



Early Islamic Civilisation



Key Vocabulary

Caliph	The chief Muslim civil and religious leader, regarded as the successor of Muhammed.
Golden Age	From 762-1258 when art, architecture, science, philosophy and Islamic culture flourished.
House of Wisdom	A huge library attracting thinkers from around the world who translated texts into Arabic.
mosque	A place of worship for Muslims. The first mosque was considered to be built in Ka'bah, Mecca.
Qur'an	The central religious text of Islam (the recitation) believed to be the revelations from God.
nomads	A group of people that travel from place to place and has no permanent home.
settlement	A place where people establish a community.
Mongols	In 1258, the Mongols (people from Mongolia) captured Baghdad and ended the Golden Age.
empire	An extensive group of countries ruled by one person.

How big was the Islamic Empire?

- The Islamic Empire reached its greatest size 730s CE.
- 10% of the Earth's land area has been conquered by Muslim armies.
- Nearly one third of the world's population was ruled by caliphs.
- During the rule of the Umayyads, the empire grew to its greatest size: it stretched across North Africa and the Middle East as far as modern Pakistan. In Europe, Spain and Portugal were also under the control of the caliphs.
- By 1500 CE, Islamic rule had extended to India, Turkey and much of north and central Africa.



Why was the location of Baghdad so important and how did this help Baghdad become a major power? (Silk Road).

- Caliph Al-Mansur and his advisors decided to build the new capital where they did as it had fertile countryside and was on important trade routes.
- The city was designed as a circle and divided into quarters along two grand avenues.
- At the centre was the Caliph's palace along with the Grand mosque.
- The city had four entrances which were along the major trade routes known as the Silk Road.
- India – dyes, spices and perfumes
- China – silk, ceramic and paper
- Persia – glass and carpets
- Africa – ivory and gold
- Syria – steal and glassware
- Spain – leather
- Baghdad was an important stop on the Silk Road: it was the bridge from powerful China and the rest of Europe.

Famous Figures

Al-Khwarizmi
(CE780 - CE850)
A mathematician, astronomer and scientist who provided the foundations of algebra and other concepts.

Ibn al-Haytham
(CE965 - CE1040)
Influential in optics and developed the first camera.

Al-Abbas Al-Zahrawi
(CE936 - CE1013)
Doctor and surgeon and helped develop surgical techniques and tools.

Muhammad ibn Zakariya Razi
(CE854 - CE 925)
Developed patient care and father of paediatrics.

What significant impact did the House of Wisdom have on the modern world and how has Britain been influenced by this?

- Built in 830CE
- It was a library and research facility, which collected and translated scientific writing from many different languages including Ancient Greek.
- Scholars from the house of Wisdom travelled widely and collected texts from all over the world and translated them in to Arabic.
- The HoW held more books than anywhere else in the world.
- The HoW held some of the first observatories.
- HoW became a famous centre for mathematics, astronomy, geography, medicine and other subjects.
- The HoW brought together scholars from many countries: language, ideas, cultures and religions were shared.

What were the roles of men, women and children?

- Man was the head of the family, expected to act responsibly providing home food and clothing and to protect them.
- Women – took care of the house was second duty, first was having children.
- Childhood - including schooling – Muslim's recognise 4 key stages of childhood. Birth until teeth – first duty is to put them on the path to becoming a Muslim. Baby is born, parent whispers call to prayer. 2nd stage teething – 7 and 7-13. During these stages, children learn to correct manners and social behaviour and begin to go to school. Toys were similar to that of today: girls had dolls, seesaws and mini animals made from cloth and wood. 13-15 – begin the five pillars.
- Education – boys got a better education, both boys and girls learnt the Qur'an. Education for all boys, most boys went to local mosque and rich boys taught by tutors. Read and write Arabic, arithmetic. Girls learnt about Islamic beliefs and customs, were taught how to clean and sew. Wealthy parents educated girls, particularly those who were children of scholars.

Timeline

762 CE	810 CE	1258 CE
Baghdad (The Round City) built	Baghdad is centre of education, science and maths	Baghdad destroyed by Mongols