

Celebrating Ramadan

A Reading A-Z Level L Leveled Book
Word Count: 442

Connections

Writing

Use a Venn diagram to compare Ramadan with another holiday. Write a paragraph to explain how the holidays are the same and different.

Social Studies

Research to learn more about the Muslim calendar. Share your findings with your class.

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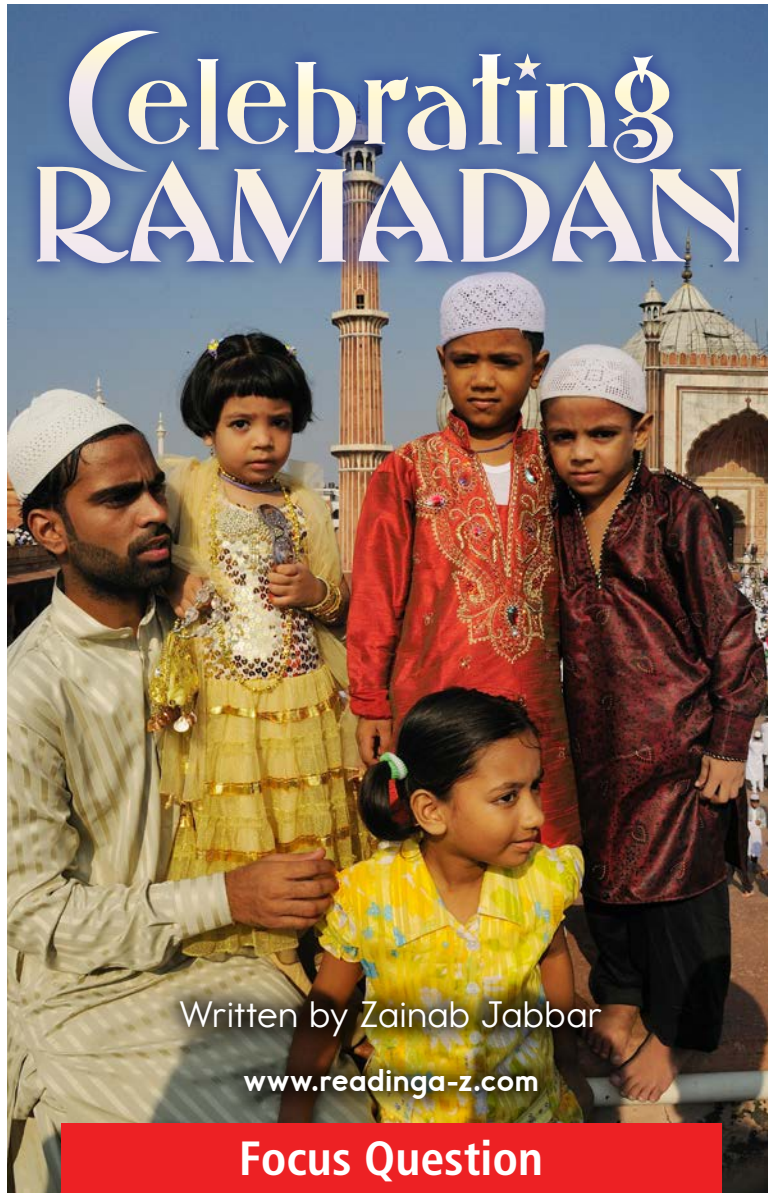
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Celebrating RAMADAN



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Focus Question

What is Ramadan, and how is it celebrated?

Words to Know

celebration	new moon
crescent moon	praying
fasting	religion

Front cover: Women in Indonesia jump into the water to celebrate the start of Ramadan.

Title page: In India, a father and his children pose in front of a mosque, a place where Muslims pray.

Page 3: An Egyptian boy helps his father with *fanous*, special lanterns used during Ramadan.

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Children in Indonesia hold bamboo torches in a parade to celebrate the coming of Ramadan.

What Is Ramadan?

Holidays are often times of **celebration**. People usually celebrate holidays about their country or as part of their **religion** or culture. Ramadan is an important holiday for Muslims—people who follow the religion of Islam.

While many holidays last for only a day or two, Ramadan is a whole month long.

The date of Ramadan changes from year to year. It depends on a calendar that marks the start of each month with a **new moon**.



Men and boys in Saudi Arabia use a telescope to look for a crescent moon.

Muslims spend a lot of time **praying** and enjoying time with family during Ramadan. The holiday helps Muslims connect with their faith and with their family and community.



Girls in Thailand pray together during Ramadan.



During Ramadan, families in Indonesia honor loved ones who have died.

Fasting During Ramadan

One of the most important parts of Ramadan is **fasting**. Fasting during Ramadan helps Muslims focus on why their faith is important to them.

For the month of Ramadan, many Muslims fast between sunrise and sunset. Once it is dark outside, they eat and drink as usual. Muslims who fast continue to go to school and work.



Muslim volunteers in the United States pack boxes of food to give to people in need.

Some Muslims choose not to fast during Ramadan. Instead, they donate money, clothes, food, or their time to help people in need. These acts are different ways to spend time thinking about their religion.

Thinking about other people's feelings is an important part of Ramadan. Muslims hold back from arguing and speaking badly about people during the holiday.

Do You Know?

The number of hours that Muslims fast each day during Ramadan isn't the same in every country. It depends on the time of year when Ramadan falls. The amount of time between sunrise and sunset changes from place to place and from day to day. Most Muslims fast between eleven and sixteen hours a day. However, Muslims who live in areas far north may fast for more than twenty hours. During the summer months, days in the north are long and nights are short.

Fasting Hours Around the World



This map shows the number of hours some Muslims around the world fasted during Ramadan in 2019.

Eating During Ramadan

Muslims usually eat two meals a day during Ramadan, one right after sunset and another just before sunrise. Most Muslims wake up before sunrise to eat a meal called *suhoor*.





A night caller riding a donkey beats a drum to wake Muslims for suhoor in Egypt.

Some people set their alarm clock for before sunrise. Others depend on night callers, people who move through neighborhoods singing songs and hitting drums.

Families enjoy cooking together before sunset to prepare the evening meal, called *iftar*. In some communities, people give each other food. Before sunset, children visit nearby houses to share food with friends. Then they return home to wait for sundown.

In some places, families watch the firing of a cannon on television. It means that the day's fasting has come to an end.



A Muslim family in India enjoys iftar together during Ramadan.



Farmers in Pakistan harvest dates. The fruit is a common way to end a day's fast.

In some areas, the middle of Ramadan marks a special time for children. They wear colorful clothes, sing songs, and visit houses to get candy.



A clown gives out candy to children in Saudi Arabia on the fifteenth night of Ramadan.

The End of Ramadan

The rise of a **crescent moon** marks the end of Ramadan. Families and friends gather to watch the night sky in search of the Moon. Once they see it, a holiday called *Eid al-Fitr* begins. Muslims dress up, share meals with family and friends, and give each other gifts.



Children in Palestine play on a giant slide during Eid al-Fitr.



A family in China celebrates Eid al-Fitr.

Muslims around the world celebrate Ramadan in different ways. Many people pray, fast, and spend time with loved ones. Ramadan is a time for Muslims to celebrate their religion and their community.

Glossary

celebration (<i>n.</i>)	a joyful gathering to mark an important occasion (p. 4)
crescent moon (<i>n.</i>)	a phase of the Moon when only a thin slice is lit up by the Sun: it happens either just before or just after a new moon (p. 14)
fasting (<i>v.</i>)	going without food or eating very little food (p. 7)
new moon (<i>n.</i>)	the first phase of the Moon, when its dark side is toward Earth (p. 5)
praying (<i>v.</i>)	asking for something from or giving thanks to a god (p. 6)
religion (<i>n.</i>)	a system of beliefs and practices (p. 4)