Guide for teachers

Hajj
journey
to the heart
of Islam

26 January – 15 April 2012
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There are a number of ways of spelling 'Mecca' in English, including 'Makka' and 'Makkah'. The Museum is using 'Mecca' throughout the schools' resources as it is the most common spelling understood by English-speaking audiences. It is known in Arabic as Makka al-Mukarrama and in the exhibition you will also find it in Arabic script.
Essential information for your visit

Please read the following information carefully. The exhibition contains religious content and sacred text and objects. Please consider this in your teaching and planning and ask your students to act respectfully when visiting the exhibition.

About the exhibition

One of the Five Pillars of Islam central to Muslim belief, Hajj is a pilgrimage to Mecca that every Muslim must undertake at least once in their lifetime, if they are able.

This unique exhibition provides the visitor with the rare opportunity to explore the purpose, history, rituals and experience of the Hajj pilgrimage through objects, images and artwork. It comprises three major sections:

• Introduction (including background to Hajj, Mecca and the Five Pillars of Islam), preparing for Hajj and the four main routes to Mecca from Kufa, Cairo, Damascus and Jeddah (including famous travellers and their experiences)
• Mecca and the rituals of Hajj (including visiting Medina)
• The Homecoming (including the impact of and remembering Hajj)

Please note that the exhibition has been designed for visitors to access and engage with in a linear way, section by section from start to finish. You may wish to plan your visit accordingly and try to avoid doubling back if possible.

Using the exhibition

Exhibition entry is free for school groups. All visiting groups must pre-book through the British Museum Ticket Desk.

Make sure you have enough adult helpers (at least 1:8 for KS2 and 1:15 for KS3 and above). Divide your class into smaller groups with an adult assigned to each group.

On arrival at the Museum make your way to the Ford Centre for Young Visitors which is downstairs from the Great Court. Allow 20 minutes for check-in, depositing bags, toilets etc.

You may be sharing the exhibition with other school students and the general public. The resources have been designed to minimise crowding, so please use them as suggested.

If an area gets overcrowded, please advise students to act sensibly and wait their turn or move to another section and come back later.

Please note that photography is not allowed within the exhibition, but students could go on and visit related objects in permanent galleries where photography is permitted.

You might like to complement your exhibition visit by visiting the Islamic world gallery (Room 34).
Background information

Hajj

Hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca, is the fifth pillar of Islam and a religious duty that Muslims should undertake if they are able, at least once in their lives. It is both a collective undertaking and a deeply personal experience.

Hajj occurs in the month of Dhu'l Hijja, the last month of the Islamic calendar. It involves a series of rituals which take place in and around Mecca over a period of five to six days. The first of these is tawaf in which pilgrims walk around the Ka'ba seven times in an anti-clockwise direction.

Muslims believe that the rituals of Hajj have their origin in the time of the Prophet Abraham. The Prophet Muhammad led the Hajj himself in AD 632, the year of his death. The Hajj now attracts about three million pilgrims every year from across the world.

Mecca, city of Abraham

Mecca, known in Arabic as Makka al-Mukarrama (Mecca the Blessed) is situated in present-day Saudi Arabia in the arid, mountainous region known as the Hijaz. The Prophet Muhammad was born there in AD 570. It was in and around Mecca that he received the earliest revelations that formed the Qur’an – the holy book of Islam.

Mecca owes its existence to a sacred sanctuary at the heart of which lies a cube-shaped building known as the Ka'ba. Muslims believe that Adam, the first prophet, built the Ka'ba and that it was later rebuilt by the Prophet Abraham (Ibrahim) and his son Ishmael (Isma'il).

Reverence for the Prophet Abraham is central to the three monotheistic religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Muslims believe that the revelation of Islam restored the ancient Abrahamic faith in the One God to the Arab people.

The Five Pillars of Islam

Islam means surrender or submission to God in Arabic. It is based on five key principles established by the Prophet Muhammad (d. 632), known as the Five Pillars of Islam. This framework helps to connect the individual Muslim with the wider Islamic community known as the umma.

Shahada
All Muslims must make the declaration, ‘I bear witness that there is no god but God and Muhammad is His Messenger.’ This is a commitment that God takes priority over all desires, ideologies and ambitions.

Salat
Muslims pray five times a day. The act of turning to Mecca symbolically reminds Muslims of their true orientation to God.

Zakat
All Muslims must give a proportion of their wealth to benefit the needy. Muslims strive to serve God by trying to create a just society, where wealth is shared fairly.
**Sawm**
Fasting during the month of Ramadan helps Muslims identify with the poor through knowing what it means to be hungry.

**Hajj**
The rituals of Hajj represent a symbolic return to the beliefs of the Prophets Adam, Abraham and Muhammad.

**Preparing for Hajj**

Pilgrims often feel called to go on Hajj and in the Islamic tradition pilgrims to Mecca consider themselves to be a guest of God. Sometimes this invitation comes in the form of a dream.

Pilgrims respond to God’s call by laying aside all other preoccupations in their daily lives. Before embarking on Hajj, pilgrims must settle all debts, make provision for any dependents and ask forgiveness from others. Pilgrims leave home prepared for the possibility that they may never return and many make a will before departing.

Months ahead of departure pilgrims study the rules governing Hajj and begin to prepare practically for the journey. Today, pilgrims from the United Kingdom book their travel through accredited agents, who make all the arrangements, including obtaining a visa and vaccinations.

**The sacred geography of Islam**

All Muslims must face towards the Ka‘ba at Mecca when they pray and this direction is known as the qibla. The requirement to pray in the direction of Mecca was not a problem for those Muslims living in close proximity to the sacred city. However, as soon as communities sprang up in areas further afield, determining the qibla became a major challenge.

Initially this was achieved by means of folk astronomy, by using the stars and natural phenomena to find the correct direction. Later a range of charts and instruments were developed that enabled the believer to find the qibla from any location in the world.

**The journey**

From the furthest reaches of the Islamic world, pilgrims have made the spiritual journey that is the ambition of a lifetime. As Hajj needs to be performed at a designated time, historically pilgrims moved together in convoys.

Those travelling overland by camel and on foot congregated at three central points: Kufa (Iraq), Damascus (Syria) and Cairo (Egypt). Pilgrims coming by sea would enter Arabia at the port of Jedda.

In the past the journey could be extremely dangerous. Pilgrims often fell ill or were robbed on the way and became destitute. However, pilgrims do not fear dying on Hajj. It is believed that those who die on Hajj will go to heaven with their sins erased.
King Abd al-Aziz and the Hajj

King Abd al-Aziz, also known as Ibn Saud, the unifier of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, entered *Makka al-Mukarrama* wearing the *ihram* in 1925 and performed Umra.

King Abd al-Aziz’s main concern was to provide security for the Holy Cities and for pilgrims to perform Hajj. The King introduced several guiding principles for assisting pilgrims during Hajj. These included providing a secure environment for pilgrims, introducing improvements to the food and health care available to pilgrims, providing clean water at sites related to the pilgrimage and improving the transport and accommodation arrangements for pilgrims.

One of the King’s first reforms was the abolition of fees that pilgrims were charged in the course of their Hajj. The King established the first factory in Mecca to manufacture the cover of the Ka’ba, the *kiswa*, in 1927. In 1936, the King re-organized the duties and responsibilities of the pilgrims’ guides or *mutawwifs*, and in 1945 established an official agency called the General Directorate of Hajj (now called the Ministry of Hajj) which has overall responsibility for serving pilgrims.

The development of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia’s oil resources from the 1940’s enabled King Abd al-Aziz to invest significant sums of money on Hajj infrastructure. In 1953, he ordered an extensive programme of electrification, maintenance, renovation and modernisation work for the Holy Mosque in Mecca, which is continued by his successors.

Mecca the blessed

Mecca has been a sacred site from ancient times. It owes its existence to a sanctuary, which developed around the Ka’ba and the spring of Zamzam.

Even before Islam, Mecca was an important site of pilgrimage for the Arab tribes of north and central Arabia. Although they believed in many deities, they came once a year to worship the One God, ‘Allah’ at Mecca. During this sacred month, violence was forbidden within Mecca and this allowed trade to flourish. As a result, Mecca became an important commercial centre.

The revelation of Islam to the Prophet Muhammad (d. 632) restored the ancient religion of the One God to the Arab people and transformed Mecca into the holiest city in the Islamic world.

The Ka‘ba

The Ka‘ba is a cube-shaped structure made of granite. Each side measures about eight metres. It is situated at the heart of a sanctuary which comprises a mosque and other religious buildings, all of which are known as *Masjid al-Haram, or Haram*.

According to the Qur’an, the Ka‘ba was the first house of worship established by God. Muslims believe it was originally built by the Prophet Adam after he had been expelled from Paradise but that over time it had fallen into disrepair. The Ka‘ba was rebuilt by the Prophet Abraham and his son Ishmael under God’s command and when it was finished, they walked around it seven times.
Embedded within the eastern corner of the Ka’ba is the Black Stone. According to some Muslim traditions it had come from Paradise whiter than milk, but the sins of the descendants of Adam turned it black.

The Prophet Muhammad

The Prophet Muhammad was born in Mecca in AD 570 and came from the tribe of Quraysh. Mecca was at the time a thriving centre of trade. Muhammad began to receive the revelations that were later to be set down in the Qur’an, at the cave of Hira, outside Mecca, in 610. However, his message was not accepted in Mecca and in 622 he had to flee to Medina. This event, known as the hijra, is the first year of the Islamic calendar.

The Prophet Muhammad reinterpreted the Hajj rituals, which had been known to the Arabs from before Islam, emphasizing the Abrahamic roots of their faith of Islam – giving it new resonance. He went on Hajj only once in 632, the year of his death. It was on the slopes of Mount Arafat that the Prophet delivered his Farewell Sermon to the Muslim community.

Hajj and Umra

There are two pilgrimages to Mecca. Hajj – known as the ‘Greater Pilgrimage’, and Umra – the ‘Lesser Pilgrimage’. Hajj can only be undertaken between the 8th and the 13th of Dhu’l Hijja – the twelfth month of the Muslim calendar. At all other times of the year, pilgrims may travel to Mecca to undertake Umra.

Both pilgrimages begin at stations known as Miqat, which pilgrims cannot cross unless they are in the white garments known as ihram. It is here that they put them on and recite the talbiya – a prayer to announce to God their arrival for pilgrimage.

Umra involves rituals which take place in the sanctuary at Mecca itself: circumambulation of the Ka’ba (tawaf) and the passing between the hills of Safa and Marwa (sa’i). Pilgrims also pray behind the Station of Abraham and drink Zamzam water. All of these rituals can be completed in a matter of hours. The Hajj begins with the same rituals as those of Umra, on day one, and continues with visits to the Holy sites of Arafat, Mina and Muzdalifa on subsequent days.

Rituals 1: Tawaf – day one

Tawaf means circumambulation and in this, the first of the rituals of Hajj, pilgrims walk anti-clockwise around the Ka’ba seven times. This tradition goes back to the time of Abraham and Ishmael, who walked around the Ka’ba seven times after they had rebuilt the structure. Pilgrims undertaking tawaf are following in the footsteps of the Prophets Abraham, Ishmael and Muhammad.

While walking round the Ka’ba pilgrims continually recite prayers. Every time pilgrims pass the Black Stone in the eastern corner, they try to kiss, touch or point to it, saying ‘Bismillah’ (In the name of God) and ‘Allahu akbar’ (God is great).
**Rituals 2: Zamzam and sa’i – day one**

Pilgrims drink from the Well of Zamzam after completing the tawaf, praying behind the station of Abraham, or after sa’i.

The sa’i commemorates the search for water by the Prophet Abraham’s wife Hagar after she was left in the desert by Abraham as a test of faith. Having exhausted her provisions, Hagar desperately ran seven times between the mountains of Safa and Marwa searching for help. On returning to her son Ishmael, she found that a spring of water had gushed out of the ground. This spring is known as the Well of Zamzam.

During sa’i pilgrims run and walk seven times between Safa and Marwa along a passageway on the eastern side of the sanctuary. The strenuousness of this exercise demonstrates the commitment that is required to live a life according to Islam.

**Rituals 3: The vigil at Arafat – day two**

At the end of the first day of Hajj (8th day of Dhu’l Hijja) pilgrims will proceed to the tented city of Mina, and camp there overnight. On the following day, they travel to the plain of Arafat.

Pilgrims stay at Arafat until dusk. Here the pilgrim will stay in contemplation and prayer, an act known as wuquf (standing). This is the most important part of Hajj, where Muslims make their commitment to dedicate themselves to the principles of Islam, which lie behind the Five Pillars. If any pilgrim misses the wuquf, their Hajj is not valid and has to be done again another year.

According to Islamic tradition, Arafat is the place where Adam and Eve were reunited following their expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Arafat is also the place where the Prophet Muhammad delivered his Farewell Sermon.

**Rituals 4: Muzdalifa and Mina – days two and three**

After leaving the plain of Arafat on the second day of Hajj, pilgrims camp overnight on the rocky plain of Muzdalifa. Here pilgrims gather pebbles that they will later throw at three pillars, known as the jamarat, situated in Mina. Forty-nine pebbles in total are collected to undertake this next ritual which will take place on three separate occasions.

The stoning of the pillars re-enacts the story of the Prophet Abraham who was confronted by the Devil and was ordered by the Angel Gabriel to reject him by throwing stones. This ritual symbolises the destruction of the inner devil.

On the morning of the 10th of Dhu’l Hijja (the third day of Hajj), pilgrims proceed to Mina to perform the first stoning. Seven pebbles are used here to stone the largest pillar known as Jamarat al-Aqaba.
Rituals 5: Mina and the final tawaf – days three to six

The third day of Hajj is the day of the festival known as *Eid al-Adha* – the Festival of the Sacrifice. An animal, usually a sheep, goat or camel is sacrificed, and the meat is distributed to the poor. This day, celebrated by Muslims around the world, commemorates Abraham’s offering of his son Ishmael as a sacrifice to God.

In Mina women cut a lock of hair and men shave their heads and change out of their *ihram* clothes. These rituals symbolise the sacrifice of the self that forms the essence of Islam.

From Mina pilgrims return to Mecca to perform a final *tawaf*. They then return to Mina for further ritual stoning for two to three days. After the final stoning, the Hajj is now complete and pilgrims return to Mecca.

The Ka‘ba and its textiles

The tradition of clothing the Ka‘ba with textiles has its origins before Islam. According to legend, the Yemeni king Tubba Asad Kamil first covered the Ka‘ba with a special cloth from Yemen in about AD 400. This ritual act was part of an ancient tradition of veiling sacred places out of respect.

The textiles consist of a number of different elements, including an overall covering (*kiswa*), which in early Islam was in a variety of colours, white, green or red. In the Abbasid period (750–1258) it was changed to black. Placed at about two-thirds of the height of the kiswa is a belt of embroidery (*hizam*). Over the door is a curtain (*sitara*)

The textiles were renewed by those rulers who had authority over the holy places. The outer textiles are changed during Hajj on the day of the Vigil at Arafat, when the Ka‘ba is also washed with water and perfumed.

The making of the *kiswa*

The main source of textiles for the *kiswa* was Egypt, known since antiquity as a centre of textile production. The first caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab (r. 634–44) sent for textiles which were known as *Kubati*, a term which denoted that they were made by Coptic Christians.

Egypt continued to be the pre-eminent centre of manufacture of the *kiswa* and related fabrics until the 20th century. The best known workshop was in the quarter of Kharanfash in Cairo. Once completed, the textiles were ceremonially paraded in the streets of Cairo before their departure for Hajj with the *mahmal*. Since 1962 the Ka‘ba textiles have been made in Mecca.
Medina the Illuminated, city of the Prophet Muhammad

Medina is known in Arabic as Al-Madinat al-Munawarra (the Illuminated City). Its importance lies in the fact that it was the place that the Prophet Muhammad migrated to in 622 – the first year of the Islamic calendar.

The Prophet built the first mosque at Medina and for Muslims this is the second holiest site in Islam. Although Medina is not an official part of Hajj, most pilgrims will go there before or after visiting Mecca.

The Prophet’s Mosque contains within it the tomb of the Prophet Muhammad, as well as the tombs of his companions and successors Abu Bakr and Umar. Other members of the Prophet’s family, including his daughter Fatima and several of the Imams revered by the Shi’a branch of Islam, are buried in the Baqi cemetery outside the mosque.

The homecoming

Hajj is a spiritual awakening and people are often profoundly changed by the experience. After Hajj, pilgrims return home determined to live by the principles of Islam more faithfully than ever before.

Pilgrims now have a new title: Hajji for men, Hajja for women. This is a mark of the greatest honour across the Muslim world, and some heads of state include it as part of their official titles.

Hajjis come home to great celebrations. They are congratulated with the phrase Hajj mabrour, ‘may the pilgrimage be accepted by God’. In Egypt and elsewhere the walls of pilgrims’ houses are decorated with images of their journey and of the sanctuary at Mecca conferring great distinction on the family.

Souvenirs

For centuries Mecca was an important commercial as well as a religious centre. Pilgrims would bring goods for sale to help finance their Hajj. Many of these objects then found their way around the world.

Today, many shops surround the sanctuaries at Mecca and Medina and the rituals of Hajj are combined with the purchase of souvenirs to take home to recall this momentous experience.

Pilgrims are requested by their families and friends to bring back something as a blessing, such as sealed containers of Zamzam water. They will also bring back head caps, prayer beads, scarves and representations of the holy places and the famous sweet dates of Medina. Many pilgrims will keep their ihram robes, sprinkled with Zamzam water, to use as shrouds when they die.
Suggested activities: KS2 Religious Education

Before your visit

• Look at a map of the Islamic world with your class and locate Saudi Arabia, Mecca, Medina, Jedda and Riyadh.
• What is Saudi Arabia like? Show the students images of towns and the landscape from the internet. Then demonstrate how to find the direction of Mecca with a compass. Use this to begin a discussion about the significance of the city.
• Identify and discuss the factors that help to unite Muslims, such as reading the Qur’an, saying the same prayers and following the teachings of Islam.
• Discuss the Five Pillars of Islam, focusing on the profession of faith (shahada), prayer (salat) and pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj). Talk about the importance of commitment in religion.
• Discuss special journeys and pilgrimage. Find examples from Islam and other world religions but also from non-religious experience. Ask the students to describe a visit to a special place and explain what it was like.

During your visit

• Download and print off the trail that has been devised for KS2 students. Ask the students to follow and complete this guide in the exhibition.
• Alternatively, print out and use the ‘Journey to Mecca’ activity sheet on page 14 to structure your students’ visit to the exhibition.

After your visit

• Discuss the visit and use the PowerPoint of Qaisra’s pilgrimage to identify the main stages of Hajj. Ask the students to research and use their knowledge to create a guide to Hajj.
• Many people bring back souvenirs or mementos of Hajj. Ask the students to think about a special journey they have made and ask them to discuss what they brought back and why.
• Hajj is extremely important to Muslims across the world. Your students could find out about the pilgrimages of other world religions and what makes these journeys important to their followers. The students could then create a play or performance that explores pilgrimage.
Suggested activities: KS3 Religious Education

Before your visit

• Look at a map of the Islamic world with your class and locate Saudi Arabia, Mecca, Medina, Jedda and Riyadh. Ask students to investigate Saudi Arabia, its people and environment.
• Discuss the origins of Islam and the significance of Mecca and Medina for Muslims.
• Revise the Five Pillars of Islam with the class and discuss the importance of Hajj as a responsibility for all Muslims.
• Ask the students to discuss pilgrimage and identify religious and non-religious examples. Then define what makes a religious pilgrimage and discuss the concept of sacred place.
• Look for and discuss points of comparison between Islam and other principal religions.

During your visit

• Print out and use the ‘Journey of faith’ activity sheet on pages 15-16 to structure your students’ visit to the exhibition.

After your visit

• Using the information collected during the visit and the PowerPoint of Qaisra’s pilgrimage, ask the students to create a large map or diagram to represent the key stages of Hajj.
• Ask the students to consider what makes the completion of Hajj such an achievement. Ask them to assess the various stages and their challenges, from preparation to the end.
• Ask the class to look at and discuss the Hajj stories on the website. Using these and evidence from the exhibition, the students could assess the impact of the pilgrimage on Muslims.
• How does Hajj help to unite Muslims? Ask students to identify and think about examples from the Hajj process. They could also consider how unity might help pilgrims.
• Discuss the commitment required to complete Hajj. Ask the students to think about how they might learn from this example. Ask them to research and write about examples of religious commitment from other faiths.
Suggested activities: GCSE Religious Studies

Before your visit

• Look at a map of the Islamic world with your class and locate Saudi Arabia, Mecca, Medina, Jedda and Riyadh. Ask your students to research the landscape and culture of Saudi Arabia.
• Revise the establishment of Islam and discuss the role of Mecca in this process.
• Revise the Five Pillars of Islam. Focus on Hajj and the reasons why Muslims take part in the pilgrimage.
• Look at and discuss the nature and importance of pilgrimage for Muslims with reference to the rituals and significance of Hajj.
• Discuss the role that pilgrimage plays in the spiritual development of Muslims.

During your visit

• Print out and use the ‘Hajj journey’ activity sheet on pages 17–18 to structure your students’ visit to the exhibition.

After your visit

• Discuss what students learnt during the visit to the exhibition. How did the objects, images, maps and voices help them to appreciate the importance and experience of Hajj? Remind them by using the PowerPoints from the website.
• Ask the students to create a short, illustrated guide to Hajj to explain what takes place at each key location in and around Mecca, including the Ka'ba, Arafat and Mina. The students should include the meaning and significance of what takes place.
• Discuss with students whether Hajj is a personal or communal experience for Muslims.
• Ask the students to consider how completing Hajj changes the life of a Muslim. They could talk about the nature of Hajj as well as consider the Hajj stories on the British Museum’s website at britishmuseum.org/hajj
• Ask the students to assess whether going on Hajj makes someone a good Muslim. They should consider Hajj alongside the other duties of Islamic life and explain their answers.
KS2 activity sheet: Journey to Mecca

Imagine you are following the Hajj pilgrimage as you walk through the exhibition. Look closely at the objects and displays and complete the activities below.

Write down two things that Muslims use or do to prepare for Hajj.

Write down two types of transport people have used to travel to Mecca.

Write down two special things (rituals) that people do when they get to Mecca.

Write down two kinds of souvenir that people bring back from Mecca.
Think about the pilgrimage to Mecca as you walk through the exhibition. Look closely at the objects and information around you and complete the activities below.

Find evidence for two or three things that Muslims do to prepare for Hajj.

Would you say that Hajj was harder or easier to achieve in the past? Write your reasons below.

Looking at the objects, what evidence shows that the Ka'ba is important to Muslims?
Find **three** rituals carried out or objects used in Hajj and note or sketch them below.

What evidence can you find for the impact of Hajj on people’s lives? Record at least **two** examples below.
GCSE activity sheet: Hajj journey

Think about the Hajj pilgrimage as you walk through the exhibition. Look closely at the objects and information around you and complete the activities below.

Why is Mecca a place of pilgrimage for Muslims? Write your reasons below.

How do Muslims prepare themselves for Hajj? Explain why preparation is necessary.

In what ways has the journey to Mecca changed over time? Is it as important as it was in the past?
Record the key rituals and note any important objects used by Muslims during Hajj.

How do Muslims show their respect for sacred places in Mecca and Medina?

Explain how completing Hajj affects the lives of Muslims.
Suggested activities: AS/A2 Religious Studies

Before your visit

• Look at a map of the Islamic world and highlight Saudi Arabia, Mecca, Medina, Jedda and Riyadh. Ask your students to research the landscape and culture of Saudi Arabia.
• Discuss pre-Islamic Arabia and religious practice there. Ask the students to investigate and consider the reasons for the appearance of Islam in the region.
• Revise the Five Pillars and discuss the principles that lie behind Hajj as one of the Pillars.
• Ask your students to identify the features commonly found in a mosque and explain their function and meaning, and compare these with the Ka’ba in Mecca.
• Discuss the status of Mecca in the Islamic world. Ask the students to compare its importance with that of Jerusalem for Jews and Christians.

During your visit

• Your students could work in pairs or small groups to investigate the motivation, meaning, process, experience, impact and importance of Hajj when they visit the exhibition. To complete their research, they should study closely the objects, documents, films, artworks and voices presented, record any evidence through notes and sketches, and discuss their discoveries and initial conclusions with their partner or other members of their group. They could also identify what aspects of the subject might require further research.

After your visit

• As a class, discuss each stage of Hajj and its significance. Ask the students to consider if the stages are of equal importance and to give reasons for their answers.
• Ask the students to use evidence from the exhibition and the Museum’s website to assess the effect that Hajj has had on the lives of those who have been able to complete the pilgrimage.
• Ask the students to think about the importance of Hajj as part of the religious experience of Muslims.
• Ask the students to consider and explain how Hajj might strengthen the community.
• Ask the students to assess how difficult it is for modern Muslims to follow the Five Pillars.
Suggested activities: KS3 History

Before your visit

• With your class, identify the Arabian Peninsula on a map of the world. Locate modern Saudi Arabia, Mecca, Medina, Jedda and Riyadh. Ask the students to use the internet to research the environment of Arabia and to think about life there before Islam.
• Discuss the origins of Islam and why it developed in Arabia. Ask the students to create a timeline of events and consider what was going on in other parts of the world at this time.
• Revise and discuss the Prophet Muhammad, the Qur’an, the Five Pillars and Hajj.
• Introduce and discuss the concepts of sacred place and pilgrimage.
• Look for objects from the Islamic world in the Explore section of the British Museum’s website. Ask the students to identify objects used for prayer or in a mosque.

During your visit

• Ask the students to investigate what Hajj was like in the past. They could record the main routes and journeys and the experiences of famous Muslims like Mansa Musa.
• Ask the students to identify the evidence that has survived of the major Hajj routes. Ask them to consider what these objects and accounts tell us about the experience of the journey.
• The control of Mecca, Medina and other sacred places has often been very important for Muslim dynasties. Ask the students to look for evidence of Mamluk and Ottoman control.
• Ask the students to look for evidence of colonial influence on Hajj and the Middle East in the past.
• There are many objects with Arabic script in the exhibition. Ask the students to look for different examples and to consider why Arabic is and has been so important to Muslims.

After your visit

• The students could assess the importance of Mecca and Medina throughout Islamic history. They could use evidence from the exhibition and other sources to support their work.
• Ask the students to assess the impact of Hajj on past Islamic dynasties. They could research and write about its influence on architecture, art and design and scientific knowledge.
• The students could compare Muslim and Christian pilgrimage during the medieval period and, using Mecca and Jerusalem could consider the similarities and the differences.
• Students could investigate the importance of religion in the lives of Muslims and Christians in the medieval period, using examples from the exhibition, other objects and research.
• Ask the students to identify how colonial powers like Britain and the Netherlands tried to control Hajj and pilgrims. Discuss the range of causes for this action with the class.
Further resources

British Museum gallery

Islamic world (Room 34)

Websites

britishmuseum.org – discover Islamic objects in the Explore section
bbc.co.uk/religion/religions – the BBC’s Religion and Ethics pages
bl.uk/sacred – the British Library’s Sacred exhibition
learnaboutarabia.com
reonline.org.uk
undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/glasgow/stmungomuseum – the St Mungo Museum of Religious Art and Life, Glasgow

Books for students

Islamic Civilizations by Nicholas Badcott (British Museum Press, 2009)

Books for teachers

Islamic Art by Barbara Brend (British Museum Press, 1991)
Islamic Art in Detail by Sheila Canby (British Museum Press, 2005)
Arabic Calligraphy by Mustafa Ja’far (British Museum Press, 2002)
The Art of Hajj by Venetia Porter (British Museum Press, 2012)
Hajj: Journey to the Heart of Islam edited by Venetia Porter (British Museum Press, 2012)
Islamic Designs by Eva Wilson (British Museum Press, 2005)

Schools and teachers’ enewsletter

Keep up to date with activities, events and school sessions at the Museum – sign up to the schools and teachers’ enewsletter at britishmuseum.org
Glossary

Allah the Arabic name for God
Dhu’l Hijja last month of the Islamic calendar – the time when Hajj takes place
Eid al-Adha the Festival of the Sacrifice – it coincides with and forms part of Hajj
Hajji/Hajja names for a man and a woman who have completed Hajj
Ihram plain white clothing worn by men and women on Hajj
Jamarat three stone pillars at Mina that are ritually stoned during Hajj
Ka’ba cube-like structure in Mecca that Muslims pray towards, wherever they are
Miqat ritual boundaries on the Hajj pilgrimage
Muhammad believed by Muslims to be the last prophet of God
Qibla direction in which Muslims pray
Qur’an the holy book of Islam
Sa’i the ritual passing between Safa and Marwa
Salat prayers offered to God five times a day
Sawm fasting during the month of Ramadan
Shahada the profession of faith
Talbiya prayer recited by Muslims to God to announce their intended arrival for pilgrimage
Tawaf the ritual of walking anticlockwise around the Ka’ba seven times
Umra lesser pilgrimage to Mecca undertaken outside the month of Dhu’l Hijja
Wuquf period of contemplation and prayer at the plain of Arafat
Zakat giving of a proportion of wealth to charity (alms)
Zamzam water from the sacred Well of Zamzam
Plan of the Holy Sanctuary (Masjid al-Haram) at Mecca (after Eldon Rutter 1928)
The rituals of Hajj

Day 1 8th Dhu’l-Hijja
1. Migat
   Arrival and change into Ihram
2. Mecca
   Circling the Ka’ba (tawaf)
   Passing between the hills of Safa and Marwa (sa’i)
3. Mecca to Mina Encampment

Day 2 9th Dhu’l-Hijja
4. Mina to Plain of Arafat
   Day of vigil (wuquf)
5. Arafat to Muzdalifah
   Collecting stones

Day 3 10th Dhu’l-Hijja
6. Muzdalifah to Mina
   Stoning largest pillar (jamarat)
7. The day of Eid al-Adha
8. Mina to Mecca
   Circling of the Ka’ba
9. Mecca to Mina

Days 4–6 11th–13th Dhu’l-Hijja
10. Mina then return to Mecca
    Stoning all pillars