

HISTORY

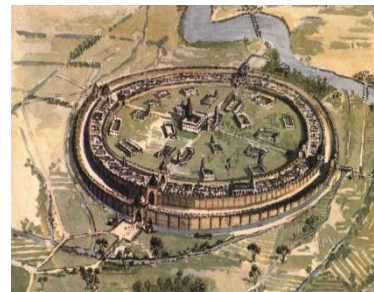


YEAR 6

HOW DID EARLY ISLAMIC CIVILISATIONS INFLUENCE THE WORLD?

The Big Picture

There are approximately 1.8 billion Muslims in the world – roughly 24% of the global population. But while Islam is currently the world's second-largest religion (after Christianity), it is the fastest-growing major religion. In this topic, children will learn about the origins of Islam and gain an understanding of the prophet Muhammad's influence on the Arabic world. Children will also learn about the importance of Baghdad in the past and compare it to the modern-day city, as well as learning about the intellectual influence that this period has had on the rest of the world through science and mathematics. This short history unit gives a background to related Geography and RE topics.



End Point Knowledge

- Pre-Islamic Arabia was the domain of nomadic tribes and those who lived in Mecca. These people were of several religions including Christianity, Judaism and a type of paganism whose chief god was called Al-Illah (The God).
- The Kaaba was already built by the time of Muhammad. Muslims believe that it was rebuilt by Ibrahim (Abraham) and his son Ismail (Ishmael).
- Muhammad was born approximately 570 CE in Mecca. His parents both died when he was young and he was raised by his grandfather. As he grew, he would periodically seclude himself in a mountain cave named Hira for several nights of prayer.
- When he was 40, Muhammad reported being visited by the angel Gabriel in the cave and receiving his first revelation from God. In 613 CE, Muhammad started preaching these revelations publicly, proclaiming that "God is One", that complete "submission" (islām) to God is the right way of life, and that he was a prophet and messenger of Allah (the Abrahamic God), similar to the other prophets in Islam.
- Muhammad's followers were initially few in number, and experienced hostility from Meccan polytheists for 13 years. To escape ongoing persecution, he and his followers migrated from Mecca to Medina. This event, the Hijra, marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar.
- Baghdad was built by the River Tigris in 752 CE by Caliph Al-Mansur as the new capital of the Islamic Empire. It was built in a circle, about 1km in diameter, with the mosque and guard headquarters in the centre. Houses were built around the city walls.
- The House of Wisdom was a library and research facility (built in 830 CE, Baghdad) in which scientific writing from many languages including Persian, Indian, Ancient Greek and Roman texts were collected and studied by Islamic scientists. This led to a rise in horticulture (growing plants to be used in medicines).
- Inventions, discoveries and concepts that we get from early Islamic civilisations include: astronomy, classification in chemistry, Damascus steel, algebra, decimal fractions, chess, glass, hard soap, Arabic numbers, camera obscura, water clocks and the magnifying glass, amongst others.
- We know about this period because there were many Islamic writers, scientists and historians who kept detailed records.

Key Vocabulary

Arabic, Allah, caliph → caliphate, Islam, Muslim, Mecca, Medina, Baghdad, Muhammad, monotheistic, polytheistic