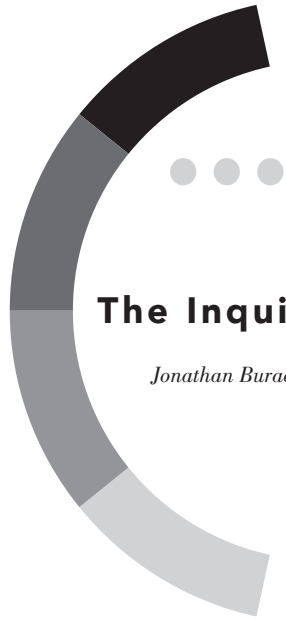


The Age of Faith



The Inquiry Arc in U.S. History

Jonathan Burack

The Rise of Islam

MindSparks®

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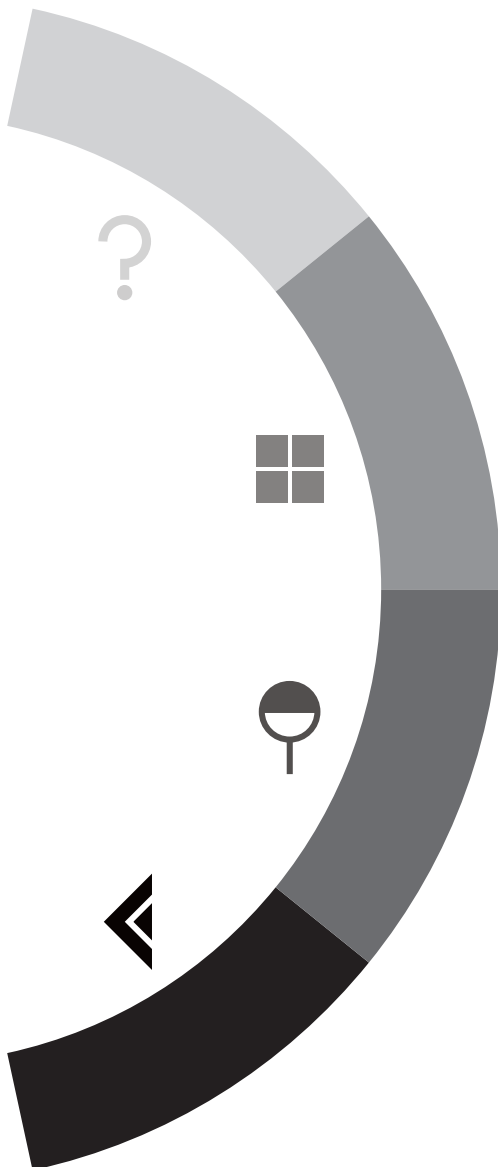
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C3 Framework

This book is based primarily on the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies Standards. This C3 Framework is an effective tool offering guidance and support for rigorous student learning. The assignments encourage students to be active participants in learning and to explore the parts of history that they find most compelling. Central to the C3 Framework and our use of it is its Inquiry Arc—a set of four interrelated dimensions of informed inquiry in social studies. The lessons in this book are based on all four dimensions of the C3 Inquiry Arc. While the C3 Framework analyzes each of the four dimensions separately, they are not entirely separable in practice—they each interact in dynamic ways. As a result, the lessons combine some or all of the dimensions in various ways.



Four Dimensions of the Inquiry Arc

1 Developing compelling and supporting questions and planning inquiries

Questions shape social studies inquiries, giving them broader meaning and motivating students to master content and engage actively in the learning process.

2 Applying disciplinary concepts and tools

These are the concepts and central ideas needed to address the compelling and supporting questions students pose. The C3 Framework stresses four subject fields: history, civics, economics, and geography. Each lesson addresses all of these disciplines.

Evaluating sources and using evidence

- 3 The purpose of using primary and secondary sources as evidence is to support claims and counterclaims. By assessing the validity and usefulness of sources, including those that conflict with one another, students are able to construct evidence-based explanations and arguments.

4 Communicating conclusions and taking informed action

While this may take the form of individual essays and other writing assignments, these lessons stress other kinds of individual and collaborative forms of communication, including debates, policy analyses, video productions, diary entries, and interviews. Meaningful forms of individual or collaborative civic action are also incorporated into each lessons.

How to Use This Book

This book offers you the chance to implement the entire C3 Inquiry Arc in brief, carefully structured lessons on important topics in world history. Each lesson is driven by a central compelling question, and disciplinary supporting questions are provided. Each lesson asks students to apply understandings from all of the C3 disciplines—history, civics, economics, and geography—and each lesson includes individual and group tasks in an integrated way.

Each lesson also includes an introductory essay, detailed teaching instructions, a set of primary sources, and the handouts needed to implement the lesson's assignments. Rubrics for student evaluation and sources for further study are also provided. The teaching instructions suggest a time frame for completion of each lesson, but the assessments can easily be adapted to fit into any lesson plan.

Each lesson also is aligned with several C3 Framework standards and Common Core State Standards. The College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards for Literacy emphasize the reading and information texts, making these lessons ideal for integration into English Language Arts instruction.



C3 Disciplines



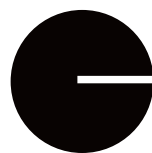
History



Civics



Economics



Geography



The Rise of Islam

Why Did It Spread So Rapidly?

Overview

Introduction

In the seventh century CE, soldiers and tribal leaders inspired by Islam united the people of the Arabian Peninsula. Arab armies then moved north to a region that includes what is now Israel, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq. By the middle of the eighth century, they had united all of the key centers of ancient civilization except for those in the Far East. The lands of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, along with large parts of the former Roman Empire, were under their control. Persia was taken over completely, and the Byzantine Empire drastically reduced in size. From Spain to the borders of India, the conquerors' Islamic faith and Arabic language began to reshape and transform the culture and political life of the region. Islam's rise is one of the great success stories of human history. Why did it succeed so rapidly in spreading across such a large and diverse territory? That is the compelling question this lesson will focus on. Students will work with ten primary sources that form the core content for tasks that will help them answer the lesson's compelling question.

Objectives

Students will work individually and in small groups to respond in a meaningful way to a compelling question about the rise of Islam. They will apply discipline-specific background knowledge, use scaffolding, and engage in instructional activities to interpret primary sources before presenting their ideas to the class.

C3 Standards Addressed by This Lesson

- ◆ **D1.4.6-8.** Explain how the relationship between supporting questions and compelling questions is mutually reinforcing.
- ◆ **D1.5.6-8.** Determine the kinds of sources that will be helpful in answering compelling and supporting questions, taking into consideration multiple points of views represented in the sources.
- ◆ **D2.HIS.5.6-8.** Explain how and why perspectives of people have changed over time.
- ◆ **D2.HIS.11.6-8.** Use other historical sources to infer a plausible maker, date, place of origin, and intended audience for historical sources where this information is not easily identified.
- ◆ **D2.HIS.12.6-8.** Use questions generated about multiple historical sources to identify further areas of inquiry and additional sources.
- ◆ **D2.HIS.16.6-8.** Organize applicable evidence into a coherent argument about the past.
- ◆ **D2.CIV.8.6-8.** Analyze ideas and principles contained in the founding documents of the United States and explain how they influence the social and political system.
- ◆ **D2.ECO.7.6-8.** Analyze the role of innovation and entrepreneurship in a market economy.
- ◆ **D2.GEO.5.6-8.** Analyze the combinations of cultural and environmental characteristics that make places both similar to and different from other places.
- ◆ **D2.GEO.6.6-8.** Explain how the physical and human characteristics of places and regions are connected to human identities and cultures.
- ◆ **D3.1.6-8.** Gather relevant information from multiple sources while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection.
- ◆ **D3.2.6-8.** Evaluate the credibility of a source by determining its relevance and intended use.
- ◆ **D3.3.6-8.** Identify evidence that draws information from multiple sources to support claims, noting evidentiary limitations.

- ◆ **D3.4.6-8.** Develop claims and counterclaims while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both.
- ◆ **D4.1.6-8.** Construct arguments using claims and evidence from multiple sources, while acknowledging the strengths and limitations of the arguments.
- ◆ **D4.3.6-8.** Present adaptations of arguments and explanations on topics of interest to others to reach audiences and venues outside the classroom using print and oral technologies (e.g., posters, essays, letters, debates, speeches, reports, and maps) and digital technologies (e.g., Internet, social media, and digital documentary).
- ◆ **D4.6.6-8.** Draw on multiple disciplinary lenses to analyze how a specific problem can manifest itself at local, regional, and global levels over time, identifying its characteristics and causes, and the challenges and opportunities faced by those trying to address the problem.

Common Core Anchor Standards Addressed by This Lesson

- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1.** Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2.** Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.6.** Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.9.** Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7.** Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- ◆ **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1.** Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Teaching Instructions

Compelling Question

What explains the rapid rise and successful spread of Islam?

Preparation

Provide all students with a copy of the Introductory Essay. Assign this reading as homework. In addition, assign all relevant parts of your course textbook or other basic reading material. Remind students to keep the compelling question for the lesson in mind as they read.

Asking Questions about the rise of Islam

This part of the lesson stresses Dimensions 1 and 2 of the C3 Framework



Day One

1. Briefly discuss the Introductory Essay in class and address any initial questions students may have.
2. Distribute the How to Analyze a Primary Source handout. Review each suggestion with the class and remind students to refer back to the handout as they read the primary sources in this lesson.
3. Divide the class into four small groups. Each group will focus its work on one of the four basic disciplines identified in Dimension 2 of the C3 Framework—history, civics, economics, or geography. As they work, the groups should keep in mind the lesson’s overall compelling question. However, for Day One and Day Two, each group will work mainly with a second compelling question—one related specifically to its assigned discipline.
4. Provide each group with one copy of its discipline-specific Assignment Sheet. Give each student a copy of all the primary sources for this unit. Each group may share a primary source packet, if necessary.
5. Have students complete the Day One section of their Assignment Sheets. The objective for Day One is for groups to read three primary sources, and then formulate one supporting question about each of those sources. The supporting questions should be recorded in the spaces provided on the Assignment Sheet.

Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Evaluating Sources and Evidence

This part of the task stresses Dimensions 2 and 3 of the C3 Framework



Day Two

6. Students will return to their previously assigned groups and formulate a claim addressing their group’s compelling question. After reading the remaining seven primary sources, they will select one that supports their claim.

7. Using the evidence gathered from primary sources, each group will then prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation about the rise of Islam from their group's disciplinary perspective. The presentation can be in the form of an oral report, a debate among group members, a PowerPoint, or related type of presentation. Allow time for students to prepare by discussing and debating topics among themselves.

Day Three

8. Each group will deliver its presentation. Allow time for class discussion following each presentation, and for a final effort to answer the central compelling question for the lesson.



Communicating Results and Taking Action

This part of the lesson stresses Dimension 4 of the C3 Framework

Students will complete a final project that expresses an understanding of the topic and responds clearly to the lesson's central compelling question. The project may be completed in groups, but students should be evaluated individually.

Distribute the Communicating Results and Taking Action handout and decide whether you will assign the projects or allow students to form groups and choose tasks on their own. Set a reasonable deadline. Students should review The Rise of Islam Rubric so they can understand how their performance will be evaluated. The projects are summarized below.

Communicating Results

- ◆ Historian Bernard Lewis wrote: *“The bulk of the Arab armies that achieved the conquests were desert people. The strategy of the Arabs in their wars of conquest was based very largely on the skillful use of desert power, reminiscent of sea power in the later empires built up by the maritime peoples of the West. The Arabs were at home in the desert; their enemies were not.”* Have students write a brief paper on how helpful the above quotation is in explaining the success of the Arab armies. Their answers should include detailed references to at least three of the primary sources for this lesson.
- ◆ In the Islamic world, Christians and Jews did not enjoy equal rights with Muslims. Some historians say they faced unfair discrimination that limited them in major ways. Others say they were treated in a very humane way that allowed them to flourish. Which of these two views is correct? Ask students to answer this question in a brief essay. In the essay, they should choose three primary sources for this lesson to support their position.
- ◆ Separate students into several small groups. Ask each group to discuss the following statement by the eleventh century Islamic historian al-Biruni describing his own history of India: *“This is not a book of controversy and debate. . . . It is a straightforward account, giving the statements of Hindus and adding to them what the Greeks have said on similar subjects, so as to make a comparison between them.”* Each group should decide what this statement tells us about the Islamic society the Arabs created in the region they conquered. The groups should prepare brief five-minute presentations of their views and use at least two primary sources for this lesson to support their interpretation of al-Biruni's statement.

Taking Action

- ◆ In recent decades, a great many violent political conflicts have made life difficult in parts of the Muslim world originally conquered by the Arab armies of the seventh and eighth centuries. Can the forces that have led to this violence be contained, and can a new Golden Age of Islam take its place? Select a small group of students to work on this question by looking closer at some of these conflicts. Have the group prepare a talk addressing this question. The talk should use the primary sources for this lesson as well as other sources and more current news stories to answer this question: “Could a new Golden Age of Islam soon develop?” Have the group present its findings to the rest of the class, along with a list of suggested readings. Film the presentation and the discussions about it.
- ◆ Send the video to local news outlets and invite them to contact the class, present the video themselves, or write about it.

Introductory Essay

The Rise of Islam



The Islamic prophet Muhammad on Mount Hira

In the seventh century CE, soldiers and tribal leaders inspired by Islam first united the people of the Arabian Peninsula. Arab armies then moved north to a region that includes what is now Israel, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq. By the middle of the eighth century, they had united all of the key centers of ancient civilization except for those in the Far East. The lands of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia, along with large parts of the former Roman Empire, were under their control. Persia was taken over completely, and the Byzantine Empire drastically reduced in size. From Spain to the borders of India, the conquerors' Islamic faith and Arabic language began to reshape and transform the culture and political life. Islam's rise is one of the great success stories of human history. Why did it occur?

By the sixth century CE, Arabian caravans were already taking part in a complex network of overland and sea trade-routes. These extended far beyond Arabia itself. The networks linked

the Byzantine and Persian empires north of Arabia to civilizations far to the east. Traveling merchants brought new ideas as well as goods to the nomadic Arabian tribes along the routes. Tribal gods may have begun to seem less important to many Arabs as they learned of the monotheistic beliefs of Byzantine Christians, Zoroastrians from Persia, and Jews throughout the region. It was in this context of change that a new faith appeared. That faith was Islam.

According to Muslim teachings, Islam was founded by the prophet Muhammad who lived from around 571 to 632 CE. Historians actually know little about him with certainty, but traditional Muslim accounts of his life form the core of Islam's beliefs. According to these traditions, the angel Gabriel appeared to Muhammad in his fortieth year and told him to "recite," or repeat, words that came directly from God. Over the course of his life, Muhammad received many such revelations. Muslims see Muhammad as the last of a line of prophets from Abraham, to Moses, to Jesus. Muhammad's version of God's truth is seen as the final version.

Gabriel's revelations to Muhammad make up Islam's holy book, the Qur'an. The Qur'an is not seen as Muhammad's word, but God's. It is a part of God himself. It was revealed in Arabic. Hence, many Muslims did not accept translations of the Qur'an as the real Qur'an. This view meant that as Islam spread, Arabic language and culture spread with it. In time, Islam and the Arabic language would reshape the entire region taken by the invading Arab armies.

However, for a long time, these armies lived apart in several encampments. The two great empires they defeated had been weakened by centuries of constant warfare with each other. Many heretical Christian sects and Jewish communities in those empires had become deeply discontented; so much so that many of them welcomed their Arab Muslim conquerors. These new Muslim rulers did not demand that followers of these religions convert to Islam. They did impose certain restrictions and extra taxes on them, but non-Muslims were allowed to retain their own religions and customs.

In time, more and more non-Muslims did convert to the Muslim faith. Many of them found it convincing. Others adopted it in order to enjoy the more privileged status it conferred. As this happened, the region became more unified in a cultural and religious sense. However, this unity did not overcome political, ethnic, and economic divisions. Muslims did want Muhammad's successors, the caliphs, to rule over all of Islam. Nevertheless, ethnic groups, tribal and clan rivalries, local military leaders, and others often established their own Islamic states. In addition, ongoing conflicts between rich and poor prevented the smooth harmony Muslim leaders hoped for. The horrible cruelties of both sides in the vast Zanj slave uprising of 869–883 CE are perhaps an extreme example of this. In any case, real political unity and social harmony were as hard for the Muslim realm to attain as they were for most other large empires in history.

Still, Islamic civilization had many impressive achievements. This was especially true in the areas of culture, philosophy, science, and medicine during Islam's Golden Age, especially in the ninth and tenth centuries. How did the nomadic peoples of Arabia create this vast new Muslim civilization as rapidly as they did? This is not an easy question to answer. The primary sources for this lesson should help you discuss, debate, and try to answer it.



A Qur'an dating from the middle of the ninth century

Image sources: By Nakkaş Osman, circa 1595. From the *Siyer-i Nebi*. Courtesy of Bilkent University.
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History Group

GROUP MEMBERS:

The Rise of Islam

Your group's task is to explore history issues related to the rise of Islam. A disciplinary compelling question is provided, and you will work from there to develop and answer supporting questions based on primary sources. Follow the steps to complete the task.

Day One

1. Review the concept of compelling and supporting questions with your instructor. Briefly, compelling questions focus on meaningful and enduring problems. They ask us to deal with major issues and important ideas. Supporting questions are those that help us to answer a compelling question.
2. As a group, briefly discuss the following compelling question:

Was it Islam's inspiring message to the Arab armies or the weaknesses of the societies they fought that enabled those armies to spread Islam so rapidly from 622 to 750 CE?

3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 2.2, 2.4, and 2.6.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

By the early seventh century CE, the Byzantine Empire and Persia under the Sassanid Dynasty were worn out. They had been fighting each other for centuries. That fighting began in the first century BCE. At first, the wars were between the Roman Empire and Persia. The Byzantine Empire was what was left after the western half of the Roman Empire fell apart in the fifth century CE. After that, the Byzantine-Persian wars continued to devastate the region. Each side conquered and slaughtered the other with unrestrained ferocity. The advantage kept shifting back and forth. Lands in what are today Syria and Iraq kept changing hands. In addition to war, Bubonic plague also weakened these empires. There was deep discontent with the Byzantine rulers among Jews and certain Christian sects.

By 629 CE, Byzantine emperor Heraclius had regained most of the lands lost earlier to Persia. However, once the Arab armies arrived, they rapidly pushed the Byzantines back from Syria, Egypt, and parts of North Africa.

Persia had also been drastically weakened by its wars with the Byzantines. In addition, it was divided by its own factions fighting for control. The Arabs conquered it rapidly by 651.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the primary sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the secondary source above to help you think about these questions. Develop supporting questions that will help answer your group's compelling question. As a group, choose one supporting question for each primary source and record those questions here.

Primary Source 2.2

Primary Source 2.4

Primary Source 2.6

Day Two

6. As a group, make a claim about your compelling question. The claim should be one you can back up with evidence from your assigned sources. This claim is your evidence-based answer to your group's own compelling question. Here is that question again:

Was it Islam's inspiring message to the Arab armies or the weaknesses of the societies they fought that enabled those armies to spread Islam so rapidly from 622 to 750 CE?

State your group's claim here:

7. From the remaining seven primary sources for this lesson, choose one additional source that your group believes can help support or clarify its claim. The source may also be one that challenges this claim in a way that seems important. In the space below, list the source your group chose and briefly state why you chose it.

Source:

Reason for choosing this source:

8. Prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation. Summarize the sources you have used. Discuss the supporting questions you developed. Explain your answer to your group's discipline-based compelling question. Use the space below for notes or to create an outline of your group's presentation.



GROUP MEMBERS:

The Rise of Islam

Your group's task is to explore the civics issues related to the rise of Islam. A compelling question is provided, and you will work from there to develop and answer supporting questions based on primary sources. Follow these steps to complete the task.

Day One

1. Review the concept of compelling and supporting questions with your instructor. Briefly, compelling questions focus on meaningful and enduring problems. They ask us to deal with major issues and important ideas. Supporting questions are those that help us to answer a compelling question.
2. As a group, briefly discuss the following compelling question:

Did early Muslim rulers give minorities in their realms equal rights and respect? Or did they limit those rights too strictly? Explain your answer.

3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 2.4, 2.7, and 2.8.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

For a long time, Arab numbers were small in the vast lands their armies conquered. Arab rulers did not force non-Muslims to convert to Islam. Instead, they classified them as *dhimmi*. *Dhimmi* means “protected person.” The term was used for many non-Muslim groups—Christians, Jews, and Sabians, at first. These were the “people of the Book,” followers of monotheistic beliefs based on scriptures. Later Zoroastrians, Hindus, and others were also included. In time, the status of *dhimmi* was extended to all non-Muslims. These groups were granted certain legal protections in return for paying an additional head tax—the *jizya*, or *kharaj*.

According to some scholars, *dhimmi*s' rights were well protected. They controlled their own communal life, practiced their religious faiths, and had equal property rights protections. They were exempt from military service. The Arab armies and rulers may have preferred to protect these communities, tax them, and make use of their many skills. Other scholars say the limits on Christians and Jews were humiliating and sometimes

quite harsh. They could not carry weapons or ride on horses and camels. They often could not build new churches. Certain forms of religious expression were banned, such as ringing church bells. They could not wear certain colors. They could not marry Muslim women. At times, persecution of a more serious nature occurred. Yet for the most part, these groups still preferred the Muslims over previous rulers.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the primary sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the secondary source above to help you think about these questions. Develop supporting questions that will help answer your group's compelling question. As a group, choose one supporting question for each primary source and record those questions here.

Primary Source 2.4

Primary Source 2.7

Primary Source 2.8

Day Two

6. As a group, make a claim about your compelling question. The claim should be one you can back up with evidence from your assigned sources. This claim is your evidence-based answer to your group's own compelling question. Here is that question again:

Did early Muslim rulers give minorities in their realms equal rights and respect? Or did they limit those rights too strictly? Explain your answer.

State your group's claim here:

7. From the remaining seven primary sources for this lesson, choose one additional source that your group believes can help support or clarify its claim. The source may also be one that challenges this claim in a way that seems important. In the space below, list the source your group chose and briefly state why you chose it.

Source:

Reason for choosing this source:

8. Prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation. Summarize the sources you have used. Discuss the supporting questions you developed. Explain your answer to your group's discipline-based compelling question. Use the space below for notes or to create an outline of your group's presentation.



Economics Group

GROUP MEMBERS:

The Rise of Islam

Your group's task is to explore the economics issues related to the rise of Islam. A compelling question is provided, and you will work from there to develop and answer supporting questions based on primary sources. Follow these steps to complete the task.

Day One

1. Review the concept of compelling and supporting questions with your instructor. Briefly, compelling questions focus on meaningful and enduring problems. They ask us to deal with major issues and important ideas. Supporting questions are those that help us to answer a compelling question.
2. As a group, briefly discuss the following compelling question:

Why might a merchant in the Middle East have welcomed the Arab conquering armies that united the region under Islam?

3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 2.3, 2.4, and 2.9.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

Historians often describe the Abbasid Caliphate as a “Golden Age of Islam.” Usually they have in mind a flowering of literature, philosophy, medicine, science, and architecture. However, this golden age was also a time of economic growth throughout the region unified by Islam and the Arabic language. That region linked Spain, Egypt, Arabia, Mesopotamia, Persia, and parts of Central Asia. Camel caravans from Muslim lands crossed the Central Asian silk routes to China. Merchant vessels sailed down the Red Sea and Persian Gulf into the Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean. They traded with East Africa, China, India, and Southeast Asia.

Long distance trade brought new kinds of crops to Islam's realm. For example, cotton, rice, and sugar came from India. Citrus fruits came from China. Sorghum came from Africa. New crop rotation patterns, irrigation techniques, and other methods were introduced. These greatly increased the food supply. As a result, cities such as Baghdad grew rapidly. Arab and Persian seafarers improved navigation with Chinese compasses,

the astrolabe, and other inventions. New kinds of business partnerships developed. Banking and a uniform monetary system based on the dinar aided long-distance commerce. During these centuries, the Muslim lands prospered.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the primary sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the secondary source above to help you think about these questions. Develop supporting questions that will help answer your group's compelling question. As a group, choose one supporting question for each primary source and record those questions here.

Primary Source 2.3

Primary Source 2.4

Primary Source 2.9

Day Two

6. As a group, make a claim about your compelling question. The claim should be one you can back up with evidence from your assigned sources. This claim is your evidence-based answer to your group's own compelling question. Here is that question again:

Why might a merchant in the Middle East have welcomed the Arab conquering armies that united the region under Islam?

State your group's claim here:

7. From the remaining seven primary sources for this lesson, choose one additional source that your group believes can help support or clarify its claim. The source may also be one that challenges this claim in a way that seems important. In the space below, list the source your group chose and briefly state why you chose it.

Source:

Reason for choosing this source:

8. Prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation. Summarize the sources you have used. Discuss the supporting questions you developed. Explain your answer to your group's discipline-based compelling question. Use the space below for notes or to create an outline of your group's presentation.



Geography Group

GROUP MEMBERS:

The Rise of Islam

Your group's task is to explore geography issues related to the rise of Islam. A compelling question is provided, and you will work from there to develop and answer supporting questions based on primary sources. Follow these steps to complete the task.

Day One

1. Review the concept of compelling and supporting questions with your instructor. Briefly, compelling questions focus on meaningful and enduring problems. They ask us to deal with major issues and important ideas. Supporting questions are those that help us to answer a compelling question.
2. As a group, briefly discuss the following compelling question:

How does geography help explain why Muslims had trouble keeping their empire united politically?

3. Read and discuss Primary Sources 2.3, 2.8, and 2.10.
4. Read and discuss the following background information. Use the information to help complete the handout.

Before Arabia united under Muhammad in the early seventh century CE, it was divided among many tribes. Once united under Islam, they rose up out of Arabia and rapidly took control of several huge regions in North Africa and the Middle East. In time, these areas were unified by Islam and the Arabic language. However, political unity did not last. Why not?

In part, it was because of geography. By the end of the eighth century, the vast Islamic empire reached from Spain in the east, across a thin band of North Africa to the Fertile Crescent lands, into the mountainous regions of Persia and Central Asia. In time, it reached down into India. It also included the Egyptian lands isolated along the Nile. Trade routes did link this vast elongated and divided region and Islam did spread along those routes. However, each part of Islam's empire was remote from the others. Various ethnic groups and religious factions kept Islam divided almost from the start. The remoteness of one region from another added to such divisions. To take one example, the Abbasids established their caliphate

in 750 CE. They soon murdered all but one member of the remaining Umayyad Dynasty. However, that one member, Abd ar-Rahman I, escaped to Spain. There, with the help of local Berber tribes, he established a rival caliphate.

5. Each group member should develop some supporting questions about the primary sources your group has been asked to discuss. Use the secondary source above to help you think about these questions. Develop supporting questions that will help answer your group's compelling question. As a group, choose one supporting question for each primary source and record those questions here.

Primary Source 2.3

Primary Source 2.8

Primary Source 2.10

Day Two

6. As a group, make a claim about your compelling question. The claim should be one you can back up with evidence from your assigned sources. This claim is your evidence-based answer to your group's own compelling question. Here is that question again:

How does geography help explain why Muslims had trouble keeping their empire united politically?

State your group's claim here:

7. From the remaining seven primary sources for this lesson, choose one additional source that your group believes can help support or clarify its claim. The source may also be one that challenges this claim in a way that seems important. In the space below, list the source your group chose and briefly state why you chose it.

Source:

Reason for choosing this source:

8. Prepare a brief (five- to ten-minute) presentation. Summarize the sources you have used. Discuss the supporting questions you developed. Explain your answer to your group's discipline-based compelling question. Use the space below for notes or to create an outline of your group's presentation.

How to Analyze a Primary Source

For this lesson, you will be studying several primary source documents. This handout offers suggestions for how best to read and analyze historical primary sources. Studying such sources is challenging. They were created in a different time and place. Their language and use of certain key terms often differs from ours. They assume things we might not accept. They arise out of historical circumstances and settings that differ greatly from our own times. To use such sources as evidence, you need to apply some special historical-thinking skills and habits. Here are some guidelines to help you do this.

◆ *Question the source.*

No primary source was written with you and your interests in mind, so you need to be clear about what you are looking for when you examine a source. You need to stay in charge of the investigation. Act like a detective and ask questions. Above all, keep your own most important compelling questions in mind as you read and think about a source.

◆ *Consider the source's origins.*

This is often simply called “sourcing.” It means asking who created the source, when and where the source was created, and why. If you know the source’s purpose, you will be more likely to see how it is shaped by its creator’s point of view. Among other things, sourcing can also help you decide how reliable or typical a source might be.

◆ *Contextualize the source.*

“Context” here means the broader historical setting for the source. Sources are always a part of a larger historical context. You need to consider how this context helps clarify the meaning of the source. You also need to decide which context is most important. Sources might be understood best in connection with a local context or a recent event. Alternatively, they might be understood better within a national or international context, or as part of a long-term trend in society at large. Your guiding questions should help you decide which context is most important.

◆ *Corroborate the source.*

This means you must think about your source in relation to other sources. Does the source agree with or support those other sources, or does it seem to be at odds with the other sources? Might there be additional sources, which have not been provided to you, that could support or conflict with your source?

◆ *Above all, read the source carefully.*

Look at language closely. Pay attention to images, emotional language, metaphors, and other literary devices. Think about what is implied, not merely what is stated or claimed in so many words. Think about what is left out as well as what is included. Make inferences based on your close reading. This will help you get more out of your source than even the source’s creator might have seen in it.

PRIMARY SOURCE ▶

2.1

Gabriel's Command to Muhammad—"Recite"

According to Muslim teachings, Islam was founded by Muhammad who lived from around 571 to 632 CE. Traditional Muslim accounts of his life form the core of Islam's beliefs. According to these traditions, the angel Gabriel appeared to Muhammad in his fortieth year and told him to "recite." That is, he was asked to repeat words that came directly from God. Muhammad received many such revelations during the rest of his life. Muslims see Muhammad as the last of a line of prophets from Abraham, to Moses, to Jesus. In this Persian miniature from the fourteenth century, Muhammad is shown receiving his first revelation from the angel Gabriel.

Original Document

Original document source: Miniature illustration on vellum from the book *Jami' al-Tawarikh*, by Rashid al-Din, 1307 CE, Edinburgh University Library, Scotland.

The Qur'an [or Koran] is Islam's holy book. Muslims believe it is in fact the words of Allah, or God, as revealed to Muhammad when Gabriel told him to "recite." What he recited was collected, written down, and edited after his death. The Qur'an is divided into chapters, or suras. Muhammad's message stresses a belief in one god, the evil of sin, the truth of Allah's words, and the need to create a worldwide Muslim community, the *ummah*. This passage is a part of Sura 47. It makes a sharp distinction between those who believe the Qur'an's message and those who do not.

Original Document

47: 1. In the name of ALLAH, the Gracious, the Merciful.

47: 2. Those who disbelieve and hinder men from the way of ALLAH—HE renders their works vain.

47: 3. But as for those who believe and do righteous deeds and believe in that which has been revealed to Muhammad—and it is the truth from their Lord—HE removes from them their sins and sets right their affairs.

47: 4. That is because those who disbelieve follow falsehood while those who believe follow the truth from their Lord. Thus does ALLAH set forth for men their lessons by similitudes.

47: 5. And when you meet in regular battle those who disbelieve, smite their necks; and, when you have overcome them, by causing great slaughter among them, bind fast the fetters—then afterwards either release them as a favor or by taking ransom—until the war lays down its burdens. That is the ordinance. And if ALLAH had so pleased, HE could have punished them Himself, but HE has willed that HE may try some of you by others. And those who are killed in the way of ALLAH—HE will never render their works vain.

47: 6. HE will guide them to success and will improve their condition.

47: 7. And will admit them into the Garden which HE has made known to them.

47: 8. O ye who believe! If you help the cause of ALLAH, HE will help you and will make your steps firm.

47: 9. But those who disbelieve, perdition is their lot; and HE will make their works vain.

47: 10. That is because they hate what ALLAH has revealed; so HE has made their works vain.

CONTINUED

47: 11. Have they not traveled in the earth and seen what was the end of those who were before them? ALLAH utterly destroyed them, and for the disbelievers there will be the like thereof.

47: 12. That is because ALLAH is the Protector of those who believe, and the disbelievers have no protector. . . .

47: 33. Those, who disbelieve and hinder men from the way of ALLAH and oppose the Messenger after guidance has become manifest to them, shall not harm ALLAH in the least; and HE will make their works fruitless.

47: 34. O ye who believe! Obey ALLAH and obey the Messenger and make not your works vain.

47: 35. Verily, those who disbelieve and hinder people from the way of ALLAH, and then die while they are disbelievers—ALLAH certainly, will not forgive them.

47: 36. So be not slack and sue not for peace, for you will, certainly, have the upper hand. And ALLAH is with you, and HE will not deprive you of the reward of your actions.

The Middle East on the Eve of Islam's Rise

By the time of his death in 632, Muhammad had united the tribes of the Arabian Peninsula into a single Arab Muslim community. As this map shows, the land north of Arabia was occupied by two ancient and once powerful societies—the Christian Byzantine and the Sassanid Persian empires. Each had worn the other down in a long series of wars. Both contained religious minorities, ethnic and tribal groups discontented with their imperial rulers. As powerful as these two empires were, conditions were ripe for drastic change.

Original Document



Arab armies inspired by Islam carried their faith north to conquer vast regions in North Africa and the Middle East. They mainly fought the weakened empires of Christian Byzantium and Sassanid Persia. In the Battle of Yarmuk in Syria on August 20, 636, Muslims won a crushing victory. This passage is part of an account of the battle by al-Baladhuri (d. c. 892). It makes clear that many inhabitants of Syria were already hostile to Byzantium and willing to welcome the invaders.

Original Document

[Byzantine emperor] Heraclius gathered large bodies of Greeks, Syrians, Mesopotamians and Armenians numbering about 200,000. This army he put under the command of one of his choice men, . . . resolving to fight the Moslems so that he might either win or withdraw to the land of the Greeks and live in Constantinople. The Moslems gathered together and the Greek army marched against them. The battle they fought at al-Yarmuk was of the fiercest and bloodiest kind. Al-Yarmuk [Hieromax] is a river. In this battle 24,000 Moslems took part. The Greeks and their followers in this battle tied themselves to each other by chains, so that no one might set his hope on flight. By Allah's help, some 70,000 of them were put to death, and their remnants took to flight, reaching as far as Palestine, Antioch, Aleppo, Mesopotamia and Armenia. . . .

. . . When Heraclius massed his troops against the Moslems and the Moslems heard that they were coming to meet them at al-Yarmuk, the Moslems refunded to the inhabitants of Hims the kharaj [a tax on land and its produce] they had taken from them saying, "We are too busy to support and protect you. Take care of yourselves." But the people of Hims replied, "We like your rule and justice far better than the state of oppression and tyranny in which we were. The army of Heraclius we shall indeed . . . repulse from the city." The Jews rose and said, "We swear by the Torah, no governor of Heraclius shall enter the city of Hims unless we are first vanquished and exhausted!" Saying this, they closed the gates of the city and guarded them. The inhabitants of the other cities—Christian and Jew—that had capitulated to the Moslems, did the same, saying, "If Heraclius and his followers win over the Moslems we would return to our previous condition, otherwise we shall retain our present state so long as numbers are with the Moslems." When by Allah's help the "unbelievers" were defeated and the Moslems won, they opened the gates of their cities, went out with the singers and music players who began to play, and paid the kharaj.

CONTINUED

Adapted Version

Byzantine emperor Heraclius gathered large amounts of Greek, Syrian, Mesopotamian and Armenian soldiers. In total, they numbered about 200,000. He put this army under the command of one of his best men. He resolved he would fight the Muslims to win or he would withdraw and go home to live in Constantinople. The Muslims gathered together. The Greek army marched against them. The battle they fought at al-Yarmuk was of the fiercest and bloodiest kind. Al-Yarmuk is a river. In this one battle 24,000 Muslims took part. The Greeks and their followers tied themselves to one another by chains so that no one could hope to flee. By Allah's help, some 70,000 of them were put to death. Those that remained took flight, reaching as far as Palestine, Antioch, Aleppo, Mesopotamia and Armenia.

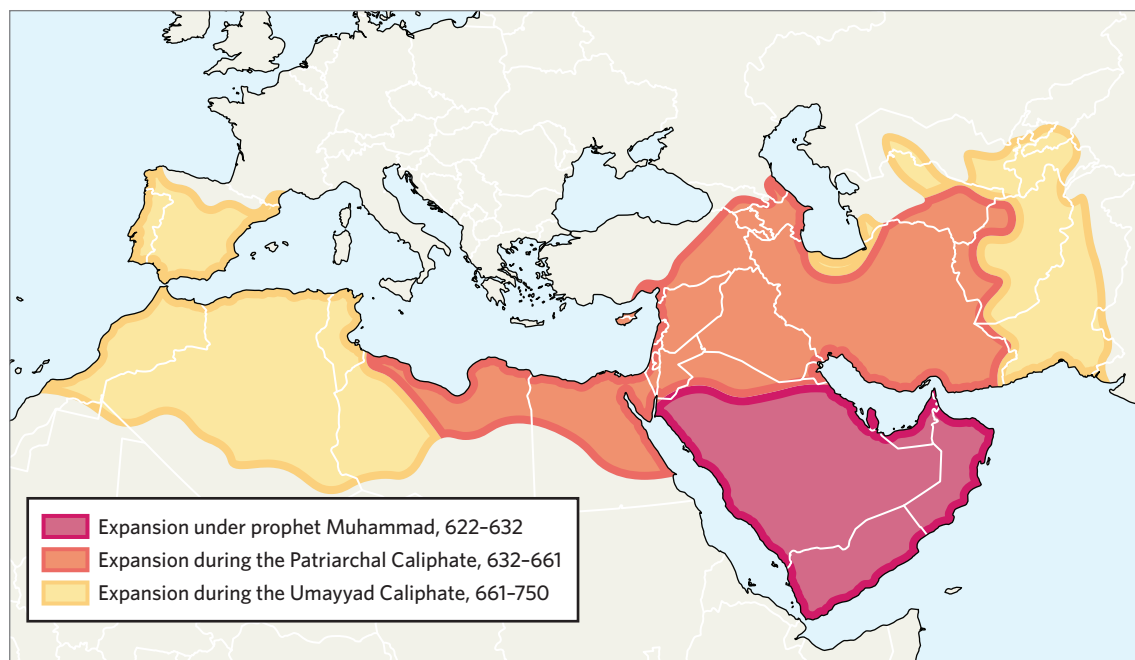
When Heraclius massed his troops and the Muslims heard that they were coming to al-Yarmuk, they returned the kharaj taxes on land and produce to the inhabitants of Hims. They said, "We are too busy to support and protect you. Take care of yourselves." But the people of Hims replied, "We like your rule and justice far better than the state of oppression and tyranny in which we were. The army of Heraclius we shall indeed . . . repulse from the city." The Jews rose and said, "We swear by the Torah, no governor of Heraclius shall enter the city of Hims unless we are first vanquished and exhausted!" They then closed the gates of the city and guarded them. The Christians and Jews of other cities that had submitted to the Muslims did the same. They said, "If Heraclius and his followers win, we will have to go back to the way things were. Otherwise we will remain in our present condition, so long as we are with the Muslims." When by Allah's help the "unbelievers" were defeated and the Muslims won, these people opened the gates of their cities, went out with the singers and music players who began to play, and paid the kharaj.

Original document source: Philip Khuri Hitti, *The Origins of the Islamic State Being a Translation from the Arabic with Annotations Geographic and Historic Notes of the Kitab Futuh al-Buldan of al-Imam abu-I Abbas Ahmad ibn-Jabir al-Baladhuri* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1916), 207–211.

Islam's Empire Expands

After Muhammad's death, the Arab armies marched north, inspired by their Islamic faith. As this map makes clear, they conquered a vast empire in little over a century. The empire included many regions that differed in resources, natural conditions, culture, religion, and political organization. Fusing all of these regions into a unified Islamic society would prove to be an enormous challenge.

Original Document



As Arab armies carried Islam into North Africa, many Berbers converted. The Berbers were an ethnic group spread throughout much of that region. In 711, it was a Berber named Ṭāriq ibn Ziyād who led the first Muslim forces into Spain. Within just a few years, Muslims controlled all of Spain and were raiding parts of France. Over the centuries, Christian forces drove the Muslims back out of Spain. The last Muslim territory in Spain, Granada, was conquered in 1492. This passage is from an address Tarik supposedly gave to his soldiers just before their invasion of Spain in 711.

Original Document

When Tarik had been informed of the approach of the enemy, he rose in the midst of his companions and, after having glorified God in the highest, he spoke to his soldiers thus:

“Oh my warriors, whither would you flee? Behind you is the sea, before you, the enemy. You have left now only the hope of your courage and your constancy. Remember that in this country you are more unfortunate than the orphan seated at the table of the avaricious master. Your enemy is before you, protected by an innumerable army; he has men in abundance, but you, as your only aid, have your own swords, and, as your only chance for life, such chance as you can snatch from the hands of your enemy. If the absolute want to which you are reduced is prolonged ever so little, if you delay to seize immediate success, your good fortune will vanish, and your enemies, whom your very presence has filled with fear, will take courage. Put far from you the disgrace from which you flee in dreams, and attack this monarch who has left his strongly fortified city to meet you. Here is a splendid opportunity to defeat him, if you will consent to expose yourselves freely to death. Do not believe that I desire to incite you to face dangers which I shall refuse to share with you. In the attack I myself will be in the fore, where the chance of life is always least.

“Remember that if you suffer a few moments in patience, you will afterward enjoy supreme delight. Do not imagine that your fate can be separated from mine, and rest assured that if you fall, I shall perish with you, or avenge you. You have heard that in this country there are a large number of ravishingly beautiful Greek maidens, their graceful forms are draped in sumptuous gowns on which gleam pearls, coral, and purest gold, and they live in the palaces of royal kings. The Commander of True Believers, Alwalid, son of Abdalmelik, has chosen you for this attack from among all his Arab warriors; and he promises that you shall become his comrades and shall hold the rank of kings in this country. Such is his confidence in your intrepidity. The one fruit which he desires to obtain from your bravery is that the word of God shall be exalted in this country, and that the true religion shall be established here. The spoils will belong to yourselves.”

CONTINUED

Adapted Version

When Tarik learned of the approach of the enemy, he rose to speak to his companions. After glorifying God in the highest, he spoke to his soldiers:

“Oh my warriors, where would you flee to? Behind you is the sea, before you, the enemy. Your only hope now is in your courage and your loyal devotion. Remember that in this country you are more unfortunate than an orphan sitting at the table of a greedy master. Your enemy is before you, protected by a vast army. He has men in abundance, but you have only your own swords. Your only chance for life is what you can snatch from the hands of your enemy. If you prolong this dire situation even a little, if you delay in seizing immediate success, your good fortune will vanish. Your very presence here has filled your enemies with fear. If you hesitate, they will take courage. Put far from you the disgrace from which you flee in dreams and attack this monarch who has left his strongly fortified city to meet you. You have a splendid opportunity to defeat him if you are ready to expose yourselves freely to death. I have no desire to force you to face dangers that I refuse to share with you. In the attack, I myself will be in the front, where the chance of life is always least.

“Remember that if you suffer patiently for a few moments, you will afterward enjoy supreme delight. Do not imagine that your fate can be separated from mine. Rest assured that if you fall, I shall perish with you, or avenge you. You have heard that this land has large numbers of ravishingly beautiful Greek maidens. Their graceful forms are draped in sumptuous gowns on which gleam pearls, coral, and purest gold. They live in the palaces of royal kings. The Commander of True Believers, Alwalid, son of Abdalmelik, has chosen you for this attack from among all his Arab warriors. He promises that you shall become his comrades and shall hold the rank of kings in this country. Such is his confidence in your fearlessness. All that he wants from your bravery is that the word of God shall be exalted in this country and that the true religion shall be established here. The spoils will belong to yourselves.”

The invading Muslim armies in the seventh and eighth centuries had to rule over huge numbers of Christians, Jews, and other non-Muslims. These non-Muslims continued to be in the majority for centuries. The Pact of Umar is a set of rules Muslims imposed on their Christian subjects. The rules in the pact applied to Jews as well. Historians believe this treaty was first established in 637 by Caliph Umar I after the conquest of Christian Syria. Changes were made to it from time to time and historians say this version of it dates from about the ninth century. Along with these restrictions, Christians and Jews paid a head tax for protection for their communities.

Original Document

This is a writing to Umar from the Christians of such and such a city. When You [Muslims] marched against us [Christians], we asked of you protection for ourselves, our posterity, our possessions, and our co-religionists; and we made this stipulation with you, that we will not erect in our city or the suburbs any new monastery, church, cell or hermitage; that we will not repair any of such buildings that may fall into ruins, or renew those that may be situated in the Muslim quarters of the town. . . .

That we will not teach our children the Qur'an; that we will not make a show of the Christian religion nor invite any one to embrace it; that we will not prevent any of our kinsmen from embracing Islam, if they so desire. That we will honor the Muslims and rise up in our assemblies when they wish to take their seats; that we will not imitate them in our dress, either in the cap, turban, sandals, or parting of the hair; that we will not make use of their expressions of speech, nor adopt their surnames; that we will not ride on saddles, or gird on swords, or take to ourselves arms or wear them, or engrave Arabic inscriptions on our rings; that we will not sell wine; that we will shave the front of our heads; that we will keep to our own style of dress, wherever we may be. . . .

That we will not display the cross upon our churches or display our crosses or our sacred books in the streets of the Muslims, or in their market-places; that we will strike the clappers in our churches lightly; that we will not recite our services in a loud voice when a Muslim is present; that we will not carry Palm branches [on Palm Sunday] or our images in procession in the streets; that at the burial of our dead we will not chant loudly or carry lighted candles in the streets of the Muslims or their market places; that we will not take any slaves that have already been in the possession of Muslims, nor spy into their houses; and that we will not strike any Muslim.

CONTINUED

PRIMARY SOURCE ▶

2.7

NON-MUSLIMS UNDER MUSLIM RULE CONTINUED

All this we promise to observe, on behalf of ourselves and our co-religionists, and receive protection from you in exchange; and if we violate any of the conditions of this agreement, then we forfeit your protection and you are at liberty to treat us as enemies and rebels.

Original document source: Jacob Marcus, *The Jew in the Medieval World: A Sourcebook*, 315–1791 (New York: JPS, 1938), 13–15.

In 713 CE, two years after the Islamic conquest of Spain began, the Treaty of Tudmir was agreed to. It was a pact made between the Muslim governor of North Africa and the Christian Visigoth Theodemir, called “Tudmir” in Arabic. The treaty described terms the invaders would impose on the Christians in the city of Orihuela and several other nearby communities.

Original Document

We will not set special conditions for him [Tudmir] or for any among his men, nor harass him, nor remove him from power. His followers will not be killed or taken prisoner, nor will they be separated from their women and children. They will not be coerced in matters of religion, their churches will not be burned, nor will sacred objects be taken from the realm, [so long as] he remains sincere and fulfills the conditions that we have set for him. He has reached a settlement concerning seven towns: Orihuela, Valentilla, Alicante, Mula, Bigastro, Ello, and Lorca. He will not give shelter to fugitives, nor to our enemies, nor encourage any protected person to fear us, nor conceal news of our enemies. He and [each of] his men shall [also] pay one dinar every year, together with four measures of wheat, four measures of barley, four liquid measures of concentrated fruit juice, four liquid measures of vinegar, four of honey, and four of olive oil. Slaves must each pay half of this amount.

Adapted Version

We will not set special conditions for Tudmir or for any among his men. Nor will we harass him or remove him from power. His followers will not be killed or taken prisoner. Nor will they be separated from their women and children. They will not be forced to give up their religion. Their churches will not be burned. Nor will sacred objects be taken from the realm, so long as Tudmir remains sincere and fulfills the conditions that we have set for him. He has reached a settlement concerning seven towns: Orihuela, Valentilla, Alicante, Mula, Bigastro, Ello, and Lorca. He will not give shelter to fugitives or to our enemies. Nor will he encourage any protected person to fear us. He will not hide news of our enemies from us. He and each of his men shall also pay one dinar every year, along with four measures of wheat, four measures of barley, four liquid measures of concentrated fruit juice, four liquid measures of vinegar, four of honey, and four of olive oil. Slaves must each pay half of this amount.

Original document source: Olivia Remie Constable, ed., *Medieval Iberia: Readings from Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

When historians speak of a “Golden Age of Islam,” they have in mind the advances in medicine, science, philosophy, and the arts under the Abbasid Caliphate (750–1258 CE). One of the most important centers of this flowering was the city of Baghdad. The city was founded in 764 CE by the Abbasid caliph al-Mansur. This description of Baghdad is by Yaqut al-Hamawi (1179–1229) in his *Geographical Encyclopedia*. This passage gives us a sense of what the city was like, perhaps around 1000 CE.

Original Document

The city of Bagdad formed two vast semi-circles on the right and left banks of the Tigris, twelve miles in diameter. The numerous suburbs, covered with parks, gardens, villas and beautiful promenades, and plentifully supplied with rich bazaars, and finely built mosques and baths, stretched for a considerable distance on both sides of the river.

In the days of its prosperity the population of Bagdad and its suburbs amounted to over two millions! The palace of the Kalif stood in the midst of a vast park “several hours in circumference” which beside a menagerie and aviary comprised an inclosure for wild animals reserved for the chase. The palace grounds were laid out with gardens, and adorned with exquisite taste with plants, flowers, and trees, reservoirs and fountains, surrounded by sculptured figures. On this side of the river stood the palaces of the great nobles. Immense streets, none less than forty cubits wide, traversed the city from one end to the other, dividing it into blocks or quarters, each under the control of an overseer or supervisor, who looked after the cleanliness, sanitation and the comfort of the inhabitants.

The water exits both on the north and the south were like the city gates, guarded night and day by relays of soldiers stationed on the watch towers on both sides of the river. Every household was plentifully supplied with water at all seasons by the numerous aqueducts which intersected the town; and the streets, gardens and parks were regularly swept and watered, and no refuse was allowed to remain within the walls.

An immense square in front of the imperial palace was used for reviews, military inspections, tournaments and races; at night the square and the streets were lighted by lamps.

There was also a vast open space where the troops whose barracks lay on the left bank of the river were paraded daily. The long wide estrades at the different gates of the city were used by the citizens for gossip and recreation or for watching the

CONTINUED

flow of travelers and country folk into the capital. The different nationalities in the capital had each a head officer to represent their interests with the government, and to whom the stranger could appeal for counsel or help.

Bagdad was a veritable City of Palaces, not made of stucco and mortar, but of marble. The buildings were usually of several stories. The palaces and mansions were lavishly gilded and decorated, and hung with beautiful tapestry and hangings of brocade or silk. The rooms were lightly and tastefully furnished with luxurious divans, costly tables, unique Chinese vases and gold and silver ornaments.

Both sides of the river were for miles fronted by the palaces, kiosks, gardens and parks of the grandees and nobles, marble steps led down to the water's edge, and the scene on the river was animated by thousands of gondolas, decked with little flags, dancing like sunbeams on the water, and carrying the pleasure-seeking Bagdad citizens from one part of the city to the other. Along the wide-stretching quays lay whole fleets at anchor, sea and river craft of all kinds, from the Chinese junk to the old Assyrian raft resting on inflated skins.

The mosques of the city were at once vast in size and remarkably beautiful. There were also in Bagdad numerous colleges of learning, hospitals, infirmaries for both sexes, and lunatic asylums.

Adapted Version

Baghdad formed two vast semi-circles on the right and left banks of the Tigris, twelve miles in diameter. The numerous suburbs were covered with parks, gardens, villas and beautiful promenades. They had many rich bazaars, and finely built mosques and baths. These stretched for a considerable distance on both sides of the river.

In its most prosperous times, Baghdad and its suburbs had a population of over two million! The palace of the Caliph stood in the midst of a vast park that took several hours to circle around. Beside a menagerie and aviary, it included an enclosure for wild animals reserved for the chase. The palace grounds were laid out with gardens. These were adorned in exquisite taste with plants, flowers, and trees, reservoirs and fountains surrounded by sculptured figures. On this side of the river stood the palaces of the great nobles. Huge streets at least forty cubits wide crossed the city from one end to the other. The streets divided the city into

CONTINUED

blocks or quarters, each under the control of a supervisor who looked after the cleanliness, sanitation, and the comfort of the inhabitants.

Like the city gates, water exits on the north and the south were guarded night and day by relays of soldiers stationed on the watch towers on both sides of the river. Every household had plenty of water at all times supplied by the numerous aqueducts intersecting the town. The streets, gardens and parks were regularly swept and watered. No refuse was allowed to remain within the walls.

A huge square in front of the imperial palace was used for reviews, military inspections, tournaments, and races. At night the square and the streets were lighted by lamps.

The troops whose barracks lay on the left bank of the river were paraded daily in a vast open space. The long wide platforms at the different city gates were used by the citizens for gossip and recreation or for watching the flow of travelers and country folk into the capital. Each different nationality in the city had a head officer to represent their interests with the government. The stranger could appeal to these officials for counsel or help.

Baghdad was a veritable City of Palaces. They were not made of stucco and mortar, but of marble. The buildings were usually of several stories. The palaces and mansions were lavishly gilded and decorated, and hung with beautiful tapestry and hangings of brocade or silk. The rooms were lightly and tastefully furnished with luxurious divans, costly tables, unique Chinese vases and gold and silver ornaments.

The palaces, kiosks, gardens, and parks of the grandees and nobles lined both sides of the river for miles. Marble steps led down to the water's edge. The river was made lively by thousands of gondolas, decked with little flags, dancing like sunbeams on the water. These carried the pleasure-seeking Baghdad citizens from one part of the city to the other. Along the wide-stretching quays lay whole fleets at anchor. There were sea and river craft of all kinds, from the Chinese junk to the old Assyrian raft resting on inflated skins.

The mosques of the city were vast in size and remarkably beautiful. There were also numerous colleges of learning, hospitals, infirmaries for both sexes, and lunatic asylums.

Original document source: William Stearns Davis, ed., *Readings in Ancient History: Illustrative Extracts from the Sources*, Vol. II: Rome and the West (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1913), 365–367.

PRIMARY SOURCE ►

2.IO

The Zanj Uprising (869–883 CE)

The Golden Age of Islam was not a time of political unity and harmony. Beyond Baghdad, the caliphs soon lost control to many other local governors and ethnic groups. Also, tensions between rich and poor, slave and free often undermined the unity of the Muslim *ummah*. One example was the huge uprising of the Zanj. These were black African slaves laboring in southern Iraq. The slaves labored to drain swamps and clean salt flats and turn them back into fertile lands. They were often worked to death in horrible conditions. In 869 CE, they and other poor people in this region rose in a vast revolt. It lasted for thirteen years and resulted in enormous destruction and suffering. This brief passage describes conditions in the city of Basra when it was under siege by the rebel forces.

Original Document

Most people hid in their homes and wells appearing only at night, when they would search for dogs to slay and eat, as well as for mice. . . . They even ate their own dead, and he who was able to kill his companion, did so and ate him.

Original document source: Mus'idi, *Les Prairies d'or*, II, Charles Pellat, trans. (Paris: Benjamin Duprat, 1962), as reproduced in Ghada Hashem Talhami, "The Zanj Rebellion Reconsidered," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 10, no. 3 (1977), 457.

Communicating Results and Taking Action

Communicating Results

- ◆ Historian Bernard Lewis wrote: *“The bulk of the Arab armies that achieved the conquests were desert people. The strategy of the Arabs in their wars of conquest was based very largely on the skillful use of desert power, reminiscent of sea power in the later empires built up by the maritime peoples of the West. The Arabs were at home in the desert; their enemies were not.”* Write a brief paper on how helpful the above quotation is in explaining the success of the Arab armies. Your answer should include detailed references to at least three of the primary sources for this lesson.
- ◆ In the Islamic world, Christians and Jews did not enjoy equal rights with Muslims. Some historians say they faced unfair discrimination that limited them in major ways. Others say they were tolerated in a very humane way that allowed them to flourish. Which of these two views is correct? Answer this question in a brief essay. In the essay, choose three primary sources for this lesson to use to support your position.
- ◆ You will be separated into several small groups. With your group, discuss the following statement by the eleventh century Islamic historian al-Biruni describing his own history of India: *“This is not a book of controversy and debate. . . . It is a straightforward account, giving the statements of Hindus and adding to them what the Greeks have said on similar subjects, so as to make a comparison between them.”* Decide what this statement tells us about the Islamic society the Arabs created in the region they conquered. Your group will prepare a brief five-minute presentation of your view, using at least two primary sources for this lesson to support your interpretation of al-Biruni’s statement.

Taking Action

- ◆ In recent decades, a great many violent political conflicts have made life difficult in parts of the Muslim world originally conquered by the Arab armies of the seventh and eighth centuries. Can the forces that have led to this violence be contained, and can a new Golden Age of Islam take its place? In a small group, work on this question by looking closer at some of these conflicts. Prepare a talk addressing this question. The talk should use the primary sources for this lesson as well as other sources and more current news stories to answer this question: Could a new Golden Age of Islam soon develop? Your group will present its findings to the rest of the class, along with a list of suggested readings. Your teacher will film the presentation and the discussions about it.
- ◆ Send the video to local news outlets and invite them to contact the class, present the video themselves, or write about it.

The Rise of Islam Rubric

Criteria	Unacceptable	Developing	Proficient	Excellent
Focus	Tries to respond to task instructions but lacks clear focus on a central idea or thesis	Addresses the task instructions adequately but focus on a central idea or thesis is uneven	Responds to the task instructions appropriately and convincingly; has a consistent focus on a central idea or thesis	Responds to all task instructions convincingly; has a clear and strong focus on a well-developed central idea or thesis
Research	Refers to some sources but fails to connect these in a relevant way to the task instructions	Refers to relevant sources well but does not always connect these clearly to the task instructions	Refers to relevant sources accurately and usually connects these to the task instructions and a central idea	Refers to relevant sources accurately and in great detail and connects these clearly to the task instructions and a central idea
Development and Use of Evidence	Uses some details and evidence from sources but does not make clear the relevance to the task purpose or instructions	Uses details and evidence from sources generally but not always in support of a clear focus relevant to the task purpose or instructions	Uses details and evidence from sources in a way that effectively supports a focus relevant to the task purpose or instructions	Uses details and evidence from sources along with clear explanations demonstrating deep understanding of the task purpose or instructions
Content	Refers to disciplinary content without clearly understanding it or while using it in an irrelevant or inaccurate manner	Refers to disciplinary content with some understanding but not always with a clear idea of its relation to the overall task	Accurately uses disciplinary content and demonstrates a clear idea of its relation to the overall task	Uses disciplinary content effectively and explains thoroughly and in-depth its relation to the overall task
Conventions	Demonstrates only limited control of standard English conventions, with many errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and other conventions	Demonstrates some command of standard English conventions with limited errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and other conventions	Demonstrates adequate command of standard English conventions with few errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, and other conventions	Demonstrates a well-developed command of standard English conventions with few errors and a use of language appropriate to the audience and the purpose of the task

Primary Source Bibliography

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- 2.5: © Nystrom Education
- 2.6: Horne, Charles F., ed., *The Sacred Books and Early Literature of the East, Vol. VI: Medieval Arabic, Moorish, and Turkish*. New York: Parke, Austin, and Lipscomb, 1917. 241–242.
- 2.7: Marcus, Jacob. *The Jew in the Medieval World: A Sourcebook, 315–1791*. New York: JPS, 1938. 13–15.
- 2.8: Constable, Olivia Remie, ed. *Medieval Iberia: Readings from Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012.
- 2.9: Davis, William Stearns, ed. *Readings in Ancient History: Illustrative Extracts from the Sources, Vol. II: Rome and the West*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1913. 365–367.
- 2.10: Mus'idi. *Les Prairies d'or, II*. Charles Pellat, trans. Paris: Benjamin Duprat, 1962. As reproduced in, Ghada Hashem Talhami. “The Zanj Rebellion Reconsidered.” *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 10, no. 3 (1977): 457.

Sources for Further Study

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January, Brendan. *The Arab Conquests of the Middle East*. Minneapolis: Twenty-First Century Books, 2009.

Morris, Neil. *The Atlas of Islam: People, Daily Life and Traditions*. Hauppauge, NY: Barron's Educational Series, 2003.

Silverstein, Adam J. *Islamic History: A Very Short Introduction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.