

Topic	Knowledge
<b>Origins of Buddhism</b>	<p><b>*Buddhism began 2500 years ago in northern India and was founded by a Prince Siddharta Gotama. He was born in 563BC and when he grew up he went in search of the truth about life and became known as The Buddha. When he died in 483 BC his followers took his message to other parts of India.</b> It gradually spread eastwards to countries such as Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Nepal, Bhutan, Japan and China. <b>There are 353 million Buddhists worldwide, they worship in a temple and their holy book is called Tripitaka.</b></p> <p>* Siddharta was born in Lumbini and belonged to a royal family. Before his birth his mother had a strange dream. She dreamt that a white elephant had entered her side and felt this was a sign that the child would be unusual. It is said that the birth of Siddharta caused her no pain. A wise man predicted that the boy would either be a great and powerful ruler or if he saw suffering a holy man. His father did not want his son to be a holy man so kept him in a castle to ensure he saw no pain or suffering. This led to him being haunted by a feeling of restlessness, so he persuaded a servant to take him out of the palace. The things he saw outside the palace changed his life. He saw a sick person in pain, a dead body, and a poor holy man. This led to Siddharta giving up his life in the palace to find the truth about suffering.</p> <p><b>* He sat under a tree at Bodh Gaya to meditate and quietly think to himself about how to achieve enlightenment.</b> While he did this Mara the Evil One appeared to distract him and make him give up. Tempting visions and horrible images flashed in his mind but he ignored them. He sat there day and night until eventually he was ready. He placed his right hand on the earth and asked it to witness he had reached enlightenment. He realised the truth about life and the path to peace. He no longer burned with selfishness or feared suffering and death. From that point on he was known as the Buddha or 'enlightened one' as he'd found Nibbana. <b>His understanding gave him great peace and he wanted to pass onto others the meaning of life.</b></p>
<b>Buddha Images</b>	<p><b>* Buddhists believe Gotama Buddha was a special man because he achieved enlightenment. In homes, temples and shrine rooms there are images and statues of the Buddha.</b> These remind Buddhists of his teachings. Many Buddhists give flowers, incense and lights as a sign of respect. <b>Images of the Buddha are called rupas.</b></p> <p>* The three main positions of statues are sitting, standing and lying down. <b>The most common image is the Buddha seated in a full or half lotus position sometimes on a throne showing meditation. A standing image may show Buddha standing or walking.</b> When lying down the image symbolises the Buddha's entry into Nibbana at the end of his life.</p> <p><b>* Rupas have different hand gestures called mudras. Each represents a different action or intention.</b> When hands are across the body on a seated image in shows meditation. The fingers of both or one hand making a circle means teaching. The right hand turned outwards with fingers pointing down means giving. The right hand raised with the palm facing outwards gives anyone approaching a sense of confidence and protection and is often seen as a blessing. Other features of Buddha images show long earlobes to remind people he gave up a royal lifestyle where he would have worn heavy jewellery. There is usually a bump on his head which symbolises wisdom or the turban he would have worn as a prince. The bump can also appear long and pointed (like a flame) to symbolise enlightenment.</p>
<b>Buddha Teachings</b>	<p>* In Buddhism there are three main teachings. These are: <b>The Four Noble Truths - this is the most basic formulation of the teachings of the Buddha.</b> They are the realisation of the Buddha during this time under the Bodhi tree when he reaches enlightenment. The Eightfold path - is linked to the Fourth Noble Truth as it is the way to achieve enlightenment. It is also known as 'the way', the path to enlightenment and the way to reach Nirvana.</p> <p><b>* The Five Precepts - are ethical teachings on day to day life, how to behave/ live ethically and morally.</b> The Five Precepts are slightly different to the Eightfold path as the Five Precepts are for the lay Buddhist and is not a direct way to reach nirvana. The first teaching that is essential to the Buddhist outlook on life is rebirth. Buddhists believe that we are involved in an eternal cycle of life, death and rebirth. The Four Noble Truths: 1. All life will involve some suffering. 2. The reason we suffer is because we are never satisfied with what we have. 3. Suffering will only end when we find peace and contentment. 4. Following the middle path through life will give us peace and contentment. Buddhists believe that people can only attain Nibbana/Nirvana when you find contentment and peace in what you have and who you are. This then frees you from the cycle of rebirth and you can enter Nirvana. The Five Precepts are guidance for everyday living. They are not called rules because the Buddha accepted that people might break them. 1. I will not harm another living being. 2. I will not take anything that has not been given to me freely. 3. I will not be obscene or behave in a sexually inappropriate way. 4. I will speak truthfully. 5. I will not confuse my brain with drugs and alcohol.</p> <p>* The Buddha was asked for details how to follow the middle path. <b>He gave his followers a list of eight points for guidance called 'The Eightfold Path'.</b> The path can lead a person through their life and is sometimes thought of as spokes on a wheel. 1: Right understanding – Try to see things as they really are. You should accept that nothing lasts forever. 2: Right attitude – Try to think positive thoughts which means thinking kind thoughts about people rather than finding fault. 3: Right speech – Try to tell the truth and not get involved in lies or gossip. 4: Right Action – Try to do things you know are correct. 5: Right Livelihood – Try to choose a job that does not destroy any life or hurt anything or anyone. 6: Right Effort – Try to think about what you say and do before acting. 7: Right awareness/mindfulness – Try to be fully aware of what is going on with yourself and others. 8: Right concentration – Try using meditation to reach a higher level of understanding.</p>
<b>Festivals of Buddhism - Wesak</b>	<p>* Wesak is the most important of all the Buddhist festivals. <b>It honours the Buddha's enlightenment and is celebrated on the full moon in April or May. As well as honouring and reflecting on the Buddha's enlightenment, its value also lies in making suitable gifts to the temple, from the communal celebration, and in the opportunity to learn more about the Buddha's teachings.</b> For some Buddhists, the festival also marks the Buddha's birthday and the day of his death. To celebrate, they might do some or all of these things: <b>Visit the local temple for services and teachings, observe extra precepts, wear white clothing, at least on their upper body and generally look smart, give offerings to the monks e.g. money, food, candles and flowers, take part in processions, decorate shrines, chant and pray and clean and decorate their homes.</b> Lay Buddhists come to temples during Wesak to light lanterns and decorate shrines with flowers. Lights represent the light of understanding that the Buddha's teachings can bring. They also symbolise his enlightenment. Flowers show how fragile and short life is. People also listen to talks about Dharma for example when the Buddha became enlightened, he came to understand the causes of suffering. He said it was caused by peoples' greed, hatred and ignorance. He claimed that many people do not fully understand that everything changes, and nothing stays the same. Not understanding and accepting this causes people to be unhappy. <b>The 'Bathing the Buddha' ceremony is also often included during Wesak. This involves water being poured over the shoulders of the Buddha.</b> It reminds Buddhists to purify their own minds from greed, hatred and stupidity. Gifts are also taken to an altar to be offered to the Buddha statues. This shows respect to the Buddha for his life and teachings. <b>Wesak is significant today because it reminds Buddhists of the importance of the life of the Buddha. While it is a time of celebration, it is also a time for reflection. Wesak gives Buddhists the opportunity to think about what they can learn from the Buddha's life. They remember his teachings, and spend time celebrating with other Buddhists.</b></p>
<b>Meditation</b>	<p>* Meditation is a term for quiet thinking. Many of us often do that at some point during the day. <b>The difference between ordinary thinking and meditation is that meditation calms the body as well as the mind.</b> It is a way of relaxing. Buddhists believe that once the body is relaxed it is easier to work towards spiritual development. why meditate? We lead busy lives, dashing from place to place, which can be very stressful. Taking time out to meditate can be deeply relaxing like re-charging your batteries. When you give yourself time to think calmly, you often find a solution to a problem that has been bothering you. No-one told the Buddha the answers to questions that had been bothering him. <b>Buddhists believe that the answers to many of our problems lie within you. Meditation is used to calm the body and mind in order to unlock the answers to these problems. Buddhists also believe that meditation can bring your mind under control and push out negative thoughts.</b> This then makes a space for feelings of kindness</p>

	<p>and generosity towards others, helping them reach enlightenment like the Buddha. In Buddhist tradition, meditation is the second part of the 'threefold path'. Meditation clarifies and concentrates the mind in preparation for the third training, which is to develop wisdom and enlightenment. The aim of all Buddhist practice is to understand the true nature of our lives and experience. <b>Types of Meditation:</b>  <b>Concentrative</b> – This is where you focus your attention on an object, which could be physical like a candle or a sound, which is why some people choose to chant but most people prefer to focus on their breathing to calm and still the mind. The purpose of concentrative meditation is 'mindfulness' to focus on calming yourself and ridding your mind of negative thoughts. <b>Generative</b> – This is where you develop your kindness towards yourself and others. The first stage of this meditation is to repeat phrases either out loud or in your mind such as 'May I be well and happy. May I progress.' The second stage of this meditation is to think of a good friend and wish them well. The third stage encourages you to think of someone you know but feel neutral towards. The fourth stage is to direct your kindness to someone you dislike and finally you should extend your heart to everyone in the world and all beings everywhere. <b>Receptive</b> – When carrying out this meditation, people keep their eyes open. The idea is to sit calmly and take in or be receptive to the outside world. This type of meditation lets the person be present in the moment. <b>Reflective</b> – This meditation encourages you to turn your attention to a theme e.g. the qualities and teachings of Buddha in order to enhance your own enlightenment. <b>How to meditate: Sitting</b> – People say it helps to sit upright with a straight back with hands rested loosely on your lap, righthand cupped in left. (like the images of the Buddha from lesson 2!) People often close their eyes or look down to avoid distraction. <b>Thinking</b> – It is difficult to think of nothing as this invites many thoughts to pass through your mind all at once. It helps meditation if you have something to focus on. Some people like to imagine a scene e.g. a smooth lake where a pebble has been dropped and the ripples gently flow outwards. <b>Breathing</b> – Concentrating on your breathing is another way of calming the mind and the body. As you breathe in count steadily to four, then breathe out more slowly to a count of eight. Do this several times to quieten you down.</p>
<p><b>Lay Buddhists and the Sangha Community</b></p>	<p>* <b>The Sangha</b> are a community of monks who give up marriage, having a family and household in order to study, pray and teach people about Buddhism. <b>Only a few Buddhists choose to be monks, usually men over the age of 20 so they have had time to decide to become a monk. In some countries without many schools, boys enter the monastery to receive an education. A person who enters a Buddhist monastery gives away his possessions and receives simple robes.</b> It takes two years to become a full monk. Monks follow an additional Five Precepts including to avoid eating after midday, to avoid entertainment, to avoid wearing perfume and jewellery, to avoid sleeping on a comfortable bed and to avoid handling money. When a monk enters a monastery, their head is shaved, and they wear white robes as a learner and red, black or yellow robes after two years. In Buddhist countries temples are used by the community to educate lay Buddhists in Sanskrit so they can learn to read ancient scriptures. The Sangha also teach Dharma and help lay Buddhists develop their skills in meditation.  <b>Lay Buddhists</b> are people who follow the teachings of Buddhism but do not become a priest or monk. Some lay Buddhists may have been brought up in a Buddhist household or may choose to be Buddhist as an adult because they think this is the best way of life for them. <b>Lay Buddhists give money and food to the Sangha and ensure the upkeep of the temple.</b> In return, monks chant scriptures and blessings, which is believed to spread goodwill to the world.</p>

Key Word	Meaning
Enlightenment	When a person has attained spiritual knowledge or awareness that frees a person from the cycle of rebirth.
Buddha	Enlightened one, when Siddharta Gotama finds the truth about life.
Meditate	A time of silence or religious chanting used for spiritual thinking
Nibbana/Nirvana	A perfect place of happiness like heaven.
Triptaka	The holy book of Buddhism
Temple	A building devoted to worship.
Rupas	Images of the Buddha.
Lotus Position	A crossed legged sitting position used for meditation.
Mudras	Hand gestures on a Buddha statue.
Rebirth	The Buddhist belief that after death we are reborn and exist in a different body
The Four Noble Truths	Teachings from the Buddha about why people follow the cycle of rebirth and can't enter Nirvana.
The Five Precepts	5 pieces of advice for everyday living.
The Eightfold Path	A list of 8 pieces of guidance that Buddha gave people to follow throughout their life
Lay Buddhist	A person who practises Buddhism but isn't a monk. They follow the three teachings of Buddha to help them conduct themselves positively and morally.

Dharma	This can be translated as 'truth' and is a term used to describe the teachings on the path to enlightenment.
Wesak	One of the most important Buddhist festivals the celebrates when the Buddha reached enlightenment.
Parinirvana Day	Buddhist festival, which commemorates the death of the Buddha aged 80. It also celebrates the Buddha entering endless Nirvana.
The Sangha	A community of Buddhist monks and nuns.
Sanskrit	Ancient language of India.

Quotes
'Rust grows from iron and destroys it; so evil grows from the mind of a person and destroys him.' The Buddha
'The greatest enemy in life is the self.' The Buddha
'The greatest pride in life is reviving from failure.' The Buddha
'The greatest wealth in life is health and wisdom.' The Buddha
'The greatest gift in life is acceptance and forgiveness.' The Buddha