

GCSE



CCEA GCSE GLOSSARIES
Religious Studies

Unit 9: Judaism



For first teaching from September 2017

GCSE Religious Studies Glossary

Abraham	Father of the Jewish nation and also father of Isaac and Jacob.
Aliyah	The honour of being called upon to read from the Torah; it is also used to refer to the immigration of Jews from the diaspora to the Land of Israel.
Amidah	'Standing': the standing prayer.
Aron Kodesh	Literally 'Holy Ark': the focal point of the synagogue, contains Torah scrolls.
Ashkenazim	Jews of Central and Eastern European origin.
Bar Mitzvah	'Son of the Commandment': a boy's coming of age at 13 years old, usually marked by a synagogue, ceremony and family celebration.
Bat Mitzvah	'Daughter of the commandment': as above but for girls from 12 years old; may be marked differently between communities.
Beit Din	a Jewish court of law composed of three rabbinic judges, responsible for matters of Jewish religious law and the settlement of civil disputes between Jews.
Bimah	'Dias,' raised platform primarily for reading the Torah in the synagogue.
Brit Bat	a Jewish naming ceremony for new-born girls.
Brit Milah	Circumcision: religious rite performed by a qualified Mohel on all Jewish boys, usually on the eighth day after birth.
Chanukah	Also known as Chanukkah. An alternative spelling for Hanukkah (Festival of Lights)
Chazan	Leader of reading, singing and chanting in the services of some synagogues.
Circumcision	See Brit Milah.
Covenant	An agreement which brings about a relationship of commitment between God and his people.
Decalogue	See Ten Commandments.
Eternal	Lasting or existing forever, without end.
Exodus	The departure of the Jews from slavery in Egypt.
Gemara	Commentary on the Mishnah included in the Talmud.
Get	Bill of divorce in Jewish Law.
Gartel	A belt used by some Jewish males during prayer. "Gartel" is Yiddish for "belt".
Haggadah	A Jewish religious text that sets out the order of the Passover Seder.
Halakah	'The Way': the code of conduct encompassing all aspects of Jewish life.

Hanukkah	'Dedication': an eight day festival of lights to celebrate the re-dedication of the temple following the Maccabean victory over the Greeks.
Havdalah	'Distinction': ceremony marking the conclusion of Shabbat.
Holocaust	The extermination of over six million Jews (as well as many others) by the Nazis between 1933 and 1945 CE.
Hebrew Bible	The Jewish Scriptures.
Huppah	Canopy used for a wedding ceremony, under which the bride and groom stand.
Israel	Literally 'One who struggles (or wrestles) with God': the phrase can refer to the land of Israel, the modern state of Israel or to the world-wide Jewish community.
Jerusalem	Ancient capital of Judah.
Jew	A member of the people and cultural community whose traditional religion is Judaism and who trace their origins to the ancient Hebrew people of Israel.
Kaddish	An ancient Jewish prayer sequence regularly recited in the synagogue service, including thanksgiving and praise and concluding with a prayer for universal peace; also called the Mourner's Prayer (Kaddish), which is publicly recited by mourners.
Kashrut	The set of Jewish religious dietary laws.
Keriah	The traditional Jewish act or ceremony of rending one's garment at the funeral of a near relative as a symbol of mourning.
Kippah	Head covering worn by males during prayers, Torah study, etc. Some followers will wear it constantly (also called Capel; Yamulkah).
Kiddush	'Holy': a prayer sanctifying Shabbat and festival days, usually recited over wine.
Ketuvim	'Writings': third section of the Tenakh.
Kosher food	'Fit; Proper': foods permitted by Jewish dietary laws.
Masada	An ancient mountaintop fortress in Southeast Israel, which is a symbol of Jewish resistance and bravery.
Messiah	'Mashiach,' 'The anointed one', who will herald in a new era for Judaism and all humankind.
Menorah	A sacred candle holder with seven branches used in the ancient temple in Jerusalem and now found in the Synagogue.
Mezuzah	A parchment placed on doorposts of Jewish homes, containing a section from the Torah and often enclosed in a decorative case.
Minyan	A quorum of ten men over the age of 13 required for traditional Jewish public worship.

Midrash	Collections of various Rabbinic commentaries on the Tenakh.
Mishnah	The collection of oral laws compiled about AD 200 by Rabbi Judah ha-Nasi and forming the basic part of the Talmud.
Mitzvah	‘Commandment’: the Torah contains 613 mitzvot (pl.); commonly used to describe good deeds.
Mohel	The person who performs the ritual of circumcision. Must be an observant Jew trained in the applicable Jewish law and surgical technique.
Monotheism	The doctrine/belief that there is only one God.
Moses	Leader and law-giver at the time of the Exodus.
Ner Tamid	A light that hangs in front of and above the ark in the synagogue and is symbolic of the light of truth and the presence of God.
Nevi’im	‘Prophets’: second section of the Tenakh.
Omnipotent	One who has unlimited power or authority.
Omnipresent	Present everywhere at the same time.
Omniscient	Having complete or unlimited knowledge.
Patriarch	Any of those biblical figures regarded as fathers of the Jewish religion, especially Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their forefathers, or the sons of Jacob.
Pesach (Passover)	Festival commemorative the Exodus from Egypt. One of the three biblical pilgrim festivals. Pesach is celebrated in the spring.
Polytheism	The belief in or worship of more than one god.
Rabbi	‘My teacher’: an ordained Jewish teacher. The religious leader of a Jewish community.
Rosh Hashanah	(New Year) ‘Head of the Year’: Jewish New Year festival.
Seder	‘Order’: a home-based ceremonial meal during Pesach, at which the Exodus from Egypt is recounted.
Shabbat	Day of spiritual renewal and rest commencing at sunset on Friday and terminating at sunset on Saturday.
Sheloshim	The thirty-day period of deep mourning following burial. Also known as <i>shloshim</i> .
Shema	Major Jewish prayer affirming belief in one God. The Shema is found in the Torah.
Shiva	A period of seven days' formal mourning for the dead, beginning immediately after the funeral.
Siddur	‘Order’: Daily prayer book.
Sefer Torah	A handwritten copy of the Torah, the holiest book in Judaism. Also known as Sifrei Torah.

Sukkot (Tabernacles)	A major Jewish festival held in the autumn (beginning on the 15th day of Tishri) to commemorate the sheltering of the Israelites in the wilderness. It is marked by the erection of small booths covered in natural materials.
Synagogue	A building for Jewish public prayer, study and assembly.
Tachrichim	Traditional simple white burial shrouds, usually made from 100% pure linen, in which the bodies of deceased Jews are dressed.
Tallit	Prayer shawl: four cornered garment with fringes.
Talmud	Mishnah and Gemara, collected together.
Tefillin	Small leather boxes containing passages from the Torah, strapped on the forehead and arm for morning prayers on weekdays.
Ten Commandments	Laws or rules handed down to Moses by God on Mount Sinai.
Tenakh	The collected 24 books of the Jewish Bible, comprising three sections: Torah, Nevi'im and Ketuvim.
Terefah	A food, food product, or utensil that is not ritually clean or prepared according to Jewish law and is thus prohibited as unfit for Jewish use; not <i>Kosher</i> .
Torah	'Law; teaching': the five books of Moses.
Tzitzit	Fringes on the corners of the Tallit.
Western Wall	A wall in Jerusalem where Jews, on certain occasions, assemble for prayer and lamentation: traditionally believed to be the remains of the western wall of Herod's temple, destroyed by the Romans in AD 70.
Yad	Jewish ritual pointer, popularly known as a Torah pointer, used by the reader to follow the text during the Torah reading from the parchment Torah scrolls.
Yad Vashem	Israel's official memorial to the victims of the Holocaust. Established in 1953.
Yahrzeit	The anniversary of the death of a parent, sibling, child, or spouse
Yom Kippur	'Day of Atonement': fast day occurring on the tenth day after Rosh Hashanah.