

Beliefs Across Borders

Compare Israelite beliefs with those of nearby peoples.

SS.6.W.2.9 "Identify key figures and basic beliefs of the Israelites and determine how these beliefs compared with those of others in the geographic area."

NAME _____

DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK _____ Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the names of key Israelite figures. Circle beliefs or practices of the Israelites, then number each detail that compares them with other peoples in the region.

Israelites and Their Neighbors

- ① About 3,000 years ago, the Israelites lived in the Levant, a region along the eastern Mediterranean Sea. Their stories describe Abraham as an early ancestor who made a covenant, or special agreement, with God. Israelites believed that God promised Abraham's descendants a homeland. Later, according to Israelite tradition, Moses led Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. Moses became a key lawgiver and leader. These stories helped the Israelites understand who they were and how they should live.
- ② A central Israelite belief was that one God created the world and guided history. This belief is called monotheism. Israelites also taught that their God expected people to follow moral laws. The Ten Commandments, linked by tradition to Moses, included rules about worship, family, truthfulness, and stealing. In the same broad area, many Canaanite, Egyptian, and Mesopotamian peoples worshipped many gods. Their gods were often connected to forces of nature, cities, or parts of daily life.
- ③ Israelite communities gathered to pray, celebrate festivals, and hear teachings about God's law. Priests had religious duties, and prophets called people to act justly and to worship only one God. King David is remembered as a ruler who made Jerusalem an important political and religious center. Israelite worship eventually centered on the Temple in Jerusalem. Other peoples in the region also had priests, festivals, and temples, but they usually honored several gods there. Similar practices did not always mean similar beliefs.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE Use the passage

1 Who were Abraham and Moses, according to Israelite tradition?

2 What two central ideas did Israelites teach about God and how people should live?

3 Describe one similarity and one difference between Israelite worship and the worship of many nearby peoples.

4 How did the message of Israelite prophets connect to Israelite beliefs?

3 YOUR TURN Your own words

Write a four-sentence exhibit label comparing Israelite religion with religions of many nearby peoples. Name one Israelite figure, explain one Israelite belief, identify one similarity, and explain one difference.

PART 1 • READ AND MARK

Underline the names of key Israelite figures. Circle beliefs or practices of the Israelites, then number each detail that compares them with other peoples in the region. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 • ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Who were Abraham and Moses, according to Israelite tradition?	Abraham was an early ancestor who made a covenant with God. Moses led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt and became a lawgiver and leader.
2	What two central ideas did Israelites teach about God and how people should live?	They taught that one God created the world and guided history. They also taught that God expected people to follow moral laws.
3	Describe one similarity and one difference between Israelite worship and the worship of many nearby peoples.	Both had priests, festivals, and places of worship such as temples. Israelites worshipped one God, while many nearby peoples worshipped many gods.
4	How did the message of Israelite prophets connect to Israelite beliefs?	Prophets called people to act justly and worship only one God, connecting moral behavior with belief in one God.

PART 3 • YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Abraham was an early Israelite ancestor connected to a covenant with God. Israelites believed in one God and taught that people should obey moral laws. Like nearby peoples, they had priests, festivals, and places of worship. Unlike many Canaanite, Egyptian, and Mesopotamian peoples, Israelites worshipped one God instead of many gods.

Accept equivalent wording that accurately identifies Abraham or Moses and distinguishes monotheism from the worship of many gods. For the open response, require all four requested parts and a historically accurate comparison.