

## Islamic Culture Document-Based Essay

**Directions:** Write a well-organized essay that includes an introduction, several paragraphs, and a conclusion. Use specific, relevant examples with rich context and analysis to support your points.

**Historical Context:**

The Muslims inherited much from Greece, Rome, and India and adopted much from the people they conquered. Because of their tolerance of other cultures, they were able to advance scholarship in several areas to the highest level at that time. As a result, Muslim achievements stand out and have a lasting impact on world cultures.

**Task:** Using your knowledge of global history, write an essay in which you:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discuss the factors that contributed to the cultural advancements and achievements of the Islamic Golden Age</li><li>• Describe at least 3 major Islamic achievements and discuss their contributions to global culture</li></ul> |
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### Document 1

Muslims had practical reasons for supporting the advancement of science. Rulers wanted qualified physicians treating their ills. The faithful...relied on mathematicians and astronomers to calculate the times of prayer and the direction of Mecca....Their attitude reflected a deep-seated curiosity about the world and a quest for truth that reached back to ...Mohammed himself. After the fall of Rome in AD 476, Europe entered a period of upheaval and chaos, an era in which scholarship suffered....In the early 800s...the House of Wisdom opened in Baghdad. There, scholars of different cultures and beliefs worked...translating texts from Greece, India, Persia and elsewhere into Arabic.

Source: *World History: Patterns of Interaction*, McDougal Littell, 1999

### Document 2

Besides the university library, Arab statisticians assure us the city boasted 37 libraries, numberless bookstores, 800 public schools...and a total population of 300,000. Its people enjoyed a high standard of living and refinement and walked on paved streets...--all this time when hardly a town in Europe, Constantinople excepted, counted more than a few thousand inhabitants. Parisians and Londoners were still trudging on muddy, dark alleys....

Source: Philip Hitti in *Capital Cities of Arab Islam*, University of Minnesota Press 1973. (Describing Cordova)

### Document 3

When Europeans learned that Muslims had preserved important medical texts, they wanted to translate the texts into Latin. In the eleventh century, scholars traveled to libraries in places such as Toledo, Spain, where they began translating—but only after they learned to read Arabic.

Through this process, European medical schools gained access to vital reference sources such as al-Razi's *Comprehensive Book* and Ibn Sina's *The Canon of Medicine*. Ibn Sina's five-volume encyclopedia guided doctors of Europe and Southwest Asia for six centuries. For nearly 500 years, al Qasim's work, *The Method*, which contained original drawings of some 200 medical tools, was the foremost textbook on surgery in Europe.

Source: *World History: Patterns of Interaction*, McDougal Littell, 1999

### Document 4

Masters of the sea, even as of the land, the Arabs spread throughout the geographical area. The whole world was theirs to explore...their ships sailed across the seas even as they moved across the land [Sahara Desert into West Africa]. The might of the sword of Islam carved the way for the slaveowner and merchant to follow.

Source: Sir T. H. Holdisch in *The Gates of India*, MacMillan 1910

### Document 5

First should be mentioned the textile products imported from Islamic countries: muslin...damask...gauze, cotton, satin.

Natural products, which by their name indicate they were imported from Islamic countries—fruits, like orange, lemon, and apricot; vegetables, like spinach, artichokes, and saffron...finally our commercial vocabulary itself has preserved...proofs that there was a time when Islamic trade and trade customs exercised a deep influence on the commercial development of Christian countries—such words as “traffic” [derived from Arabic tafriq], which means distribution.

Source: J. H. Kramers in *The Legacy of Islam*, Clarendon Press 1931

### Document 6



Islamic Astrolabe used for navigation.