

Watching the Sky or Doing the Math?

Read the passage and answer the questions. (CEFR B1–B2)

Class _____ No. _____ Name _____



音声を聞こう

- 1 Every year, millions of Muslims wait for the same announcement: has the new crescent moon been seen? Traditionally, a lunar month begins only when people actually see the thin crescent after sunset. Clouds, dust, or a low horizon can hide it, so the start of Ramadan and the date of Eid can differ by a day between neighboring countries.
- 2 Today, astronomers can predict the position of the moon with great accuracy, and some countries rely mainly on these calculations to plan calendars in advance. Others prefer the traditional method, arguing that seeing the moon with one's own eyes is part of the religious practice. In the Philippines, for example, local religious authorities may decide when bad weather makes sighting impossible. Saudi Arabia, for its part, publishes a calculated calendar for everyday use, while its religious authorities still announce the start of Ramadan and the day of Eid after reports of a sighting.
- 3 For Muslim communities abroad, including those in Japan, the question is practical as well as spiritual: should they follow their home country, Saudi Arabia, or the local sky? The debate shows how an ancient tradition and modern science can exist side by side.

Comprehension

1. What is the main idea of the passage?

- (A) All Muslim countries now use only scientific calculations. (B) Muslims use both moon sighting and calculation to set dates, and the two methods exist side by side.
- (C) Seeing the moon is impossible in most countries. (D) Muslims in Japan must follow the Japanese calendar.

2. Why can the start of Ramadan differ by a day between neighboring countries?

- (A) Because each country has a different holy book. (B) Because some countries do not celebrate Eid.
- (C) Because the moon moves faster in some countries. (D) Because clouds, dust, or a low horizon can hide the new crescent.

3. What does Saudi Arabia do, according to paragraph 2?

- (A) It uses a calculated calendar for everyday life but announces Ramadan and Eid after a sighting is reported. (B) It only follows the calendar of the Philippines.
- (C) It has stopped announcing the start of Ramadan. (D) It lets each city decide the date of Eid.

4. What can we infer about Muslims living in Japan?

- (A) They all celebrate Eid on exactly the same day. (B) They never need to think about the calendar.
- (C) Different communities may celebrate Eid on different days, depending on the method they follow. (D) They have stopped fasting during Ramadan.

5. In paragraph 2, the word 'accuracy' is closest in meaning to

- (A) the quality of being exactly correct (B) a religious rule
- (C) a beautiful view of the sky (D) a kind of telescope

6. Why does the writer mention Muslim communities in Japan in the last paragraph?

- (A) To show that Japan has the largest Muslim population. (B) To argue that Japan should create its own Islamic calendar.
- (C) To show that the debate is also a practical problem for Muslims living abroad. (D) To explain why Ramadan is not observed in Japan.



Vocabulary, Paraphrase & Summary

Match the words with the definitions. Then rewrite and summarize.

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|-----------------|--|
| 1. announcement | a. to need or trust someone or something to help you |
| 2. crescent | b. a person or group that has the official power to make decisions |
| 3. horizon | c. connected with religion or with deep feelings and beliefs, not with physical things |
| 4. astronomer | d. an official public statement that gives information about something |
| 5. accuracy | e. the thin, curved shape of the moon when only a small part of it can be seen |
| 6. rely on | f. the line far away where the land or sea seems to meet the sky |
| 7. authority | g. a scientist who studies the stars, planets, and space |
| 8. spiritual | h. the quality of being exactly correct |

Paraphrase — say it in your own words

1. “Traditionally, a lunar month begins only when people actually see the thin crescent after sunset.”

Hint: Start with 'In the traditional way, ...' and use 'cannot start until'.

2. “Others prefer the traditional method, arguing that seeing the moon with one's own eyes is part of the religious practice.”

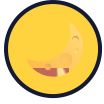
Hint: Use 'because they believe'.

3. “The debate shows how an ancient tradition and modern science can exist side by side.”

Hint: Use 'at the same time' instead of 'side by side'.

Summary

Summarize the passage in about 50 words.



Debate & Opinion Essay

Prepare for a debate. Then write your opinion (100–150 words).

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Motion: Religious calendars should follow scientific calculation rather than moon sighting.

FOR 賛成

- Astronomers can predict the moon with great accuracy, so dates can be planned in advance.
- Calculation avoids differences caused by clouds, dust, or a low horizon between neighboring countries.
- For communities abroad, a calculated date makes it easier to plan school, work, and family events.

Add your own reason:

AGAINST 反対

- For many believers, seeing the moon with one's own eyes is part of the religious practice itself.
- A religious tradition should be decided by its own community, not only by scientific convenience.
- Countries like Saudi Arabia already use both methods, which shows that one does not need to replace the other.

Add your own reason:

Opinion	<i>I believe / I think that ...</i>
Reason 1	<i>First, ... For example, ...</i>
Reason 2	<i>Second, ... In fact, ...</i>
Counter	<i>Some people say ... However, ...</i>
Conclusion	<i>In conclusion, ...</i>