

Golden Age of Islam

Why was the early Islamic civilisation so significant?

Golden Threads: Innovation & Legacy

Chronology: 570AD - 1258

Year 5 Summer 1

1. How did early Islamic civilization impact our lives today?

- The word 'Islam' means submission in the Arabic language and for those who believe in the religion of Islam, it means submission to one God.
- Muslims follow the teaching of Muhammad, who they know as a prophet. A prophet is someone who teaches the word of God.
- Muhammad lived in the Arabian peninsula from 570AD to 632AD, during the medieval period.
- Muslims believe that around 1,400 years ago, in the city of Mecca, Muhammad received the word of God whom they named Allah (the Arabic word for God).



Chronology and Significance

How did the early Islamic civilisation expand at such a high rate?

- The Arabs had incredibly skilled cavalry (soldiers on horseback) that could move extremely fast.
- Living in the desert made the soldiers tough. They could live in barren, rugged conditions where others couldn't and survive on minimal supplies.
- The Arabs took opponents by surprise and chose their targets carefully.
- Muslim forces had amazing weapons like ballistae -giant slings- which could throw enormous stones and bolts that could smash through the walls of cities.



Continuity and Change

3. Why was Baghdad such an innovative city?

- Baghdad was the capital city of the Muslim Empire.
- The caliph's palace was right next to the main mosque so that when people bowed down to pray they were also bowing down to the caliph.
- Baghdad was full of mosques, beautiful buildings with abstract designs.
- Each neighbourhood would have its own mosque.
- There was also a House of Wisdom which included a vast library and school.
- There was a hospital in Baghdad built in 805.



Significance

4. What was life like in Baghdad at the time of the Early Islamic Civilisation?

- Trade enabled inhabitants of Baghdad to have a very luxurious life.
- Many goods were brought to Baghdad in the 9th century AD.
- The Prophet Mohammed popularised the use of the first toothbrush in around 600.
- Bathroom soap bars that we know today were first produced in the Middle East during the 10th century.



Similarities and Differences

5. How did daily life in the Islamic city of Baghdad compare to daily life in Cordoba at the time?

- At the time, Ancient Cordoba was far bigger than London and Cairo and it boasted over 80,000 shops for visitors to browse within.
- 700 mosques and 300 public baths spread throughout the city.
- Streets which were paved and even lit.
- It had many bookshops and more than seventy libraries.
- Book manufacturers couldn't make the books fast enough, such was the demand.



Similarities and Differences

Assessment task:

Debate - Why early Islamic civilisation was so significant and what was its legacy?