

**The Muslim World****Lesson 3****Muslim Culture****Key Terms and People**

**House of Wisdom** center of learning established in Baghdad in the 800s

**calligraphy** art of beautiful handwriting

**Before You Read**

In the last lesson, you read about the expansion of Islam.

In this lesson, you will read about the cultural achievements of Muslim society.

**As You Read**

Use a diagram to take notes on the key elements of Muslim culture.

**MUSLIM SOCIETY****Where and how did Muslims live?**

The Muslim empire included people of many different lands and cultures. Major cities arose in the Muslim world. They included Córdoba and Cairo, centers of Muslim rule in Spain and North Africa, and Baghdad, the Abbasid capital.

Muslim society was divided into four groups. At the top were people who were Muslims from birth. Next came those who converted to Islam. The third group included Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians—protected because Muslims shared some of their beliefs. The fourth group were slaves, none of whom were Muslims.

According to Muslim law, women should obey men. But Muslim women still enjoyed more rights than did those living in European society at the time. The Qur'an gave Muslim women some economic and property rights. In early Muslim society, women could also have

an education and take part in public life. Later they lost those rights.

1. Name the four groups of Muslim society.

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**MUSLIM SCHOLARSHIP EXTENDS KNOWLEDGE****How did Muslim scholars keep learning alive?**

Muslims placed a high value on learning and scholarship. Muslim scholars added much to human knowledge. Europe was in chaos, and much of the knowledge of Europeans was in danger of being lost. During this time, Muslim scholars collected ancient Greek, Indian, and Persian works of science and philosophy. The scholars translated these works into Arabic. One center of this study was the **House of Wisdom** in Baghdad. Later, this

**Lesson 3, *continued***

ancient learning returned to Europe when the works of Muslim scholars were translated.

2. Explain how Muslim scholars helped save the learning of the West.

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**ART AND SCIENCES FLOURISH**

***What were some achievements of Muslim society?***

The House of Wisdom had many scholars and advisers. Some scholars used Greek ideas in new ways. Others created original works.

Literature was a strong tradition before Islam. Later, the Qur'an became the standard for all Arabic literature and poetry. The collection *The Thousand and One Nights* included many entertaining stories, fairy tales, and legends.

Muslims had their own special practices in art. For instance, artists could not draw pictures of people. Only Allah, the religion said, could create life. Unable to draw these images, Muslims developed a new art form. They practiced **calligraphy**, or the art of beautiful handwriting.

Muslim scholars made great advances in medicine and mathematics. The physician al-Razi wrote an encyclopedia that collected all that was known about medicine from Greece to India. In science, Muslims studied the work of ancient Greek scientists but used experiments rather than logic to reach conclusions. One Muslim scientist made new discoveries about how people see. His findings helped lead to the invention of the telescope and microscope. A mathematician named al-Khwarizmi wrote a textbook whose ideas were developed into algebra.

The Muslim Agricultural Revolution happened from the 700s until the 1200s. Traders introduced new crops and growing techniques. Muslim engineers developed ways to water fields and produce more crops. With more food available, the population could increase and improve the economy.

3. Name four achievements of Muslim scientists and mathematicians.

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**PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION BLEND VIEWS**

***How did philosophy blend with Islam?***

Philosophers at the House of Wisdom also translated works of the ancient Greek philosophers. Not all were initially accepted.

Muslim philosopher Ibn Rushd was criticized for trying to join Greek and Muslim ideas. But he argued that Greek philosophy and Islam both searched for the truth. The Jewish philosopher Maimonides, who lived in the Muslim Empire, was also criticized for his ideas. He wrote a book that blended philosophy, religion, and science.

As the empire flourished and grew, philosophers began to reflect the different people who lived in the Muslim empire. Values of many cultures were embraced. Their society developed a concept of the "ideal man" that recognized the diversity of the empire. In time, Muslims came to recognize the value of their differences.

4. Why was Ibn Rushd criticized?

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**Lesson 3, *continued***

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As you read about Muslim culture, write notes to help you summarize Muslim achievements in each area.

<b>1. Muslim society</b>	<b>2. Medicine, math, and science</b>
<b>3. Philosophy</b>	<b>4. Literature and the arts</b>