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Ramadan starts for quarter of the world

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/1108/110802-ramadan.html>

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2nd August, 2011

THE ARTICLE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1108/110802-ramadan.html>

Over a billion Muslims across the world began observing the holy month of Ramadan on Monday. They waited with great anticipation for their religious leaders to declare the start of Islam's holiest time of the year. Sunday night at sunset marked the start of a month filled with prayer, fasting, giving to charity, get-togethers with family and friends, and self-reflection. Despite the fact that 23 per cent of the world's population is Muslim, a sizeable proportion of non-Muslims know very little about Ramadan. Many are surprised to learn that Ramadan does not happen at the same time each year but moves forward by about eleven days. People also find it surprising to learn that Muslims do not eat or drink (even water) for roughly sixteen hours a day for the whole month.

This year, Ramadan comes at a time when there is great unrest in many Muslim lands. All Muslims will be hoping the bloodshed currently taking place in Syria will end and that Syrians will be able to live in peace. In Libya, rebels fighting Colonel Gaddafi's government said Ramadan would not stop their efforts to win democracy. A 24-year-old fighter said: "If it's war and we're tired, we'll eat, but if we remain in a defensive position, we will fast. God is with us." Barack Obama called for the world to help victims of Somalia's drought during Ramadan, saying: "The heartbreaking accounts of lost lives and the images of families and children in Somalia...compel us to act. Now is the time for nations and peoples to come together to avert an even worse catastrophe."

WARM-UPS

1. RAMADAN: Walk around the class and talk to other students about Ramadan. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

one billion Muslims / Ramadan / anticipation / holiest time / fasting / self-reflection / great unrest / bloodshed / live in peace / democracy / Somalia / heartbreaking

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. RELIGIONS: What do you know about them? Complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you wrote. Change and share again.

	I know...
Islam	
Christianity	
Hinduism	
Buddhism	
Sikhism	
Judaism	

4. PEACE: Students A **strongly** believe peace will come to the Muslim lands of the Middle East; Students B **strongly** believe it won't. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. HOLY MONTH: What's most important about Ramadan? Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the most important at the top. Change partners and share your rankings again.

- giving to charity
- fasting
- self-reflection
- prayer
- Iftar food
- family get-togethers
- shorter working/studying days
- Eid

6. HOLY: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'holy'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1108/110802-ramadan.html>

1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. Just under one billion Muslims will observe Ramadan this year. | T / F |
| b. Ramadan is Islam's holiest time of the year. | T / F |
| c. Just over a quarter of the world population is Muslim. | T / F |
| d. People are not surprised to hear Muslims fast for up to 16 hours a day. | T / F |
| e. Ramadan this year comes at a time of greater peace. | T / F |
| f. A Libyan fighter said Ramadan would not stop him fighting. | T / F |
| g. Barack Obama asked people to help those suffering in Somalia. | T / F |
| h. Obama said we need to act now to stop a serious disaster happening. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article.

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. observing | a. expectation |
| 2. anticipation | b. stories |
| 3. fasting | c. parties |
| 4. get-togethers | d. killing |
| 5. roughly | e. following |
| 6. unrest | f. prevent |
| 7. bloodshed | g. conflict |
| 8. remain | h. abstaining from food |
| 9. accounts | i. stay |
| 10. avert | j. about |

3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. observing the holy | a. is great unrest |
| 2. waited with great | b. the start |
| 3. Sunday night at sunset marked | c. it surprising |
| 4. a sizeable proportion | d. anticipation |
| 5. People also find | e. Somalia's drought |
| 6. at a time when there | f. worse catastrophe |
| 7. the bloodshed currently | g. month of Ramadan |
| 8. help victims of | h. taking place in Syria |
| 9. heartbreaking accounts | i. of non-Muslims |
| 10. avert an even | j. of lost lives |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1108/110802-ramadan.html>

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Over a billion Muslims across the world began (1) _____ the holy month of Ramadan on Monday. They waited with (2) _____ anticipation for their religious leaders to declare the (3) _____ of Islam's holiest time of the year. Sunday night at sunset marked the start of a month filled with prayer, (4) _____, giving to charity, get-togethers with family and friends, and self-reflection. Despite the fact that 23 per cent of the world's population is Muslim, a (5) _____ proportion of non-Muslims know very little about Ramadan. Many are surprised to (6) _____ that Ramadan does not happen at the same time each year but moves forward by about eleven days. People also find it (7) _____ to learn that Muslims do not eat or drink (even water) for roughly sixteen hours a day for the (8) _____ month.

sizeable
whole
start
observing
learn
great
surprising
fasting

This year, Ramadan comes at a time when there is great (9) _____ in many Muslim lands. All Muslims will be hoping the bloodshed (10) _____ taking place in Syria will end and that Syrians will be able to live in peace. In Libya, rebels fighting Colonel Gaddafi's government said Ramadan would not stop their (11) _____ to win democracy. A 24-year-old fighter said: "If it's war and we're tired, we'll eat, but if we (12) _____ in a defensive position, we will fast. God is with us." Barack Obama called for the world to help (13) _____ of Somalia's drought during Ramadan, saying: "The heartbreaking (14) _____ of lost lives and the images of families and children in Somalia...compel us to (15) _____. Now is the time for nations and peoples to come together to (16) _____ an even worse catastrophe."

act
unrest
victims
avert
currently
accounts
efforts
remain

LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1108/110802-ramadan.html>

Over a billion Muslims across the world _____ holy month of Ramadan on Monday. They waited _____ for their religious leaders to declare the start of Islam's holiest time of the year. Sunday night at sunset marked the start of a month _____, fasting, giving to charity, get-togethers with family and friends, and self-reflection. Despite the fact that 23 per cent of the world's population is Muslim, _____ of non-Muslims know very little about Ramadan. Many are surprised to learn that Ramadan does not happen at the same time each year but _____ eleven days. People _____ to learn that Muslims do not eat or drink (even water) for roughly sixteen hours a day for the whole month.

This year, Ramadan comes at a time when there is _____ Muslim lands. All Muslims will be hoping the _____ taking place in Syria will end and that Syrians will be able to live in peace. In Libya, rebels fighting Colonel Gaddafi's government said Ramadan would not _____ win democracy. A 24-year-old fighter said: "If it's war and we're tired, we'll eat, but if we remain _____, we will fast. God is with us." Barack Obama called for the world to help victims of Somalia's drought during Ramadan, saying: "The _____ of lost lives and the images of families and children in Somalia...compel us to act. Now is the time for nations and peoples to come together to _____ catastrophe."

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1108/110802-ramadan.html>

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'holy' and 'month'.

holy	month
-------------	--------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• across• declare• filled• despite• happen• roughly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• unrest• hoping• rebels• remain• lost• worse
--	--

STUDENT RAMADAN SURVEY

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1108/110802-ramadan.html>

Write five GOOD questions about Ramadan in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper. When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

RAMADAN DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'Ramadan'?
- c) What do you know about Ramadan?
- d) Do you always wait with great anticipation for religious holidays to start?
- e) Do you think fasting for 16 hours a day (no water too) is difficult?
- f) How can Muslims teach non-Muslims about Ramadan?
- g) What should non-Muslims to understand about Ramadan?
- h) Do you think the way people celebrate Ramadan today is different to how they celebrated it in the past?
- i) What aspects of Ramadan should other religions follow?
- j) Do you think each Ramadan changes you as a person?

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RAMADAN DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Will Ramadan help stop the fighting in Syria, Libya, Yemen...?
- c) What do you think of the 24-year-old Libyan rebel who vowed to fight even during Ramadan?
- d) Muslims give a lot to charity during Ramadan. How can we get non-Muslims also to give during this holy month?
- e) How do you feel the week and the day before Ramadan starts?
- f) What three adjectives describe this article, and why?
- g) Who do you think enjoys Ramadan more, children or adults?
- h) What would you like to know about Ramadan?
- i) Do you think people in different countries celebrate Ramadan differently?
- j) What do you think of Ramadan moving forward 11 days each year?

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LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/1108/110802-ramadan.html>

Over a billion Muslims across the world began (1) ____ the holy month of Ramadan on Monday. They waited with great anticipation for their religious leaders to declare the start of Islam's holiest time of the year. Sunday night at sunset (2) ____ the start of a month filled with prayer, fasting, giving to charity, (3) ____-togethers with family and friends, and (4) ____-reflection. Despite the fact that 23 per cent of the world's population is Muslim, a sizeable proportion of (5) ____-Muslims know very little about Ramadan. Many are surprised to learn that Ramadan does not happen at the same time each year but moves forward by about eleven days. People also find it surprising to learn that Muslims do not eat or drink (6) ____ water) for roughly sixteen hours a day for the whole month.

This year, Ramadan comes at a time when there is great unrest in many Muslim (7) _____. All Muslims will be hoping the bloodshed currently taking place in Syria will end and that Syrians will be able to live (8) _____ peace. In Libya, rebels fighting Colonel Gaddafi's government said Ramadan would not stop their efforts to win democracy. A 24-year-old fighter said: "If it's war and we're tired, we'll eat, but if we remain in a (9) _____ position, we will fast. God is with us." Barack Obama called for the world to help victims of Somalia's (10) _____ during Ramadan, saying: "The heartbreaking (11) _____ of lost lives and the images of families and children in Somalia...compel us to act. Now is the time for nations and peoples to come together to (12) _____ an even worse catastrophe."

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|---------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1. | (a) observing | (b) observation | (c) observed | (d) observe |
| 2. | (a) made | (b) marked | (c) make | (d) marking |
| 3. | (a) sit | (b) put | (c) get | (d) let |
| 4. | (a) lonely | (b) alone | (c) solo | (d) self |
| 5. | (a) none | (b) not | (c) no | (d) non |
| 6. | (a) ever | (b) every | (c) even | (d) evens |
| 7. | (a) lands | (b) landings | (c) landed | (d) land |
| 8. | (a) up | (b) in | (c) on | (d) to |
| 9. | (a) defend | (b) defending | (c) defensive | (d) defends |
| 10. | (a) drought | (b) draught | (c) draft | (d) drift |
| 11. | (a) financial | (b) bookkeeping | (c) sums | (d) accounts |
| 12. | (a) adverse | (b) avert | (c) aversion | (d) a version |

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HOMework

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out more about Ramadan. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. RAMADAN: Make a poster about Ramadan. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. UNREST: Write a magazine article about Ramadan in Syria, Libya or Yemen. Include imaginary interviews with people who are fighting for change.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to an expert on Ramadan. Ask him/her three questions about Ramadan. Tell him/her three things you like about it. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. T c. F d. F e. F f. T g. T h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. observing | a. following |
| 2. anticipation | b. expectation |
| 3. fasting | c. abstaining from food |
| 4. get-togethers | d. parties |
| 5. roughly | e. about |
| 6. unrest | f. conflict |
| 7. bloodshed | g. killing |
| 8. remain | h. stay |
| 9. accounts | i. stories |
| 10. avert | j. prevent |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. observing the holy | a. month of Ramadan |
| 2. waited with great | b. anticipation |
| 3. Sunday night at sunset marked | c. the start |
| 4. a sizeable proportion | d. of non-Muslims |
| 5. People also find | e. it surprising |
| 6. at a time when there | f. is great unrest |
| 7. the bloodshed currently | g. taking place in Syria |
| 8. help victims of | h. Somalia's drought |
| 9. heartbreaking accounts | i. of lost lives |
| 10. avert an even | j. worse catastrophe |

GAP FILL:

Ramadan starts for quarter of the world

Over a billion Muslims across the world began (1) **observing** the holy month of Ramadan on Monday. They waited with (2) **great** anticipation for their religious leaders to declare the (3) **start** of Islam's holiest time of the year. Sunday night at sunset marked the start of a month filled with prayer, (4) **fasting**, giving to charity, get-togethers with family and friends, and self-reflection. Despite the fact that 23 per cent of the world's population is Muslim, a (5) **sizeable** proportion of non-Muslims know very little about Ramadan. Many are surprised to (6) **learn** that Ramadan does not happen at the same time each year but moves forward by about eleven days. People also find it (7) **surprising** to learn that Muslims do not eat or drink (even water) for roughly sixteen hours a day for the (8) **whole** month.

This year, Ramadan comes at a time when there is great (9) **unrest** in many Muslim lands. All Muslims will be hoping the bloodshed (10) **currently** taking place in Syria will end and that Syrians will be able to live in peace. In Libya, rebels fighting Colonel Gaddafi's government said Ramadan would not stop their (11) **efforts** to win democracy. A 24-year-old fighter said: "If it's war and we're tired, we'll eat, but if we (12) **remain** in a defensive position, we will fast. God is with us." Barack Obama called for the world to help (13) **victims** of Somalia's drought during Ramadan, saying: "The heartbreaking (14) **accounts** of lost lives and the images of families and children in Somalia...compel us to (15) **act**. Now is the time for nations and peoples to come together to (16) **avert** an even worse catastrophe."

LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - a 2 - b 3 - c 4 - d 5 - d 6 - c 7 - a 8 - b 9 - c 10 - a 11 - d 12 - b