4. In the star, illustrate this section.

The Teachings of Islam

1. Judaism, Christianity and Islam all trace their origins to which ____________________________

2. How did Muslims view the “people of the book”?

3. What do Muslims believe the Qur'an reveals?

4. In the star, illustrate this section.

The First Pillar: Shahadah (Profession of Faith)

1. What phrase do Muslims repeat as an expression of shahadah?

2. According to Muslims, who is Allah?

3. How does Allah relate to the God of Christians and Jews?

4. In the star, illustrate this section.

The Second Pillar: Salat (Daily Worship)

1. Where and how often do Muslims pray?

2. Toward what city do Muslims pray?

3. What are Muslims required to do before they pray?

4. In the star, illustrate this section.

The Third Pillar: Zakat (Almsgiving)

1. Why is charitable giving important to Muslims?

2. How much of their wealth do Muslims give?

3. Are Muslims the only religious group that emphasizes giving? Explain.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Questions</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Siyam | 1. What is siyam? When is it performed?  
2. What rule about food do Muslims observe during Ramadan?  
3. How is the end of Ramadan celebrated? |
| Hajj | 1. What values does the hajj promote?  
2. How do Muslims dress for the hajj?  
3. What is the Ka'aba? |
| Jihad | 1. How does jihad relate to Muslims and their personal struggles?  
2. What is the "lesser jihad"?  
3. What is the "greater jihad"? |
| Shari'a: Islamic Law | 1. What is shari'ah, and how did it develop?  
2. What values does shari'ah promote?  
3. What are three examples of behaviors that shari'ah regulates? |
In this reading, you will explore the basic beliefs and practices of Islam. You will learn more about the holy book called the Qur'an. Together with the Sunnah (the example of Muhammad), this book guides Muslims in the Five Pillars of Faith. The Five Pillars are faith, prayer, charity, fasting, and making a pilgrimage to Mecca. You will also study the idea of jihad. Jihad represents Muslims' struggle with internal and external challenges as they strive to please God. Finally, you will examine shari'ah, or Islamic law.

Since the time of Muhammad, Islam has had a huge impact on world history. From Arabia, Islam spread rapidly throughout the Middle East, across North Africa to Spain, and across central Asia nearly to China. In addition to sharing a common faith, Muslims also belonged to a single Islamic community, called the ummah. The Islamic community blended many peoples and cultures.

Islam now has more followers than any religion except Christianity. One out of five people in the world are Muslims. Most people in the Middle East and North Africa are Muslim, but Muslims live in nearly every country of the world. In fact, the majority of Muslims are Asian. And Islam is the fastest-growing religion in the United States.

Islam, Judaism, and Christianity have much in common. Members of all three faiths are monotheists (they believe in one God). All three religions trace their origins to the prophet Abraham. Their scriptures, or sacred writings, all include such figures as Adam, Noah, and Moses. Muslims believe that all three religions worship the same God.

Muslims consider Jews and Christians to be "People of the Book." The Jewish Bible, called the Torah, is known as the Old Testament in the Christian Bible. The New Testament of Christianity includes, among other writings, the gospels that tell of the life and teachings of Jesus. Muslims believe that these holy books, like the Qur'an, came from God. The Qur'an states that God "earlier revealed the Torah and the Gospel as a source of guidance for people." For Muslims, however, the Qur'an contains God's final revelations to the world. They believe that its messages reveal how God wants his followers to act and worship. In the rest of this reading, you'll learn more about the ideas that have shaped the Muslim faith.
The first Pillar: Shahadah

The first Pillar of Faith is *shahadah*, the profession (declaration) of faith. To show belief in one God and in Muhammad's prophethood, a Muslim says, "There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the messenger of God."

The first part of the shahadah affirms monotheism. Like Christians and Jews, Muslims believe that one all-powerful God, whom they call Allah, created the universe. They believe that the truth of one God was revealed to humankind through many prophets. These prophets include Adam, Noah, Moses, and Jesus, who appear in Jewish and Christian scriptures. The Qur'an honors all these prophets.

The second part of the shahadah identifies Muhammad as God's messenger. According to this statement, Muhammad announced the message of Islam, which was God's final word to humankind. The meaning of shahadah is that people not only believe in God, but also pledge their submission to Him. For Muslims, God is the center of life. The shahadah follows Muslims through everyday life, not just prayers. Parents whisper it into their babies' ears. Muslims strive to utter the shahadah as their last words before death. Students taking a difficult test say the shahadah to help them through the ordeal.

Muslims also believe that all souls will face a day of judgment. On that day, God will weigh each person's actions. Those who have lived according to God's rules will be rewarded and allowed to enter paradise. Those who have disbelieved or done evil will be punished by falling into hell.
The Second Pillar: Salat

The second Pillar of Faith is salat, daily ritual prayer. Muhammad said that "prayer is the proof of Islam. Salat emphasizes religious discipline, spirituality, and closeness to God. Throughout Muslim communities, people are called to prayer five times a day: at dawn, noon, midday, sunset, and after nightfall. A crier, called a muezzin (or mu’addin), chants the call to prayer from the tall minaret (tower) of the mosque.

Before praying, Muslims must perform ritual washings. All mosques have fountains where worshipers wash their hands, face, arms, and feet. With a sense of being purified, Muslims enter the prayer area. There they form lines behind a prayer leader called an imam. The worshipers face the direction of Mecca. The imam begins the prayer cycle by proclaiming "Allah Akbar!" ("God is most great"). The worshipers then recite verses from the Qur'an and kneel before God.

While praying at a mosque is preferable, Muslims may worship anywhere. In groups or by themselves, they may perform their prayers at home, at work, in airports, in parks, or on sidewalks. A direction compass may help them locate the direction of Mecca. Some Muslims carry a prayer rug to have a clean spot to pray. Some make additional prayers by using prayer beads and reciting words describing God's many characteristics.
The Third Pillar: Zakat

The third Pillar of Faith is *zakat* or *almsgiving* (giving to those in need). Muhammad told wealthy people to share their riches with the less fortunate. This practice remains a basic part of Islam. The word *zakat* means "purification." Muslims believe that wealth becomes pure by giving some of it away and that sharing wealth helps control greed. Zakat also reminds people of God's great gifts to them.

According to the teachings of Islam, Muslims must share about one fortieth (2.5 percent) of their income and possessions with their poorer neighbors. They are encouraged to give even more. Individuals decide the proper amount to pay. Then they either give this sum to a religious official or distribute it themselves. Zakat is similar to charitable giving in other faiths. For instance, Jews and Christians also ask for donations to support their houses of worship and charitable activities.
The fourth Pillar: Siyam

The fourth Pillar of Faith is *siyam*, or fasting (going without food). Muslims were not the first people to fast as a way of worshiping God. Both the Old and New Testaments praise the act. But the Qur'an instructs Muslims to fast for an entire month during Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar.

According to Islamic teachings, Ramadan was the month that God first revealed His message to Muhammad. Muslims use a lunar calendar (one based on the phases of the moon). A year on this calendar is shorter than a 365-day year. Over time, as a result, Ramadan cycles through all the seasons of the year.

During Ramadan, Muslims fast from the break of dawn to the setting of the sun. Pregnant women, travelers, the sick, the elderly, and young children do not have to fast. During the daylight hours on each day of Ramadan, Muslims do not eat any food or drink any liquid, including water. Muslims then break their fast, often with dates and other food and beverages—as Muhammad did—and perform the sunset prayer. After a meal shared with family or friends, Muslims attend special prayer sessions. Each night a portion of the Qur'an is read aloud. By the end of Ramadan, Muslims have heard the entire holy book.

The holy month of Ramadan encourages generosity, equality, and charity within the Muslim community. Fasting teaches Muslims self-control and makes them realize what it would be like to be poor and hungry. During Ramadan, Muslims also strive to forgive people, give thanks, and avoid arguments and bad deeds.

A celebration called Eid al-Fitr takes place when Ramadan ends. People attend prayers. They wear new clothes, decorate their homes, and prepare special foods. They exchange gifts and give to the poor.
The Fifth Pillar: Hajj

The fifth Pillar of Faith is *hajj*, the pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca. In the Islamic year's 12th month, millions of believers from all over the world come together at Mecca. All adult Muslims who can do so are expected to make the hajj once during their lifetime. By bringing Muslims from many places and cultures together, the hajj promotes fellowship and equality.

In Mecca, pilgrims follow what Muslims believe are the footsteps of Abraham and Muhammad, and so draw closer to God. For five days, they dress in simple white clothing and perform a series of rituals, moving from one sacred site to another. Upon arrival they go straight to the Great Mosque, which houses the Ka’aba. Muslims believe that Abraham built the Ka’aba as a shrine to honor God. The pilgrims circle the Ka’aba seven times, which is a ritual mentioned in the Qur'an. After this, they complete several other visits and rituals.

Afterward, pilgrims may celebrate with a four-day feast. In honor of Abraham's ancient sacrifice, as recounted in religious Scriptures, they sacrifice animals, usually sheep or goats, and share the meat with family, friends, and the poor. Then, having completed the hajj, they don their own clothes again. Before leaving Mecca, each pilgrim circles the Ka’aba seven more times. Muslims around the world celebrate this "farewell" day as Eid al-Adha.
**Jihad**

The word *jihad* means "to strive." The Qur'an tells Muslims to fight to protect themselves from those who would do them harm or to right a terrible wrong. Early Muslims considered their efforts to protect their territory and extend their rule over other regions to be a form of jihad. However, the Quran forbade Muslims to force others to convert to Islam. So, non-Muslims who came under Muslim rule were usually allowed to continue practicing their faiths.

Although the Qur'an allows war, it sets specific terms for fighting. Muhammad told his followers to honor agreements made with foes. Muslim fighters must not mutilate (remove or destroy) the dead bodies of enemies or harm women, children, old people, and civilians. Nor should they destroy property, crops, sacred objects, or houses of worship.

Jihad represents the human struggle to overcome difficulties and do things that would be pleasing to God. Muslims strive to respond positively to personal difficulties as well as worldly challenges. For instance, they might work to become better people, reform society, or correct injustice.

Jihad has always been an important Islamic concept. One account of Muhammad tells about the prophet's return from a battle. He declared that he and his men had carried out the "lesser jihad," the external struggle against oppression. The "greater jihad," he said, was the fight against evil within oneself. Examples of the greater jihad include working hard for a goal, giving up a bad habit, getting an education, or obeying your parents when you may not want to.

Another passage from the Quran says that Muslims should fulfill jihad with the heart, tongue, and hand. Muslims use the heart in their struggle to resist evil. The tongue may convince others to take up worthy causes, such as funding medical research. Hands may perform good works and correct wrongs.
Islamic law is called *shari'ah*, the "path to be followed." It is based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Shari'ah covers Muslims' duties toward God. It guides them in their personal behavior and relationships with others. Shari'ah promotes obedience to the Qur'an and respect for others.

In Medina’s Muslim community, Muhammad explained the Qur'an and served as a judge. After his death, the caliphs used the Qur'an and the Sunnah to solve problems as they arose. As the Muslim empire expanded, leaders faced new situations. Gradually, scholars developed a body of Islamic law.

Islamic law guides Muslim life by placing actions into one of five categories: forbidden, discouraged, allowed, recommended, and obligatory (required). Sometimes the law is quite specific. Muslims, for instance, are forbidden to eat pork, drink alcohol, or gamble. But other matters are mentioned in general terms. For example, the Qur'an tells women to "not display their beauty." For this reason, Muslim women usually wear different forms of modest dress. Most women cover their arms and legs. Many also wear scarves over the hair. The shari'ah also applies to court. In a shari'ah court, a qadi (judge) hears a case and makes a ruling. Sometimes the qadi consults a mufti, or scholar of law, for an opinion.

Islamic law helped Muslims live by the rules of the Quran. By the 19th century, however, many Muslim regions had come under European rule. Western codes of law soon replaced the shari'ah except in matters of family law. Today, most Muslim countries apply only some parts of Islamic law. But shari'ah continues to develop in response to modern ways of life and its challenges.