

Torah

The Torah is the first 5 books of the Bible. They are sometimes called The Five Books of Moses. Many Jews believe that God wrote the Torah and gave it to Moses to give to the people. Use an English Bible and the clues to help you fill in the table.



Clues:

- The book called Leviticus is known in Hebrew as Vayikra.
- Shemot means Names.
- The Hebrew word Borayashit and the English word *Genesis* have the same meaning.
- Putting -im on the end of a Hebrew word is the same as putting -s on the end of an English word.
- Bemidbar is the Hebrew name of the 4th book.
- Devar is Hebrew word that means word.

The 5 Books of Torah

English Name	What it means	Hebrew name	What it means
	Creation		Creation
	Leaving	Shemot	
	For the Priests		And He called
	Numbers		In the wilderness
	Second Law	Devarim	

When you have filled the table, cut it out and stick it into your RE book.

Illustrate your page with a picture of a scroll or perhaps with Jewish symbols such as the Star of David or the Menorah.

When the Torah is read in a synagogue it is read from a **Torah Scroll**. Jewish people call the scroll a **Sefer Torah** (you say say-fer). Sefer is a Hebrew word meaning book. A Torah scroll must be written on **parchment** (which is a kind of leather) and must be written **by hand**, with a pen that is not made of any metal that could be used to make weapons. If any mistakes are found in a scroll, it cannot be used until the mistake has been corrected. If a scroll is unrolled it is as long as a football pitch!

Torah scrolls are very precious because they contain the word of God and also because they are very expensive. It can take a scribe several years to complete one. Jewish communities are very careful with their Torah scrolls and treat them with great respect. They are kept in a special cupboard called the **Ark**. Each scroll is "dressed" in beautiful covers and has silver ornaments and bells.

Before any of the Torah is read from a scroll, the scroll is taken in a procession around the synagogue so that every one can see it. After its covers have been taken off and it has been unrolled to the right place, it is held up high so that people can see the writing in it.

It is a great honour to be called to help read from the Torah.

Teacher's notes

The English names of the books come mostly from Greek or Latin. The Hebrew names are taken from the first noun or verb in each of the books.

Pronunciations

Boraysheet

Shemot

Viy-ikra

B'midbar

De-varim

There is good evidence that the text of the Torah has been passed down unchanged since biblical times. Scribes who write scrolls must undergo long training and are required to observe many rules that ensure care and accuracy in their text. Mistakes in writing scrolls are occasionally found and can be corrected, although a mistake in the name of God requires a whole panel to be rewritten, since that cannot be corrected. A scroll can be expected to last for over 100 years. Its text will eventually fade. Minor fades can be put right but when a scroll is beyond repair it must be "retired" to a special repository. It cannot be thrown away, since it contains the name of God.