




RE: What is good and what is challenging about being a Jewish teenager in the UK today?

1. Key People

Abraham	The first leader of the Jews, when they were called "Hebrews". It is said God agreed to make Abraham's people into a great nation in return for their worship.
Moses	Moses is said to have formed a special relationship with God and led the Hebrews out of Egypt. They then became known as "Israelites".
Traditional Jews	These Jews follow the instructions in the Torah closely. Some do this strictly, while others are more relaxed.
Progressive Jews	These Jews have adapted some of the teachings of the Torah to take account the challenges of today's world.
The rabbi	"Rabbi" means "teacher". Leading services in synagogues, they instruct others in the mitzvot.

4. Concepts

Identity and Community		worship 
Living a Good Life	relationships 	morality 

2. You need to know...

- It is said that God **chose** the Jews to be his people and set an example to the world
- It is said that Abraham and Moses both agreed to worship God by keeping laws in return for **God's favour** and God leading them to Canaan, the **Promised Land**
- Jews are taught that God **revealed** commandments to Moses that were eventually **written down** (in Hebrew) as the **Torah**, which are also called the Five Books of Moses
- The **Tanakh** is a **combination** of the Torah, stories about prophets, and other writings focused on God
- During Shabbat there are several services at synagogues and a **special meal** is served at home on Saturday
- Most Jews agree that **no work** is to be done during Shabbat, but "work" is interpreted differently by different Jewish groups
- **Rosh Hashanah** and **Yom Kippur** are the most important days of the Jewish year. They are called the **Days of Awe**.
- It is said that God spends the time between the two days **judging** each person's deeds and makes a final decision on Yom Kippur, the **Day of Atonement**.
- Many Jews spend the **10 days** between the Days of Awe reflecting on their behaviour, asking God for forgiveness and making amends

3. Key vocabulary

Torah	"passed on instructions". The name of the first five books of the Jewish Bible.
Tanakh	The Jewish Bible.
Shabbat	"rest". A weekly day of rest for Jews.
covenant	A binding agreement.
mitzvot	"commandments" The 613 laws of Judaism. The singular is "mitzvah".
Rosh Hashanah	"head of the year". The start of a period where God is said to judge everyone.
Yom Kippur	"Day of Atonement". The first day of the new Jewish year, in September/ October.

5. Contexts

All about God

- The mitzvot are either about doing things for God or how you treat others, so that God is pleased
- There's not much in the Tenakh about an afterlife- follow God's laws and whatever happens, happens

"God's chosen people"

- This term has often been misinterpreted
- It means that God has chosen the Jews to do things differently from God's other creations
- Most Jews would say they're not more special than anyone else, they just have extra duties

Diversity

- Not all Jews are the same!
- Most Jews in the UK are Traditional, but this branch has differences within it; synagogue attendance is just one example