

Islamic World Through 1450

Allah will admit those who embrace the true faith and do good works to gardens watered by running streams.

—The Quran, Chapter 47

The fastest growing major religion in the world today, Islam, is rooted in faith in one God, Allah, as taught by several prophets. The last of these prophets was *Muhammad* (570–632 C.E.), who lived in the desert lands of the Arabian Peninsula.

In the course of the first century after Muhammad's life, Islam expanded rapidly, reaching from Persia to Spain. Today, Islam remains the predominant religion in the Arab countries of the Middle East and North Africa, as well as in non-Arab countries such as Iran, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Niger.

Pre-Islamic Bedouin Culture

In the sixth century, the *Bedouins* were well established in the Arabian Peninsula. Their culture was mostly nomadic, tribal, and polytheistic. In each clan or tribe, a sheikh ruled with consent of a tribal council. Shaping a sheikh's decisions was a feeling of allegiance to other clans or tribes in the region. *Polygyny*, in which a man has more than one wife at a time, was allowed, partly as a way to care for widows whose husbands had died in raids or warfare.

Although polytheistic, the religion of the Bedouins included worship of a supreme deity: *Allah*. Each tribe had a sacred stone, but the most revered of all was a large black stone at the city of *Mecca*. The entire tribe was a part of the religion, and there was no separate class of priests. Tribal values emphasized honesty and generosity. All of these features—except polytheism—would provide some continuity when incorporated into Islam.

Land trade routes via camels formed the basis of the Arabian economy. When fighting calmed between two nearby empires, the Byzantine to the north and the Sassanid to the north and east, water travel by the Red Sea and Arabian Sea became more popular than overland routes and the Bedouin trade caravans suffered. The Bedouins had to compete with the coastal merchants and traders whose wealth was growing.

Muhammad and Islam

Muhammad was born into the Bedouin world in 570. He became a caravan manager. In the course of his work, Muhammad regularly came into contact with Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians. Muhammad married a rich widow in Mecca and settled there. Over the course of many years, he experienced revelations that he attributed to an angel of the deity he referred to as Allah. These revelations were later collected by those who had heard his message in the *Quran* (also spelled *Koran*, meaning “recitation”). Muhammad criticized polytheism, tribal loyalties, and commercial practices in his society. He called for social justice, including alms for the poor.

The Spread of Islam Slowly at first, Muhammad's ideas spread through his preaching. According to tradition, it took Muhammad three years to gather 30 people to follow Allah. Muslims, those who accepted Muhammad's teachings, viewed him as a great prophet, the final one in a line that included Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. But Muslims did not, and do not today, worship Muhammad as divine. This contrasts with the position of Jesus in Christianity, who is considered divine by almost all Christians.

Muhammad's teaching led to conflict with Mecca's existing leaders. They rejected the idea that Muhammad was the agent of the one true deity and began to persecute his kin and those who worshipped Allah. Due to the persecution, Muhammad and his followers fled the city in 622 and escaped to *Medina* (the flight is called the *Hegira*). There he formed the first Muslim community. Muhammad returned ten years later to conquer Mecca and declare the building housed the sacred black stone there—the *Ka'aba*—a shrine of Islam.

During Muhammad's lifetime, most of the Arabian Peninsula was united under Islam. Conditions in Arabia contributed to the rapid spread of Islam. A drought, combined with the desire of the rulers of Islam to extend their trade routes, encouraged the new converts to move out of the Arabian Peninsula. As they moved, they carried their faith with them and introduced it to others. Islam was also expanded through military conquest. But after an area was conquered, Islamic rule was relatively tolerant: No one was forced to convert to the faith. If conquered peoples paid a tax, they could become exempt from military service. The strong allegiance among Arabs to Islam and the egalitarian nature of the religion attracted many new converts.

Core Theological Principles of Muhammad Islam emerged as the third great world religion to come from Southwest Asia. Like the other two, Judaism and Christianity, Islam was a monotheistic faith that honored Abraham and other prophets. Because of these similarities, followers of Islam showed great respect toward these other *People of the Book*. Core theological principles of Islam include: the ideas of salvation and hope of an afterlife; the importance of submission to the will of Allah (the one true God); and a belief in the Quran as the sacred book providing guidance and laws for the followers.

Islam in Practice To put these principles into practice, Muslims have a core set of obligations that have become known as the *Five Pillars*:

1. Believing in only one God—Allah
2. Praying five times daily
3. Giving alms to the poor
4. Fasting during the month of *Ramadan*
5. Making a pilgrimage to Mecca once in a lifetime

Another principle of Islam, and the most controversial one today, is the concept of *jihad*, or struggle to strive in the way of Allah and to improve both oneself and society. While many Muslims view *jihad* as an inner struggle, some have interpreted it as a requirement to go to war to preserve and extend Islam.

Shariah Developed by Muslim scholars after the death of Muhammad, the Islamic code of law called *shariah* outlines behavioral requirements for daily life. For example, it requires morality and honesty, and bans gambling, eating pork, and drinking alcohol. Polygyny is permitted in some circumstances, but Muhammad attempted to limit the practice to four wives. Also, Muslims were cautioned not to enslave Muslims, Christians, or Jews. Countries that in recent years have based their laws on shariah include Iran, parts of Nigeria, Afghanistan, Libya, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Yemen.

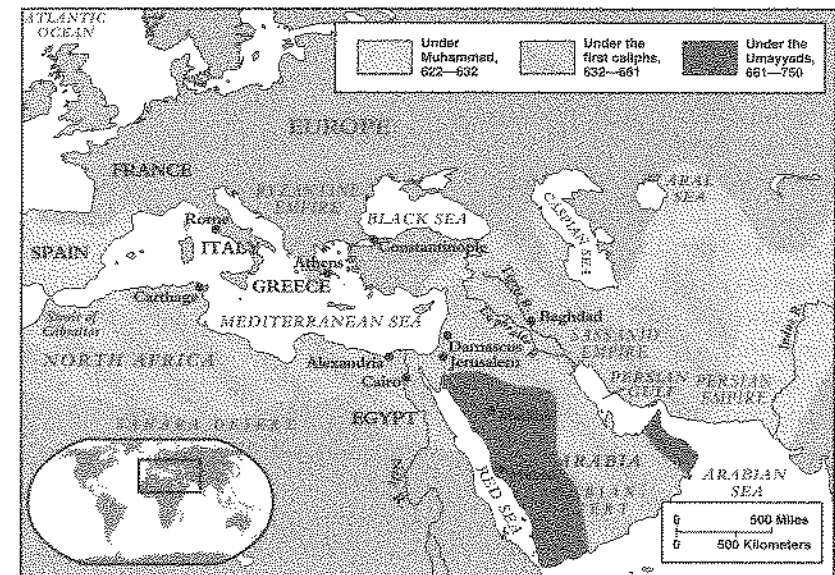
The First Four Caliphs and Umayyads

At Muhammad's death in 632, his followers split over who should become the leader of the Islamic community. Some supported his father-in-law, *Abu Bakr*. Others advocated for Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, *Ali*. Abu Bakr won the dispute and took over as *caliph*, or head of state. He was responsible for guiding the Islamic world in accordance with the dictates of the Quran. Ali, who lost the dispute, eventually became the fourth caliph.

This succession dispute divided Islam into factions that still exist today. The supporters of Abu Bakr became the Sunni group, or *Sunnis*. They consider the first four successors the "Rightly Guided Caliphs." Supporters of Ali became the *Shia* group, also known as *Shiites*. They consider Ali the first true caliph. Today, about 85 to 90 percent of Muslims are Sunni. Shia are strongest in Iran and Iraq. The term *Dar al-Islam* has come to refer to all of Islamic culture, including Shia and Sunni. (Test Prep: Make an outline comparing the division in Islam with the schism in Christianity. See page 134.)

As caliphs conquered lands beyond the Arabian Peninsula, they spread Islam, the Arabic language, and the cultivation of cotton, sugar, and citrus crops. Abu Bakr led raids into and seized land from the Byzantine Empire based in Constantinople and the Persian Sassanid Empire. Political conquest often led to religious conversion, but not always. Muhammad had taught that people should not be forced to become Muslims. Further, the conquering forces had a financial reason not to require religious conversion. Because Muslims were exempt from certain taxes, conversions reduced on tax collections.

THE SPREAD OF ISLAM, 622–750



Ali, the fourth caliph, ruled from 656 until he was assassinated in 661. At that time, a network of merchants from Mecca, aided by capable generals and strong armies, assumed power. They founded the *Umayyad Dynasty*. This Sunni dynasty moved its capital to *Damascus*, from where it governed its huge empire for approximately 90 years. Ultimately, the Umayyads' control reached as far west as Gibraltar, in the Iberian peninsula, and as far east as India. They controlled the largest territory of anyone since the Roman Empire.

Followers of Ali, however, resisted the Umayyad leaders, causing Shia beliefs to develop political as well as religious components. Their community leader became known as *imam* rather than caliph.

Umayyads and Abbasids

By the end of 90 years, the Umayyad rulers had grown weak and corrupt. In 750, their capital, Damascus, fell to a group known as the *Abbasids*. The new rulers founded a new city for their capital, *Baghdad*. Situated in an ideal spot for trans-Eurasian trade, Baghdad soon rivaled Constantinople in both wealth and population, and the Abbasid Caliphate became one of the most powerful and innovative empires of its time.

Baghdad's Influence In addition to serving as a capital city, Baghdad became a center of learning. Although the paper-making process originated in China, the invention of techniques to make thicker, more useful paper was an achievement of Baghdad. A cataloguer of books in the tenth century listed thousands of existing titles and authors, many from lands far from the caliph's court. The expansion of the intellectual world of Baghdad represented a "golden age" of learning.

The Influence of Persia When Islam was brought to Persia in 651, Arabic was the official language, and non-Arab believers such as Persians were treated as second-class citizens. In the ninth century, Persian Muslims began a movement against the privileged status of Arabs, arguing that the practice went against the Islamic principles of brotherhood and equality. Through such efforts, Persians were able to convert to Islam while maintaining their distinctive Persian culture and language. During the Islamic Golden Age that followed, Persia contributed remarkable scholars, scientists, and poets. The polymath known to the West as Avicenna (980–1037) advanced the science of medicine and wrote on numerous topics, including astronomy, geography, and logic. Rumi (1207–1273) was a Persian poet, theologian, and jurist. His poetry, mostly written in Persian, has been influential not only in Persia, but around the world. Rumi’s teachings became the basis of the Sufi movement within Islam, which is described on page 155.

Problems for the Abbasids Even as Baghdad flourished in intellectual areas, the rulers confronted difficulties with tax collection and control of far-flung provinces. Grain and produce reached the city as partial payment for taxes from provincial governors, so the central administration tried to standardize tax collection to be in cash only. Administrators hoped that this reform would better support the government and minimize corruption by provincial officials.

Over time, the political empire became increasingly hierarchical with an ever-growing bureaucracy. *Viziers* (prime ministers) would communicate the will of the ruler to the people—the ruler himself was often seated behind a screen. Being a ruler was a dangerous occupation and leaders faced frequent assassination attempts. Some were successful.

Comparing Islamic Empires		
Abbasid Empire	Both	Umayyad Empire
<i>Location:</i> Southwest Asia and North Africa	<i>Branch of Islam:</i> Sunni	<i>Location:</i> Southwest Asia, North Africa, and Southwest Europe
<i>Capital:</i> Baghdad	<i>Ethnicity of Leaders:</i> Arab	<i>Capital:</i> Damascus and then Córdoba
	<i>Foreign Policy:</i> spread influence of Islam	

Invasions and Trade Shifts

In the 1100s and 1200s, the Abbasid Empire suffered from a problem that plagued many prosperous empires in history: attacks from outside groups. Four different groups successfully assaulted parts of the Abbasid Empire. All came from the west or north.

Mamluks Originating from Egypt, the *Mamluks* were a Turkic group that had formerly been military slaves. They took control of Egypt and established an empire across North Africa.



Source: LACMA

Gold coins minted under the Abbasids were widely used in the Mediterranean region.

Seljuk Turks Like the Abbasids, the Seljuk Turks were Muslims. They originated from Central Asia. They seized parts of the Middle East, including Baghdad itself. Their leader took the title *sultan*, reducing the Abbasid caliph to the role of chief Sunni religious authority. The Turks almost immediately began threatening the neighboring Byzantine Empire.

Crusaders The conquest by the Seljuk Turks brought a third invader to the region: Crusaders from Europe. Under the Abbasids, Christians could travel easily to and from their holy sites in and around Jerusalem. When the Seljuk Turks limited this access, Christians in Europe organized Crusades to reopen access. The Crusades will be described in more detail in Chapter 12.

Mongols The fourth group to attack the Abbasid Empire were among the most famous conquerors in history: the Mongols. Like the Seljuk Turks, they hailed from Central Asia. The Mongols conquered what was left of the Abbasid Empire in 1258, and pushed Seljuk Turks out of Baghdad. They continued to push westward, but were stopped in Egypt by the Mamluks. The Mongols will be described in more detail in Chapter 13.

Economic Challenges The Abbasids faced economic as well as military challenges. In particular, trade patterns were shifting. Baghdad lost its traditional place on the southern Silk Roads route when goods began to move more frequently along northern routes. Over time, Baghdad lost population and its canals fell into disrepair and the countryside could not sustain the agricultural needs of the urban population. Slowly, the infrastructure that had made Baghdad a great city fell into decay.

Islamic Rule in Spain

While the Umayyads ruled only briefly in the Middle East, they had more success farther west. In 711, after Muslim forces had defeated Byzantine armies across North Africa, they successfully invaded Spain from the south. They designated *Córdoba* as their capital for Spain. They rapidly expanded northward, sending forces into France.

Battle of Tours The Islamic military was turned back in 732 when it lost the *Battle of Tours* against Frankish forces. This defeat, rare for Islamic armies during the 700s, marked the limit of rapid Islamic expansion into Western Europe. Most of the continent remained Christians, but Muslims ruled Spain for the next seven centuries. (Test Prep: Write a paragraph tracing the Islamic influences on Spanish culture. See also pages 227–229.)

Prosperity Under Islam Like the Abbasids in Baghdad, the Umayyad rulers in Córdoba created a climate of toleration with Muslims and Christians coexisting easily. They also promoted trade, with Chinese and Southeast Asian products entering Spain, and through it the rest of Europe. Many of the goods in this trade traveled aboard ships called *dhow*s. These ships, first developed in India or China, had long, thin hulls that made them excellent for carrying goods, though less useful for conducting warfare. The influence of Islamic architecture can still be seen in Spain today. Impressive buildings were constructed during this period, such as the palaces and fortresses of the *Alhambra* (thirteenth century), built outside present-day Grenada.

Scholars in Spain The Islamic state in Spain known as al-Andalus, became a center of learning. Córdoba had the largest library in the world at the time. Among the famous scholars from Spain was *Ibn Rushd*, known in Europe as *Averroes* (twelfth century). He wrote influential works on law, secular philosophy, and the natural sciences. Another great scholar of ethics during this period was Maimonides, who was Jewish.

Social and Cultural Life

Over time, the Islamic world fragmented politically but advanced culturally. Trade brought in new goods and fresh ideas. In addition to the cities of Baghdad and Córdoba, Cairo in Egypt and Bukhara in central Asia developed great universities.

Islamic centers of learning were not limited to the study of religious teachings. Indeed, in the sayings of the prophet Muhammad is the injunction to “Go in quest of knowledge even unto China.” Islamic scholars translated Greek literary classics into Arabic, saving the works of Aristotle and other Greek thinkers from oblivion. Scholars also brought back mathematics texts from India and techniques for paper-making from China. Medical advances in hospital care improved in cities such as Cairo, while doctors and pharmacists studied for examinations for licenses that would allow them to practice. Writers such as the Persian *Omar Khayyám*, author of *The Rubaiyat*, created works that remain well known throughout the world today.

Centers of Learning in the Islamic World

Name	Location (Date Founded)	Specialty
House of Wisdom	Baghdad (c. 762)	Mathematician Al-Khwarizmi established basis of algebra
University of Al Karaouine	Fez, Morocco (859)	First university in the world to offer degrees
Library of al-Hakam II	Cordoba, Spain, (c. 961)	Library contained several hundred thousand volumes
Al-Azhar University	Cairo, Egypt (972)	University offered undergraduate and postgraduate degrees
Al-Nizamiyya University	Baghdad (1065)	University offered free education

Social Classes in the Islamic World Before the era of Muhammad, farmers and sailors were more common in the Arabian Peninsula than pastoral nomads. However, it was the nomads who led the camel caravans that built trade relationships between coastal and interior dwellers. As always, with trade in goods came the spread of ideas. Trade between the Byzantine and Islamic empires led to contact of people in the Arabian peninsula with Christianity and Judaism. Even as society changed, kinship remained the most important aspect of social relations in the early Islamic world. Clan members felt strong loyalty to one another, just as they had in the Bedouin world.

However, the increase of trade along the Red Sea caused the growth of a powerful merchant elite in many cities. Both Mecca and Medina in Muhammad’s day were stops on the long-distance camel routes. In these cities, mosques and shariah came to provide a common base for social and cultural life.

In the non-Arab areas of Islamic expansion, control by Islamic caliphs led to some discrimination toward non-Arab converts, though usually not open persecution. This discrimination gradually faded in the ninth century. The caliph’s soldiers, who were forbidden to own territory they had conquered, sometimes chose to remain in the armies of the caliphates because they received regular salaries. The presence of a permanent military force that kept order but did not own property allowed life for most of the inhabitants of the countryside to remain virtually unchanged. However, people paid tribute to Islamic caliphs rather than to Byzantine rulers.

Commerce and Class The role of merchants in Islamic society was more prestigious than in other societies in Europe and Asia at the time. Muhammad himself had been a merchant, as had his first wife. Merchants could grow rich from their dealings with far-flung trade routes across the Indian Ocean and Central Asia. They were esteemed as long as they maintained fair dealings and gave to charity in accord with the pillars of the Islamic faith.

Slavery Although Islam allowed slavery, Muslims could not enslave other Muslims. Also exempt were Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians. Slaves were often imported from Africa, Kievan Rus, and Central Asia, but the institution of hereditary slavery did not develop. Many slaves converted to Islam, after which their owners freed them. Once liberated, their children were considered freeborn.

Slave women might find themselves serving as concubines to Islamic men who already had wed their allotment of four wives. Slave women were allowed more independence—for example, to go to markets and to run errands—than the legal wives. Only slave women were permitted to dance or perform musically before unrelated men. This opportunity sometimes enabled female slaves to accumulate enough money to buy their freedom.

Free Women in Islam

Some of the practices now associated with Islam were common cultural customs in Central Asia and the Byzantine Empire before the time of Muhammad. For example, women often covered their heads and faces. This practice solidified under Islam, with most women observing *hijab*, a term that can refer either to the practice of modest dress in a general sense or to a specific type of covering. (Men there also often wore head coverings of various sorts, from turbans to skull caps.) While women could study and read, they were not supposed to do so in the company of men not related to them.

Muhammad's Treatment of Women Muhammad raised the status of women in several ways. He treated his wives with love and devotion. He insisted that dowries, the price a prospective husband paid to secure a bride, be paid to the future wife rather than to her father. He forbade *female infanticide*, the killing of newborn girls. Maybe most important, Muhammad's first wife was an educated woman with her own business, which set a pattern for recognition of women's abilities.

The Status of Women Overall, Islamic women enjoyed a higher status than Christian or Jewish women. Islamic women were allowed to inherit property and retain ownership after marriage. They could remarry if widowed, and they could receive a cash settlement if divorced. Under some conditions, a wife could initiate divorce. Moreover, women could practice birth control. Islamic women who testified in a court under shariah were to be protected from retaliation, but their testimony was worth only half that of a man. One gap in the historical record is written evidence of how women viewed their position in society. Most of the records created before 1450 were written by men.

As elsewhere, the rise of towns and cities resulted in new limitations on women's rights. Their new status might best be symbolized by the veil and the harem. *Harems*, dwelling areas set aside for women and eunuchs, were made up of wives, concubines, and the children of these women.

Sufism

As Islam spread, it became more varied. In some areas, particularly in India and Persia, Islamic groups called *Sufis* began to appear. Notable for their shaved heads, Sufis followed rituals and ecstatic chants in attempts to unite with God. Sufi groups abstained from earthly pleasures and some used whirling dancing to express religious ecstasy. Unlike Muslims who focused on intellectual pursuits such as the study of the Quran, Sufis emphasized introspection to grasp truths that they believed could not be understood through learning. The rise of Sufism may have begun as a mystical response to the perceived love of luxury of the early Umayyad caliphate.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES: WHAT IS ISLAM'S LEGACY IN SPAIN?

An old saying is that the Muslims needed seven years to conquer Spain and the Christians needed seven centuries to reconquer it. Historians have viewed those seven centuries of Islamic rule in Spain in many ways. In the early 1800s, people in the United States knew little about Islam. So, when writer Washington Irving put together a collection of tales and observations about the Muslim era in Spain, under the title *Tales of the Alhambra* in 1832, he focused on how exotic and romantic the era was. The book was very popular when it was published, and is still widely available today.

In the first half of the twentieth century, as Spanish nationalism grew stronger, historians looked for the roots of what made Spain distinctive from other countries in Europe. A Spanish historian who spent most of his life in Argentina, Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz, found these roots in pre-Islamic era. He argued that the essential character of Spanish culture was established before Muslims arrived, persisted during their rule, and reemerged when they were forced out. In other words, Albornoz viewed the impact of the Muslims on modern Spain as relatively minor. In contrast, Américo Castro, a Spanish historian who taught for many years in the United States, argued that the impact of Islam was immense. Castro concluded that the fusion of Islamic culture with older Spanish traditions was what made Spain "Spanish."

In recent years, clashes between Christians and Muslims have prompted historians to focus less on Spanish national identity and more on how Islamic rulers of Spain created a culture of tolerance. For example, Yale professor Maria Rosa Menocal, in *Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain*, published in 2002, praised Spain as a place where scholars "saw no contradiction in pursuing the truth, whether philosophical or scientific, or religious, across confessional [religious] lines."

KEY TERMS BY THEME

STATE-BUILDING	polygyny	Ali
Abbasid	Allah	Sunnis
Baghdad	Mecca	Shias
viziers	<i>Quran (Koran)</i>	Dar al-Islam
Seljuk Turks	Medina	Umayyad Dynasty
sultan	Hegira	Damascus
Mamluks	Ka'aba	imam
Córdoba	People of the Book	dhows
Battle of Tours	Five Pillars	Averroes
SOCIAL STRUCTURE	jihad	Alhambra
Muhammad	Ramadan	Omar Khayyám
	shariah	<i>The Rubaiyat</i>
CULTURE	Abu Bakr	female infanticide
Bedouins	caliph	dowries
		hijab
		Sufis

MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

- Which of the following is the best example of how Islam, during and after the time of Muhammad, adopted aspects of the traditional religion of Bedouin culture?
 - The respect for the ideas expressed in the Koran
 - The importance of the black stone known as the Ka'aba
 - The requirement to follow the principles of shariah
 - The ban on enslaving Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians
- The division of Islam between Sunnis and Shias was similar to other conflicts in history that began as
 - a dispute between upper and lower classes
 - a rivalry over who should succeed an important leader
 - a battle for control of a natural resource
 - a debate over how to interpret a law
- Between the eighth century and the eleventh century, Baghdad became
 - an important city in the Byzantine Empire
 - an important center of learning and distribution point for books
 - the most important city in the Umayyad empire
 - the most important city on the northern Silk Roads
- The attack by the Seljuk against the Abbasids in 1055 is an example of
 - nomads attacking a settled society
 - Persians attacking Arabs
 - ocean-going invaders attacking a land-based empire
 - invaders being pushed to move from outside pressures
- Which of the following statements best describes the Islamic rule of Spain between the eighth and fifteenth centuries?
 - Spain slowly became part of the Abbasid Empire.
 - Spain had to fight off attacks by the Seljuks and Mamluks.
 - Muslims built a culture of religious toleration.
 - The Battle of Tours marked the beginning of Islamic influence in Spain.
- Free women in the Islamic world enjoyed which of the following rights?
 - They could speak publicly in marketplaces.
 - They could participate in dance performances in mixed groups.
 - They could serve as imams or priests in local mosques.
 - They could divorce and own property in certain circumstances.
- What impact did urbanization have on the status of women in the Arabian Peninsula?
 - Their status remained relatively the same because it reflected religious values.
 - Their status rose because they had more employment opportunities.
 - Their status declined since they performed fewer tasks raising food.
 - Their status rose because some joined the upper class or royalty.
- From the time of Muhammad to 1450, which of the following best describes the movement of the knowledge of technological advances?
 - They often began in the Islamic world and moved to Europe.
 - They often began in Europe and moved to the Arabian Peninsula.
 - They often began on the edges of the Islamic world and moved to the Arabian Peninsula.
 - They often began and remained in the Arabian Peninsula.

9. Which factor was most responsible for the decay of Baghdad in the thirteenth century?
- (A) Islam had lost its popularity in the area.
 - (B) The city had become overpopulated.
 - (C) Huge amounts of wealth were invested in city infrastructure.
 - (D) The conquering Turks fought each other more than they maintained the city.

Question 10 refers to the following excerpt.

I saw my Lord with the eye of my heart.
He said, "Who are you?" I said, "I am You."
You are He Who fills all place.
But place does not know where You are.
In my subsistence is my annihilation;
In my annihilation, I remain You.

—Mansur al-Hallaj (c. 858–922), Persia

10. Which phrase most accurately explains something about al-Hallaj's views about religion or politics?
- (A) "I am You" suggests he is a Sufi.
 - (B) "You are He who fills all places" suggests he is an Umayyad.
 - (C) "With the eye of my heart" suggests he is a Sunni.
 - (D) "In my subsistence is my annihilation" suggests he is Mamluk.

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE-OVER-TIME ESSAY QUESTIONS

Directions: You are to answer the following question. You should spend 5 minutes organizing or outlining your essay. Write an essay that:

- Has a relevant thesis and supports that thesis with appropriate historical evidence.
 - Addresses all parts of the question.
 - Uses world historical context to show continuities and changes over time.
 - Analyzes the process of continuity and change over time.
1. Analyze the continuities and changes in the role of women in the Middle East between c. 500 and c. 1450.

Questions for Additional Practice

2. Analyze continuities and changes in the spread of Islam from 622 to 1450.
3. Analyze the continuity and change in the economy and society in the Abbasid Dynasty from 750 to 1258.

COMPARATIVE ESSAY QUESTIONS

Directions: You are to answer the following question. You should spend 5 minutes organizing or outlining your essay. Write an essay that:

- Has a relevant thesis and supports that thesis with appropriate historical evidence.
 - Addresses all parts of the question.
 - Makes direct, relevant comparisons.
 - Analyzes relevant reasons for similarities and differences.
1. Compare the city of Cordoba under Islamic rule with ONE of the following cities:
- Chang'an in Han China
 - Athens in Classical Greece
 - Persepolis in the Achaemenid Dynasty

Questions for Additional Practice

2. Compare the spread of Islam with the spread of Christianity. How were the two processes similar and different?
3. Analyze the similarities and differences in culture between the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties.

THINK AS A HISTORIAN: PRACTICE HISTORICAL ARGUMENTATION

A historical argument includes an analysis that is carefully written and supported by facts and evidence. It is not simply a statement of fact, such as "Baghdad was the largest city in the Abbasid Empire." Nor is it a personal preference or unsupported opinion such as "I like the Abbasids more than the Umayyads." *Which TWO of the following statements are the best examples of a historical argument?*

1. Islamic rule was relatively tolerant because it did not punish people who did not convert to Islam.
2. The core principles of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism are more similar than different. All consider Abraham an important figure.
3. In the century following Muhammad's death, Islam spread through the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia.
4. Of all of the invaders who attacked Baghdad, the Mongols were the most interesting.

WRITE AS A HISTORIAN: USE TOPIC SENTENCES

Add clarity to an essay by starting each body paragraph with a clear and concise topic sentence that introduces the main point of the paragraph. *For each item, select the best topic sentence for an essay about Islam.*

1. First body paragraph
 - a. Islamic nations differed from other religious states since they had different beliefs regarding social structure.
 - b. Compared to women of Judaism and Christianity, Islamic women enjoyed more privileges such as inheriting land and the right to independent thinking.
2. Second body paragraph
 - a. A class of merchants arose in some Islamic states due to the growth of trade.
 - b. The economy grew in the Muslim world through many different factors.
3. Third body paragraph
 - a. Shariah law governed over the people of Islam, and served as the basis for moral code in Muslim states.
 - b. Islam directly affected the legal system of the state.