History of the Islamic World

Section 3

MAIN IDEAS

1. Muslim armies conquered many lands into which Islam slowly spread.
2. Trade helped Islam spread into new areas.
3. Three Muslim empires controlled much of Europe, Asia, and Africa from the 1400s to the 1800s.

Key Terms and Places

caliph  title of the highest Islamic leader
tolerance  acceptance
Baghdad  city that became the capital of the Islamic Empire in 762
Córdoba  Muslim city in Spain that became the largest and most advanced city in western Europe in the early 900s
janissaries  slave boys converted to Islam and trained as soldiers
Istanbul  capital of the Ottoman Empire; formerly Constantinople
Esfahan  capital of the Safavid Empire

Section Summary

MUSLIM ARMIES CONQUER MANY LANDS

After Muhammad’s death Abu Bakr (uh-boh BAK-uhr) was the leader of Islam. He was the first caliph (kah-luhf). This title was used for the highest Islamic leader. Abu Bakr unified Arabia. The Arab army conquered the Persian and Byzantine empires.

Later caliphs conquered lands in Central Asia, northern India, and North Africa. They controlled eastern Mediterranean trade routes. After many years of fighting, the Berbers of North Africa converted to Islam. A combined Arab and Berber army conquered Spain and ruled for 700 years.

TRADE HELPS ISLAM SPREAD

Arab merchants took Islamic beliefs and practices with them to new lands. Coastal trading cities developed into large Muslim communities.

Muslims generally practiced tolerance, or acceptance. They did not ban all other religions in present-day countries mark the eastern and western boundaries of the Islamic empire?

What present-day countries mark the eastern and western boundaries of the Islamic empire?

Why do you think trade flourishes in coastal cities?

Why do you think trade flourishes in coastal cities?
their lands. More people began speaking Arabic and practicing Islam. The Arabs also took on non-Muslim customs. Cultural blending changed Islam into a religion of many cultures. The development of Muslim cities like Baghdad and Córdoba reflected this blending of cultures.

**THREE MUSLIM EMPIRES**

In the 1200s, Muslim Turks known as Ottomans attacked the Byzantine Empire. They trained **janissaries**, boys from conquered towns who were enslaved and converted to Islam. The janissaries fought fiercely. In 1453 the Ottomans took Constantinople and renamed it **Istanbul**. This ended the Byzantine Empire. By 1566 the Ottomans took control of the eastern Mediterranean and parts of Europe.

The Safavids (sa-FAH-vuhs) gained power in the east. They soon came into conflict with the Ottomans. The conflict stemmed from an old disagreement about who should be caliph. In the mid-600s, Islam had split into two groups—the Sunni and the Shia. The Ottomans were Sunni, and the Safavids were Shia. The Safavid Empire conquered Persia in 1501 and soon grew wealthy, building glorious mosques in **Esfahan**, their capital.

East of the Safavid Empire, in India, lay the Mughal (MOO-guhl) Empire. The Mughals united many diverse peoples and were known for their architecture—particularly the Taj Mahal. Under the leader Akbar, the Mughal Empire was known for its religious tolerance. But more restrictive policies after his death led to the end of the empire.

**CHALLENGE ACTIVITY**

**Critical Thinking: Drawing Inferences** Draw a time line marking the major Muslim conquests and a map to show the size of Islamic territory.