

Monotheism and Polytheism

Name _____

At the time of Abraham, people in Mesopotamia worshiped thousands of gods. People in Egypt worshiped many nature gods. The ancient Israelites introduced a new idea. They worshiped only one god.

Put a check in the appropriate column in the chart to compare monotheism and polytheism.

	Monotheism	Polytheism
Which belief is probably easier to understand?		
Which belief encourages various people to choose which deity to worship?		
Which belief would encourage the development of cults dedicated to a particular god?		
Which belief would probably tend to unite people who support it?		
For most people, which belief has survived into modern times?		

From your research, explain briefly why you believe monotheism is more popular than polytheism in our times.

The Torah

Name _____

Which facts about the Torah, or first five books of the Old Testament, support the use of the Torah as a historical document, and which facts support its use as a religious document? Put a check in the appropriate column.

	Torah as a Historical Document	Torah as a Religious Document
Archaeologists have uncovered Hammurabi's Code, which is mentioned in the Torah.		
The ancient Israelites wrote their stories in the Torah to express their faith in God.		
Historians have found that some of the information in the Torah is supported by other historical evidence.		
The stories in the Torah tell how the god of the Israelites is powerful over history and nature.		

Explain briefly how you think historians separate what they feel is factual in the Torah from what is religious.

What kind of stories do you think appear in the Torah that historians may debate whether they are historical or religious?

Why do you think it is sometimes difficult to read the Torah as a historical source?
