**Oral Tradition to Written Tradition**

The history of the Jewish people began with Abraham, then Moses, and later the Prophets. For a long time the detail of their story was passed on by word of mouth. Parents told their children the stories of their ancestors. Imagine families sitting together at night around campfires, the children listening to stories about the action of God in the lives of Abraham and Moses. All the details were carefully remembered.

These memories were handed down as stories, sayings and teachings from one generation to the next. This was the **oral stage** of Jewish scripture. It was the time when the events of the past were passed on by word of mouth. Most people at that time could not read or write. Precious memories were re-told again and again so details would not be forgotten. The oral stage lasted for many centuries.

The history of God’s action in the life of God’s chosen people were eventually **written down**. Jewish scripture was written down between 900BCE and 90CE. The Hebrew Bible was written by different people from different backgrounds. The authors had many different talents and a variety of writing styles. Some were good at story-telling, others were good at legal work that involved facts and figures and others were good at prophesy, being able to show how God was at work in the world.

In this way different authors were inspired to write different parts of the scriptures. The holy writings developed very slowly. They were written down over a period of about 1,000 years.

Eventually, some people thought it would be a good idea to have all the scripture together in one volume. They thought it would help the faith of the Jewish people in the future. So the **works of the different scriptural authors were collected together**. God inspired scribes to select and edit the sacred writings. In 90CE, the seal of the approval was given to 39 books. The result was the Tenakh or the Hebrew Bible as it exists today.
 **Questions
Name two important people at the beginning of Jewish History.
List the three stages Jewish Scriptures went through to reach the form of the Tenakh has today.
What happened to the Jewish Scriptures in 90CE?**