

Advice for teachers

DEVELOPING A COURSE

A course outlines the nature and sequence of teaching and learning necessary for students to demonstrate achievement of the set of outcomes for a unit. The areas of study describe the knowledge required for the demonstration of each outcome. Outcomes are introduced by summary statements and are followed by the key knowledge and skills which relate to the outcomes.

Teachers must develop courses that include appropriate learning activities to enable students to develop the knowledge and skills identified in the outcome statements in each unit.


For Units 1 and 2, teachers must select assessment tasks from the list provided. Tasks should provide a variety and the mix of tasks should reflect the fact that different types of tasks suit different knowledge and skills. Tasks do not have to be lengthy to make a decision about student demonstration of achievement of an outcome.

In Units 3 and 4, assessment is more structured. For school-assessed coursework, assessment tasks are prescribed. The contribution that each task makes to the total school-assessed coursework is also stipulated.

USE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

In designing courses and developing learning activities for Texts and Traditions teachers are encouraged to make use of applications of information technology and new learning technologies, such as computer-based learning, multimedia and the World Wide Web.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Examples of learning activities for each unit are provided in the following section. Examples highlighted by a shaded box are explained in detail in accompanying boxes. The examples that make use of information technology are identified by this icon .

Many of the themes raised in these learning activities may be explored not only in the Surahs cited below but also in other Surahs which may be set for study in the following years.

Unit 3: Texts and the early tradition

Area of study 1: **The background of the tradition**

Area of study 2: **Approaches to texts**

Area of study 3: **Interpreting texts (Part 1)**

Outcome 1

Text:

Identify events, people and places relating to the early development of the tradition.

Examples of learning activities

The Holy Qur'an (Tr.) Abdullah Yusuf Ali

draw a map of Arabia and show the following locations: Makkah (trans. Abdullah Musat Ali), Madinah, Damascus, Baghdad, Jerusalem, Syria, Yemen and Egypt on a map of the world colour in the Muslim world



use the Internet and software (e.g. Alim) to prepare a timeline of the history of Islam

make notes on the meaning of the following terms: Hijrah, Qur'an and Hadith



use the Internet to collect research material and write a short report on the life of Prophet Muhammad (pbuh)

make a list of the important events in the life of the Prophet in a) Makkah and b) Madinah

find out the reasons that led to the hostility of the Makkans to the message of the Prophet

describe the circumstances that led to the Hijrah of the Prophet from Makkah to Madinah

describe the significance of the Battle of Badr as a turning point in the development of Islam

describe the Conquest of Makkah and comment on the general amnesty declared by the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) at the time of this conquest

describe the incidence relating to the Search for the Truth and Receiving the Truth by the Prophet

make a list of important personalities related to the early development of Islam

write short paragraphs on each of the following personalities who were involved in the early development of Islam: Abu Bakr Al-Siddeeq, Umar bin Khattab, Uthman bin Affan, Ali bin Abu Talib, Khadijah, Aisha, Waraqa bin Nawfal, Angel Gabriel, Bilal, Hafsah and Zaid bin Thabit

list the names of the compilers of Hadith with the years of their birth and death

make a list of the famous Huffaz (plural: persons who memorised the Qur'an/ singular: Hafiz) during the lifetime of the Prophet

identify the six most authentic Hadith collections and their compilers

list the four schools of thought that developed in Islam after the death of the Prophet (pbuh)

discuss the contribution of the great Muslim lady Khadijah towards the cause of Islam

write a short narrative on the life of Aisha

Surah 2 – ‘*The Heifer*’

prepare a profile of The Prophet as the Seal of the Prophets

prepare a diagram to illustrate the historical relation of Islam to Judaism and Christianity (2:4 and 136)

prepare explanatory notes on the status of Moses, Jesus and Mary in Islam (2:87)

Surah 6 – ‘*The Cattle*’

write a short report on the Islamic view of the afterlife (6:32, 127; also Surah 2:25; 11:23, 103–108)

Surah 17 – ‘*The Night Journey*’

consult Qur’anic commentaries for information and write a brief report on the event to which this Surah’s title refers

write a brief report on where, when and why this Surah was revealed



using the Internet, research the background of the people and places named in the following verses: 17:1 (Mosque of Makkah, Mosque of Jerusalem, Muhammad); 17:2 (Moses, Children of Israel); 17:3 (Noah); 17:55 (David); 17:61 (Adam, Iblis); 17:65 (Satan); 17:70 (sons of Adam); 17:80 (the Gate of Truth); 17:102 (Pharaoh)

prepare a short report on the tradition of revelation in Islam prior to the Prophet (17:2, 4, 55, 77)

prepare brief explanatory notes on the meaning of the religious ideas mentioned in the following verses: 17:1 (*Ayat*, signs); 17:8 (Hell); 17:9 (that which is most straight; a magnificent reward); 17:13, 49–52 (Day of Judgment); 17:20 (Bounties of your Lord); 17:21 (we have bestowed more on some than on others); 17:85 (The Spirit); 17:101 (Nine Clear Signs)

prepare explanatory notes on the events referred to in the phrases ‘When the first of the warnings came to pass’ (17:5) and ‘the more numerous in manpower’ (17:6)



use the Internet and Qur’anic commentaries to research the items given in the following verses: 17:8 (Book of Moses); 17:26 (those in want, the wayfarer); 17:39 (*Al-Hikmah*, precepts of wisdom); 17:55 (Psalms); 17:97 (*Auliya*, helpers, protectors)

Surah 31 – ‘*Luqman*’

write a short report on the significance of the title of this Surah (31:12)

Surah 49 – ‘*The Chambers*’

prepare brief explanatory notes on ‘the desert Arabs’ (49:14)

prepare a map to illustrate the geographical spread of Islam and its varying centres of development during the period 1–150 A.H (i.e. 622–772 CE)

prepare an account of the historical, social and religious circumstances that lead to the need for the Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) to teach the revelation of Allah

prepare a report explaining the theological beliefs underlying the respective attitudes towards the use of representational art in domestic and religious contexts; provide evidence for your explanation

Detailed example**ISLAMIC VIEW OF THE AFTER-LIFE**

1. Using the Internet, research the 'Six Articles of Faith' to establish that Islam teaches a doctrine of life after death
2. Consult the Qur'an and Commentaries (e.g. 6:32, 127; 2:25; 11:23, 103–108) and make notes on Islamic teachings about the Hereafter.
3. Conduct a literature search for details of Islamic views on Heaven, Hell and the Day of Judgment.
4. Compile an interpretive summary of events after death.
5. Draw a diagram illustrating the various possible fates of the post-mortem soul.
6. Write an extended report presenting the results of the research activity.

Outcome 2

Analyse issues that relate to the writing of the text, its literary structure and major themes.

Examples of learning activities

use the Internet to collect research material for briefly explaining the meaning of the following terms and concepts: Islam, Allah, Salah, Ramadan, Kaabah, Zakat, Hijrah, Khalifah, Worship, Akhirah, Risalah (Prophethood), Death and Tawheed

write short paragraphs on each of the following personalities and explain their contribution towards the revelation and compilation of the Qur'an: Prophet Muhammad (pbuh), Abu Bakr Al-Siddeeq, Umar bin Khattab, Uthman bin Affan, Ali bin Abu Talib, Khadijah, Aisha, Waraqah bin Nawfal, Angel Gabriel, Bilal, Hafsa and Zaid bin Thabit



write a brief description of the historical, social and spiritual significances of the ordering of the Surahs

prepare an account of the different types of sacred Islamic literature

prepare a diagram and explanation to illustrate the stages of the compilation of the Qur'an and the development of the Hadith during the first two centuries of Islam (i.e. seventh and eight centuries CE)

Islamic beliefs are solidly based on Tawheed (oneness of God Allah). Explain the meaning of these branches of Tawheed:

- Tawheed ar-Ruboobeeyah
- Tawheed al-Asmaa was Sifaat
- Tawheed al-Ebaadah

Why is 'Ebaadah' the 'core' of Islam? Explain the difference between Allah's attribute of being one (al-Ahad) and a student being number one in the class



use Internet resources and historical commentaries to research a report on the writing of the Qur'an which addresses the following: How did Allah make sure that the Prophet preserved the Qur'an? What did the Prophet do to make sure that the Qur'an was not lost? Explain why the Qur'an was not written down in one book during the lifetime of the Prophet. Why was the Qur'an later (after the death of the Prophet) recorded in one book? Identify the Sahaabee who was chosen to write

down the whole Qur'an in one book and mention four reasons why he was chosen. What was the reason for the second compilation of the Qur'an? Explain why Allah preserved the Qur'an and allowed the earlier books of revelation to be lost. Why was it important that Allah preserve the Qur'an?

What status is given to women in Islam? compare this status with that of past and present non-Muslim societies

Under what circumstances is polygyny (known as polygamy) allowed in Islam? discuss the Practicality and Responsibility of this provision in Islam

Surah 17 – *'The Night Journey'*

prepare a diagram with assistance from Hadith (ref Al-Alim software) to illustrate the various stages of the Night Journey of the Prophet

prepare a diagram of the history of the Children of Israel up to the present day (17:2)

prepare a short report on the Islamic doctrine of Qadr (Fate) (17:13)

write explanatory notes on five important themes in 17:23–29

infer the local conditions that prompted the revelation of the moral guidelines contained in the Surah (17:23–38)

from the arguments of the Unbelievers to the Prophet's call, deduce the features of the religion practiced by them at the time



explain the image of Satan as presented by Surah 17; use the Internet to explore the concept of Satan presented by other philosophies and religions, including present-day satanists

describe the times of worship mentioned by the Surah (17:78–79); refer to relevant Hadith to describe the postures; search Islamic literature to find the significance of these postures; prepare a report on Salah (Worship) in Islam

What is the Truth and falsehood referred to in 17:81? Describe how the Truth is supposed to overcome falsehood

Surah 49 – *'The Chambers'*

write a report on the historical background to the revelation of this Surah

draft ten ethical rules from Surah 49 similar to the Ten Commandments; see appropriate Old Testament Books such as Exodus for the Ten Commandments

analyse issues that relate to the writing of the text, its literary structure and major themes

explain the meanings of the following terms in relation to the literary structure of the Qur'an:

Ulum al-Qur'an, Surah, Ayah, Juz, Wahy, Qissah, Tafsir, Tazwid, Tilawah, Qira'ah, Harf, I'jaz, Naskh, Maki, Madani and Asbab al-nuzul

discuss the use of figures of speech in the Qur'an

quote and explain **three** examples of the use of **metaphors** in the selected Qur'anic text for study

Outcome 3

Apply basic exegetical methods to the interpretation of texts within the founding tradition.

Examples of learning activities

Surah 2: *'The Heifer'*
comment on the theological significance of the change of name from 'Iblis' (2:34) to 'Satan' (2:36)

prepare a report on the status and role of spiritual beings (e.g. angels, jinn) in Islam (2:98; also 6:61, 100; 17:88)


prepare a report on the Islamic view of the origin and status of magic, with particular reference to Harut and Marut (2:102)

write a brief report on the status, role and authority of the Imam (2:124; also 17:71)

write a brief description of the Islamic view on the relation of God (Allah) to the natural world (2:164)

prepare explanatory notes on the characteristics of authentic faith (2:165 and 285)

prepare a short report on Islamic dietary regulations (halal) (2:172–173)

 prepare a brief report on Islamic teaching about the Day of Resurrection (2:174; also 17:49–52); use the Internet to research information on Resurrection in other religions e.g. Christianity, Judaism, Taoism; draw a table or diagram to compare and contrast Islamic teachings on Resurrection with those in other religions

prepare a brief description of the 'law of equality' (2:178)

briefly describe the duties required of Muslims in the month of Ramadan (2:183–187)


Surah 6 – *'The Cattle'*
prepare a brief explanatory note on the theological differences between the 'stated term' and the 'determined term' (6:2)

prepare a short report explaining the theological differences between 'the blind' and 'the seeing' (2:50)

prepare a brief description of the degrees or grades of wisdom in Islam (2:83)

Surah 17 – *'The Night Journey'*

consult Qur'anic commentaries to find the literal meanings of the following terms: Israa, Miraj, Masjid al-Haram and Masjid al-Aqsa

 using the Internet, Qur'an, commentaries and Hadith, prepare a report on the significance of the Night Journey for the Prophet

In 17:2, to what does the word 'Book' or 'Scripture' refer? explain how Islamic teachings are related to the Scripture which God gave to Moses (Prophet Musa, A.S) as a guidance to the people of Israel. List the ten commandments in the Scripture sent to Prophet Musa

write a short report on the Qur'anic teaching about divine foreknowledge (17:1)

write a brief description of the Qur'anic teaching on God's action in human history, and explain the identities of 'His Servant' and 'Our servants' (17:5)

prepare a brief report on the Prophet's teaching about the freedom of will (17:64 and 84; also 2:195 and 256; 12:40; 42:21)

read Surah 17:1 and 78 and Sahih Al Bukhari vol. 5, Hadith 227 and briefly describe how each verse sets the scene in regards to names and times of prayer; produce simple line-drawing to illustrate the themes in these verses

write a short explanation of the meaning of the following verse: 'Read thine (own) record; sufficient is thy soul this day to make out an account against thee' (17:14)

prepare a report explaining how God provides for all (17:20, 30–31; 2:3)


write a brief explanation of the meaning of the term 'illah' in the following verse: 'Take not with Allah another object of worship [illah]; Or thou (O man!) wilt sit in disgrace and destitution' (17:22)

write a short report on the importance of parents in Islam (17:23–29); How is this importance justified in those verses?

read Surahs 17:23–29 and 49:9–13; identify how these verses each set the scene for manners and morals in a rapidly growing Muslim community

explain the meaning of the following ayah (verse): 'And, out of kindness, lower to them the wing of humility, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Thy Mercy even as they cherished me in childhood' (17:24)

write a brief report on the Qur'anic doctrine of the Oneness of Allah (Tawheed) and explain a) the theological significance of the phrase 'they would certainly have sought out a way to the Throne', b) the principle of disbelief about which this verse speaks, and c) the major sign of that disbelief (17:42)

 use the Internet and Qur'anic commentaries to prepare a brief report on the meaning and significance of the following ayah (lines): 'The seven heavens and the earth, and all beings therein, declare His glory' (17:44)

prepare brief explanatory notes on the religious significance of the following phrases: 'He that maketh the Ship go smoothly for you through the sea', 'His Bounty' (17:66); 'those that ye call upon' (17:67); 'ye find no helper therein against us' (17:69)


Surah 49 – 'The Chambers'

in a brief report, identify where, when and why this Surah was revealed; explain what the title 'al-Hujuraat' refers to, and describe what major lessons the Surah teaches

write a brief report on 49:2, 4–5 describing the Qur'an's attitude towards the believers referred to

consult Qur'anic commentaries and write a short description of what happened and who was involved in the incident mentioned in 49:4–5

write a brief explanation of why backbiting is compared to eating 'the flesh of his dead brother' (49:12)

 use the Internet and Qur'anic commentaries to gather information about why and how human beings were created in two sexes and then made into nations and tribes (49:13)

write a short report on the Prophet's teaching about racism, nationalism and international relations (49:13)

prepare brief explanatory notes on the following religious ideas, expressions and themes: 'Faith', 'not belittle aught of your deeds' (49:14), 'striven with their belongings', 'the Cause of Allah' (49:15) and 'full knowledge of all things' (49:16)

discuss the issue of adultery and fornication from the Islamic perspective (17:32)

Detailed example

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NIGHT JOURNEY



Use Internet resources and Qur'anic commentaries to prepare a brief report covering the questions below:

- a. What and where are the 'acred Mosque' and the 'Farthest Mosque'?
- b. What are their respective importance?
- c. How was the Prophet prepared for his journey to the heavens?
- d. Describe what signs were given and things revealed to the Prophet in the seventh heaven.
- e. Briefly explain why some people left Islam on learning about the Prophet's journey.
- f. Describe two incidents from the Israa' which proved to the Makkans that the Prophets journey was true.

Describe the three lessons which may be learned from Israa' and Miraj.

Unit 4: Texts and their teachings

Area of study 1: **Interpreting texts (Part 2)**

Area of study 2: **Religious ideas, beliefs and social themes**

Outcome 1

Apply basic exegetical methods to the interpretation of texts within the founding tradition and discuss the major themes of the texts.

Examples of learning activities

(Refer to examples of learning activities in Outcome 3 Unit 3)

Outcome 2

Discuss a significant religious idea, belief or social theme in the foundational texts of a tradition, and describe how this belief or theme has been interpreted within the tradition at a later stage.

Examples of learning activities**Surah 2**

examine the changing understandings of how to 'practice regular charity' (*Zakat*) (Surah 2:43, 263–266)

examine social, economic and theological changes in understanding of the duty of Pilgrimage (*hajj*) that have led to the view that the duty can be fulfilled vicariously (2:158, 196–203)

discuss the social and theological significance of the teaching that 'they are your garment and you are their garment' (2:187) and describe changes in the Muslim attitude to the status of women

examine the Islamic attitudes towards the social opportunities and material things of the ordinary human world – i.e. acceptance versus denial – as these are evidenced in several different historical Islamic communities (2:188)

examine various ways in which the Prophet's teaching on justified war has been understood (2:190)

Surah 17

use the Internet to research and examine developments in Islamic attitudes towards the natural environment and human duties towards it (17:37 and 70; also 2:164) – see, e.g. www.geocities.com/Tokyo/Spa/3879/

How does Islam deal with the issue of murder and manslaughter? discuss the concept of killing for a 'just cause' in Islam



Surah 31

examine Islamic ways of holiness, identifying and describing changes in understanding of the teachings of self-surrender and doing good (31:22)

examine developments in Islamic cosmological doctrines due to the impact of Neoplatonic philosophy (31:22). See, e.g. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 1978, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*; Thames & Hudson)

discuss the social and theological significance of the teaching that 'they are your garment and you are their garment' (2:187) and describe changes in the Muslim attitude to the status of women

Detailed example**STATUS OF WOMEN IN ISLAM**

1.  Use the Internet to research the Qur'an for passages relevant to the status of women e.g. Qur'an 2:187, 3:195, 4:124, 9:71–72, 16:97, 23:35.
 2.  Using the Internet, conduct a literature search for books and articles presenting a range of Islamic perspectives on the status of women e.g.
www.religiousconsultation.org/hassan3.htm
www.geocities.com/muthram/inheric.html
 3. Consult commentaries and works by traditional scholars and contemporary feminist writers e.g. Abdullah Yusuf Ali, n.195, Fadhlalla Haeri, Riffat Hassan, Haifaa Jawad.
 4. Summarise the main arguments from each source and note the Qur'anic passages each relies upon.
- Write a report on the research, including a personal response addressing both sides of the issue.

SUITABLE RESOURCES

Courses must be developed within the framework of the study design: the areas of study, outcome statements and key knowledge and skills.

Some of the print resources listed in this section may be out of print. They have been included because they may still be available from libraries, bookshops and private collections.

Islam in Focus

Dr Hammudah Abdalati

American Trust Publications, Indianapolis 1975

This book was written for the reader with a general interest in Islam who is willing to research areas of particular interest elsewhere but who seeks a starting point. It deals with the outstanding principles, practices, and attitudes of Islam. While Dr Abdalati professes deliberately to lack depth and breadth, his coverage of each topic is remarkably wide given the brevity. It is highly readable, well sign-posted, and pithy in its treatment of each topic.

Unlike other references that introduce Islam, this volume includes quotations from the Qur'an in the original Arabic which Dr Abdalati then transliterates and finally translates, or rather interprets. The call to prayer, the opening verse of the Qur'an, and commonly uttered short verses from the Qur'an are included in this treatment. Each of the five prayers is described word for word, action for action, and there are also illustrations of the postures of prayer and their names.

The approach that Abdalati takes in this book is one of balancing the exigencies of modern life with a willingness and ability to express religiosity. His stated intention is to provide an even-handed, unemotional introduction to the guiding principles of Islam as an antidote to the extremes of indifference or fanaticism amongst Muslims, and ignorance and wariness amongst non-Muslim readers. An interesting inclusion to this purpose is a chapter entitled 'Distortions About Islam' in which the often thorny issues of Holy War, the status of women, marriage, polygamy, and the nature of Jesus are discussed.

The Family Structure in Islam

Dr Hammudah Abdalati

American Trust Publications, Indianapolis 1977

Dr Abdalati considers how religious inspiration, law and social conditions during the first four centuries of Islam shaped ideas about what the Muslim community should be and, moreover, what the family structure should be. As such, this book borrows much of its language and central arguments from the social sciences. His discussion of relations between the sexes, and particularly within marriage, aims to discover the integrity of Muslim social institutions in a way that is not apologist but that aims at objectivity where, he admits, none can easily exist. At the same time Dr Abdalati is explicitly conscious of the difference and divergence between the ideal and the actual.

Abdalati observes that Muslim society is special in relation to other forms of society but also diverse within itself. He sets each of his exhaustive topics (e.g. 'The Traditional Form of the Muslim Family', 'Religion and Exogamy', 'Polygyny', 'Divorce as a Moral Act', 'Maintenance [of women] in Sickness') within its proper historical context, quoting the relevant Muslim jurists and scholars, then going on to observe contemporary realities.

This is a very sophisticated treatment of the family structure, which on the face of it would appear to be the simplest aspect of Islam but which is, in fact, the most contested. It will be quickly apparent to the student that it is the family structure that creates society, creates history and, ultimately, creates Muslim 'reality'. As such it is a difficult and challenging text. Its virtue is that the young reader will have addressed for him/her all the aspects of sexual control that hold so much fascination for non-Muslims, while being exposed at the same time to the basic premises of, and questions posed by the exacting science of sociology.

Islam Today: A Short Introduction to the Muslim World

Akbar S. Ahmed

I.B.Tauris, London 1999

Ahmed focuses much of his scholarly energy on commentaries and explorations of Islam. As an anthropologist he is concerned with exploring the machinations of Muslim communities, their orthodoxy and their orthopraxy, in order to reveal their integrity as social systems.

This book is one such commentary. It looks to the sources of Islamic tradition and explores how they form the Islamic philosophy and the manner in which Muslims make choices about their daily life.

Ahmed also discusses the impact, in real and imagined ways, Islamic traditions and primary sources have on the history of Islam and on the politics of contemporary Muslims both as majority and minority populations in their countries of residence – countries which reach well beyond the Arab lands and the consequent stereotypes.

The book is extremely well sign-posted and pithy in its chapters, making it a relaxed read that is easy to dip in and out of. It is also written with an eye to philosophical motifs, to colourful characters and to historical episodes that will be familiar to the novice and even to the young reader. Ahmed periodically throws up fascinating analogies and side references that arrest the reader's attention. He also includes personal experiences in a way that lacks self-consciousness and that bring greater impact and immediacy to some of the political realities he observes.

Islam

Ismail R. Al Faruqi

Amana Publications, Beltsville Maryland USA 1995

Dr Al Faruqi is a scholar of comparative religion as well as an authority on Islam. In this book he encourages the reader to recognise two simple facts: 1) that the religion of Islam is a later 'moment' of the same consciousness that produced Judaism and, subsequently, Christianity, and 2) that the culture of Islam is the source of much that Western civilisation takes for granted. His objective is to present Islam as its adherents see it, and his plea to the reader is for empathy and an open mind.

The book poses and answers some basic questions in its opening chapter, such as 'What is a Muslim?' 'Why is a Muslim a Muslim?' and 'Since When is Anyone a Muslim?' It goes on to explain the five basic principles and behaviours of Islam to which a Muslim subscribes. There are chapters on the Prophet Muhammad, the family, the attitude of Muslims to wealth and to nature, the Islamic worldview, and artistic and architectural features inspired by Islam. Each chapter is short and simply written with concepts that are accessible and engaging to the novice student of Islam.

There is a brief glossary of terms and a small bibliography. The text is interspersed with photographs of Muslims and of Islamic architecture around the globe.

The Concepts of Islamic Ummah & Shariah

Dr Muhammad Mumtaz Ali

Pelanduk Publications, Selangor Darul Ehsan Malaysia 1992

Dr Ali wrote this book in the face of contemporary demands for the implementation of the Sharia (Islamic law) in the modern world. He seeks to pose a suitable methodology for Muslims to consider, and one that forces an appraisal for most, and a reappraisal for some, of the meaning of Ummah (the Muslim community – borderless and non-ethnic specific).

Dr Ali's contention is that the notion of 'Ummah' has only ever been imagined and that it has never been rooted in reality to form any sort of science. He believes that the Shariah cannot be implemented credibly in society until the Ummah has clear form and dimensions. He therefore offers an operational model of the Ummah that includes

faith, action, organisation and leadership, which he premises on verses from the Qur'an, and on Hadith and Sunna (sayings and practice of the Prophet Muhammad) that deal with these concepts specifically.

The book is well laid out and sign-posted and its contentions are rigorously argued with much quoting of primary and secondary sources as well as cross-referencing to the arguments of other scholars, both Muslim and non-Muslim. The bibliography, although it professes to be 'Select', is extensive and impressive. Clearly this is a highly specialised text that offers many challenges, both in concepts and in language, to the young reader.

The Challenge of Islam

Altaf Gauhar (ed.)

The Islamic Council of Europe, London 1978

In 1976 the Islamic Council of Europe organised the first International Islamic Conference that Europe had hosted in modern history under the theme of 'Islam and the Challenge of our Age' and held at the Royal Albert Hall, London. This book is a selection of papers given at that conference by a collection of eighteen Islamic scholars with professions ranging from the Attorney General of Pakistan to Professor of Near Eastern Languages & Literature at Berkeley. It will be interesting for students to note that only two of the contributors are Arabs.

The book, as was the conference, is designed for both Muslim and non-Muslim and is organised into three parts: the first dealing with the doctrine of Islam and its essential message; the second with the concept of an Islamic state and hence such subjects as Islamic Law, social justice, and banking; and the third examining Islam in relation to the non-Islamic world, specifically the West. Parts two and three are dated but provide a useful recent historical perspective on these subjects.

There is a summation of the contents in an introduction by the editor, each chapter begins with a précis of its content, and notes and references appear at the book's end. Of particular interest to many will be the inaugural address given by HRH Prince Muhammad Al Faisal, Chief Guest of the Conference and Personal Representative of His Majesty King Khalid bin Abdul Aziz. Also, Appendix 1 & 11 are transcripts of the speeches given by the Secretary General of the Islamic Council of Europe at the opening and the conclusion of the Conference.

Islam: A Short History

Karen Armstrong

Weidenfeld & Nicholson, London 2000

Armstrong has written, as the title suggests, a short history of Islam for the general reader. Her strength of familiarity with the primary and secondary sources is clear without, however, the inclusion of any references, notes, or even a bibliography. This latter fact may prove disconcerting to the serious scholar, but accessibility to the complex history of Islam is assured for the popular reader.

The history begins with the biography of the Prophet Muhammad and the socio-political world in which he lived and into which he received the revelations of the Qur'an. It then moves through his successors to leadership of the Islamic community, the disputes surrounding this issue, the schisms, the founding of dynasties, expansion of territory and conversion, dealing with the several Crusades from Christendom and the Mongols before moving onto the several great empires of Islam. It finishes with a discussion of the modern era from colonialism through to such minority expressions as the Nation of Islam in America and the Armed Islamic Group in Algeria.

Armstrong includes a chronology of events, phases, and eras from the first revelation to the 1998, maps indicating the place into which Islam first arrived and the extent of the Islamic Empire, and a section with the names of some key figures in the history of Islam up to today and their very brief biographies. She also includes a glossary of Arabic terms, and instead of a bibliography there are suggestions for further reading according to subject matter, with titles, for example, about the Prophet Muhammad, Islamic history, philosophy, spirituality, fundamentalism, and women.

What Everyone Should Know About Islam and Muslims

Suzanne Haneef

Kazi Publications, Chicago 1982

Haneef is a convert to Islam from Christianity who is active in Islamic education, as well as in education of non-Muslims about Islam. As a former Christian, and an American, Haneef has a strong consciousness of the preoccupations of a non-Muslim Western world reader. She has a chatty style and an enquiring tone, and poses questions that are appealing and engaging, making this book highly accessible to the young reader.

Haneef concentrates on the basic tenets of Islam, the key concepts of social behaviour, and the essential observances of a Muslim's daily life. In doing so she uses the language of Islam, or indeed of any religion, and of ethics. Such headings as 'Sincerity', 'Purity, Modesty, and Chastity', 'Dignity, Honor and Self Respect', and 'Consideration and Good Manners' may both intrigue and challenge the young reader. The sections on the relations between sexes are dealt with cogently, honestly and unapologetically.

This book is excellent in its simplicity of language and the interesting layout of the text. It includes photographs of important mosques in the Muslim world, the Kaaba in Mecca surrounded by the visiting pilgrims, American Muslims at prayer, and an American Muslim family.

The Life of Muhammad

Muhammad Husayn Haykal (trans. from the 8th edition by Ismail Ragi A. Al Faruqi)

North American Trust Publications 1976

One of the chief attributes of this biography of the Prophet Muhammad is that it is the first to be written by a contemporary Muslim scholar. Dr Haykal is a classic Islamist who dedicated his later life to the study of the life of the Prophet and to his companions. This biography of the Prophet is well known to all Arabic readers and the English version is the best known to the modern Muslim and scholar who demand a work that is not only fully researched and sourced but which also uses a contemporary methodology of history writing.

The book is highly readable. The narrative truly fleshes out the person of Muhammad and the nature of his prophethood. It reveals how and why it is that he was the very essence of what Islam espouses and what Muslims aspire to reflect in their daily behaviours and careers. It also personalises all the characters who were the Prophet's contemporaries, giving names, dates and potted biographies but also describing them physically, listing their personal attributes, their demeanours and their idiosyncrasies. In this sense it clearly is written for a Muslim audience, but the book is entirely engaging to the non-Muslim reader who will find it an intimate and humanising introduction to Islam.

The Women of Medina

Muhammad Ibn Sa'd (trans. Aisha Bewley)

Ta-Ha Publishers, London 1997

The author lived in Iraq in the eighth and ninth centuries CE (the 2nd and 3rd centuries of the Islamic Era). He was an authority on Muslim biography and his greatest work was to compile the earliest surviving, and now the most important, collection of narrations from the generation who knew the Prophet personally. This book represents the 8th volume of his collection called *Kitab at-Tabaqat al-Kabir*, and it deals exclusively with women who met the Prophet Muhammad in seeking guidance on a variety of matters, and also those who transmitted verses (of the Qur'an) from him via another person.

This book is an excellent introduction to the methodology of Islamic narration for the newcomer to the study of Islam. It is an accessible introduction to the oral tradition that is essential to Islam (Qur'an means 'that which is recited'). It concentrates on names, relationships, who said what when, and upon whose authority conversations

are recorded. People's actual words are given great import and are repeated *verbatim* down a line of named informants. This is the classical method for describing the sayings and practice of the Prophet Muhammad, and his wives and companions, as witnessed through the eyes and preoccupations of their contemporaries.

Being translated from the Arabic, and using a manner of speech and terminology that was current in Mecca and Medina in the first century of the Islamic Era (the 7th century CE), the text may seem in parts awkward and very often repetitive. Many terms are retained in the Arabic, but these are glossed clearly and comprehensively at the end of the text. There is no commentary, and so the import of what is being told may be lost on the modern reader who is new to Islam. Teachers who know Islam will enjoy commentating on the text and encouraging speculation on the part of their students. For those teachers who do not know Islam, it remains an excellent model of Islamic narration and the vital importance of a chain of authorities in reporting the message of Islam. In short, it exemplifies the pedigree of Islam.

The Structure of the Ethical Terms in the Koran: A Study in Semantics

Toshihiko Izutsu

Keio Institute of Philological Studies, Tokyo 1959

This book is just one part of a broad linguistic study on the development of Arab moral consciousness as reflected in the (Arabic) language of the Qur'an. The opening chapter is a rationale for this study. In it, Izutsu states that through semantic analysis the purpose is to discover the ways in which principal 'value-words' are used in the Qur'an. Izutsu's thesis is that the message of Islam brought the most radical social reform Arabia, and indeed the East, had ever seen, and so he seeks to discover which are the truly characteristic traits of Qur'anic moral conceptions compared with those that were already prevalent among the Arab tribes before the advent of Islam.

This is a highly specialised book that will pose considerable challenges to the young reader. The four opening chapters deal with the semantic structure of words, the formulation of a method of semantic analysis vis-à-vis the Qur'an, and the application of that method. However, Izutsu manages to render the complex science of linguistics accessible to the reader who is truly compelled by this subject. The more general, or less advanced reader will still find great interest in such subjects as the Prophet Muhammad's 'moral attitude', and chapters such as 'Pagan Moral Ideas in Islamic Dress' have obvious appeal.

Islam The Straight Path

John Esposito

Oxford University Press, 1988

Esposito wrote this book explicitly as an introduction to Islam that serves the purposes of undergraduate study across the disciplines of politics, history, anthropology and comparative religion. He includes a glossary, chapter notes and references, and a bibliography that all reflect the general purpose of those listed academic disciplines.

The book is conscious of the fact that while Islam is divinely revealed, there are many interpretations of that revelation reflected in the philosophies and behaviours of Muslims around the world. Esposito selects some of those interpretations and developments within the Islamic community and describes how they inform Islam as we see and experience it today (that is in the late 1980s). His chapters deal with the Prophet Muhammad and the message of Islam, the formation of the Islamic community through time, what constitutes religious belief and practice in Islam, and finally how modern Muslims manifest belief and practice and what are some of the contemporary realities and challenges for them.

Esposito includes only brief excerpts from the Qur'an and the Hadith, with some reference to the Holy Scriptures that precede the Qur'an and upon which it avowedly builds. This scant citation of the primary sources of Islam is in deference to his stated aim of achieving a general purpose introduction and not one for the dedicated scholar of Islam. The latter will be disappointed by this but will find plenty within the notes, references, and strong bibliography at book's end to assist further enquiry.

Freedom of Expression in Islam

Muhammad Hashim Kamali

Islamic Texts Society, Cambridge 1997

Dr Kamali's position as Professor of Law (Islamic) informs the legalistic aspect of this book that examines the sources of the Shariah (Islamic law) for evidence on the subject of freedom of expression, but he also writes with a view to the ethical and political nature of defining and limiting free speech. It is the first such presentation of these ideas in the English language.

The book's particular contribution is to scholarship regarding three key concepts of freedom of expression, being freedom to express an opinion, freedom to criticise, and freedom to practice one's religion. Its exposition on the meaning and implications of rights and responsibility holds an interest and usefulness for the classroom that goes beyond the study of Islam alone.

The book is given added appeal and accessibility through the citing of real case studies. The many technical Arabic terms are footnoted for meaning and explanation, and there is an extensive glossary at the end. The Bibliography includes many works in Arabic, as testament to the author's rigorous scholarship, while the Appendices include real moral and legal cases to illustrate points made in the text. Appendix V is a fascinating account of the outcomes and implications of the Salman Rushdie 'affair' which pertains to Rushdie's book *The Satanic Verses* published in 1988, and which controversy the young readers and their teachers might remember.

Muhammad: His Life Based on the Earliest Sources

Martin Lings

Unwin Paperbacks, London 1986

Lings has achieved in this book an impressive combination of fidelity to the original, or what is called 'authentic' Islamic sources, an assiduous attention to detail, and an easy narrative style. His particular talent, perhaps, is to have rendered seventh and eighth century (CE) Arabic speech modes into idiomatic English and yet still retain a sense of timelessness. His narration of events is both simple and epic. This makes the book worthy of the essential message of Islam since Muslims' daily life, their faith and their world view, both micro and macro, is informed by the life of Prophet Muhammad.

Lings draws upon sources from the eighth and ninth century (CE), some of which are here translated for the first time into English. He provides a key to the references he uses, as well as notes on pronunciation, a map of Arabia at the time of the Prophet, and his genealogical, or lineage chart. The very numerous chapters of the book are short episodic accounts of events beginning with the context into which Muhammad was born and concluding with his death and burial, and succession of leadership of the community.

The young reader will find the book highly detailed but in no way turgid or tedious. Lings has taken from his sources (which of course are based on oral tradition) so much personal detail of each character involved that he can write how they looked and how they behaved, right down to who carried the baby and who got off the camel first. Hence the book reads with the ease of a fictional novel, yet at the same time with the gravity that is due to the radical and world changing phenomenon that is the Prophet Muhammad and his revelations.

Towards Understanding Islam

Sayyid Abul A'la Maududi (trans. and ed. Khurshid Ahmad, 12th edition)

Islamic Publications, Lahore 1967

Maududi was (he died in 1979) a colourful and significant character in contemporary Islamic history. He was a leader of the contemporary Islamic resurgence, authoring over one hundred scholarly and popular works on Islam and in 1941 founding Jama'at Islami, one of the most important and prominent Islamic movements today. His biography in Pakistan exhibits the same manner of political controversy as that of the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb.

His life was devoted to informing Muslims as to the meaning and intent of the message of Islam and encouraging them to engage in this fully and responsibly – an endeavour that sometimes clashed with the political aspirations of his compatriots.

This particular book was written with Muslim youth in mind and addresses their needs explicitly. Maududi recognises in it that young Muslims living in modern circumstances demand intellectual as well as faith based expositions of their religion and rationales for the existence and maintenance of their community. It is not designed for the older Muslim nor for the more traditional scholar of Islam. It does not focus on variance in religious or ethical interpretations, nor on the dissensions that form the identity of several Muslim communities, subjects that usually are the mainstay of traditional scholarly texts on Islam.

The best aspect of this book is that it is written with an assumption of faith where Islam is a given truth that exists whether the reader takes it up and lives it out or not. There are philosophical dimensions in the discussion that will be useful springboards in a classroom of the age group in question. Points made about the place of women may be controversial in the Australian context but certainly are not extreme or likely to give offence.

The Islamic Way of Life

Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi (trans. and ed. Khurshid Ahmad & Khurram Murad)

The Islamic Foundation, Leicester 1992

This book is based on a series of five short talks given by Mawdudi (sometimes spelt 'Maududi'), in Urdu, on Radio Pakistan in 1948, in which he dealt with the basic principles of moral, political, economic, social and spiritual life according to the teachings of Islam. The style is extremely succinct yet personable. Mawdudi's charm is that his text exudes a sense of humility at the same time as it is definite in its statements of what is correct according to Islam and, equally, what is not correct.

The fact that the text is taken from short talks is reflected in the length of the chapters, the longest being only ten pages and the shortest four pages. This edition includes endnotes of extensive references from the Qur'an and Hadith (sayings of the Prophet Muhammad) that did not exist in the original text. The talks were, naturally, intended for a Muslim audience, as well as a contemporary Pakistani audience, yet they are universal in their appeal and will hold great interest for today's Australian reader, whether Muslim or otherwise.

All of the above makes this book a pleasure to read for both the beginner and the seasoned scholar of Islam. It is an excellent first text for students of Islam because its language is simple without being simplistic, and its coverage of important principles of Islam is broad without being verbose.

Today's Problems Tomorrow's Solutions: The Future Structure of Muslim Societies

Abdullah Omar Naseef (ed.)

Mansel Publishing Ltd, London & New York 1988

This volume is a collection of essays taken from papers presented at the International Islamic Conference on 'Dawa and Development in the Muslim World: The Future Perspective' held in Makkah in 1987. Note that *dawa* means propaganda. It has a missionary tone and its intent is as an invitation to Muslims to renew their faith.

The editor, Naseef, is the Secretary General of the Muslim World League based in Makkah, while the contributors to the collection, who are of many nationalities, are noted in their fields as jurists, economists, educators, linguists, and public policy and Islamic scholars. The central perspective of the collection is reformist, and its central theme is the call for new intellectual responses in the Muslim world through the creation and encouragement of polymaths in the same way as they existed in the classical Islamic world. As one contributor puts it 'in a world that is shaped and controlled by another civilisation, the real task facing the Muslim *umma* (community) is a creation of an intellectual space which is a genuine embodiment of the world-view and culture of Islam'.

This is a fascinating volume of essays in that it affirms commitment to one's faith (Islam) while insisting on the ethical reform of the social matrix of that faith. There is no doubt that it is an important contribution to the students' appreciation of contemporary Islamic thought and debate. However, it will be a challenging text for the student who is already acquainted with Islam, and a difficult text for those who are new to the religion and to its scholarship. The reader will need maturity and a fair degree of sophistication to stay with the text. Hence it is recommended for detailed study by the advanced scholar, while beginners might benefit more from judicious selections from the text by their teacher.

A Young Muslim's Guide to the Modern World

Seyyed Hossein Nasr

Mekar Publishers, Petaling Jaya Malaysia 1994

Nasr is an Iranian born and American educated scholar who has been Professor of Philosophy in Tehran University and Professor of Islamic Studies in Universities in the USA. His particular interest to the student of Islam is that not only are both these perspectives (of Iran and America) at the forefront of his writing, but that he addresses Islam from both the Sunni and Shia perspectives. He writes about the complex divergence of the two major streams of Islam in language and with concepts that are accessible to the novice. This is uncommon in English language sources for the popular study of Islam.

This book is exactly as it titles indicates – a young Muslim's guide to living and thriving and preserving the faith within the confines of an often alien modern world view as imposed historically by colonialism/imperialism and currently by globalisation (read Westernisation). It is a guide to assist young people to engage in their modern, often Western educations while formulating their own Islamic responses to current ideologies. In this respect it is a natural, and perhaps more accessible, progression of the themes dealt with in *Today's Problems Tomorrow's Solutions* edited by Abdullah Naseef in 1988.

Nasr succeeds in his aim to reassert what he calls 'the eternal truths of Islam' in contemporary language that is meaningful to the young who have not experienced traditional Islamic modes of instruction. More importantly, he wants the reader to fully engage with, comprehend and appreciate the Western religious, intellectual, artistic and social world view and to refuse to deal in generalisations about the nature of Western society. Nasr encourages this engagement in the second part of his book which is a rare, if not unique, survey by a non-Western of Western science, art, philosophy, religion, economics, education, and lifestyles, all from an Islamic viewpoint.

This will be a fascinating study for the young student in Australia who, while learning about Islam in the modern world, will also learn about different world views and how extraordinary, and challenging, it can be to realise that one's whole mode of being is defined through this prism.

Ideals and Realities of Islam

Seyyed Hossein Nasr

Aquarian, London 1994

This book is written for the Western reader and for the Western educated Muslim, and is an extended response to the criticisms brought against Islamic tradition and faith by the Judaeo-Christian and secular 'West'. It is considered to be Nasr's seminal work.

The book concentrates its attention on the major components of Islamic tradition – the Qur'an, the Prophet Muhammad, his significance and his legacy, and the Shariah – discussing them with a consciousness of the leap of faith that it may require of the non-Muslim reader. Nasr helpfully includes a discussion of the setting of Islam, its message and its messenger in a historical, geographical, intellectual, and linguistic context as well as in its relationship to the other monotheistic faith traditions.

This book is exceptional in that of its six chapters, one is dedicated to the *Sufi* tradition (the spiritual or mystic dimension of Islam) and another to the divergence between the Sunni and the Shia streams of Islam. These chapters hold particular interest and usefulness for the classroom. The mystical dimensions of Islam have enormous appeal in contemporary society and yet this subject remains controversial in Islamic scholarship and is rarely presented expansively, in English and to a Western audience. The young reader doubtless will find it an appealing subject. As for the chapter on the Islamic schisms, one of its many attributes is its specific reference to the Twelve Imam Shia and to the Ismailis. This provides students with real models of two Shia sects that, when described, will be familiar to them from contemporary world politics and will therefore have considerable relevance to them.

A Popular Dictionary of Islam

Dr Ian Richard Netton
Curzon, Surrey 1997

Dr Netton is an internationally acclaimed authority on Islamic philosophy, theology and cosmology. This book is his compilation of the key sources, traditions, historical motifs, important places, characters, and episodes of Islam, along with its ethical, philosophical and political ideas. As such it is a reference book to be used by the student like any other reference text or dictionary.

This dictionary is an excellent explanation in and of itself of the importance of Islamic history in a Muslim's daily life. It includes in its entries the biographies of key scholars and other historical, sometimes legendary characters, as well as architecture, economies, cities and towns of note, and famous battles fought by Muslims, very often against other Muslims. The entries are pithy and focus on the main and generally accepted and agreed upon facts (that is, many Muslim scholars concur on these matters). Dr Netton does not deal in controversies and points of divergence.

The dictionary will be of particular interest and usefulness to teachers who are likely to recognise proper names of places, buildings, people and political and philosophical movements, which in many cases they might not have associated with Islam or might not have appreciated the significance of vis-à-vis Islam.

Islam and Universal Peace

Sayed Qutb
American Trust Publications, Indianapolis 1977

Qutb is one of the most famous political figures of modern Islamic history. As an Islamic scholar of Egyptian village upbringing but of University of Cairo and Stanford University education, and as an official of the Egyptian Ministry of Education, Qutb formulated a unique approach to his chosen vocation of disseminating the message of Islam for the social good. For his subsequent political affiliations, which vehemently opposed imperialist Britain and its pact with the Egyptian government, Qutb was imprisoned in 1954. Despite suffering torture and other indignities, he refused the Egyptian government's several offers for clemency on the grounds that he could not seek pardon for the fact of his living justly and in good faith. Hence, he remained in prison until his execution in 1966. He wrote *In the Shades of the Qur'an* (which is also on the VCE booklist) during this period.

For his biography alone, Qutb is an essential inclusion on any list of sources for the serious student of Islam, its message, its history, politics, and its challenge in the modern era. However, Qutb's writing also holds particular interest for the young reader who will find the compelling themes of social justice and the 'meaning of life' dealt with in an engaging style with spiritual overtones that the student of religion may not always associate with Islam.

Qutb offers this book in answer to the worthy preoccupation of achieving world peace and suggests what it is that Islam brings to this aspiration. He describes the concept of Islamic belief and its affect on and effect in life, and goes on to describe Islam's prescriptions for peace in the family, in wider society, in government, and in international politics, quoting from the Qur'an and the Hadith throughout. The book is highly readable and easily accessible to the young reader.

Concept of Islam

Mahmoud Abu-Saud

American Trust Publications, Indianapolis 1983

The premise of this book was a series of lectures delivered by the author at an American University to undergraduate students taking a preliminary course in Islam. Hence, the many subjects within it are dealt with in pithy and extremely well sign-posted sections. Abu-Saud's structure and language also shows respect for the students' capacity to enquire and to research subjects of particular interest for themselves. The bibliography is brief but half are works by non-Muslim scholars.

Unlike any other book on this list, Abu-Saud's includes a lengthy first section on pre-Islamic Arabia that describes the physical landscape, the inhabitants, the language, the social conditions, and the two world powers that were relevant to that region at that time. The following four sections deal with the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad as prophet and as statesman, while the final four sections address the Holy Book, the basic principles of Islam, the proper social order, and the large-scale concepts of the Creator and all created beings in the universe.

This book is an excellent first introduction for the young or beginner student who will benefit greatly from an appreciation of the historical conditions into which the message of Islam arrived. The final section on the universal order from the Islamic viewpoint provides a good platform for general discussion across a variety of disciplines.

A Guide to the Contents of the Qur'an

Faruq Sherif

Garnet Publishing, Reading 1995

This is an immensely useful reference book for the student of Islam, and particularly for one who is not able to read the Qur'an in its original form, since it organises the verses of the Qur'an according to subject matter or themes.

The Qur'an, even when interpreted into another language (note that a 'translation' of the Qur'an is by definition impossible), is laid out in a manner and a style that is unfamiliar to the English reader, and often confusing even to the Arabic language reader. It does not hold what might be called, in modern Western terms, an inherent logic of progression in its message or its themes, dealing instead with its many diverse subjects in very diverse parts and in no apparent order. This guide by Sherif accommodates that fact and creates a pathway of discovery of the Qur'an that is quite unique in the existing literature.

An added attraction of this guide is that draws only upon the Qur'an for its survey of the Qur'anic themes and subjects. Muslims in formulating the tenets of their daily life commonly conflate the teachings of the Qur'an with the teachings of the Prophet and the imams. There is often confusion, thereby, between what is divinely revealed and what is a later accretion taught explicitly by the Prophet in his own oral traditions or interpreted through his deeds. Sherif confines his reporting of the contents of the Qur'an and its necessary exegesis to what exists in the Qur'an, and nowhere else. It is a difficult task that he sets himself and the knowledgeable reader must decide as to the degree of his success. The beginner, however, will find this a highly accessible reference tool.