

Key Stage 2: Islam: art and belief

The final page of these notes can be copied and given to students who you think may need additional support during the session, or to adult helpers.

About this session

This session takes place in the Islamic world gallery (Room 34). It uses question and answer and object enquiry to explore the influence of belief on art and design from the Islamic world. The session lasts for 60 minutes.

Session outline

- The session begins with a brief look at how artists of some world religions represent their special people and gods.
- The session then focuses on Islam with a discussion of the key features of Islamic art, like geometric patterns, Arabic calligraphy and plant motifs and how belief and culture influenced their development. The issues around the depiction of people and animals are discussed.
- The students then work in small groups to look for examples of Islamic art and design around the gallery, observing objects closely and recording their observations in special booklets.
- At the end of the session, the students share their discoveries, and conclusions about art and design from Islamic world are summarised.
- **Key themes** of the session are religious faith and practice, decoration, pattern, representation, patronage and evidence.
- **Key vocabulary** includes Islam, belief, Arabic, calligraphy, geometry, symmetry, motif, arabesque.

Preparing for your session

- Look at a modern map of the Islamic world. Highlight Saudi Arabia, Mecca and Medina.
- Discuss Islam, especially the prophet Muhammad (pbuh), the Qur'an, the importance of Arabic and the purpose and features of a mosque.
- Look for objects relating to Islam under the Explore section of the British Museum website at www.britishmuseum.org. Show them to your students on the interactive whiteboard and discuss them.
- Introduce/revise the key themes and key vocabulary listed above.
- Discuss geometry and show your students how to draw a square and a hexagon using accurate measurements. Emphasise the mathematical knowledge and instruments required for this. Use your shapes to demonstrate and discuss lines of symmetry.

Following up your session

- Collate all information from the booklets used in the Museum session to create a whole class portfolio on Islamic art and belief.
- Ask the students to search for the objects studied in the session in the Explore section of the British Museum website at www.britishmuseum.org.
- Put up large map of the Islamic world on classroom wall and ask students to add pictures of the objects studied to correct modern location.
- Reinforce the experience by arranging a visit to a local mosque and ask students to identify the characteristic patterns and designs that decorate the building.
- Students could draw on their new knowledge of Islamic art and design to create an individual piece of artwork suitable for a mosque. Before they start, remind them that representations of people and living creatures are not appropriate in this context.
- Select some examples of Christian, Hindu and Buddhist art from the Explore section of the British Museum website at www.britishmuseum.org and ask the students to describe the key features of the objects. Identify and discuss the ways that belief influenced the artists who created the objects.

Galleries with related objects

Room 1: Ceramic bowls and tiles from the Islamic world

Room 68: Coins with religious inscriptions from the Islamic world

Curriculum links

KS2 Art and Design

KS2 RE: Islam

Key Stage 2: Islam: art and belief

Summary sheet

In this session you will learn about:

- how artists of different religions represent their special people and gods
- how belief has influenced the art created by Muslim artists
- how to identify key features of art from the Islamic world

Key words

Islam - religion followed by Muslim people
 belief
 Arabic - language spoken by most Arab
 and many Muslim people
 calligraphy
 geometry
 symmetry
 arabesque

What is religious art?

- You will discuss art created by artists of different religions.
- You will discuss what people think Islamic art is.

How have Muslim artists shaped art and design?

- You will discuss the features of Islamic art, like geometric patterns, Arabic writing and plant patterns.
- You will find out about how Muslim beliefs have influenced art and design.

Investigating objects

- You will explore the gallery in small groups to investigate objects from the Islamic world.
- You will select your own examples, investigate them and feed your discoveries back to class.