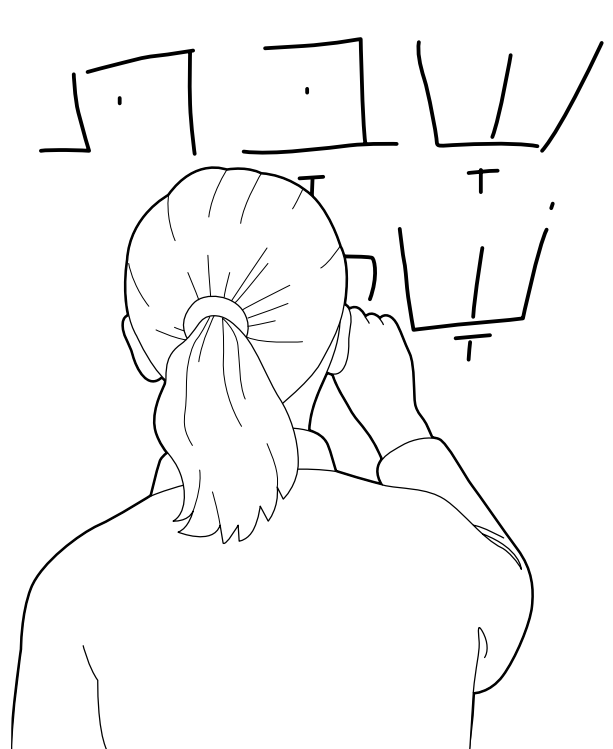


# A house of learning

One very important function of a synagogue is to provide a place for learning and study.



**Q1.** Many commandments in the Torah talk about the importance of learning. Describe three of them.

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**Q2.** What language is the Torah written in? .....

**Q3.** Learning to read the Torah is important, but what else do Jewish people learn to do with the Torah?

.....

**Q4.** How many letters are there in the Hebrew language? .....

**Q5.** In Hebrew, how are the vowel sounds shown?

.....



## Answers

1. **To learn about and teach the Torah; to study religious scholars; to respect the old and the wise.**
2. **Hebrew.**
3. **Think about what it means and discuss it with others.**
4. **22.**
5. **As dots or dashes above or below the letters.**

## Lesson objectives

- ▶ To review the role of the synagogue as a house of learning.
- ▶ To learn some of the ways that a synagogue is used as a house of learning.

## Lesson outcomes

- ▶ The children can identify some of the things taught in the synagogue.
- ▶ The children know why the synagogue is called a house of learning.

## Teaching notes

*Jewish children often attend "Sunday school" on both Saturday and Sunday. Very young children may learn about holidays and be told stories. Most Jewish children, however, attend school to learn Hebrew and to learn how to read and discuss the Torah. This is in preparation for an important ceremony called mitzvah, which takes place when the child is 13. At this ceremony, the child is called up to read from the Torah during worship for the first time.*

## Hebrew

*Most words in the Hebrew language can be reduced to a three-consonant root word that contains the essence of the word's meaning. For example, the root word K-D-Sh means "holy" or "sacred". From this root comes the word kedushah, meaning holiness; kodesh (from aron kodesh – holy cabinet); kiddushin, meaning betrothal, and many others.*

*Often, the vowel signs are not written and the meaning of the word must be gathered from the context. The vowel signs are also called nikkud, or points. There is also a cursive form of each letter, which is used for everyday writing. If the children have already studied Arabic in the Curriculum Visions 'Mosque' book, they may realise that both languages are very similar. This is because they both belong to the same language group – the semitic languages. In fact, many words are very similar in both languages.*

## Complementary work

*The children could use secondary sources to look at written Hebrew and learn more about the language.*

## Resources

*Secondary sources on the Hebrew language.*