



Living Together:

Muslims in a changing world



Age 10-12: Exploring Cultural Contributions - Civil Society

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Origins of Islam

Muhammad, the Prophet of Islam (570 - 632 CE)

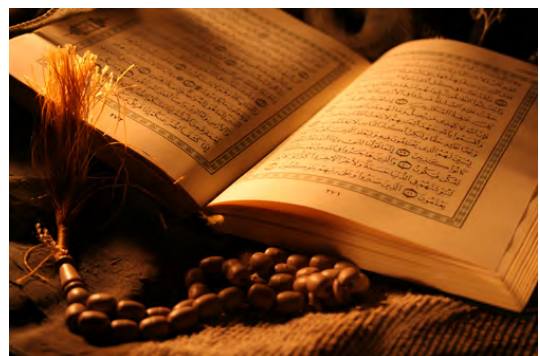
Muhammad was born in **Mecca**. He lost his parents at a young age and grew up in his uncle's family. He became a trader and he spent a lot of time **praying** and **thinking** about life. In 610 CE, a messenger from God began to give him teachings. These teachings eventually became the words in the **Qur'an**, the holy book for Muslims.



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Muhammad began to tell people in Mecca what he had learned. They had their own ideas and beliefs and were not interested in his. Muhammad left Mecca and moved to **Medina** where people there were more receptive to his ideas. Medina became his home.

The **Qur'an** gives Muslims **moral rules** by which to live. The Qur'an was written in **Arabic**. Today, Muslim children learn Arabic so they can read the Qur'an in its original form so they know how to live a **good life**.



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Activity: Moral Dilemmas

Problem	How would you deal with it?	Who/what helps you make that decision?
You find \$100 on the sidewalk. No one is around. Do you keep the money? Would you take it to the police?		
A new student arrives in Grade 6. He doesn't speak English very well. At recess he stays by himself. Some people in your class start to bully him. What do you do?		
You and your friends are at the mall. They dare each other to steal a chocolate bar from one of the stores. You don't want to join in, but they are putting pressure on you to shop lift. What do you do?		
You and your friends are shooting hoops after school one day. An unpopular classmate asks to play. What do you do?		
A friend of your parents gives you a new gameboy that no one in your class has seen. You take it to school. Someone in your class who is not really your friend asks if he can try it. What do you do?		

Activity: How Do You Make Decisions

Ask one of your classmates the following questions. Write their answers in the space provided.

1. How do you make decisions?
2. Do you ask anyone for help when you make decisions? Who?
3. What happens if you make a wrong decision?
4. How do the adults in your life help you to make decisions?
5. How do your friends help you make decisions?

The spread of Islam

When Muhammad died in 632 CE, many people embraced Islam in central and southern Arabia.



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In the following 100 years, more people embraced Islam in Mesopotamia, North Africa, as well as parts of southern Spain and France.

Muslim warriors used Arabian horses. They were armed with spears, sabers, and bows. The sabers were in the

shape of a half moon - the symbol of Islam. They wore coats of chain mail to protect their chests and carried shields.



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For almost 200 years (1095 - 1291 CE), European warriors fought with Muslim warriors over control of Jerusalem and other places associated with Christianity. These long battles are referred to as the Crusades. Richard the Lion Heart of England led one of the Crusades. By the end of the 13th century, the Crusaders were defeated for the last time.

Crusade Knight statue on Lichfield Cathedral,
Staffordshire, England, UK
A.C. Jones/Shutterstock Images LLC

Mali was one of the African countries that became Muslim. As part of the Islamic tradition, Muslims have always been expected to participate in hajj and complete a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their lives.

Activity: Mansa Musa pilgrimage

Here is an account of one pilgrimage taken by the ruler of Mali in 1324 CE.

Mansa Musa was probably the greatest king of the Empire of Mali. He ruled Mali for twenty-five years (1312-1337). As far as we know, Mansa Musa was the first Muslim ruler in West Africa to decide to follow the Islamic instruction to participate in a Hajj (pilgrimage) to the holy city of Mecca. To get to Mecca, in present day Saudi Arabia, Mansa Musa and his entourage had to travel more than 3000 miles across the Sahara desert (look at a map of Africa). According to the Arab historian al-Umari who witnessed the pilgrimage when it passed through Cairo, Egypt, Mansa Musa's entourage included 100 camels each loaded with 300 pounds of gold, 500 servants each of whom carried a four pound gold staff, his senior wife with 500 attendants, and more than one thousand subjects. Mansa Musa gave away so much gold on his way through Egypt that the value of gold actually dropped! As a result of this Hajj, Mali became famous. People from Asia, North Africa and Europe learned for the first time of this great empire in West Africa. More importantly, while in Mecca and Cairo, Mansa Musa purchased many books and recruited many leading Moslem scholars to return with him to Mali. These scholars were responsible for the opening up of libraries in Mali and a university at Timbuktu.

(<http://exploringafrica.matrix.msu.edu/teachers/curriculum/m14/activity3.php>)

Imagine you are one of the people in Mansa Musa's party. Describe your position and explain why you were attracted to become one of Mansa Musa's followers. Draw a picture of what you look like as one of Mansa Musa's followers.

Write:

Draw:

Activity: How Does Information Spread?

Information has spread in different ways over the centuries. Think about the way information spread about the Crusades over 800 years ago to the way information is spread about wars now. Use the organizer to explain the way ideas spread today as compared to the way information spread in the past.

The spread of ideas in the past	The spread of ideas today

Trends spreading

1. Describe a trend that has spread quickly over the last year.
2. Why has it spread so quickly?
3. Have you participated in the trend? Why?

Islamic governments

There are many Muslim countries that are governed by Islamic law. Islamic law was written hundreds of years ago. Muhammad and his early followers led simple lives.

Today, there are struggles between Muslims who would like their government to be more conservative and religious and Muslims who would like their government to be less traditional.

In the same way that western governments take on many different forms so do Islamic governments.

Activity: Describe the Government

Use < www.cia.gov/library > and click on *The world fact book* to complete the organizer on the Islamic countries listed.

Country	Afghanistan	Iran	Turkey	Saudi Arabia	Indonesia
Conventional long form name					
Government type					
Capital					
Administrative divisions (number)					
Independence (date)					
Legal system					
Executive branch: Chief of state (name)					
Head of government (name)					
Cabinet (number)					
Legislative branch: Type					
Number of seats					

1. List activities in which the government plays no role in your life.

2. What do you conclude about the role government plays in your life?

Two types of governments

Activity: Authoritarian Decision Making

Here are three new rules for the classroom that will start tomorrow.

- All students must use red ink when writing in class.
- You may speak only if your name begins with “C.”
- All students’ notebooks must have their teacher’s name written in bold letters. Student names must be written in lower case in blue ink.

1. How do you like these rules? Why?

2. How easily do you think the students will adjust to the new rules?

Activity: Representative Decision Making

1. Here are the three rules for my group.

2. Here are the results of the group vote.

Activity: Authoritarian vs. Representative - Pros and Cons

When many people are involved in making rules, there are advantages and disadvantages.

1. Complete the organizer with what you consider to be the most important advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages	Disadvantages

2. When you researched Islamic governments, which governments do you feel are authoritarian decision - makers?

3. Which Islamic governments do you feel are representative of the people?

Islam today

Approximately, 1/5 of the world's population is Muslim. Only about ¼ live in the Middle East. Despite this, Arabic remains the language of the Qur'an and the Middle East is the land where Islam began.



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The mosque remains the centre of the Islamic community, wherever it is in the world. One mosque, the Great Mosque of Hassan II in Morocco was completed in 1993. It holds up to 25, 000 people.

Some well known personalities in the West have converted to Islam. Muhammad Ali, the boxer formerly known as Cassius Clay, converted in the 1960s. Cat Stevens, a singer, converted in the 1970s.

Activity: What Changed?

Complete the following organizer, explaining how converting to Islam changed their lives.

	Cat Stevens	Cassius Clay
Birth date		
Birth place		
Occupation		
Birth name		

	Cat Stevens	Cassius Clay
Islamic name		
Meaning of name		
Conversion year		
Volunteer work with Islamic organizations		

Activity: Describe a Change

Describe a change that you have made in your life.

Why did you make the change?

Who helped you make the change?

Are you glad you made the change? Why?