

Early Islamic Empire – Was it truly the ‘Golden Age’?

Key Vocabulary	Meaning
Baghdad	Baghdad was the centre of the Arab caliphate during the "Golden Age of Islam" of the 9th and 10th centuries, growing to be the largest city worldwide by the beginning of the 10th century.
Mecca	Mecca, in a desert valley in western Saudi Arabia, is Islam's holiest city, as it's the birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad and the faith itself.
Allah	Allah is the standard Arabic word for God and is used by Arabic-speaking Christians and Jews as well as by Muslims. ... The Arabic word thus holds special significance for Muslims, regardless of their native tongue, because the Arabic word was spoken by God himself. Allah is the pivot of the Muslim faith.
Empire	An extensive group of states or countries ruled over by a single monarch, an oligarchy, or a sovereign state.
Sunni	The larger of the two main branches of Islam, which differs from Shia in its understanding of the Sunna, its conception of religious leadership, and its acceptance of the first three caliphs.
Shia	One of the two main branches of Islam, followed by about a tenth of Muslims, especially in Iran, that rejects the first three Sunni caliphs and regards Ali, the fourth caliph, as Muhammad's first true successor.
Arabesque	An ornamental design consisting of intertwined flowing lines, originally found in ancient Islamic art
Silk road	A network of trade routes linking China to the Middle East and Europe, first used to carry Chinese silk.
Caliph	A caliph is the leader of a caliphate - a political-religious form of government of a Muslim community. A caliph had to be Muslim, male, sane, fair, just, and law-abiding.
Geometric	Repeating, interlaced, or overlapped shapes.
Calligraphy	Decorative handwritten lettering.
House of Wisdom	The House of Wisdom was a library and research facility which collected and translated writing from many cultures, including Persian, Indian, ancient Greek and Roman texts.
Arabic	The language of the Arabs, spoken by some 150 million people throughout the Middle East and North Africa.





What you will be learning about
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The importance of Baghdad 2. The House of Wisdom 3. Discovery and learning 4. The first four Caliphs 5. Islamic art 6. Trade and power



Baghdad and the Islamic Empire	London and Europe
Baghdad population: over a million	London population: approximately 20,000
Millions of books, many thousands of readers.	Very few books, only very rich or educated people could read.
Clean water and good drainage in cities.	Very little drainage in cities, water supplies were unsafe.
Advanced mathematics used Arabic numbers and the concept of 'zero'.	Basic mathematics, with Roman numerals and no concept of 'zero'
General peace across a huge Islamic empire.	Many wars between Christian kingdoms.

Key Dates	
AD 632	Muhammad dies and Muslims struggle to agree who should be the next caliph . The first four caliphs appointed after this time come to represent an age of 'pure Islam '. When the last, Ali, was assassinated in AD 661, the Umayyad dynasty of caliphs took over for nearly a century. After that began the reign of the Abbasid caliphs .
AD 752	Caliph Al-Mansur builds Baghdad as the new capital of the Islamic empire on the river Tigris. It was close to established trade routes, such as the Silk Road , and became known as the cultural and learning capital of the world.
AD 830	The House of Wisdom is built in Baghdad.
AD 1000	Al-Zahrawi finishes his medical book Al Tasrif. It will be used by doctors for another 500 years.
AD 1258	The Siege of Baghdad. Mongols from Asia attacked Islamic lands, destroying the House of Wisdom and burning Baghdad. They threw millions of books into the river. The city never recovered its former glory, but the ideas lived on.

Important people in Islamic History:

-  The early Islamic doctor **Al-Zahrawi** is known as 'the father of surgery'.
-  **Ibn Al-Haytham** made the world's first camera or pinhole camera.
-  Al-Khwarizmi worked at the House of Wisdom. He is famous for his contributions to the development of **algebra**.
-  The early Islamic doctor **Muhammad Ibn Zakariya Razi** made a significant contribution to the history of medicine.