

# LEARNING FROM ONE ANOTHER

BRINGING MUSLIM PERSPECTIVES  
INTO AUSTRALIAN SCHOOLS

Eeqbal Hassim and Jennet Cole-Adams

تعارف





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National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies,  
University of Melbourne

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تقديم نظرات المسلمين إلى المدارس الأسترالية

*Learning from One Another: Bringing Muslim perspectives into Australian schools*  
Eqbal Hassim and Jennet Cole-Adams

### **Publisher**

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*'People, We created you  
from a single man and a  
single woman, and made  
you into nations and tribes  
so that you should all get  
to know one another.'*

(Quran, 49: 13)

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*Eeqbal Hassim and Jennet Cole-Adams*

Our teachers are training the leaders of tomorrow. This is a weighty responsibility, one that deserves the respect and support of every Australian. This resource has been developed with that objective in mind. It is a unique educational tool, offering Australian teachers some very practical ideas to ensure the continued engagement of Muslim pupils in a rich and rewarding educational process.

Australian society has gone through significant changes in the last few decades. The ethnic and religious composition of Australia has gained greater diversity, which is at once enriching and a challenge. New cultures and traditions have made Australia a nation that celebrates the rich heritage of its inhabitants — new and old — and fosters mutual respect and understanding. The challenge to any cosmopolitan society, however, is not to lose sight of its core values and principles that are essentially grounded in humanity. Australia has a proud tradition of tolerance, respect for others and the law. Our education system cherishes these values and trains our future leaders to be mindful of the needs of others while remaining committed to the humanist value system that has made Australia a vibrant multicultural society.

Tolerance and respect are important values, but a vibrant cosmopolitan society moves beyond them and embraces diversity, allowing for the free flow of ideas and traditions. Embracing diversity breaks the barriers that separate us. Whilst respecting other traditions and cultures is civil and polite, it reinforces the distinctness of cultures. Embracing other cultures, however, opens the door to cultural synthesis. What emerges in this process is something new and exciting that reinforces the quintessential humanity at the heart of all cultures.

It is critical to emphasise that embracing diversity and transcending cultural barriers is a two-way process. Our educators play a critical role here, nurturing in future generations the values of mutual respect and learning. By introducing pupils to lesser known cultures and traditions while helping those from minority communities see the shared values that draw us closer, our teachers help shape the future of our society.

This resource emphasises the significance of mutual learning and offers unique and unparalleled strategies to foster inclusiveness in the classroom.

*Professor Shahram Akbarzadeh*

National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies  
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Courtyard of Sheikh Zayed Mosque, Abu Dhabi, UAE. Photo Frank Haas.



# INTRODUCTION

Understanding Islam and Muslims in Australia and overseas is more important than ever in our education system.

Along with the growing media, political, social and academic focus on Islam and Muslim cultures worldwide, Australia's positioning as part of Asia — where most of the world's Muslims live — makes an awareness and appreciation of these issues all the more important.

As the preamble to the 'Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians (December 2008)' states, 'India, China and other Asian nations are growing and their influence on the world is increasing'. As well as there being very large Muslim communities in India and China, more than 240 million Muslims live in the Southeast Asian countries neighbouring Australia. Our nearest neighbour, Indonesia, is the most populous Muslim nation in the world. All this reinforces the fact that being 'Asia literate' means being aware of Islam and Muslim cultures.


We also have strong trade and educational links with the Middle East. In addition, Islam is one of the fastest growing religions in the Western world.

The Melbourne Declaration also emphasises the worldwide movement of people and ideas through global integration and international mobility. From this perspective, knowledge of Islam and Muslims is integral to studies of history, society and environment, globalisation and media. Social inclusion and the strengthening of Australia's social fabric also demand good intercultural and interfaith understanding.

In recognition of the importance of learning about Islam in our education system, the Federal Government in 2008 funded the establishment of the National Centre of Excellence for Islamic Studies (NCEIS), a three-university consortium comprising the University of Melbourne, Griffith University and the University of Western Sydney, to promote understanding of Islam and Muslims.

A report commissioned by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (Australia) suggests there is still a degree of prejudice and ignorance about Islam and Muslims in Australia. The 2003 report, *Isma (Listen)*, links incidents of racial and religious discrimination with a lack of familiarity with Islam.

There is some recognition in the public service of the importance of education about Islam and Muslims. The Australian Federal Police, for instance, now runs 'Islamic awareness' sessions for its senior officers. Other government and non-government agencies, however, have been less active in this domain.



Similarly, while many Australian education authorities have recognised the need for, and importance of, greater interfaith understandings in schools, the lack of knowledge of Islam and Muslims among school educators remains an obstacle to such understanding. Teachers are often uncomfortable talking about Islam because they feel ill-equipped to deal with a topic that has received so much, often contentious, media coverage. Yet teachers are also the people uniquely positioned to inform and engage all young Australians about Islam and Muslims today.

Through migration and the growth in Australian-born Muslims, the number of Muslim students in our schools is continuously increasing. This has significant implications for cross-cultural awareness and sensitivities in teaching and learning.

Recognising this need, Professor Shahram Akbarzadeh (NCEIS, University of Melbourne) was awarded a grant by the Myer Foundation to design and deliver a series of professional learning workshops for school teachers on the Muslim experience in Australia. This project was launched in 2009 in cooperation with the Australian Curriculum Studies Association (ACSA) and Dr Eeqbal Hassim, a Muslim education expert. In the first year of its life, this project focused on Melbourne and Sydney, receiving very positive feedback from teachers. This initial year has been instrumental in the design of the present resource book, allowing for the expansion of this project to other capital cities.

*Learning from One Another: Bringing Muslim perspectives into Australian schools* is a comprehensive resource for Australian schools, designed to accompany the workshops. The inspiration for the title comes from the Quran: 'People, We created you from a single man and a single woman, and made you into nations and tribes so that you should all get to know one another.' (Quran, 49: 13)

This resource is structured in three main parts. Part A focuses on introducing Islam and Muslim related content into the classroom in each curriculum area. It suggests strategies and content and provides learning sequences for primary and secondary levels. Part B provides information about Muslims in Australian schools and suggests practical approaches to engaging and including Muslim students. Part C provides basic information about Islam and Muslims in Australia and overseas, reflecting the diversity of beliefs, practices, cultures, ethnicities and languages.

Throughout the resource, we have used a very simple approach to transliterating Arabic terms, as linguistic accuracy is not the goal. At times, we have avoided Arabic terms altogether. For ease of reference, a glossary of Arabic terms has been provided at the end of the resource.

The main goals of this resource are to:

1. provide avenues for teachers to introduce Islam and Muslim related content in their classrooms
2. equip teachers with the skills to meet the needs and expectations of Muslim students and their parents in education
3. facilitate a whole-school approach to supporting healthy relationships and engagement with Muslim students, parents and communities
4. offer teachers a greater awareness of the diversity of Islam and Muslims, nationally and globally
5. develop an appreciation of Muslim history and cultures in Australia.

We believe that *Learning from One Another* will prove useful to all Australian primary and secondary schools — independent, Catholic and government — regardless of the number of Muslim students in attendance. It offers insights, suggestions and practical advice in a range of areas affecting Muslim students, as well as presenting curriculum content and sample learning sequences of relevance to all Australian students. In addition, although this resource was written with the Australian context in mind, there will be many areas of application in other countries, particularly in parts of the Western world where Muslims live as minorities.

We have tried to reflect the diversity of Muslims in Australia, providing a range of Muslim viewpoints where relevant, while not valuing one opinion over another. There is no one right answer to the questions involving Muslims in our schools. Each Muslim student reflects his or her own particular background, views, beliefs and practices. To provide hard and fast answers would be unjust and unrealistic. Instead, by offering a range of possible explanations, we hope to give educators the tools to find the most appropriate approach for their circumstances.

This resource has primarily been designed to complement the accompanying professional learning workshops for teachers. We believe its benefits will be greatest when teachers also attend the workshops. Nonetheless, it will provide useful information and strategies to all teachers in Australia, whether or not they attend the workshops.

Finally, we hope that you will find *Learning from One Another* useful and engaging. We wish you the very best in your endeavours to implement some of its suggestions with your students at school.

**Interior of the dome at the Selmiye Mosque, Edirne, Turkey.**  
Photo Piotr Tysarczyk. Background image courtesy of Photos8.com.



# PART A

## ISLAM AND MUSLIMS IN THE CLASSROOM

الفصل أ  
الإسلام والمسلمون في الفصل الدراسي

Part A focuses on incorporating Islam content and Muslim perspectives in all curriculum areas. It also identifies issues and content in each subject area that may be challenging for teachers when working with Muslim students.

Including information in the curriculum about Islam and its followers is beneficial for all Australian students, not just Muslims. It acknowledges the beliefs of Muslim students and encourages them to engage with the education system. It also hopes to inspire all students — within and beyond the classroom — to develop interfaith understandings and social relationships, and to help create a more inclusive, peaceful and productive Australia.

For ease of use, Part A has been organised around subject areas. While there is currently some variation between state and territory jurisdictions in organising curriculum content, this resource uses the subject areas identified for the first stage of the emerging Australian Curriculum.

For each subject there is an **Introduction** to set the context. The **Issues to look out for** section focuses on content specific to that subject that may require sensitivity when working with Muslim students. The **Suggested strategies and content** section offers ideas and entry points for exploring Islam content and Muslim perspectives across curriculum areas. Where appropriate to the subject area, there are two ready to use **Learning sequences**, one for primary classes and one for secondary classes. These learning sequences include guidance for teachers and, in most cases, reproducible worksheets to be used with students. Teachers will inevitably adapt these to their own situations and needs.

**Opposite: Dome of the Sheikh Lotf Allah Mosque, Isfahan, Iran.** Photo seier+seier.



## Introduction

Proficiency in English is an essential skill for Muslim students just as it is for other students in Australia. Muslims in Australia recognise the need for a good grounding in the English language to gain qualifications for employment as well as to communicate effectively in society.

Muslims comprise nearly a third of the world's population and the Muslim world is becoming ever more literate in the English language — a result of increased interaction between the Muslim and English-speaking Western worlds through economics, politics, education and sport. Consequently, the influence of the Muslim world has amplified, as is clear from the amount of media coverage on issues relating to Islam and Muslims.

Despite this trend, most texts used in Australian English classrooms still have a Western or European perspective. Incorporating Islamic content and Muslim perspectives into the English curriculum will benefit not only Muslim but non-Muslim students, providing them with global perspectives and cross-cultural understanding. Specifically, the introduction of some Islamic content into English classes will:

- ◆ acknowledge the role that Islam and Muslims play historically, and in the world today
- ◆ represent the interests of the rapidly growing Muslim population in Australia
- ◆ help engage new Muslim migrants and refugees in learning the English language
- ◆ build relationships between Muslim and non-Muslim students.

## Issues to look out for

Despite its importance in the curriculum, some Muslim students and/or their parents may be sensitive about particular content studied in the English classroom. The moral and religious aspects of some texts may be disputed by Muslims. While most will take no issue, some will express their concerns.

For instance, in Australian schools, particularly at the secondary level, there are many student texts that contain references to:

- ◆ sex (including sexual exploration among adolescents, extra-marital sex, sexual promiscuity and sexual orientation)
- ◆ drug use (even if it is not condoned by the text)
- ◆ music (refer to the **Arts** section in **Part A** for an explanation of Muslim sensitivities toward music)
- ◆ immorality and crime
- ◆ non-Islamic religious celebrations (especially Easter and Christmas)
- ◆ other celebrations (such as birthdays and parties, which some Muslims do not condone, believing that Muslims should not follow the ways of non-Muslims)
- ◆ religious bias (particularly when information about Islam and/or Muslims is misrepresented or one-sided).



While including such issues from time to time is fundamental to the Australian curriculum, some Muslims will voice grievances due to their observance of an ideal code of morality and conduct found in the Islamic religious texts. For them, Islam is a complete way of living, governing all aspects of spirituality, personal conduct and social regulation. This worldview promotes an ethical and legal approach to their faith, which might prompt devout Muslims to ask: What does Islam say about such and such an issue?

Such concerns are not unique to Muslims; as with the broader community, teachers need to be responsive to the concerns raised by students and parents. However teachers also have a responsibility to provide a broad curriculum, and may need to negotiate the learning program on an individual basis.

## Suggested strategies and content

Including texts with Muslim perspectives and content about Islam is an effective way of engaging Muslim students, and of exposing all students to themes and issues relevant to Australian society. These can include fiction and non-fiction texts.

Primary students, for example, may enjoy *The Red Camel*, by Kirsty Murray (National Museum of Australia, 2008), which follows the adventures of an Afghan camel boy in the Australian outback at the beginning of the 20th century. Teenagers have responded positively to *Does my head look big in this?* by Randa Abdel-Fattah (Pan Macmillan Australia, 2005), a coming of age story set in contemporary Melbourne. Excellent teacher support material for both texts is available on the publishers' websites.

- ◆ *The Red Camel* — [http://www.nma.gov.au/kidz/making\\_tracks](http://www.nma.gov.au/kidz/making_tracks)
- ◆ *Does my head look big in this?* — <http://www.panmacmillan.com.au/resources/RA-DMHLBITNotes.pdf>

Senior students can explore the two acclaimed novels by Khaled Hosseini, *The Kite Runner* and *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. While both books capture Muslim life in Afghanistan, they also deal with issues, including rape and displacement, which may be confronting for some students and their families.

The Muslim world has a long tradition of poetry. Many powerful poems are available in translation on the internet, including the one by 13th-century poet Jalaluddin Rumi that is used in the accompanying primary learning sequence, **Searching inside ourselves**. Rumi's Arabic and Persian poetry is possibly the most widely translated into English. For instance, refer to:

- ◆ Coleman Barks. *A Year with Rumi: Daily Readings*. New York: HarperOne, 2006.
- ◆ *The Essential Rumi*, translated by Coleman Barks with contributions from Arthur J. Arberry et al., London: Penguin Classics, 2004.

Media coverage of issues around Muslims in Australia and the world also provides fertile ground for classroom activities. An analysis of the language and images used to explore contemporary events allows students to develop an understanding of how meaning and stereotypical representations are created. The secondary learning sequence **Muslims, meaning and the media** is one strategy for achieving this outcome.

## Learning sequence: Searching inside ourselves

Level: Upper primary

In this learning sequence students explore a poem written by the famous Muslim poet, Jalaluddin Rumi.

1. Display and read the poem *Allah*, which means 'God' in Arabic, with your students. Rumi, who was born in 1207 in what is now Afghanistan, originally wrote the poem in Persian. It has now been translated into English and many other languages, along with his other works.

### Allah

I tried to find Him on the Christian cross,  
but He was not there; I went to the Temple of  
the Hindus and to the old pagodas, but I could not  
find a trace of Him anywhere.

I searched on the mountains and in the valleys  
but neither in the heights nor in the depths was I able to find Him.

I went to the Kaba in Mecca,  
but He was not there either.

I questioned the scholars and philosophers but  
He was beyond their understanding.

I then looked into my heart and it was there  
where He dwelled that I saw Him; He was  
nowhere else to be found.

2. Use the following questions to explore this poem with your students:
  - ◆ Who is the narrator searching for?
  - ◆ Where does the narrator's journey take him?
  - ◆ What does the narrator find?
  - ◆ What idea is repeated throughout this poem?
  - ◆ How did this poem make you feel?
  - ◆ This poem was written about 750 years ago. Is it still relevant today?
  - ◆ This poem has been translated from Persian to English. In what ways might this have changed the poem?
3. Ask your students to create a visual response to this poem.
4. As a class, discuss the idea of emotions, feelings and notions that can only truly be found 'inside' us (e.g. fear, love). Ask your students to write their own poems about something that lies within.

## Learning sequence: Muslims, meaning and the media

Level: Middle secondary

This learning sequence explores, through an analysis of Muslim issues, how language is used in the print media to influence the way articles are read.

### Activity one: Key words

Introduce this sequence with a word association game in your classroom. Ask students to respond to the word '*jihad*' by suggesting another word that they associate with the term. Emphasise that there are no wrong answers. Once you have collected a number of responses give the students a formal definition of '*jihad*'.

The Macquarie dictionary, for example, describes it as a 'spiritual struggle' and for most Muslims the term relates to their personal struggle to follow God's path. At times, it can also involve armed fighting, often in self-defence, should that be necessary.

Discuss with your students the fact that there are so many connotations attached to the word '*jihad*' and why this might be. This discussion may cover the fact that this word is in Arabic and used frequently in the media in relationship to terrorism and 'Holy War'.

Repeat this exercise with the word '*hijab*', which can refer to the headscarf and modest dress, and which incorporates the many styles worn by Muslim women. Linguistically, in Arabic, *hijab* refers to a barrier or covering. *Hijab* is not always physical; it also connotes modest behaviour which prevents one from indulging in immorality.

Try using the word '*sharia*', which generally means Islamic law. Linguistically, it refers to 'a path'. In Islamic theology, it refers to Islam in its entirety, not just its legal injunctions. However, for many Muslims, past and present, the term '*sharia*' is almost exclusively used in a legal and penal sense.

### Activity two: Positioning the reader

Ask each student to find and print a media article of interest to them that includes one of the three words above. Students can easily do this by putting their chosen word into the search engine on any online news provider's website. Ask your students to complete the following **Muslims, meaning and media** worksheet with reference to their chosen article.

As a class, compare and discuss the articles that students worked with. You may like to discuss other devices used by journalists to position the reader, whether positively or negatively. Do the articles present a balanced view? Does the structure of the article prioritise one position over another?



## Worksheet: Muslims, meaning and media

What is the main message of your article?

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Identify place/s in your article where the word '*jihad*', '*hijab*' or '*sharia*' is used. Replace with the word 'struggle', 'headscarf/modest dress', or 'Islamic law' as appropriate. Does this change the way a reader might relate to this article? Why or why not?

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Journalists often attempt to engage readers, particularly around controversial issues, by using words that heighten interest or are likely to elicit certain responses. Can you identify other words/phrases in your article that do this? List these words and an alternative word/phrase that could be used to elicit an alternative response.

	Word	Alternative	
e.g.	<i>fanatical</i>	<i>devout</i>	_____
	<i>war</i>	<i>conflict</i>	_____

Having analysed the language used in your article, do you think the journalist has positioned the reader to interpret the information in a particular way, (e.g. positively or negatively)? Explain your answer.

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On a separate piece of paper rewrite your article, or a section of it, using language that repositions the reader in relationship to the issue being discussed. You should not change the structure or information, just the words used to present the story.

## Introduction

The exploration and advancement of science has been one of the hallmarks of Muslim civilisation.

While their names might not always be familiar, there are many important Muslim scientists who since the 8th century have shaped the fields of astronomy, physics, chemistry and biology, as well as associated fields such as mathematics and geography. Learning and the advancement of knowledge was paramount in medieval Muslim civilisation, and today's Muslims uphold their scientific tradition proudly.

Students should learn about the contributions of these Muslim scientists just as they learn about the contributions of the ancient scientists and philosophers of Europe. Contemporary science owes much to the Muslim scientists who studied, translated, expounded upon and advanced the work of their Greek predecessors. These scientists helped bridge the gap between the Greek philosophers and the scientists who followed on from the European Renaissance.

Devout Muslims see science as a portion of the knowledge that God gave to human beings. This aspect of God's knowledge is gained through investigation, experimentation and contemplation, which the Quran encourages human beings to embrace.

The Muslim philosophy of science is based on the idea that God is the creator of everything, and from this perspective the foundation for science is the Quran. Science in this case is driven and inspired by divine revelation, not simply questioning or investigating the unknown. The Quran states that the ones most knowledgeable about the world are those most mindful of God.

Scientific exploration among Muslims has traditionally been driven by the Quran, *Sunna* (Prophet Muhammad's traditions) and religious requirements. Geometry and algebra developed out of a need to accurately work out the direction of the Kaba (the cube-shaped structure in the middle of the Holy Mosque) in Mecca for prayer; and medicine evolved out of a religious duty to look after the wellbeing of oneself and others. As such, Muslims see science and religion as complementary, not contradictory. In medieval times, Muslim scientists were also experts in theology and Islamic law.

## Issues to look out for

Religious beliefs held by Muslims (and others, including Christians) can lead to concerns about some content covered within the science curriculum. Many Muslims oppose Darwinism and the theory of evolution, deeming these to be in opposition to Islamic creationism.

Some Muslim parents/guardians may attempt to have their children exempted from studying such content, but most allow their children to study Darwinism and the theory of evolution, regardless of their personal views. Others only reject part of the theory of evolution, in particular that dealing with the primate origins of human beings. They generally accept cell evolution and the evolution of other living things, on the proviso that none of these occur by accident, rather by creation and design. Other sensitive areas may include cloning and the various forms of artificial insemination, which could be taken as attempts to 'play God'.

In addition, due to concerns about modesty, some Muslim students and their parents may have some concerns about studying diagrams of the naked body. Most Muslims have no problems with such content, accepting it as an important part of the science curriculum.

## Suggested strategies and content

Teachers may like to explore the relationship between science and religion in the Muslim world. The requirement for bathing before prayer led to many Muslim innovations including soap, perfume and toothpaste. The need to face the direction of Mecca for prayer also led to developments in the field of navigation. These concepts can form the basis of an engaging integrated unit.

A useful resource is the website [www.1001inventions.com](http://www.1001inventions.com), which is based on a United Kingdom museum exhibition featuring Muslim inventions. The site includes a free downloadable teaching pack with many suggestions for primary and secondary classroom activities.

Some of the Muslim scholars whose work can be studied are shown in the table below.

Scientist	Date	Contributions
Al-Biruni	circa 1030	Astronomy and mathematics — Compiled an account of the science of astronomy in his time; determined magnitude of earth's circumference; discussed earth's rotation on its axis and determined latitudes and longitudes.
Al-Battani (Albategnius)	circa 877–918	Astronomy and mathematics — Moon and planet orbits (amendments of Ptolemy); obliquity and length of seasons; true and mean orbit of ecliptic and the sun; popularised the first notions of trigonometrical ratios as used today.
Al-Khwarizmi (Alkhwarezm)	circa 820	Astronomy and mathematics — Wrote a textbook of algebra, in examples, that was translated into Latin and used as a principal text by Western scholars until the 16th century; responsible for introduction of Arabic numerals to the West (called 'algorithms' after him). Algebra is taken from the Arabic, <i>al-jabr</i> , which means 'coercion'. In this case, it is forcing a letter upon an unknown value in order to solve an equation. His systematic development of algebra included, for the first time, analytical solutions of linear and quadratic equations.
Jabir b. Hayyan	circa 776	Father of Arabic alchemy — Described the important chemical operations of calcinations and reduction; improved on the methods of evaporation, sublimation, melting and crystallisation.



Illustration of different phases of the moon in the Persian translation of *Kitab al-tafhim* by Al-Biruni. Image sourced from MuslimHeritage.com

Scientist	Date	Contributions
Al-Razi (Rhazes)	865–925	Physician — Two hundred scientific works, half of them medical. His works were used as principal medical texts in the west. His work on smallpox and measles ( <i>al-Judari wal-Hasba</i> ) was first translated into Latin in 1565. Forty editions in European languages were published from 1498–1866. His encyclopaedia of medicine ( <i>al-Hawi</i> ) was translated into Latin in 1279 and was repeatedly reprinted in Europe from 1488.
Ibn Sina (Avicenna)	980–1037	Physician and father of paediatrics — His two leading works are <i>al-Qanun fit-Tibb</i> (Canon of Medicine) and <i>Kitabush-Shifa</i> (Book of Healing). His works have been translated in Europe since the 12th century. His <i>Qanun</i> was the principal medical textbook in the West until the 17th century. Sixteen editions were produced in the West in the 15th century, and 20 issued in the 16th century.
Ibn al-Haytham (Alhazen)	circa 965	Physics (optics) — His influential work on optics survives in Latin; opposed the theory of Euclid and Ptolemy that the eye sends out visual rays (extramission), and proposed intramission instead; examined refraction of light through different mediums; Roger Bacon (13th century) and all medieval Western writers on optics base their works largely on Alhazen's.
Ibn al-Baytar	1197–1248	Botany — Travelled extensively to compile a plant encyclopaedia translated into Latin as late as 1758.
Al-Idrisi	1100–1165	Botany, medicine, zoology and geography — Wrote encyclopaedias in all of these fields that were later translated into Latin.



**Sculpture of Ibn al-Baytar in Benalmádena, Málaga, Spain.** Photo Keke999.



## Introduction

As mentioned in the ‘Science’ section, the development of science has been one of the pillars of Muslim civilisation. As such, the advancement of mathematics, which plays an important role in science, also became the preoccupation of many medieval Muslim scholars. Their work involving algebra and geometry, in particular, continues to be used today in fields such as physics and astronomy.

Muslims see mathematics as an exact form of knowledge. The unambiguous nature of this knowledge appeals to many who see parallels with the religious injunctions of Islam. Muslims traditionally encourage their children to study mathematics, as it is a discipline in which certainty can triumph over conjecture.

Students may be interested to learn about the contributions of Muslim mathematicians who helped bridge the gap between the Greek philosophers and the scientists of the European Renaissance.

## Suggested strategies and content

As well as highlighting the achievements of specific Muslim mathematicians within the maths curriculum, the contribution of the Muslim world to geometry, in the form of tessellating patterns, is also worth exploring. The primary learning sequence, **Tessellating tiles of the Alhambra**, focuses on this through the tile patterning found in early Muslim buildings. The secondary learning sequence, **Alkhwarezm’s six standard forms**, explores the amazing contribution of Alkhwarezm to contemporary algebra.

For examples of Muslim contributions to mathematics, please refer to the table in the **Science** section (in particular, al-Biruni, Albategnius and Alkhwarezm). Simple facts such as that the numbers we use today are ‘Arabic numerals’, and that ‘zero’ comes from the Arabic word ‘*sifr*’ are of particular interest.



Pencil and coloured crayon copy of the mosaics in the Alhambra made by M.C. Escher in 1936.



## Learning sequence: Tessellating tiles of Alhambra

*Level: Upper primary*

*In this learning sequence students explore tessellation through the tiles found at the Alhambra in Granada, Spain. Built in the 13th century, Alhambra is an exquisite example of Muslim architecture. It was a visit to the Alhambra that first inspired M.C. Escher to begin his own work with tessellating patterns.*

### Activity one: Introducing tessellation

Tessellation is the tiling of a plane (imagine an endless floor or wall) using shapes that create no gaps and no overlaps. Tessellating patterns are frequently found on brick pathways and tiled walls and floors. Introduce the idea of tessellation to your students by finding some examples at your school.

Explain to students that they are going to explore tessellation by looking at one of the earliest examples of this feature. You may like to show them some images of the Alhambra, which are readily available on the internet.

### Activity two: Regular and irregular tessellations

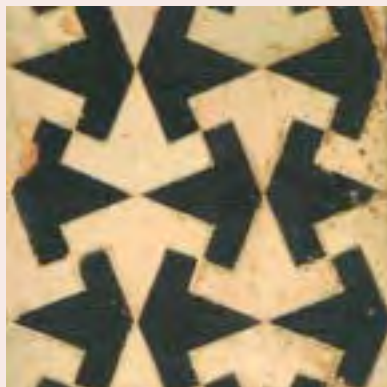
There are many types of tessellating patterns, the simplest and most commonly used being known as a regular tessellation. A regular tessellation is created using one type of regular polygon. (A regular polygon is a shape in which all the side lengths and all the internal angles are the same, like an equilateral triangle.)

The only regular polygons that tessellate are squares, equilateral triangles and hexagons. This is because these shapes, when tiled together, have angles that add up to 360 degrees.

Irregular tessellations can be made out of numerous other single shapes or a number of shapes used together. Your students can explore regular and irregular patterns using the **Tessellating tiles** worksheet which explores tessellation through the tiles at the Alhambra.

### Activity three: Create a class tessellation

In this activity students use the following tile pattern, from the Alhambra, to create their own class tessellation.



Print or photocopy several sheets of the **My tile** worksheet. Cut each sheet into four and distribute one tile shape to every student in the class. Ask students to decorate the tile shape in any way they choose and then cut it out. When students have completed this task, ask each one to stick their shape onto a large piece of cardboard so that a class tessellating pattern, similar to the one above, is created.



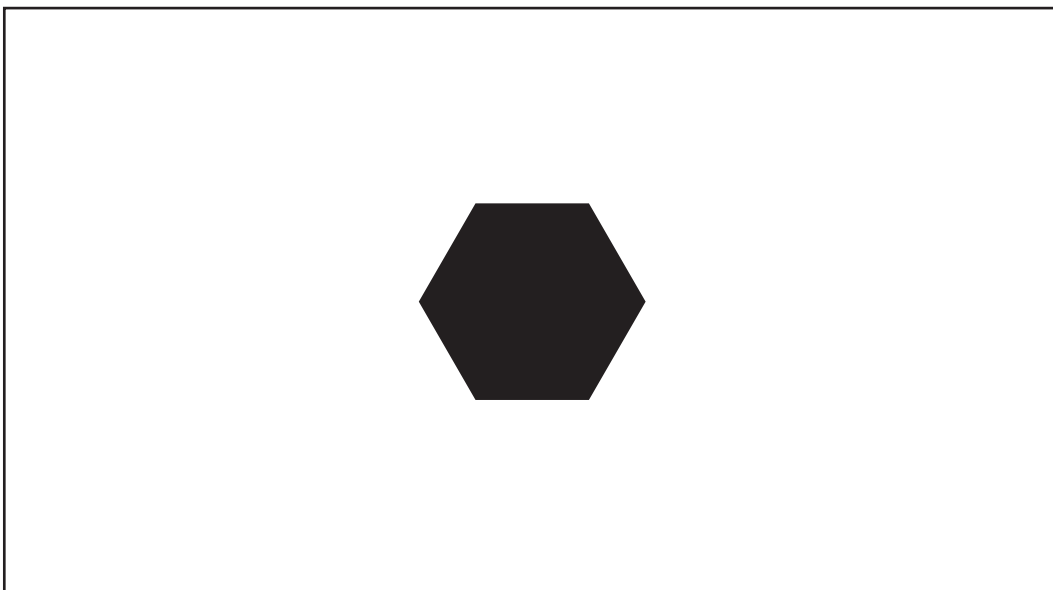
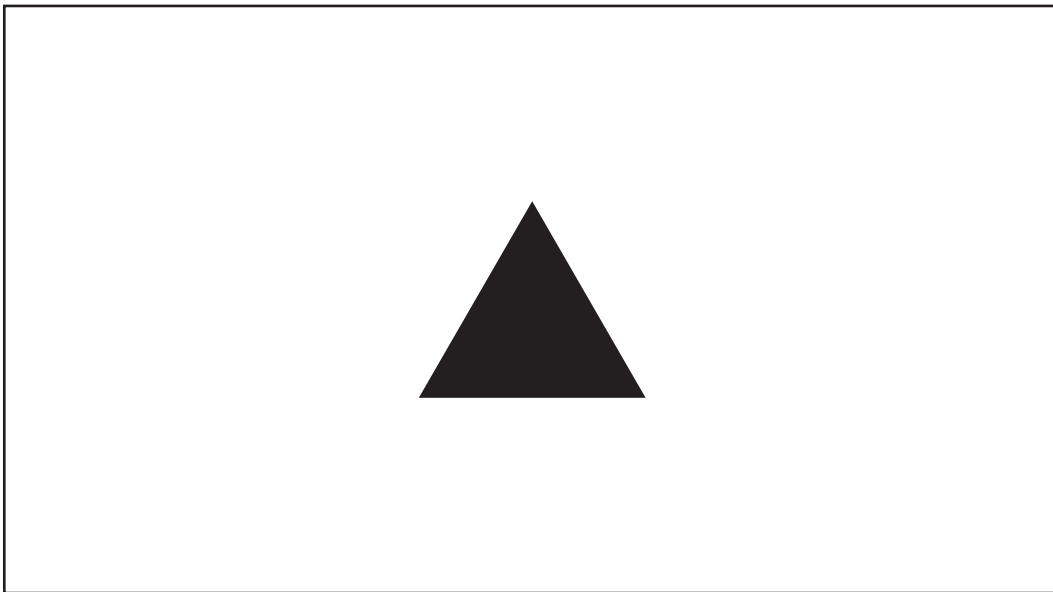
## Worksheet: Tessellating tiles



This image shows a section of wall from the Alhambra that uses regular tessellation. (Keep in mind that shape, not colour, is important.)

There are only three shapes that can be used to create regular tessellations: squares (as seen above), equilateral triangles and hexagons.

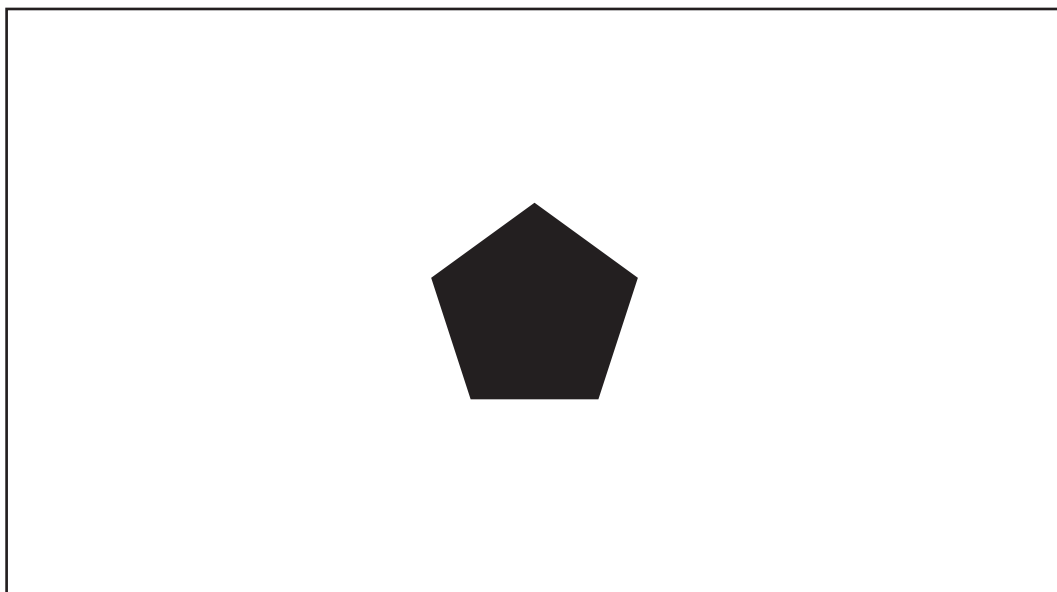
Create your own regular tessellations below using triangles and hexagons.





### Worksheet: Tessellating tiles

What happens if you try to tessellate using a pentagon? Try below.



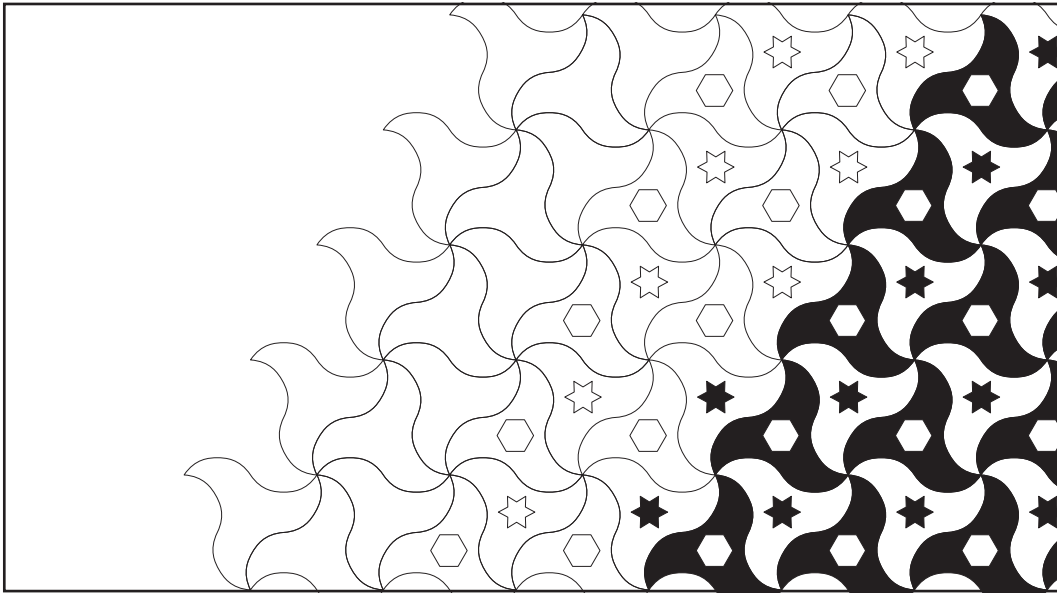
Tessellating patterns can also be made that use irregular shapes or a number of shapes. Here is another example of an irregular tessellation from the Alhambra.



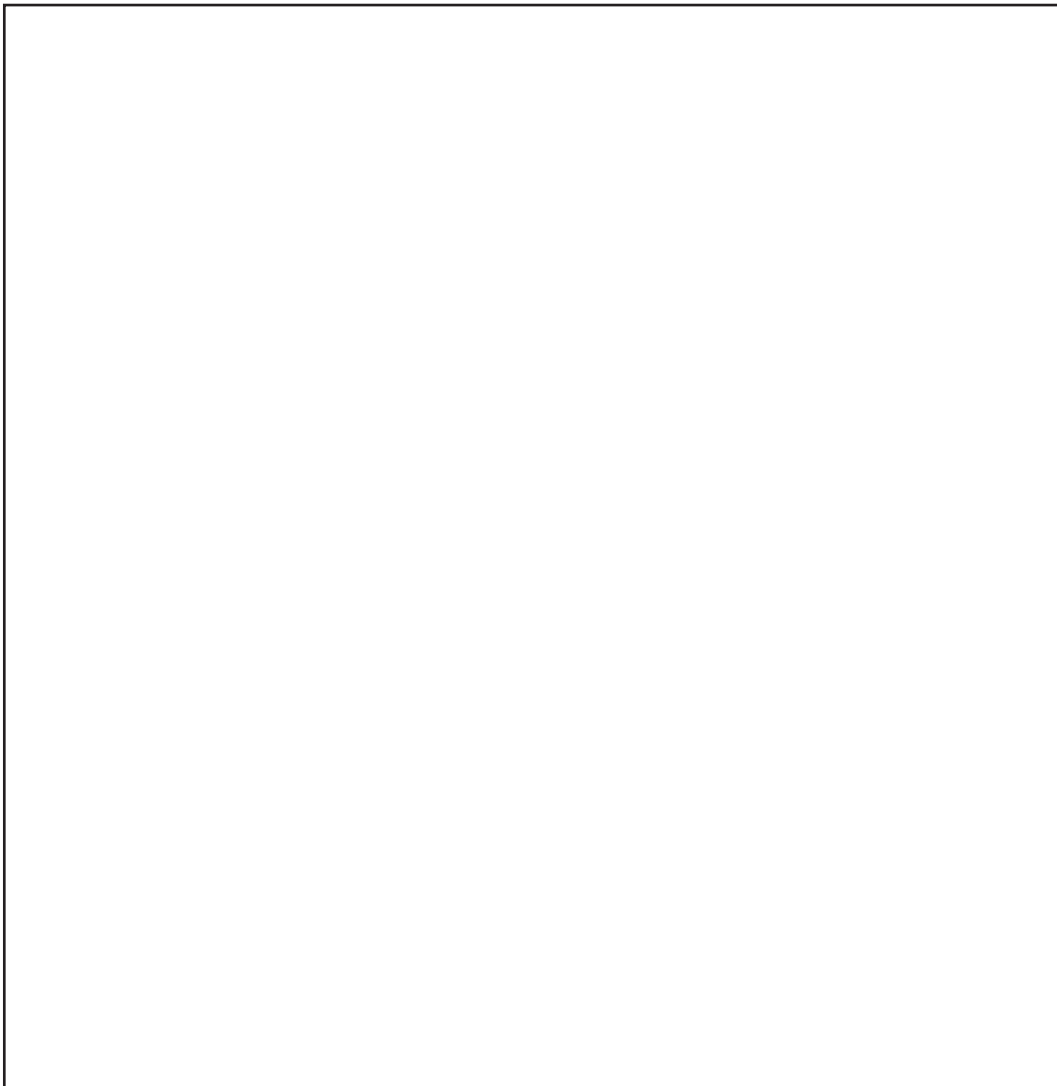


### Worksheet: Tessellating tiles

Can you recreate the design on the previous page by completing the pattern below?

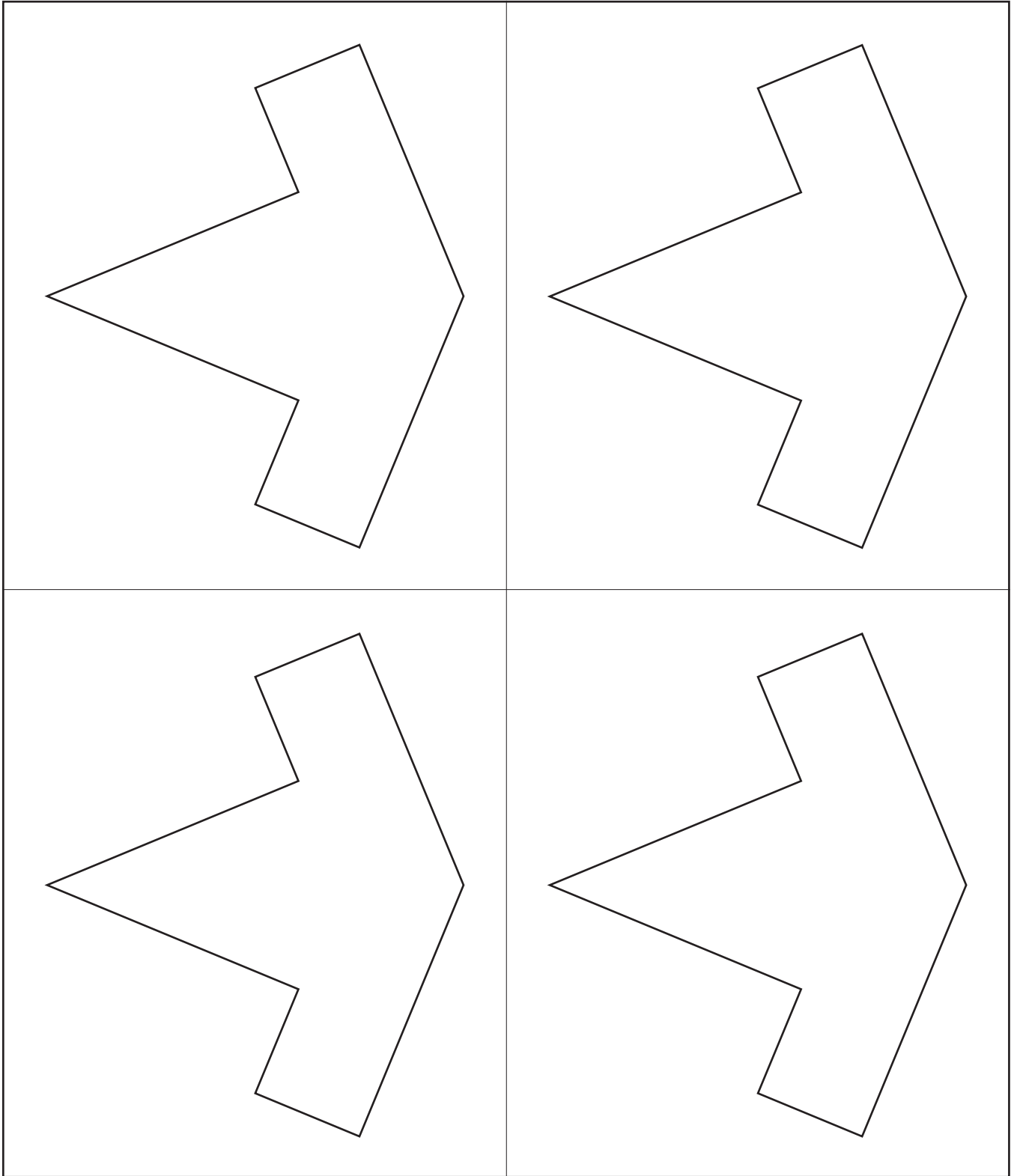


Now have a go at creating your own tessellating design.





**Worksheet: My tile**



## Learning sequence: Alkhwarezm's six standard forms

Level: Middle secondary

This sequence highlights the contribution of a great Muslim scholar, Alkhwarezm. It involves students exploring his six standard forms, from which algebra today developed.

Ask students to complete the worksheet, *The 'father of algebra'*. The answers are:

1.  $2x^2 = 15x$
2.  $3x^2 = 8$
3.  $4x = 5$
4.  $3x^2 - 2x = 8$
5.  $3x^2 + 6 = 12x$
6.  $6x + 12 = 3x^2$

1 0  
5 4 3 2  
9 8 7 6





## Worksheet: The 'father of algebra'

Muslim scholar Alkhwarezm is known as the founder of algebra. His work, from around 813–833, forms the basis of algebra today. The word algebra comes from the Arabic '*al-jabr*', meaning 'coercion'.

Alkhwarezm's method of solving linear and quadratic equations first reduced the equation to one of six standard forms where a unit was a number, a root was  $x$ , and a square was  $x^2$ . The forms are:

1. Squares equal roots ( $ax^2 = bx$ )
2. Squares equal number ( $ax^2 = c$ )
3. Roots equal number ( $bx = c$ )
4. Squares and roots equal number ( $ax^2 + bx = c$ )
5. Squares and numbers equal roots ( $ax^2 + c = bx$ )
6. Roots and number equal squares ( $bx + c = ax^2$ )

The method of reducing these equations involves using the operations of *al-jabr* and *al-muqabala*. *Al-jabr* is the process of removing the negative terms in the equation by adding the same quantity to each side. For example,  $x^2 = 40x - 4x^2$  is reduced to  $5x^2 = 40x$  by adding  $4x^2$  to each side. *Al-muqabala* means 'balancing'. It is the process of bringing quantities of the same type to the same side of the equation. For example,  $x^2 + 14 = x + 5$  is reduced to  $x^2 + 9 = x$ .

The following equations reflect Alkhwarezm's six standard forms. Simplify each equation to express it in Alkhwarezm's reduced forms.

1. Squares equal roots ( $ax^2 = bx$ )  
 $7x^2 - 5x = 5x^2 + 10x$
2. Squares equal number ( $ax^2 = c$ )  
 $4x^2 + 5x - 10 = x^2 + 5x - 2$
3. Roots equal number ( $bx = c$ )  
 $6x - 7 = 2x - 2$
4. Squares and roots equal number ( $ax^2 + bx = c$ )  
 $3x^2 + 6x + 2 = 10 + 8x$
5. Squares and numbers equal roots ( $ax^2 + c = bx$ )  
 $3x^2 - 4x + 6 = 8x$
6. Roots and number equal squares ( $bx + c = ax^2$ )  
 $15 - 3(x + 1)^2 = 0$

## Introduction

Since the advent of Islam in 7th-century Arabia, Muslims have shaped world events politically, economically, religiously and intellectually. Even in modern history, Muslim politics powerfully influence international relations the world over. Their political, religious and economic strength up to the 15th century allowed Muslims to advance education and knowledge to levels previously unseen, laying the intellectual foundations for enlightenment in Europe. The Muslim contribution to Australia's development has also been ongoing and significant.

Muslims have their own version of history that needs to be acknowledged and appreciated. Providing students with only a Euro-centric version of history denies them the opportunity to evaluate different perspectives on past world events — a skill necessary to form a more nuanced view of the world as it is today.

## Issues to look out for

Muslims often have a different perspective on history and world events, medieval and modern, to non-Muslims. Some common examples include varying interpretations of the Crusades, the Silk Road, European history, American history, the 'War on Terror' and the history of Islam and Muslims in Australia. As a diverse group, Muslims themselves often hold different views about their own history. As teachers it is essential to acknowledge, explore and challenge differing perspectives with all students.

## Suggested strategies and content

Historiography involves appreciation of different perspectives about how human civilisation has evolved. To develop this skill, students need to be introduced to a range of historical perspectives, including Muslim ones. This can be challenging as many readily available resources and texts present events from Euro-centric perspectives. Research by Joel Windle and Shahram Akbarzadeh (presented at the inaugural NCEIS conference in November 2008), suggests that there is a distinct lack of references to the history of Islam, medieval and modern, in history textbooks used in Victorian secondary schools. This is despite Islam's flourishing as a powerful intellectual, political and religious civilisation during the Dark Ages, as well as its pivotal role in influencing current affairs and contemporary global politics.

A constructive approach to differences of opinion on history involves the teacher and students learning with and from each other. This is particularly the case in a multicultural and multifaith classroom. As well as it being important to find and use historical source material that presents a Muslim perspective in your classroom, the students themselves can often be a wonderful source of information. Effective history teaching encourages a culture of enquiry and active discussion about different perspectives. Such teaching encourages respect, so that students are able to listen, understand and appreciate others' opinions, even when they disagree with them. Group-based projects are often useful in this context.

Nonetheless, for some students, both Muslim and non-Muslim, discussion around world events and conflicts can be quite emotive. Many students hold entrenched positions and teachers may need to facilitate class discussions with care. At the same time it is important that Muslim, or other, students are not put in a position where they are expected to justify a 'Muslim', or other, position.



In selecting a variety of resources, a good place to start is your local community; Muslim parents or community representatives are often delighted to share their stories or perspectives with students. There is a wealth of material freely available on the internet as well as books that specifically offer a Muslim perspective. For primary students, a focus on the contribution of Muslim people to Australia is appropriate, including the early Macassan traders and the Afghan cameleers. The latter is explored in the learning sequence **Afghans, camels and the outback**.

There are numerous opportunities to incorporate the role of Muslims and Islam throughout the secondary history curriculum. Senior students can explore the complex relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims today with *People like us: how arrogance is dividing Islam and the West*, by Waleed Aly (Picador, 2007). The books of Hanifa Deen, particularly *Caravanserai: journey among Australian Muslims* (updated edition, Fremantle Arts Centre Press, 2003) may also be useful. Geraldine Brooks' bestselling *Nine parts of desire: the hidden world of Islamic women* (Penguin Books, 2007) also offers history and insights into the Muslim world.

The secondary learning sequence, **The Crusades — a Muslim perspective**, provides a different perspective on a popular topic in history classes.



**Citadel built by Saladin as a protective fortress against the Crusader invasion.** Image courtesy of the National Library of Australia, no. nla.pic-an23565093.

## Learning sequence: Afghans, camels and the outback

*Level: Middle primary*

*In this learning sequence students analyse historical sources to explore the contribution made by Muslim cameleers to the opening up of the Australian outback from the mid-19th century to the early 20th century. These cameleers were some of the earliest Muslim settlers in Australia.*

Display the following worksheets digitally or distribute copies to your students. Use the following background information to assist you in helping your students to work through an inquiry process. More information about the contribution of the Muslim cameleers to Australian history can be found in **Part C** of the resource under the heading **Muslims in Australia**.

### Background

Camels first appeared in Australia in the mid-1800s, with significant numbers beginning to arrive in the late 1800s. As the number of camels increased so did the number of cameleers, who were skilled at handling the animals. It is estimated that 15,000 camels and 2000 cameleers arrived in Australia between 1870 and 1900. Camels proved much more versatile and hardy than other animals in helping open up Australia's harsh interior.

The cameleers used camel trains of between 25 and 70 camels to move people, equipment and supplies through remote areas. The cameleers and their trains were responsible for taking supplies to isolated stations and mines. They were often the only contact that people living at remote outposts had with the outside world. Early explorers hired cameleers and their trains to escort them on expeditions, greatly improving the chances of success. The cameleers also helped develop railways and the overland telegraph between Adelaide and Darwin.

While often referred to as the 'Afghan' camel men or cameleers, not all of them came from Afghanistan. They also came from Turkey, as well as from Kashmir and other regions of the Indian subcontinent. They were, however, all Muslims, and are responsible for building the first mosques in Australia.

By 1930 motor vehicles and roads signalled the end of an era for the cameleers. Some returned to their homelands but many settled in Australia, particularly in the Northern Territory. Many Muslims living in Australia today are descendants of cameleers. The Ghan train, which runs between Adelaide and Darwin, is named after these men, in recognition of the contribution they made to the construction of the original line between Adelaide and Alice Springs.



## Worksheet: Afghans, camels and the outback

What contribution did the cameleers make to the development of Australia? Explore the following pieces of historical evidence to find out.

**A camel being unloaded from a steamship at Port Augusta, South Australia, in 1920.**

Image courtesy of the State Library of South Australia, no. B 68916.



### Source one

Why do you think camels, like this one, were sent from Afghanistan and surrounding areas to Australia during the 1800s and early 1900s? Think about why camels were useful in the Middle East and why they would be useful in Australia.

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### Source two

*We went all over the outback... We carried tea, sugar, spirits, clothing. No motors then, no planes. Only my camels.* (Bejah Dervish, cameleer)

Why do you think cameleer Bejah Dervish carried large quantities of supplies?

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## Worksheet: Afghans, camels and the outback



**Loaded camel team about to depart from a Queensland railway siding, about 1900.**  
Image courtesy of the State Library of Queensland, no. 18899.

### Source three

What does the image above tell you about how the camels were used and the places that the camels visited?

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### Source four

*I named this fine watering-place Saleh's Fishponds, after my Afghan camel-driver, who was really a first rate fellow, without a lazy bone in his body.* (Explorer Ernest Giles wrote this in 1889 after his expedition through western South Australia.)

Why do you think that some explorers had cameleers and their teams with them on expeditions?

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## Worksheet: Afghans, camels and the outback



**The mosque, Marree, South Australia, about 1884.**

Image courtesy of the State Library of South Australia, no. B 15341.

### Source five

Who do you think might have built this mosque? What does it tell you about the religion of the cameleers?

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## Worksheet: Afghans, camels and the outback



The Ghan Train,  
Macdonnell Ranges.  
iStockphoto.

### Source six

Why do you think this train is called the Ghan? What route do you think it might travel? Can you draw it on the map below?



Using information from the historical sources on the previous pages, briefly describe the contribution that the cameleers made to the development of Australia.

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## Learning sequence: The Crusades — a Muslim perspective

*Level: Lower/middle secondary*

*This learning sequence explores the Crusades from the perspective of the Muslim world. It is designed to complement a unit of work on the Crusades. Students are involved in investigating source material to broaden their perspectives on these events.*

1. Ensure that your students are familiar with the Crusades and understand the motivations of the Europeans in embarking on the Crusader campaigns. Familiarity with the extent and timelines of the various Crusades is also helpful.
2. Depending on the texts you have used, you may like to involve your students in analysing the sources that they have explored to identify the perspectives that they offer. From what perspective does the author present information? How many of the images and quotes are from a Western perspective? How many offer a Muslim perspective?
3. Distribute the **Through Muslim eyes** worksheet and help students to answer the questions. This activity involves students exploring six sources that present a Muslim perspective on the Crusades.
4. When students have completed the worksheet, have a class discussion to explore the following questions:
  - ◆ Why do we usually explore events from our own cultural perspective?
  - ◆ What are some reasons that make it difficult to explore alternative perspectives? (language, access, understanding and fear)
  - ◆ Is it important to explore both sides of the story? Why or Why not?



## Worksheet: Through Muslim eyes

Many Australian text books explore the Crusades from the perspective of the European Christian Crusaders. They present sources that depict the Christian motivations and experiences throughout the Crusader period. In this activity you will explore aspects of the Crusades from a Muslim perspective.

Read the first three sources before answering the question following them.

### Source one

Salahuddin al-Ayyubi, better known in the West as Saladin, was responsible for uniting the Muslim forces during the Second and Third Crusades and taking back Jerusalem in 1187. During the Third Crusade, while negotiating with Richard the Lionheart over the possession of Jerusalem, Saladin dictated a message that included the words:

*The city is as holy to us as it is to you; it is even more important for us, because it was there that our Prophet made his miraculous nocturnal journey, and it is there that our community will be reunited on judgement day. It is therefore out of the question for us to abandon it.*

See Amin Maalouf, *The Crusades through Arab Eyes*, translated by Jon Rothschild, Al Saqi Books, 1984, p. 212.

### Source two

Imaduddin was Secretary to Saladin and here describes the taking of Jerusalem by the Muslims in 1187:

*Their darts vibrated with menace, their flight nourished on the bile of perceptive men. How many boulders came down out of heaven upon them, how many blocks of sandstone plunged into the earth, how many blazing firebrands bespattered them! The damage caused by the catapults, the extraordinary extent of their devastation, the effects of their concentration, the whistling wind of their flight, the extent of their range were beyond compare... until they reduced the walls to a single line of bricks and drove their defenders away. The enemy's ordnance was smashed and broken, the moat crossed and the attack sustained. The victory of Islam was clear, and so was the death of Unbelief.*

See Francesco Gabrieli, *Arab Historians of the Crusades*, translated from Italian by E.J. Costello, University of California Press, 1969, pp. 155–156.

### Source three

Bahauddin was a member of Saladin's staff. In his biography of Saladin he wrote:

*If one said that once Saladin had gone forth on the Holy War he did not spend a dinar or a drachma except on the war or in gifts and donations one would speak the truth and one's statement would be accurate. The Holy War and the suffering involved in it weighed heavily on his heart and his whole being in every limb; he spoke of nothing else, thought only about equipment for the fight, was interested only in those who had taken up arms, had little sympathy with anyone who spoke of anything else or encouraged any other activity.*

See Gabrieli, *Arab Historians*, p. 100.





## Worksheet: Through Muslim eyes

What do the three sources on the previous page reveal about the motivations of the Islamic forces during the Crusades? How are they similar to or different from the motivations of the Christian forces?

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Read sources four and five before answering the next question.

### Source four

The Muslims often referred to the Crusaders as 'Franks', and the term was applied to all Western Europeans. Usama, a Syrian Muslim, commented in his autobiography on the habits of the Franks living in the 'Holy lands' during the Crusader period.

*The Franks are without any vestige of a sense of honour and jealousy. If one of them goes along the street with his wife and meets a friend, this man will take the woman's hand and lead her aside to talk, while the husband stands by waiting until she has finished her conversation. If she takes too long about it he leaves her with the other man and goes on his way.*

See Gabrieli, *Arab Historians*, p. 77.

### Source five

Saladin's Secretary, Imaduddin, also commented on the Franks when reflecting on the taking of Jerusalem:

*When Jerusalem was purified of the filth of the hellish Franks and stripped off her vile garments to put on the robe of honour, the Christians, after paying their tax, refused to leave, and asked to be allowed to stay on in safety, and gave prodigious service and worked for us with all their might, carrying out every task with discipline and cheerfulness... They stood ready to accept whatever might be inflicted on them, and their affliction grew as they stood waiting for it. Thus they became in effect tribute-payers, reliant upon (Muslim) protection; they were used and employed in menial tasks and in their position they accepted these tasks as if they were gifts.*

See Gabrieli, *Arab Historians*, p. 163.



## Worksheet: Through Muslim eyes

What do sources four and five suggest about the attitudes of Muslims to the Western Crusader forces? What do you think the Western forces may have thought about the Muslims?

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### Source six

The following analysis of the Crusades comes from a recent encyclopaedia:

*Muslims and others in the Middle East regard the Crusades as invasions by Europeans motivated by greed and scorn for Islam, establishing a paradigm for the perception of future Western incursions into the Muslim world. European colonialism and the modern 'war on terror' are seen as extensions of the original Crusader impulse.*

John L. Esposito (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of the Islamic World*, vol. 2 (under the entry 'Crusades'). New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Do you agree with this contemporary reflection on the Crusades? Why or Why not?

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## Introduction

Muslims have a long tradition in geography, making a name for themselves in medieval times as keen explorers who helped map the world, both demographically and geographically, and develop navigational aids such as the astrolabe. They documented their experiences in detailed travel and geographical diaries, such as those of Ibn Battuta, the ‘prince of travellers’. His extensive travels are documented in his famed *Rihla* (Travel). Another traveller, Ibn Hawqal, contributed to such endeavours through his work *Suratul-Ard* (Profile of the World). Without the Muslim mapping of the world, Columbus might not have discovered America.

Because of this tradition, Muslims generally show a keen interest in this subject. For devout Muslims, this interest can also be a reflection of a Quranic injunction to travel the world in order to appreciate the greatness of God by learning about its landscapes and its peoples.

There is also a range of issues related to geography that are relevant to Muslims. As many Muslims in the world today are undereducated and socio-economically disadvantaged, topics such as world aid, the ‘Third World’ and demographics are of particular interest to them. In addition, the question of national boundaries in several parts of the globe still remains a sensitive issue for many Muslims. Today, the sheer numbers of Muslims worldwide (1.2–1.5 billion) mean that Muslims feature prominently in the study of global demographics.

## Issues to look out for

There are different perspectives on geographical or national boundaries involving considerable Muslim populations. The most notable examples include Israel and Palestine, Kashmir, Chechnya, Southern Philippines (in particular, ARMM, or the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao), India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, as well as Malaysia, Singapore, Southern Thailand, Aceh and Central Asia.

Some Muslims also ask why some of their fellow believers are so socio-economically and educationally disadvantaged in the world today. They argue that the reason for this is not Islam; it is the fault of the former colonial powers who left Muslim lands unprepared for independence. Many make the same argument about America’s involvement in various Muslim countries on the grounds of fighting terrorism and introducing democracy.

## Suggested strategies and content

Geography provides many opportunities for offering a more inclusive curriculum. In exploring their local community, many early primary students could learn more about the presence and influence of Muslims in their area, and in Australia generally. As students broaden their focus to include neighbouring countries, a focus on Islam is important, particularly since Indonesia has the world’s largest Muslim population. The primary learning sequence **Where in the world is Mecca?** challenges students to find the direction of Mecca, a skill that Muslim students may already be familiar with.

The growth of Islam in recent times is of particular relevance to secondary geography classes. Content could include mapping the growth and movement of Muslim populations. Students can also explore the increasing Muslim population in the West and the role of Muslims in disputes over national boundaries. The secondary learning sequence, **Get the facts: Muslims in Australia**, explores Muslim demographics in Australia.

## Learning sequence: Where in the world is Mecca?

Level: Middle primary

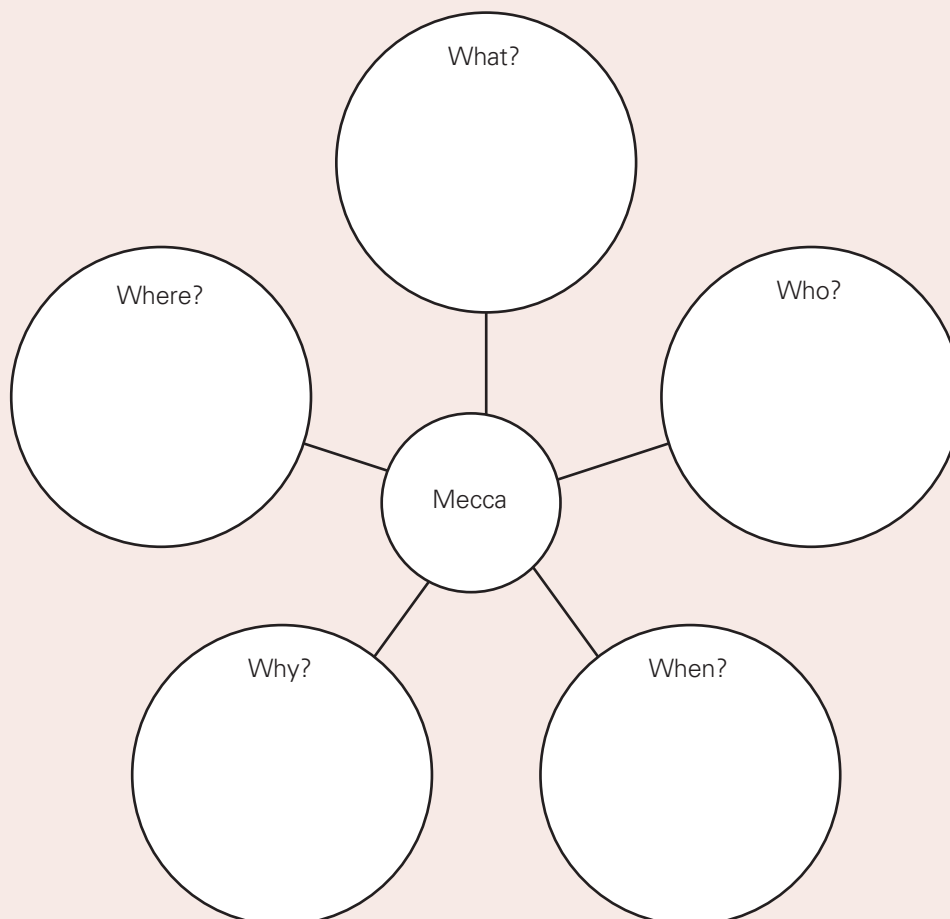
In this learning sequence students learn about the significance of Mecca and why Muslims need to know the direction of Mecca whenever they pray. Students will learn about finding the direction of Mecca without a compass and then create their own compass rose to identify the direction of Mecca from five cities around the world.

### Activity one: Mecca

Mecca is a place of great spiritual significance to all Muslims. Located in what is now Saudi Arabia, Mecca was the place where Islam began and the birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad. Muslims who are physically and financially able are expected to make at least one pilgrimage, or *hajj*, to Mecca in their lifetime. Each year, about 2 million Muslims make this journey. More information about the *hajj* can be found in **Part C** (under **The pillars of Islam**).

One of the five pillars of Islam, shared by Muslims across the world, is prayer. Muslims are expected to pray at least five times a day. Whenever Muslims pray, they must face towards the Kaba in Mecca.

Begin a class discussion by drawing the following diagram on the board.



Using student knowledge, and research as needed, come up with answers to the following questions about Mecca: Where is it? What is it? Who is Mecca important to? Why is it important? When is it important?

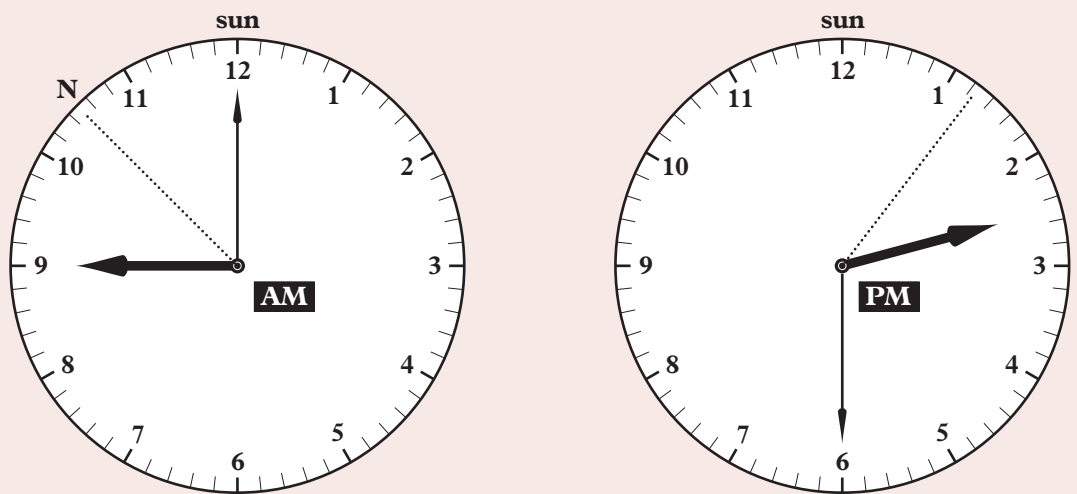
### Activity two: Where's Mecca?

In this activity students work in pairs to create a compass rose to help them locate Mecca from five cities around the world. Distribute the two page **Where's Mecca?** worksheet to students. Help students create their compass rose and complete the task.

### Activity three: In which direction do Muslims pray?

Muslims in Australia need to work out the direction of Mecca before they pray. While they know that Mecca is located approximately northwest of Australia, Muslims need to find out what direction northwest is from wherever they are at the time. Rather than carrying a compass, many Muslims use the sun's position in the sky and/or their watches to orient themselves.

As a class, when the weather is suitable, go outside and use the following technique to find north. Hold an analogue watch horizontally with the numeral 12 pointing towards the sun. Locate the hour hand. The direction that lies midway between the 12 and the hour hand will be north.



Once you have located north, ask students to work out where northwest is and face towards Mecca.

**The Sacred Mosque in Mecca where the Kaba is situated.** iStockphoto.





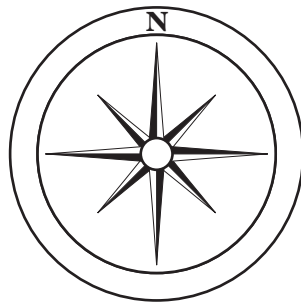
## Worksheet: Where's Mecca?

In this activity you are going to work out the direction of Mecca from five different cities around the world.

1. To create a compass rose, cut around the compass template provided at the bottom of this page. You will need to carefully cut out the centre of the compass.
2. Label the other points on your compass.
3. Now look at the map of the world and correctly label the following cities on the map: Mecca, London, Melbourne, Cape Town, Shanghai and Miami.
4. Complete the following table by finding the direction from the five cities to Mecca. Place the centre of your compass on one of the cities. Place a ruler over the compass to create a line between the city and Mecca. The compass point that runs in the same direction as the ruler indicates the direction from that city to Mecca.

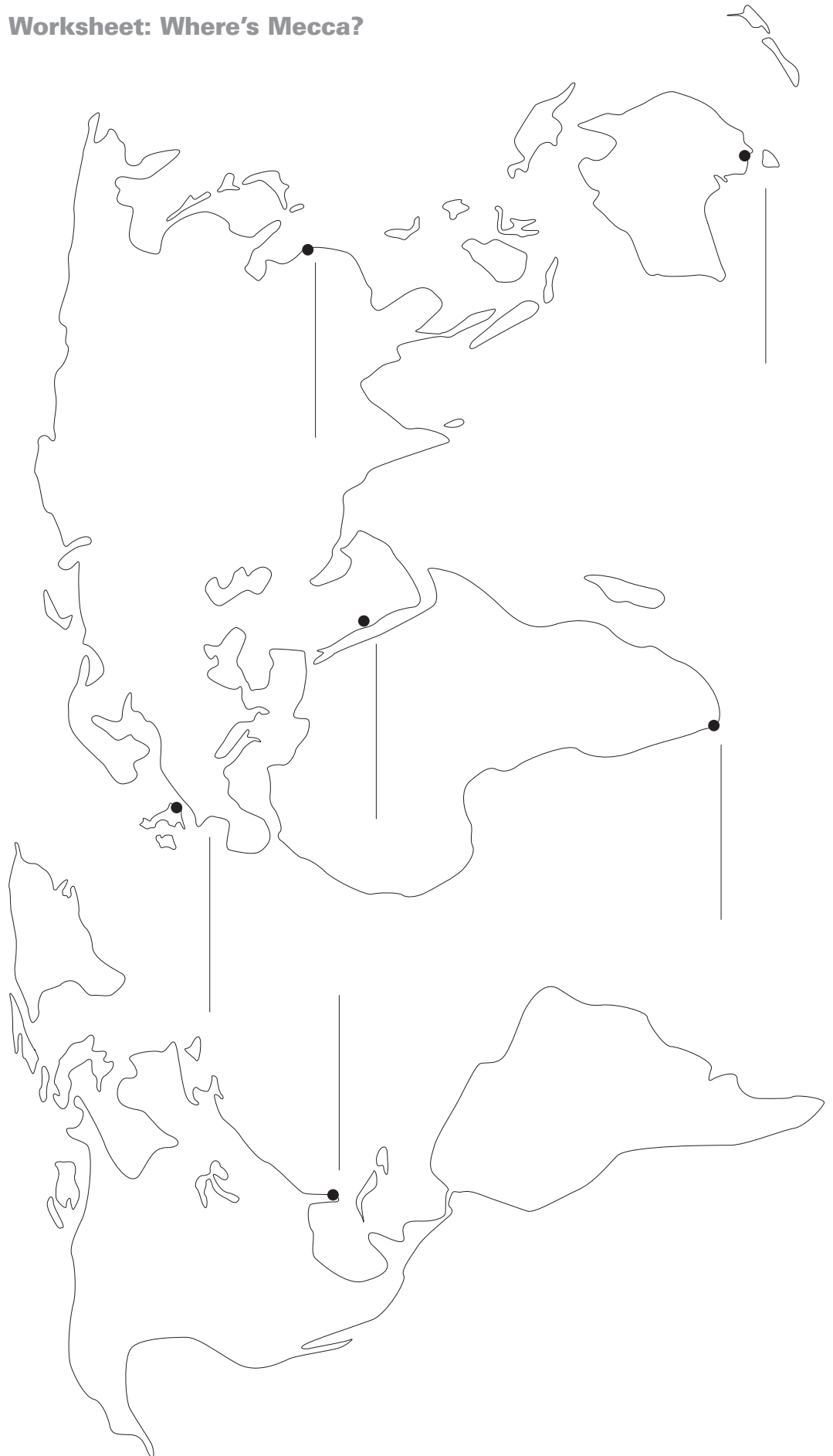
What direction is Mecca from?

London	
Melbourne	
Cape Town	
Shanghai	
Miami	





## Worksheet: Where's Mecca?



## Learning sequence: Get the facts — Muslims in Australia

*Level: Lower secondary*

*This unit engages students in analysis and graphing of statistics about Australia's Muslim population. It also aims to challenge misconceptions regarding Australia's Muslim population. More information can be found in **Part C** of the resource, under **Muslims in Australia**.*

### Activity one: True or false

The worksheet, **True or false**, asks students to decide whether statements about Australia's Muslim population are correct. They should complete this task without prior discussion.

When the students have completed this task, distribute the **Get the facts** worksheets. Ask students to use the information to check their answers. Students may be surprised at the results. This activity asks students to reflect on their initial answers, which may reflect stereotypes, bias and the high profile of Muslim Australians in the media.

### Activity two: Graphing

Ask your students to use the **Get the facts** worksheets to:

- ◆ Create a visual representation of the statistics by developing graphs to display the information.
- ◆ Write a short demographic analysis of Muslims in Australia.





### Worksheet: True or false

Read the seven statements below and, without doing any research, write **true** or **false** in the box.

	true or false
Between 5–10% of Australians are Muslims	
Islam is the largest non-Christian religion in Australia	
Over 75% of Muslims living in Australia are under the age of 25	
Most Muslims living in Australia were born overseas	
Most Muslims living in Australia are male	
Victoria has the highest Muslim population in Australia	
Tasmania has the smallest Muslim population in Australia	

Now use the statistics provided on the **Get the facts** worksheets to check your answers. Use the space below to rewrite any of the statements that are not true so that they are correct.

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Did you guess any answers incorrectly? Why? Did any of these statistics surprise you? Why or why not?

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## Worksheet: Get the facts

### Religious affiliations in Australia, 2006

Religion	Population	Percentage
Catholic	5,126,900	25.8
Anglican	3,718,200	18.7
Uniting Church	1,135,400	5.7
Presbyterian and Reformed	596,700	3.0
Eastern Orthodox	544,200	2.7
Baptist	316,700	1.6
Lutheran	251,100	1.3
Pentecostal	219,700	1.1
Other Christian	776,900	3.9
Buddhism	418,800	2.1
Islam	340,400	1.7
Hinduism	148,100	0.7
Judaism	88,800	0.4
Other non-Christian	109,000	0.5
No religion	3,706,600	18.7

Note: Information not included for those who did not state religion.

### Geographical distribution of Muslims in Australia, 2006

State/territory	Muslim population	Percentage of total Muslim population
New South Wales	168,788	49.6
Victoria	109,369	32.1
Western Australia	24,187	7.1
Queensland	20,318	6.0
South Australia	10,521	3.1
Australian Capital Territory	4,373	1.3
Northern Territory	1,083	0.3
Tasmania	1,049	0.3



## Worksheet: Get the facts

### Place of birth of Muslims living in Australia, 2006

Place	Number	Percentage
Born overseas	199,070	58.5
Australia	128,904	37.9

Note: Information not included for those who did not state country of birth.

### Age and gender of Muslims in Australia, 2006

Age group	Males	Females
0–14 years	52,346	49,552
15–24 years	32,943	31,007
25–44 years	59,488	54,580
45–64 years	27,437	22,826
65+ years	5,536	4,669

All statistics are sourced from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing, Australian Bureau of Statistics.



## Introduction

Muslims have contributed much to the arts, particularly in the areas of visual art, architecture, calligraphy, music and film. In visual art, Muslims developed complex, sometimes geometric patterns, in keeping with the religious belief that they should avoid visually depicting God and prophets. This belief also encouraged a focus on what Muslims believe to be God's Word, the Quran, and the development of complex calligraphy in Arabic. Each Muslim region has its own unique style of calligraphy.

Muslim architecture generally reflects these two main trends, with cultural nuances that vary from region to region. Most mosques, for instance, will display geometric patterns as well as Quranic calligraphy. Modern Muslim architecture can be a sight to behold, often with an Arab-Islamic flavour. Some of the grandest and most famous buildings in the world today, whether medieval or modern, are the product of Muslim architecture.

In music, one of the important contributions made by Muslims is the introduction of Arabic and Persian melodies. Even in popular music today, these influences are widespread and there are some famous artists who are Muslim (such as Yusuf Islam, formerly Cat Stevens). Yet many traditional Islamic legal opinions view music unfavourably or consider it prohibited in Islam.

## Issues to look out for

In visual art, some Muslim students and/or their parents will be uncomfortable with drawing and sculpting animate objects (people and animals). Muslim students who adopt this stance, either of their own accord or on account of parental instruction, might purposely avoid drawing living creatures in full. For instance, they might depict a human being or an animal without a face. This is based on an Islamic opinion stating that if such drawings lack key physical features, they do not become the objects they portray.

While most Muslims do not see any harm in drawing animate objects, some students have gone as far as defacing their works and the works of others. They base their opinion on a literal reading of the following saying of Prophet Muhammad: 'Whoever depicts an animate object then God will charge him with giving that object a soul on the Day of Judgement.'

A small number of Muslims, for the same reason, also believe that photography and video are prohibited in Islam. They only accept the use of photography and video where it is unavoidable, such as photo ID for driver's licences and passports. All of these opinions reflect only a small minority of Muslims in Australia.

Music is a major area of disagreement for Muslims in Australia (as elsewhere), among scholars and the Muslim laity. As a general precept, Muslim scholars have always stipulated moral decency and modesty as a requirement for music and singing. Even so, classical Arab-Muslim songs have been known to include 'indecent' lyrics, some of which are studied in Muslim universities worldwide due to their poetic value.

Here are some of the opinions that you might encounter on this issue:

1. Music is prohibited in Islam except during the two *Id* festivals and at weddings. The only type of music allowed during these occasions is the beating on the monotone drum (*daff*), which may be accompanied by the voices of children. Only men may perform in front of men and the same rule applies to women.
2. All types of musical instruments are prohibited in Islam except for the *daff*, which may be used for musical purposes at all times. The *daff* may be accompanied by singing, which has formed the basis of the most popular form of *nashid* (Islamic religious song) in the Muslim world. String and wind instruments are prohibited because they are thought to sound like the devil, and to lead to immorality, carelessness and laziness.
3. All types of musical instruments and singing are permissible as long as modesty, moral decency and religious rules are observed. Proponents of this view argue that the prophetic sayings about the ‘evils’ of music and leisurely singing are almost always in the context of activities such as sex and drinking alcohol. If these ‘indecent’ acts are avoided, then music in itself is permissible.
4. All types of music and singing are permissible as long as the individual is able to regulate his or her own behaviour according to Islamic moral standards.

These differences in opinion can make it difficult for Australian teachers, but being aware of such issues and prepared to negotiate with students and their families is the best approach. Some local Muslim scholars who have a more traditional attitude to music have taken the position that children may learn music as part of general education but should be discouraged from taking it up as an extra-curricular activity.

### **Suggested strategies and content**

Art, music and drama teachers may involve students in exploring Muslim contributions and influences from an artistic, historical and social perspective. Historically, Muslim rulers commissioned their best artists and builders to produce grand works, the credit for which was often given to the person endowing the funds.



**Zaragoza bridge pavilion designed by Zaha Hadid.** Photo Grez.

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In modern times, more credit has gone to the artist or architect. Yusuf Islam (formerly Cat Stevens), the Grammy-award winning composer A Rahman, and Youssou N'Dour are just some of the Muslim artists who reflect their spirituality in their art. Two members of the multi-award winning Danish hip-hop trio, Outlandish, are committed Muslims.

In architecture, Zaha Hadid (see image on previous page), a world renowned Iraqi British architect with a 250-strong design team, in 2004 became the first woman to win the prestigious Pritzker Prize in architecture. Islam inspired streetscapes or graffiti are also emerging as a popular art form, with figures such as Mohammad Ali from Aerosol Arabic gaining prominence. Ali recently collaborated with a group of young Muslim street artists to produce a mural commissioned by the City of Melbourne. The project, *Ali and the Crooked Rib*, has been documented in a film by Thomas Baricevic with accompanying notes for teachers.

Students can also undertake projects reflecting Muslim art, architecture, calligraphy, music and even popular culture (such as graffiti). The following two learning sequences, **Minarets and mosques — the art of Muslim buildings** and **Calligraphy and Islam**, suggest ways of doing this with primary and secondary students.



Melbourne mural created by Mohammad Ali and a group of young Muslim artists. Photo Crooked Rib.

## Learning sequence: Minarets and mosques — the art of Muslim buildings

*Level: Middle/Upper primary*

*In this learning sequence students explore features of Muslim architecture and use this knowledge in two activities: 1) creating an Islam inspired streetscape using silhouettes; and 2) printing an arabesque design.*

### Activity one: Common features of Muslim architecture

Islam has inspired some of the world's most famous and alluring buildings. Traditional features of Muslim architecture can be seen at mosques, tombs, forts and palaces throughout the Muslim world.

Explore examples of Muslim architecture with your students, focusing on four common features: minarets, domes, arches and arabesque. Many images are available on the internet. Use the buildings suggested below to explore examples of each feature.

- ◆ Isfahan Mosque, Iran
- ◆ Alhambra, Grenada, Spain
- ◆ Taj Mahal, Agra, India
- ◆ Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem, Israel
- ◆ Suleymaniye Mosque, Istanbul, Turkey
- ◆ Koutoubia Mosque, Marrakech, Morocco
- ◆ The Great Mosque of Xi'an, Xi'an, Shaanxi Province, China
- ◆ Mesjid Negara, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- ◆ Istiqlal Mosque, Jakarta, Indonesia
- ◆ Prophet's Mosque, Medina, Saudi Arabia

### Minarets

Often resembling towers, minarets are a consistent feature of mosques. A caller to prayer (*muazzin*) would traditionally climb to the top of the minaret and make the call to prayer (*azan*). Although minarets were designed to increase the range of the caller's voice, over time they have evolved various decorative shapes and designs, often reflecting their locality. Modern day minarets even have loudspeakers to further the reach of the caller's voice.

#### **Minaret at the Great Mosque of Paris.**

Photo Eeqmal Hassim.





**Left: Dome of a mosque in Spain.** Photo Eeqmal Hassim.

**Below: Dome of the Rock**  
Photo courtesy of Photos8.com



### Domes

Coming in many shapes and sizes, domes often form a building's roof or are used as design features on minarets or other structures. They are sometimes flat and rounded, sometimes pointed. Domes were originally designed to improve the acoustics within a mosque. Over time, they have become a signature feature of many mosques and are often elaborately decorated.

### Arches

Muslim architecture often features large open areas such as courtyards and pavilions. Arches are used to connect these areas and as structural support. Circular and pointed archways feature, internally and externally, in many buildings.



**Arches at the famous Mezquita in Spain.**  
Photo Eeqmal Hassim.



**Fine arabesque detail at the Alhambra Palace in southern Spain.** Photo Eeqmal Hassim.



## Arabesque

Arabesque is a design element common in Muslim architecture, involving the use of repeated geometric patterns. It comes in many styles and is found on internal and external walls.

### Activity two: Islam inspired streetscape

**Materials:** Scissors, pencils, A4 black paper/card for each student, butcher's paper, glue

Ask your students to use their knowledge of Muslim design features and work as a class to create an Islam inspired streetscape. Students should each create the silhouette of a building that incorporates features common to Islamic architecture. Ask students to create a design before copying it on to the black paper and cutting out their silhouette.

Collect all the designs and work with students to place them on sections of butcher's paper, so as to create one or more streetscapes.

### Activity three: Creating arabesque

**Materials:** Potatoes, knives or other cutting implements, pencils, coloured paints (in saucers) or ink pads, paper towel, paper

Arabesque involves repeating geometric shapes to create a larger pattern or design. Students can create their own arabesque using a stamp made from half a potato.

Ask students to draw a simple geometric shape that appeals to them. Give them each half a potato and ask them to mark the shape using a pencil tip onto the potato. Students then create a stamp by carefully cutting away the potato that surrounds their shape. The shape should protrude from the remaining potato by at least 5 mm.

Students should dry their stamp using paper towel before dipping it in paint (or using an ink pad) and using it repeatedly to create an arabesque print. They may like to use alternating colours or work with another student to create a design that alternates two shapes.

## Learning sequence: Calligraphy and Islam

*Level: Upper/Middle secondary*

*This learning sequence explores the tradition of calligraphy in the Muslim world and asks students to identify its role and purpose. Students reflect on the tradition from their own context and perspective.*

1. Introduce your students to Islamic calligraphy by using the **The art of words** worksheet. Ask students to answer the questions on the worksheet or discuss them as a class. You may like to ask your students to find their own examples of Islamic calligraphy.
2. Ask your students to use their name or initials as the basis for a calligram that explores something about them. Calligrams are created when words are used to create an image, as shown on the **The art of words** student worksheet.
3. Ask your students to create a piece of art that incorporates words and has a spiritual (not necessarily religious) dimension. Students should write an account that explains their work and why they chose the approach they did.



**An Arabic calligraphist at work.** Photo Eeqmal Hassim.

## Worksheet: The art of words

There is a rich tradition of calligraphy among Muslims the world over, particularly using Arabic script. Muslim cultures use calligraphy, or handwriting, as a form of artistic and spiritual expression, and continue to adapt the tradition to the contemporary world.

Islam does not have a strong tradition of figurative art, with some Muslims believing that the drawing of animate objects, such as people or animals, is an offence to God. A saying of Prophet Muhammad is that God will challenge anyone who has drawn or sculpted an animate object to give it a living soul in the afterlife. For this reason much Muslim art emphasises calligraphy and abstract representations.

Page from a Quran.  
iStockphoto.



Muslim calligraphy is closely associated with the Muslim holy book, the Quran. Muslims consider calligraphy to be one of the primary ways of preserving and valuing the messages of the Quran, after the oral tradition. Today most Muslim calligraphy is still inspired by phrases from the Quran.

Calligraphy has had a large influence on Muslim architecture, particularly in mosques, where Muslims go for prayer. Calligraphy is often used as the basis for repetitive designs that decorate interior and exterior walls. This form of artistic expression is known as arabesque and is common across the Muslim world.

Calligraphy on the facade  
of the Dome of the Rock.  
Photo courtesy of  
Photos8.com





## Worksheet: The art of words

Figurative representations are seen in Muslim art in the form of calligrams (shown below), which use words to create pictures. Muslims often use spiritually significant words, such as Allah, to form the shapes of animals or other objects.



An example of a calligram. Image courtesy of Photos8.com

Today, the Muslim tradition of calligraphy is reflected in advertising and marketing, particularly in the Arab world. It is often the inspiration for business logos (such as the Aljazeera logo shown at right) and designs can also be animated for use on websites.



The logo for Aljazeera, the Arabic news network, is in the form of a drop of water. <aljazeera.com>

Muslim calligraphy is also finding a place in popular culture (see below right). Examples can be seen in the messages and tag lines of some graffiti artists. It is also found in body art, with many tattoo designs incorporating Arabic script. Interestingly, based on a number of traditions and sayings from Prophet Muhammad, most Muslims believe that tattoos are not allowed within Islam.

- ◆ Why is calligraphy a tradition of Islam?
- ◆ Do you consider calligraphy to be art or craft?
- ◆ In what ways has the tradition of calligraphy in the Muslim world changed over time?
- ◆ Can you think of examples where the Muslim tradition of calligraphy, particularly arabesque, has been adopted or adapted by other cultures?
- ◆ What relationship, if any, exists between religion and art?
- ◆ What other examples of visual art can you find that incorporate written language?



Section of a mural created by Mohammad Ali and a group of young Muslim artists. Photo Crooked Rib.

## Introduction

Muslims value health and physical education (PE). The international sporting world has many devout Muslim athletes. In Islam, Muslims are expected to keep strong and healthy as their bodies are regarded as a gift from God.

## Issues to look out for

The concerns that Muslims might express about health and physical education within schools are not to do with a lack of concern for physical wellbeing, but are almost always linked to questions of modesty and morality.

## Sex education


A perennial concern for Muslim parents and for teachers in Australian schools is sex education. Muslims believe that sex education is important for adolescents, but they are often concerned with the type of sex education offered in Australian schools. Muslim parents believe that sex education should be conducted within a religious and moral framework that stipulates that sex should only take place within marriage. Sex outside of marriage is seen as *zina* (fornication), which is a major sin in Islam. Hence, many Muslim parents view sex education in Australia as promoting a permissive sexual culture (one in which it is fine to have sex outside marriage as long as it is consensual, safe sex and the consequences have been responsibly considered by the parties involved). This culture clash explains why so many Muslim parents have voiced their concerns about this aspect of the curriculum, with many seeking exemptions for their children.

Muslim parents are not alone. Sex education can be a worry for all parents. Yet all adolescents, Muslims included, will face issues around sex and sexuality at this important stage of their development. Sex education can provide important information for them at this time.

Negotiation is the key. Firstly, the school needs to listen to and acknowledge the concerns of the Muslim, or other, parents and consider their perspectives when implementing the sex education curriculum. Secondly, Muslim parents need to accept that sex education as delivered in Australian schools is necessary and important for their adolescent children. While Muslim parents might expect their children to abstain from sexual activities, this will not always be the case; in such instances, sex education helps keep their children safe. In addition, some sex education content will be relevant in the context of family planning. Negotiation about sex education will often be difficult and confronting for the school and Muslim parents, but it is important to find a way forward.

## PE and sports

Another key area of concern for some Muslim students and their parents is sports attire, especially for girls who wear the *hijab*. For general PE, the vast majority of schools are happy for Muslim girls to opt for long sleeved tops and long trousers. Some Muslim boys will also opt for long trousers — a common view among Muslims is that Muslim males should at least cover themselves from the navel to below the knee. But there is more flexibility for males, as some Islamic legal opinions allow the navel and even part of the thighs to be seen.



In competitive school sports, however, accommodating the needs of Muslim girls, and even boys, may be more difficult due to the uniform codes of individual sports. In cases where negotiation is unsuccessful, the result is often the student not participating.

While even the more devout Muslim parents are generally accepting if their primary aged children do not adhere to *hijab* requirements, most will insist that their adolescent children conform to Islamic dress codes (some will also want their younger children to conform to the *hijab* as a way of getting them used to it).

## Swimming

Most Muslims recognise that swimming is an important life skill for all Australians, but some Muslim women in this country will not swim unless they can find an all female (and preferably all Muslim) pool. For schools, this poses a problem as swimming is often part of the PE curriculum. This problem is worse in co-ed schools, but even in all-girls schools some Muslim girls will hesitate to swim, as non-Muslims will see them out of their *hijab*. In some cases, after negotiation with the school, the girls will swim with a long-sleeved top and trousers, as well as a swimming cap. But some schools have refused to allow such attire, arguing that it is unsafe.

Some Muslim fashion designers have tried to resolve the issue by introducing the ‘Burqini’, made out of lightweight swimsuit material, which is a cross between a *hijab* and a swimsuit. While this may seem an ingenious solution, some Muslims believe that the Burqini does not satisfy *hijab* requirements which, they argue, dictate that clothing should be flowing and loose so as not to reveal one’s shape.

Once again, the key is negotiation. The school and the parents need to work together to enable all Muslim girls to learn the potentially life-saving skill of swimming.

## Ramadan and fasting

During the month of Ramadan, (the dates change from year to year according to the Gregorian calendar), Muslims fast from dawn to sunset. This requirement only applies to mature, sane and healthy Muslims. In Islamic law, a mature Muslim is generally one who has reached puberty and/or has attained intellectual maturity. Muslim women only fast when they are not menstruating.

Muslims do not eat or drink during fasting, and this can create challenges in the context of PE. Muslim students may demonstrate a range of responses during Ramadan. Many will still eagerly participate in PE; others will participate but might ask to be excused if they feel exhausted at any stage. Some will seek an exemption from the start, while some may not even be fasting. The key to managing the issue of fasting and PE is to be guided by the student, and to allow participation or exemption according to each individual’s response.

The teacher should pay close attention to a fasting child and intervene if they show signs of exhaustion or dehydration. PE teachers should also note that Muslims are allowed to break their fast for health reasons, and most are very reasonable in this regard.

Although Muslim children who have not attained puberty sometimes fast because their parents wish to train them from a young age, they are not required to do so in Islam. This often makes it easier to negotiate with parents. Establishing a prior agreement with parents that their child will be given nourishment should he or she display signs of exhaustion or dehydration during PE is an excellent way to avoid misunderstandings.

Finally, Muslim students who choose not to participate in PE because they are fasting may feel marginalised and alienated if they are left alone to study. Involving these students in helping set up and run the PE class may be preferable.

## Introduction

In the modern era, particularly since the Oil Boom in the 1970s, the Muslim world has become an important player in the global economy, especially in oil, minerals and gold, and through the Islamic banking sector (estimated to deal with many billions of dollars). Some of the wealthiest people in the world are Muslims and an example of this wealth is the increasing number of opulent buildings in the Gulf region.

Since the Islamic Revival of the 1980s, Islamic banking has become a growing force, with major world banks now incorporating Islamic banking and finance products into their services. Citigroup, the largest commercial bank in the world, was the first non-Muslim bank to introduce such a venture. In Australia, the National Australia Bank (NAB), is currently considering a similar venture. Australia also has an Islamic finance and banking services provider, the Muslim Community and Credit Association (MCCA). Australia's Indonesian and Malaysian neighbours are also key players in the field.

As charging and paying of interest (*riba*) is prohibited in Islam, Islamic banking and finance products are designed to benefit the buyer and seller, or lender and borrower, without interest. Mechanisms such as profit sharing, joint-ventures and agreed rate profits are preferred, and bank accounts carry no interest.

*Halal* trade is another growing area of world trade, and Australia is a major exporter of *Halal* foods. *Halal* in Islam basically means 'permissible'. In relation to food, many Muslims believe that they should only consume food products with animal content if the food has been prepared according to Islamic rites of slaughter. As a result, *Halal* labelling on food products has become important in the import and export of food the world over. Companies pay Islamic governing bodies for *Halal* accreditation in order to open up wider markets for their products. In 2006, Australia had its first *Halal* trade expos in Melbourne and Sydney, with keen interest shown by government and business sectors.



Example of *Halal* labelling on food.

## Issues to look out for

Muslims traditionally view the taking and paying of interest as forbidden in Islam, because it is seen as a form of oppression. However, in modern times, even devout Muslims differentiate between *riba* that is referred to in the Quran and *Sunna* and interest as it functions in today's banking systems. Nonetheless, attitudes to this vary considerably among Muslims.

Some Muslims see capitalism as a greed-driven economic system that leads to an imbalance in the global distribution of wealth. They argue that it makes the rich richer and the poor poorer, noting that many Muslim communities live in poverty. They also see capitalism as a product of the West. However, most Muslim students will approach the study of business at school with an open mind. In fact, most Muslims make financial decisions based on what is most practical for their situation, and not necessarily for religious reasons.

## Suggested strategies and content

Teachers may like to incorporate content about Muslim contributions to the world economy, in particular, Muslim perspectives on the oil trade, Islamic banking and *Halal* trading. This allows students to appreciate other ways of looking at economics and business. It also makes them aware of an alternative banking system and a lucrative area of trade that both emerge from the specific needs of a religious group. Some entry points for Muslim content and perspectives include:

- ◆ discussing the oil trade from the standpoint of the Muslim nations
- ◆ exploring Islamic banking and finance, through research, discussion or debate about the merits, or otherwise, of banking without interest
- ◆ discussing the Islamic listing on NASDAQ and the New York Stock Exchange when studying stock markets (as a reflection of Islamic finance and *Halal* trade)
- ◆ discussing Islamic business and economics in the context of ethical business and economic practices.

The learning sequence **Banking on Islam** encourages secondary students to explore the principles of Islamic banking.



Mosaic covered Dome of the Treasury at the Umayyad Mosque, Damascus, Syria. Photo heretiç.



## Learning sequence: Banking on Islam

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*Level: Middle secondary*

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*This unit engages students in analysing the principles and practices of Islamic banking in the world today. Students produce promotional material for an Islamic bank.*

For background information, or to help introduce students to the concept, teachers can use the information on Islamic banking found in the **Introduction** to the **Economics and Business** section on the previous pages.

### **Activity one: Know your terms**

Introduce your students to the concept of Islamic banking. When you have done this, distribute the **Common Islamic banking terms** worksheet or, alternatively, give the students the list of terms and ask them to create their own glossaries.

When students are familiar with the terms ask them to brainstorm the main differences between Islamic and other forms of banking. What are the advantages and disadvantages of Islamic banking?

### **Activity two: Selling the services**

Ask your students to take on the role of a communications expert who has been hired by an Islamic bank to promote their services. Students should create material, in the form of a pamphlet, slideshow, article or poster, that informs potential customers about the bank's services. Students should conduct their own research about Islamic banks. Their publicity material should include information about the principles of Islamic banking, and should incorporate each word from the glossary of terms.



## Worksheet: Common Islamic banking terms

Many Muslims across the world rely on Islamic banking principles that have been in use for more than a thousand years. Islamic banking does not allow the use of interest payments and is based on the idea of sharing profits and losses. It also forbids investment in certain things, such as unethical products and companies, or futures trading (regarded as a form of gambling).

The following terms are all relevant to Islamic banking practices.

### **Quran**

The Quran is the holy book of Islam and its primary source of legislation. Muslims believe that it is a guide to how humans should live.

### **Sharia**

The term *Sharia*, or Islamic law, actually means 'path'. It refers to the way that a Muslim should live as dictated by the Quran and other Islamic traditions. Islamic banking is guided by the *Sharia* and experts in *Sharia* oversee the practices of Islamic banks.

### **Haram**

This term refers to all things that are prohibited for Muslims, including pork, alcohol, interest and gambling. Islamic banks do not invest in services or products that are *haram*. The opposite of *haram* is *halal*.

### **Riba**

Riba, meaning 'increase' or 'interest', is prohibited by *Sharia*. It means that those lending money may not charge interest on the amount of money loaned. It is based on the idea that when something is lent, the repayment should be of equal value.

### **Mudaraba**

A *mudaraba* is a partnership where one party (the bank) provides the capital, and the other party provides the expertise or management. It could be used when a person wishes to borrow money to start a business. The two parties then share the profits.

### **Murabaha**

This term refers to the sale of goods where the cost of the goods and a profit for the seller are declared and agreed to prior to the sale. As charging interest is forbidden, this practice is often used by Islamic banks when they offer finance for houses or vehicles.

### **Musharaka**

This is a financing venture between two or more partners, in which each partner provides funds for, and can be involved in the management of, the venture. Profits and losses are shared by all partners. Islamic banks are often partners in such agreements.

### **Takaful**

Conventional insurance involves paying premiums that need not be commensurate with the amount of money received from the insurer. The Muslim equivalent of insurance, *takaful*, works on the concept of co-sponsorship and is community based. Individuals or families contribute money to a central fund, from which money can be withdrawn when someone is in need. *Takaful* in Arabic means 'sponsoring one another'.

# CROSS-CURRICULAR PERSPECTIVES

## VALUES EDUCATION, CIVICS AND CITIZENSHIP, GLOBAL EDUCATION AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

### Introduction

The impact of Muslims in the world today — whether in politics, religion, economics, education, or culture — is more than enough justification for including Muslim content and perspectives in cross-curricular studies in our schools. Muslims in Australia and overseas represent a rich and colourful tapestry of beliefs, cultures, languages, ethnicities and nationalities as well as economic and educational backgrounds.

It is when this diversity is not recognised, that Islam, as a religion, is most likely to be reduced to the stereotypes often portrayed in the media. Cross-curricular approaches to learning about Islam and Muslims provide an excellent start to addressing misconceptions about the religion.

### Issues to look out for

Stereotypes, prejudice, ignorance, misinformation, misconceptions, racism and the role of the media and politics are all interrelated and Muslim students may be especially sensitive about how these topics relate to them. Since September 11, Muslim students have had to face such issues head on. At a time when they are trying to discover themselves and form their own identities, their allegiance to Australia has been questioned, as have their beliefs. These difficulties need to be recognised and acknowledged.

On the other hand, Muslim students can also display their own prejudices and stereotypes towards the wider Australian society, out of ignorance and misinformation. Prejudice is a two-way street and teachers need to acknowledge this clearly in any classroom discussion.

### Suggested strategies and contents

When prejudice arises in class discussion, teachers can use it constructively in their teaching. Students should be encouraged to evaluate different perspectives and to challenge them when necessary. While this can be difficult for teachers to facilitate, such conversations are valuable in developing tolerant and open-minded individuals.

Muslim experiences of prejudice in Australia can also be a basis for encouraging intercultural and interfaith dialogue in schools. They allow for first-hand learning and the exploration of differences and similarities, unity and diversity. In Australia, many Islamic schools have established healthy relationships with other schools as a way of fostering interfaith and intercultural understanding.

At the classroom level, secondary teachers may find a 'keywords' media exercise — such as the one suggested in the learning sequence **Muslims, meaning and the media** in the **English** section — particularly engaging and useful. Students can also research popular Islam related terms from the media and present their findings in class. Alternatively an analysis of headlines that refer to Islam and Muslims can be interesting. A powerful resource to use with secondary students is *Beyond Beliefs* (available through Issues Deliberation Australia, [www.ida.org.au](http://www.ida.org.au)). This teacher resource kit, which includes a DVD documentary, explores the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims in Australia. *Australian Screen* also has several examples of footage that presents Muslim perspectives (<http://aso.gov.au>).

Primary teachers may find roleplay effective in exploring cultural and religious diversity. When children are in role, they can often appreciate others' perspectives, which can help to develop empathy. A useful resource for learning about different perspectives is *The Really Big Beliefs Project*, by Emma Barnard and Thomas Cho (Curriculum Corporation, 2005). It is a big, colourful book suitable for middle and upper primary students learning about different faiths in the world. Teachers may also like to download the free IDEAS unit *Developing cultural sensitivity in the classroom* from the Australian Curriculum Studies Association website ([www.acsa.edu.au](http://www.acsa.edu.au)).

The primary learning sequence invites students to create a **Museum of Religion**, and the secondary one, **It's all in the name!**, explores ethnic stereotyping and discrimination.

## Case study

### Ivanhoe Grammar School (Melbourne, Australia)



Photos in this case study courtesy of Ivanhoe Grammar School.

At Ivanhoe Grammar School, students are fortunate to work and play in a culturally diverse setting. Each student is therefore encouraged and supported to develop their own cultural identity while being enriched through their contact with other cultures within and outside the classroom. The School believes the development of intercultural knowledge, values and skills, including developing a stronger understanding of Muslims, is critical to prepare students to live, work and learn in the 21st century.

At Year 10, all students are required to undertake the subject Global Perspectives to develop their thinking and learning. The core working concept of Global Perspectives is that of 'Global Issues'. The subject begins with an exploration of ethical decision making, including appeals to religious authority and human rights. This affords students the opportunity to recognise the diversity of religious belief and practice between religions, and within selected religions. Islam is presented as a religious tradition of considerable diversity in practice and belief between nations and cultures. To further explore the diversity of Islam and Muslims, students are invited to deconstruct media representations of Islam and Muslims. In particular, students interrogate the circulation of stereotypes and how language is deployed to reinforce such stereotypes.

Students at Year 10 also engage in an interdisciplinary unit on Afghanistan. In their English lessons, students read and deconstruct *Kite Runner* while Global Perspectives provides the social, cultural and political history of Afghanistan. Afghanistan provides the context for examining 'Just War Theory' and international relations in the 'Post-Cold War' period more broadly.



Global Perspectives culminates with a Model United Nations Conference that provides an interactive forum for exploring contemporary global issues and the work of the United Nations. Participating students shed their former identities and step into the 'shoes' of country ambassadors to the United Nations, to debate and negotiate contentious global issues on the United Nations agenda.

At Year 9 all students are required to undertake the subject Asian Studies. Students begin the subject responding to the question, 'Is Australia an Asian country?' The subject further invites students to respond to the question, 'What is a good neighbour?' It is through such questions that Australia's relationship with Indonesia is explored. Of particular note is the 'Brain Storm' activity that requires students to nominate periods of cooperation and conflict in Australia's relationship with Indonesia. Such an activity often indicates a significant understanding of how, for instance, the Asian tsunami, Bali terrorist bombings and the independence of East Timor affected the relationship between Australia and Indonesia.

As participants in the Asia Education Foundation's Australia-Indonesia Project, students contribute to a WIKI that facilitates student to student contact between Ivanhoe Grammar School and the Balinese School SMAN 4.

*Tim Bush*  
Director of World Studies

#### **Useful teachers' resources for cross-curricular perspectives**

- ◆ *Diversity: An educational advantage*  
<http://www.teachingdiversity.org.au>  
Resources to help use diversity in schools as an educational advantage.
- ◆ *Keynotes Project*  
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/studentlearning/programs/multicultural/tchkeynotes.htm>  
Resources on how to manage multiculturalism, racism, prejudice, violence and conflict in schools, and a multifaith classroom.
- ◆ *Nadas Island*  
<http://www.nadasisland.com/culture>  
An award-winning website for ESL teachers and students, dealing with language, culture and motivation.
- ◆ *Understanding Cultural Difference through Dialogue*  
<http://www.latrobe.edu.au/dialogue/assets/downloads/understanding-difference-through-dialogue.pdf>  
A La Trobe University resource for teachers of middle-years secondary school students to facilitate dialogue as a means of promoting cultural tolerance and harmony.
- ◆ *Understanding the Multifaith Classroom in a Secular Society*  
<http://www.nceis.unimelb.edu.au/resources/-teachers/multifaith-classrooms/resource-kit>  
A resource from the NCEIS, University of Melbourne, containing useful information about Judaism, Islam and Christianity for teachers of all school levels.

## Learning sequence: Museum of Religion

*Level: Middle primary*

*In this learning sequence students take on the role of curators and create a Museum of Religion in their classroom to increase interfaith understanding.*

### Activity one: The museum curator

Explain to students that they will be creating a Museum of Religion and begin the session by explaining the role of a museum curator. Write the word 'curator' on the board and brainstorm all the things that a museum curator does. Prompt responses as necessary so that your list covers most of the following tasks:

- ◆ selecting topics for exhibitions
- ◆ researching the topic
- ◆ selecting objects and images for display
- ◆ writing labels that explain the significance of objects/images
- ◆ designing the display
- ◆ setting up the exhibition.

Explain to your students that they will all be assuming this role for your Museum of Religion.

### Activity two: Choosing your approach

Now that your students are curators they need to decide which approach to use to organise the information in their exhibition. Their museum exhibition could organise information by:

- ◆ religion (Christianity, Islam, Buddhism etc.)
- ◆ theme (celebrations, places of worship, rights of passage, clothing etc.)

Ask students to talk in pairs or small groups and jot down an advantage and disadvantage of each approach. Conduct a class vote to select the approach that will be used.

Once the decision has been made, brainstorm the religions or themes that you will use to organise the class museum.

### Activity three: Creating the museum

Divide students into small groups and allocate a theme or religion to each one. Tell each group they are responsible for:

- ◆ researching their theme or religion
- ◆ selecting and locating objects or images that they will display — students may have access to a variety of religious artefacts from their homes, but should use images when it is not possible to locate objects
- ◆ writing labels to explain to others the significance of the image or object displayed.

Create your Museum of Religion and enjoy a 'visit'! Invite others to come along too!

## Learning sequence: It's all in a name!

*Level: Middle/Upper secondary*

*This learning sequence explores ethnic stereotyping through a focus on a 2009 Australian National University (ANU) study about names and employer discrimination.*

### Activity one: My name

Ask your students to focus on their own names by working with a partner to answer the following questions:

- ◆ Is there a story behind your name?
- ◆ Do you like your name? Why or why not?
- ◆ What do you think people who do not know you might assume about you based only on your name? (Think about gender and ethnicity.)

### Activity two: A study in discrimination

Begin this activity by writing the following names on the board. They are actually examples of ethnically distinctive names used in the ANU study about names and discrimination:

Jennifer Robinson, Ahmed Kassir, Winnie Tjungarrayi, Peng Lin and Maria Ferrari

Ask your students what ethnic backgrounds they think these people might have. (The names are Anglo, Middle Eastern, Aboriginal, Chinese, and Italian.)

Now distribute or display the **What's in a name?** worksheet that describes the ANU study. You might like to discuss the questions on the worksheet as a class.

(For more details, see *Does Racial and Ethnic Discrimination Vary Across Minority Groups? Evidence from Three Experiments* via <http://econrsss.anu.edu.au/~aleigh/> )

Conclude this activity with a class debate: 'Discrimination is a feature of any multicultural society'.



## Worksheet: What's in a name?

A recent study by researchers from the Australian National University showed that job applicants find it easier to get an interview if they have an Anglo-Saxon name.

The study, completed in June 2009, involved sending more than 4000 fake CVs in response to job advertisements in Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney. Several types of CV were created under different names. The advertised positions were in hospitality, data entry, customer service and sales.

'By varying the names on the CVs, we were able to estimate precisely the extent of hiring discrimination' explained one of the researchers, Professor Alison Booth. 'Because all other characteristics are held constant, we can be sure that we are really measuring discrimination.'

The study used a selection of distinctive names reflecting Anglo-Saxon, Middle Eastern, Indigenous, Chinese and Italian ethnicity. These included names such as Adam Mitchell, Lala Hariri, Ronnie Japanangka, Ping Chang and Giuseppe Romano.

The findings showed that to get the same number of interviews as an applicant with an Anglo-Saxon name, an applicant:

- ◆ with a Chinese name must submit 68% more applications
- ◆ with a Middle Eastern name must submit 64% more applications
- ◆ with an Indigenous name must submit 35% more applications
- ◆ with an Italian name must submit 12% more applications.

The fake CVs all made it clear that the applicants had completed high school in Australia, so it is unlikely that employers thought the applicants did not speak English.

One interesting statistic to emerge was that in Melbourne, Italian-named applicants were not disadvantaged. In fact, Italian-named applicants could submit 7% fewer applications than Anglo-named applicants to get an interview.

### Discuss the following questions:

- ◆ What are the stereotypes that the employers may have associated with each of the ethnically distinctive names?
- ◆ Where do these stereotypes come from?
- ◆ Do you think the employers made conscious or unconscious decisions not to interview people with certain names? Why?
- ◆ Why do you think the results varied between different ethnic groups?
- ◆ Can this discrimination be overcome? How?



# PART B

## ACHIEVING POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR MUSLIM STUDENTS

الفضل  
تحقيق نتائج إيجابية للطلاب المسلمين

This part of the resource aims to provide educators with an awareness of issues that commonly affect Muslim students in schools. The first section focuses on recognising the needs of Muslim students, parents and communities within a school context. The second section focuses on facilitating the religious practice and customs of Muslims in schools.

Muslim students often have specific needs in schools and these are not necessarily religious. Muslims are a diverse group; culturally, ethnically, linguistically, nationally and in their religious views. Even within one ethnicity, there may be many sub-cultures. Parental and societal expectations also play a role. The needs of Muslim students in schools reflect this diversity. For instance, a Muslim who appears more ‘relaxed’, ‘moderate’ or ‘modern’ in his or her practice of Islam is not necessarily less religious than other Muslims, but may simply have a different interpretation of Islam.

Engaging Muslims in Australian schools is, ultimately, a matter of negotiation. Sometimes the negotiation is simple and almost implicit. At other times, it can be strained and difficult. It mostly depends on the religious and cultural expectations of the parents and the extent to which their children reflect these at school.

Negotiation needs to be a two-way street. Often, teachers go out of their way to be sensitive to the needs of Muslim students, without first establishing with the students and their families what these needs are. Such a one-sided approach can reinforce the notion that Muslim students are different or ‘alien’, and might lead schools to make unnecessary compromises in curricular and extra-curricular areas.

Negotiation is not about one party abandoning or reshaping their beliefs in order to accommodate another who is not willing to budge. All parties involved in a child’s education need to come together to discuss concerns — the school spells out its general expectations and the Muslim students and their parents explain their needs to the school. This approach does not always work, but tends to fail only if neither party is willing to negotiate in the first place.



Negotiation, especially when it involves religion, is a tricky exercise in schools. This resource attempts to strike a balance between the needs of Muslims and a school’s educational responsibilities. In the process of negotiation, all parties (the school, students and parents) will be learning from each other. Muslims are also involved in a continuous learning process about the requirements of their faith, and it would be helpful if this journey was shared constructively with the school in any negotiation about the needs of Muslim students.

Finally, this resource attempts to demonstrate that, as Muslims in Australia are a diverse group, the role of educators is not to find the elusive ‘right’ answer. Rather than viewing the diversity that exists in schools as an impediment, it can be used as a learning opportunity. Diversity can enrich teaching and learning experiences as we learn from, and about, each other. Students will come to appreciate that there are many valid worldviews and perspectives. Indeed, in today’s complex world, the ability to appreciate different points of view is an important life skill.

**Wall and ceiling of the Sheikh Lotf Allah Mosque.** Photo Phillip Maiwald.



# ENGAGEMENT AND IDENTITY FOR MUSLIM STUDENTS

الانفعال والذاتية للطلاب المسلمين

## Engagement in learning


Since September 11, 2001, and the other acts of terror that followed, many Muslim students have felt isolated and alienated because of their religion, race and/or language. The reasons for these feelings vary, but the media, politicians and ignorance are often blamed. These students feel that there is prejudice towards all Muslims. They feel wronged that they have to 'pay' for the crimes committed by others in the name of Islam. Muslim students and their parents need to understand that prejudice can go both ways. Just as the wider Australian public might be ignorant or misinformed about Muslims, Muslims can also generalise about 'Aussies'. Acknowledging this is a step towards learning from, and about, each other.

While there continue to be isolated cases of discrimination towards Muslims in Australia, Australian society has evolved in its perceptions of Islam and Muslims. As the Muslim population has increased, familiarity has enabled Australians to share their experiences and views about life with each other. Schools have played an important role in this process and continue to facilitate engagement with Muslim students, parents and communities and to build a better understanding of their worldviews.

Even so, there is scope for improvement. Listening to and acknowledging the needs of Muslim students is the first step to involving them actively in their schooling. This is particularly true of recent migrants and refugees, who have often experienced a completely different education system. They may be used to rote based learning, as opposed to the 'constructivist' approach used in Australia. Some refugees have also been through many months, or even years, of transit, without attending formal schooling. For some, education in Australia is their first experience of school. So apart from their proficiency in English, there are many transitional issues that have a profound impact on student engagement, learning and achievement. These include teaching and learning styles, assessment methods, culture shock and experiences of prejudice.

While these issues affect Muslim migrants more than Muslim students who are born here, this is not to say that a second or third generation Muslim will not share some of these concerns. This is particularly the case when students come from more insular families. Sometimes, English is not their first language and their approach to learning reflects the experiences of their parents in another time and country.

You may find that some Muslim students will hesitate to participate in class discussions. They can appear quiet and disengaged. This does not necessarily mean that they are not learning; it may simply indicate a preference to learn by observation instead of participation. These students may have come from an education system that emphasises preservation of knowledge instead of a shared journey to construct knowledge.



It is also worth noting that the preservation of knowledge forms a basis for the philosophy of Muslim education. Muslims have been using this method of teaching and learning for more than 14 centuries and, given the advancement of learning in medieval Muslim societies, it is not surprising that some Muslims hold this philosophy close to their heart. They believe teachers are meant to be authoritative and trusted figures whose job is to impart as much of their knowledge as possible to their students. The students must listen carefully, understand and memorise as much as they can. Discussions are not the domain of young students who are not experts in their field, but of trained or aspiring scholars. So when Muslim students are quiet in a class discussion, they may still be engaged. They might also feel ill-equipped to contribute to discussion because they think that they are not knowledgeable enough to do so.

These students may be used to tests and examinations as the only way to gauge their learning (or memorisation). They may find assessment tasks involving oral presentations, class discussions, debates, journals and projects intimidating and difficult. It is important to communicate with students and parents about the merits of these activities. With more knowledge they are likely to realise that these simply represent a different way of learning.

The open and friendly way in which students and teachers interact in Australian schools may also come as a shock to some Muslim students and their parents. They might see this as a lack of respect as opposed to a fun learning environment. Teachers need to explain to these students and parents that Australian schools still emphasise the fundamental value of respect, and show them how it is expressed in the school environment.


For example, many Muslim cultures teach their children that it is improper to look into the eye of an older person when spoken to. Some Muslim parents may also be reluctant to look into the eye of a staff member of the opposite sex. For these Muslims, such actions show modesty and respect, whereas in Australia this behaviour might be seen as disrespectful. In such cases, it is probably better to be tolerant and focus on the objectives of the conversation.

A good way to engage and motivate Muslim students is to incorporate content about Muslims from different parts of the world into classroom learning. This is a gesture of inclusion and an acknowledgment that their background is valued. You may refer to **Part A** of this resource for some ideas. Sometimes, simply learning a few words in their native language is enough to start a conversation with these students and begin building trust.

## **Identity, citizenship and belonging**

Like all of us, Muslim students want to feel that they belong and are accepted as part of Australian society. However, this can prove difficult when they are constantly dodging negative allegations and stereotypes about Islam and Muslims. Often, their instinctive reaction is to withdraw or rebel as this can be simpler than confronting the problem.

Among the general populace, little is known about Islam, with views about Muslims shaped by the media. As a society, we can be dismissive when faced with the unknown, seeing ourselves as superior and the other party as flawed and different (to dismiss is easier than to converse and engage). Muslims in their turn can be dismissive of the wider public — the process is exactly the same.



Since September 11, 2001, Muslims have also been subject to questions of citizenship, belonging and allegiance in a manner not experienced by others. To be asked whether they are Australian first or Muslim first is unfair, but in an attempt to appease the wider public, many Muslims feel compelled to use the term ‘Australian Muslim’ or ‘Muslim Australian’. This terminology is difficult to justify: we do not hear of ‘Australian Christian’, ‘Jewish Australian’ or ‘Australian Buddhist’. As educators we should avoid using such terminology and address its implications in our classrooms as part of developing cross-cultural understanding.

Most Muslims want to belong and contribute to Australia. Most live here by choice and are fully functioning members of Australia’s society. As educators, we need to assure Muslim students — and indeed any other student — that when things go wrong, it is not because of who they are. We need to empower them to evaluate their actions and make the right choices regardless of obstacles. This will help them to find their own place in Australia’s diverse social fabric.

### **Role models**

Children and adolescents often look to role models for inspiration. Muslim students often crave a Muslim role model to help them feel that they too can succeed, irrespective of their faith. Famous Muslim role models in Australia can be difficult to come by, but suitable Muslim role models may be available in the school or local community. Sessions in which students can meet successful Muslims from the community can be very empowering for Muslim students, and can enable other students to move beyond stereotypes and towards a deeper understanding of Islam and Muslims. The Australian Government publication *The Australian Journey — Muslim communities* (Department of Immigration and Citizenship, Australian Government, 2009, pp. 10–87) has many Australian examples.

### **Peer pressure**

Like other students, Muslim students face peer pressure. This becomes a concern for Muslim parents when it starts challenging their religious and cultural values and expectations. As with peer pressure generally, the roles of the school and the parents are not clearly defined, which can make managing such issues difficult.

Where there is a disparity between the expectations of the parents and the school, the school should communicate clearly how much responsibility it can, or cannot, take in such situations. For instance, some Muslim parents do not allow their children to attend parties. This reluctance can include childhood birthday parties as well as teenage gatherings. Since parties are common in Australia and students may feel pressured to attend them, Muslim parents might think that the school has some responsibility in this regard. Many schools would not consider this issue within their scope of responsibility.

These issues can be traumatic for families and it may be appropriate for schools to offer help from a school counsellor if the parents or student feel there is a significant problem. The counsellor could also work with a local *imam* (Muslim religious leader) if this would help to build trust with the parents or student.

## Parental expectations and rebellion

Sometimes parents have expectations of their children that differ from the children's own wants and aspirations. For Muslim parents, this can be with respect to religion, education, behaviour and life choices. Often the disparity reflects a clash of generations.

Failure to meet parental or community expectations can lead to children withdrawing or rebelling. This withdrawal or rebellion often manifests itself during school hours and may become a concern for teachers.

While these issues are common to all students, the particular circumstances of Muslim families have been explored by Dr Irene Donohoue Clyne ('Educating Muslim Children in Australia', in Abdullah Saeed and Shahram Akbarzadeh (eds), *Muslim Communities in Australia*, Sydney: UNSW Press, 2001, pp. 116–137). The quotes below, from her interviews with Muslim parents, identify some of their common concerns.

*Morally, Australia is not a good place to rear children. Smoking, drugs and illicit relations are a constant threat. We have to be particular about children's friends, try to know the family and make sure that the child has good company.*

*When you are in a different religious and cultural society, you become more aware of yourself. You cannot become part of mainstream Australian society due to the cultural difference. So, for the sake of maintaining one's identity, you tend to find refuge in religion and start practising it more strictly. Moreover, religion gives you a sense of security. Away from your homeland and family you become closer to God.*

*The most important aspect of a Muslim child's education is learning and elucidation of the Holy Quran, knowing the doctrinal writings and the principles of Prophet Muhammad's traditions, and proficiency in the Arabic language.*

*Every day I ask my child what did they give you at school? What homework do you have? What grade did you get in your studies? They do not give him homework at all, only sometimes. Not enough homework!*

*In my country, children are very fearful of their teachers. They also respect them very much. If they see them in the street they fear them sometimes more than they fear their fathers and mothers.*

*One of the greatest disadvantages for Muslim children living in Australia is too much freedom, especially when they abuse that freedom, then neglect their studies and follow their desires that are very often destructive. Our rights as parents in Islam are being undermined by the new freedoms available to our children in Australia.*

*In my home country, teachers do not allow children to do what they like. If the child misbehaves, he is harshly punished, not like here. In Australia, children are left to behave, as they like. They even laugh at the teachers here!*

While some of these concerns are not unique to Muslims, these quotes highlight the divide between home and school that many Muslim students experience. They also highlight the need for strategic communication between schools and Muslim families.

## Parent and community involvement

Muslim parents, like other parents, can manifest a range of approaches to their children's education. Some are very engaged and others not at all. When parents do become involved in schools, their interest usually revolves around their child's learning, co-curricular activities and social activities hosted by the school. A lack of parental involvement in schools may be due to parents having to work long hours or at odd times, and/or look after very young children. At other times, a lack of proficiency in English can prove a hindrance, with parents lacking the confidence to converse with teachers. In some circumstances, however, families may consciously choose not to be involved in their children's education. This may not reflect a lack of care; they may believe that it is the school's responsibility to ensure that their children are learning. In the history and theory of Muslim education, teachers were proxy parents. Based on the notion that teachers knew better how to teach and discipline an individual, parents transferred their responsibilities to the teacher who would guide, educate and discipline their child. When a child fails to achieve at school, the teacher is often the first one blamed. Traditional Muslim educational literature is filled with advice about choosing the right teacher to entrust your children to.

Historically, school was not a place for socialising; it was a place for learning and preserving knowledge. Students did not mingle or play at school — they would go home during break times for food and rest, before returning to school for more intense learning and memorising. This may explain why some Muslim parents, especially new migrants, do not participate actively in school life.

Intercultural events focusing on food, art, fashion or music can be a non-threatening way of involving and valuing Muslim parents in the school community. For many parents, such direct references to aspects of their culture may help to establish a productive relationship with the school and allow them to see the wider role of schools in Australia. Such events also provide the opportunity to establish communication between parents and teachers, independent of the child.

Involving the broader Muslim community in school events is also valuable. If your school was hosting an *iftar* (breaking of the fast during Ramadan), for instance, you could seek contributions from nearby *halal* food outlets, and invite an *imam* from a local mosque. Or you might arrange to visit a local mosque with your students. The Islamic council in your state or territory (see **Appendix — Key Muslim organisations in Australia**) can provide a list of 'visitor-friendly' mosques in your area. It is worth noting, however, that, as with all religions, some Muslims may hold personal preferences for particular *imams* and mosques, which can complicate arrangements.

Most Australian communities support many religions. It is important to recognise this diversity in schools. Interfaith events and programs are a powerful way of making all students, no matter what their religion, feel that they belong. Schools may wish to invite local religious leaders and students from a variety of faiths to share their stories and ideas. This often highlights the similarities rather than differences between students. The **Museum of Religion** learning sequence from **Part A** (under **Cross-curricular perspectives**) may also be useful.

# FACILITATING RELIGIOUS PRACTICE AND CUSTOMS IN SCHOOLS

تيسير أداء العبادات والهاديات في المدارس

## Prayer

Islam requires that sane, mature Muslims pray five times a day (please refer to **Part C** under the heading **Prayer** in the section on the **Pillars of Islam**). There is one prayer that falls within school hours, the noon prayer (*zuhr*). Although the span of time in which a Muslim can pray *zuhr* changes with the seasons, it can almost always be prayed during lunchtime at school.

There are also devout Muslim students who will not pray *zuhr* at school; they will pray at home after school, especially in the summer months when the span for *zuhr* is longer. Even in winter, when *zuhr* ends during school hours, some students will still pray at home. In such cases, they use an Islamic jurisprudential argument that they can combine the *zuhr* and *asr* prayers due to need.

Male and female Muslim students may request a space for prayer at school, though Muslim girls and women do not pray when they are menstruating. A simple solution for schools is to provide a designated room each day during lunchtime for Muslim students to pray *zuhr*. If supervision of students is a concern, the school could specify a set time for Muslim students to use the room during lunchtime (e.g. 15 minutes) with a supervising teacher. If this is not a major concern for the school, the room could be made available for the whole of lunchtime. You will find that some students pray on their own while others do so in a group.

In co-ed schools, some Muslim students may request separate prayer spaces for boys and girls. As separate rooms are not always feasible, schools might consider giving male and female Muslim students separate times to use the room during lunchtime, or creating a visual barrier in the room.

It usually takes around five minutes for most Muslims to complete the *zuhr* prayer — some may take a little longer or shorter. Schools should also note that Muslim students will need to perform ritual purification (*wudu*) before praying. This involves washing the hands up to the elbows, the face (including rinsing the mouth and nose), the feet and wiping one's hair. Due to the nature of *wudu*, these students might cause the toilet floors to be wet and slippery, especially if they choose to wash their feet in sinks (which other students and staff might find confronting and/or dangerous). If the school does not want this to happen, they could suggest that the *wudu* only be taken in shower facilities (if these exist). Otherwise, they might request that students wash their feet using only designated taps (other than those with a sink, or drinking taps) around the school.

Some students will already have done the *wudu* at home, but as it needs to be renewed after each visit to the toilet or breaking wind, it is highly likely that Muslim students in your school will use the toilets for *wudu*. In addition, many Islamic legal opinions allow the wiping of the socks — instead of washing the feet — if an individual has already made *wudu* beforehand. Wiping of the socks for *wudu* is a practical approach for Muslim students, and schools should not hesitate to suggest this option.

On Fridays, mature Muslim males are required to attend congregational Friday prayers at a local mosque. Friday prayers replace the *zuhr* prayer for that day. Some Muslim high school students may request about an hour off school to attend these prayers. This request might affect their lunchtime or even a part of an afternoon class. While schools should respect this need, it is important to recognise that Muslim students, as adolescents, may try to take advantage of the situation and maximise their time of absence. Schools should ensure that strict time restrictions are placed on the Muslim students and that they negotiate with the relevant teacher if they miss class time.



For schools that have several Muslim boys who wish to pray the Friday prayer, arrangements could be made for them to pray together at school in a designated space. Since a short sermon is involved — the students can elect a prayer leader (*imam*) among them to deliver this — the time taken for the Friday prayer will be longer than the *zuhr* prayer. Reservoir District Secondary College in Melbourne is an example of a school with a significant Muslim student population. On Fridays, students congregate to pray the Friday prayer, Sunnis and Shiites alike. They elect an *imam* to give the sermon and lead the prayer.

In many cases, three or more people are enough to form a congregation for Friday prayer; however, some Islamic legal opinions stipulate at least 40 people. Students who adopt this opinion might request a leave of absence to attend a local mosque.




Image courtesy of Photos8.com

## Ramadan and fasting

Islam requires that sane, mature and healthy Muslims fast during the month of Ramadan from dawn to sunset each day. Menstruating, pregnant and breastfeeding women, the elderly, the sick and children are excused from fasting. While fasting, Muslims must abstain from food, drink, sex and immoral behaviour. Although children are not required to fast, many Muslim parents begin training their children from as young as five to get them used to the yearly routine. Muslims will eat a dawn meal prior to the fast and then can only eat and drink after sunset.

Several issues arise for schools with Muslim students fasting. One of the most common concerns is over participation in PE and sports. Please refer to **Part A** of this resource under the heading **Health and PE** for further information on how to address this issue.

Muslim student absenteeism during Ramadan is common. Schools may question the need for a child to fast if he or she is unable to cope physically. This is especially the case for young children who are doing so only as a means of training. In such cases, schools should not hesitate to raise concerns with parents. Teachers may be able to negotiate that the child be given nourishment should he or she display signs of exhaustion or dehydration during school hours. Alternatively, the child might only fast for a portion of the day, say till recess or lunchtime.



In most cases, however, Muslim students will have few problems coping physically at school while fasting, especially if Ramadan falls during the cooler months of the year. Some students might display sporadic signs of lethargy and lack of concentration, but this should not be a major concern unless it is having a clear impact on a child's performance at school. While there may be room for negotiation over a young child, for older students this may not be the case. Schools have to accept that some Muslim students will not work to their full potential during Ramadan. However, some Muslim students will try to work with more vigour and motivation during Ramadan as Islam encourages Muslims to strive to do their best in this month. In any case, under normal circumstances the school should ensure that Muslim students continue to attend school during Ramadan.

For schools with a considerable number of Muslim students, Ramadan should be considered when timetabling events for the school calendar. These schools could also consider hosting an *iftar*, which provides an excellent opportunity to build relations with Muslim parents, the local Muslim community and the wider school community. The *iftar* could also introduce a range of foods that reflect the diversity of Muslims in Australia, or your school, e.g. Lebanese, Turkish, African, South Asian and Southeast Asian.

### **Id absences**

Like Easter and Christmas, the two *Id* festivals (*Idul-Fitr* and *Idul-Adha*) are important religious celebrations for Muslims, so it is understandable if Muslim parents make requests for their children's absence from school. When the two *Id* festivals fall during school times — the dates change each year as the Islamic months follow the lunar calendar — some Muslim children might come late to school, or miss school altogether. During *Id*, Muslims usually attend a congregational prayer and sermon in the morning, which, in Australia, takes place any time between 7.30–10.30 am depending on the mosque. This is usually followed by feasts, visits and the exchanging of gifts with family and friends.


With *Idul-Adha*, it is possible that Muslim students may request leave from school to perform a minor pilgrimage (*umra*) or major pilgrimage (*hajj*) to Mecca. The *hajj*, which is the fifth pillar of Islam, is only performed in the month of *Zul-hijja*, which is the 12th month of the Islamic calendar. The dates change each year according to the Gregorian calendar. Although the actual *hajj* only lasts about a week, most Muslims will spend around four weeks in Mecca and Medina. On the other hand, the *umra* may be performed at any time of the year and is often shorter. In Australia, this kind of leave from school is more often requested for younger Muslim students who need to accompany their parents.

### **Halal food**

Most Australians now know that Muslims are required to consume *halal* (permissible) food. But what exactly is *halal* food? Unfortunately, there is more than one answer, with a wide range of Islamic legal opinions and interpretations as to what constitutes *halal* food.

*Halal* refers to food that is considered permissible to consume in Islam. Based on the Quran, all foods are *halal* except for:

- ◆ carrion (the animal has died before it has been slaughtered)
- ◆ blood (which flows from the animal during the slaughtering process; this does not include blood in the veins after cooking although many Muslims will still only consume meat well-done)
- ◆ pork (including all pig-based products such as gelatine)
- ◆ that which is sacrificed other than for God
- ◆ wine and its equivalents.



The Quran emphasises, however, that anyone who consumes these foods out of necessity (in life and death situations) is not at fault.

In the *Sunna*, there are more prohibitions, based on the legal opinions of Muslim scholars. These additions are extensions of the principles laid out in the Quran. For instance, carnivorous animals are prohibited for consumption as they eat meat that is not slaughtered properly. Some Muslims also believe, based on the *Sunna*, that donkey meat and lizard meat is not permitted for consumption.

*Halal* meat refers to meat that has been slaughtered in accordance with Islamic requirements, which include mentioning the name of God and using a sharp blade so as not to torture the animal. Animals must be bred humanely. Many Muslims will only consume this form of *halal* meat and meat derivatives.

Some Muslims believe that meat slaughtered by the People of the Book (Jews and Christians), or *Ahlul-Kitab* in Arabic, is also permissible, based on a verse in the Quran. The *Sunna* also includes examples of Prophet Muhammad consuming meat prepared by Jews and Christians. Based on the logic that Australia is a predominantly Christian country, some Muslims have no hesitation consuming meat that is not explicitly labelled *halal*. To them, *halal* meat includes the meat of Christians and the kosher meat of Jews, so they will purchase it from most Australian stores. A small minority of Muslims believe that poultry and its equivalents are not subject to Islamic rites of slaughter. They believe that these rites only apply to cattle (and other animals with four legs, such as camels and horses).

As Muslims do not consume pork or pig products, there are other sensitivities that teachers may need to watch out for in relation to pigs. Many Muslims believe that the pig, as a whole, is impure, and therefore touching it nullifies their *wudu*, or requires them to ritually purify themselves again. Therefore, they do not touch pigs or wear pig leather. For schools, this issue might arise during excursions to animal petting zoos, for example.

Many Muslims also believe that dogs are impure and will not touch them. Some Muslims will even divert from their course to avoid a dog. There is a tradition of Prophet Muhammad that states: 'If a dog drinks from any one of your vessels, you must wash it seven times and one of the times should be with dirt' (or anything else that purifies, such as detergent). Some Muslims believe that only the dog's saliva is impure (so they may touch a dog but not allow themselves to be licked by it). Yet other Muslims believe that the tradition has nothing to do with impurity and is a recommendation not to share one's vessels with a dog.

Many Muslims will consume seafood. In Islam, there is a clear tradition from Prophet Muhammad stating that water from the sea is pure (it can be used for Islamic purification rites) and so are its inhabitants. However, some Muslims do not consume crabs because of their amphibious nature.

Wine and its equivalents are prohibited by both the Quran and *Sunna*. In the early years of Islam, the Muslims used to consume wine. They were only banned from praying while drunk. Over time, the prohibition strengthened until wine was completely prohibited and dismissed as the 'infamy of the devil' in the Quran.

In general, Muslims say that alcohol consumption is prohibited in Islam, with some Muslim legal opinions also saying that it is impure to touch (some Muslims refuse the use of alcohol on their skin for medical purposes, or alcohol-based perfumes). However, the word alcohol does not occur in the Quran or *Sunna*; these primary Islamic texts only refer to wine and its equivalents, which are only prohibited in a quality and quantity known to intoxicate. Islam prohibits all forms of intoxicants, including all hard and recreational drugs.

Despite the wide range of opinion among Muslims in Australia, it is certainly safer and more practical for schools with significant numbers of Muslim students to source *halal* certified products for school BBQs, picnics, dinners, social events and camps. These products are widely available in supermarkets across Australia, and from the growing number of *halal* butchers, meat suppliers and caterers. The prices are similar to equivalent products so cost is rarely an issue. You can request a list of *halal* certified producers in Australia in the form of state government produced guides. You can also request a list of *halal* eateries in your city from the local Islamic council in your state or territory (see the **Appendix — Key Muslim organisations**).

However, if your school only has a small number of Muslim students, it may be simpler to get them to specify their dietary requirements. Often, they will seek their own food alternatives.

## **Hijab**

Many Australians are familiar with the word *hijab*, commonly translated into English as ‘headscarf’. In Arab-Islamic terms, it implies ‘a barrier’ both physical and spiritual. Physically, it involves covering the body in a certain manner and acting in a modest way with the opposite sex; in a spiritual sense, it connotes morality.

Islamic legal opinions vary on the requirements for the *hijab* for Muslim females. There are also a whole array of interpretations, manifestations and *hijab* designs in everyday life. Each Muslim culture has its own expression of *hijab* and there are intercultural borrowings in *hijab* fashion. Also, for a range of practical reasons, Muslim women do not always fulfil the requirements of *hijab* that they ascribe to.



Two Muslim women in different *hijab* styles. iStockphoto.

The most popular opinion, across the Muslim world and in Australia, is that in front of male non-relatives and in public, Muslim females who have reached puberty must cover all parts of their body except for the face and hands. This view is based on both the Quran and *Sumna*, and many Muslim women believe that the design and fashion of the *hijab* is left to the individual as long as she fulfils the basic requirements. Some Muslims, however, believe that there are additional conditions for *hijab*. These include wearing attire that:

- ◆ is loose fitting (such as an *abaya*, which is a loose gown or wraparound)
- ◆ does not attract attention
- ◆ does not resemble male clothing
- ◆ does not imitate the clothing of non-Muslims.

Some Muslims adhere to the additional requirement that the face should be covered (including, or excluding, the eyes depending on the Islamic legal opinion) using a *niqab* (face cover). They argue that if the *hijab* is meant to be modest and prevent attractiveness, then a Muslim woman should cover her face first and foremost. Another common term to refer to a *hijab* that includes covering the face is the *burqa*.

As the local Muslim population grows, *hijab* is an issue that increasingly affects Muslim girls in Australian schools. First, it is worth noting that not all Muslim girls wear the *hijab* inside or outside of school. Their reasons include: not being ready to wear it yet; not believing that it is necessary for Muslim women (either due to their interpretation of Islam or their commitment to it); or a fear of marginalisation and prejudice.

Muslim girls who wear the *hijab* at school often put on a modified uniform with colours that still blend in with the standard school uniform. The modifications are often in the form of a headscarf, longer skirt or pants, and longer socks or stockings (should the standard uniform be short). In Australia, most schools are happy to incorporate these modifications, which may be requested for younger and older girls. For younger Muslim girls, the *hijab* at school is not a religious requirement, but an attempt at getting them comfortable with the *hijab* from a young age. To encourage a better understanding of the *hijab*, some schools might host *hijab* fashion shows.

Unless a student is facing some form of prejudice for wearing the *hijab* at school, *hijab* concerns tend to arise only in the context of PE and sport (including swimming). This issue is dealt with in some detail in **Part A, Health and PE**.

For Muslim male adolescents at school, an issue that might arise is growing a beard for religious reasons. Some Muslims believe that men must keep a beard, although they differ as to its minimum length. Some schools will allow the beard to be kept; others may not. Those that permit it can still request that the beard be kept neat and tidy.



## Co-curricular activities

Despite the importance of co-curricular activities in developing well-rounded individuals in our schools, Muslim students and parents may raise some concerns about participating in extra-curricular music, drama (particularly as it often includes music), school sports and school camps. These concerns often revolve around: the playing of music; close intermingling between the sexes; *hijab*; and girls being away from home without a *mahram* (close male relative, such as father, brother or grandfather).

As to music and drama, please refer to **Part A** of this resource under the heading **Arts** for more information. At times the concern with drama also involves the close contact between the sexes during performance and rehearsals (an issue particularly with secondary level students). As extra-curricular music and drama is often not a requirement at schools, it is likely that those Muslim parents who have such concerns will request that their children not take part. If this creates an issue for the student, teachers may be able to negotiate with the parents and agree on a mutually acceptable role for the student in a production.

With school sports, the concerns of Muslim parents and students generally involve the *hijab* for girls. In addition, during the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, there are often concerns about the participation of Muslim students in sports. Please refer to **Part A** of this resource under the heading **Health and PE** for further information on how to handle these concerns.

School camps are common in many primary and secondary schools throughout Australia. These are often a highlight of the school year for students, teachers and parent helpers. The confidence and social skills developed through school camps are important facets of learning in many schools. However, it is common for female Muslim students not to attend. The main objection cited by their parents is based on an Islamic legal opinion that prevents Muslim women travelling for more than a day and a night without an accompanying *mahram*. As most school camps last for several days at least, some Muslim parents do not grant their girls permission to attend camp. However, not all devout Muslims choose this course of action — some believe that the opinion reflects a different context, i.e. when Muslims were persecuted during the early years of Islam.

When Muslim girls are not granted permission to attend school camps, they sometimes feel isolated. They may also be singled out by their peers. For schools, it may be worthwhile explaining these consequences and attempting to negotiate with parents. Some parents may respond positively if a Muslim parent or member of staff also attends the camp.

## Shaking hands with the opposite sex

Some Muslims believe Islam prohibits unrelated males and females from having any physical contact. They also believe that touching a person of the opposite sex nullifies their *wudu*. For them, it is a mark of respect to a non-relative of the opposite sex that they do not shake their hands, out of ‘modesty’. They will simply greet and nod their head. While not shaking hands might be seen as rude in an Australian context, this perception can easily be changed by increasing intercultural understanding.

That said, many Muslims in Australia see no harm in a business-like handshake with the opposite sex when there is no desire associated with it. Some Muslims will not be the first to extend their hand, but will gladly receive an extended hand. These Muslims believe that looking after the feelings of others is an important facet of social dealings in Islam. Only the most adamant Muslims will refuse a handshake completely.

# PART C

## WIDE WORLD OF MUSLIMS



The aim of this part of the resource is to reflect the diversity of Muslim beliefs and practices, not to define what ‘true’ Islam is supposed to be. One Muslim’s idea of ‘true’ Islam may not be the same as another’s. This diversity stems from varying interpretations of the core texts of Islam, and from Muslims’ many different backgrounds, as well as from differing personal manifestations of Islam.

This resource aims only to provide a taste of this variety, and to give educators enough knowledge to manage the differences among Muslim students in Australian schools. Most Muslims do not see their diversity as an impediment to harmonious relations or as a source of tension and conflict. Instead, they accept and embrace it, taking it as an opportunity to learn from each other. There are, nonetheless, some Muslims who do not adhere to this view.

This part of the resource is arranged into the following sections:

- ◆ Key Muslim beliefs and practices
- ◆ Who are Muslims?
- ◆ A very brief history of Islam
- ◆ Muslims in Australia
- ◆ Misconceptions and stereotypes

Despite their differences, Muslims the world over see themselves as a people united around the belief in and worship of one God, Allah, and the desire to emulate the teachings of Prophet Muhammad. This unity is also affirmed and reflected throughout these sections.

Part C begins with a brief introduction to key Muslim beliefs and practices, to give an idea of what Islam stands for and its key tenets. It is important to have a good general idea of Islam prior to discussing its followers, the Muslims. We then look at who the Muslims are, including their background, ethnicity, languages, cultures, nationalities and where they live.

Part C then looks briefly at the history of Islam and the contribution of Muslims to human civilisation. Islam has a history that spans over 1400 years, in which time Muslims have made immense contributions to the advancement of human society, intellectually, economically and politically. Muslims are still a major influence on global events and policies.

We then discuss Muslims in Australia in a specific section, looking at how they differ from, or are similar to, Muslims in other parts of the globe. This section also explores the history of Islam in Australia, as well as the contribution of Muslims in Australian society. Finally, we look at some common misconceptions and stereotypes surrounding Muslims.

### What does Islam mean?

Islam is a noun derived from the Arabic verb *aslama*, meaning to ‘submit’. In Islam, this refers to submission to the will of God, either in the form of His commandments or through fate and predestination. A person who submits to the will of God is known as a Muslim (the active participle of *aslama*). In addition, *aslama* is derived from *salam*, meaning ‘peace’. Muslims believe that people who have submitted to the will of God are at peace.

### What makes someone a Muslim?

The vast majority of Muslims were born into Muslim families and raised as Muslims. Based on several verses in the Quran and the corresponding sayings of Prophet Muhammad (*Hadith*), Muslims believe that all human beings are born in a state of purity (*fitra*) due to their innate recognition of God, and that it is their parents (or guardians) who raise them as Jews, Christians, Muslims or even sceptics of religion.

Others choose to convert to Islam, which they do verbally by affirming their sincere belief that ‘there is no god worthy of worship except God and Muhammad is the Messenger of God’. Muslims generally convey this meaning in several different ways in Arabic, such as *la ilaha illallah Muhammad rasulullah*. This is the shortest version of the testimony of faith (*shahada*), which is the first pillar of Islam. At the very least, devout Muslims repeat this phrase in their five daily prayers as a mark of their faith.

All sane and mature Muslims are required to follow the teachings, rules and regulations of Islam to the best of their ability. Those who fail to do so are seen as committing sin. Even so, Muslims differ in their levels of religious observance depending on their background, environment and personal experiences of Islam.

The following *Hadith* sums up what it means to be a Muslim:

One day, while we were sitting with the Prophet, a man wearing gleaming white clothes with jet black hair came to us. There was no sign of travel on him and none of us knew him. He sat in front of the Prophet, his knees touching the Prophet’s knees, and placed his hands on the Prophet’s thighs. He said: ‘O Muhammad! Inform me about Islam.’ So the Prophet said: ‘Islam is that you testify that there is no god but God and that Muhammad is the messenger of God, establish the prayer, pay your alms, fast the month of Ramadan and perform the pilgrimage if you are able.’ The man said: ‘You have spoken the truth.’ He then said: ‘Inform me about faith.’ The Prophet said: ‘It is that you believe in God, His angels, His scriptures, His messengers, the Last Day and fate, both the good and the bad of it.’ The man said: ‘You have spoken the truth.’ He then said: ‘Inform me about the perfection of faith (*ihsan*).’ The Prophet replied: ‘It is that you worship God as if you see Him; but if you cannot see Him then know that He sees you.’

The six pillars of faith and five pillars of Islam, explored in the following pages, are fundamental to Muslim belief and practice.





## Pillars of faith

### The first pillar of faith — Belief in One God

The most integral belief of a Muslim is that there is only one God, the Creator and Sustainer of everything. This belief also requires the negation of all other gods besides God and recognition that God alone is worthy of all forms of worship. Muslims view other gods or objects of worship as false deities. The most common name for God among Muslims is Allah.

Allah is the proper name in Arabic for God. It is derived from *al-ilah* in Arabic meaning ‘the God, or the one worthy of worship’. Allah was used by the Arabs, Jews, Christians and polytheists alike, even before the coming of Muhammad. Nowadays, Christian Arabs also use Allah to refer to God.

Allah is neither uttered exclusively by Muslims nor do they have any claim to monopolise its use; Jews and Christians who speak Arabic also refer to God using the term. Prior to Prophet Muhammad, the Arabs were already using the term Allah. For most Muslims, Allah is the same as God.

In some non-Arabic speaking Muslim communities, however, especially those of South Asia and Southeast Asia, there is considerable sensitivity towards ‘Allah’ being used by any other religious group. In Southeast Asia, for instance, Allah has been used exclusively by Muslims since the 15th century. Any contemporary attempt by non-Muslims to use ‘Allah’ is seen as a subversive plot to confuse the local Muslims about faith and religion.

Out of reverence and respect for Allah, Muslims often use the Arabic phrase *subhanahu wa taala* (glory be to Him the Most High), or other variations of the phrase, after hearing the mention of His Name. This is not compulsory but is commonly practised.

Muslims believe that Allah is the God of all people, not just Muslims, and possesses the most Beautiful Names and Attributes, many of which are spelled out in the Quran and in Prophet Muhammad’s sayings. According to a prophetic saying, God has 99 Names, but there are more names than this found in the Quran and *Hadith*. A *Hadith* also states that God has an untold number of names.

Many Muslims memorise the 99 Names of God as children, believing that preserving these Names by heart will earn them Paradise. Muslims are encouraged by the Quran to call upon God using His Beautiful Names.

Muslims believe that the Names and Attributes of God are absolute and eternal, like God Himself, as they are a part of Him. On the next page are some of the Names of God, as found in the core texts of Islam.

Al-Rahman	The Compassionate
Al-Rahim	The Merciful
Al-Malik	The King
Al-Salam	The Source of Peace
Al-Samad	The Self-Sufficient
Al-Khaliq	The Creator
Al-Musawwir	The Designer
Al-Ghaffar/al-Ghafur	The Forgiving
Al-Tawwab	The One who accepts repentance
Al-Wahhab	The Bestower
Al-Razzaq	The Sustainer
Al-Alim	The Knower of all things
Al-Basir	The All-Seeing
Al-Sami	The All-Hearing
Al-Khabir	The Aware
Al-Adl	The Just
Al-Halim	The Clement
Al-Azim	The Mighty
Al-Kabir	The Greatest
Al-Aliyy	The Most High
Al-Hakim	The Wise
Al-Wadud	The Loving
Al-Majid	The Glorious
Al-Haqq	The Truth
Al-Muhyi	The Giver of Life
Al-Mumit	The Creator of Death
Al-Hayy	The Eternally Living
Al-Qayyum	The Self-Subsisting
Al-Ahad	The One
Al-Awwal	The First
Al-Akhir	The Last
Al-Zahir	The Manifest
Al-Batin	The Hidden
Al-Ghaniyy	The Rich
Al-Nur	The Light
Al-Baqi	The Everlasting
Al-Rashid	The Guide
Al-Sabur	The Patient

Muslims also have a range of other beliefs about God of which the following are a sample:

- ◆ Human beings were created to serve God by obeying him and making the world a better place to live in.
- ◆ God neither begets nor is begotten — that is why the Quran opposes the Holy Trinity, for instance.
- ◆ Nothing that exists is comparable to God. God cannot be imagined or represented in any way.
- ◆ God is neither male nor female; the pronoun ‘He’ is often used to refer to God as it has been the traditional way to refer to Him.
- ◆ God existed and will always exist. He has no beginning or end. He was there before the creation of the universe and will remain forever even after the end of time.
- ◆ Everyone can speak directly to God through prayer. No intermediary is needed between God and the person in prayer.
- ◆ God has complete knowledge of everything that happens in the universe; before it happens, when it happens, after it happens and why. He even knows of those things that did not occur and why.
- ◆ God created the universe in ‘six days’ — however, the Quran is not explicit about how long these days last. The word used is *yawm*, which can be best understood as a specified period of time, long or short. Hence, there is no contradiction between the universe evolving over billions of years and God creating it. Muslims also believe that God created the first human beings, Adam and Eve.

Reference: Abdullah Saeed, *Muslim Australians: Their Beliefs, Practices and Institutions*, Canberra: Commonwealth Government, 2004, pp. 17–18.

### **The second pillar of faith — Prophets and messengers**

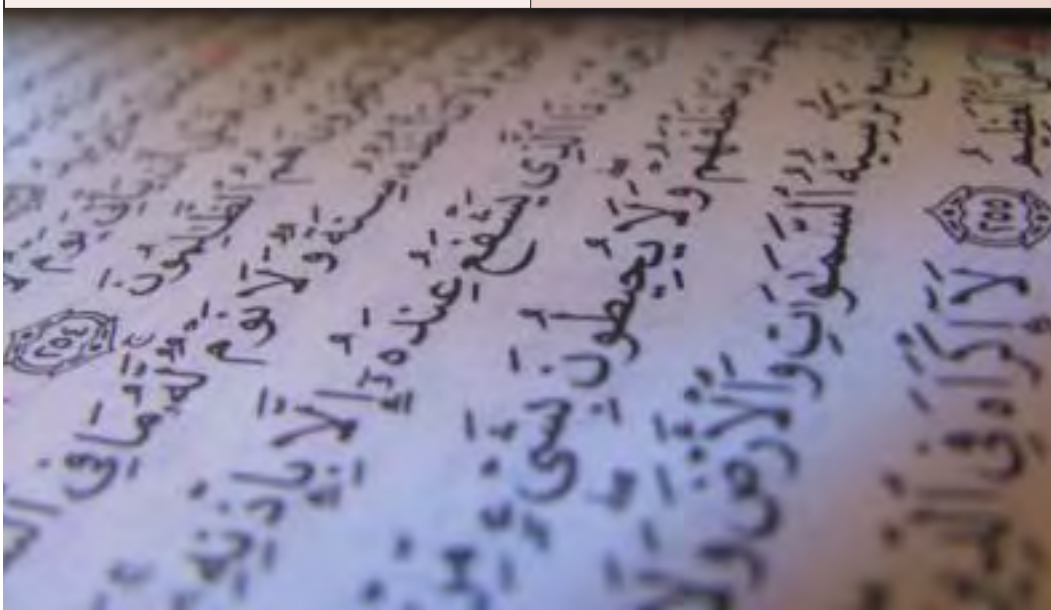
Muslims believe that Muhammad is not the only prophet or messenger of God sent to guide human beings to lead a moral life. Rather, Islam requires them to believe that God sent prophets and messengers to all the peoples on earth. Their primary message was the same — the belief and worship of one God, the rejection of false deities, and doing good deeds. The first prophet was Adam and the last was Muhammad. Although a *Hadith* mentions that there have been more than 100,000 prophets and 300 messengers, the Quran mentions only 25 of the most notable and important ones. The ones that the Quran mentions are often shared with the Judeo-Christian tradition.

The Quran calls all the prophets and messengers of God Muslims (those who submit to God), including Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus. From this perspective, Muslims do not see Islam as a new religion, but rather as one that has existed from the time of Adam. They believe that previous prophets were meant only for their people but that Muhammad was sent for all of humankind to complete the message of Islam. To them, Muhammad’s message was a continuation of an old message about God and morality.

Out of respect, Muslims say the phrase ‘peace and blessings be upon him’ (*sallallahu alayhi wa sallam*) whenever Prophet Muhammad’s name is mentioned. They also say ‘peace be upon him’ (*alayhis-salam*) when the names of other prophets are mentioned. Found below are the names of the 25 prophets mentioned in the Quran.

Arabic	English
Adam	Adam
Idris	Enoch
Nuh	Noah
Hud	Eber
Salih	Salih
Ibrahim	Abraham
Lut	Lot
Ismail	Ishmael
Ishaq	Isaac
Yaqub	Jacob
Yusuf	Joseph
Ayyub	Job
Shuayb	Jethro
Musa	Moses
Harun	Aaron
Dawud	David
Sulayman	Solomon
Ilyas	Elijah
Al-Yasa	Elisha
Yunus	Jonah
Zul-kifl	Ezekiel
Zakariyya	Zechariah
Yahya	John the Baptist
Isa	Jesus
Muhammad	Muhammad

Photo courtesy of Photos8.com



## Prophet Muhammad

Muslims are required to believe in Prophet Muhammad and his teachings. Someone who does not accept Prophet Muhammad as a Messenger of God cannot be a Muslim. The message and teachings of Prophet Muhammad can be found in two main forms: the Quran, and the Prophetic traditions as memorised, recorded and transmitted by early Muslims who lived during the time of the Prophet and in the first three centuries of Islam. Both the Quran and the Prophetic traditions will be dealt with in more detail in later sections.

Very little is known about Muhammad's childhood. He was born in Mecca in the year 570 CE into the powerful tribe of Quraysh. His father, Abdulla, died before he was born and he was first raised by his mother, Amina, who died when he was six years old. After his mother's death, his paternal grandfather, Abdul-Muttalib, raised him but he too passed away when Muhammad was only eight. He was then cared for by his uncle, Abu Talib. Muhammad was not born a prophet; he was an ordinary person up to the age of 40.

There is a monumental body of historical literature on the life of Muhammad as an adult. It presents him as a simple man, who did not have much wealth but possessed the highest moral character and conduct. His trustworthy nature earned him the title of *al-Amin*, the trustworthy one, even among the pagan Arabs of Mecca, who were known to use him as an arbiter for tribal disputes. For instance, when Muhammad was a young man, the different tribes in Mecca were arguing about who had the honour of replacing the 'Black Stone' (a stone from Heaven) on the Kaba. Muhammad solved the problem by placing the stone on a cloak and getting each tribal elder to hold its corners.

Muhammad married an astute and wealthy widow, Khadija, at the age of 25. Khadija had earlier employed Muhammad to work for her because of his integrity and diligence. Muhammad married none of his 10 other wives until after the death of Khadija. These other marriages were mainly for pragmatic reasons such as strengthening family, tribal and faith ties, particularly after the establishment of the Muslim state of Medina more than 12 years into Muhammad's prophethood. To have more than one wife was common in pre-Islamic Arabia; Islam later limited polygamy to no more than four wives. Muhammad had six of his seven children with Khadija (two sons and four daughters).

Muhammad was unlike many Arabs of his time — he shunned the worship of idols and was exemplary in his morals and manners. He used to retreat to a cave, the Cave of Hira on the Mountain of Light near Mecca, to meditate and reflect on God's creation and himself as a person. On one such occasion, he received his first revelation from God. He heard the voice of the Archangel Gabriel ordering him to 'read' three times. Each time, Muhammad said that he was unable to. Gabriel finally ordered Muhammad to recite the first verses revealed from the Quran:

Read! In the name of your Lord who created: He created man from a clinging form.  
Read! Your Lord is the Most Bountiful One who taught by [means of] the pen, who taught man what he did not know. (Quran, 96: 1–5)

Muhammad was very frightened and rushed home to Khadija who comforted and reassured him. As more and more revelations came, Muhammad realised that he was a messenger of God with orders to spread Islam to the people. In his first years as a prophet, Muhammad's primary mission was to call his people to the worship of one God and to shun idolatry. He informed his people about the rewards for doing so, in the form of Heaven, and the punishment for refusing to believe, in the form of Hell. He emphasised the importance of prayer and the remembrance of God as a key aspect of developing one's spirituality. Over time, Muhammad was ordered to teach morality, social dealings and the legal aspects of Islam to his followers once their faith was firm.

Muhammad began by preaching to his closest family and friends. As Islam began to spread, the pagan Meccans saw this as a challenge to their authority and way of life. As a result, they openly opposed Muhammad and sought to persecute, torture and kill his followers. After preaching with relatively limited success in Mecca for 13 years, Muhammad and his followers migrated north to a town called Yathrib (later named Medina, or 'City of the Prophet'). Some of his followers sought refuge in the Christian kingdom of Abyssinia en route to Yathrib. The people of Yathrib welcomed the Muslim migrants and guaranteed them safety and protection. There, Muhammad and his followers established the first Muslim 'state' in 622, which marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar. Most of the Islamic injunctions, except for prayer, were instituted in Medina.

Muhammad lived in Medina for 10 years before his death in 632. There, he gained many followers. Just before his death, Muhammad and his followers conquered Mecca, meaning that Islam would now reign supreme in the area. Muhammad performed his first and only pilgrimage (*hajj*) that year together with more than 100,000 followers. Islam had now spread to all corners of Arabia and the foundations were laid for a new religious civilisation that would rule a large part of the world for many centuries.

Reference: Saeed, *Muslim Australians*, pp. 12–14.

### Useful resources

*Muhammad Legacy of a Prophet* (DVD) — A documentary on the life of Prophet Muhammad produced in 2002 by Kikim Media and Unity Productions Foundation.

*The Message* (DVD) — A 1976 movie on the life of Prophet Muhammad, featuring Anthony Quinn and directed by Moustapha Akkad.

Tariq Ramadan. *The Messenger: The Meanings of the Life of Muhammad*. Oxford University Press, 2007. Known as the 'Muslim Martin Luther', Tariq Ramadan provides a highly approachable and lucid account of Prophet Muhammad's life.



Photo Eqmal Hassim.

## The third pillar of faith — Scriptures

Muslims see the Quran as the last in a line of divine scriptures, revealed to confirm and correct previous scriptures. The Quran mentions that revelations were given to Abraham (*Suhuf*, or scriptures), Moses (*Tawrat*, or Torah), David (*Zabur*, or Psalms), Jesus (*Injil*, or Gospel) and finally Muhammad. It is a requirement of faith that Muslims believe in all these divine scriptures. The Quran grants the people who follow these scriptures the honorific title of *Ahlul-Kitab*, or 'People of the Book'. The Quran urges Muslims and the 'People of the Book' to come together and share their similarities in dialogue. The fight for the holy city of Jerusalem between Jews, Christians and Muslims demonstrates the common history that these religions all share.

### Quran

Muslims believe that the Quran is the literal word of God in Arabic, transmitted faithfully by the Archangel Gabriel to Prophet Muhammad. The Quran was revealed gradually over a period of 22–23 years and was memorised and written down by Muhammad's companions. Muslims believe that there is no other religious book like the Quran in form and style, and that it reflects the most eloquent form of Arabic without resembling prose or poetry.

In view of the Quran's status as the sacred text of Islam, Muslims treat it with the utmost respect and would not place it on the floor, bring it to the bathroom or use it like any other book. They will often place it higher than other books in a special place. Prior to reading the Quran, many Muslims perform the ritual purification (*wudu*), brush their teeth and put on perfume. Some Muslims also kiss the Quran before and after reading it. At the very least, devout Muslims recite the Quran daily in the five daily prayers (see the section on **Prayers** on page 88). Muslims view the Quran as the source of guidance in belief, law and ethics. The Quran is often printed with beautiful calligraphy and its verses adorn the walls of mosques.

As the Quran was initially an oral text, many Muslims emphasise the importance of memorising it and reciting it eloquently. A melodious recitation of the Quran by a professional reciter has many rich musical characteristics apart from its spiritual impact on the listener.

After Prophet Muhammad's death, the Muslims first compiled the Quran under the first Caliph, Abu Bakr. Later, as the Muslim population grew and more non-Arabs converted to Islam, the third Caliph, Uthman, saw the need for another compilation. Copies of this authoritative compilation were sent to various parts of the Muslim lands and are the basis for the Quran as we know it today.

Two very simple introductions to the Quran have been provided by:

- ◆ Abdullah Saeed, *The Qur'an: An Introduction*. London and New York: Routledge, 2008.
- ◆ Michael Cook, *The Koran: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

### Sunna

Apart from the Quran, Muslims also believe in a second primary source of guidance in Islam, the *Sunna*. They believe that the *Sunna* and the Quran are complementary — they explain one another. The *Sunna* is the tradition or way of life of Prophet Muhammad. In order to piece together the *Sunna*, Muslims have transmitted and compiled narrations from Prophet Muhammad. Each narration is known as a *Hadith*. Muslims have developed a complex science of *Hadith* verification in order to determine the authenticity of narrations attributed to the Prophet. They have also developed complex theological and jurisprudential methods to better understand the teachings of the *Sunna*.



## The fourth pillar of faith — Angels

Muslims also believe in angels and that they are created from light. However, they do not know what they look like or exactly how many there are (though there are many). Only prophets were given the ability to see angels in their true form, although Gabriel did come in human form to Prophet Muhammad and his companions. They belong to the world of the unseen and each angel has been assigned by God to perform a specific function. Muslims believe that the workings of nature are all overseen by angels.

Muslims do not believe in ‘fallen angels’ since angels have no power to disobey God, according to Islam. Only a few angels are mentioned specifically in Islam. They include: the Archangel Gabriel (Jibril), who is in charge of revelation; Michael (Mikail), who is in charge of rain; Israfil, who is in charge of commencing the Day of Judgement; Malik, who is in charge of Hell; and the angels who record good and bad deeds.

## The fifth pillar of faith — Day of Judgement

Muslims believe that the world will eventually come to an end. God will then resurrect human beings to hold them accountable for their good and bad deeds. Those who led a moral life by following God’s guidance will be rewarded with eternal life in Paradise. Those who were immoral and disobeyed God will be punished in Hell either for a certain period of time or eternally, depending on how serious their transgressions were.

Although the Quran and *Sunna* attempt to depict Paradise and Hell in a language we can understand, many of the metaphors were most relevant to Arabs at the time of Prophet Muhammad. There is no way of knowing what Paradise and Hell actually look like; they are beyond human imagination. Muslims believe that those in Paradise will have everything their hearts desire while those in Hell will experience unimaginable torment.

Muslims also believe that Paradise and Hell are of varying degrees. The loftiest parts of Paradise belong to the most righteous and the lowest to those who just scraped through. Similarly, the lowest parts of Hell are for the most evil of individuals.

## The sixth pillar of faith — Divine predestination

Muslims believe that God knows of everything that happens, or does not happen, in the universe and why. He has full knowledge of the past, present and future in a manner that human beings cannot comprehend. His knowledge is eternal, timeless and all-encompassing. Muslims believe that good and bad things happen for a reason and that patience in the face of adversity is one of the most important characteristics for a Muslim.

Most Muslims also believe that God has determined the fate of everything, but since humans have no knowledge of the future, they are encouraged to always act morally. Human beings are thus judged for the decisions that they make in their lives. Acting morally indicates a good end while constant sinning signifies a bad end. However, the *Sunna* emphasises that only God knows the ultimate recompense for each individual and that one human being should not be quick to judge another.

Reference: Saeed, *Muslim Australians*, p. 20.



## Pillars of Islam

The pillars of Islam are the keys to Islamic worship and practice. They are the foundations upon which the outward acts of worship in Islam are built. Sane, mature Muslims (according to most Islamic legal opinions, this refers to individuals, male or female, who have attained the age of puberty and are intellectually mature, or have reached 15 years of age, whichever comes first) are required to fulfil these pillars to the best of their ability. Most Muslims believe that a failure to carry out any pillar of Islam is a sign of weakness in a person's faith and a sin punishable in the afterlife. Muslims believe that anyone who rejects any of these pillars cannot be a Muslim.

### The first pillar of Islam — Testimony of faith (*Shahada*)

This first and most fundamental pillar in Islam is the testimony of faith, known as the *shahada* in Arabic. Testifying one's faith in Islam is a precondition of being a Muslim — the open profession of what lies in the heart. Most Muslims say the *shahada* in Arabic although it may be said in any language. In Arabic, there are many variations of the *shahada*, all of which satisfy the conditions of professing the belief that there is no god worthy of worship but God (Allah) and that Muhammad is the Messenger of God. The shortest Arabic utterance of the *shahada* is: *la ilaha illallah Muhammad rasulullah*.

Interior of the Hassan II Mosque, Casablanca, Morocco. Photo Rienna.



## The second pillar of Islam — Prayer (*Salat*)

Praying five times a day at set times is the second most important pillar in Islam. There are many sayings of the Prophet Muhammad about how God will hold people accountable for how well they have performed their prayers on the Day of Judgement.

Prayer is given utmost importance in Islam for the following reasons, as explained in the Quran and the traditions of Prophet Muhammad:

- ◆ Human beings were created to worship God.
- ◆ Prayer is a means of communicating one's faith in God and developing spirituality.
- ◆ Prayer is a symbol of one's faith.
- ◆ Prayer helps one to avert immoral behaviour and sin.

The type of prayer being referred to here is one that is known as *salat* in Arabic. It involves a specific course of actions and sayings. Each prayer is made up of a number of sets, or *raka* (as specified in the table below). In general, each set involves standing upright while reciting certain verses of the Quran (the opening chapter of the Quran, *al-Fatiha*, is a requirement for each set), bowing (while glorifying God) and prostrating (while glorifying God). Muslims generally pray in the same way with minor variations depending on which Islamic legal school of thought they follow.

Each prayer can be made in a couple of minutes, or can take as long as one desires (depending on the length of Quranic recitation). However, when praying in congregation, the prayer leader (*imam*) should not burden his followers with a long prayer, especially if there are women, the elderly and children. The prayers may be carried out at any time during the specified times below.

Prayer	Time of day	Number of sets ( <i>raka</i> )
<i>Fajr</i>	Between dawn (first light) and sunrise	2
<i>Zuhr</i>	From when the sun passes its zenith until mid-afternoon	4
<i>Asr</i>	From mid-afternoon until sunset	4
<i>Maghrib</i>	From sunset until about an hour later when the redness disappears from the horizon	3
<i>Isha</i>	From an hour or so after sunset until dawn	4



Muslims in prayer.  
iStockphoto.

Islam also makes allowances for Muslims so that they will never need to miss prayers. For example, a traveller may shorten four *raka* prayers to just two. In fact, the original prayers in Islam were just two *raka*, except for *fajr* and *maghrib*. When the Muslims were more stable in Medina, these were increased to four *raka*. Aisha, Prophet Muhammad's wife, said that when the early Muslims travelled, they would revert back to the original prayer.


Muslims may also combine the prayers if necessary, such as during travel, illness, studying an important subject, and any other pressing or unforeseen matters:

- ◆ *Zuhr* may be prayed in the time of *asr* and vice versa.
- ◆ *Maghrib* may be prayed during the time of *isha* and vice versa.

Combining the prayers is considered praying on time in Islamic legal terms. Shortening and combining the prayers may be relevant when dealing with Muslim students at school.

When the time for prayer arrives, the call to prayer (*azan*) is often made at a mosque (*masjid*) or even at home. In Muslim countries, this call is made from a minaret and is heard far and wide. In many Muslim minority countries such as Australia, however, local regulations stipulate that the *azan* can only be heard inside the mosque.

**Minaret.** Photo courtesy of Photos8.com



**Call to prayer**  
*Allahu akbar. Allahu akbar*  
(God is great. God is great) x 2  
*Ashhadu an la ilaha illallah*  
(I testify that there is no god but God) x 2  
*Ashhadu anna Muhammadan rasulullah*  
(I testify that Muhammad is God's messenger) x 2  
*Hayya alas-sala*  
(Come to prayer) x 2  
*Hayya alal-falah*  
(Come to success) x 2  
*Allahu akbar*  
(God is great) x 2  
*La ilaha illallah*  
(There is no god but God) x 1

Before prayer, Muslims perform a ritual cleansing (*wudu*), which involves washing the hands, face, arms and feet. They must repeat this procedure before praying again if they go to the toilet or pass wind. If a Muslim has had sexual relations, they must perform a full body wash (*ghusl*). The *ghusl* replaces the *wudu* in this case. When there is no water, Muslims purify their face and hands with dirt.

Muslims are allowed to pray anywhere clean except in the middle of a street or walkway. Often, they will use a prayer mat as a precaution. When they are ready to pray, they turn to face Mecca (*qibla*). According to the most common opinion, Muslim men must at least be covered from the navel to the knee and women should cover everything except for the face and hands.

Apart from the five daily prayers, there are optional prayers throughout the day and night that a Muslim may choose to do to get closer to God. Muslims can also supplicate directly to God at any time, and believe that all good deeds are a form of worship as long as the intention is to please God.



### The third pillar of Islam — Alms (*Zakat*)

Able Muslims are required to pay alms tax (*zakat*) in two forms: *zakatul-mal* is alms paid out of one's wealth that has not gone below a certain amount for a whole year; and *zakatul-fitr* is the alms given at the end of Ramadan to the poor. *Zakat* comes from the word *zaka* in Arabic, which means 'to purify'. Hence, in Islam, *zakat* is intended to purify one's wealth and is a form of wealth redistribution.

In modern terms, the amount of *zakatul-mal* is equal to 2.5% of a person's annual net savings, as long as the net savings are over a minimum threshold (about \$3000–4000 in Australia). The percentage of *zakat* is higher on land, farm produce and minerals (anywhere from 5–20%).

*Zakat* is usually given to the poor and destitute, orphans, poor relatives, those who struggle to repay their debts, students and general welfare projects including hospitals, mosques and schools. Apart from mandatory *zakat*, Muslims are also encouraged to spend generously on charitable causes. This form of charity is called *sadaqa* and may be given at any time. *Sadaqa* is not only in the form of donations. Prophet Muhammad said that some actions are also *sadaqa*, such as smiling at another person, feeding your family and having sex with your spouse. Muslims believe that charity given with the right intention is rewarded many times over by God (up to 700 times according to the Quran).

### The fourth pillar of Islam — Fasting (*Siyam*)

Each year, during the month of Ramadan, which is the ninth month of the Islamic calendar, sane, mature and healthy Muslims are required to fast for 29–30 days from dawn to sunset. They eat a light meal before starting the fast in the morning and break the fast as soon as the sun sets. The timing of Ramadan changes from year to year according to the Gregorian calendar.

Muslims abstain from food, drink and sex when they are fasting. In addition, they are required to act morally and put aside bad deeds, speech and thoughts. Prophet Muhammad once said that anyone who cannot avoid such bad actions will gain nothing from fasting except for thirst and hunger. Islam encourages fasting Muslims to spend their time praying, reading the Quran and performing charitable acts. Fasting is also a time for forgiveness — Muslims are urged to repent to God and forgive those who may have wronged them. Each day, when breaking the fast, Muslims thank God for His blessings.

According to the Quran, fasting is nothing new; it was practised by past prophets and their followers as a way of developing God-consciousness and sharpening their morality. Fasting also has health benefits and teaches Muslims to be thankful for what they have and to think about those who are disadvantaged.

Menstruating, pregnant and breastfeeding women, the sick, travellers, the elderly and children are exempt from fasting. All of these classes of people, except the elderly and children, must make up for their missed fasts at another time or feed those in need instead. Many Muslims like to train their children to fast from a young age. These children may fast some days or only part of the day.

## The fifth pillar of Islam — Pilgrimage (*Hajj*)

Muslims who are physically and financially capable must perform a pilgrimage (*hajj*) to Mecca at least once in their lifetime. The *hajj* takes place during the 12th month of the Islamic calendar, Zul-hijja. Like Ramadan, the month of Zul-hijja changes from year to year according to the Gregorian calendar. There is a lesser pilgrimage, called the *umra*, which may be performed at any time.

Each year, more than 2 million people from all over the world perform the *hajj*, which is the largest religious event in the world. The *hajj* takes about five days to complete, but Muslims often spend more time in Mecca and Medina to visit holy sites and perform the *umra* as well. The *hajj* consists of specific rites which Muslims believe were first practised by Abraham and Ishmael. These rites include:

- ◆ circumambulation of (walking around) the Kaba
- ◆ walking/jogging seven times from Safa to Marwa (two small hills in Mecca) — according to Islamic tradition, Ishmael's mother, Hajar, did this in search of water
- ◆ a day of supplication and prayers at Arafat (a town close to Mecca)
- ◆ sacrificing livestock
- ◆ the ritual stoning of the devil at the nearby town of Mina.

Muslims are encouraged to pray and seek forgiveness constantly throughout the *hajj*. The sign of a good *hajj* is that an individual becomes a better person afterwards.

During the *hajj*, everyone is equal — a royal or a billionaire dresses in the same simple white robe as a commoner. It does not matter if you arrived in Mecca by plane, sea or foot. What counts is your sincerity and servitude to God.

**Muslims circumambulating the Kaba during pilgrimage.** iStockphoto.



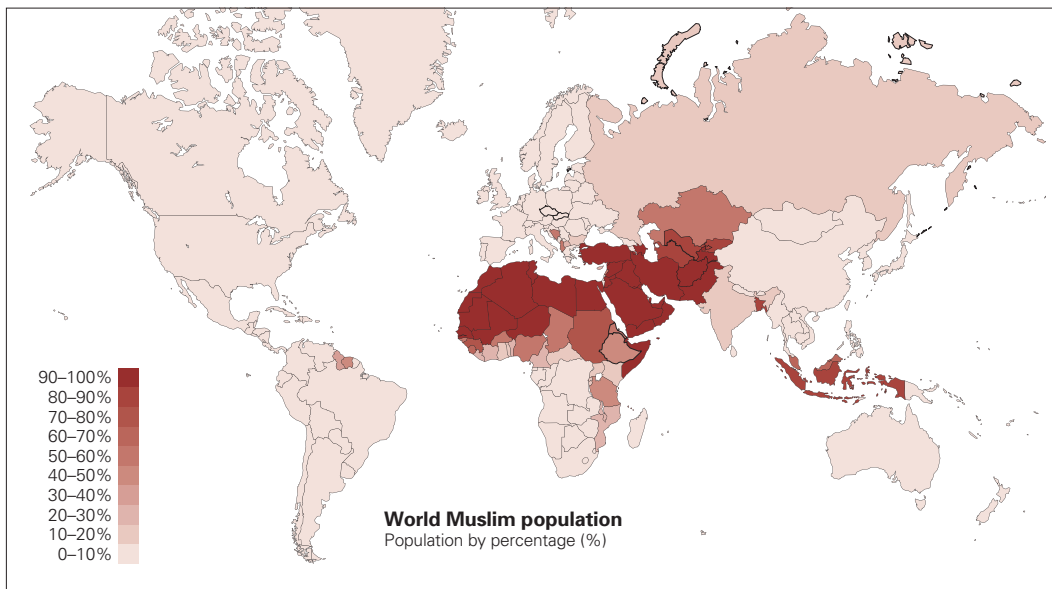
# WHO ARE MUSLIMS?

من المسلمين؟

Islam is the fastest growing religion in the world today. While there are no official figures as to the total number of Muslims in the world, sound estimates range from 1.2 to 1.5 billion, which is a little more than 20% of the world's total population. Despite the profound influence of Arab language and culture on the practice of Islam throughout the Muslim world, more than 80% of Muslims are non-Arab.

Muslims are found across the globe, with the greatest concentrations in Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, the Middle East and Africa (refer to the 'World Muslim population' map below). Two-thirds of the world's Muslims live in majority Muslim countries. There are 56 states in the world with Muslim majorities. The countries with the largest Muslim populations include Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Turkey, Iran, Egypt and Nigeria. Of these, only Egypt is an Arab country.

About one-third of Muslims live as minorities in countries such as India, China, Russia, Canada, the United States and France, all of which have sizeable Muslim populations. There are approximately 20 million Muslims in total in Europe and the Americas (especially the United States and Canada). Australia itself has a growing Muslim minority. According to the 2006 Census, there are 340,393 Muslims in Australia. This figure is expected to easily exceed 400,000 by the next census. The following map looks at the Muslim population, by percentage, around the world.



Adapted from TheGreenEditor (Wikimedia Commons).

As the map above indicates, Muslims reflect a diverse range of ethnicities, languages and cultures beyond the common images of Muslim Arabs, Persians and South Asians seen on television. Each Muslim ethnicity and culture manifests Islam in its own unique way. Diversity in Islamic faith and practice depends on nationality, tribe, education, socio-economic standing, political views, theological standpoints and Islamic legal school of thought (*mazhab*). Some Muslims are devout and others not so; some could be called 'modern' and others 'traditional'; some are 'moderate', while others are 'extreme'.

Nevertheless, people who consider themselves Muslim generally share the following basic beliefs, whether or not they stay true to them:

- ◆ the pillars of faith
- ◆ the pillars of Islam
- ◆ prohibition of pork and alcoholic beverages
- ◆ prohibition of murder, theft and adultery
- ◆ the requirement to be honest, truthful and kind and help the disadvantaged.

Sunnis and Shiites are the two main theological divisions of Islam. Please refer to **A very brief history of Islam** on the following page for a quick look at the historical origins of the split. Within these two divisions are further sub-branches. The majority of Muslims today are Sunni (roughly 85%). The rest are Shiites, who are mainly found in Iran, Iraq and Lebanon although they exist throughout the Muslim world. Most Muslims in Australia are Sunnis but there is a growing number of Shiites due to the arrival of refugees from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Muslims also follow different schools of Islamic legal thought. This can sometimes lead to differences, major and minor, in their interpretation and practise of Islam. Some of these schools are based on a literal reading of the Islamic texts, while others are more open to interpretation. The table below looks at the five prominent schools of Islamic law in the world today. While different, these schools have much in common — this is because their pioneers learned from one another. With the migration of Muslims throughout the world, many Muslim minorities are made up of members from all these schools.

School	Countries
Hanafi	Indian subcontinent and Turkey
Maliki	North and West Africa
Shafii	Southeast Asia and Egypt
Hanbali	Arabia and the Persian Gulf
Jafari	Shiite Muslims of Iraq, Iran and Lebanon

Reference: Saeed, *Muslim Australians*, pp. 11–12, 26–27.

The diversity of opinions in the Muslim world explains why there is no single religious authority for Muslims. Anyone who is a trained scholar of Islam, and is recognised by his or her peers as such, can express a religious opinion. Some of the common terms for a scholar of Islam in the Muslim world are *alim*, *shaykh*, *imam*, *mawlana*, *ustaz* and *mulla*. A superior scholar who is recognised as an authority to issue religious verdicts (*fatwa*) is known as a *mufti*. In many Muslim countries, the *mufti* is chosen by the government. However, other semi-official *muftis* may exist in the same country. Even Muslim minority countries, such as Australia, have *muftis*. Muslims are allowed to choose and follow the scholars they trust.

# A VERY BRIEF HISTORY OF ISLAM

## مختصر التاريخ الإسلامي

The immediate context of Prophet Muhammad's universal message of Islam was 7th-century, pre-Islamic Arabia, particularly Mecca (which is in modern day Saudi Arabia).

During that time, Mecca was the commercial hub of Arabia. In addition, it was a meeting place for poets and story tellers, which also made it a cultural and linguistic centre for the Arabs. Most Meccans were idol worshippers who believed in a higher God, but there were also groups of Jews and Christians, so that the Meccans were already aware of God, the prophets and divine revelation before the arrival of Muhammad.

Mecca was made up of a number of clans and tribes, the dominant one being the Quraysh. Each clan was made up of various families, each seeking to gain economic, political and religious ascendancy. The town is also home of the Kaba, the cube-like house that stands in the middle of the Sacred Mosque where Muslims conduct their pilgrimage. The Arabs valued the Kaba as the most important place of worship and placed their idols around it. Muslims believe that Abraham built the Kaba with his son Ishmael.

It was in this context that Prophet Muhammad started preaching Islam from the year 610 onwards. He emphasised that the main message of Islam was servitude to one God and the denial of anything that might detract from this. He preached that he came with the same message as all the previous prophets, including Abraham, Moses and Jesus. In addition, Muhammad emphasised that one of his main duties was to perfect human character, morality and manners. (Refer to the previous section on **Prophet Muhammad** for more basic information about his life and mission.)


Just before his death, Prophet Muhammad asked his followers to testify that he had completed his message before God. With his passing, the message of Islam was complete but there were arguments as to who would lead the Muslim community. It is generally accepted that Abu Bakr, the Prophet's close friend and father-in-law, was the first successor. He was followed by Umar, Uthman and then Ali. These four companions are known as the Rightly Guided Successors. This represents the Sunni version of events. However, Shiite Muslims believe that Ali should have been the first leader after the Prophet. As time passed, the theological, legal and political divisions among Muslims grew.

Despite such early political and theological conflicts, the Muslim community continued to expand. Within a few years of Muhammad's death, the Muslims had conquered the Byzantine and Sassanid empires. This meant that a large proportion of the Middle East and North Africa fell under Muslim control. These expansions were intended to spread Islam and fortify the Muslim state by bringing enemy territories under Islamic rule. Many of the peoples of the newly conquered regions converted to Islam. Those who did not were allowed to live peacefully and practise their faith as long as they abided by the law of the land and paid the *jizya*, a tax imposed on non-Muslims (*zimmi*) living under Muslim rule, as they did not pay the *zakat*.

Within 100 years, Islam had conquered modern day Spain, the south of France and the western borders of China. This laid the foundations for the Islamic Golden Age that followed, which saw a succession of Muslim empires that were instrumental in advancing human civilisation. Among these empires were:

1. The Umayyad era (661–750) saw the Muslim state consolidate politically, economically and religiously.



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2. The Abbasid period (750–1258), often called the golden age of Islam, saw Islam dominate, politically and intellectually, much of the globe. Muslims of this period contributed immensely to the development of astronomy, mathematics, medicine, chemistry and agriculture.
  3. The Ottoman era (15th–20th century) preserved the intellectual traditions and achievements of the Abbasid era. Creative scholarship, however, was not the hallmark of this period and political infighting became endemic. This political instability led to a decline in the power of the Muslim world. After the European Renaissance, the last 200 years of Ottoman rule was characterised by the Muslim world readjusting to a European paradigm.

Reference: Saeed, *Muslim Australians*, pp. 12–14.

## The modern period

The past 200 years has marked a considerable decline in the power of the Muslim world. With the waning political power of the Ottomans, the Muslims borrowed more and more from the Europeans instead of continuing their own traditions of politics, law, economics and education. Many parts of the Muslim world also fell under European colonial rule in the 19th century, although this phenomenon had begun as early as the 16th century. For the first time in centuries, instead of being the rulers, the Muslims were ruled over by others.

The rapid nature of this change has seen the Muslim world struggle to cope with modernity at times. The decline of Islamic influence has been met with two broad responses from the Muslim world. The first has been to adapt Islam to modernity, the approach of those we generally call the ‘modernists’ or ‘moderates’. The second has been to oppose it, an approach labelled, correctly or incorrectly, ‘traditionalist’ or ‘fundamentalist’. The first group focus on the inherent harmony between Islam and scientific progress, regardless of who is leading that advancement, and are not generally in conflict with the West. Some of the most famous pioneers of this movement include Sayyid Ahmad Khan of the Indian subcontinent, and Muhammad Abduh, Jamaluddin al-Afghani and Rashid Rida from Egypt.

The second group believe, in general terms, that the West has always tried to subvert and gain ascendancy over Islam. Their focus is on giving Islam global dominance once again. Some famous names synonymous with this movement are the Muslim Brotherhood (*Ikhwanul-Muslimin*) of Syed Qutb and Hasan al-Banna, and Al-Qaeda of Osama bin Laden. In between these two groups lie a plethora of Islamic viewpoints and worldviews.

After the Oil Boom in the 1970s and the Iranian Revolution of 1979, the 1980s saw an Islamic revivalism that reflected the second response. This revivalism has exacerbated tensions between Islam and the West. The mutual distrust between the Islamic and Western worlds is nothing new; it was evident during the Crusades. Often, this mistrust is caused by, and/or coupled with, ignorance and prejudice. The current tensions, particularly concerning Arab-Israeli relations, the oil trade, the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, and terrorism, are constant reminders of this distrust. On a positive note, however, we find the Muslim and Western worlds learning more about each other than ever before.

### Useful audio-visual resources

*Islam: Empire of Faith* (DVD) — A comprehensive documentary from PBS that follows the history of Islam, from past to present, and is available on YouTube. Please visit <http://www.pbs.org/empires/islam/>.

*The Rise and Fall of Islamic Spain* (DVD) — An enlightening documentary on the Islamic civilisation in Spain during the European Middle Ages; produced by Unity Productions Foundation in association with Gardner Films.

# MUSLIMS IN AUSTRALIA

## المسلمون في أستراليا

### The statistics

According to the 2006 Census, Australia had 340,393 Muslims (around 2% of the total population). This number is expected to easily surpass the 400,000 mark by the next census.

### State of residence

The following table shows where Muslims in Australia live, and indicates that New South Wales is home to nearly half of Australia's Muslims.

State/territory of residence	Muslim population	Percentage of total Muslim population
New South Wales	168,788	49.6
Victoria	109,369	32.1
Western Australia	24,187	7.1
Queensland	20,318	6.0
South Australia	10,521	3.1
Australian Capital Territory	4,373	1.3
Northern Territory	1,083	0.3
Tasmania	1,049	0.3

### Age and gender of Muslims in Australia

Due to migration patterns, Australia's Muslims are a relatively young group compared with the whole of Australia. This is particularly true of Australian born Muslims, of whom more than 80% are under 25.

Age	Male	Female
0–14	52,346	49,552
15–24	32,943	31,007
25–44	59,488	54,580
45–64	27,437	22,826
65+	5,536	4,669

### Birthplace of Muslims in Australia

Birthplace	Percentage	Birthplace	Percentage
Australia	37.9	Bangladesh	3.9
Lebanon	8.9	Iraq	2.9
Turkey	6.8	Indonesia	2.5
Afghanistan	4.7	Bosnia & Herzegovina	2.2
Pakistan	4.1	Iran	2.1

### Main language spoken by Australian Muslims

While 86% of Muslims speak a language other than English at home, 80% have a good proficiency in English. Only about a third of Muslims speak Arabic.

Main language	Number
Arabic	114,034
Turkish	46,914
English	43,139
Urdu	18,142
Bengali	15,304
Dari	13,766

All data sourced from the 2006 Census of Population and Housing, Australian Bureau of Statistics.

### Origins of Islam in Australia

There were Muslims in Australia long before the arrival of the First Fleet. The Macassans, an ethnic group from eastern Indonesia, were already fishing for sea-slugs on the northern shores of Australia in the 17th century. The evidence for their presence in northern Australia can be found in Aboriginal cave drawings that portray the distinctive vessels of the Macassans.

Later, some Muslim sailors and prisoners reportedly came to Australia on convict ships, though we know very little about them from the extant historical sources. In the 1860s, cameleers mainly from Afghanistan began settling in Australia. They were employed by the European explorers for their expertise with camels and desert trekking. Camels were especially useful in Australia's harsh, dry interior, and were used to transport goods and services to different parts of the country.

The Muslim cameleers played a key role in opening up trade routes through the centre of Australia and their contribution is now being properly recognised in books and exhibitions. They assisted the Burke and Wills expedition and helped with the establishment of the Overland Telegraph Line (1870–73) that helped connect inland mining towns throughout Australia. They also helped to transport food and water during the 1894 Coolgardie gold rush. Their expertise saved the lives of many Europeans who were not used to the desert conditions.

In the 1870s, Malay Muslim divers were recruited to work as pearl divers in Western Australia and the Northern Territory. By the mid-1870s there were 1800 Malay divers in Western Australia, although most of them eventually returned to their home countries. Many Afghans and Malays had to leave due to the White Australia policy; those who stayed faced discrimination and economic hardship.

Very few Muslims came to Australia in the early 20th century owing to the White Australia policy, although in the 1920s and 1930s, some Albanian Muslims managed to migrate to Australia because of their lighter European complexion.

After World War II, Australia started broadening its immigration policy to make up for skills shortages and to assist population growth and economic development. As a result, Muslims who were displaced by the war began to arrive from Europe. From 1967 to 1971, around 10,000 Turks migrated to Melbourne and Sydney under an agreement between Australia and Turkey.

From the 1970s, the government embraced a policy of ‘multiculturalism’. This led to a significant increase in the number of Muslims migrating to Australia to seek a better life. They came with the hope of benefiting from its education system, economy and security. Today, Muslims from more than 60 countries have settled in Australia, most from Lebanon, Turkey, Indonesia, Bosnia, Iran, Fiji, Albania, Sudan, Egypt, Palestine, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India.

One of Muslims’ most notable contributions to Australian society is their sheer diversity and the opportunity this provides for people to learn and benefit from one another. Among Muslims themselves, being presented with an array of interpretations of Islam can sometimes make them more open-minded about their own religion and society in general. Particularly after September 11, 2001, some Muslims have actively promoted interfaith dialogue and have sought to teach more about Islam and Muslims to the wider public. More and more Muslims are taking part in public service, sports, the media and politics, thus giving their fellow Muslims a more mainstream voice.

On a more quantifiable front, Muslim requirements for *halal* food have helped Australia develop lucrative trade links with Muslim nations in the Middle East and Southeast Asia in particular. The thousands of Muslim international students from Indonesia, Malaysia, the Indian subcontinent, and the Gulf and Arab states have helped to strengthen Australia’s skilled workforce. Many of these students stay permanently or temporarily in Australia to work or start a business after completing their studies.

Muslims work in a wide variety of white- and blue-collar areas. While a good number of young Muslim adults are undertaking tertiary studies, Muslim unemployment figures are generally higher than the national average. The reasons for this are numerous but underlying discrimination and prejudice towards non-Europeans in Australia may be a factor (see **Part A, Cross-curricular perspectives, What’s in a name?** learning sequence).

Many Muslims are also keen to establish small businesses, often in *halal* food. Most of these can be found in areas where there is a large Muslim population or an ethnic majority (such as Brunswick and Coburg in Melbourne, and Auburn and Lakemba in Sydney). There are also more than 25 Islamic schools found in the major capital cities throughout Australia. Approximately 10% of Muslim students attend these independent schools.

Reference: Saeed, *Muslim Australians*, pp. 7–10.



**First mosque in Melbourne — this Albanian mosque was established in 1969.**  
Photo Eeqmal Hassim.

But Muslims should not be seen as a separate social entity when we talk about contributions to society. They do not deserve special treatment or scrutiny. Most Muslims have similar aspirations to non-Muslims; they want to live a good life and make this world a better place. Everyone makes their own unique contribution to society, no matter how small or large, because they are *unique*. To truly appreciate how a person or a community is contributing to society at large, we simply need to be prepared to look and listen.

### Suggested reading

For more information about the history of Islam and Muslims in Australia, refer to the valuable, pioneering work of Bilal Cleland (*Muslims in Australia: A Brief History*. Melbourne: Islamic Council of Victoria, 2002). This work is also available on the Islamic Council of Victoria website at [www.icv.org.au](http://www.icv.org.au). Cleland has also published some of his findings in an academic work co-edited by Professor Abdullah Saeed and Professor Shahram Akbarzadeh. See Bilal Cleland, 'The History of Muslims in Australia', in Abdullah Saeed and Shahram Akbarzadeh (eds), *Muslim Communities in Australia*. Sydney: UNSW Press, 2001: 12–23.

See also:

Abdullah Saeed, *Islam in Australia*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 2003.

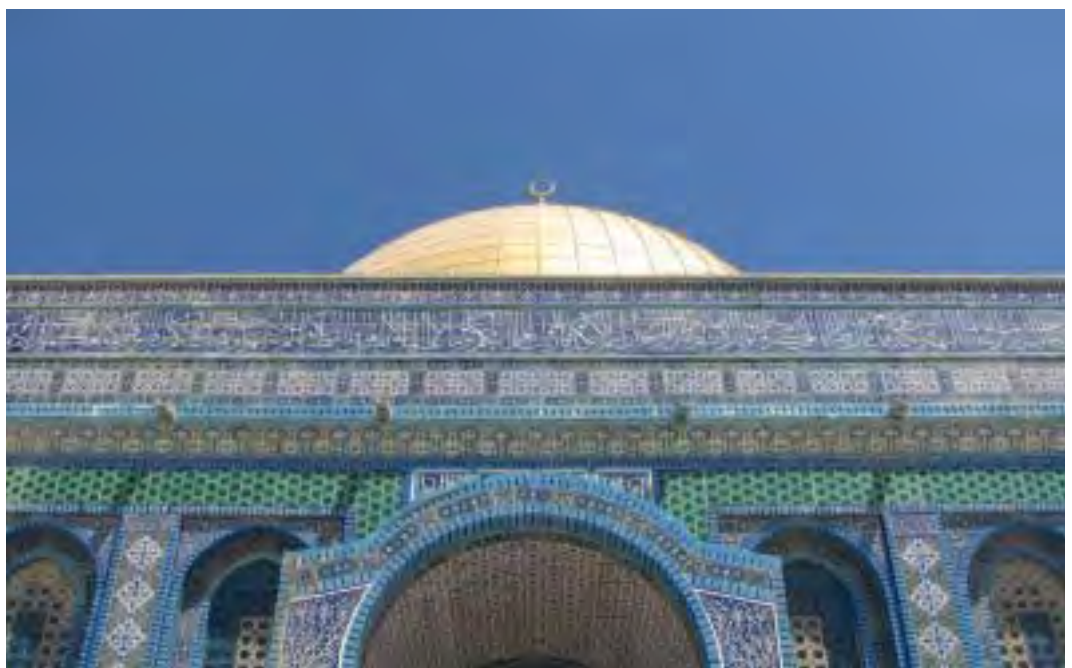
Abdullah Saeed, *Muslim Australians: Their Beliefs, Practices and Institutions*. Canberra: Commonwealth Government, 2004.

Abdullah Saeed and Shahram Akbarzadeh (eds), *Muslim Communities in Australia*. Sydney: UNSW Press, 2001.

Manar Chelebi, *The Australian Muslim Student*. Edited by Kath Engebretson. Terrigal, NSW: David Barlow Publishing, 2008. Manar's book was the first of its kind to fill the important need of educating school principals, teachers and the wider Australian community about the needs of Muslim students.

*Muslims in Australia since the 1600s* (DVD) — A groundbreaking documentary about the Muslim presence in Australia today and since the 1600s; produced in 2007 by Sahwa Productions. Please visit [www.muslimsinaustralia.com](http://www.muslimsinaustralia.com)

**The Dome of the Rock is an Islamic shrine and major landmark located on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. It was completed in 691–692, making it the oldest existing Islamic building in the world.** Photo courtesy of Photos8.com



# MISCONCEPTIONS AND STEREOTYPES

## أفكار خاطئة وقوالب نمطية

In this section, we have responded to some of the most common misconceptions and stereotypes about Muslims, most of which come from ignorance about Islam and Muslims, though some reflect prejudiced attitudes.

### **Muslims worship a different God**

Muslims believe that they worship the same God that was worshipped by Abraham, Moses and Jesus. The God of the Muslims is the God of all, including Jews and Christians. The only difference lies in their understanding of God and His Actions.

### **Muslims worship Muhammad**

Although Muslims believe Muhammad was the messenger of God, the Quran emphasises that he was a normal human being. Muhammad himself did not like to be treated as a special person. Worship is only directed to God in Islam. Muhammad was only a guide and that is why Muslims do not like the term 'Mohamedanism'.

### **Muslims denounce Jesus**

On the contrary, Muslims believe that Jesus was one of the most important messengers of God. They also believe in his second coming before the end of time. However, they do not view him as divine. They also deny that he died on the cross, believing he was raised up to Heaven to await his return to earth prior to the end of time.

### **Islam is an Arab religion**

Only 20% of the world's Muslims are Arabs. The rest come from many different cultures and backgrounds. However, it is true that Arabic was and remains the lingua franca of the Muslims, especially in the study of religion. Many non-Arab Muslims still display Arab influences in their understanding and practise of Islam.

### **Islam condones terrorism and the killing of innocents**

Islam only allows a just war, often in self-defence. Any offensive should be for the greater good. Islam absolutely prohibits the killing of non-combatants, including women, children and the elderly. Muslims who commit acts of terror believe that the 'ends justify the means'. However, in traditional Islamic law, both the objectives and the means must be in accordance with Islamic principles.

### **Muslims are potential terrorists and a threat to national security**

On the contrary, most Muslims are outspoken in their criticism of terrorism, regardless of the perpetrator. This is because Islam only allows for a just war as outlined above. It cannot be denied, however, that some Muslims condone terrorism in the name of Islam. From their perspective, the 'enemies of Islam' are the terrorists and they are the warriors of the faith.



## **Islam is intolerant of other religions**

Some Muslims are intolerant but Islam leaves the ultimate judgement to God. Muhammad was always respectful of people of other faiths who did not harm him. Even the Quran refers to the Jews and Christians with the honorific title of ‘People of the Book’. It treats their scripture with respect. The Quran also mentions that Jews, Christians and the like will not be wronged by God on the Day of Judgement as long as they do good deeds. When Jews and Christians asked Muhammad for his judgement on their religious matters he replied by asking them to use their own scriptures. Muhammad himself had Jewish and Christian wives. Islam orders Muslims to be kind and friendly to all people as long as they mean no harm. Even if they mean harm, the Quran urges Muslims to respond in a kinder manner.

## **Islam is against democratic values**

While many Muslim states across the world do not adopt democracy, the Quran actually orders Muslims to engage in consultation (*shura*) in order to run their daily affairs. The system of *shura* is somewhat similar to democracy. However, many Muslims still live under authoritarian regimes and/or believe that democracy is the product of the West and should be dismissed.

## **Women are inferior to men in Islam**

While some Muslims believe this, due to their cultural and family background, others strongly oppose it. There is a diverse range of opinions in the Islamic world about the role of women in society. In Islam, men and women are equal before God — the best Muslims are those who fulfil their rights and responsibilities to the best of their ability.

## **Muslims want to be different and dress differently**

What a person does in a democratic country should be their own choice so long as it does not go against the law of the land. A Muslim woman has just as much right to wear the *hijab* as another woman has to wear a bikini. Muslims have the right to *halal* food, just as vegetarians have a right to vegetarian food. The *hijab*, for instance, is like the Jewish yarmulke or the Sikh turban. It is all a matter of personal choice and tolerance on the part of others.

## **Muslims do not want to ‘integrate’**

The majority of Muslims in Australia wish to be equal members of Australian society. They generally want the same things as any other Australian — they want to live a safe, secure and happy life. However, the prejudice that they sometimes face can cause them to withdraw and feel alienated or marginalised. They may feel demonised for the crimes of others and that they do not have a ‘fair go’. When this happens, a common response is either to exclude oneself from mainstream society or to rebel. That being said Muslims too can sometimes be guilty of stereotyping the wider Australian public. This prejudice on the part of some Muslims can also be a barrier to healthy participation in Australian society. Most Muslims, however, are successful in realising their dream in Australia and are fully functioning members of the Australian polity.

## **Muslims want their own system of law**

Some Muslims do want this but the vast majority of Muslims will abide by the laws of the land. To them, the freedom to practise the faith in Australia is a blessing. Their main aim is to function as Muslims and as equal members of Australian society, not to establish some type of *Sharia* (Islamic law). In fact, much of Islamic law, save the penal code, is already practised by Muslims in Australia, in the form of personal and family law, as well as the rules governing social dealings.

Adapted in parts from Saeed, *Muslim Australians*, pp. 66–74.







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### **Islamic Society of Victoria**

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### **Islamic Women's Welfare Council of Victoria**

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<i>Abaya</i>	Loose gown or wraparound cloak.
<i>Ahlul-Kitab</i>	'People of the Book' as referred to in the Quran, in particular Jews, Christians and Sabians who follow divine revelation.
<i>Alim</i>	Scholar; often used by Muslims to refer exclusively to a scholar of Islam; literally means 'knowledgeable one'.
Allah	The name of God in Islam; comes from the Arabic <i>al-ilah</i> , meaning 'the God'. Allah is/was also used by Arabic-speaking non-Muslims to refer to God.
<i>Asr</i>	One of the five daily prayers carried out at anytime between mid-afternoon and sunset; consists of four sets (see <i>raka</i> ); means 'mid-afternoon'.
<i>Azan</i>	Call to prayer.
<i>Burqa</i>	<i>Hijab</i> that includes a face cover.
<i>Daff</i>	Monotone drum.
<i>Fajr</i>	One of the five daily prayers carried out at anytime between dawn (first light) and sunrise; consists of two sets (see <i>raka</i> ); literally means 'dawn'.
<i>Fatwa</i>	Non-binding Islamic religious verdict (see <i>mufti</i> ).
<i>Fitra</i>	In Islam, it refers to the state of purity that all human beings are born in due to their innate recognition of God; literally means 'innate nature'.
<i>Ghusl</i>	The full body washing a Muslim is required to perform for prayer after sex, or after a Muslim woman has finished menstruating and wishes to pray; literally means 'washing'.
<i>Hadith</i>	Prophetic tradition; a narration from Prophet Muhammad reporting his words, deeds, actions, tacit approvals and/or circumstances; literally means 'news' in Arabic.
<i>Hajj</i>	Fifth pillar of Islam to be carried out by Muslims who are physically and financially able at least once in their lifetime; major pilgrimage to Mecca carried out only during the 12th month of the Islamic calendar (Zul-hijja). The rites of <i>hajj</i> include circumambulation of the Kaba, walking/jogging seven times from Safa to Marwa (two small hills that Ishmael's mother, Hajar, climbed in search of water), a day of supplication and prayers at Arafat (a town close to Mecca), sacrificing of cattle, and the ritual stoning of the devil at the nearby town of Mina.
<i>Halal</i> (food)	Food that is permissible to consume in Islam; the Quran mentions that all food are <i>halal</i> except for carrion, blood (that flows from the animal during slaughtering), pork (including all pig-based products), that which is sacrificed for other than God, and wine and its equivalents (see <i>halal</i> ).
<i>Halal</i>	'Permissible' in Islam (see <i>halal</i> [food]).
<i>Haram</i>	'Prohibited' in Islam.
<i>Hijab</i>	Refers to, in popular terms, the headscarf and modest dress of Muslim women in a range of styles; generally involves covering all parts of the body except the face and hands. Some Muslims believe that Muslim women should also cover their faces. Linguistically, <i>hijab</i> refers to 'a barrier' or 'covering' in Arabic. <i>Hijab</i> is not always physical; it also connotes modest behaviour.



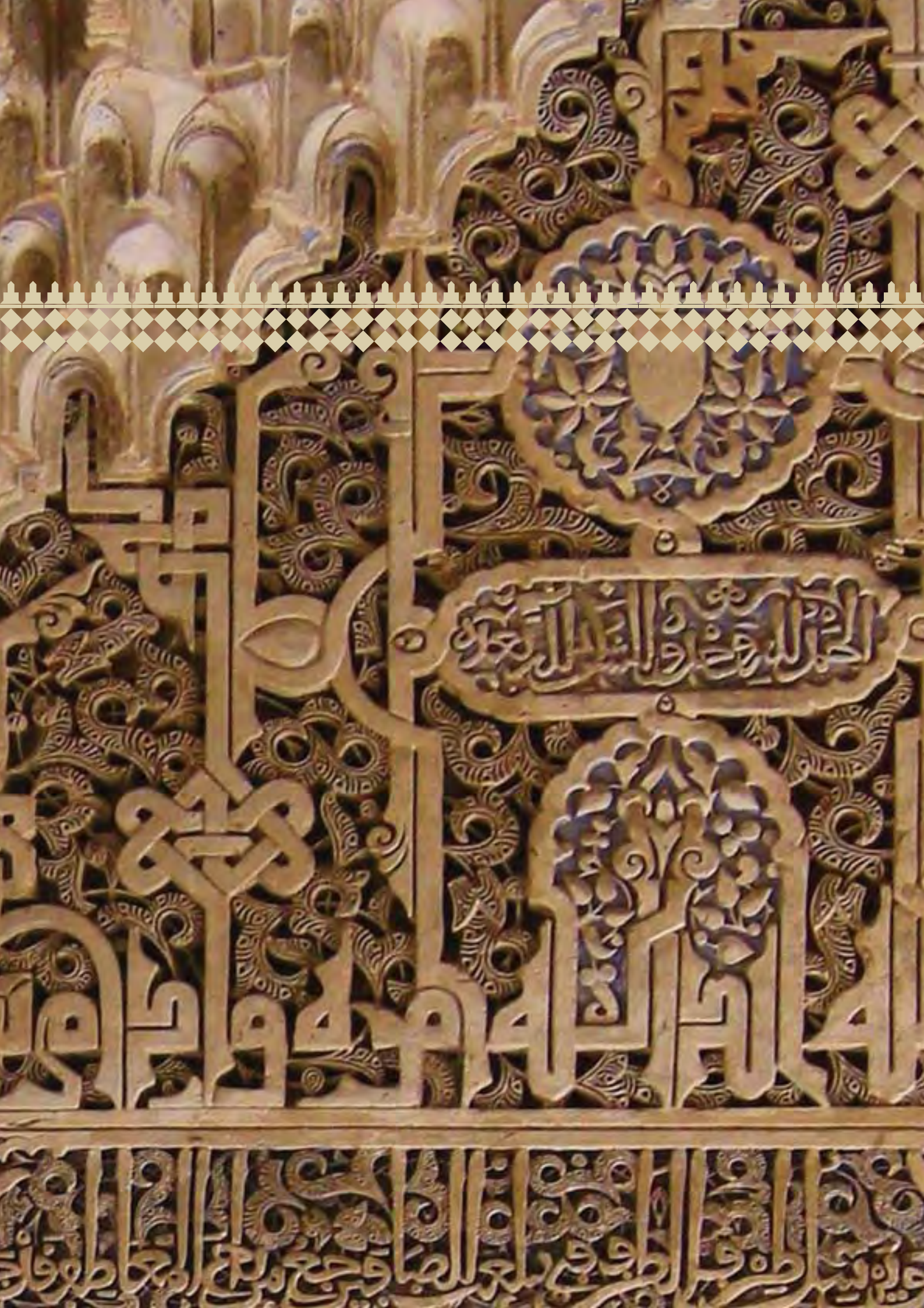
<i>Idul-Adha</i>	The celebration that coincides with the sacrificing of cattle during the <i>hajj</i> season.
<i>Idul-Fitr</i>	The celebration marking the end of Ramadan.
<i>Id</i>	Muslim day of celebration; from the Arabic verb meaning 'to return' since <i>Id</i> occurs annually in Islam.
<i>Iftar</i>	Breaking of the fast meal; from the Arabic verb meaning 'to break the fast'.
<i>Imam</i>	Leader of a people; prayer leader; religious leader in Islam; spiritual guide; literally means 'the one at the forefront'.
<i>Injil</i>	The Gospel of Jesus as referred to in the Quran.
<i>Isha</i>	One of the five daily prayers carried out at anytime between an hour or so after sunset and dawn; consists of four sets (see <i>raka</i> ); literally means 'evening'.
<i>Jihad</i>	Literally means 'struggle' in Arabic. In Islam, it refers to a 'spiritual struggle' to follow the right course of action. For most Muslims, it relates to their personal struggle to follow God's path; at times, it can involve armed fighting, often in self-defence, should that be the 'right' course of action.
<i>Jizya</i>	The protection tax paid by non-Muslims living under Muslim rule since they are not subject to <i>zakat</i> (alms tax paid by Muslims); derived from an Arabic verb meaning 'to offer' or 'permit'.
<i>Kaba</i>	The cube-shaped structure, known as the 'House of God', in the middle of the Sacred Mosque in Mecca where Muslims carry out their pilgrimage; Muslims must face the direction of the Kaba whenever they pray and believe that it was built by Abraham and Ishmael; literally means 'cube' in Arabic.
<i>Khamr</i>	Refers to (intoxicating) wine and its equivalents in Islam. The word alcohol does not occur in the Quran or <i>Sunna</i> ; rather, they refer to wine and its equivalents.
<i>Maghrib</i>	One of the five daily prayers carried out at anytime between sunset and an hour or so later when the redness disappears from the horizon; consists of three sets (see <i>raka</i> ); literally means 'place where the sun sets' or 'west'.
<i>Mahram</i>	In Islamic law, refers to a close male relative of a Muslim female, e.g. husband, father, brother, grandfather and paternal uncle. A Muslim woman may not marry a <i>mahram</i> ; rather, the <i>mahram</i> is meant to protect her and has the power to give her away in marriage. Derived from an Arabic verb that means 'to prohibit'.
<i>Masjid</i>	Mosque; from the Arabic verb meaning 'to prostrate'.
<i>Mawlana</i>	Used (often by South Asian Muslims) to refer to a respected religious scholar/leader; literally means 'our guardian'.
<i>Mazhab</i>	School of Islamic thought, legal or theological, although it is most commonly used in a legal sense; the five major schools are Hanafi, Maliki, Shafii, Hanbali and Jafari; literally means 'a way of thinking or progressing' and each scholar can technically have a <i>mazhab</i> .
<i>Muazzin</i>	Caller to prayer.
<i>Mudaraba</i>	A partnership where one party (the bank) provides the capital and the other party provides the expertise or management; both parties share the profits; from the Arabic verb meaning 'to speculate'.
<i>Mufti</i>	A distinguished scholar of Islam who is qualified to issue a religious verdict (see <i>fatwa</i> ). In many Muslim lands, past and present, the <i>mufti</i> is/was a government servant; however, there are also <i>muftis</i> who function independently.

<i>Mulla</i>	Religious leader and/or scholar.
<i>Murabaha</i>	Sale of goods where the cost of the goods and a profit for the seller are agreed to prior to the sale. As interest is forbidden in Islam, this practice is often used by Islamic banks when offering finance; from the Arabic verb meaning 'to profit'.
<i>Musharaka</i>	A financing venture between two or more partners, where each partner provides funds for the venture. All partners can be involved in managing the venture and profits and losses are shared by all partners; from the Arabic verb meaning 'to share'.
Muslim	A follower of Islam; literally means 'one who has submitted (to God)'. Muslim differs from Islamic; Islamic is derived from Islam or is in accordance with it — a Muslim may, or may not, be doing that which is Islamic.
<i>Nashid</i>	Islamic religious song.
<i>Niqab</i>	Face cover (see <i>hijab</i> ).
<i>Qibla</i>	The direction of prayer for Muslims, i.e. facing the Kaba in Mecca; literally means 'direction'.
Quran	The sacred book of Islam; Muslims believe that the Quran is the exact Word of God in Arabic revealed, via Gabriel, to Prophet Muhammad, who then transmitted it faithfully to his followers who memorised it and wrote it down.
<i>Raka</i>	A set of prayer; each set involves standing upright while reciting certain verses of the Quran (the opening chapter of the Quran, <i>al-Fatiha</i> , is a requirement for each set), bowing (while glorifying God) and prostrating (while glorifying God); there is also intermittent sitting involved during prayer; from the Arabic verb meaning 'to bow'.
Ramadan	The ninth month of the Islamic calendar wherein Muslims fast (see <i>siyam</i> ).
<i>Riba</i>	Literally means 'increase'; in Islamic law, refers to 'interest' charged/paid on top of the original loan amount, which is prohibited. It is based on the idea that when a loan is given, the repayment should be of equal value.
<i>Sadaqa</i>	Refers to any charitable act in Islam, whether or not it involves money/wealth; derived from the Arabic verb meaning 'to be truthful'.
<i>Salam</i>	Peace.
<i>Salat</i>	A specific type of prayer in Islam; involves a specific course of actions and sayings, including standing upright while reciting certain verses of the Quran (the opening chapter of the Quran, <i>al-Fatiha</i> , is a requirement), bowing (while glorifying God) and prostrating (while glorifying God). The five daily prayers form the second pillar of Islam; derived from the Arabic verb meaning 'to send blessings'.
<i>Shahada</i>	Testimony of faith that is the first and most fundamental pillar in Islam; involves professing one's belief that 'there is no god worthy of worship but God (Allah) and that Muhammad is the Messenger of God' ( <i>la ilaha illallah Muhammad rasulullah</i> ). Literally means 'testimony'.
<i>Sharia</i>	Refers generally to Islamic law in popular terms. Linguistically, it refers to 'a path'. In Islamic theology, it refers to Islam in its entirety, not just its legal injunctions; however, the term is used almost exclusively in a legal and penal sense for many Muslims.
<i>Shaykh</i>	Scholar of Islam or elder; a title of respect.



<i>Shiite</i>	(Follower) of Shiite Islam; Shiites believe that the rightful successor to Prophet Muhammad was his cousin and son-in-law, Ali, not Abu Bakr, based on their belief about the special status of the Prophetic household. Shiites make up about 15% of the Muslim world.
<i>Shura</i>	Muslim consultative assembly.
<i>Siyam</i>	Fasting, from dawn to sunset; a Muslim who fasts abstains from food, drink, sex and immoral behaviour.
<i>Suhuf</i>	The scriptures of Abraham referred to in the Quran; literally means 'scriptures' or 'pages'.
<i>Sunna</i>	The way of life of Prophet Muhammad in the form of his words, deeds and tacit approvals; literally means 'path' in Arabic.
<i>Sunni</i>	(Follower) of Sunni Islam; Sunnis believe that the four righteous caliphs who led the Muslims after Prophet Muhammad's death were Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Ali respectively. Sunnis make up around 85% of the Muslim world.
<i>Takaful</i>	Islamic form of 'insurance' based on the concept of co-sponsorship. Individuals/families contribute money to a central fund. When someone is in need, money is then taken out of that central fund; from the Arabic verb meaning 'sponsoring one another'.
<i>Tawrat</i>	The Torah of Moses as referred to in the Quran.
<i>Umra</i>	Minor pilgrimage to Mecca carried out at any time of the year; Muslims sometimes combine the <i>umra</i> and <i>hajj</i> together.
<i>Ustaz</i>	Teacher; professor; often used to refer to a religious teacher or scholar in Islam.
<i>Wudu</i>	Ritual purification that a Muslim carries out before praying; involves washing the hands, face (including rinsing the mouth and nose), arms (to the elbows) and feet (to the ankles), and wiping the top of the head; needs to be repeated after urinating, defecating or breaking wind.
<i>Yathrib</i>	The old name of the city of Medina, in modern day Saudi Arabia, prior to the migration of Prophet Muhammad and his followers there.
<i>Zabur</i>	The Psalms of David as referred to in the Quran.
<i>Zakat</i>	Third pillar of Islam; alms tax paid by able Muslims annually in two forms: 1) <i>zakatul-mal</i> (the tax paid on one's wealth that has not gone below a certain amount, about \$3000–4000 in Australia, for one whole year); and 2) <i>zakatul-fitr</i> (the alms given at the end of Ramadan to the poor); derived from the Arabic verb meaning 'to purify'.
<i>Zimmi</i>	A non-Muslim living under Muslim rule (used mostly in medieval Muslim times); derived from an Arabic verb meaning 'subjugated' or 'defeated'.
<i>Zina</i>	Fornication; sex out of wedlock.
<i>Zuhr</i>	One of the five daily prayers carried out at anytime between just-after-noon and mid-afternoon; consists of four sets (see <i>raka</i> ); literally means '(just after) noon'.
<i>Zul-hijja</i>	The 12th month of the Islamic calendar wherein Muslims perform <i>hajj</i> (see <i>hajj</i> ).

Photo opposite courtesy of Photos8.com



الحمد لله رب العالمين

والصلاة والسلام على من لا نبي بعده  
وبعد فقد بلغنا من كتابنا هذا ما كنا  
نرجوه من الله تعالى من أن يكون  
مفيداً للقارئ الكريم

This resource for Australian primary and secondary teachers offers practical advice and strategies about meeting the needs of Muslim students, and incorporating Islam and Muslim related content into the curriculum.

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# تعارف

تقديم نظرات المسلمين إلى المدارس الأسترالية