

The Rise of Islam

Lesson 1



MAIN IDEAS

1. Arabia is a mostly a desert land.
2. Two ways of life—nomadic and sedentary—developed in the desert.

Key Terms

- sand dunes** hills of sand shaped by the wind
- oasis** a wet, fertile area in the desert
- sedentary** settled
- caravan** a group of traders that travels together
- souk** a market or bazaar

Lesson Summary

A DESERT LAND

The Arabian Peninsula is a mostly hot and dry desert of scorching temperatures and little water. Yet people have lived there for thousands of years.

Arabia, located in the southwest corner of Asia, is the crossroads for three continents—Africa, Europe, and Asia. Trade routes cross the region by both land and sea. These routes have brought many different people and customs through Arabia, influencing the people who live there.

The world's largest sand desert, the Rub'al-Khali, which means "Empty Quarter," lies in Arabia. There is little life there. **Sand dunes**, or hills of sand shaped by the wind, can rise to 800 feet and stretch for hundreds of miles. Water is scarce and exists mainly in oases throughout the desert. An **oasis** is a wet, fertile area in the desert. Oases have always been key stops along Arabia's trade routes.

Deserts cover much of Arabia's interior, but other landforms are along its edges. Mountains border the southern and western coasts, and

Arabia was the trading crossroads for what three continents?

Why would oases be important to people traveling along trade routes?

Lesson 1, *continued*

marshy land is near the Persian Gulf. Most people have settled in the milder coastal regions.

TWO WAYS OF LIFE

People developed two main ways to live in the desert: nomadic and **sedentary**, or settled. Nomads moved from place to place. They lived in tents and raised goats, sheep, and camels. They traveled with their herds across the desert, moving along regular routes as seasons changed. They depended on camels for transportation and milk. Nomads traveled in tribes, or groups of people. Tribe membership was important to nomads. It offered protection from desert dangers and reduced competition for grazing lands.

Other people settled in oases and farmed. Settlements in oases along the trade routes became towns, where most people in Arabia lived. Merchants and craftspeople lived there too and worked with people in caravans. A **caravan** is a group of traders that travel together. Most town centers featured a **souk**, which is a market or bazaar. Both nomads and caravans used these centers of trade. Nomads traded animal products and desert herbs for cooking supplies and clothing. Merchants sold spices, gold, leather, and other goods brought by the caravans.

Arabian towns were important places along the trade routes. They linked India with Northeast Africa and the Mediterranean. Trade made it possible for Arabs to come in contact with people and ideas from different cultures around the world.

CHALLENGE ACTIVITY

Critical Thinking: Elaborate If you lived in Arabia, would you choose a nomadic or sedentary life? Write a one-page description of what your life would be like based on the lifestyle you would prefer to live.

Why did nomads want to travel in a tribe?

Underline the sentence that tells where most people in Arabia lived.

What are some things that could be found at a souk?

Lesson 1, *continued*

DIRECTIONS Write a descriptive phrase to describe each term.

1. sand dunes _____

2. souk _____

3. caravan _____

4. oasis _____

5. sedentary _____

DIRECTIONS Look at each set of vocabulary terms. On the line provided, write the letter of the term that does not relate to the others.

_____ 6. a. sand dunes
b. souk
c. oasis

_____ 7. a. souk
b. sedentary
c. sand dunes

The Rise of Islam

Lesson 2



MAIN IDEAS

1. Muhammad became a prophet and introduced a religion called Islam in Arabia.
2. Muhammad's teachings had similarities to Judaism and Christianity, but they also presented new ideas.
3. Islam spread in Arabia after being rejected at first.
4. The Qur'an is the holy book of Islam.
5. Along with the Qur'an, the Sunnah guide Muslims' lives.
6. Islamic law is based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

Key Terms and People

Muhammad an Arabian man whose teachings became the basis for a new religion

Islam religion based on messages Muhammad received from God

Muslim a person who follows Islam

Qur'an the holy book of Islam

shrine a place where people worship a saint or god

pilgrimage journey to a sacred place

mosque a building for Muslim prayer

jihad literally means "to make an effort" or "to struggle"

Sunnah a collection of actions or sayings by Muhammad

Five Pillars of Islam the five acts of worship required of all Muslims

Lesson Summary

MUHAMMAD BECOMES A PROPHET

Muhammad brought a new religion to Arabia. What is known about him is from religious writings. He was born in the city of Mecca around 570.

Muhammad became upset that Mecca's rich people did not help the poor. According to Islamic teachings, when he was 40, an angel revealed God's messages to him. These form the basis of **Islam**. A follower of Islam is a **Muslim**. Islam's messages were written in the **Qur'an**, the holy book of Islam.

Underline the name of Islam's founder.

What did the messages Muhammad received from God form?

Lesson 2, *continued*

MUHAMMAD’S TEACHINGS

Some of Muhammad’s ideas came from Judaism and Christianity, including monotheism, or belief in one god. This was a new idea for many Arabs who prayed to gods at a **shrine**. The most important shrine was in Mecca. People traveled there on a **pilgrimage**.

Why did people travel to Mecca on a pilgrimage?

ISLAM SPREADS IN ARABIA

Mecca’s rulers felt threatened by Muhammad. So he left and went to Medina. His house became the first **mosque**, or Muslim prayer building. Many Arab tribes accepted Islam. After years of fighting, Meccans welcomed back Muhammad and accepted Islam.

Underline the name for a Muslim prayer building.

THE QUR’AN

Muslims believe that the Qur’an is the word of God as told to Muhammad. Muslims believe that God wishes them to follow rules. These rules affect Muslims’ everyday life.

Why is the Qur’an so important?

Jihad is an important Islamic concept, which means “to make an effort” or “to struggle.” It refers to the internal struggle of a Muslim trying to follow Islamic beliefs. It can also mean the struggle to defend the Muslim community or convert people. The word has also been translated as “holy war.”

What two struggles does jihad refer to?

THE SUNNAH

Another important Islamic holy book is the **Sunnah**, a written record of Muhammad’s words and actions. It spells out the five acts of worship required of Muslims—the **Five Pillars of Islam**.

ISLAMIC LAW

The Qur’an and the Sunnah form the basis of Islamic law, or Shariah. This sets punishments or rewards. It makes no distinction between religious and secular life. Most Islamic countries

How is Shariah law used in Islamic countries today?

Lesson 2, continued

today blend Islamic law with a legal system like that in the United States.

CHALLENGE ACTIVITY

Critical Thinking: Summarize Suppose you had to explain Islam to someone who knew nothing about it. Write a one-page paper that includes important information about the religion.

Five Pillars of Islam

Islam

jihad

Mosque

Muhammad

Muslim

pilgrimage

Qur'an

shrine

Sunnah

DIRECTIONS Read each sentence and fill in the blank with a word from the word bank that best completes the sentence.

1. The first acts of worship required of all Muslims are known as the _____.
2. The inner struggle people go through in their effort to obey God or to convert others to Islam is known as _____.
3. The religion based on messages sent by God through an angel to an Arabian man is _____.
4. A collection of actions or sayings by an Arabian man who founded a religion is the _____.
5. A person who follows Islam is a(n) _____.
6. A building for Muslim prayer is known as a(n) _____.
7. The holy book of Islam is the _____.
8. A place where people worship a saint or god is a(n) _____.
9. A journey to a sacred place is a(n) _____.
10. The Arabian man whose teachings became the basis for a new religion was _____.

The Rise of Islam**Lesson 3****MAIN IDEAS**

1. Muslim armies conquered many lands into which Islam slowly spread.
2. Trade helped Islam spread into new areas.
3. A mix of cultures was one result of Islam's spread.
4. Islamic influence encouraged the growth of cities.

Key Terms and People

Abu Bakr one of Islam's first converts, appointed caliph after Muhammad's death

caliph title of the highest Islamic leader

tolerance acceptance

Lesson Summary**MUSLIMS ARMIES CONQUER MANY LANDS**

After Muhammad's death, his followers chose **Abu Bakr** to be the next leader of Islam. He was one of Muhammad's first converts. Abu Bakr became the first **caliph**, a title that Muslims use for the highest Islamic leader.

Abu Bakr directed battles against Arab tribes who did not follow Muhammad's teachings. He unified Arabia as a Muslim state. Muslim leaders who followed Abu Bakr conquered the Persian and Byzantine empires. Muslim leaders made treaties with non-Muslims that listed rules conquered people had to follow. For example, non-Muslims could not build places of worship in Muslim cities. In return, Muslims would not attack them.

During this time, the conflict between different groups of Muslims led to the Shia-Sunni split. The conflict stemmed from a disagreement about who should be caliph. Shias said caliphs should be descended from Muhammad's family. Sunnis believed that religious leaders should elect caliphs. Today, most Muslims are Sunni. Shia Muslims live in Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, and India.

Who was the first caliph?

Underline the sentence that describes Abu Bakr's major contribution as a caliph.

What was the source of the conflict between different groups of Muslims?

Lesson 3, continued

Many caliphs came from the Umayyad family. They conquered lands in Central Asia, northern India, and North Africa. They controlled eastern Mediterranean trade routes. After many years of fighting, the Berbers of North Africa converted to Islam. A combined Arab and Berber army conquered Spain and ruled for 700 years.

How were the Arabs able to conquer Spain?

TRADE HELPS ISLAM SPREAD

Arab merchants took Islamic beliefs and practices with them to new lands. They brought back products such as cotton and rice. They learned of inventions such as paper and gunpowder. Coastal trading cities grew into large Muslim communities.

Why do you think trade flourishes in coastal cities?

A MIX OF CULTURES

Muslims generally practiced religious **tolerance**, or acceptance. More people began speaking Arabic and practicing Islam. The Arabs also took on non-Muslim customs. Cultural blending changed Islam from a mostly Arab religion into a religion of many different cultures.

Underline the sentence that explains how cultural blending affected Islam.

THE GROWTH OF CITIES

The growing Muslim cities reflected this blending of cultures. For example, the wealthy city of Baghdad was a major trading center. It attracted artists and writers. Córdoba, in Spain, was the largest, most advanced European city during the early 900s. It was a center of learning. People from across the Muslim world came there to study. It was also a center of Jewish culture. Jewish poets, philosophers, and scientists made contributions to Córdoba's growth.

In addition to Muslims, what other religious group had a thriving culture in Islamic Spain?

CHALLENGE ACTIVITY

Critical Thinking: Draw Conclusions Consider the benefits to Islam from cultural blending. Write a one-page paper that demonstrates how this practice helped Islam become a more universal faith.

Lesson 3, *continued*

DIRECTIONS Write a word or phrase that defines or describes the name or term given.

1. Abu Bakr _____
2. caliph _____
3. tolerance _____

DIRECTIONS Use the two vocabulary words **caliph** and **tolerance** and the name **Abu Bakr** to write a short summary that relates to the lesson.

The Rise of Islam

Lesson 4



MAIN IDEAS

1. Muslim scholars made advances in various fields of science and philosophy.
2. Islam influenced styles of literature and the arts.

Key Terms and People

Ibn Battutah Muslim explorer and geographer

Sufism a movement of Islam, based on the belief that one must have a personal relationship with God

Omar Khayyám famous Sufi poet who wrote *The Rubáiyát*

patrons sponsors

minaret a narrow tower on a mosque from which Muslims are called to pray

calligraphy decorative writing

Lesson Summary

SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY

Islamic scholars made great advances in many fields. These included astronomy, geography, math, and science. At Baghdad and Córdoba, Greek and other writings were translated into Arabic. A common language helped scholars share research.

Muslim scientists built observatories to study the sun, the moon, and stars. They also improved the astrolabe. The Greeks had invented this tool to chart the position of the stars. The astrolabe would later be used in sea exploration. Also, it helped Muslim explorers spread Islam to different parts of the globe, which expanded the Islamic world.

It was a Muslim mathematician who invented algebra. Muslims found better ways to calculate distance and make precise maps. They also used the stars to navigate. Muslim merchants and explorers traveled wide and far. One great explorer was **Ibn Battutah**. He traveled to Africa, India, China, and Spain in the 1320s.

In which two cities were scholarly writings translated into Arabic?

Why do you think the astrolabe would be useful in sea exploration?

Lesson 4, continued

Muslims were also known in medicine. They added to Greek and Indian medicine. Muslim doctors created tests for doctors to pass before they could treat people. They wrote descriptions of diseases, started the first school of pharmacy, and built public hospitals. A Baghdad doctor found out how to detect and treat smallpox. Another doctor, known in the West as Avicenna, wrote a medical encyclopedia widely used in Europe for centuries.

Some Muslims developed a new philosophy called **Sufism**. People who practice Sufism are Sufis. Sufis seek a personal relationship with God. Sufism has brought many followers to Islam.

LITERATURE AND THE ARTS

Poetry and short stories were popular among Muslims. The collection of stories called *The Thousand and One Nights* includes tales about legendary heroes and characters. The most famous Sufi poet was **Omar Khayyám**. He wrote about faith, hope, and other emotions in *The Rubáiyát*.

There were many achievements in architecture. Rulers liked to be **patrons**. Patrons helped fund the design and construction of mosques. The main part of a mosque is a huge hall where thousands of people gather to pray. Often mosques have a large dome and a **minaret**, or narrow tower from which Muslims are called to prayer.

Muslims believe only Allah (God) can create humans and animals or their images, so artists did not show them in religious art. In part for this reason, Muslim artists turned to **calligraphy**. This decorative writing became an art form.

Underline advances in medicine made by Muslims.

What is the name of Islam's great collection of stories?

Underline the sentence that helps to explain why Muslim artists developed calligraphy as an art form.

Lesson 4, *continued*

CHALLENGE ACTIVITY

Critical Thinking: Explain Islamic culture made many advances in science, medicine, and art that people still use today. Choose the advancement that you think is the most important to our modern society. Then write a one-page paper explaining your position.

DIRECTIONS Read each sentence and fill in the blank with the word in the word pair that best completes the sentence.

1. Decorative writing that became a Muslim art form is known as _____ . (**minaret/calligraphy**)
2. The famous Sufi poet who wrote *The Rubáiyát* was _____ . (**Ibn Battutah/Omar Khayyám**)
3. People who helped sponsor the design and construction of mosques in the Muslim Empire were known as _____ . (**patrons/Sufis**)
4. A narrow tower on a mosque from which Muslims are called to pray is called a(n) _____ . (**patron/minaret**)
5. The great explorer who traveled to Africa, India, China, and Spain in the 1320s was _____ . (**Omar Khayyám/Ibn Battutah**)
6. A movement of Islam that is based on the belief that one must have a personal relationship with God is known as _____ . (**Sufism/Calligraphy**)