam is more likely than other religions to promote violence.

Islamophobia is connected to international politics and, more specifically, to the fear of terrorism. Acts of terror and violence carried

out by Muslims and the political and media reactions to them have created a link in the public mind between Muslims and terrorism and have made many people fearful of Muslim communities.

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, anti-Muslim hatred is on the rise as activists and politicians exploit atrocities committed by the Islamic State and other extremists.

According to the Center for American Progress’ 2014 study Fear Inc. 2.0, “Islamophobia in the United States... takes the form of a general climate of fear and anger toward American Muslims, as seen in the “civilization jihad” narrative, the religious right’s rhetoric, and the biased media coverage of the Boston Marathon bombing. It comes out in cynical political efforts to capitalize on this climate of fear, as seen in state-level anti-Sharia bills introduced across the country and in far-right politicians’ grandstanding. And perhaps most dangerously, it manifests itself in institutional policies that view American Muslims as a threat.”

Going beyond the text Media myths

A “media myth” is created when groups are misrepresented because of the extreme action of a few in that group that dominates media coverage. In your journal, answering the following questions for each of the headlines below.

- Does this headline present an overgeneralization or stereotype?
- Would this headline make someone feel frightened or unsure about Muslims?
- Would this headline make someone reluctant to get to know a Muslim neighbor?
- What “loaded” or strong language is being used in this headline?
- What attitudes towards Muslims might be evoked by this newspaper headline?

“Bitter and twisted O.J. is turning into a Muslim!”

– National Enquirer, 8/28/2014

“ISIS – they’re in the US & ready to strike!”

– National Enquirer, 2/13/2015

“Crash shocker: German pilot was crazed Islamic terrorist!”

– Globe, 4/2/2015

“Muslim cemetery a plot by radicals to gain foothold in small Texas town, residents suggest”

– Salon.com, 7/21/2015

Look through the pages of the *Tampa Bay Times* to find examples of general stereotypes of media myths about specific groups of people. Think about the following questions as you look through the pages of the newspaper:

- Is Islamophobia different from other forms of racism?
- Why is the religious faith of all criminals not highlighted in the press?
- What other groups can you think of where the majority are blamed for the behavior of a minority?

Write your thoughts down in your journal and then formulate an opinion article or blog post about this topic. Use specific examples from the *Tampa Bay Times* and other researched sources to support your ideas.

Source: Islamophobia Education Pack by Show Racism the Red Card



Spring Hill residents Rasha Atfeh, 15, left, Nareman Amin, 15, and Naseem Akel, 14, break their Ramadan fast in 2004. Photo by Keri Wiginton, *Times*

Community Tampa Bay

Community Tampa Bay's mission is to cultivate inclusive leaders to change communities through dialogue and cross-cultural interactions. We give people the tools to have hard conversations with people who don't look like them or who come from different backgrounds. And we empower individuals to build relationships based on understanding and mutual respect.

For us, "culture" means the intersecting aspects that make up a person's social identity: race, ethnicity, nationality, sex, sexual orientation, gender, faith, class, ability and age.

We work with youth, young adults and adults, reaching more than 1,000 individuals annually with our unique approach to leadership development, which uses proven strategies in prejudice reduction. No matter who you are, we meet you where you are and involve you in the process of learning and change.

We have presented on the efficacy of our programs at the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland and have been recognized as providing Best Practice approaches in diversity education by the US Department of Education.

For more information about Community Tampa Bay, visit communitytampabay.org.



Doris Duke Charitable Foundation

The mission of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation is to improve the quality of people's lives through grants supporting the performing arts, environmental conservation, medical research and child well-being, and through preservation of the cultural and environmental legacy of Doris Duke's properties.

Established in 1996, the foundation supports four national grant-making programs. It also supports three properties that were owned by Doris Duke in Hillsborough, New Jersey; Honolulu, Hawaii; and Newport, Rhode Island.

DDCF's activities are guided by the will of Doris Duke, who endowed the foundation with financial assets that totaled approximately \$1.79 billion as of December 31, 2014. The foundation awarded its first grants in 1997. As of December 31, 2014, the foundation has awarded grants totaling approximately \$1.3 billion.

For more information about the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, visit ddcf.org.



Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art

The mission of the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art's Building Bridges Program is to increase the public's understanding of contemporary Muslim societies through the arts.

The Building Bridges Program seeks to increase public understanding of Islamic cultures through media and the arts. Since 2007, the Building Bridges Program has supported efforts to help the public increase their familiarity with and understanding of current day Muslim societies through arts and media programming.

For more information about the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art and the Building Bridges Program, visit ddfia.org.



Newspaper in Education



The Tampa Bay Times Newspaper in Education program (NIE) is a cooperative effort between schools and the Times Publishing Co. to encourage the use of newspapers in print and electronic form as educational resources – a "living textbook." Our educational resources fall into the category of informational text, a type of nonfiction text. The primary purpose of informational text is to convey information about the natural or social world. Since the mid-1970s, NIE has provided schools with class sets of the daily newspaper plus award-winning original educational publications, teacher guides, lesson plans, educator workshops and many more resources at no cost to schools, teachers or students. Each year, more than 5 million newspapers and electronic licenses are provided to Tampa Bay-area teachers and students free of charge thanks to our generous individual, corporate and foundation sponsors. NIE teaching materials cover a variety of subjects are correlated to the Florida Standards.

For more information about NIE, visit tampabay.com/nie, call 800-333-7505, ext. 8138 or email ordernie@tampabay.com. Follow us on Twitter at [Twitter.com/TBTimesNIE](https://twitter.com/TBTimesNIE).

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Florida Standards

This publication and its activities incorporate the following Florida Standards for high school: high school: **Social Studies:**

SS.912.A.1.1; SS.912.A.1.2; SS.912.A.1.3; SS.912.A.1.4; SS.912.A.1.5; SS.912.A.1.6; SS.912.A.1.7; SS.912.A.7.12; SS.912.A.7.15; SS.912.A.7.3; SS.912.C.2.12; SS.912.C.2.13; SS.912.C.4.3; SS.912.H.1.2; SS.912.H.1.3; SS.912.P.10.1; SS.912.P.10.10; SS.912.P.10.11; SS.912.P.10.12; SS.912.P.10.3; SS.912.P.10.4; SS.912.S.1.4; SS.912.S.1.6; SS.912.S.1.7; SS.912.S.1.8; SS.912.S.2.1; SS.912.S.2.2; SS.912.S.2.3; SS.912.S.2.4; SS.912.S.2.5; SS.912.S.3.2; SS.912.S.3.3; SS.912.S.4.1; SS.912.S.4.10; SS.912.S.5.11; SS.912.S.5.12; SS.912.S.5.4; SS.912.S.5.5; SS.912.S.6.6; SS.912.S.8.10; SS.912.S.8.4; SS.912.S.8.7; SS.912.S.8.9; SS.912.W.1.1; SS.912.W.3.1; SS.912.W.3.2; SS.912.W.3.3; SS.912.W.3.4; SS.912.W.3.5; SS.912.W.3.6 Language Arts: LAFS.910.RI.1.1; LAFS.910.RI.1.2; LAFS.910.RI.1.3; LAFS.910.RI.2.4; LAFS.910.RI.2.5; LAFS.910.RI.2.6; LAFS.910.RI.3.7; LAFS.910.RI.3.8; LAFS.910.W.1.1; LAFS.910.W.1.2; LAFS.910.W.1.3; LAFS.910.W.2.4; LAFS.910.W.2.5; LAFS.910.W.2.6; LAFS.910.W.3.7; LAFS.910.W.3.8; LAFS.910.W.3.9; LAFS.910.W.4.10; LAFS.910.SL.1.1 LAFS.910.SL.1.2; LAFS.910.SL.1.3; LAFS.910.SL.2.4; LAFS.910.SL.2.5; LAFS.910.SL.2.6; LAFS.910.L.1.1; LAFS.910.L.1.2; LAFS.910.L.3.4; LAFS.910.L.3.5; LAFS.910.L.3.6; LAFS.910.RH.1.1; LAFS.910.RH.1.2; LAFS.910.RH.1.3; LAFS.910.RH.2.4; LAFS.910.RH.2.5; LAFS.910.RH.2.6; LAFS.910.RH.3.7; LAFS.910.RH.3.8; LAFS.910.RH.3.9; LAFS.910.WHST.1.1; LAFS.910.WHST.1.2; LAFS.910.WHST.2.4; LAFS.910.WHST.2.4.5; LAFS.910.WHST.2.6; LAFS.910.WHST.3.7; LAFS.910.WHST.3.8; LAFS.910.WHST.3.9; LAFS.1112.RI.1.1; LAFS.1112.RI.1.2; LAFS.1112.RI.1.3; LAFS.1112.RI.2.4; LAFS.1112.RI.2.5; LAFS.1112.RI.2.6; LAFS.1112.RI.3.7; LAFS.1112.RI.3.8; LAFS.1112.W.1.1; LAFS.1112.W.1.2; LAFS.1112.W.1.3; LAFS.1112.W.2.4; LAFS.1112.W.2.5; LAFS.1112.W.2.6; LAFS.1112.W.3.7; LAFS.1112.W.3.8; LAFS.1112.W.3.9; LAFS.1112.W.4.10; LAFS.1112.SL.1.1 LAFS.1112.SL.1.2; LAFS.1112.SL.1.3; LAFS.1112.SL.2.4; LAFS.1112.SL.2.5; LAFS.1112.SL.2.6; LAFS.1112.L.1.1; LAFS.1112.L.1.2; LAFS.1112.L.3.4; LAFS.1112.L.3.5; LAFS.1112.L.3.6; LAFS.1112.RH.1.1; LAFS.1112.RH.1.2; LAFS.1112.RH.1.3; LAFS.1112.RH.2.4; LAFS.1112.RH.2.5; LAFS.1112.RH.2.6; LAFS.1112.RH.3.7; LAFS.1112.RH.3.8; LAFS.1112.RH.3.9; LAFS.1112.WHST.1.1;