

A day in the life (of an imam)



Find out about the meaning of stories and articles

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Muslim 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 Muslim Faith, Mosque, Muslim art and writing and Muslim holy days books.)

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A day in the life of an Imam

An imam is a Muslim cleric. Imams lead worshippers in the daily prayers, teach the Qur'an and other religious teachings and help worshippers with questions or problems. In some mosques, the imam may also help to run the mosque, organising fund raising activities and special programmes. Imams have usually undergone training in religious colleges. Imams can marry and usually live near the mosque.

5:00am It's still dark when I wake up for morning prayer. Many muslims say morning prayer at home, on their own, but I go to the mosque to worship with whoever shows up. I live next door to the mosque, so I can be there very quickly. The time for prayers changes throughout the year. Today, morning prayer begins at 5:45, so I wash and then open the mosque for prayer. Doing this every day, washing in cold water, and praying, is difficult, it is a test.

6:00am After prayer, I go home for breakfast and to spend time with my children before they go to school. Then I return to the mosque.

8:00am This is usually a quiet time, so I spend some time working on this week's sermon and answering emails.

10:00am I go to a local primary school. One of the teachers has asked me to come in and talk with the children about Islam for their RE lesson. On the way back to the mosque, I stop in to visit a worshipper who has been sick for some time. She has not been able to do the prayer movements because of her illness, and I reassure her that God will listen to her prayers, even if they are said in bed.

12:10pm I lead the worshippers in mid-day prayers.

1:00pm After a quick lunch, its back to the mosque. I have a list of people who have made appointments to come and get advice or discuss problems they are having. I meet with a college student who is worried about taking out a student loan. The Qur'an forbids charging interest on loans and he is worried that his loan is not correct according to Islamic law. I also meet with a woman who wants to arrange Arabic lessons for her two children.

2:00pm I lead afternoon prayers and then return to my office. A worshipper drops in to give a donation to the mosque. Another worshipper comes in to talk about her teenage son – she is worried because he has been staying out late and she wants advice. One worshipper wants advice about the Islamic requirement to give money to charity each year. Another worshipper wants an opinion on whether it is all right to go to an office party where he knows some people will be drinking alcohol.

4:20pm It is time for late-afternoon prayers. Then I teach a class of students who are studying the Qur'an. After spending time memorizing a part of the Qur'an, we discuss the meaning of the parts they have learned.

6:15pm Evening prayers. A lot of worshippers come in on their way home from work or after school. After the prayers, I spend time praying silently. Then I meet with more worshippers. Today there are several people who need advice. One couple wants marriage counselling. I meet with two people and make appointments to speak to the rest tomorrow.

8:00pm I go home and have dinner with my family. Some evenings I am at the mosque until 9 or even 10 at night, so I spend time with my family whenever I can. Then I read or watch television for a few minutes. By 10:30, I am in bed so I can get a good nights sleep before it is time for morning prayers.



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 'worshipper'.

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

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

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

e Draw a small picture to illustrate someone worshipping in a mosque.



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: advice	guidance

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.**



Sequencing

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

I meet with two people and make appointments to speak to the rest tomorrow.

I go home and have dinner with my family.

Today, morning prayer begins at 5:45, so I wash and then open the mosque for prayer.

I meet with a college student who is worried about taking out a student loan.

I lead afternoon prayers and then return to my office.

On the way back to the mosque, I stop in to visit a worshipper who has been sick for some time.



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) At what times does the imam lead prayers?
- (b) What does the imam do at the primary school?
- (c) Why is the college student worried?
- (d) What does the imam do right after late-afternoon prayers?
- (e) What does the imam do immediately after evening prayers?



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 do imams often live close to the mosque?

2 Why does the imam wake up so early in the morning?

3 What is the sick worshipper worried about?

4 How does the imam feel about early morning prayer?



Opinions matter

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



1 Does the imam's schedule seem very busy?

2 What does the imam spend most of his time doing?

3 Why is the man worried about going to the office party?

4 Does the imam discuss only questions about Islam, or does he talk to people about personal problems as well?

5 What advice would you give to the woman who is worried about her son?
Do you think the imam will have different advice?



Talking it through

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



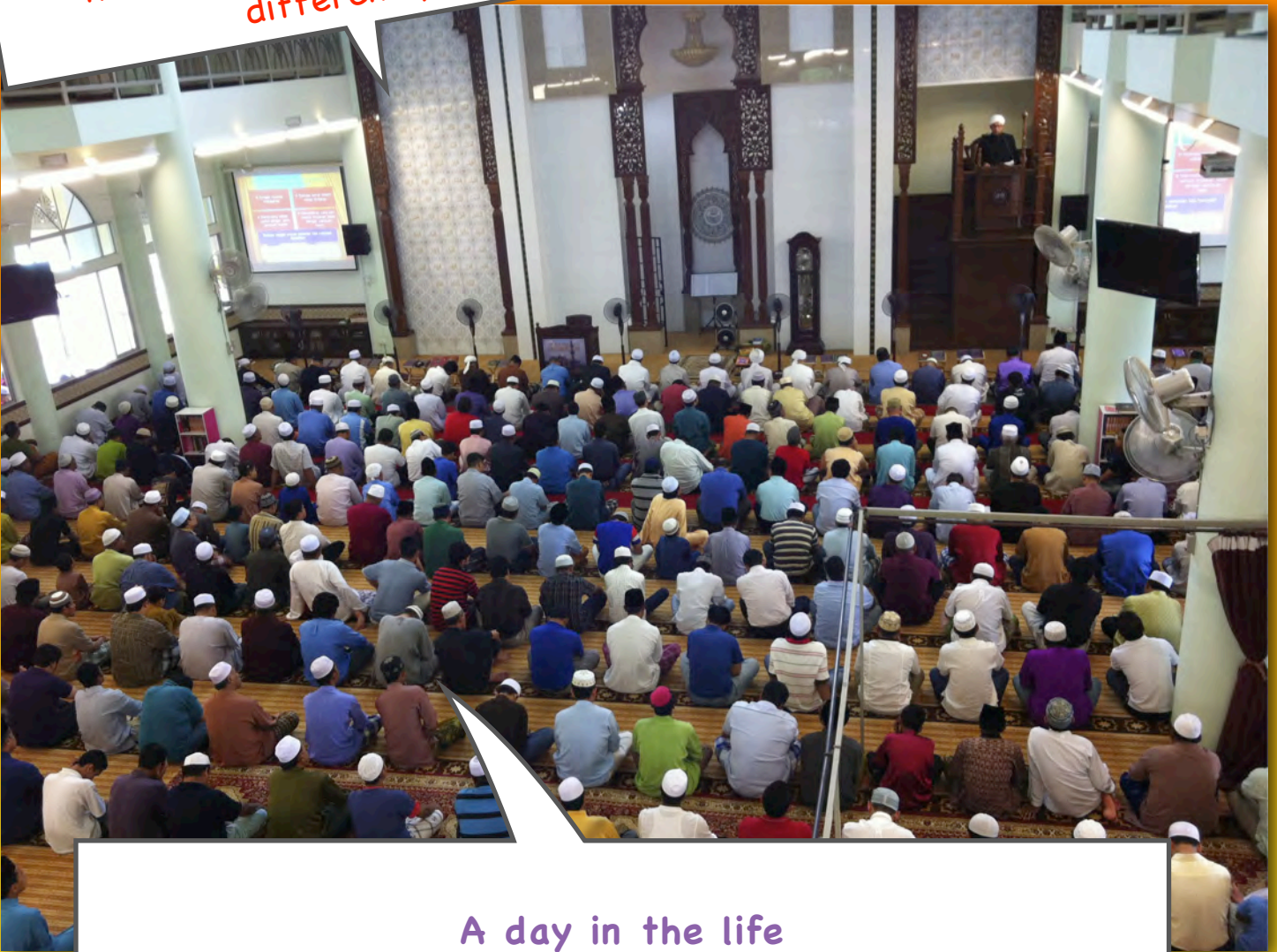
Discussion topic: Comparing days

Compare the day in the life of an imam with a day in the life of another religious leader, such as a rabbi or a priest. What do they have in common? How are they different?



Make a story...

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



A day in the life

You are an imam in a busy mosque. You get up early and go to the mosque for morning prayers...
(Now write about some of the other things that you do during the day. Include the daily prayers.)

A day in the life of an Imam

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