

LC: Can I compare Europe with Baghdad during the Golden Age of Islam?

Now that we understand what Baghdad was like during the Golden Age, we are going to compare it with Europe who were, conversely, in the 'Dark Ages'. Use the PowerPoint alongside your own research to learn what Europe was like around 1200CE. There are three activities you can complete:



•**Support:** Create a table comparing Baghdad to Europe. Consider the points discussed in the PowerPoint such as war, medicine and education.



•**Main:** Imagine you are a scholar on a visit to Baghdad. You have been sent there to learn about the city and think of ways to improve England. Write back to the King of England, explaining what Baghdad is like and what must change back home to prosper like Baghdad has.



•**Extend:** Imagine you have travelled from Baghdad to England. Write a report on the state of England and how you would make changes to improve the lives of the people there.

Life in Baghdad and London



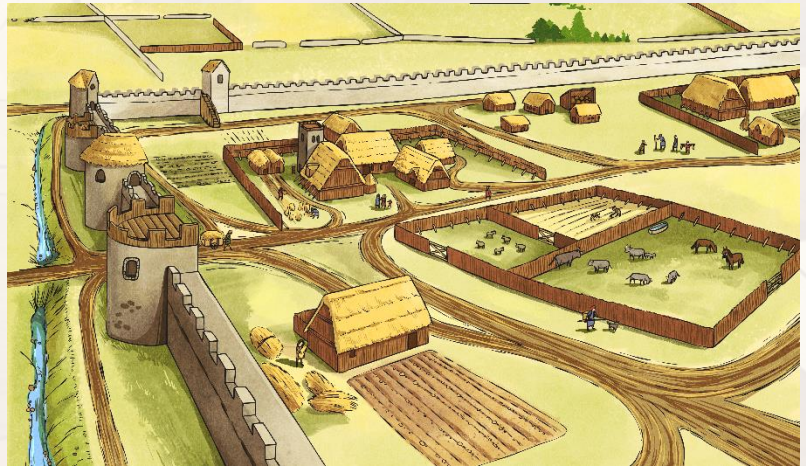
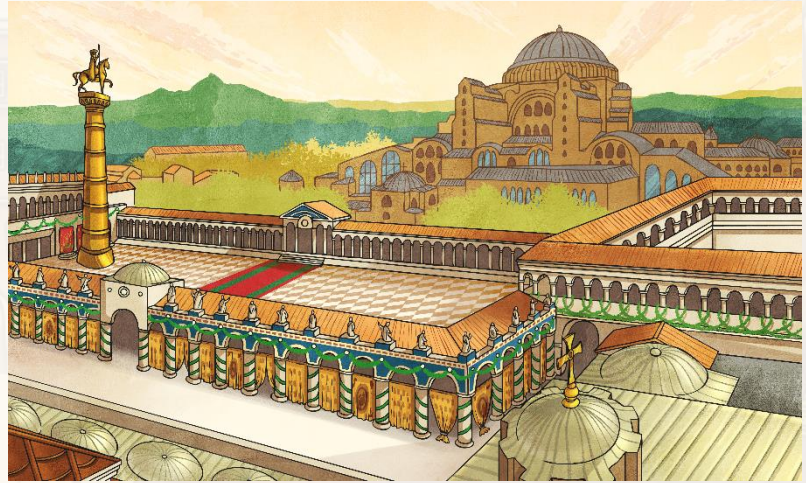
Questions

1. What do you think it was like to live in Baghdad and London in AD 900?
2. Where would you want to live? Why?
3. What questions would you want to ask people living in each place?

Questions

Make a list of questions you would like to ask:

- a) A person living in London in AD 900.
- b) A person living in Baghdad in AD 900.



The Islamic Empire and Europe



What do you think were the main differences between living in the Islamic World and Europe around the 10th – 11th century.

Can you match the statement to the area of the world at this point in history?



Islamic Empire and Europe Comparison

Can you cut out and sort the statements into whether it relates to the Islamic Empire or Europe in around AD 1000?

The Islamic Empire AD 1000	Europe AD 1000

- | | |
|---|--|
| Very few books and hardly any readers. | Religion tended to be "blind" faith. |
| General peace across a huge empire. | About 20,000 people lived in London and its suburbs. |
| Very poor mathematics using Roman numerals and no zero. | Millions of books and many thousands of readers. |
| Many wars between kingdoms. | Religion tended to encourage scientific study. |
| Used advanced mathematics using Arabic numbers and zero. | Clean water and good drainage in cities. |
| Gathered and used books from the ancient Greeks/Romans. | Ignored the writings of ancient Greeks and Romans. |
| Unsafe water supplies and very little drainage in cities. | About one million people lived in Baghdad and its suburbs. |

Learning and Living in Baghdad



Learning and knowledge was placed at the centre of life in Baghdad, which became the cultural capital of the world. Many scholars travelled there to share, research and advance their knowledge. Baghdad began to attract people from all parts of the world to trade, study and work there.

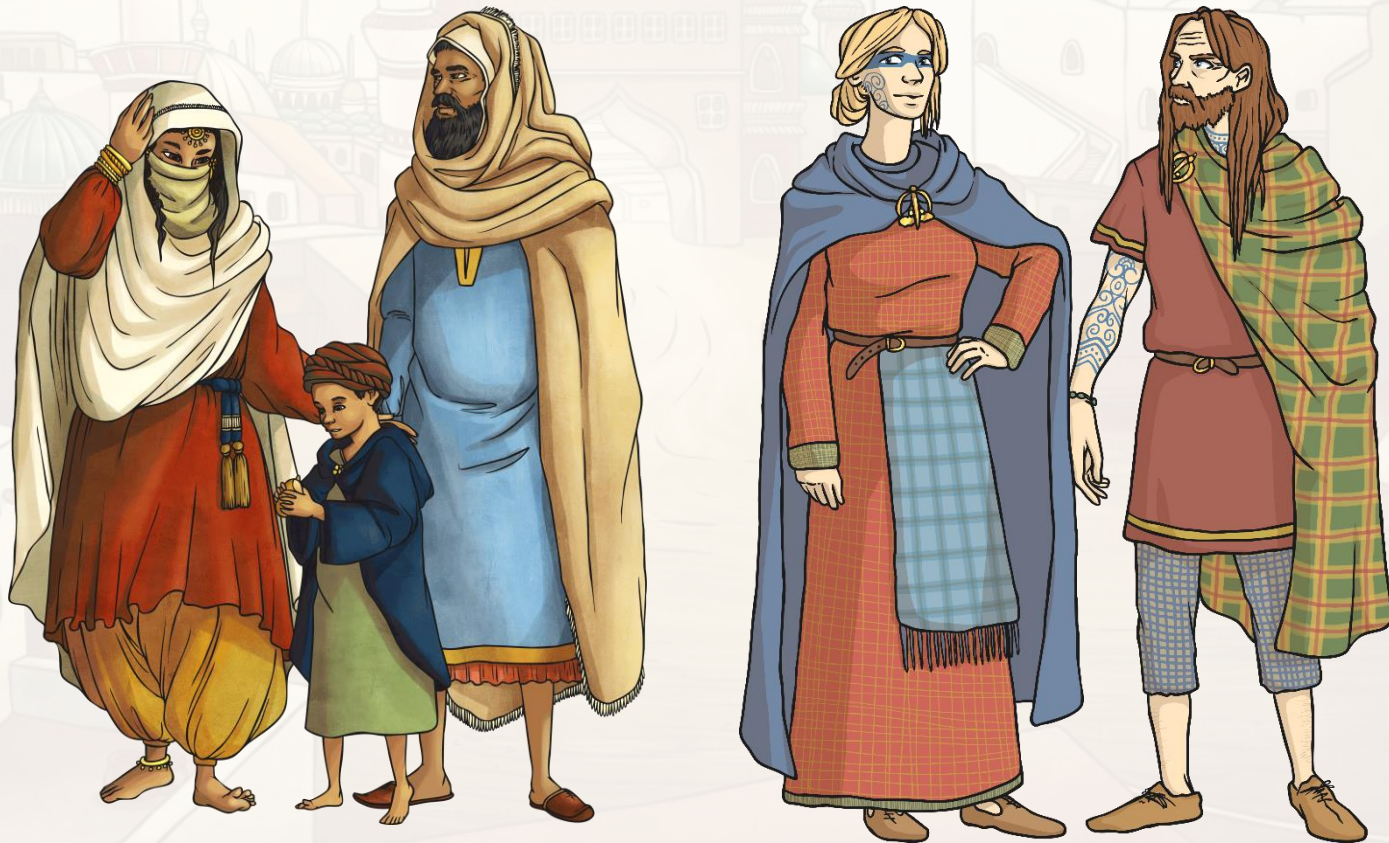
Imagine you are growing up in Baghdad in the year 900. Write a letter to your friend who lives elsewhere in the world, explaining why Baghdad is such an exciting city to live and study in.



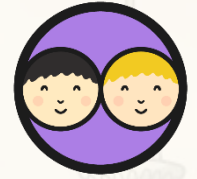
Life in Baghdad and London



It's time to ask your questions. Are you surprised by any of the answers?



Baghdad in AD 900

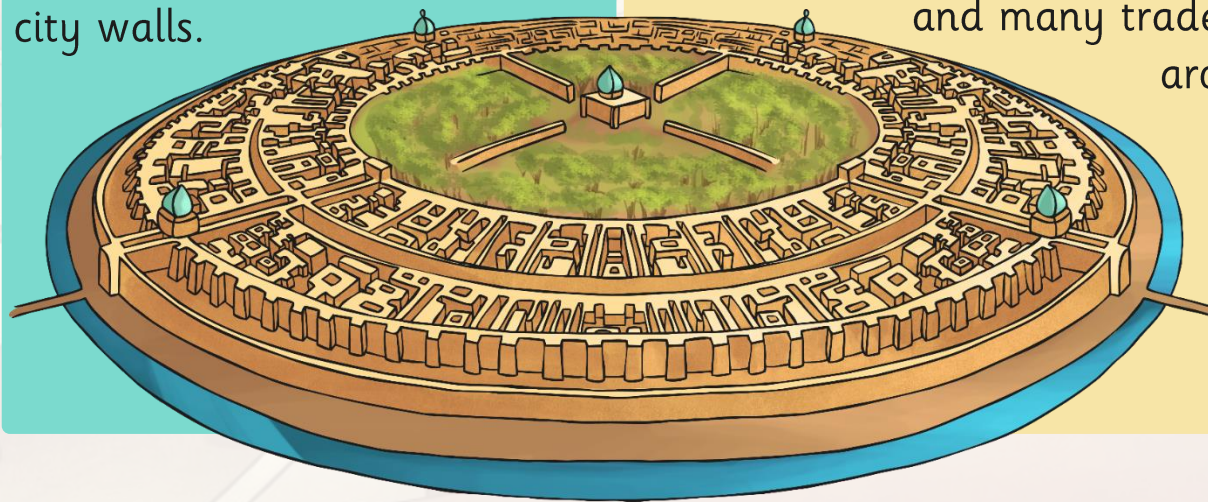


Baghdad was built in **AD 752** by **Caliph Al-Mansur** as the new capital of the Islamic Empire.

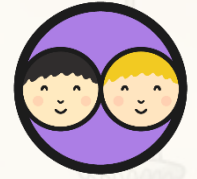
It was built in a **circle**, about 1km in diameter, with the **mosque and guard headquarters** in the centre. Houses were built around the city walls.

Baghdad's **location** was perfect for the city to succeed. It was close to water and established trade routes.

Major roads crossed through the city, and many traders set up **markets** around the entrances.



Baghdad in AD 900



Baghdad became known as the cultural and learning capital of the world. The world's **first universities and hospitals** were built there.



A **banking system** was set up so that people could trade and encouraged more people to settle close to the city.



Over **1 million people** lived in Baghdad.



The **House of Wisdom** was built in Baghdad as the centre of learning and knowledge. Many scholars travelled there.

Life in Baghdad and London



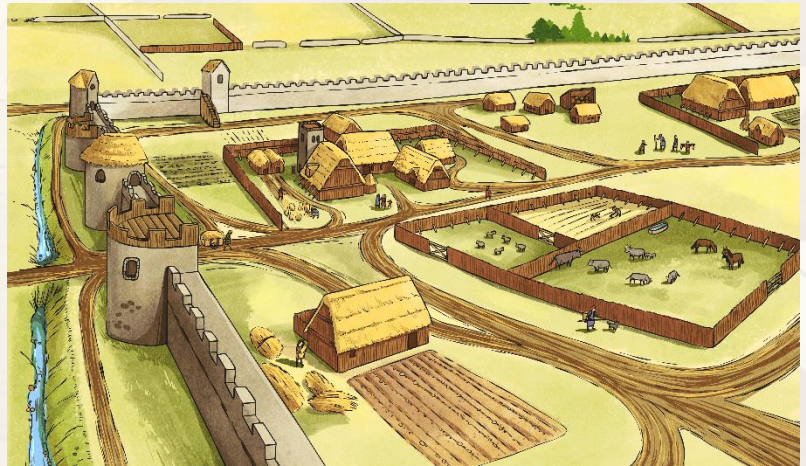
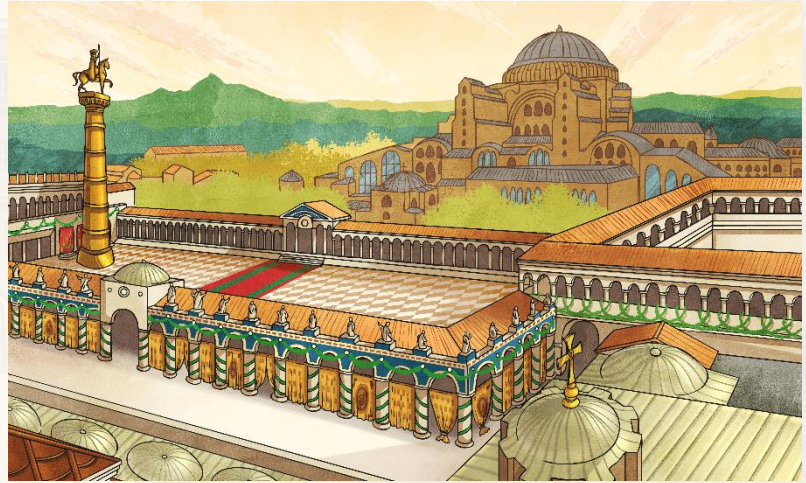
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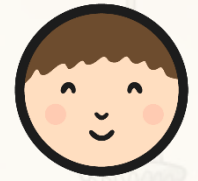
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The Islamic Empire and Europe



The Islamic Empire

c. AD 1000

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Gathered and used books from the ancient Greeks/Romans

Millions of books and many thousands of readers.

Clean water and good drainage in cities

Used advanced mathematics using Arabic numbers and zero

Religion tended to encourage scientific study

General peace across a huge Islamic empire

Europe

c. AD 1000

About 20,000 people lived in London and its suburbs

Ignored the writings of ancient Greeks and Romans

Very few books and hardly any readers

Unsafe water supplies and very little drainage in cities

Very poor mathematics using Roman numerals and no zero

Religion tended to encourage “blind” faith

Many wars between Christian kingdoms

The Siege of Baghdad, 1258

Ilkhanate Mongol armies and their allies attacked many Islamic lands. They destroyed the House of Wisdom, burned Baghdad and killed thousands of people. They threw millions of books into the river which turned the water black with ink!



The city never recovered its former glory, but the ideas lived on...

Baghdad's Legacy



Without the ideas that were created and passed on by the research and work from the House of Wisdom (such as the translated works from Ancient Greece and Rome), the renaissance that began in Europe in the 14th century would not have happened.

Questions

1. Do you think it is important that we learn about the early Islamic civilisation?
2. Does the House of Wisdom still matter?



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Use your comparison sheet from earlier in the session to help you compare the two places.



