

Ramadan in the UK today

Copy the 16 cards on the next pages for your pupils to use in discussion and ranking activities

Ideas on how to use these for an excellent lesson are in the *REtoday* article with Iffat Hussain's pupil quotations. A fill-in worksheet on learning about Ramadan and learning from Ramadan follows.

'Food is not everything! I'd like people to know that our religion tells us to put others before yourself and to help and feed the less fortunate. The Qur'an was fully completed and sent down to earth in this holy month. Ramazan is the best example of how our religion shows us not to be selfish but considerate.'

Anisa, 13

'Keeping the Fast is important to me because it makes me realise how poor people starve: they may have to search in the rubbish for food, whereas we just fast for one month. We don't eat, smoke or drink from sunrise till sunset. My experience has been wonderful. It helps me to pray. I will continue fasting in the future.'

Sophia, 11

'I first started keeping the fast when I was 9 years old and in Year 4. The fast was a bit hard then because I was quite young, but now it's OK: I can keep it properly.'

Sabha, 14

'I respect other religions, but I'm proud to be a Muslim. The Muslims that keep the fast realise how difficult it is for poor, innocent people, who have no food. It's OK for us ~ we keep the fast for 12 or 14 hours a day, but they have nothing. When I started, I was about 8, and it was really difficult, but this year I've kept a lot of mine – well apart from one to be honest. I am proud to be fasting!'

Robiya, 12

'The fast is getting harder for me because it is earlier in the year this time: it used to be in December, and just 8 or 9 hours, but this year, it is nearly 14 hours. You play around and then you get really thirsty, but it brings the community close. It has worked for me. We go to the mosque much more in Ramadan.'

Hamed, 12

'If you fast, you can think of the Prophet Muhammad who stayed hungry for 40 days: we just do one month. At the end of Ramadan, I am really sad, and also excited about Eid ul Fitr. It sometimes gets hard when I see other people eating, but I am lasting out the 14 hours each day.'

Mohammad, 14

'In Ramadan, I have read the Qur'an in English version and in Arabic. Now I understand my religion more and better. I would advise non-Muslim people who want to understand about fasting to read the English version. Some people have chosen to become Muslims just by reading the Qur'an.'

Anika, 11

'Ramadan is fine for me this year. Last year, when I was 10, it was much harder. The time passes quickly at school. We pray to God for forgiveness for the sins we've done, so that is the spiritual benefit. We go the mosque at special times, so that is the community benefit. It feels weird at the end, because we're used to it, and then suddenly we stop and CELEBRATE EID!'

Naila, 11

'Ramadan is the key to heaven. It keeps you fit. This year has been good, but it was hard at first. It makes the community closer because at night all the Muslims are in the mosque together.'

Kuizor, 14

'The Qur'an is the holy book sent by Allah to Muhammad (PBUH) and we get a lot of praise from Allah if we read it during Ramadan. It is quite easy to fast once you have got used to it. We think about the poor people in the world, and we do it for self discipline.'

Yasmin, 14

'If everyone does fast, it will bring Muslims closer together, and everyone will be equal, but don't just fast: you need to pray as well. We have a calendar to tell us what times the fast closes and opens each day.'

Anisah, 14

'I would like all children who are not Muslims to know that Ramadan is a special, blessed month.'

Aziz, 12

'I first kept the fast when I was seven. I felt good about it. It makes you a better person. Because I've kept it since I was seven, it's easy for me now, except when I smell something good that is cooking. During Ramadan, we can't lie, we can't swear, we can't talk about someone behind their back and we can't fight. If we can, we do all good deeds.'

Siara, 14

'It's quite special for all Muslims. This year it's going good for me. I think it's easier on a school day, because the time goes by quickly. We know it is not for us, but for God that we do it. Muslims read the Holy Qur'an more in this month. It makes a difference to the Asian community because all the Muslims gather together and read Namaz. It's a commitment to God and to obeying the rule of God.'

Zakia, 14

'Ramadan is a religious thing, a duty, for us. For me, some spiritual benefits come from Ramadan, that I feel more close to Allah. I love the atmosphere around me. Fasting stops us from swearing or bullying and makes us feel more patient and tolerant. Praying makes me feel fresh all the time! In a way, fasting is like giving charity, Zakat, but we are giving charity from our bodies, not just with money or possessions. I have mixed feelings about the end of Ramadan: most of the time I want it to last all the year round, but then again I look forward to celebrating Eid. Fasting is a happy month. It's not for fun, but everyone does enjoy it.'

Taiyyibah, 13

'The fast gets harder each year for me in school because it is a longer day this year, from 5.30 am to about 7.00 pm. Sometimes I used to break it if I was hungry. But we pray to Allah and we ask him to forgive all our sins that we've committed throughout our lives. Through my life, I've learned that the Qur'an is a gift to the Prophet by Allah. Allah wants us to go on the right way and grow up to be a true, faithful person. Eid will be coming soon now: we get gifts of clothes and money from older people. The whole month reminds me that we have everything such as shelter, homes money and education, but some of the poor don't even have food to eat.'

Amina, 14

Muslim belief and practice	Responses
1 The rules for Ramadan are...	My own approach to food is...
2 Young Muslims have important things to say about Ramadan such as...	I was surprised to discover...
3 Here are three purposes to the fasting:	I think fasting is good because...
4 In Ramadan, the Qur'an is important because...	But fasting could have disadvantages such as...
5 Muslim attitudes to food are about	If everyone in our town took part in the fast...
6 If Ramadan was abolished, the Muslims would feel...	My view is that British Muslims should/should not have a day off work for Eid Al Fitr because...
7 Compared to fasting in another religion, Ramadan seems to be...	Fasting is a part of several religions. I think this is because...
8 Another thing I noticed was...	Fasting and dieting have similarities and differences...