

Ramadan

Pre-reading

Questions: What do you know about Ramadan? What would you like to know about it?

Definitions: Revelation – something that is made known that was not known before

Self-discipline – training and control of oneself for growth and improvement



Reading*

15 Islam is one of the most widespread religions in the world. Its followers, Muslims, number
15 between 850 million and 1 billion. Islam is practiced in many countries throughout the world.

30 Islam is based on the belief in one God, Allah. Allah is the Arabic word Muslims use for “God.”

49 In Arabic, “Islam” means submission to Allah. The Muslims believe that in the seventh
63 century Allah chose Muhammad to receive his message. Muhammad recorded the revelations he
76 received. That text came to be known as the Koran.

86 The most important rituals practiced by the Muslims are often referred to as the Five Pillars
102 of Islam. They are as follows:

108 1. Shahadah – a short statement declaring the greatness and oneness of Allah.

120 2. Salat – prayer that is offered five times a day

130 3. Sawm – the fast that takes place during Ramadan

139 4. Zakat – a religious tax used for the poor, the sick, and the others less privileged
155 in the Islamic community

159 5. Hajj – the pilgrimage to the Holy City of Mecca

169 The third pillar references an important Muslim holiday. Ramadan is the ninth month of
183 the Islamic calendar. This month lasts 29 or 30 days and occurs during different seasons
198 depending on the cycle of the calendar. The fast of Ramadan lasts the entire month. All those who
216 have reached the age of puberty (usually 12 years of age) are expected to observe the fast.

233 During this time, strict restraints are placed on Muslims. They are not to eat or drink during
250 the daylight hours. Smoking and sexual relations are also forbidden. The fast is broken at sunset.
266 It begins again the next morning when one can see the white light coming through the darkness.

283 Ramadan is a time for Muslims to **concentrate** on the practice of their faith. It is a time for
302 greater focus on Islam and less focus on every day concerns. Time is spent praying, worshipping,
318 contemplating, and receiving religious instruction. Part of the worship includes reciting passages
330 from the Koran.

333 For many, Ramadan is a time of profound joy. There is a festive atmosphere after sunset.
349 In many cities Muslims visit with family and friends after they have broken the fast. Shopping
365 areas and restaurants are busy, alive with food and fellowship.

375 On the 27th day of Ramadan fireworks are often used to celebrate the Night of Power. The
392 Night of Power is the night that Muhammad first received his revelation of the Koran in the year
410 610. Ramadan is a time to celebrate and give thanks for the gift of the Koran. It is a time to
431 remember the poor, to practice self-discipline, and recommit one’s self to the Islamic faith.

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Understanding

1. People of what faith celebrate Ramadan? _____

2. What is their holy book called? _____

3. What is in the holy book? And, who wrote it? _____

4. Describe the Ramadan fast - What does it entail? Why is it done? How long does it last? _____

5. What does the word **concentrate** mean? _____

6. Who is Allah? _____
7. Who is the prophet of Allah? _____

8. What is the Night of Power? _____

Writing

Option A: Summarize the reading in your own words.

Option B: If you celebrate Ramadan, write about what it means to you.
