



What do these objects tell us about Jewish people and what is important to them?

Prior knowledge

In order to access the learning in this unit, pupils should have learnt:

- about the Torah and its importance to Jewish people
- basic facts about special times for Jewish people, particularly Shabbat, Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah

Assessment for 7–11s

The statements below suggest expected outcomes from this unit for 9-year-olds. Adapt them for the age of pupils you are teaching. These link to the outcomes for this series of books shown on the webpages. You may need to adapt them slightly for the syllabus or guidelines you follow.

Expected outcomes

- Identify the three objects studied in this unit and explain some ways in which they express key Jewish values and beliefs.
- Make clear connections between what Jewish people believe and how they live, individually and in communities, from studying the three objects.
- Consider and weigh up ideas about how the Jewish beliefs, values and ways of living studied in this unit relate to their own experiences and their experiences of the world today, developing insights of their own.

This unit helps pupils in Scotland to achieve RME 1-06a and 2-06a.

Welsh RVE sub-lenses for this unit can be found at www.natre.org.uk/exploring-religion-and-worldviews

Background knowledge for the teacher

Many of us have objects that are of special significance to us and which may, in one way or another, reflect our character, values or ideas that matter to us. Jewish homes and synagogues contain lots of objects like this; they are objects that express ideas and beliefs that are of great importance to Jewish people.

In this unit pupils will investigate the following objects:

A shofar – a ram's horn that, when blown into, produces a very loud and haunting sound, like wailing. The shofar is blown in the synagogue on Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year). Often, Jewish people say that the disturbing sound of the shofar is a like a wake-up call, reminding them that they must make up for their wrongdoings and try to be better in the year to come.

A yad and Sefer Torah – 'yad' is Hebrew for 'hand'. It is an ornamental pointer in the shape of a closed hand with an extended index finger, usually made of silver, and is used as an aid to

reading the Sefer Torah. The Sefer Torah is the handwritten scroll of the five Books of Jewish Law, also called the Books of Moses. These objects together show the importance of the Torah scrolls, the words of which are so precious they should not be touched by human hands.

A Sabbath Book – this is a more unusual artefact and not really used any more. This will put pupils' investigative skills to the test and aid them towards some rich learning about the Sabbath/Shabbat – the Jewish day of rest that begins at sundown on Friday and ends on Saturday – as well as the Jewish commitment to helping others through *tzedakah* (charity). Something similar has been used until very recently at Yom Kippur; in many places all of this has now become digital.

For those using RE Today units of work and syllabuses, this work could be used as part of a sequence of learning in L2.10 How do family life and festivals show what matters to Jewish people? and U2.9 Why is the Torah so important to Jewish people?



Essential knowledge

By the end of this unit pupils should know:

- key tenets of Jewish faith and life: the importance of Shabbat and *tzedakah*, the central role of the Torah and the ways in which the Sefer Torah is shown respect in the synagogue, and the significance of atonement and new beginnings



Key vocabulary:

Shofar, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur/Day of Atonement, *yad*, Sefer Torah/Torah scrolls, parchment/vellum, Sabbath Book, Sabbath/Shabbat, creation, day of rest, *tzedakah*



Next steps

- Visit a local synagogue, Jewish museum or Jewish heritage centre to bring further explorations to life, and/or ask a member of the Jewish community to speak to the class about three objects that are important to them.
- Pupils aged 9–11 can learn more about the importance of the Torah with RE Today's *Inspiring RE: Jewish People*.



Classroom ready resources

Go to www.natre.org.uk/exploring-religion-and-worldviews to access the resources below:

- images and information from the Jewish Museum London to use in Steps 2 and 3
- a link to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Center for Jewish Art, which has the largest digitised collection of Jewish art and artefacts in the world
- audio files of Jewish people reminiscing about their experiences growing up in different areas of Manchester; the files are accompanied by detailed written information
- BBC clips linking to the objects in Steps 2 and 3
- more information about *tzedakah*, from My Jewish Learning
- Resource 4.3 (summary sheet)

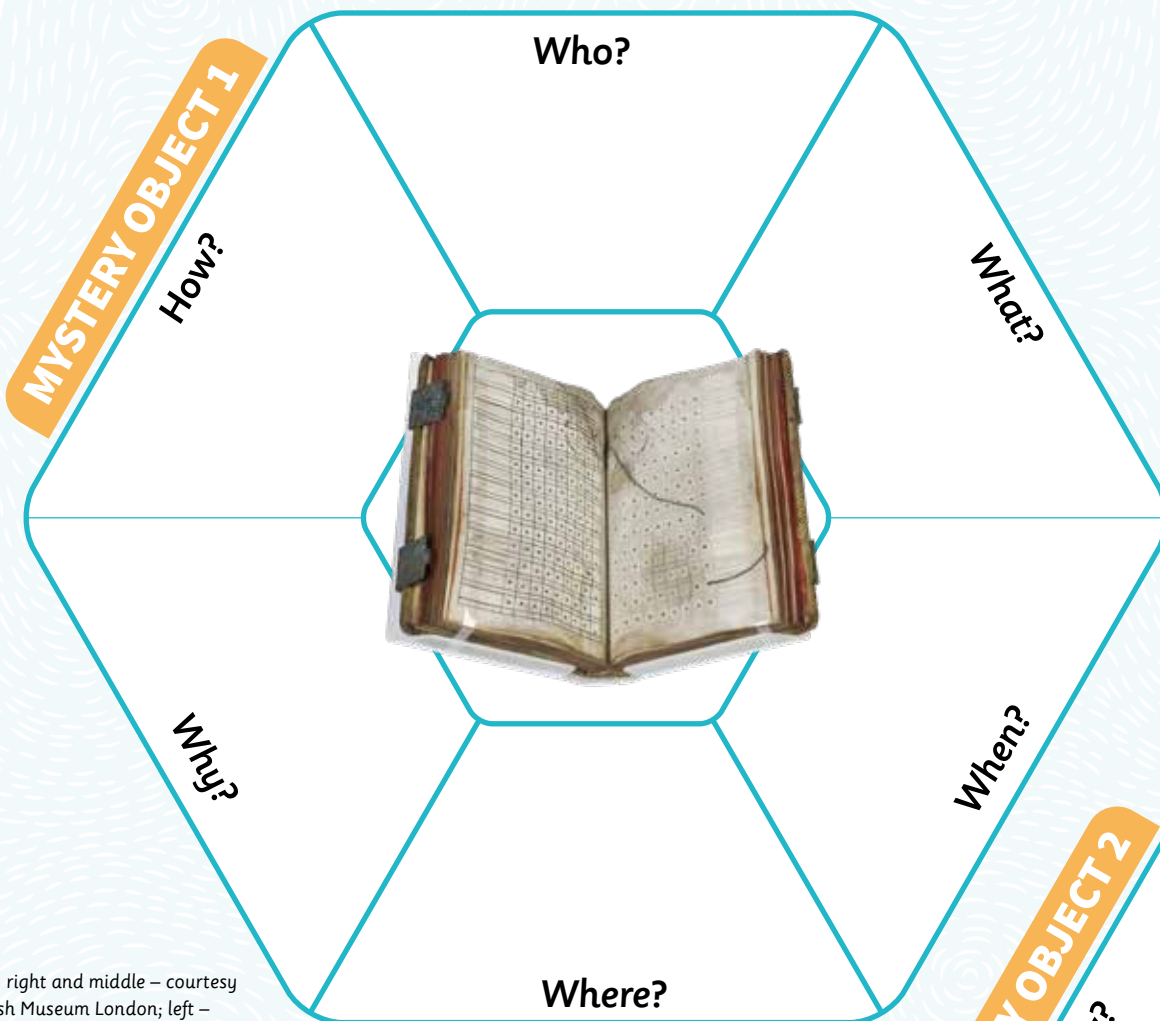
Members are able to download extra resources to support this unit:

- Resource 4.1 as three separate sheets
- a copy of the unit
- a PowerPoint presentation to use with your class

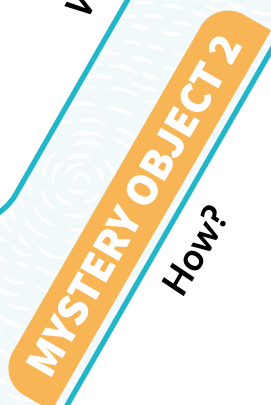
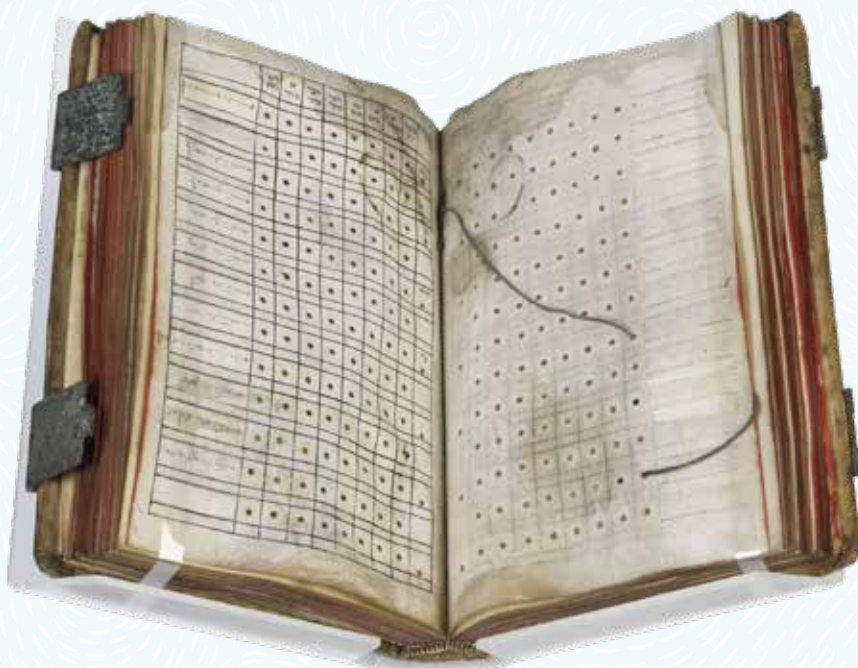


Resource 4.1

Three mystery objects – five Ws and an H



Photos: right and middle – courtesy of Jewish Museum London; left – courtesy of Jewish Museum London / United Synagogue



Wh

Wh



P



OBSERVATION

MYSTERY OBJECT 3

Who?

What?

When?

Where?

How?

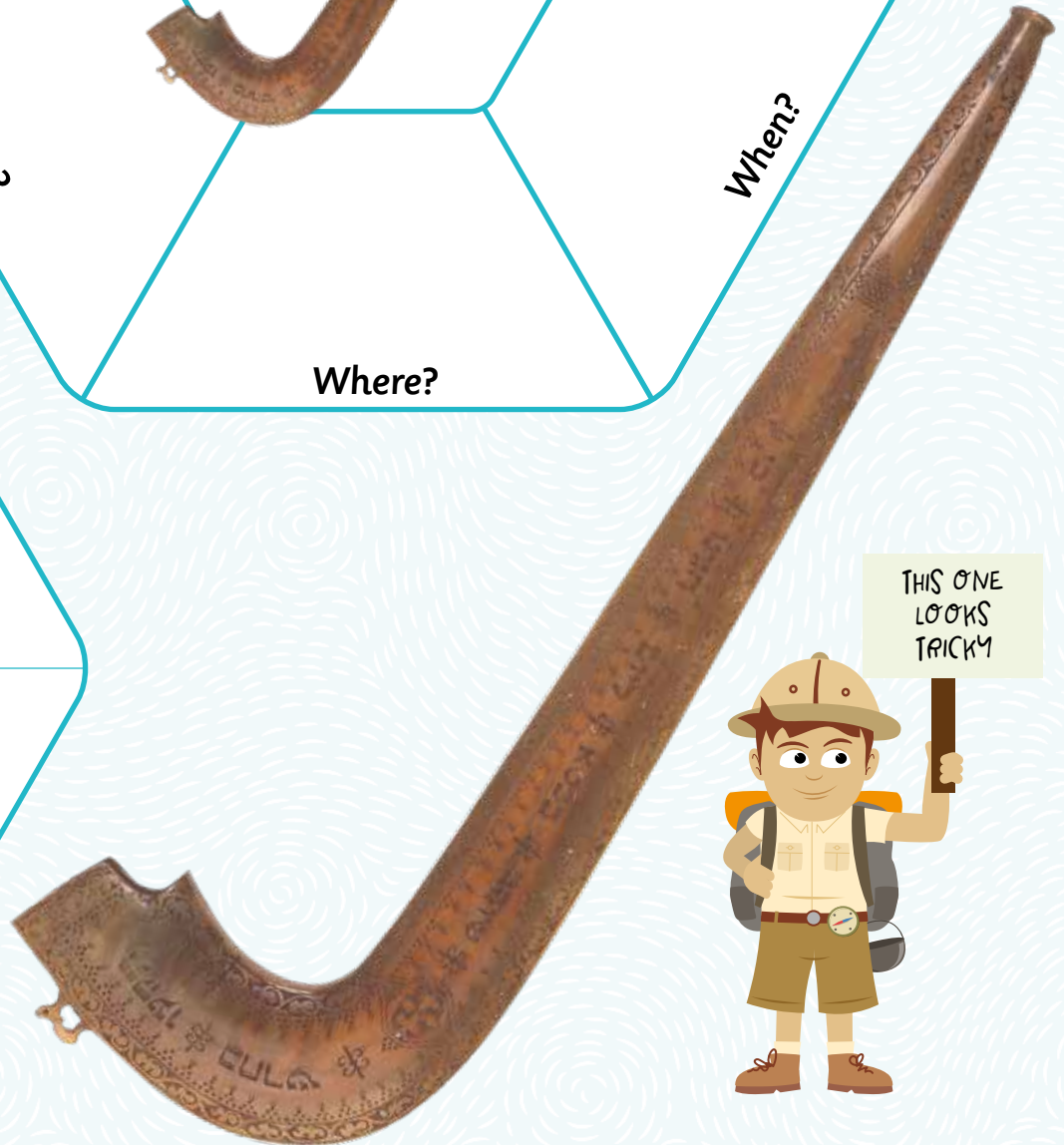
Why?

What?

When?

Who?

Where?



THIS ONE LOOKS TRICKY



Step 1

What objects are important to us?

Ask children to think carefully and list three to five objects that are really important to them. Encourage them to talk in depth about the objects:

- Where are they kept – at home, at school, at a relative's house or elsewhere?
- How often do they see or use the objects?
- How do they engage with or use the objects?
- What makes these objects so special to them?

Allow plenty of time for discussion in pairs or small groups and invite some feedback to the class. Next, ask the children to select the one object that is most important of all to them. You might suggest that they have to give all of them up, except just one.

Ask them to write down three reasons why they chose this object as the most important one.

Who chose an object that was connected with:

- a special memory?
- a celebration or event that happens again and again?
- a special person?
- an idea that is important to them?
- helping them or others?
- something else? (Give time for discussion of these different ideas.)

To extend this activity you could ask the children what they think is the most important object in the classroom. Do they all agree? Perhaps take a vote to decide. Discuss their opinions and the conclusions they reach.



Step 2

Detective work – three mystery objects (five Ws and an H)



OBSERVATION

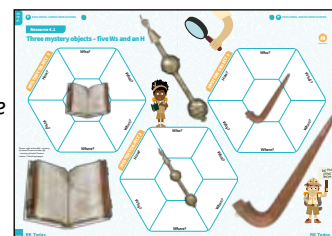
Show children the pictures of the *yad*, shofar and Sabbath Book from the Jewish Museum London (see Classroom ready resources). Introduce these as three mystery objects that the children are going to try to find out about. It is a good idea to have large versions of these photos on display if possible. Tell the class that there is something connecting all three objects.

Use Resource 4.1, pp. 16–17, to encourage some deep thinking and investigation of the mystery objects. Split the class into groups of around four or five 'detectives'. They are going to think about, and discuss with their team, the significance of these objects. Remind them to be thinking about what connects them all.

You might want to start them off with some possible questions that could apply to thinking about all three objects, like these:

- Who might this belong to? Who might use this? Who might think this is a special object?
- What do we think the object is? Does it look familiar? Can we name it?
- When might the object be used?
- When was it made?
- When was it important? Is it still important today?
- Where might the object be found?
- Why do we think this object might be special or important to someone?

Encourage the groups to look carefully at the pictures, to think carefully about what they have learnt already in RE, and to come up with questions and ideas specific to each object.



Can the children guess some answers – might they already know them? Ask them to write their ideas about the answers to these questions into the hexagons, as well as some questions of their own beginning with the 'five Ws' plus 'How'.

Ask each group to choose a scribe to write a short report using the prompts and titles below:

- From looking closely at these three mystery objects, we conclude ...
- Things we are certain about are ...
- Things we are confused about are ...
- We think that the connection between these objects is ...
- We would like to take the following steps to find out more about the mystery objects ...

Bring the class back together to share their reports and ideas. How similar or different are they? This can be a good opportunity to assess prior learning. Can the class draw any firm conclusions?



Step 3

Detective work – three mystery objects



If it is possible for children to have access to the internet in class, share the links in the Classroom ready resources. Otherwise, go to those highlighted in Classroom ready resources and print the information for the children to use. There are also wider research resources suggested in Classroom ready resources.

Allocate one object per group, allowing the children to explore the Jewish Museum's online collection. For each object there are the following sections:

- What can we see?
- What do we know?
- What do we wonder?
- Object file

Give groups time to explore the information and to see to what extent their ideas were correct and which of the questions they raised can be answered. They could record their findings on a page divided into four, with the following headings in each section:

- We were right about ...
- We were wrong about ...
- The main things we learnt about our object from the museum were ...
- We would still like to find out ...

Give children time to research what else they would like to find out. This could be set as an investigative homework, or access to the internet, books and your teaching could be used in class.



Step 4

Peer presentations

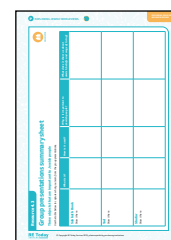
Each group should now be developing some expertise on their focus object. Ask groups to focus on the following three questions and work together to produce a five- to ten-minute presentation on their focus object:

- What is it?
- How is it used?
- Why is this object important to Jewish people?
- What does it show us about Jewish beliefs and ways of living?

Encourage creative approaches to this task. Tell children that the best presentations will be those from which the rest of the class really gets a chance to understand what they have learnt. Suggest some formats that might be engaging but still informative to the audience, such as role play or an interview with a museum expert. Discourage simply talking in front of PowerPoint slides with lots of text on them – perhaps place a limit of no more than eight words to a slide, if groups decide to use PowerPoint. You might wish to introduce a competitive element, with a class poll for which was the best presentation.

Ensure that groups include the key words for each object (see the Key Vocabulary section).

Online Resource 4.3 offers a recording sheet for pupils to record their learning after the presentations.



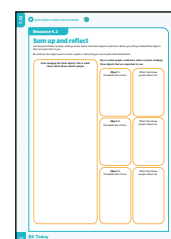
Step 5

Sum up and reflect

Use Resource 4.2 on p. 20 as a framework to reflect on what each child has learnt about Jewish people from studying the objects featured in this unit. Personal reflection is also important.

Thinking back to Step 1 and having built up knowledge from studying the objects in this unit, children are asked to reflect on the objects that sum them up as individuals as well.

Discuss what methods we have used as investigators. Can pupils think of other examples where people can find out about others from exploring objects and doing detective work around them?





Resource 4.2

Sum up and reflect

Use the space below to show what you have learnt and what people could learn about you if they studied three objects that are important to you.

Be creative! You might want to write a poem or decorate your work with some illustrations.

From studying the three objects, this is what
I have learnt about Jewish people:

Here is what people could learn about me from studying
three objects that are important to me:

Object 1:
Draw/describe it here:

What this shows
people about me:

Object 2:
Draw/describe it here:

What this shows
people about me:

Object 3:
Draw/describe it here:

What this shows
people about me: