



Living Together:

Muslims in a changing world



Age 8-10: Exploring Cultural Contributions - the Arts

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Intro to Islamic Buildings

Buildings are the most important form of Islamic art. Of all forms of art, they cost the most, last the longest, and are seen by the most people.

As Islam spread around the world, so did their buildings. There are four main types of Islamic buildings:

- a) the mosque
- b) the tomb
- c) the palace
- d) the fort

Mosques

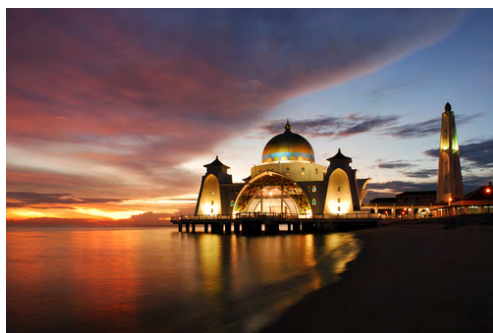
Mosques are the best known and best preserved because they have been used and well looked after for centuries.

Mosques are the **spiritual centre** of an Islamic community. Muslims gather in mosques to **pray**, **discuss** religious issues, and **organize** help for people in need. This could be helping the poor in the local area as well as helping when disasters happen in their own country or in other parts of the world.

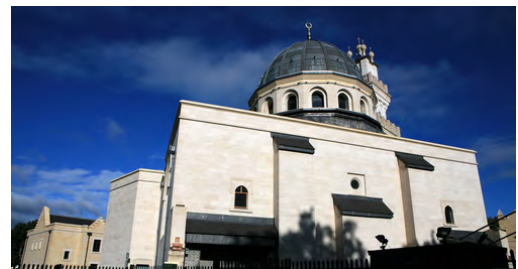
Mosques come in different sizes and designs depending on the location.



The Blue Mosque in Istanbul, Turkey
Mediamix Photo/Shutterstock Images LLC



Floating Mosque in
Melaka, Malaysia
STU/Shutterstock
Image LLC



Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies mosque in Oxford, UK
Paul Cowan/Shutterstock Images LLC

There are features that are in all mosques.

- It is a place where the community can pray.
- The floor is usually covered in carpets.
- There is a way to show the direction of Mecca. Mecca is the religious home of Muslim people.
- There is a place to wash.

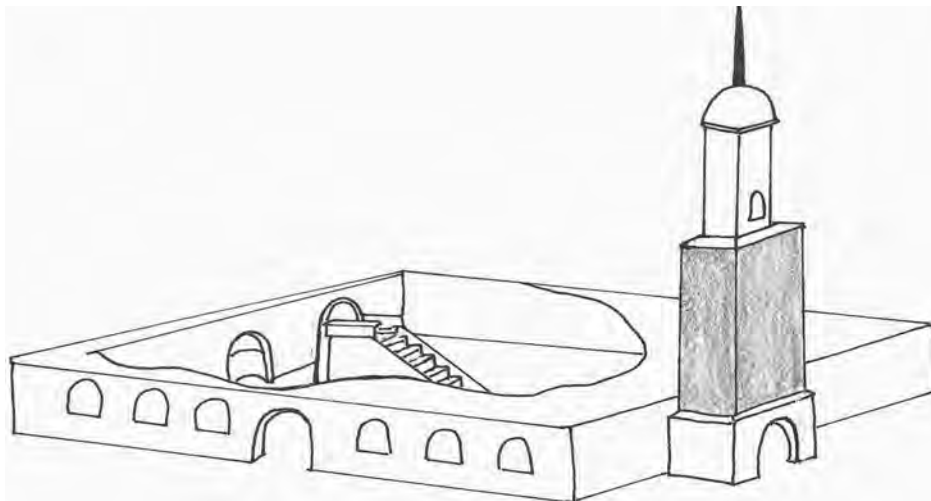
There is a standard of behaviour and dress for all mosques. People **take off their shoes**, and women and some men, **cover their heads** before entering. Often women pray separately from the men.

Activity: Inside a mosque

The interior of many mosques share similar characteristics.

Can you locate the following using the picture provided?

- a) **minbar**: a raised pulpit from which the imam (leader) gives his sermons.
- b) **minaret**: the highest point of a mosque. Traditionally, it is used to call people to prayers.
- c) **finial**: the top of the minaret.
- d) **mihrab**: niche showing the direction of Mecca.



The mosque at Mecca

All Muslims are expected to complete a **pilgrimage or hajj** at least once in their lives. This journey takes them to the **Sacred Mosque at Mecca**.

People who make the pilgrimage wear plain white clothes called **ihram**. Kings and queens wear the same clothes as everybody else. Everyone is considered equal.



Natalia Bratslavsky/Shutterstock Images LLC



Ayazad/Shutterstock Images LLC

The Sacred Mosque surrounds the **Ka'ba**. The Ka'ba is a stone cube that is covered with a black cloth. There are no windows and nothing inside it. Pilgrims walk around the Ka'ba seven times.



Ayazad/Shutterstock Images LLC

Activity: Difficult Journey

- i) What is the most difficult journey you have been on?
- ii) Where did you go? Who went with you?
- iii) What the journey difficult?
- iv) Would you do the journey again? Why?

Suleymaniye Mosque, Istanbul



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As Islam spread to colder countries, the buildings needed more enclosed spaces. This allowed the heat to stay in the building when the weather was cold.

The Suleymaniye Mosque in Istanbul was built in the 16th century. It was one of the first mosques built using a dome roof to cover the prayer hall. There were many windows in the dome so that the daylight would provide light inside the mosque.



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Forts

The Alhambra, Granada, Spain

The Alhambra is an example of an Islamic palace and fort.



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It was built in the 13th century by the Moors who were Muslims from northern Africa. It was a fort as well as a palace. Its gardens are also part of its Islamic design. The water in the fountains reminds people of life and growth.

Alhambra

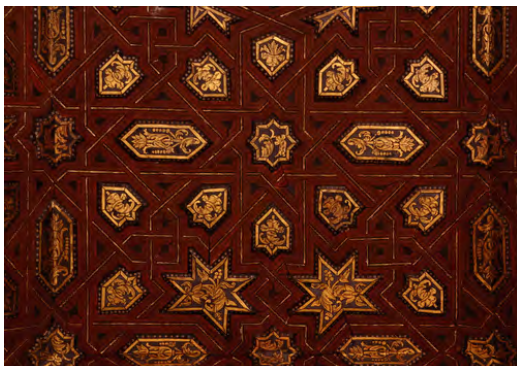
is the best

preserved and the oldest Moorish design. It uses arabesque designs which are based on the natural curves of plants. It also

displays glazed tiles on the walls and ceilings.



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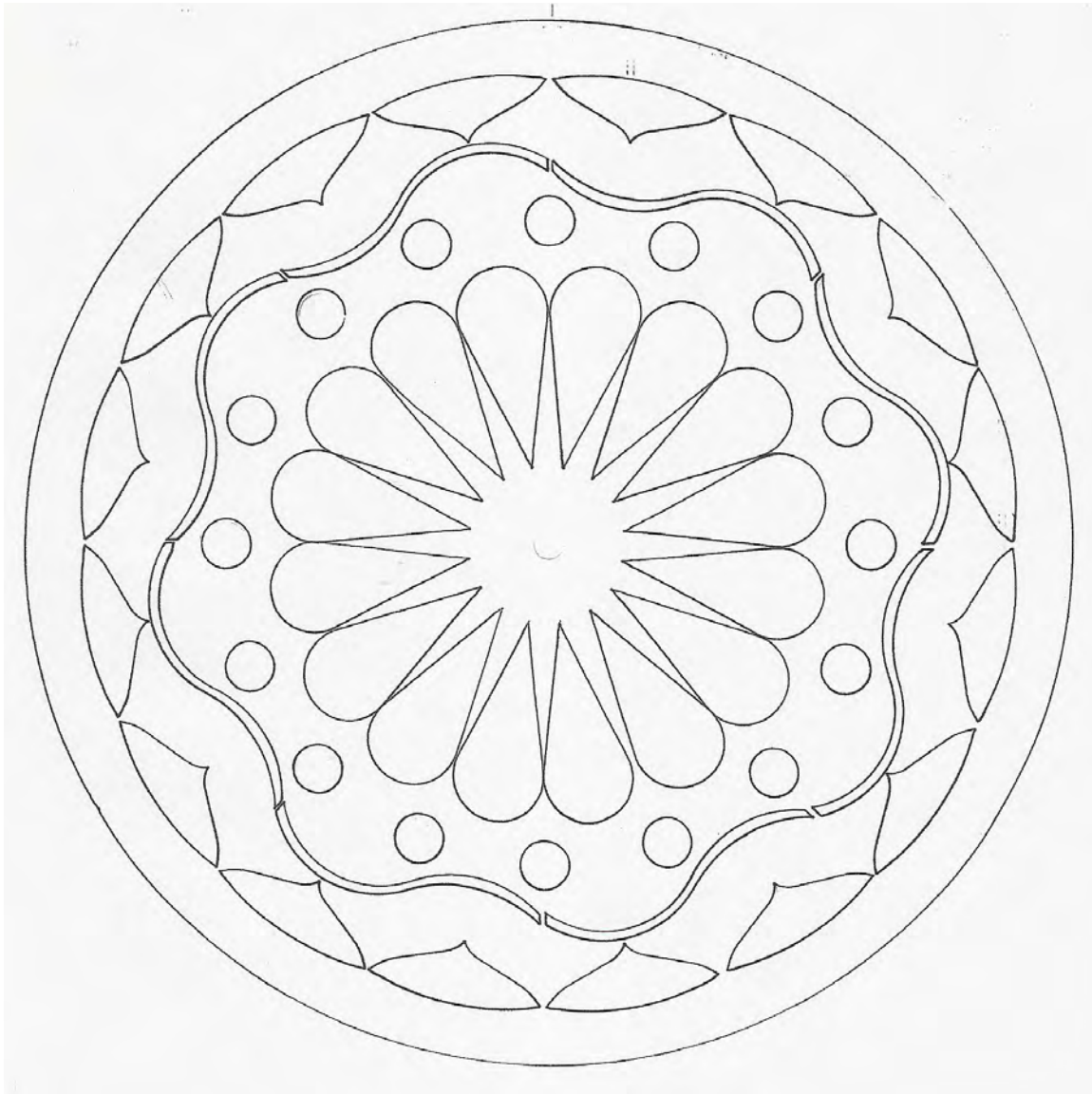


Thomas Pavne/ Shutterstock Images LLC

The main colours used on the tiles are red, blue, gold, and purple. These colours were the only ones available at the time Alhambra was constructed.

Activity: Colour the Tile

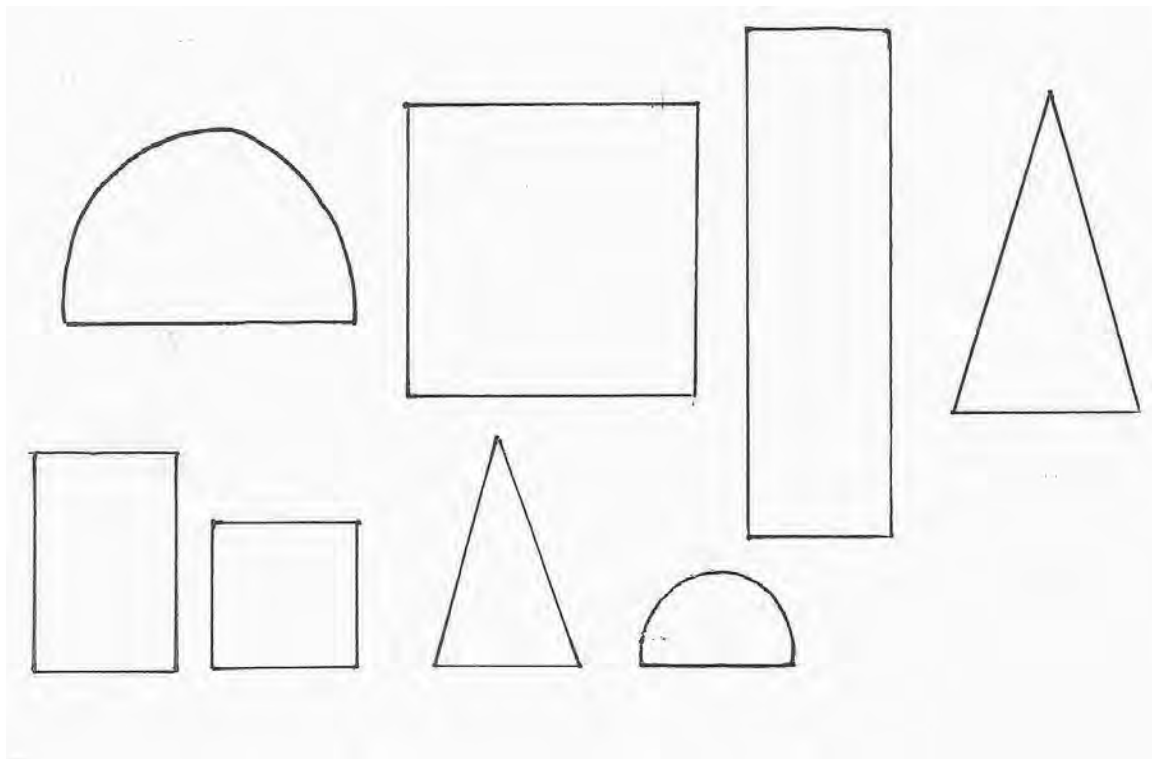
Create a pattern of colour on the tile using only red, blue, purple, and gold.



Activity: Cut and Glue Building

Many geometrical shapes were used in the building of mosques.

The shapes below could have been used in Islamic buildings.



On a separate piece of paper, trace and cut out as many of the shapes as you need to create a building. Once you are happy with the design, glue the pieces in place.



Ages 8-10: Exploring Cultural Contributions - the Arts

My design

Carpets and rugs

Wherever nomadic people went, they took their sheep and goats. While the men hunted and fought, the women spun sheep's wool and goat hair into yarn.

The yarn was then woven into cloth to make clothes for their families as well as tents. It was also used to make carpets and rugs. Carpets began as floor coverings in the tents. They were warm and soft and easy to roll up for travel.



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Yiannis Papadimitriou/
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People living in the cities wanted carpets made by the nomads. Merchants began to travel to the nomads to buy their carpets. The best carpets were thick and soft to the touch and decorated with bright patterns.



Today, Muslims use prayer rugs that are colourful and often have geometric designs. The prayer rugs never show people or animals. Prayer rugs are only big enough for one person to use. Usually, Muslim families have separate prayer rugs for each family member at their homes.

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Activity: Intro to Rugs

Use the website < <http://islamicart.com/main/rugs/intro.html> > to answer the following questions about rugs.

Introduction

1. Click on loom. What is surprising about the picture?

2. Click on knots. Name two types of knots used in rug making.

3. Click on pile. Which fringe do you like best? Why?

Weaving and knotting

1. Click on horizontal. Where is the loom? Where is the weaver?

2. Click on vertical. Where is the loom? Where is the weaver?

3. Which way of weaving would be better do you think? Why?

Activity: Design Your Own Rug

Design a rug using geometric shapes or floral designs or a combination of both. Colour the rug.

Calligraphy

Calligraphy is the art of beautiful writing. For Muslims, writing is one of the most important skills. Calligraphy is used to decorate public buildings like mosques and schools as well as homes.

Arabic script is used for all Islamic calligraphy. It is written from right to left. People who write beautiful scripts are called calligraphers. They practice writing Arabic script.

Calligraphers design pictures using Arabic script. These pictures are drawn on tiles, dishes, as well as the walls of buildings.

Here is an image created with Arabic script:



Lawrence Wee/ Shutterstock Images LLC

Activity: Write a Calligraphy Poem

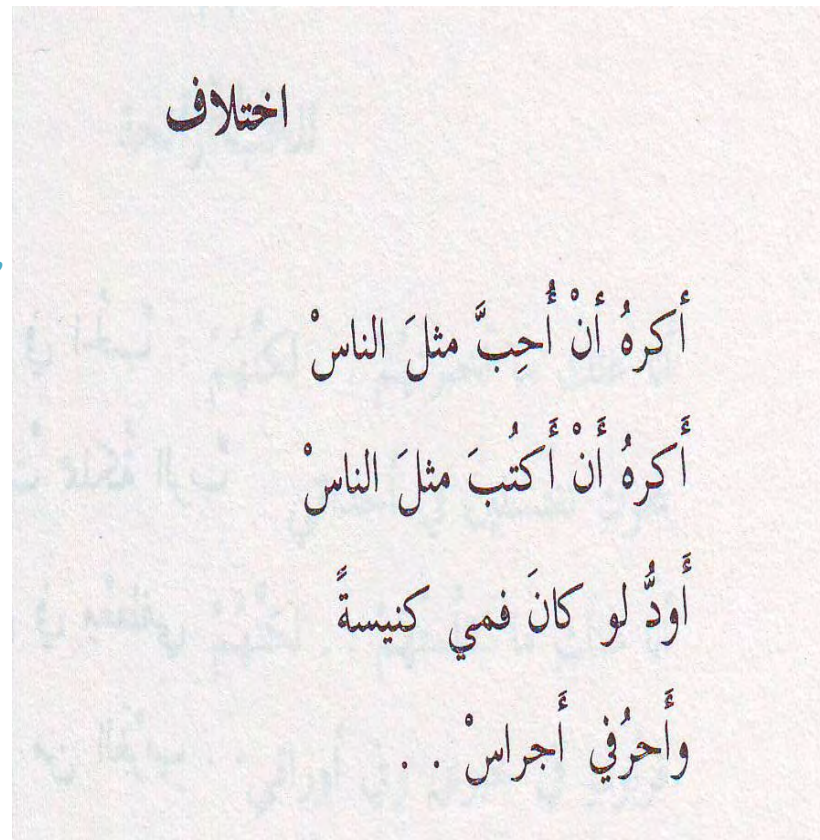
Here is a poem written by Nizar Kabbani in English.

Difference

*I hate to love like everyone else,
I hate to write like everyone else,
I wish my mouth were a church.
I wish my letters were bells.*

Try and write the poem in Arabic following the script. Remember to start on the right hand side of the page.

Here is the same poem written in Arabic.



Activity: Decorate Pottery

In the same way that Islamic pottery is decorated using Arabic script, try and decorate this jug using English script.



Headdresses, jewelry, & perfume

Headdress

Over centuries, Islam has spread to many countries. Each country often has its own tradition of headdresses or head coverings that both men and women wear. There are also headdresses that people wear on special occasions. If the headdresses are decorated, they can also be seen as a form of art.



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The head covering worn by Muslims is influenced by several factors:

- the climate of the region
- the age of the person
- the social status (poor or rich)
- whether the person is married or not married
- the group the person belongs to (ethnic, village, tribe, or country)
- the job the person has

Activity: True or False

Decide whether the statement is true or false. If the statement is false, rewrite it so it is true on the space provided.

1. All Muslims wear the same head coverings. True False

2. Some head coverings are works of art. True False

3. The weather affects what Muslims wear on their heads. True False

4. A married and an unmarried person wear the same head covering. True False

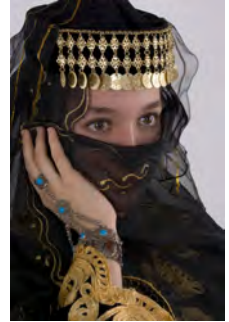
5. Muslims who are rich wear different head coverings than Muslims who are poor. True False

Jewelry



Beautiful artwork can be seen in the jewelry that people wear for weddings. Traditionally, only silver was used, but now gold is used as well. Many pieces of jewelry are bought for a bride when she marries.

Andre
Blais/Shutterstock
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Brian
Chase/Shutterstock
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Activity: Jewelry in Your Life

1. Do you wear any jewelry? Why?
2. What jewelry do brides in your culture wear on their wedding day?
3. Do the adults in your life (parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles) wear jewelry on special occasions? Why?
4. Draw a picture of your favourite piece of jewelry that you own or would like to own.

Perfume

Islamic traders first brought new spices, herbs, and other fragrances to the Middle East. Using their knowledge of chemistry, scientists were able to create new and different perfumes. They were also able to grow imported plants like jasmine and citrus fruit that were needed in the manufacturing of perfume.

Muslims are encouraged to wear perfume. Because of this, scientists searched for ways to produce large amounts of perfumes.

Perhaps one perfume you have heard of is frankincense. In the past, it was a major trading item for Muslim traders. It was in great demand in Christian Europe because it was used in religious services. Today, it is burned for its perfume.

Rose water sprinkler, used in marriages and social occasions to welcome people

Kharidehal Abhirama Ashwin/
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Activity: Perfume Project

Group project

Select one of these projects to complete.

1. Explain how perfume is made using a simple diagram. Design an experiment that can make a perfume out of something that is easily accessible.
2. Design a perfume bottle on a piece of paper showing both front and back views.

On the bottle add:

- the name of the perfume
- the ingredients that were used to make your perfume

On a separate piece of paper explain why you chose the name.

Final activity

Internet scavenger hunt

1. What is the Taj Mahal?
2. In what country is the Taj Mahal located?
3. What is cartouche?
4. What could cartouche be used for in an Islamic building?
5. Where is the Dome of the Rock?
6. What is the Dome of the Rock?
7. What is ihram?
8. What is attar?
9. What does tessellation mean?
10. What does arabesque mean?