










Why is the Torah important to Jewish People Today?

Knowledge Summary

- Jewish people live locally and globally and aren't always easily recognisable as they have a diverse expression of their faith.
- Jewish people believe in one God as expressed in the daily Shema prayer (covering eyes with the right hand). This is from Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and is used in the mezuzah (door posts) and tefillin (head boxes).
- The Jewish God is expressed using many ideas e.g. Creator, Almighty, Our Father, Judge, Merciful, Lord, the Powerful, Truth, Shepherd of Israel, King of Kings and Eternal. Some of these are used in the daily prayers of Shema, Ein Keloheinu and Avinu Malkeinu found in the Siddur (daily prayer book).
- The Sefer Torah is a handwritten scroll treated with special respect, read throughout the year.
- The Tenakh has the Torah (law), Nevi'um (prophets) and Ketuvim (writings). This overlaps with the Christian Old Testament bible.
- The creation story used at Rosh Hashanah and Shabbat and links with people resting on the 7th day (Saturday), like God did. The law given during the Exodus and Passover stories are still followed today - all 613 of them. (not all Jews keep the laws)
- Some laws affect foods (mitzvot) and identify Kosher (Fit to eat) and Trefah foods (Forbidden).
- Synagogues also vary from Orthodox to Progressive and have differences in how the people worship from covering of heads to not letting women teach.
- Within a synagogue is an Ark (a decorative cabinet where the Sefer Torah is kept), Ner Tamid (an eternal light) and a Bimah (raised platform from which the Rabbi teaches.)

Symbol	Vocabulary	Definition / Knowledge
	Jewish	Relating to or associated with Jewish people or Judaism.
	Synagogue	A building where Jewish people meet for worship and instruction.
	Kippah	A skull cap worn by Orthodox Jewish men.
	Tallith	A fringed shawl traditionally worn by Jewish men at prayer.
	Orthodox	Following the traditional rules and beliefs.
	Progressive	A person favouring social reform.
	Rabbi	A Jewish religious leader who studies and teaches the Jewish law.

Symbol	Vocabulary	Definition / Knowledge
	Hashem	A title used by Jews for God which literally means 'the Name'.
	Shema	A Hebrew prayer and confession of faith.
	Mezuzah	The Shema prayer is written and attached in a case to the doorpost of a Jewish house as a sign of faith.
	Tefillin	Black, leather cubic boxes which Jewish men wear on their head during prayer.
	Torah	The law of God as told by Moses.
	Tenakh	Jewish Scriptures of the book of law, prophets and collective writings.
	Nevi'im	The prophets / spokespersons - second section of the Tenakh.
	Ketuvim	The writings, - third section of the Tenakh.
	Sefer Torah	A handwritten scroll containing the Torah.
	Kosher	Fit to eat (clean / allowed) food according to the Jewish law.
	Trefah	Food that isn't allowed (unclean) according to the Jewish law.
	Avot Melakhah	Prohibited tasks during Shabbat
	Rosh Hashanah	Jewish New Year festival of 10 day.
	Shabbat	The seventh day of the week or Sabbath rest day (Saturday).
	Ark	An ornate cabinet in which the Sefer Torah is kept.
	Ner Tamid	The eternal light - a lamp which burns continuously in Jewish synagogues.
	Bimah	A raised platform from which the Torah is read.

Lesson	Key Questions - learning sequence
1	What can we find out about Jewish communities in the UK and further afield?
2	What do Jews believe about God?
3	How do Jews remember their belief about God?
4	What is a Sefer Torah? How is it used?
5	Are there particular laws that Jewish people follow?
6	What happens during worship at a synagogue?