

Key vocabulary

Torah	<i>The first five books of the 24 books of the Hebrew (Jewish) Bible: The five books of Moses.</i>
Shema	<i>Hear, O Israel – a Jewish prayer. It affirms faith and a belief in one God</i>
Orthodox	<i>The Torah is seen as literally revealed by God on Mount Sinai and faithfully transmitted ever since.</i>
Progressive	<i>Traditional beliefs, laws and practices have been modified or abandoned in reforms to adapt Judaism to the changed social, political and cultural conditions of the modern world.</i>
Tenakh	<i>An acronym of the first Hebrew letter of Torah (teaching/law), Nevi'im (Prophets), and Ketuvim (writings).</i>
Shabbat	<i>Jewish holy day begins on Friday at sunset and lasts until nightfall on Saturday.</i>
tefillin	<i>A set of small, black leather boxes containing scrolls of parchment inscribed with verses from the Torah.</i>

Learning sequence

Find out about some modern day Jews, both local and global.

'The Shema', including belief in one God and the command to love God with all their heart, soul and might. Its use in the mezuzah and tefillin.

Titles used to refer to God and what they reveal about Jewish ideas about the nature of God.

Find out about how a Sefer Torah (handwritten scroll) is produced, covered and treated and the reasons for this. How is it used in the synagogue?

Read examples of stories in the written Torah.

Explain why Jews do not all keep the kosher laws in the same way.

Explore two synagogues: one Orthodox and one Progressive. Compare them and find out similarities and differences.

Important facts

Many Jews treat the name of God with the greatest of respect – no one word or name can sum up everything that God is, so many Jews don't try to limit God in this way, often referring to God as simply 'Hashem', meaning 'The Name' (except when they are praying).

Some Jews do not write the name of God out fully, instead they put 'G-d' as a mark of respect, and so that God's name cannot be erased or destroyed.

The five books of the Torah and the first five books of the Christian Old Testament are the same, so it is for this reason that Jews and Christians share many stories. The New Testament of the Christian Bible is not part of Jewish tradition.



Why is the Torah so important to Jewish people?

Final outcome

Pupils will ... recall what they have learned in this unit and come up with responses to this statement: 'Rituals, traditions, stories and celebrations help to keep a community strong.' Apply their learning about Jewish ways of living and their own experience to show their understanding.

Biblical links

Poems (e.g. psalms Psalm 23); commandments (e.g. 10 Commandments in Exodus 20); stories e.g. Creation Genesis 1, Noah Genesis 6-9, Joseph and his brothers, starting Genesis 37



Key skills

Text 	Identify and explain Jewish beliefs about God; Give examples of some texts that say what God is like and explain how Jewish people interpret them
Impact 	Make clear connections between Jewish beliefs about the Torah and how they use and treat it; Make clear connections between Jewish commandments and how Jews live (eg Kosher rules); Give evidence and examples to show how Jewish people put their beliefs into practice in different ways (differences between Orthodox and Progressive Jewish practice).
Connections 	Make connections between Jewish beliefs studied and explain how and why they are important to Jewish people today; Consider and weigh up the value of tradition, ritual, community, study, worship in the lives of Jews today and articulate responses on how far they are valuable to people who are not Jewish.