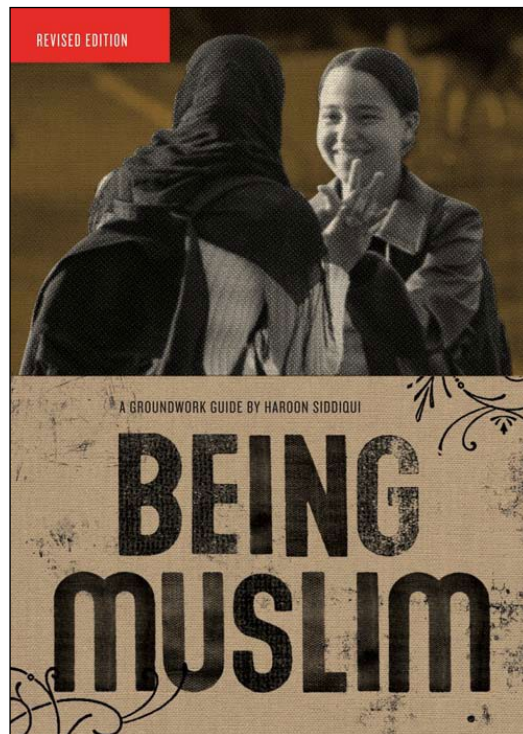




# GROUNDWOOD STUDY GUIDES

## Being Muslim (Revised edition) A Groundwork Guide

*Written by* Haroon Siddiqui



*Being Muslim* is written for Muslims and non-Muslims alike. It presents a readable explanation of the most complex and emotion-laden issues of our troubled times. The varying branches of Islam are analyzed and their history outlined — but the focus is on the present.

### CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

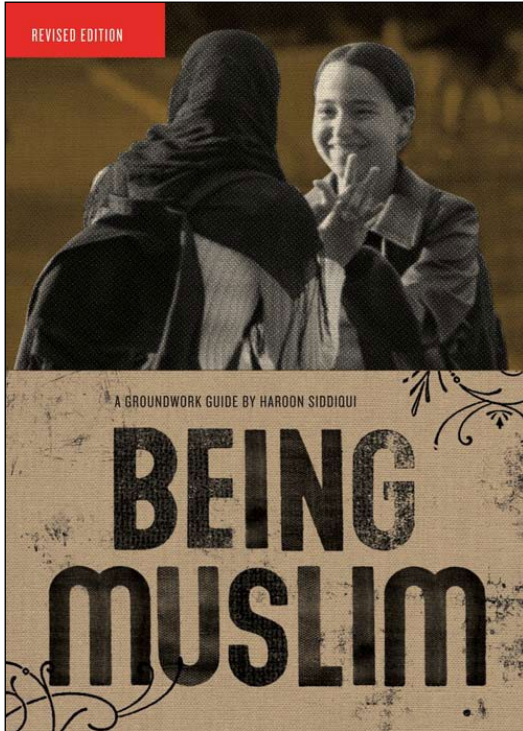
Ages 14 and up / Grades 9 and up

YOUNG ADULT NONFICTION / Religious studies / Islam

7.13 x 5.13 / 160 pages

Hardcover with jacket / \$10.00 / 978-0-88899-887-3 / ebook 978-1-55498-001-7

[groundwoodbooks.com](http://groundwoodbooks.com)



## BOOK DESCRIPTION

This book is about the issues that affect Muslims today and it is also about Islam, providing an introduction to the faith and how it is practiced.

The book examines the following:

- the range of political issues that have arisen around Islam
- challenges for European Muslims
- issues for Muslim women
- terrorism, and the meaning of jihad
- the hopes for new understanding between the West and Muslims

## CURRICULUM CONNECTIONS

- Humanities and Social Sciences
- Social Studies (Civics, Geography, History, World Studies)
- Business Studies (Economics)
- English Language Arts
- Arts (Visual Arts, Theater Arts)
- Information & Communications Technology
- Health/Career and Life Management

## IDEAS FOR GETTING STARTED

Introduce the book and your goals for studying it, and briefly outline the issues the book explores. Tell students that issues-based study raises varied opinions, and that, as a class, you will set some ground rules for maintaining a respectful and safe classroom atmosphere for discussing personal views and beliefs. Ask the class to collaborate to create a list of expectations, such as “We’ll respect one another’s privacy”; “We’ll listen to one another”; and “We won’t insult one another.” Post the list and revisit it periodically to allow students to make observations and air problems.

Use Getting Started: Language Matters (in this Teachers’ Guide) to ensure correct usage of terms and also to introduce the need for accuracy, fairness and respect in talking about religions and cultures. Answers for the worksheet are: (1) place of worship, temple, wat; (2) Christianity; (3) temple, mandir, place of worship; (4) Islam; (5) Jewish; (6) Buddhist; (7) Hindu; (8) Islamic; (9) Judaism; (10) Judaic synagogue; (11) Muslim; (12) Muslims.

Read aloud the first sentence of the book on page 9. Have students respond to it in writing — they can keep their writing private. After your study of the book ask students to return to what they wrote and reflect on whether their thoughts have changed.

Select a video about Islam to show to the class and follow it up with a class or small-group discussion. Afterward, ask students to identify questions they would like answered in their study of *Being Muslim*.

## TEACHING/LEARNING APPROACHES

Read the book as a class, with group or class discussions at the end of each chapter and a culminating activity at the end. You could use a combination of teacher read-aloud, guided reading and independent reading.

Have students read the book independently and create their own independent study project.

Assign groups of students one chapter each and have them read it and present it to the rest of the class.

Have students read the book in groups and then either collaborate on a culminating activity or complete it independently.

Ask students to keep an Issues Journal (in writing or on audio or video) in which they comment on what they have read and/or discussed. Encourage frequent updates throughout the study of Being Muslim. Let students know from the outset whether the journal is for personal use only, or if it's meant to be part of their assessment.

## IDEAS FOR DISCUSSION

How did you feel when you were reading this book? What did you learn? What surprised you? What misconceptions did you have that were corrected? What do you agree with? What do you disagree with? What would you like to learn more about?

The author writes, “It was inevitable that many Muslims would find comfort in Islam.” (p. 28). What does he mean — what reasons does he cite?

In North America, how can we change behaviors and attitudes to make North American Muslims feel that they are not “foreigners”?

What is xenophobia? How does the author support his statement that “The twin European pathologies of xenophobia and Islamophobia have come together in a toxic mix.” (p. 38).

Are Muslim women oppressed by their religion? How does the book approach this subject?

What appeals to you about the Haj? What would you like to ask someone who has completed the pilgrimage?

## IDEAS FOR ACTIVITIES

Students create a glossary of terms they encounter throughout *Being Muslim*. For a deeper understanding, they could create a chart of the terms, organized by categories, such as places, people and groups, Islamic beliefs and Muslim practices.

**Subjects: Humanities and Social Sciences, English Language Arts, History**

Invite a guest speaker to the class to speak about Islam. Invite a local Islamic scholar, Muslim religious or community leader, or a faculty member from a local college or university. Students could think of questions in preparation for the speaker.

**Subjects: Humanities and Social Sciences, English Language Arts, History**

Students compare and contrast the Five Pillars of Islam with the duties of another religion with which they are familiar. They could present their comparison in an essay or with a graphic, such as a large Venn diagram or T-chart.

**Subjects: Humanities and Social Sciences, English Language Arts**

Students address “Islamophobia,” and the expectation that every Muslim must explain or apologize for the actions of a few, through drama — a monologue, script for a play, music video or improvisational role-play. They could brainstorm locations and scenarios as a class before they begin. Some examples: a Muslim man talks to a customs official at a North American border; a Muslim family immigrates to a town in North America where no other Muslim families live; an Arab Muslim man boards a plane whose other passengers are all non-Muslim; a North American Muslim girl wants to take part in a community play but does not want to remove her hijab for the role.

**Subjects: Humanities and Social Sciences, Arts (Theater Arts), English Language Arts, Health/Career and Life Management**

Students select a political event, conflict or incidence of anti-Islamic prejudice described in the book that they want to explore further. For example: the 1991–2003 US-led sanctions on Iraq; The Patriot Act; wars in Chechnya; the torture of Maher Arar; the resistance to allowing Turkey to join the European Union. Students can present their research findings in an essay, oral report or slideshow.

**Subjects: Humanities and Social Sciences, History, World Studies, English Language Arts**

Students search resources such as web articles, print articles and books, videos and websites of Muslim women's groups to learn more about Muslim women's experiences and perspectives on issues that they face. They could share the information they find in groups and then follow up with a discussion of their perceptions of Muslim women's rights, and how their perceptions compare with what the author of *Being Muslim* writes.

**Subjects: Humanities and Social Sciences, History, World Studies, English Language Arts**

Using information from *Being Muslim* and information they research, students design a website for younger students (grades 6–8) that provides information about Islam. They could include written informative reports along with maps, photos, graphs, video clips and so on. Alternatively, they could write a children's book on Islam. They should have their work reviewed by Muslim reviewers, make any revisions, and then share their work with their target audience.

**Subjects: Humanities and Social Sciences, English Language Arts, History, Geography, Information and Communications Technology**

Students organize a debate on an issue arising from *Being Muslim*. They choose the issue, the opposing viewpoints, conduct supporting research and conduct the debate. To deepen understanding continue the same debate but have students change to the opposing side, do further research and continue the debate process.

**Subjects: Humanities and Social Sciences, English Language Arts**

Reread pages 33–35 of *Being Muslim*, where the author advises Muslims on how to meet their challenges. Students then write an “answer” to this address in which they advise non-Muslims on how to adjust their attitudes toward Muslims and how to reach the same degree of excellence that he exhorts. Students could respond in written paragraphs, a video or an audio recording, or in the form of a creed or personal journal entry.

**Subjects: Humanities and Social Sciences, English Language Arts**

Arrange for a visit to a mosque. If you have Muslim students in your classroom, and if they are comfortable with doing so, have them organize the visit and help with providing the “guided tour.”

**Subjects: Humanities and Social Sciences**

## CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER GROUNDWORK GUIDES

- See *Democracy* for themes of democracy in the Middle East and its geostrategic significance, and of Islamist movements.
- See *Empire* for themes of the influence of the American Empire and interventionism, and of racism.
- See *Genocide* for accounts of genocide in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Cambodia.
- See *Oil* for themes of economic factors and interventionist policies.
- Have students select other books in the series for independent study.

## GETTING STARTED: LANGUAGE MATTERS

In discussing world cultures and religions, we aim for respect, fairness and accuracy. A good place to start is with accurate usage of terms — even with the seemingly minor issue of using adjectives and nouns correctly. What's wrong with the following phrases? Beside each item, write your correction of the italicized word.

1. Buddhist *church*
2. *Christian* is a world religion
3. Hindu *church*
4. *Muslim* is a world religion
5. *Judaism* man
6. *Buddhism* people
7. *Hinduism* beliefs
8. *Islam* prayer
9. *Jewish* is a world religion
10. Judaic *church*
11. *Islamic* woman
12. among *Islams*



## STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT OF RESEARCH SKILLS

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Rate your research skills using the following chart.  
Rate your performance for each category/criteria,  
based on the following ratings. You and your teacher  
can add comments in the Comments column.

3 = Excellent  
2 = Satisfactory  
1 = Needs Improvement

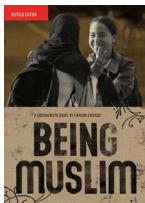
| CATEGORY/CRITERIA  | RATING | COMMENTS |
|--|--------|----------|
| identifies specific purposes to guide the research                             |        |          |
| uses a variety of sources, both print and online                               |        |          |
| chooses resources that are appropriate for the topic                           |        |          |
| finds specific and relevant information on a website                           |        |          |
| chooses resources that are reliable and current                                |        |          |
| distinguishes fact from opinion in resources                                   |        |          |
| records and organizes information, and summarizes in own words                 |        |          |
| acknowledges sources and identifies material copied directly from the resource |        |          |

## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY



**HAROON SIDDIQUI** is a voice of moderation and wisdom in the post-9/11 world. As a newspaper columnist for Canada's largest circulation newspaper, the *Toronto Star*, he has a readership that includes people from many cultures and his work has been recognized as promoting understanding between them. Haroon has been awarded the Order of Canada, the nation's highest civilian honor, for his journalistic contributions as well as for his volunteer work. He lives in Toronto, Ontario.

## GROUNDWORK GUIDES



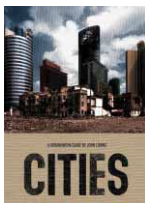
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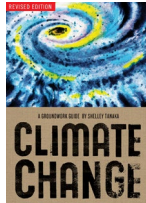
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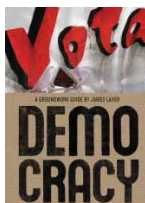
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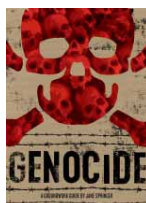
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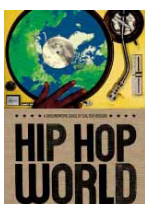
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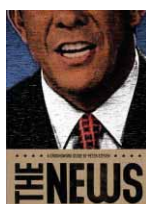
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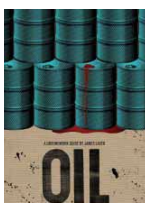
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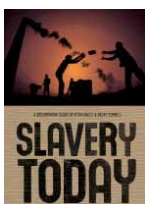
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