

Vocabulary List: Holidays and Observances

'Id al-Fitr (*i*-EED al FAHT-ehr, Festival of the Breaking of the Fast) Celebrates the end of Ramadan. It comes on the first day of the month, Shawwal, which follows Ramadan.

A.H. Anno Hegirae, in the year of the Hajj

Ashura (ah-shoo-RA) Commemorates the martyrdom of Husayn (grandson of the prophet Muhammad) on the 10th of Muharram, 61 A.H. (680 C.E. [A.D.])

B.C.E. Before Common Era

C.E. Common Era

Christmas Celebration of Jesus' birth

Day of Hajj (ahl-HAHJ, Day of Arafat) Commemorates the concluding revelation to the Prophet at Mt. Arafat, a mountain 18 kilometers east of Mecca.

Epiphany (Manifestation) In the Western church, this event marks the presentation of Christ to the gentiles (non-Jewish peoples), being associated primarily with the journey of the

Magi (MAY-ji), Wise Men, to the infant Jesus. In the Eastern Church, Epiphany remembers the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist, and the miracle at Cana when Jesus turned the water into wine. Many Middle Eastern churches emphasize Epiphany much more than the traditional Christmas.

High Holidays Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the two most important Jewish festivals of the year

Hijra (HIJ-ruh) Migration of the prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina (A.D. 622) This date begins the Islamic calendar.

Id al-Adha (*i*-EED ahl-OOHD-hah, Festival of Sacrifice) The concluding act of pilgrimage. Muslims offer sheep, goats, and camels in a pattern after Abraham's offering of his son Ismail to God. The poor and needy receive the meat.

Julian calendar Used by Eastern Christianity, the forerunner to the calendar most Americans currently use (the Gregorian). Instituted by Julius Caesar in 46 B.C., the Julian calendar bases its calculations on the length of time it takes the earth to revolve around the sun.

Laylat al-Qadr (LAHY-let ahl-KAHD-ehr, Night of Power) This event came to the Prophet Muhammad in 610 C.E. (A.D.), when he was forty years old. It commemorates the first revelation of the Qur'an.

Lunar calendar Using the moon to calculate the days marking a given calendar year

Mawlid al-Nabiy (MOW-lid oon-NA-bee) (Birthday of the Prophet) The anniversary of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad. For many Muslims, this day ranks third in importance, after 'Id al-Fitr and Id al-Adha.

Pesah (PAY-sahk, Passover) commemorates the departure of the Israelites from Egypt. The eight-day observance consists of reciting special prayers and eating symbolic foods. The first and last two days of Pesah are ones of special observance. This remembrance is a high point of Jewish life.

Ramadan (RAH-mah-dahn) A holy month of fasting wherein Muslims, who are physically able, do not eat or drink from the first sign of dawn until sunset.

Rosh Hashanah (rohsh hah-shah-NAH) (New Year's Day) is the beginning of the Jewish calendar. Celebrated for two days, it marks the anniversary of the creation of the world. The day serves as a day of examination for all people, the examiner being the righteous and merciful creator.

Shia (SHEE-uh) Muslims who believe Muhammad passed his successorship directly through his bloodline. This school of thought comprises some 15% of Middle Eastern Muslims.

Solar calendar: Using the sun to calculate the days marking a given calendar year

Yom Kippur (YOHM kee-poor) (Day of Atonement) stresses repentance and forgiveness needed to reestablish oneness with God. One first seeks forgiveness from others and forgives those who have caused pain. Then comes confession of sin and seeking forgiveness from God. The most important and most personal holy day for most Jewish people.

Review Quiz: Holidays and Observances

Part 1--Multiple Choice Place the letter of the most correct answer in the blank provided.



1. _____ The initials C.E. represent
 - A. Calvin's Enterprise.
 - B. Common Era.
 - C. Cultural Enlightenment.

2. _____ The initials B.C.E. represent
 - A. Before the Christian Era.
 - B. Before the Common Era.
 - C. Before the Cultural Enlightenment.

3. _____ Islam follows a _____ calendar resulting in a year 354 days long.
 - A. lunar
 - B. solar
 - C. lunisolar

4. _____ The abbreviation A.H. represents
 - A. Anno Hegirae, the year of the Hijra.
 - B. After Hanukkah.
 - C. Ali's Harvest.

5. _____ The migration (Hijra) of the prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina took place in the year A.D. _____. It is the date which begins the Islamic calendar.
 - A. 1492
 - B. 622
 - C. 732

6. _____ The Jewish year follows a _____ calendar.
- A. lunar
 - B. solar
 - C. lunisolar
7. _____ The most important and personal holy day for Jewish personnel is
- A. Hanukkah.
 - B. Yom Kippur.
 - C. Sukkot.
8. _____ The two most important Jewish high holy days are
- A. Shavuot and Sukkot.
 - B. Hanukkah and Sukkot.
 - C. Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah.
9. _____, commemorating the departure of the Israelites from Egypt, is a high point of Jewish religious life.
- A. Sukkot (Feast of Booths)
 - B. Pesah (Passover)
 - C. Hanukkah (Feast of Lights)
10. _____ For Muslims _____ is the day of communal weekly gathering.
- A. Saturday
 - B. Friday
 - C. Sunday
 - D. Sabbath
11. _____ commemorates the martyrdom of Husayn on the battlefield of Karbala 61 A.H. It is an important day for Shia Muslims.
- A. Hijra
 - B. Muharran
 - C. Ashura
12. _____ After 'Id al-Fitr and Id al-Adha, this day ranks third in importance for many Muslims.
- A. Mawlid al-Nabiy (birthday of the Prophet)
 - B. Nisf-Sha'ban (Night of Repentance)

C. Mi'Raj al-Nabiy (ascension of Prophet to heaven)

13. _____ The two most important Muslim festival/observances are
- A. 'Id al-Fitr (Breaking of Fast) and Id al-Adha (Festival of Sacrifice).
 - B. Day of Hajj and Mawlid al-Nabiy (birthday of Prophet).
14. _____ is the holy month of fasting for Muslims.
- A. Muharran (beginning the Muslim year)
 - B. Dhul-Hijja (last month of year--pilgrimage)
 - C. Ramadan
15. _____ The Laylat al-Qadr (Night of Power) commemorates
- A. the first revelation of the Qur'an.
 - B. the ascension of the prophet to heaven following his night journey.
 - C. the last day of Ramadan.
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Part 2--True/False

Place a *T* or an *F* in the blank provided.

1. _____ In the Middle East, religious holidays/observances are of little significance for intelligence analysts.
2. _____ Religious observances/holidays were a key deceptive device in the Arab-Israeli conflict of 1973.
3. _____ Peoples the world over plan their lives by the solar calendar.
4. _____ Eastern Christianity (most of the Middle Eastern Christians) exclusively use the Gregorian calendar. Their festival dates are the same as those in the West.
5. _____ The actual day Easter is observed varies from year to year.

6. _____ Ramadan always comes during the cooler, shorter (light) days of the year.
 7. _____ The Jewish religious day runs from sunset to sunset.
 8. _____ Many Middle Eastern churches emphasize Epiphany more than the traditional Christmas.
 9. _____ Orthodox Churches (most Middle East Churches) begin their church year with Easter.
 10. _____ During Ramadan, Muslims fast from 1200-2400 hrs.
 11. _____ Many Muslims observe the Day of Hajj and Id al-Adha (Festival of Sacrifice) whether on pilgrimage or not.
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Part 3--Matching Place the correct letter in the blank provided. Not all of the letters will be used.

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|-----------------------------|--|
| 1. _____ Hijra | A. Celebrates the end of Ramadan.
It comes on the first day of the month, Shawwal, which follows Ramadan. |
| 2. _____ C.E. | B. Anno Hegirae, in the year of the Hajj. |
| 3. _____ 'Id al-Fitr | C. Commemorates the martyrdom of Husayn (grandson of the prophet Muhammad) the 10th of Muharram, A.H. 61. |
| 4. _____ High Holidays | D. Before Common Era |
| 5. _____ Julian Calendar on | E. Common Era |
| 6. _____ Solar Calendar | F. Celebration of Jesus' birth. |
| 7. _____ Ramadan | G. Commemorates the concluding revelation to the Prophet at Mt. Arafat, a mountain 18 kilometers east of |
| 8. _____ Lunar Calendar | |
| 9. _____ Day of Hajj | |
| 10. _____ Pesah | |

11. _____ Laylat al-Qadr Mecca.

Unit 5: Holidays and Observances

12. _____ A.H.
the
13. _____ Epiphany
14. _____ B.C.E.
miracle at
15. _____ Ashura
into
16. _____ Id al-Adha
17. _____ Shi'a
18. _____ Rosh Hashanah
19. _____ Yom Kippur
20. _____ Christmas
- Abraham's
Ismail to God.
needy receive the meat.
- Julius
- (A.D.),
- H. In the Western church, this event is associated primarily with journey of the **Magi** (Wise Men). In the Eastern Church, Epiphany remembers the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist, and the Cana when Jesus turned the water wine.
- I. Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the two most important Jewish festivals of the year.
- J. Migration of the prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina (A.D. 622). This date begins the Islamic calendar.
- K. The concluding act of pilgrimage. Muslims offer sheep, goats, and camels in a pattern after offering of his son
The poor and
- L. Used by Eastern Christianity, the forerunner to the calendar most Americans currently use (the Gregorian). Instituted by Caesar in 46 B.C.
- M. Commemorates the first revelation of the Qur'an. This event came to the Prophet Muhammad in 610 C.E. when he was forty years old.
- N. Using the moon to calculate the days marking a given calendar year.
- O. The anniversary of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad.
- P. Commemorates the departure of the Israelites from Egypt.

able, do
sign

Q. A holy month of fasting wherein
Muslims, who are physically
not eat or drink from the first
of dawn until sunset.

calendar.
it marks the
creation of the

R. The beginning of the Jewish
Celebrated for two days,
anniversary of the
world.

through

S. Muslims who believe Muhammad passed
his successorship directly
his bloodline.

T. Using the sun to calculate the days
marking a given calendar year.

with
and most
Jewish

U. Stresses repentance and forgiveness
needed to reestablish oneness
God. The most important
personal holy day for most
people.



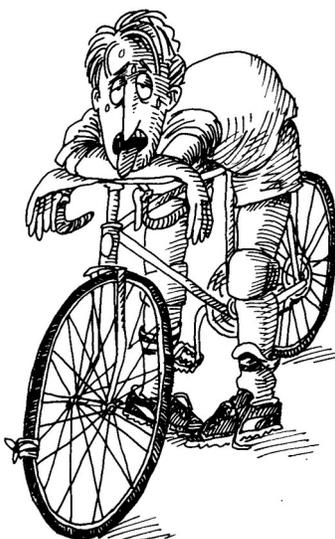
"Flex Your Brain"

Sources Used in Holidays and Observances

MacDonald, Margaret Read, The Folklore of World Holidays, (Detroit, Mich: Gale Research, Inc., 1994). This resource is filled with data on religious and cultural festivals around the world. Most entries are detailed, thorough, and interesting. (Aiso)

Smith, Jonathan, The HarperCollins Dictionary of Religion, (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1995).

Spence, David, The Multifaith Calendar, (Burnaby, British Columbia: Hemlock Printers, 1996). A helpful, accurate, and informative calendar. Artistically done, the calendar not only lists significant events on days when they occur, but also explains their importance in a monthly aside.



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