

Comprehension Workbook 7

# Ramadan

## (celebrations)



Find out about the meaning of stories and articles

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## (celebrations)

*Young muslim man and his son  
with prepared food for iftar in  
Ramadan*



**Find out about the meaning of stories and articles**



# 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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# Celebrating Ramadan

The Muslim month of Ramadan celebrates the time when God gave the Qur'an to the Prophet Mohammed. Muslims believe that the month has been specially blessed by God and that good deeds that are done during Ramadan are especially loved by God – more than at other times of the year.

All Muslim adults who are physically able, are required to fast during Ramadan. Fasting means not eating or drinking anything between the times of sunrise and sunset. Because the Islamic calendar is based on the movements of the moon, the month of Ramadan is not at the same time every year. This means that sometimes Ramadan occurs in winter and sometimes in summer.

Here are the words of some Muslims describing how they feel about Ramadan.

The Muslim poet Rumi (1207– 1273):

“There is a hidden sweetness in the stomach’s emptiness. When the brain and the belly burn from fasting, every moment a new song rises out of the fire. The mists clear, and a new energy makes you spring up the steps before you. When the stomach is filled with food and drink, an ugly metal statue is seated where your spirit should be. When fasting, good habits gather like helpful friends. But even when power and control in your life are lost, they will return when you fast, like soldiers appearing out of the ground, or pennants flying in the breeze.”

Ali:

"Ramadan is a beautiful experience, because although it requires discipline, you learn patience and understanding for those around us who don't have enough to eat. The month of Ramadan is the same for everyone. The rich and the poor both go hungry during this month. It's a beautiful time also because you feel so close to your family and to other Muslims. People gather together at night, either at the mosque, or at someone's home, and break the fast together and pray at night."

Shaheed:

"Every morning during Ramadan is the pre-dawn meal called suhoor. Eating a balanced meal allows you to concentrate on your daily work or studies as well as on your prayers. When you eat the wrong foods, you feel tired. It is a reminder of how important it is to eat right all the time. For suhoor I eat foods with lots of energy like oatmeal, eggs and fruit. I also drink a lot of water, so I don't get thirsty during the day. The best part of eating breakfast so early is that you have some extra time for prayer in the morning. If the weather is nice, I go outside and read my Qur'an as the sun comes up."

Rana:

"Ramadan is God's month and it is a chance for Muslims to be closer to God and farther from Satan. I feel real happiness during Ramadan when I pray and talk to God. The first hours of each day's fast are the hardest, then it gets easier. As the day goes on, you feel quieter and calmer – it takes energy to be angry, so fasting helps me to stay calm and see the good in people. When I am done fasting, I try to remember the way I felt so I can stay calm in everyday life."



# 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 'discipline'.

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

**c** Write a new sentence using the word 'discipline'.

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

**e** Give an example of someone using 'discipline' in everyday life.



# 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	pretty

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.

The best part of eating breakfast so early is that you have some extra time for prayer in the morning.

When fasting, good habits gather like helpful friends.

Eating a balanced meal allows you to properly focus on your daily responsibilities as well as your religious ones.

The rich and the poor both go hungry during this month.

I feel real happiness during Ramadan when I pray and talk to God.

When the stomach is filled with food and drink, an ugly metal statue is seated where your spirit should be.



# Get to the facts

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

*iftar table for breaking fast in Ramadan.*



Write a sentence to answer each of these questions:

- (a) According to Ali, who do Muslims feel close to during Ramadan?
- (b) When was Rumi born?
- (c) What foods does Shaheed eat during suhoor?
- (d) For Shaheed, what is the best thing about eating breakfast before dawn?
- (e) For Rana, what is the hardest time of the day during Ramadan?



# Whys and wherefores

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

1 In the Rumi poem, what is the “new song” that rises out of the fire of hunger?

2 What does Ali learn during Ramadan?

3 Why would eating the wrong foods make you feel miserable?

4 Why is it important to drink a lot of water with the suhoor meal?



# Opinions matter

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

- 1 Why does Rumi say that fasting helps people to regain power and control?
- 2 In the Rumi poem, Rumi writes that a full stomach is like an ugly metal statue sitting where your spirit should be. What does Rumi mean by this?
- 3 Why do think Rana feels closer to God during Ramadan?
- 4 How does fasting help Rana to stay calm?
- 5 Why is Ramadan the same for everyone?



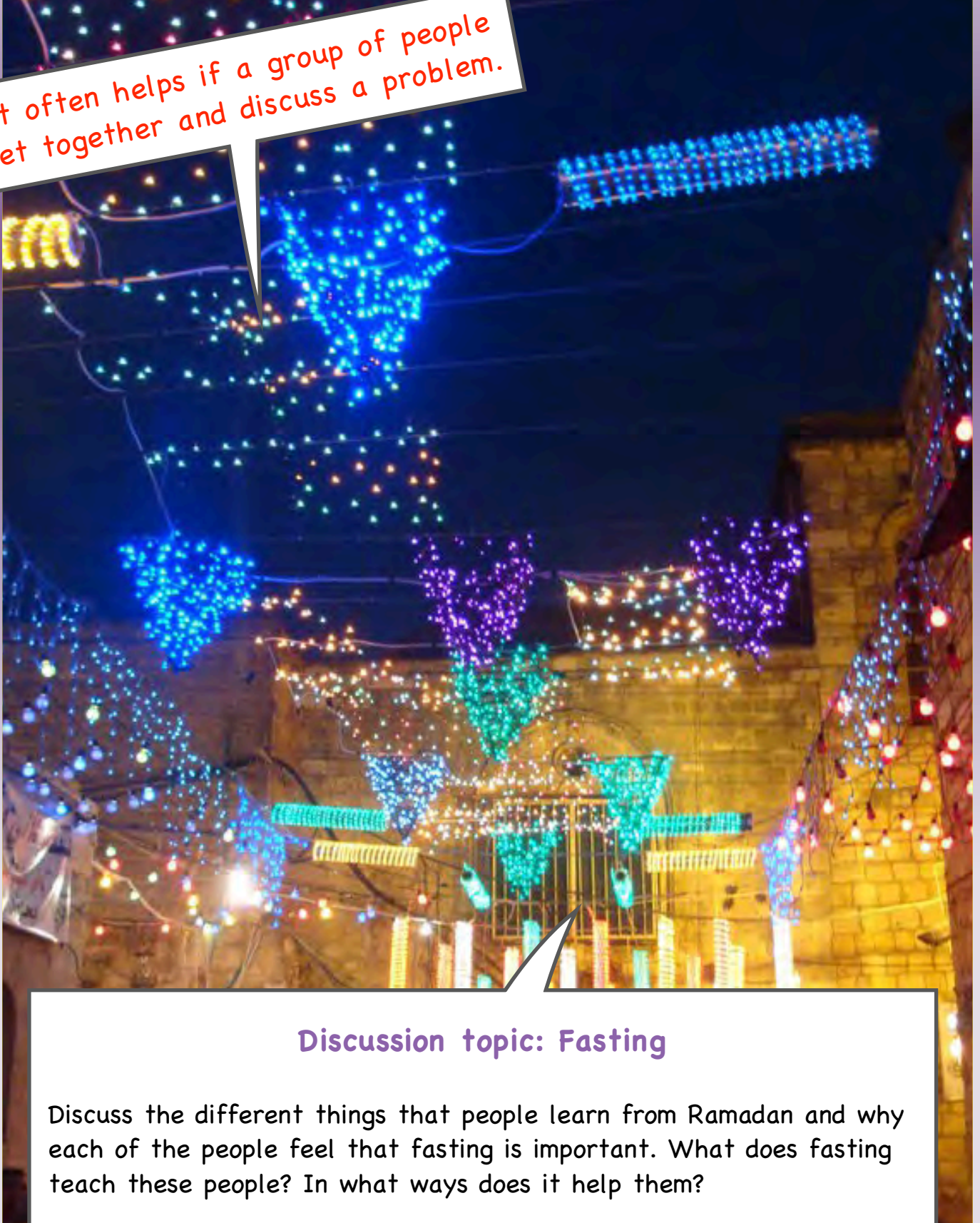




# Talking it through

Ramadam, Jerusalem with lights. (Source: Wikipedia)

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



## Discussion topic: Fasting

Discuss the different things that people learn from Ramadan and why each of the people feel that fasting is important. What does fasting teach these people? In what ways does it help them?



# Make a story...

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



## Fasting

It is the first day of Ramadan. Your alarm clock rings – it is 5am. Dawn. You need to get up and have breakfast. After breakfast, you won't eat again until sunset.

(Now write a story telling how you feel as the day goes on. You can describe how you feel to be hungry and what are some of the good things about fasting.)



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