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# The Qur'an

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This article covers some basic information about the Qur'an and provides some sections spoken aloud in Arabic.

## Introduction

### The Qur'an

The Qur'an is the holy book for Muslims, revealed in stages to the **Prophet Muhammad** over 23 years.

Qur'anic revelations are regarded by Muslims as the sacred word of **God**, intended to correct any errors in previous holy books such as the **Old and New Testaments**.



A copy of the Qur'an ©

## Origin

The Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad by God in Arabic.

Some Qur'anic fragments have been dated as far back as the eighth, and possibly even the seventh, century. The oldest existing copy of the full text is from the ninth century.

Although early variants of the Qur'an are known to have existed, Muslims believe that the text we have today was established shortly after the death of the Prophet by the Caliph Uthman.

## Contents

There are 114 chapters in the Qur'an, which is written in the old Arabic dialect.

All the chapters except one begin with the sentence *Bismillahir rahmanir raheem*, 'In the name of **Allah** the most merciful and the most kind'. This is the thought with which Muslims should start every action.

The longest chapter of the Qur'an is Surah *Baqarah* (The Cow) with 286 verses and the shortest is Surah *Al-Kawther* (abundance) which has 3 verses.

The arrangement of surahs does not correspond to the chronological order in which they were revealed.

The Qur'an is sometimes divided into 30 roughly equal parts, known as juz'. These divisions make it easier for Muslims to read the Qur'an during the course of a month and many will read one juz' each day, particularly during the month of **Ramadan**.

## Translations

**Translations** of the Qur'an exist in over 40 languages but Muslims are still taught to learn and **recite** it in Arabic, even if this is not their native language and they cannot converse in it.

Translations are regarded by Muslims as new versions of the holy book, rather than as translations in the conventional sense.



Qur'an page ©

## Memorising the Qur'an

At the time of the revelation of the Qur'an, books were not readily available and so it was common for people to **learn it by heart**.

Committing the Qur'an to memory acted as a great aid for its preservation and any person who is able to accomplish this is known as a *hafiz*.

## Respect

The Qur'an is treated with immense respect by Muslims because it is the sacred word of God.

While the Qur'an is recited aloud, Muslims should behave with reverence and refrain from speaking, eating or drinking, or making distracting noise.

## Sunnah and Hadith

In addition to the Qur'an, the other sacred sources are the **Sunnah**, the practise and examples of the Prophet Muhammad's life, and the **Hadith**, reports of what the prophet Muhammad said or approved.

Both the Hadith and Sunnah must adhere to a strict chain of narration that ensures its authenticity, taking into account factors such as the character of people in the chain and continuity in narration. Reports that fail to meet such criteria will be disregarded.

One famous example is that of the scholar of Hadith literature, Imam Bukhari, who travelled several hundred miles on horseback to acquire a Hadith. When he arrived, he saw the man that knew the Hadith deceiving his donkey into thinking there was grain in a sack in order to induce him to move forward. Imam Bukhari promptly left without approaching the man because he was not willing to allow any individual with a questionable personality to join a chain of narration or contribute knowledge that would define the practice of the religion.

## Audio readings

### Audio readings

Imam Misbahi reads passages from the Holy Qur'an.

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English translation: This is the Book. In it is guidance sure, without doubt to those who fear Allah, who believe in the unseen, are steadfast in **prayer** and spend out of what we have provided for them, and who believe in the **revelation** sent to you, and sent before your time and in their hearts have the assurance of the hereafter. They are on true guidance from the Lord, and it is these who will prosper.

In order to see this content you need to have both **Javascript** enabled and **Flash** installed. Visit **BBC Webwise** for full instructions

English translation: Say: "We believe in Allah, and in what has been revealed to us and what was revealed to **Ibrahim**, Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and in the books given to **Musa**, **Isa**, and the prophets, from their Lord: We make no distinction between one and another among them, and to Allah do we bow our will in Islam. " If anyone desires a religion other than Islam, never will it be accepted of him; and in the hereafter he will be in the ranks of those who have lost all spiritual good.