

2. A type of work which provides a legal commentary on these verses.

**asb•b al-nuzül**

Literally, “the causes or occasions of revelation.” This is a genre of work in which the background to the revelation of specific passages, or surahs is explained, usually in the form of an oral report, of events that occurred during the Prophet’s mission. This type of work seeks to show what problem or situation the verse was originally meant to address.

**•fi÷**

Someone who has memorized the Qur’an.

**khatm, khatmah**

1. A complete reading of the Qur’an.
2. A performance of the reading of the entire Qur’an by a professional Qur’an reader.
3. The occasion when a student first finishes reading the entire Qur’an and the celebration or ceremony that is held when this happens.

**maktab/kutt•b**

Traditionally, this was where most Muslims learned how to read and write, as well as some arithmetic and other elementary skills.

**Meccan/Medinan**

Both Muslim and Orientalist scholars divide up the surahs of the Qur’an historically, into those that were revealed when the Prophet was in Mecca (ca. 610-622) and those that were revealed when he was at Medina (c.a 622-632). The Meccan surahs tend to be shorter, have short, rhythmically parallel verses, and include general moral messages such as warnings of the Judgment in the Afterlife. The Medinan surahs are longer, have much longer verses, and include many specific answers to legal and other questions of relevance to an established community. In modern Qur’ans, the caption at the head of each surah usually identifies it as Meccan or Medinan.

**mysterious letters**

Twenty-nine surahs of the Qur’an open with a series of letters from the Arabic alphabet. Their meaning is disputed. Some say that they are abbreviations of important religious terms; others say that they are not meant to be understood by mortals. The Arabic terms for these letters are *muqat•fi•t* “separated, interrupted (letters)” or *faw•ti* “openers.” Examples include *alif-l•m-mim* (A-L-M), *y•-sin* (Y-S), *•mim* (~-M), and so on.

<b>J•hiliyyah</b>	The Islamic term for the pre-Islamic, pagan period, characterized, in the view of the Qur'an, by the worship of many gods and reprehensible religious, social, and other practices.
<b>al-Jaz</b>	Central Western Arabia, where Mecca and Medina are located
<b>Kafibah</b>	Literally "the Cube" The temple or shrine in Mecca. In the Prophet's time an earlier, this was a pagan shrine where many gods were worshipped. it was also the site of a popular annual pilgrimage. The Qur'an interprets this shrine as a Biblical temple originally devoted to the worship of God by Abraham and Ishmael, but corrupted by subsequent generations of Arabs.
<b>al-Hajj</b>	The annual pilgrimage to Mecca
<b>Quraysh</b>	The tribe of the Prophet.
<b>H•shim</b>	The clan of the Prophet.

### Quiz on the Qur'an.

Short answers:

1. What is the term for a verse in the Qur'an?
2. What is the term for a chapter in the Qur'an?
3. How many surahs are there in the Qur'an?
4. Has the Qur'an been translated into English? How many times?
5. Where was the Prophet Muhammad born?
6. Name three characters who appear in both the Qur'an and the Hebrew Bible.
7. Name three characters who appear in both the Qur'an and the Gospels.
8. Name three characters who appear in the Qur'an but appear neither in the Hebrew Bible nor in the Gospels.
9. What are the two names applied to the devil in the Qur'an?
10. What does a *muqri* do?

### Multiple choice:

1. The sacred texts mentioned in the Qur'an include
  - a. the Torah.
  - b. the Gospel.
  - c. the Psalms of David.
  - d. all of the above.
2. What was the name of a school where children learn to memorize the Qur'an?
  - a. *juz*
  - b. *fi*
  - c. *maktab*
  - d. *muqri*

3. When did the *hijrah* take place?
  - a. 570 C.E.
  - b. 622 C.E.
  - c. 632 C.E.
  - d. 750 C.E.
  
4. When did the Prophet Muhammad pass away?
  - a. 570 C.E.
  - b. 622 C.E.
  - c. 632 C.E.
  - d. 750 C.E.
  
5. The mysterious letters occur ...
  - a. at the beginning of the Qur'an.
  - b. at the ends of fifteen surahs of the Qur'an.
  - c. throughout the Qur'an.
  - d. at the beginnings of twenty-nine surahs of the Qur'an.
  
6. The first English translation of the Qur'an was published in
  - a. 1542
  - b. 1649
  - c. 1734
  - d. 1800
  
7. Which of the following are terms applied to prophets in the Qur'an?
  - a. Prophet
  - b. Messenger
  - c. Warner
  - d. All of the above.
  
8. Someone who has memorized the Qur'an is called a
  - a. *ḥafīẓ*.
  - b. *adith*.
  - c. *ajj*.
  - d. *ijz*.
  
9. The term *Yawm al-Din* refers to
  - a. the Day of Judgment.
  - b. the Day of Resurrection.
  - c. the Day of Punishment.
  - d. the Day of Celebration.
  
10. The Prophet Muhammad appears in the Qur'an
  - a. frequently by name.
  - b. never by name.

- c. in every surah.
- d. none of the above.

## The Six Most Popular Texts from the Qur'an:

### *al-F•ti,ah* (Q 1)

In the name of God, the Merciful and Beneficent

1. Praise be to God, Lord of [all] Peoples,
2. The Merciful and Beneficent,
3. King of the Day of Judgment.
4. We worship You, and from You we seek help.
5. Lead us on the straight path,
6. The path of those whom You have blessed,
7. Not of those who have incurred Your wrath, nor of those who have gone astray.

[When Sunni Muslims recite the F•ti,ah, they usually add “Amen” at the end.]

[This is my own translation. This surah is recited when visiting the tomb of a relative, when remembering a deceased relative, when sealing a pact or contract, such as entering into a partnership or reconciling an old feud or conflict, when agreeing on a betrothal or engagement.]

### **Exercise II: Compare and contrast al-F•ti,ah with the Lord's Prayer below.**

What elements are similar? What elements are different? What is the effect on the hearer?

Our Father in heaven,  
Hallowed be your name.  
Your kingdom come.  
Your will be done,  
    on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
And do not bring us to the time of trial, but rescue us from the evil one.

[When reciting this prayer, Christians often add: “For Thine is the power and the power and the glory for ever and ever, Amen.”]

[This is the prayer given by Jesus to his followers in the Gospel of Matthew 6:9-13. The version is that of the New Revised Standard Version]

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### *Surat al-Ikhlās* (Q 112)

In the name of God, the Merciful and Beneficent

1. Say: God is One.
2. God is Everlasting.
3. He neither begets nor was begotten,
4. Nor does He have any equal.

*qul huwa Llāhu ahad \**