Scheme of work

**Section A: The study of religions: beliefs and teachings – Islam (Short Course)**

**Introduction**

This SOW offers a route through the GCSE Religious Studies Short Course (8061). This is a sample scheme of work and is only one suggestion for how the delivery of the GCSE Religious Studies specification might be planned. It is not intended to be prescriptive or definitive and can be edited to suit your delivery model and the particular needs of your learners.

Teachers can use the ideas below to develop schemes which suit the arrangements and time allocations of their own schools and colleges.

Please remember that assessment is always based on the content of the [specification](https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/religious-studies/gcse/religious-studies-short-course-8061/specification-at-a-glance).

You can find past assessment materials on [Centre Services](https://onlineservices.aqa.org.uk/).

**General timings**

The scheme of work is based on a total of 60 teaching hours. Of these 60 hours, we suggest that each of the religions studied should be covered in approximately 15 hours.

**Contents**

You can use the title links to jump directly to the different sections of this scheme of work (Use Ctrl and click to follow the link)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Section | Page |
| [Introduction](#Intro) | 3 |
| [Beliefs and teachings: Key Beliefs](#Sunni) | 4 |
| [Sunni and Shi’a core beliefs](#Sunni) | 4 |
| [Tawhid](#Tawhid) | 5 |
| [The nature of God](#TheNature) | 6 |
| [Angels](#Angels) | 8 |
| [Predestination and human freedom](#Predestination) | 9 |
| [Life after death (Akhirah)](#Akhirah) | 10 |
| [Risalah](#Risalh) | 12 |
| [The Qur’an](#Quran) | 14 |
| [Holy Books](#HolyBooks) | 16 |
| [The Imamate in Shi'a Islam](#Imamate) | 17 |
| [Appendix](#Appendix) | 18 |

Version 2.0

September 2023

Introduction

Guidance

* Introduction to the historical and theological development of Islam in Arabia. This introductory lesson provides you with an opportunity to begin to explore topics including Prophethood and Holy Books. Use of historical and theological approaches may be helpful here.
* Pre-Islamic Arabia is referred to as the Age of Jahiliyyah (understood as ‘ignorance’) in Islam. Generations prior to the revelation of the Qur’an had become ‘ignorant’ of the truth of Islam. Jahiliyyah’ may be understood to mean ignorance of Tawhid (the oneness of God), Risalah (Prophethood), and Akhirah (the afterlife and its consequences). This ‘ignorance’ is believed to have led to a hostile and dangerous society, including regular tribal warfare and the poor social treatment of women.
* The people of Arabia are believed to have forgotten the previous messages sent down by Allah by the Prophet Ibrahim. Ibrahim is believed to have brought Islam to Arabia and rebuilt the Ka’aba which was originally believed to have been built by Adam in Arabia.
* The social characteristics of Pre-Islamic Arabia included a nomadic culture which struggled to survive in a hostile climate. The tribe was highly valued as an individual could not survive alone. Warfare or vendettas were a regular occurrence between tribes for the means of survival.
* The religious characteristics of Pre-Islamic Arabia included polytheism. This worship was centred around the Ka’aba, said to house 360 statues of gods. The Quraysh, Prophet Muhammad’s tribe, were the guards of the Ka’aba and were well-respected.
* Ask students to list the reasons that a revelation was needed at this time: socially, morally, and religiously. You may compare the society of Pre-Islamic Arabia with society today, and explore the value of the revelation in today’s context.
* Islam was not a ‘new’ religion to Arabia. Prophet Muhammad was the Seal of the Prophets, sent to bring Arabia back to Islam and reaffirm previous Prophet’s messages through the final Holy Book.
* The concept of the Ummah and that all Muslims are ‘one’, however, due to the historical context, we have different denominations today. But, all follow the main belief that Allah is one God and the Prophet Muhammad was his final messenger.
* There are different denominations within Islam for example, Sufi, Ahmadiyya, Ismaili; however, the two largest dominations are Sunni and Shi’a.

Resources

Read the [Ofsted RE Research Review](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ofsted-publishes-research-review-on-religious-education)(4 minutes).

Beliefs and teachings: Key Beliefs

Lesson 1

Topic title

Sunni and Shi’a core beliefs.

Specification content

The six articles of faith in Sunni Islam and five roots of Usul ad-Din in Shi’a Islam, including key similarities and differences.

Guidance

The focus is to introduce the key beliefs within Sunni and Shi’a Islam.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Students should describe and explain each of the articles / roots and the implications for Muslims (ie the ‘influences’ of these beliefs – AO1.2).
* Students could compare the Sunni six articles and the Shi’a five roots. Key questions to consider: which beliefs are shared? Which beliefs are not shared? Why might Sunni and Shi’a Muslims hold different beliefs?
* Study some of the following: Surahs 1, 4 and 112. Consider the importance of Tawhid as a shared belief amongst Sunni and Shi’a Muslims.

Differentiation and extension

* Using the historical approach, explain the historical context behind the Sunni and Shi’a division. The division originates from the dispute over the leadership of the early Ummah (Muslim community) after the Prophet Muhammad’s death in 632CE. The majority of Muslims believed that Abu Bakr (the Prophet’s close friend) should be the next leader, whereas others believed that Ali (the Prophet’s cousin and son-in-law) should be the next leader. Those who supported Abu Bakr became known as ‘Sunni’ Muslims (following the Sunnah, or tradition, of the Prophet Muhammad). Those who supported Ali became known as the Shi’a Muslims (a contraction of the Arabic for ‘Partisans of Ali’, Shi’at Ali).
* Explore why there is a split between Sunni and Shi’a Muslims in the first instance in regards to the rightful successful after the death of the Prophet Muhammad. Explore the Seveners and Twelvers within Shi’a Islam linking to Ismaili Shi’as.

Resources

* Read about [being a Muslim](https://www.reonline.org.uk/knowledge/islam/being-a-muslim/). RE online (5 minutes).
* Watch two clips about [the difference between Sunni and Shia Muslims.](https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/sunnis-shias-whats-the-story/z4q8382)   
  BBC Teach (4 minutes).
* Read about [the six articles and five roots of Islam](https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zdxdqhv/revision/2). BBC Bitesize (7 minutes).

Lesson 2

Topic title

Tawhid.

Specification content

Tawhid (the Oneness of God), Qur’an Surah 112.

Guidance

The focus is to give students a deeper understanding of the concept of Tawhid and how Muslims apply this teaching in their daily lives.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* The specified text to study is Surah 112, (others such as Surah 1 and 16:3 may also be useful). Students could read each Surah and identify aspects of Tawhid. Key questions to consider: why is belief in Tawhid a key Islamic belief? How might each Surah influence a Muslim’s belief in God? What might a Muslim learn about the deeper meaning of Tawhid from each Surah?
* Consider exploring why the Oneness of God is important to Muslims as a monotheist religion, and how this concept is deeply rooted in the Islamic understanding of this. Whilst, making it clear that Tawhid is more than simply ‘belief in one God’. Students may deepen their understanding of Tawhid through considering the idea of God as Creator and Judge of mankind.

Differentiation and extension

* Link with Topic 7 - Risalah: ask students to consider the importance of Prophets throughout the ages in revealing and reaffirming Tawhid. All Prophets since Adam preached this message: what does this tell Muslims about the importance of belief in Tawhid?
* Using a Theological approach, ask students whether they think Tawhid is a simple or complex idea to understand. This links to the Nature of God and Allah’s attributes all contained within one God.
* The concept of monotheism could be a good opportunity to explore the historical aspect of Islam deriving from Ibrahim, with a link to Christianity and Judaism being the three Abrahamic faiths.
* A link could be made to the Christian view of the Trinity and its idea of monotheism, in relation to Islam rejecting this view point surrounding Jesus being the Son of God whilst highlighting that Islam does still accept Jesus as a prophet.

Lesson 3

Topic title

The nature of God.

Specification content

The nature of God: omnipotence, beneficence, mercy, fairness and justice/Adalat in Shi’a Islam, including different ideas about God’s relationship with the world: immanence and transcendence.

Guidance

The focus in this lesson is to look at the qualities of God and how Muslims understand the nature of God through them. This lesson leads on from the belief in Tawhid.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Study a selection of Surahs (eg 1, 4, 7, 16, 17, 50, 112) and analyse the Surahs in relation to the specification content above and for example, Allah as creator; worship of Allah, 99 Beautiful Names, etc.
* Reflect on the idea of Allah being both Immanent and Transcendent. Ask students what it means for Allah to be within creation. Link this to Surah 50:16. How might this influence a Muslim’s behaviour? (AO1.2) What might it mean for Allah to be outside of creation? Link this to His role as Creator through Surah 1:1-7: the first revelation of the Qur’an.
* Explore why the different characteristics are important and how they link to a Muslim’s daily life and how this reflects in their worship and aspiration to be a reflection of Allah (AO1.2 – influences).

Differentiation and extension

* Applying a Theological approach, you may introduce students to the 99 Beautiful Names of Allah and discuss how they enhance understanding of Tawhid and the supremacy of God’s will. Students could consider the idea of Tawhid’s simplicity as holding seemingly contradictory ideas of God, such as God being both Al’-Awwal (The First) and Al’-Akhir (The Last).
* Ask students to consider why the Sunni six articles of faith contain two beliefs about God (Tawhid and Al Qadr, or predestination). Is Al Qadr a part of the nature of Allah, or does it tell Muslims about their place in creation? Teachers should note that Sunni and Shi’a Islam differ on the place of free will for human beings (link with Topic 5). Sunni Muslims believe that Allah predestines everything. Shi’a Muslims believe that Allah knows everything that will happen, but does not predetermine this.
* Link with Topic 6 – Akhirah. Ask students to consider why the Shi’a five roots of ‘Usul ad-Din contain two beliefs about God (Tawhid and Adalat). Is Adalat considered an equally important belief as Tawhid? How might belief in Adalat influence a Shi’a Muslim? For example, you may compare this with the Sunni article of Al Qadr. Would a Sunni Muslim view their afterlife in a different way than a Shi’a Muslim?

Resources

* Watch a useful clip for [introducing the complexity of God’s nature held within Tawhid](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lgm3puP3tMA). YouTube (3 minutes).
* Watch here [99 Beautiful Names, Spoken Word by Boonaa Mohammed](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r5fC9QlPCW8). YouTube (3 minutes).

Lesson 4

Topic title

Angels.

Specification content

Angels, their nature and role, including Jibril and Mika’il.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Students should explore the different duties allocated to the angels and how this affects the lives of Muslims, eg ensuring they do good deeds (AO1.2).
* Students should be given information about the role of angels in Islam and that they are creatures created by Allah who are continuously in his service.
* You may find it helpful to study the following Surahs with students: Surahs 21:20 and 35:1 give an insight into the nature of Angels as winged beings who do not have free will, and therefore praise Allah ceaselessly. Surahs 2:97 and 66:4 mention Jibril by name and provide knowledge about his role in revelation. It is also believed that Jibril is the Angel who accompanied the Prophet Muhammad on his Night Journey - Surah 2:98 states that the Angel Mikail’s role is to provide nourishment for Allah’s creation.
* Angels have significance in this world and in the afterlife. Angels record a Muslim’s personal actions, provide nourishment to the world, and supported in the process of revelation. Students may create ‘CVs’ of Angels which detail their roles and responsibilities, focusing on the role of Angels in a person’s worldly life and in their afterlife.

Differentiation and extension

* Explore how the other angels play an important role in a Muslims life including; Izra’il (Angel of Death), Israfil (Angel present on day of resurrection), Munkar and Nakir (angels responsible of questioning the soul of a person who has died), Al-Kiram and Al Katibun (angels who record the deeds of a Muslim).
* Link to Topic 1 – the six articles of faith and five roots of Usul-ad-Din. Teachers should encourage students to make connections between the nature and roles of Angels. Belief in Angels is one of the Sunni six articles of faith, and students may make connections between this article and other articles of faith. For example, Angel Jibril is the angel of revelation - he appeared to the Prophet Muhammad on the Night of Power for the first revelation.
* Link to Topic 6 – Akhirah. Surah 82:1-12 outlines the role of the Angels in recording a person’s good and bad deeds in their Book of Deeds. Teachers could link this topic with the Beliefs topic of the Akhirah and the roles of Angels in the Day of Judgement.
* Link to Topic 7 – Risalah. Both Jibril and Mikail are believed to have cleansed the Prophet Muhammad’s heart, as referenced in Surah 94:1, when he was a child.

Lesson 5

Topic title

Predestination and human freedom.

Specification content

Predestination and human freedom and its relationship to the Day of Judgement.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Students should consider the different beliefs regarding predestination, human freedom and the impact of belief in predestination in the lives of Muslims.
* This topic introduces the Sunni article of faith al-Qadr (predestination) and the Shi’a root of Adalat (the justice of God). The two key beliefs influence Sunni and Shi’a views of human freedom and the consequences of the Day of Judgement.
* Surahs (9:51) and (13:11) provide helpful reference points in exploring the difference between Sunni and Shi’a views of human freedom. Traditionally, Sunni Muslims believe that as God’s Will is supreme; He has predestined everything (9:51). For Shi’a Muslims, there is a greater emphasis on human free will and personal responsibility for a person’s own afterlife (13:11).
* Consider Predestination (al-Qadr) and human freedom and its relationship to the Day of Judgement. Get students to think about the choices that they have as humans and explore here the possible consequences of our actions even though we have free will.

Differentiation and extension

* Topic links may be made with the role of Angels (Topic 4) in recording a person’s good and bad deeds (82: 1–2). This role implies human accountability for their actions on the Day of Judgement, as it is this Book which results in the person’s destination in the afterlife.
* You could divide the class in half, with each half being given one of the two Surahs as mentioned in the Guidance. Students could find evidence from the topics completed so far to justify their particular Surah’s view regarding personal responsibility and accountability. Students may present their findings to the other half of the class, and together they may explore the ways in which both Surahs may be true for a Muslim. Is accountability for our own actions possible if God has predetermined our actions? Why may predestination be a requirement of God’s Omnipotence? Links available with Topic 2 and 3.

Lesson 6

Topic title

Life after death (Akhirah).

Specification content

Akhirah (life after death), human responsibility and accountability, resurrection, heaven and hell.

Learning outcomes

This lesson introduces students to Islamic beliefs about the afterlife.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Students could look up a description of the afterlife from Surah 37:43–48.
* You may explore the topic of Akhirah as a process which begins before death, once a leaf with the person’s name on it falls forty days before death. Akhirah is a process that begins to take place during a person’s life, continues through the experiences of the grave, and cumulates in the resurrection on the Day of Judgement.
* Surahs describing Jannah (Heaven) include 36:55-58 and 56:15-24.
* Surahs describing Jahannam (Hell) include 4:56 and 56:42–44.
* Students should examine the influence of the descriptions of Jannah and Jahannam on a Muslim (AO1.2).

Differentiation and extension

* You could make connections with prior learning, including: Tawhid (Topic 2), Malaikah (Topic 4), and Al Qadr (Topic 5) for Sunni Muslims and Adalat for Shi’a Muslims.
* Students could consider the connections between belief in one God and Allah’s role as the ultimate Judge in the Akhirah.
* Students may revisit their learning on Angels and explore the roles of Angels leading up to the Day of Judgement.
* Students could explore the implications of the Sunni belief in Al Qadr versus the Shi’a emphasis on Adalat. For example, human responsibility and accountability further demonstrates the Shi’a root of Adalat. Allah is Just in His final decision about a person’s destination as it is a result of a person’s own actions. Whereas the Sunni belief in Al Qadr is demonstrated through Allah’s role as the ultimate Judge, with His decision being made before the Day of Judgement itself.
* Further opportunities include taking a Theological approach, conducting an analysis of the literal versus metaphorical readings of the description of Akhirah in the Qur’an. Some scholars avoid a literal reading of the Qur’anic descriptions of Akhirah, as the true reality is beyond human understanding. In exploring this, you may:
* Encourage students to draw connections between Jahiliyyah, revisiting the Arabian population’s struggle for survival in the desert, and the fertile and abundant descriptions of Jannah. Questions to consider include: was the Qur’anic message for the people experiencing a struggle to survive? Does this make the Qur’anic descriptions of the Akhirah less relevant for some Muslims today?
* Topic: Literalist readings of scripture are deemed to be true ‘without knowing how’ and by placing faith in the message of the revelation. Students may explore the extent to which this practice is supported and challenged by modern science. Questions to consider include: why might some Muslims argue that science is relevant for this world but not the Akhirah? Does belief in Akhirah give a Muslim’s life purpose?
* Explore how Islamic belief on Akhirah is in opposition to fundamentalist view on suicide.

Beliefs and teachings: Authority

Lesson 7

Topic title

Risalah.

Specification content

Risalah (Prophethood) including the role and importance of Adam, Ibrahim and Muhammad.

Learning outcomes

The focus should be on understanding the concept of prophethood and the role and importance of Adam, Ibrahim and Muhammad.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Look up the meaning of the Arabic term Risalah. Students could discuss what qualities a person needs to be called a Prophet, and explore the difference between a Nabi (Prophet) and a Rasul (Messenger).
* Risalah is an article of faith that began with the creation of the first human being. The first man, Adam, was a Prophet of God. This demonstrates human beings’ unique status in Islam.
* The nature of prophets as ordinary human beings who were chosen by God for extraordinary purposes.
* Key questions to consider include: how did the prophets get their message? What are the similarities between their messages? What did the prophets do with their message? What makes prophets special and highly respected individuals?

Differentiation and extension

* Students could be encouraged to draw connections between the prophetic messages of Adam, Ibrahim, and Muhammad. Although Adam did not receive a message in the form of a Holy Book, he did receive knowledge of the names of creation (2:31–32) which he passed on to the Angels. Ibrahim, like Muhammad, lived in a time of polytheism and was instructed by Allah to bring his community back to the belief in one God (Tawhid – Topic 2). This is illustrated by both Ibrahim and Muhammad reclaiming the Ka’aba. Ibrahim rebuilt the Ka’aba after Adam’s original Ka’aba was destroyed, and Muhammad reclaimed Ibrahim’s Ka’aba from polytheistic practices in the age of Jahiliyyah.
* When teaching the Prophet Muhammad, the following could be considered:
* Students could research the Prophet Muhammad’s family lineage, which is believed to link to Ibrahim through his son Ismail, the son who helped Ibrahim rebuild the Ka’abah. You may consider whether Muhammad was destined to be a Prophet from the beginning, even though he did not receive his first revelation until he was aged forty.
* Linking to the introductory lesson on the age of Jahiliyyah, why might Muslims believe that Muhammad was the perfect Prophet for this era? Consider his personal characteristics (eg Al-Amin, or the Trustworthy One), his status in Mecca as a reliable merchant, and his miraculous revelation (as Muhammad is believed to have been illiterate).
* Consider Muhammad’s role in the revelation of the final Holy Book (Topic 8), alongside Muslims following his Sunna (behaviours, as recorded in Hadith) over other Prophets.
* Have a duty to take care of Allah’s creation and be good stewards towards the Earth.
* Students could explore other important prophets including; Musa (Moses) Idris (Enoch), Nuh (Noah), Dawud (David), Ismail (Ishmael) and Ishaq (Isaac).

Lesson 8

Topic title

The Qur’an.

Specification content

The holy books:

* Qur’an: revelation and authority
* the Torah, the Psalms, the Gospel, the Scrolls of Abraham and their authority.

Learning outcomes

Students should gain a comprehensive understanding of the historical context, key themes, and teachings within the Qur’an, enabling them to critically analyse and appreciate its significance in Islamic culture and global history.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Students should examine how the Qur’an was revealed and why it holds authority for Muslims.
* Study should cover the different uses of the Qur’an: its use in a Muslim’s everyday life, as a source of law, and in worship.
* Muslims believe the Qur’an to be the Kalam Allah (the direct, phonetic word of God) and incorruptible. This makes the Qur’an different to the previous Holy Books, which are believed to have been corrupted (changed) over time.
* The Qur’an was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad over a period of 23 years. Its themes provide eternal guidance to Muslims, and are also responding to the society of Jahiliyyah (‘ignorance’) in which it was revealed.
* The Qur’an also serves as a source of practical guidance, or Shari’ah – Surah 5:48. The Shari’ah is the code of behaviour in Islam which determines the rightness or wrongness of an action.
* The Qur’an was originally transmitted orally, and this tradition still continues today in Muslims who choose to become a ‘hafiz’ (‘Guardian’) – a person who can recite the Qur’an from memory.
* Surah 2:23 emphasises the Qur’an’s unique status – no human being can produce ‘a surah like it’. The Qur’an is the final Holy Books and cannot be changed, unlike previous scriptures. This follows the Prophet Muhammad’s status as the Seal of the Prophets.

Differentiation and extension

* To what extent can we question the Qur’an and to what extent can Muslims respond?
* Students may discuss importance of the Qur’an as ‘The Recital’ for Muslims today: not only a physical text, but one that should be recited aloud.
* You may wish to consider the use of the Qur’an by non-Arabic speakers. Questions to discuss could include: can the Qur’an be adequately translated? What might a person gain from reciting the Qur’an if they do not understand its words?
* Links to Theme – the Qur’an as the first source of Shari’ah (guidance) and its impact on a Muslim’s understanding of relationships (Theme A).

Resources

Read an [article on the Qur’an](https://www.reonline.org.uk/knowledge/islam/the-quran/). RE online (3 minutes).

Lesson 9

Topic title

Holy Books.

Specification content

The holy books:

* Qur’an: revelation and authority
* the Torah, the Psalms, the Gospel, the Scrolls of Abraham and their authority.

Learning outcomes

The focus should be on looking at the other holy books revealed by Allah and the authority that they have. The Qur’an is the final Holy Book in Islam, following and perfecting previous revelations. The previous Holy Books were revealed by previous Messengers, as covered in Topic 7.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* Previous messages (Holy Books) had been sent by Allah to earlier communities. These messages had become corrupted and changed over time by later generations who kept returning to polytheistic practices. The Qur’an is the final revelation sent by Allah that could not be corrupted, and this ensures the Prophet Muhammad’s place as the ‘seal of the prophets’.
* Teachers should note that the revelations of Holy Books throughout history informs the Muslim view that Islam was not a new religion in Arabia, or to the world, but was the perfection of previous revelations sent by Allah.
* The following Surahs may support the study of previous Holy Books:
* 21:105 states that previous Holy Books had been revealed before the Qur’an, naming the Zabour (the Psalms) specifically.
* Surah 7:156 clearly connects the Prophet Muhammad as the ‘unlettered Prophet’ (the Prophet who was illiterate, making the Qur’an miraculous) with the Prophet Ibrahim’s Tawrat and the Prophet Isa’s Injil.
* Teachers could get students to make links between the Qur’an and other holy books. Students could explore: which themes are present in each revelation? For example, the importance of belief in Tawhid and the role of the messengers. Do the previous Holy Books still hold importance for Muslims after the revelation of the Qur’an? How does the existence of previous revelations confirm the truth of the Islamic message for a Muslim?

Resources

Read about [the four recorded books before the Qur’an](https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zd6w7p3/revision/6). BBC Bitesize (4 minutes).

Lesson 10

Topic title

The Imamate in Shi'a Islam.

Specification content

The Imamate in Shi'a Islam: its role and significance.

Learning outcomes

The focus is on looking at the concept of Imamate and its importance in Shi’a Islam. Teachers should ensure that coverage of Shi’a Islam is not presented in opposition to Sunni Islam, but its beliefs/practices are covered with reference to historical events and theological differences.

Possible teaching and learning activities

* The term ‘Shi’a’ is a contraction of ‘Shi’at Ali’, meaning the ‘partisans of Ali’. The original division between Sunni and Shi’a Islam was caused by a leadership dispute: Shi’a Muslims believe that Ali was the rightful first Caliph, instead of Abu Bakr, who was a close friend of the Prophet Muhammad. Abu Bakr was elected by the majority of the early community after the Prophet Muhammad’s death, but many members of Muhammad’s close family believed that Ali was named by Muhammad as the rightful successor. (Surah 53:3-4).
* Belief in the Imamate is one of the five roots of Usul ad-Din (Topic 1).
* Imams are descendants of the prophet Muhammad and part of the Ahl al Bayt.
* This original political divide has developed into a religious one. This has led to the Shi’a addition to the Shahadah (Topic 12), or the declaration of faith: ‘There is no God but Allah. the prophet Muhammad is his messenger and Ali is the friend of Allah’.
* Some Shi’as believe there have been twelve Imams, others believe there have been seven.

Differentiation and extension

* Questions to extend learning may include: Why is the concept of Imamate still relevant today? (Link to the Shi’a beliefs regarding the Mahdi and the afterlife). Why might Shi’a Muslims believe that the Ahl al Bayt are able to interpret the Qur’an in ways that other Muslims cannot?
* There may be tensions between different dominations, but link back to the concept of the Ummah.

Resources

* Read an article about [Islam: Sunni and Shi'a](https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/subdivisions/sunnishia_1.shtml). BBC website (10 minutes).
* Read here an article which provides context for [the development of the Caliphate. outside of the Ahl al Bayt](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Muawiyah-I/Legacy). Britannica.com (12 minutes).
* Watch this clip about [the relationship between Sunni and Shi’a Muslims today](https://www.britannica.com/biography/Muawiyah-I/Legacy) (Attention should be paid to the reasons cited for their differences and their similarities in faith). YouTube (10 minutes).

Appendix

Alternative curriculum models – the following two approaches outline alternative structures for delivering the Islam unit of work.

Approach 1

A historical and theological approach, sequencing the revelation of the Qur’an in context with previous revelations and Prophetic Messages.

Paper 1: Beliefs

**Lesson 1** The Qur’an (Topic 8 & Topic 9). The Holy Books: The Torah, the Psalms, the Gospel, the Scrolls of Abraham and their authority (Topic 10).

Qur’an: revelation and authority.

Lesson 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7 the three key themes of the early Qur’anic rev elations:

**Lesson 2** Tawhid (Topic 2): Tawhid (the Oneness of God), Qur’an Surah 112.

**Lesson 3 and 4** Prophets prior to Muhammad: Risalah (Prophethood – Topic 7), including the role and importance of Adam and Ibrahim.

**Lesson 5** Prophet Muhammad: Risalah (Prophethood – Topic 7), including the role and importance of Muhammad.

**Lesson 6 and 7** Akhirah: Akhirah (life after death – Topic 6), human responsibility and accountability, heaven and hell.

**Lesson 7 and 8** The Nature of God (Topic 3)

**Lesson 9** Angels (Topic 4)

**Lesson 10 and 11** The Sunni Six Articles of Faith (revisiting prior learning) and the Shi’a Five Roots of Usul ad-Din (Topic 1). Introduction to the political and later theological division between Sunni and Shi’a Islam.

**Lesson 12 and 13** Predestination (Topic 5): The Sunni and Shi’a perspectives. Predestination and human freedom and its relationship to the Day of Judgement.

**Lesson 14** The Imamate (Topic 11): The Imamate in Shi’a Islam. Its role and significance.

Approach 2

A historical and theological approach, sequencing the Qur’anic revelations within their historical context and the influence of this context on the development and practice of Islam today.

**Introductory lesson**

**Lesson 1** The Qur’an (Topic 8 & Topic 9). The Holy Books: The Torah, the Psalms, the Gospel, the Scrolls of Abraham and their authority (Topic 10).

**Lessons 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8** The three key themes of the early Qur’anic revelations – Tawhid, Risalah, and Akhirah.

**Lesson 2** Tawhid (Topic 2): Qur’an Surah 112.

**Lessons 3 and 4** Prophets prior to Muhammad: Risalah (Prophethood – Topic 7), including the role and importance of Adam and Ibrahim.

**Lessons 5 and 6**

* Prophet Muhammad: Risalah (Prophethood – Topic 7), including the role and importance of Muhammad. With the Prophet Muhammad’s central role in the revelation of Islamic

beliefs and the formation of Islamic practices, the Prophet Muhammad’s role within all subsequent lessons should be noted. The purpose of Lessons 5 and 6 here should be to highlight:

* His social status during the age of Jahiliyyah.
* His role in the revelation of the Qur’an: The Prophet’s initial reaction the call to revelation, his preaching in Mecca, and the differences between the revelations of Mecca and Medina responding to his changing role from religious leader to religious, social, and political leadership in Medina. This encourages students to understand the role of a ‘Prophet’ as not only a receiver of a divine message, but an embodiment of the message itself.
* The Prophet Muhammad’s role as the ‘Seal of the Prophets’ should be highlighted, meaning that the Qur’an is believed to be the final message from Allah to humanity until the Day of Judgement.

**Lessons 7 and 8** Akhirah: Akhirah (life after death – Topic 6), human responsibility and accountability, heaven and hell. The Prophet Muhammad’s role as a Nadir (a ‘warner’) to the Quraysh should be noted alongside the theme of ‘Akhirah’ within the Qur’an as a system of reward and punishment for all people.

**Lesson 9** Sunni and Shi’a Islam origins: it may be helpful here to cover the historic origins and development of Sunni and Shi’a Islam before covering their particular beliefs and practices. Coverage of the historic leadership succession after the Prophet Muhammad’s death should be covered in order to provide context for the later Sunni and Shi’a historical and theological divisions It may be helpful to give reference to the Battle of Karbala and its importance for Shi’a Muslims, as it is from this battle that Shi’a Islam grew from a political division to a religious and political division in Islam.

**Lessons 10 and 11** The Sunni Six Articles of Faith (revisiting prior learning: Tawhid, Kutub, Nubuwwah, and Akhirah) and introducing Al Qadr and Malaikah. The Shi’a Five Roots of Usul ad-Din (Topic 1) should be introduced to allow students to begin to compare the two branches of Islam. This will allow for a simultaneous coverage of both Sunni and Shi’a Islam throughout the scheme of work.

**Lesson 12** The Imamate (Topic 11): The Imamate in Shi’a Islam.

**Lesson 13** The Nature of God (Topic 3): omnipotence, beneficence, mercy, fairness, and justice/Adalat in Shi’a Islam, including different ideas about God’s relationship with the world: immanence and transcendence. Differences between the Sunni and Shi’a theology should be explained in terms of the two groups developing distinct responses to theological issues after the death of the Prophet Muhammad. Shi’a Muslims, for example, may place a greater emphasis on the ‘Justice’ of God as a response to the early events that took place within their community.

**Lessons 14** Predestination (Topic 5): The Sunni and Shi’a perspectives. Predestination and human freedom and its relationship to the Day of Judgement.

**Lesson 15** Angels (Topic 4): their nature and role, including Jibril and Mika’il. Connections may be made with the Topics of Tawhid, Risalah, Kutub, Akhirah, and Sa.