

Yom Kippur



Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. Who observes Yom Kippur?
2. How do you like to start a new year?
3. What is fasting?
4. What do you think *let bygones be bygones* means?

B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can.

Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| ___ 1. fate | a) a place of worship for Jewish people |
| ___ 2. repent | b) intimate relations between a married man and woman |
| ___ 3. synagogue | c) to turn away from sin and ask for forgiveness |
| ___ 4. fast | d) to refrain from eating and drinking |
| ___ 5. lotion | e) cream used to soften and moisturize skin |
| ___ 6. marital relations | f) what will happen to a person in the future |
| ___ 7. look forward to | g) a spiritual being in heaven |
| ___ 8. ritual | h) to be excited about something in the future |
| ___ 9. serenity | i) an action or activity that is repeated regularly or at set times |
| ___ 10. optimism | j) peacefulness |
| ___ 11. angel | k) a positive feeling of hopefulness |
| ___ 12. confess | l) to admit one's wrongdoings |

Reading

1. Also known as the *Day of Atonement*, Yom Kippur is one of the most important days of the Hebrew year. Yom Kippur falls in September or October on the eve of the tenth day of the Jewish New Year. The first day of the new year is Rosh Hashanah. According to the Jewish faith, this is the day when God decides each person's **fate**. Between the first and tenth day of the year, practicing Jews **repent**. They confess their guilt and ask friends and enemies for forgiveness. It may take up to three requests before a person agrees to *let bygones be bygones*. Jews also ask God for forgiveness.
2. During the 25 hours of Yom Kippur, Jewish families spend most of the day praying in the **synagogue**. Adults **fast** from sunset the night before Yom Kippur until nightfall the following day. A large feast is served the day before. This makes fasting easier. What about the tots? Children under nine do not have to fast and neither do pregnant women or people with illnesses. Children between 9–12 eat and drink a tad less than usual. After boys and girls have their Bar or Bat Mitzvahs they fast with the adults in the family. Besides not eating and drinking, Jews are not allowed to wear leather shoes, bathe, wear perfumes or **lotions**, or engage in **marital relations** on Yom Kippur. In Israel, where many Jewish people live, there is no TV, no radio, and no public transportation in use on this day. Most Jews also don't work or drive that day.
3. Does this day of no-nos sound like a nightmare to you? Don't worry. Jewish people **look forward to** this holiday every year. Yom Kippur is an annual opportunity to make peace with God. After following the **rituals**, Jews feel a sense of **serenity** and **optimism**. This is a great way to start a new year, don't you think? Married Jews are supposed to wear a special robe on Yom Kippur called a *Kittel*. This is also the robe that Jews are buried in. Some Jews just wear white clothing on Yom Kippur. White is symbolic of **angels**. Jews who have repented are like angels in heaven.
4. According to the Jewish faith, every Jew is responsible for the sins of others in the Jewish family. When they pray for forgiveness and **confess** their sins, Jewish people use "we" instead of "I." The prayer schedule includes a prayer of thanks for blessings, followed by a promise to observe the rituals of Yom Kippur, and finally a confession of sins. Stories of God's forgiveness are shared and the Ark in the synagogue is opened. This symbolizes the gates of heaven being open for the Jewish people.

What is Kapparot?

Kapparot is an ancient Jewish tradition. It takes place just before Yom Kippur. A family member buys a live chicken or rooster. The bird is waved around the head of each family member and a special prayer is said. The chicken is then slaughtered and donated to charity. In modern households, the chicken is sometimes substituted with a handkerchief full of money. The good deed helps absolve Jews of their sins.

Did you know...

Refraining from drinking caffeine is recommended before fasting. A caffeine withdrawal can cause headaches and make it more difficult to observe the fast.

Comprehension

Practice asking and answering the following questions with your partner.
Then write the answers in the spaces below. Use full sentences.

1. What is another name for Yom Kippur?

2. When is Rosh Hashanah?

3. Which Jews are exempt from fasting
(they do not have to fast) for Yom Kippur?

4. Name five things that Jewish people
are not allowed to do on Yom Kippur.

5. Why does the reading mention Israel?

6. How do Jewish people generally
feel about Yom Kippur?

7. Why do Jewish people wear white for Yom Kippur?

8. What is the significance of the Ark?

9. Describe Kapparot.

Vocabulary Review

A. Choose the Correct Word

Choose the word or phrase with the closest meaning to the underlined words in the following sentences.

1. According to the Jewish faith, this is the day when God decides each person's fate.
 - a) favors
 - b) faults
 - c) future
2. Jewish people look forward to this holiday every year.
 - a) dread
 - b) anticipate
 - c) confess
3. Between the first and tenth day of the year, practicing Jews repent.
 - a) regret their sins
 - b) stop eating
 - c) pray for the things they want
4. When they pray for forgiveness and confess their sins, Jewish people use "we" instead of "I."
 - a) admit
 - b) dissolve
 - c) prevent
5. After following the rituals, Jews feel a sense of serenity and optimism.
 - a) a positive attitude
 - b) peace
 - c) thankfulness

B. Synonyms & Antonyms

Using the words in the word list, try to make five pairs of synonyms and five pairs of antonyms.

Word List

- fast
- devil
- synagogue
- confess
- peace
- church
- traditions
- keep secret
- angel
- look forward to
- lotion
- optimism
- eat
- dread
- pessimism
- serenity
- apologize
- cream
- repent
- rituals

Synonyms

Antonyms

Pair Work (Student A)

Read the list out loud to your partner. Your partner will listen to each item and decide whether it is something that Jews should or shouldn't do on Yom Kippur.

Dos and Don'ts for Yom Kippur

- eat a large meal the day before
- drink coffee the day before
- wear white
- wear leather shoes
- apologize to friends
- ask God for forgiveness
- wear special perfume
- donate money to charity
- go to the synagogue
- go to work as usual

Discussion

Get in small groups and discuss the following questions.

1. Have you ever fasted? If yes, describe the experience. If no, do you think you could do it?
2. Do you have any rituals at the beginning of your own new year?
3. What is your idea of serenity? Describe the most peaceful experience you've ever had.
4. Do you donate money or items to charity? Which charities need the most help in your country?
5. Do you believe in angels? If yes, describe what you think they are like. If no, why not?
6. Are you an optimistic person? If yes, give an example of how you are optimistic.
7. In your opinion, is religion an important part of a child's upbringing? Why or why not?
8. What are some dos and don'ts in your culture or religion?
9. Describe a traditional outfit (such as the *Kittel*) that is unique in your culture or religion.
10. If you could only have one holiday each year, which holiday would you choose to celebrate? Why?

Pair Work (Student B)

Listen to your partner read out a list of actions. Decide whether or not each item belongs in the Dos or Don'ts side of your chart. Write the information on the correct side.

Dos	Don'ts

Discussion

Get in small groups and discuss the following questions.

1. Have you ever fasted? If yes, describe the experience. If no, do you think you could do it?
2. Do you have any rituals at the beginning of your own new year?
3. What is your idea of serenity? Describe the most peaceful experience you've ever had.
4. Do you donate money or items to charity? Which charities need the most help in your country?
5. Do you believe in angels? If yes, describe what you think they are like. If no, why not?
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Vocabulary, Idioms & Expressions

A. Reference

IDIOM OR EXPRESSION	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
fall (<i>verb</i>)	to occur on a certain day	My birthday falls on a Friday this year.
let bygones be bygones	to forget about (or forgive) what happened in the past	I know you're upset about what I said last week, but can't we just let bygones be bygones ?
tot	a child (especially a young child)	The tots are going to eat at the little table. There isn't enough room in the dining room.
tad	a little bit	The paint is a tad dark. Let's choose a lighter shade.
no-no	a thing you can't do	There are so many no-nos at Jake's new school. You can't bring bikes, skateboards, or toys from home.
nightmare	a terrible thing	Parking was a nightmare . We had to wait half an hour to get a spot.

B. Practice

Now write your own sentences using the vocabulary and idioms on this page.

Listening

Fill in the blanks as you listen to the recording.

1. Also known as the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur is one of the most important days of the Hebrew year. Yom Kippur falls in September or October on the eve of the tenth day of the Jewish New Year. The first day of the new year is Rosh Hashanah. According to the Jewish faith, this is the day when God decides each person's fate. Between the first and _____ day of the year, practicing Jews _____. They confess their guilt and ask friends and enemies for forgiveness. It may take up to three requests before a person agrees to *let bygones be bygones*. Jews also ask God for _____.
2. During the 25 hours of Yom Kippur, Jewish families spend most of the day praying in the synagogue. Adults _____ from sunset the night before Yom Kippur until nightfall the following day. A large feast is served the day before. This makes fasting easier. What about the tots? Children under nine do not have to fast and neither do pregnant women or people with illnesses. Children between 9-12 eat and drink a tad less than usual. After boys and girls have their Bar or Bat Mitzvahs they fast with the adults in the family. Besides not eating and drinking, Jews are _____ to wear leather shoes, bathe, wear perfumes or lotions, or engage in marital relations on Yom Kippur. In Israel, where many Jewish people live, there is no TV, no radio, and no public transportation in use on this day. Most Jews also don't work or drive that day.
3. Does this day of no-nos sound like a _____ to you? Don't worry. Jewish people look forward to this holiday every year. Yom Kippur is an annual opportunity to make peace with God. After _____ the rituals, Jews feel a sense of serenity and _____. This is a great way to start a new year, don't you think? Married Jews are supposed to wear a special robe on Yom Kippur called a Kittel. This is also the robe that Jews are buried in. Some Jews just wear white clothing on Yom Kippur. White is _____ of angels. Jews who have repented are like angels in heaven.
4. According to the Jewish faith, every Jew is responsible for the sins of others in the Jewish family. When they pray for forgiveness and _____ their sins, Jewish people use "we" instead of "I." The prayer schedule includes a prayer of thanks for blessings, followed by a _____ to observe the rituals of Yom Kippur, and finally a confession of sins. Stories of God's forgiveness are shared and the Ark in the synagogue is opened. This _____ the gates of heaven being open for the Jewish people.

Answer Key

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson, students learn about some interesting rituals that Jewish families take part in over a 25-hour period during the Jewish New Year. Students learn and practice new vocabulary and discuss fasting and religion.

LEVEL: Int

TIME: 1.5–2 hours

TAGS: holidays, Yom Kippur, Jewish, Jew, Hebrew, Rosh Hashanah, New Year, Israel

Pre-Reading

A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

Answers will vary.

1. Jewish people observe Yom Kippur.
2. Answers will vary.
3. Fasting is refraining from eating and drinking for a certain period of time.
4. Answers will vary. Forgive others and move on. Live in the present, not in the past.

B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

- | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1. f | 3. a | 5. e | 7. h | 9. j | 11. g |
| 2. c | 4. d | 6. b | 8. i | 10. k | 12. l |

Reading (and/or Listening)

Read individually, in small groups, or as a class. You can also play the listening as your students read along. A gap-fill version of the reading is available on page 8. Help your students with vocabulary and expressions that they are unfamiliar with.

Comprehension

1. Another name for Yom Kippur is the Day of Atonement.
2. Rosh Hashanah is on the first day of the Hebrew calendar.
3. Young children, pregnant women, and those who are ill do not have to fast for Yom Kippur.
4. Jewish people are not allowed to eat, wear leather shoes, wear perfumes or lotions, or engage in marital relations on Yom Kippur.
5. The reading mentions Israel because many Jewish people live there, and Jewish people in Israel refrain from doing many everyday things on Yom Kippur, such as watching TV or taking public transit.
6. Jewish people are generally excited about Yom Kippur.
7. The white robes symbolize angels. Jewish people hope to be innocent like angels after Yom Kippur.
8. The Ark symbolizes the opening of the gates of heaven.
9. Kapparot is a ritual performed just before Yom Kippur. A member of the Jewish family buys a live chicken. The bird is waved around each family member's head and a prayer is said. The chicken is then killed and donated. Money in a handkerchief is sometimes used instead.

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Vocabulary Review

A. CHOOSE THE CORRECT WORD

1. c 2. b 3. a 4. a 5. a

B. SYNONYMS OR ANTONYMS?

Synonyms

serenity / peace
apologize / repent
synagogue / church
lotion / cream
rituals / traditions

Antonyms

fast / eat
confess / keep secret
devil / angel
dread / look forward to
optimism / pessimism

Pair Work

Dos: eat a large meal the day before / wear white /
apologize to friends / ask God for forgiveness /
donate money to charity / go to the synagogue

Don'ts: drink coffee the day before / wear leather shoes /
wear special perfume / go to work as usual

Listening

1. tenth, repent, forgiveness
2. fast, not allowed
3. nightmare, following, optimism, symbolic
4. confess, promise, symbolizes

SPELLING NOTE:

This lesson shows the American spelling of the words *Favors, Practicing, and Practice*. Most other English-speaking countries spell these words this way: *Favours, Practising, and Practise* (when used as a verb; *Practice* when used as a noun). Make it a challenge for your students to find these words in the text and see if they know the alternate spellings.