## Preparation

* Download “World Religions Before c. 1450”
* Download “Confucianism”
* Download “Buddhism”
* Download “Judaism”
* Download “Christianity”
* Download “Hinduism”
* Download “Islam”

## Purpose

In this activity, you’ll be comparing across time and place to find similarities and differences between belief systems. From a broader perspective, belief systems may all seem the same; however, by comparing and contrasting, we are able to see the differences between similar concepts. You will also continue to evaluate how historical events and processes relate to the course frames, which will deepen your understanding of how frames can be used to make sense of large periods of time.

## Process

1. Your teacher will ask you the following questions:
   * How did local, communal religions become shared belief systems that are now practiced by millions of people across the world?
   * What do these major world religions—Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, and Islam—share in terms of their common beliefs about the world and our place in it?
2. Your teacher will either hand out or have you download the Comparison – Belief Systems worksheet.
3. Review the questions on the Comparison Tool to ensure you’re focusing on the right details when you read your assigned articles.
4. Your teacher will break the class into small groups and assign two articles to each group.
5. In your group, read your assigned articles and complete the Comparison Tool’s Part 1: Identifying and Describing, which is included in the worksheet.
6. Once everyone is finished filling out the tool, your group will share the similarities and differences you found by writing them on the chart your teacher creates on the board.
7. Take a few minutes to read what the other groups found and look for similarities and differences across all of the belief systems.
8. Discuss the following questions with your class:
   * What similarities are shared by all of these belief systems?
   * What are some of the main differences between these belief systems?
9. Finally, use these similarities and differences to develop two thesis statements in response to the prompts:
   * To what extent did these belief systems impact networks similarly?
   * To what extent did these belief systems impact communities differently?
10. Your teacher will collect your worksheets and thesis statements at the end of the activity to assess your understanding of the topic and this historical thinking practice.

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| Name: |  | Date: |  |

**Directions:** Follow the steps below.

**Part 1: Identifying and Describing**

1. Write the topic of comparison at the top of the chart, and then add the cases you’re comparing and their associated time periods.
2. Respond to the questions in the Part 1 chart for each case you’re comparing. Use the resources provided for this comparison.
3. After responding to the questions for each case, identify and describe the similarities and differences between these cases.

**Part 2: Analyzing**

1. If you were going to write two essays about the similarities and/or differences you’ve identified for this topic, what are two thesis statements you might use? Write one thesis statement about similarities and one about differences.
2. If required, use your thesis statements to craft a response to the comparison prompt for this activity.

**Topic of Comparison**

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| Part 1: Identifying and Describing | | |
| Cases You’re Comparing |  |  |
| Time Period |  |  |
| Location |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Community**  How did these belief systems impact communities? |  | **Similarities** |  |
|  |
| **Differences** |
|  |
| **Networks**  How did networks help make these belief systems become world religions? |  | **Similarities** |  |
|  |
| **Differences** |
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| Part 2: Analyzing | |
| Thesis Statement 1: Similarities |  |
| Thesis Statement 2: Differences |  |
| Response |  |