

France to ban pupils' religious dress

Level 1 | Elementary

1 Key Vocabulary

Fill the gaps using these words from the text:

secular commission recommendation headscarf
constitution fundamentalist

1. A _____ is something which Muslim women and girls wear on their heads.
2. A _____ is someone who believes that old religious laws are absolutely correct.
3. A _____ is a group of people who study a question for a long time and then produce an official report.
4. A _____ country is one without an official state religion.
5. A _____ is a suggestion or piece of advice about how to solve a problem.
6. The _____ of a country is a set of basic laws that describe the rights and duties of the citizens of that country.

2 What do you know?

Match the words with their definitions

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 1. headscarves | a. Religious symbols which some Christians wear. |
| 2. Yom Kippur | b. Religious symbols which many Muslim women wear. |
| 3. crosses | c. Religious symbols which some Jewish people wear. |
| 4. skullcaps | d. A Muslim religious holiday. |
| 5. Eid | e. A Jewish religious holiday. |

Now read the text.

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Jon Henley in Paris

France is a secular country. This means that there is no official state religion in France. Recently a commission published a report about religion in French schools and other public institutions. The commission told the French government that new laws were necessary to protect secularism in France. Their report made many recommendations.

First of all, people will not be allowed to wear religious symbols in French schools and other public buildings. These symbols included Muslim headscarves, Jewish skullcaps and large Christian crosses.

Secondly, the report said that all public service employees must treat everyone in the same way. Some Muslim women want their husbands to be with them all the time in hospital and will only accept women doctors. The report says that everyone who uses the health service must remember that it is not possible to say which healthcare worker you want or do not want. The report also says that everyone must follow the rules of hygiene.

The report recommended that the Jewish and Muslim holy days of Yom Kippur and Eid should be official school holidays. Employees should be able to choose which religious holiday they wanted to take.

In multicultural societies like Britain or the USA, it seems strange to have a special law to protect secularism, especially as the main aim of this law seems to be to stop Muslim girls wearing headscarves to school. In France, however, the constitution guarantees secularism. According to French law, it does not matter what your religion or ethnic group is – every French citizen is equally French.

The chairman of the commission said the aim of the new law was to protect constitutional secularism and to oppose "people who wanted to destabilise France", in other words Islamic fundamentalists. But he also said that the law was not against the mainly moderate Muslim community of 5 million. "Muslims must understand that secularism is an opportunity for Islam," Mr Stasi said. "Secularism means that the church and the state are separate, but it is also the respect of differences."

The Guardian Weekly 20-12-03, page 4

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3 Comprehension check

Are these sentences True or False according to the text?

	True	False
1. There is no official state religion in France.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The commission recommended that girls should wear headscarves in schools.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. It also recommended that Muslim women should only go to women doctors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Yom Kippur and Eid are official school holidays in France.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. At the moment employees are not free to choose which religious holiday they want to take.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Britain and the USA have special laws to protect secularism.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Under French law, every French citizen is equally French.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4 Word order

Put these words into the correct order to make sentences about the text.

1. lot the recommendations made a commission of
2. allowed symbols to people not wear schools will in be religious
3. rules everyone hygiene follow the must of
4. country Britain multicultural a is
5. in million Muslims 5 France live

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5 Plurals

Complete the table. Two examples are from the text.

Singular	Plural
1. headscarf	_____
2. woman	_____
3. half	_____
4. leaf	_____
5. child	_____
6. thief	_____
7. wife	_____
8. life	_____

6 Puzzle

Complete these words from the text:

1. e _ _ _ l _ _ y _ _ _
2. h _ _ _ lt _ _ _ a _ _ _
3. c _ _ _ s _ _ i _ _ u _ _ _ _ n
4. g _ _ a _ _ a _ _ t _ _ _
5. m _ _ d _ _ r _ _ t _ _
6. e _ _ _ o _ _ r _ _ g _ _

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Key

1 Key Vocabulary

secular commission recommendation
headscarf constitution fundamentalist

1. headscarf
2. fundamentalist
3. commission
4. secular
5. recommendation
6. constitution

2 What do you know?

1 b; 2 e; 3 a; 4 c; 5 d

3 Comprehension Check

1 T; 2 F; 3 F; 4 F; 5 T; 6 F; 7 T

4 Word order

1. The commission made a lot of recommendations.
2. People will not be allowed to wear religious symbols in schools.
3. Everyone must follow the rules of hygiene.
4. Britain is a multicultural country.
5. 5 million Muslims live in France.

5 Plurals

1. headscarves
2. women
3. halves
4. leaves
5. children
6. thieves
7. wives
8. lives

6 Puzzle

Complete these words from the text:

1. employee
2. healthcare
3. constitution
4. guarantee
5. moderate
6. encourage