

Comprehension Workbook 3

Talmud

(Jewish Bible)



Find out about the meaning of stories and articles

CurriculumVisions

VisionMasters

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Talmud

(Jewish Bible)



Find out about the meaning of stories and articles

understand • key words • summarise • sequencing • AF2-3 • AF4-5 • AF6-7 • discuss • create

Jewish faith

Matches the requirements of the Literacy Strategy and designed to integrate with the study of world religions. (This material is independent of any specific text book and can be used alongside any publisher's books including our Jewish Faith, Synagogue, Jewish art and writing and Jewish holy days books.)

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Unit 3: Talmud

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Talmud

The Jewish Bible that is written down in the Old Testament is only part of Jewish religious teachings. Jewish belief teaches that many other teachings were given by God to Moses and passed down in oral form. Over time, these teachings were written down, in a document called the Mishnah. Later, rabbis and other educated people wrote about the meaning of the teachings in the Mishnah. These writings were gathered together in a book called the Gemara. Together, the Mishnah and the Gemara are called the Talmud. Here are some passages from the Talmud. Many of these are similar to some of our modern laws.

If a man is carrying a barrel and another man walks by carrying a board, and the barrel is broken by the board, the man with the board is not liable, because both people have the right of way. If the man with the board came first, and the man with the barrel came behind him, and the barrel is broken by the board, the man with the board is not at fault. But if the man with the board is walking in front and stopped suddenly, and the barrel breaks; the man with the board is liable. But if the man with the board warned the man with the barrel to stop, the man with the board is not at fault.



If a man splits wood on private premises and injures someone in a public road, or if he is doing it in a public road and injures someone on private property, or if he is on private property and injures someone on another private property, he is responsible. If one ox was running after another ox, and injures the other ox, and the owners argue over who is responsible for the injury, the burden of proof rests with the one who wants to be paid damages.

Rabbi Hillel was in the habit of saying: "Do not cut yourself off from your community. Do not pass judgment on your neighbour until you have been in his place. Do not say anything that you do not want heard, because eventually it will be heard. Do not say, "Some day, when I have time, I will go to synagogue and worship, because then you will never make the time to worship."

Ben Zoma was in the habit of saying: Who is a wise man? He who learns from everybody. Who is a hero? He who conquers his anger. Who is a rich man? He who is satisfied with

A retailer has to clean his measures once every 30 days (because the stuff sticks to them and prevents accurate measuring). The wholesaler has to clean his measures once a year (the wholesaler must measure all the time, so stuff does not stick to his measures). The storekeeper must clean his weights once a week (as he takes hold of them with wet hands, and so they become heavier). Shop scales must be cleaned before each weighing.



Understanding words

Before we can understand a story we have to know what all of the words mean. Let's try one...

a Write a sentence in which you found the word 'liable'.

b From that sentence, write what you think 'liable' means.

c Write a new sentence using the word 'liable'.

d Use a dictionary to find words with a similar meaning (synonyms) to 'liable'.

e What is something a person may be 'liable' for.



Finding key words

Next, we need to find the key words that tell us what the story is about...

Read the story and underline the key words. Write the most important of these key words in a list like the one below. Write next to it a word that means a similar thing (a synonym). You don't have to use all the spaces, but you should not use more.

Key word	Synonym (similar word)
Example: fault	error

Summarising

(the gist of the story)

To summarise means to rewrite the story in a shorter version using as many of our key words from Task 2 as needed.

1 Write a heading for your summary.

2 Now write the main idea in one sentence.
e.g. "This story tells us..."

3 Now add some detail to the main idea by writing more sentences after it.

**Finally,
can you rewrite your
summary to make it better?**

- 1. Look out for errors such as using the same word too often – use alternatives.**
- 2. Make sure you have summarised the author's purpose in your OWN words.**
- 3. Make sure your summary is in a logical order.**
- 4. Is your summary informative AND interesting to others?**

**There is
nothing wrong
with rewriting; even
the best authors
rewrite their
work.**



Sequencing

Sequencing means getting the events in the right order. Write these sentences in the correct order, so they make sense.

Do not say anything that you do not want heard, because eventually it will be heard.

But if the man with the board warned the man with the barrel to stop, the man with the board is not at fault.

He who is satisfied with what he has.

The wholesaler has to clean his measures once a year (the wholesaler must measure all the time, so stuff does not stick to his measures).

A retailer has to clean his measures once every 30 days (because the stuff sticks to them and prevents accurate measuring).

If the man with the board came first, and the man with the barrel came behind him, and the barrel is broken by the board, the man with the board is not at fault.

If one ox was running after another ox, and injures the other ox, and the owners argue over who is responsible for the injury, the burden of proof rests with the one who wants to be paid damages.



Get to the facts

Answer these questions to see how much you know about the facts of the story.



Write a sentence to answer each of these questions:

- (a) If two people are walking past each other on a public road, one carrying a board and one carrying a barrel, and the barrel is broken by the board, who is responsible?
- (b) Why shouldn't you say anything that you don't want heard?
- (c) If a man is splitting wood in his front garden, and a piece of wood flies out into a public road and injures someone, who is responsible?
- (d) Who is a wise man?
- (e) How often do weights need to be cleaned?



Whys and wherefores

Answer these questions to see how much you know about the meanings in the story and how it was written.

1 Why is the man with the board liable for damage to the barrel if he stops suddenly?

2 If one ox injures another ox, who is responsible for proving which ox is responsible?

3 Why does the retailer have to clean his measures more often than the wholesaler?

4 Who is a rich man?



Opinions matter



Answer these questions to give your views and to develop the story.

- 1 In the first paragraph, imagine that instead of carrying boards and barrels, the two men were driving cars. Do the laws still make sense?
- 2 In an accident, do you think the burden of proof should always rest with the person who wants to be paid damages?
- 3 Why is "I don't have time" a bad excuse for not doing something important?
- 4 What does Ben Zoma mean by "rich" when he writes that a rich man is someone who is satisfied with what he has?
- 5 Do you think it takes more courage to conquer your anger or to yell at someone?



Talking it through

It often helps if a group of people get together and discuss a problem.



Discussion topic: Modern applications

Discuss how these laws, rules and sayings might fit in with today's laws and ways of behaviour. Do these rules and guidelines still make sense? Think of some modern situations where these laws or guidelines may still apply.



Make a story...

When you read a description it often gives you ideas about how the event might be described differently.



Follow the law

You are walking past a park carrying a plate of cakes. You are on the pavement. In the park, two kids are kicking a football. One of the kids yells "look out" and a moment later the football crashes into your plate and all of your cakes are squashed.

(Now continue the story of describing you would use the laws and guidelines in the Talmud to find out who was responsible for ruining the cakes...)

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