

Call to prayer



Find out about the meaning of stories and articles

CurriculumVisions

VisionMasters

Comprehension Workbook 4

Call to prayer



Find out about the meaning of stories and articles

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

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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Call to prayer

The call to prayer, or adhan, is used to announce the times of the daily prayer. In the times before everyone had watches or clocks to keep the time, the call to prayer would be sung from the minarets of the mosques, so everyone would know when it was time to pray. This is especially important as the times of the five daily prayers is based on the times of sunrise and sunset and changes each day. Today, the adhan is still sung from minarets throughout the Muslim world, although loudspeakers and recorded adhans are also used. The person who sings the adhan is called the muezzin.

The story of the first muezzin comes from the time of the Prophet Mohammed. One of Mohammed's companions, Ibn Zayd, had a dream where he saw someone calling all Muslims to pray from the roof of a mosque. Ibn Zayd told his dream to Mohammed, who said it was a vision from God. The Prophet Mohammed asked a Muslim called Bilal, who was an Ethiopian who was famous for his beautiful voice, to call worshippers to prayer. Bilal thus became the first muezzin. (The word muezzin comes from the Arabic word "mu'adhdhin", which means "one who gives the adhan.")

Traditionally, the muezzin stood at the top of the minaret for the adhan. Today, many muezzin sing the adhan from inside the mosque, using a microphone. One ancient tradition was for the muezzin to be blind, so he could not see into other people's houses while singing the adhan from the top of a minaret. The muezzin stands facing the direction of Mecca while singing the call to prayer.

One of Mohammed's early followers, Abu Huraira, once said that, "When the adhan is pronounced Satan takes to his heels and passes wind with a loud noise in order not to hear the adhan."

The adhan is always sung in Arabic. These are the words of the adhan in English.

The call to the pre-dawn prayer:

God is Great (repeat four times)

I bear witness that there is no god except the One God
(repeat two times)

I bear witness that Muhammed is the messenger of God
(repeat two times)

Rise up for prayer (repeat two times)

Rise up for Salvation (repeat two times)

Prayer is better than sleep (repeat two times)

God is Great (repeat two times)
There is no god except the One God

The call at all other prayer times:

God is Great (repeat four times)

I bear witness that there is no god except the One God
(repeat two times)

I bear witness that Muhammed is the messenger of God
(repeat two times)

Hurry to the prayer (repeat two times)

Hurry to salvation (repeat two times)

God is Great (repeat two times)
There is no god except the One God



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 'witness'.

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

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

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

e Write a sentence describing what you think the words 'bear witness' mean.



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: beautiful	wonderful

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?**

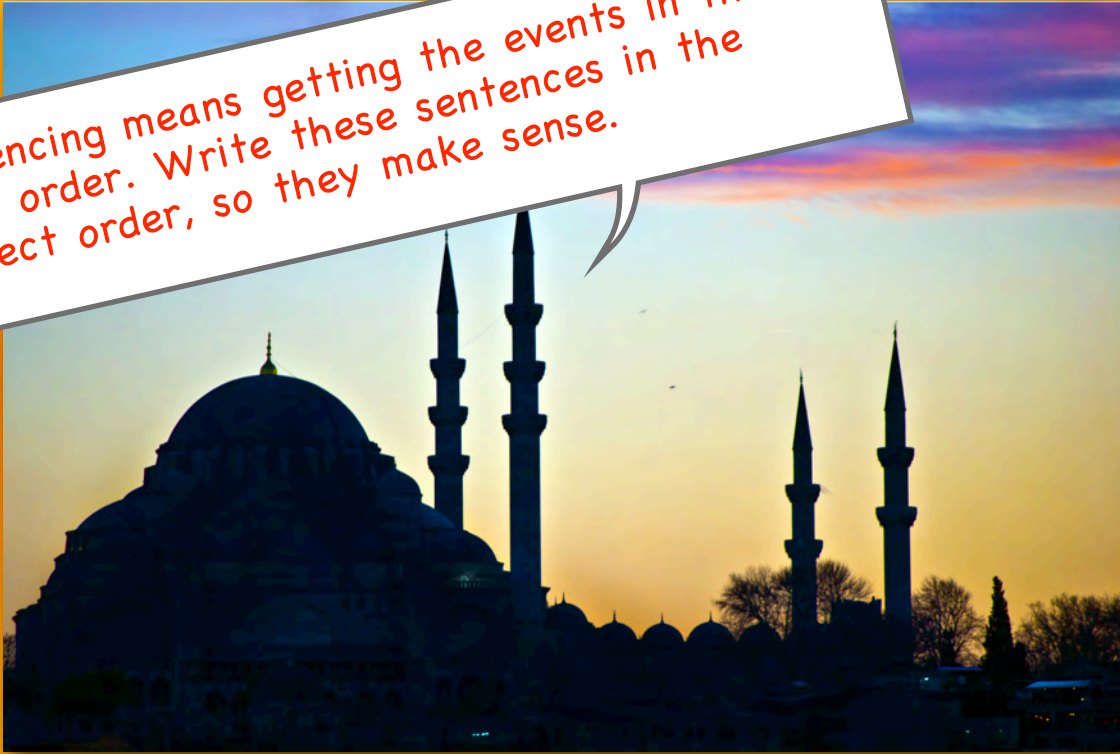
- 1. Look out for errors such as using the same word too often – use alternatives.**
- 2. Make sure you have summarised the author's purpose in your OWN words.**
- 3. Make sure your summary is in a logical order.**
- 4. Is your summary informative AND interesting to others?**

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

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4

Sequencing

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



Prayer is better than sleep

I bear witness that there is no god except the One God

Rise up for prayer

There is no god except the One God

Rise up for Salvation

I bear witness that Muhammed is the messenger of God



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 is the name of the person who sings the call to prayer?
- (b) What is the name of the call to prayer?
- (c) Where was the call to prayer traditionally sung from?
- (d) Who was the first person to sing the call to prayer?
- (e) What language is the call to prayer sung in?



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 were blind muezzin sometimes used in the past?

2 What are some different places the call to prayer is sung from today?

3 Why do you think the Prophet Mohammed chose Bilal to sing the first call to prayer?

4 What are the differences between the call to prayer sung in the morning and the call to prayer sung at other times?



Opinions matter

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

- 1 Why was the call to prayer important in the days before people had clocks and watches?
- 2 What do the words "takes to his heels" mean?
- 3 What do the words "passes wind" mean?
- 4 In many cities in Islamic countries, there are mosques every few blocks. Do you think the call to prayer is very loud in these places?
- 5 In Istanbul, Turkey, the city has set up classes to help teach muezzin to sing better. Do you think this is a good idea?





Talking it through

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



Discussion topic: Call to prayer

Listen to a recording of a call to prayer. Discuss how the call to prayer sounds and how it makes you feel. Imagine a city with hundreds of mosques all with muezzin singing the call to prayer at the same time. What do you think it would sound like?



Make a story...

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



The Adhan

It is early in the morning and you are staying in a city in a Muslim country, such as Egypt or Turkey. You are sleeping. Suddenly, you are woken up by the sound of the call to prayer from a nearby mosque...

(Now write about what you do next and how you feel to be woken up by the call to prayer...)

The call to prayer

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