Articles and Questions

Each **free article** of ***What in the World?*** includes:   
  
1) a PDF file

*and*

2) a Word file

These files contain **only** the article and questions. They do **not** contain Answer Keys.

This **Word** file allows students to complete assignments using a computer either at school or at home. Teachers can assign all or parts of the file by email attachment or a school website. The **Word** file also allows teachers to:

• easily modify and format content including changing *fonts* and text sizes

• create a PDF document and use Adobe Reader's 'Read Out Loud Mode'

• save paper and copying costs and help protect the environment

• promote and encourage students’ computer skills

What Else Can You Do With The Word File?

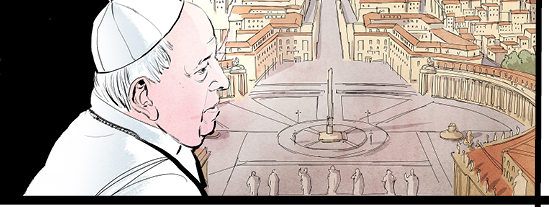
#1) You can easily upload the file to Google Docs and share it with students or other teachers. **See how here:**

<https://support.google.com/drive/answer/2424368?hl=en>

#2) Translate the uploaded document into another language. (see **Tools>Translate document**).Google Docs will create a new copy of the original file but you will need to edit the document to suit your requirements. Google Docs can translate into over 100 languages including Spanish, Mandarin, German, etc. **See how here:**

<https://support.google.com/docs/answer/187189?hl=en&co=GENIE.Platform=Desktop>

**The Passing of a Beloved Pontiff**



On Easter Monday, April 21, the world woke to the news that Pope Francis, spiritual leader of the world’s   
1.3 billion Roman Catholics, had died. The cause of his death at age 88 was a stroke followed by cardiac arrest.

**Cardinal** Kevin Farrell, who delivered the sad news, spoke of Francis’s deep commitment to his faith.

“[Pope Francis] taught us to live the values of the **Gospel** with fidelity, courage, and universal love, especially in favour of the poorest and most marginalized,” the cardinal said.

**A last Easter blessing**

The last months of the **pontiff**’s life were marked by declining health. In February, he was hospitalized for 38 days with double pneumonia.

Yet he insisted on returning to work, even making a final appearance on Easter Sunday. Too weak to deliver his message, an aide read his words. But he personally blessed the throngs of the faithful in Rome’s St. Peter’s Square, calling out, “Brothers and sisters, Happy Easter!”

**Who was Pope Francis?**

The late Pope, named Jorge Mario Bergoglio by his Italian parents, was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina on December 17, 1936. He entered the **seminary** in his early twenties.

Francis was a Jesuit, a Catholic order focused on missionary work and education. His devotion to both these roles impressed Pope John Paul II, who appointed him a **bishop** in 1992. From then on, his rise in the Church was rapid. Yet he always maintained a simple lifestyle, favouring spirituality over ceremony.

**A pope of the people**

His peers recognized his special spiritual qualities as well, and in March 2013, cardinals elected him the 266th pope—the first-ever Jesuit pope and the first from the Americas.

The new pope chose the name Francis in honour of Saint Francis of Assisi, who was known to cherish all creation, to live modestly, and to promote peace. Pope Francis followed in the saint’s footsteps. He chose to live in a small guest house rather than the lavish residence where other popes had lived.

From the beginning, he signalled a new style of leadership. He wore simple **vestments** and often mingled with the crowds. He was known for washing prisoners’ feet, visiting refugees in distant lands, and calling for a “Church of the poor, for the poor.”

His time as leader of the Catholic Church was defined by a focus on mercy, inclusion, and social justice. He famously asked, “Who am I to judge?” when questioned about his open approach to LGBTQ+ issues.

He also championed the fight against climate change, publishing a landmark **encyclical** on the subject. And he repeatedly called for economic systems that served people rather than profit. He even tried to address the Church’s decades-long abuse scandals. He met with resistance, yet he persisted in seeking greater accountability.

**Progressive – to a point**

He came to Canada in 2022 to address another issue. The visit followed an earlier meeting at the Vatican with Indigenous delegates from Canada. The group was seeking an apology for the Church’s role in Canada’s Residential Schools, which operated from 1831 to 1996. At least 4000 Indigenous children died and thousands more were physically and mentally abused at these largely Catholic institutions.

“I humbly beg forgiveness for the evil committed,” he told Residential School Survivors and others who heard him speak in Alberta. He added that he wanted to ensure that “every child is treated with love, honour, and respect.”

Yet some felt Francis’s words of regret didn’t go far enough. And the Pope did preserve some of the Church’s more conservative positions, such as not allowing women to be **ordained** and maintaining a hard line on women’s reproductive rights. Many people also felt that his attempts to deal with the Church’s child abuse scandals fell short. But few doubted his sincerity.

**An outpouring of grief**

The response to Pope Francis’s passing was immediate and global. Social media lit up with tributes from world leaders and people of all faiths. From Jerusalem to the **barrios** of Buenos Aires, vigils and spontaneous gatherings marked the sense of loss.

Francis’s body lay in state for three days at St. Peter’s **Basilica**, where 250,000 people filed past, pausing to pray or leave flowers. Then, on April 26, hundreds of thousands filled St. Peter’s Square for the funeral Mass. The service, broadcast globally, included prayers in many languages and the soaring voices of the Sistine Chapel Choir. Heads of state, royalty, and religious leaders from every continent attended. Among them were Canada’s Governor General Mary Simon, U.S. President Donald Trump, and Prince William from the United Kingdom. But migrants and the poor also attended.

After the Mass, 150,000 people lined the streets to watch the procession carry the Pope’s coffin to Saint Mary Major, the humble basilica where he chose to be buried. The first pope in a century not to be interred in St. Peter’s Basilica, he was laid to rest beneath a simple stone marked with his papal name and a single white rose.

Many people focused on Francis’s legacy of kindness. “[His] **pontificate** will be remembered as a bridge between tradition and modernity” – one that “prioritized compassion over condemnation,” said Catholic scholar Andrew Chesnut.

**A new pope is elected**

With the official mourning period over, the conclave got underway and on May 8, 69-year-old Robert Francis Prevost was elected. He grew up in Chicago and he is the first American to fill the role, but he has strong roots in Latin America because of the many years he spent as a missionary in Peru He chose Leo XIV as his papal name.

The new pope is a member of the Order of St. Augustine—known for its community work. He, too, is said to be humble and committed to the poor and migrants. Observers say he will likely continue the Church’s focus on social justice and inclusivity.

“We must… be a Church that builds bridges… always open to… those who need our charity, our presence, dialogue, and love,” he told crowds gathered in St. Peter’s Square for his first address. “United hand in hand with God and among ourselves, let us move forward.”

**The Conclave, The Vatican and The Holy See**

When a pope dies or resigns, the Catholic Church enters a period of suspense known as the conclave. The word “conclave” comes from the Latin for “with key.” It reflects the tradition of locking the cardinals inside the Vatican until they choose a new pope. Only cardinals under the age of 80, of whom there are 135, can vote. They gather for a special Mass, then mark secret ballots. To be elected, a candidate must receive a two-thirds majority. After each round of voting, the ballots are burned. Black smoke from the Sistine Chapel chimney signals no decision. White smoke? A new pope is chosen.

The body that organizes the conclave is called the Holy See – the central governing, administrative, and spiritual authority of the Catholic Church. It has existed since the earliest days of Christianity and is recognized internationally as a sovereign entity. It can conduct diplomatic relations and sign treaties with nations around the world.

The Vatican, located in Rome, is the physical space where the Holy See operates. With about 1000 residents, it is the smallest independent nation in the world, covering just 49 hectares. As leader of the Roman Catholic Church, the pope heads both the Vatican and the Holy See.

**Did You Know?**

Of the estimated 2.5 billion Christians in the world, more than half are Roman Catholics.

**barrio:** a neighborhood, especially a Spanish one

**basilica:** a church that has been given special recognition by the pope for its historical, spiritual, or architectural significance

**bishop:** a person who holds a high position in a Christian church. A bishop is often in charge of a group of churches.

**cardinal:** the highest rank of priest in the Catholic Church

**encyclical:** an official letter from the pope sent to all bishops making a statement about the teachings of the Church

**Gospel:** the lessons taught by Jesus Christ and his apostles

**ordination:** the act or ceremony of making somebody a priest, minister, or rabbi

**pontificate:** the period of time when a particular pope heads the Roman Catholic Church

**pontiff:** another name for the pope

**seminary:** a college that trains priests, ministers, or rabbis

**vestments:** the special clothes worn by priests during church ceremonies

**On The Lines**

1. How many Christians are there in the world? How many Christians are Roman Catholics?

2. Where is the headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church located?

3. Name the leader of the Roman Catholic Church who recently passed away. How old was he when he died?

4. How long had he held this position?

5. When did he visit Canada? What was the purpose of his visit?

6. Briefly describe the legacy of this man.

7. Explain the process used to select a new pope.

8. Who was elected as the new pope on May 8? What papal name did he choose?

9. List at least two other important facts about the new pope.

**Questions For Further Thought**

1. The news of Pope Francis’s passing had a huge impact around the world. What reasons can you suggest to explain why hundreds of thousands of people paid tribute to the Pope on social media, in person, or by watching the broadcast of his funeral?

2. The article states: “***Pope Francis chose the name Francis in honour of St. Francis of Assisi who was known to cherish all creation, to live modestly, and to promote peace.***” As you see it, how did Pope Francis’s actions demonstrate these qualities?

3. Pope Francis “***will be remembered as a bridge between tradition and modernity.***” Which modern issues were important to Pope Francis? As you see it, is it important for a pope to be involved with current issues?

4. Pope Francis visited Canada only once, in 2022. As you see it, what was the significance of this visit?

5. The conclave of cardinals is responsible for choosing a successor to Pope Francis. Which qualities do you think are most important for someone in this role? Explain your choices.

**Questions For Online Exploration**

*Note:* The links below are listed at **www.lesplan.com/links** for easy access*.*

1. Watch the final public appearance of Pope Francis on Easter: **https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/video/9.6730369** [0:57].

2. Pope Francis was elected to the papacy in 2013. Find out why this came as a shock to some:   
**https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/video/1.6532019** [3:34].

Why were some Catholics surprised by this choice?

3. Find out more about Pope Francis’s apology to Indigenous Peoples in Canada:   
**https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/video/1.6532019** [3:34].

How did his apology affect the Residential School Survivors at the ceremony?

4. Learn more about how Pope Francis advocated for climate change:   
**https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/video/9.6732357** [2:09]

Who did the Pope hope to influence with his writing on this topic? As you see it, was he successful in influencing others to care for the planet?

5. View a timeline of the Pope's accomplishments during his 12-year papacy:  
**https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/253852/a-timeline-of-pope-francis-12-years-as-pope**.

Describe one event from the timeline and how it shows mercy, inclusion, or social justice.

6. Learn more about how a new pope is chosen: **https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/video/9.6730531**[4:07]

What did you learn?

**Putting It All Together**

**A. Write the letter that corresponds to the best answer on the line beside each question:**

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 1. **How many Roman Catholics are there in the world?**  
 a) 250 million b) 675 million  
 c) 1.3 billion d) 2.5 billion  
 e) 4.6 billion

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2. **Pope Francis belonged to a Catholic order focussed on missionary work and education called:**  
 a) the Jesuits b) the Dominicans  
 c) the Carmelites d) the Franciscans  
 e) the Oblates

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 3. **The secret meeting where cardinals vote for a new pope is called a:** a) conclave b) conquest  
 c) conspiracy d) convention  
 e) contest

**B.** Mark the statements **T** (**True**) or **F** (**False**). If a statement is **True**, write one important fact to support it on the line below. If a statement is **False**, write the words that make it true on the line below.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 4. **True** or **False?** Pope Francis was from Argentina.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 5. **True** or **False?** The headquarters of the Roman Catholic Church is Vatican City.

\_\_\_\_\_\_ 6. **True** or **False?** Pope Francis visited Canada last year.

**C. Fill in the blanks to complete each sentence.**

7. There are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ billion Christians in the world.

8. Smoke from burning papal ballots is coloured \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ when cardinals select a new pope.

9. Pope Leo XIV is the first pontiff from the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. (2)

**D. Respond to the following question in paragraph form. *(Use a separate sheet of paper if necessary.)***

10. As you see it, what impact did Pope Francis have on the Roman Catholic Church and on the world? Give reasons to support your response.

**Assessment Rubric**

This rubric may be helpful in providing students with formative, strength-based feedback and/or assessing students’ responses holistically. This easy-to-modify activity is included in the doc file which you can download from:   
**www.lesplan.com/subscribers**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Emerging** | **Developing** | **Proficient** | **Extending** |
| **Supports thinking** | Answers or reflections are brief and include obvious facts/details/ evidence. | Answers or reflections are general and supported with some relevant facts/details/evidence. | Answers or reflections are clearly supported with specific, relevant facts/details/evidence. | Answers or reflections are insightful and supported with specific, relevant facts/details/evidence. |
| **Shows understanding** | Responses show a basic understanding of the text, topic, issue or message. | Responses are thoughtful and show a general understanding of the text, topic, issue or message. | Responses are thoughtful and show a complete understanding of the text, topic, issue or message. | Responses are insightful and show a deep understanding the text, topic, issue or message. May synthesize ideas or explain the ‘so what’. |
| **Thinks  critically** | Makes straightforward connections or inferences. Focuses on retelling. | Makes logical connections to self (T:S) and/or background knowledge (T:S). Inferences are logical | Makes meaningful connections to self. Considers ideas between texts (T:T).  Inferences are plausible. | Makes powerful connections that go between texts and/or beyond the text (T:W).  Inferences are plausible and insightful. |

