

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Block: \_\_\_\_\_

### Islamic Calendar

The Islamic calendar (or Hijri calendar) is a lunar calendar. It contains 12 months that are based on the motion of the moon, and because 12 lunar months is  $12 \times 29.53 = 354.36$  days, the Islamic calendar is consistently shorter (11 days) than a solar year, and therefore it shifts with respect to the Gregorian calendar.

The Islamic calendar is the official calendar in countries around the Gulf, especially in Saudi Arabia. But other Muslim countries use the Gregorian calendar for civil purposes and then turn to the Islamic calendar for religious purposes.

Each month starts when the lunar crescent is first seen after a new moon.

Years are counted since the Hijra, that is, Prophet Muhammad's migration to Medina, which is assumed to have taken place 16 July 622. On that date started the year of the Hijra. Note that although only  $2002 - 622 = 1380$  years have passed in the Christian calendar, 1423 years have passed in the Islamic calendar, because its year is consistently shorter (by about 11 days) than the tropical year used by the Christian calendar.

As the year in the Islamic calendar is about 11 days shorter than the year in the Christian calendar, the Islamic years are slowly gaining in on the Christian years. But it will be many years before the two coincide. The 1<sup>st</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> month of CE 20, 874 in the Gregorian calendar will also be (approximately) the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> month of AH 20,874 of the Islamic calendar.

1. What is the formula for calculating a lunar year? \_\_\_\_\_ months X \_\_\_\_\_ days = \_\_\_\_\_ days
2. Why do some countries use both the lunar calendar and the Gregorian calendar?
3. When does a new month start in the Islamic calendar?
4. Why is the date July 16, 622 so important to Muslims?
5. The Islamic calendar is how many days shorter than the Christian calendar? Why?