

Comprehension Workbook 8

Sukkah

(building a sukkah)



Find out about the meaning of stories and articles

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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.)

Contents

Unit 8: Building a sukkah

	Building a sukkah	2
	Understanding words	4
	Finding key words	5
	Summarising	6
	Sequencing	7
	Get to the facts (AF 2-3)	8
	Whys and wherefores (AF 4-5)	9
	Opinions matter (AFs 6-7)	10
	Talking it through	11
	Make a story...	12
	Print the story (from PDF)	13

Building a sukkah

The holiday of Sukkot has two different meanings. The first meaning of Sukkot is as a harvest festival. The word Sukkot means “booths” and the second meaning of Sukkot is that it remembers the time, described in the Bible, when the Jewish people spent 40 years wandering in the desert after fleeing Egypt. During Sukkot, families build shelters, called sukkah, in their gardens that remind them of the simple shelters the Jews slept in during their wandering. Eating in the sukkah for the seven days of the holiday is a commandment. Here are some of the rules for building a sukkah.

A sukkah must have at least two and a half walls. The walls do not have to be solid, but must be made of a material that will not blow away in the wind. Many people build the frame for the sukkah out of wood, and then make the walls from canvas. You can also build the frame out of plastic PVC pipes or bamboo. The walls can also be covered with natural materials.



The sukkah can be any size, but should be large enough for the whole family to eat in comfortably. The roof must be put on last. It must be made of something that grew up from the ground and was cut down, such as tree branches, palm fronds, bamboo, sticks or wood. These materials cannot be tied down or tied together. The roof must have enough bare spaces so that the stars can be seen, but must be dense enough to provide shade.

Most people decorate the sukkah. Because Sukkot is a harvest festival, one way to decorate it is with plants and vegetables from the area where you live. Families also hang children's artwork on the walls. Usually the whole family is involved in building and decorating the sukkah. One common decoration are four types of plants mentioned in the Bible. These are an etrog, which is a type of citrus fruit that looks like a large lemon, a branch from a palm tree, two willow branches and three myrtle branches.

During Sukkot families eat their meals in the sukkah. It is also a commandment during Sukkot to take the four plants and "rejoice before the Lord." So these four plants are tied together and held up and waved in six directions (north, south, east, west, up and down) while a blessing is said. This is done in synagogue and also sometimes at home.





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 'materials'.

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

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

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

e What are the names of some 'materials' that can be used to build a sukkah.



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: rejoice	celebrate

3

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.**

123
4

Sequencing

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

A sukkah must have at least two and a half walls.

So these four plants are tied together and held up and waved in six directions (north, south, east, west, up and down) while a blessing is said.

Usually the whole family is involved in building and decorating the sukkah.

The roof must be put on last.

You can also build the frame out of plastic PVC pipes or bamboo.

These materials cannot be tied down or tied together.



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) What does the word sukkot mean?
- (b) How many walls should the sukkah have?
- (c) What should the roof be made out of?
- (d) How big should the sukkah be?
- (e) What do families do in the sukkah?



Whys and wherefores

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

1 What are the two meanings of the holiday of Sukkot?

2 What is the sukkah a reminder of?

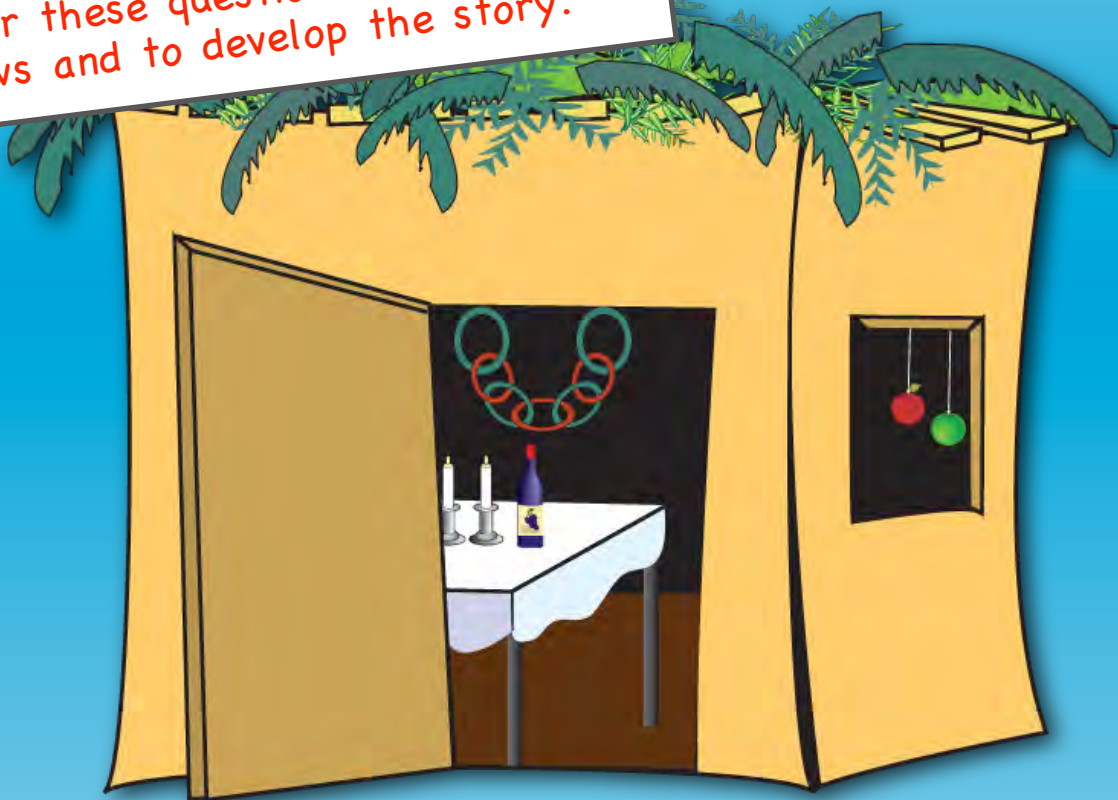
3 How is the sukkah decorated?

4 Draw a picture of a sukkah. Label the materials that you use.



Opinions matter

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



1 Why is the sukkah decorated with plants?

2 Why do you think the roof of the sukkah must be made from something that grew?

3 Why do you think the sukkah must be built so that you can see the stars through the roof?

4 The holiday of Sukkot is in September or October. How would you feel if you had to eat all your meals in a sukkah for a week?

5 Is building and decorating a sukkah a fun family activity?



Talking it through

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



Discussion topic: Shelters

Discuss the ways in which the sukkah is a reminder of the time when the Jewish people spent 40 years wandering in the desert? What kinds of shelters do you think they built? What materials do you think they used?



Make a story...

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



Build a sukkah

You and your family are going to build a sukkah. You decide to build it in your garden. First you gather the materials together and then you can start to build.

(Now describe what materials you would use to build the sukkah and how you would decorate it...)

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