

**Write Now** → Soar the following passage on the Five Pillars and the Qur'an (Koran).

### **Beliefs and Practices of Islam**

The main teaching of Islam is that there is only one God, Allah. All other beliefs and practices follow from this teaching. Islam teaches that there is good and evil, and that each individual is responsible for the actions of his or her life.

### **The Five Pillars**

To be a Muslim, all believers have to carry out five duties. These duties are known as the Five Pillars of Islam.

- 1) **Faith:** To become a Muslim, a person has to testify to the following statement of faith: "There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger of Allah." This simple statement is heard again and again
- 2) **Prayer:** Five times a day, Muslims face towards Mecca to pray. They may assemble at a *mosque*, and Islamic house of worship, or wherever they find themselves.
- 3) **Alms:** Muhammad taught that all Muslims have a responsibility to support the less fortunate. Muslims meet that social responsibility by giving alms, or money for the poor, through a special religious tax.
- 4) **Fasting:** During the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, Muslims fast between dawn and sunset. A simple meal is eaten at the end of the day. Fasting serves to remind Muslims that their spiritual needs are greater than their physical needs.
- 5) **Pilgrimage:** All Muslims who are physically and financially able perform the *hajj*, or pilgrimage to Mecca, at least once. Pilgrims wear identical garments so that all stand as equals before Allah.

### **Break it down now...**

- 1) Where do Muslims go to worship? Where do Muslims go to worship if they can't make it to this place of worship?
- 2) Under what Pillar does the hajj fall under? Using your knowledge gained from last night's HW, describe the hajj.
- 3) Which of the Five Pillars most directly reflects a commitment to social justice? Explain!
- 4) **Think back to your HW:** Why do you think that Muslims consider only the Arabic version of the Qur'an (Koran) to be the true word of Allah?