

Ramadan

Task 1

I know ...	I want to know ...	I learned ...

Reading 1

What is Ramadan?

For Muslims around the world, Ramadan is a holy month. It's a month for fasting, praying and trying to be a better person. It is a time when Muslims try to strengthen their faith and show gratitude.

Ramadan does not come on the same dates each year. It is based on the Islamic calendar, which follows the moon cycle. The month can be 29 or 30 days, with the start and end being announced based on the new crescent moon.

What is fasting?

Fasting during Ramadan is one of the Five Pillars of Islam – the five main ways that Muslims practise their faith. During Ramadan, most Muslims don't eat or drink anything during the day, not even water. Muslims only fast if it is safe for them. This means that young children, pregnant women and people with illnesses do not have to fast.

What else do people do during Ramadan?

During Ramadan, Muslims spend time thinking about their habits and actions and trying to do more good deeds.

Donating to charity is one good deed that everybody does during Ramadan. All Muslims must give a kind of 'zakat' during Ramadan. Zakat is a donation to charity. During Ramadan, Muslims should give a specific amount of food or its value in money.

Muslims also spend a lot of time praying during Ramadan. Muslims normally pray five times a day. During Ramadan, there is an extra prayer that is done in the evenings after the other prayers are completed. It is called 'taraweeh'. Many people make it part of their Ramadan routine to pray taraweeh at a mosque or at home with their family.

What do people eat during Ramadan?

Before sunrise, Muslims eat their 'suhoor' meal. For suhoor, people try to drink a lot of water and eat things that will give them energy for the day. After sunset, they break their fast with the 'iftar' meal. Many people start their iftar with a date or a glass of water.

People love to enjoy iftar with their friends and family. Some people keep their iftar meal simple, but many people use it as a chance to eat their favourite dishes. Many cultures have special drinks or desserts that they only make during Ramadan. In countries like Jordan and Palestine, 'qatayef' is a kind of dessert that is mostly eaten during Ramadan. Qatayef are similar to sweet dumplings or pancakes folded in half and stuffed with sweet cheese, cream or nuts. In Turkey, 'ramazan pidesi' is a round, flat bread that is only made during Ramadan and enjoyed as part of iftar meals.

Task 2

Use Reading 1 to mark each sentence as true or false. For statements that are false, correct them to make them true.

1. Ramadan is at the same time every year.
2. All Muslims must fast during Ramadan.
3. Fasting during Ramadan means not eating or drinking during the day.
4. All Muslims give food to charity during Ramadan.
5. Muslims spend more time exercising to get stronger during Ramadan.
6. Suhoor is eaten before sunrise and iftar is eaten after sunset.
7. Women who work do not have to fast.

Task 3

Use Reading 1. Fill each gap using a word from below:

qatayaf *taraweeh* *iftar* *zakat* *water*
ramazan pidesi *suhoor* *bread* *dates*

During Ramadan, Muslims eat _____ before sunrise and _____ after sunset.

Many people break their fast with _____ or _____.

_____ is a kind of charity that Muslims give.

A popular dessert eaten by Palestinians during Ramadan is _____.

_____ is a type of _____ made in Turkey during Ramadan.

Muslims pray _____ in the evenings during Ramadan.

Reading 2

How do Muslim teenagers feel about Ramadan?

Ramadan is a time when we get closer to Allah. I always get a headache the first few days until I get used to fasting. The best parts are eating suhoor and having a shorter school day.

- Jad

It makes me feel happy even though I get thirsty and tired. I love the decorations and staying up late with my family.

- Sham

It is a time to get closer to God and reflect on my actions. I like how everyone comes together for iftar and prayers. My favourite part is the peaceful nights.

- Shatha

Ramadan is a special month that's different from other months. Even though it's exhausting, it helps you appreciate the blessings you have.

- Rayann

I love Ramadan, because it's when I get to have my favourite foods for iftar. Plus, there's always dessert. The hardest parts are not having energy to play football with my friends and trying to study while hungry.

- Yousef

Task 4

Based on Reading 2, discuss the questions below with your partner or group. Make notes in the space.

1. How does Ramadan make them feel?
2. What is difficult about Ramadan?
3. What are their favourite parts?
4. What do they have in common?

Task 5

Think about your own experiences. Discuss the questions with your partner or group.

- Do you observe Ramadan? If so, discuss these questions with a partner:
 - How does Ramadan make you feel?
 - What is difficult about Ramadan?
 - What are your favourite parts?
- If you don't observe Ramadan, have you ever experienced something similar? Discuss with a partner:
 - What would you like the most about Ramadan?
 - What would you find the most difficult?

Task 6

With your group, plan a Ramadan iftar. Questions to consider:

- Who will it be for?
- What kind of food and drink do they need for their health?
- What kind of food and drink do they like?

You could include appetisers, soups, salads, main dishes, desserts and drinks.