



Journeys

Recommended year group: Year 7

Subject focus: Geography, English, History, RE

Driving Question

Why do people go on journeys and how do journeys change people?

Introduction

The aim of this theme is to help students explore the different reasons why people undertake journeys and to consider how these journeys can change those who make them. The theme begins with key map-reading and navigation skills that allow travellers to move successfully from one place to another. Students then build their place knowledge of the Middle East and investigate why this region has been so significant both historically and today.

Focusing first on Christianity and then Islam, students examine the religious pilgrimages undertaken by followers of each faith, exploring why these journeys take place and what lasting effects they may have. They then compare modern religious journeys and contemporary poetry with those from the medieval period, asking: Have the reasons for pilgrimage changed over time, or have some motivations stayed the same across the centuries?



Key vocabulary

Arafat, Apparition, Biome, Canterbury, Career, Chaucer, Climate, Compass rose, Contour lines, Crusades, Denomination, Desert, Distance, Doom Painting, Ecosystem, Foreign Aid Worker, Grotto, Grid reference, Hajj, Immaculate Conception, Inference, Interpretation, Mecca, Oil, Pilgrimage, Provenance, Prologue, Scale, Sensory, Shrine, Simile, Sin, Social status, Social worker, Source, Spiritual Leader, Venerate

READ

***Young Heroes: Inspiring Stories of Courage and Determination* — Hilary & Greg Robinson**

Real stories of young people around the world who have taken life-changing journeys — including migration, activism, and personal challenge.

LISTEN

BBC Radio 4 – “*The Documentary: Pilgrimage*”

A short radio documentary exploring the reasons people still choose to go on pilgrimages today.

WATCH

National Geographic – “*Inside Mecca*”

A clear, respectful documentary showing the stages of the Hajj.

Learning Checks

Lesson 4 Big Read - What language does Chaucer use to show where your chosen character is in the social standing of Medieval England?

RL.HC.01: Analyse how historical context effects the content and style of a text.

Lesson 6: Crusades - Evidence A and B: “How useful is each piece of evidence for telling us what Saladin was like?” **SE.HS.03** Using historical sources

Lesson 8 – Big Write – Sensory description. **CL.WP.01:** Write imaginative, interesting and developed texts (Ideas)

Extended learning opportunities

Students could use these ideas to explore different features of the theme.

Careers

Ideas within the theme can be used alongside careers lessons to discover career pathways associated with key elements of learning from this theme.

Explore careers in care

[care | Search | National Careers Service](#)

[Health & Welfare Videos - Get Career Confident](#)

Places to visit

This section offers a selection of virtual trips which supports knowledge of key areas and attractions from the lessons.

[Virtual tour to Canterbury Cathedral](#)

[Virtual tour to Lourdes](#)

[Virtual tour to Hajj](#)



People, Place and Time

People: shows individuals whose journeys shaped history, religion, exploration and culture. It explains how their travels influenced religion, literature, national development, poetry, pilgrimage, and exploration.

Place: major pilgrimage locations around the world,. It describes why each site is spiritually significant and how millions of people continue to travel to these places for worship, healing, celebration, or connection to their faith traditions.

Time: shows human migration across history. It presents a timeline from prehistoric migrations to the Syrian refugee crisis. It shows how people have always moved for survival, belief, opportunity, or safety

Family learning opportunities

Using a world map, trace the route of Xuanzang, Ibn Battuta or Lewis & Clark and add small pictures or notes at each major stop.

Choose one site—such as Lourdes, the Golden Temple, Mecca, or the Western Wall—and explore a virtual tour together.

They then discuss: *Why do people visit this place? What emotions might pilgrims feel?*

Discuss the different reasons people migrated in the timeline (e.g., climate change, persecution, exploration).

Students then explain which reason they think is most common today and why.

1. *The Girl Who Stole an Elephant* — Nizrana Farook

A bold adventure through the Sri Lankan jungle as Chaya leads a dangerous escape. A journey of bravery, friendship and doing what's right.

2. *The Explorer* — Katherine Rundell

After a plane crash in the Amazon, four children must navigate the rainforest to survive. A journey of discovery, resilience and teamwork.

3. *The Breadwinner* — Deborah Ellis

Parvana disguises herself as a boy to support her family under Taliban rule. A powerful journey that explores courage, identity and responsibility.

4. *Journey to the River Sea* — Eva Ibbotson

Sent from England to Brazil, Maia travels deep into the Amazon and discovers a world full of mystery and wonder. A classic journey of self-discovery.

5. *A Long Walk to Water* — Linda Sue Park

Two stories set in Sudan — one modern, one historical — intertwine to show how journeys for water, safety and survival shape lives.

6. *Wolf Brother* — Michelle Paver

Set in the Stone Age, Torak must trek through forests, mountains and danger to defeat a demon bear. A physical and spiritual journey.

7. *Refugee* — Alan Gratz

Three young people — in Nazi Germany, 1990s Cuba, and modern Syria — each take life-changing refugee journeys to seek safety and hope.

8. *The Nowhere Emporium* — Ross MacKenzie

Daniel stumbles into a magical shop that moves from place to place. His journey blends mystery, magic and self-discovery.

9. *Wonder* — R.J. Palacio

Auggie's journey isn't across a landscape but through the challenges of starting school. A powerful emotional journey about kindness and courage.

10. *The Boy at the Back of the Class* — Onjali Q. Raúf

A group of children help a refugee boy reunite with his family. A modern journey of friendship, empathy and global awareness.

Lessons

Lesson title	Subject	Essential knowledge/concepts	Competencies	National curriculum coverage
Lesson 1: Geographical Map Knowledge – OS Map Skills	Geography	Identify key features of map skills. Apply map skills to different scenarios.	SE.GE.04 Demonstrate map skills	Geography Interpret a range of sources of geographical information, including maps, diagrams, globes and aerial photographs and Geographical Information Systems (GIS).
Lesson 2: The Middle East	Geography	Identify where the Middle East is and describe key physical features. Describe why the Middle East is important for religious journeys Explain why the Middle East is significant for oil production and global trade.	SE.GE.01 Demonstrate knowledge of locations, places, environments and different scales	Geography Build on knowledge of globes, maps and atlases and apply and develop this knowledge routinely in the classroom and in the field.
Lesson 3: Medieval Pilgrimage	History	Explore the features of a religious pilgrimage. Using historical interpretation skills, study a variety of sources, investigating a range of reasons why people went on journeys and pilgrimages during the Medieval period.	SE.HS.03 Using historical sources	History Understand the methods of historical enquiry, including how evidence is used rigorously to make historical claims, and discern how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been constructed. The development of Church, state and society in Medieval Britain 1066-1509
Lesson 4: Chaucer – Big Read	English	Analyse extracts from Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. Investigate how historical context affects different characters and our understanding of them.	RL.HC.01 Analyse how historical context effects the content and style of a text.	English NC Develop an appreciation and love of reading, and read increasingly challenging material independently through pre-1914 texts. Understand increasingly challenging texts through knowing the purpose, audience for and context of the writing and drawing on this knowledge to support comprehension.

Lesson 5: Careers that Care	PD	Identify how different jobs may have skills that are applicable to each other. Describe how these skills can be used in more than one profession.	PD.CA.02: Experiencing the world of work	Gatsby Benchmark 4: Linking curriculum learning to careers.
Lesson 6: The Crusades	History	Investigate the Crusades and understand why people went on Crusades. Infer information from a source. Evaluate how useful a source is	SE.HS.03 Using historical sources	History Understand the methods of historical enquiry, including how evidence is used rigorously to make historical claims, and discern how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been constructed. The development of Church, state and society in Medieval Britain 1066-1509 - Christendom, the importance of religion and the Crusades
Lesson 7: Christian Pilgrimage – Lourdes	RE	Investigate current pilgrimages, in particular the Christian Pilgrimage to Lourdes. Identify, describe and explain the traditions and practices associated with the pilgrimage to Lourdes, building knowledge of the Christian religion.	SE.RE.02: Make sense of religious practices	SACRE RE Make connections between religious and non-religious beliefs, concepts, practices and ideas studied.
Lesson 8 - Big Write Sensory description	English	Identify the components of sensory description, focusing on similes Use prior knowledge of descriptive writing to describe a setting from a pilgrimage journey from a first-person point of view.	CL.WP.01: Write imaginative, interesting and developed texts (Ideas)	Acquire a wide vocabulary, an understanding of grammar and knowledge of linguistic conventions for reading, writing and spoken language Write clearly, accurately and coherently, adapting their language and style in and for a range of contexts, purposes and audiences
Lesson 8: Islamic Pilgrimage – The Hajj	RE	Identify, describe and explain the traditions and practices associated with Hajj, building knowledge of the Islamic religion. Reflect on the importance pilgrimages have on people. Write a justified response to the statement: 'Pilgrimages are a waste of time and money'.	SE.RE.02: Make sense of religious practices	SACRE RE Make connections between religious and non-religious beliefs, concepts, practices and ideas studied.