

Exploring Sacred Spaces: A Fact-File with Nova the Owl

Learning objective: To identify and compare the key features and purposes of different places of worship, understanding their significance to believers.

Nova the Owl is on a mission to learn about how different communities express their faith through architecture and design. Use this fact-file to research a specific place of worship. You will need to look for features that make the building unique and explain why these spaces are so important to the people who visit them.

Word bank: Sanctuary · Architecture · Symbolism · Ritual · Community · Tradition · Reverence · Pilgrimage

1. Identify the place of worship and its religious tradition: Name the building and describe the religion or belief system it belongs to. (2 marks)

2. Key Architectural Features: Describe two or three physical features of the building (e.g., domes, towers, stained glass, or open halls). Why were these features chosen? (4 marks)

3. Function and Purpose: Explain why this place is considered 'sacred' or 'holy'. What activities usually happen inside this space? (3 marks)

4. Compare and Contrast: Compare this place of worship to a different one you have studied. How are they similar in their purpose, and how do they differ in appearance? (4 marks)

5. Justify the Importance: Why might a believer feel that visiting a physical place of worship is more meaningful than praying or meditating at home? (4 marks)

6. Critical Thinking: What might happen to a community if their local place of worship were to close? Explain the impact on their social and spiritual life. (4 marks)

Extension challenge: Imagine you are an architect tasked with designing a new space for reflection that represents peace and unity. Create a detailed sketch of your building, labelling the specific features that encourage quiet thought. Write a short paragraph justifying why your chosen materials and layout help create a sense of reverence.