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The Talmud is a written collection of the Jewish Mishnah, commentary it, and commentary on that commentary which was compiled over many years and through different generations. Having evolved from an oral tradition, the construction and layout of the Talmud is definitely unique in that it reflects a non-linear method of story telling in a linear way. When teaching the Mishnah, oral commentary can be selectively chosen for a particular set of students' needs. The Talmud is a collection of many oral commentaries, and thus could be thought of as a collection of many possible teachers' commentaries; the reader can decide to read more into the side commentaries if he wants more understanding. Additionally the Talmud has references to other parts of itself, which is reflective of oral communication that can jump around. Instead of repeating the same thing in multiple places, it is easier to have references in text. Reading through the Talmud, it is definitely can be much more time consuming than communicating orally, although at the same time it is more complete and thorough.