



What impact did the Islamic civilisation have on the wider world?

Sticky Knowledge

Islamic Scholars and their Achievements

Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi AD 780 – AD 850	‘Father of algebra’ Introduced Arabic numbers 1-9 and the concept of ‘zero’
Muhammad ibn Zakariya al-Razi AD 854 - AD 925	Treatment of smallpox and measles Study of eyes Recognised the importance of doctor/patient relationships
Abu al-Qasim Khalaf ibn al-Abbas al-Zahrawi AD 936 – AD 1013	New surgical techniques New surgical tools, e.g. forceps
Ibn al-Haytham AD 965 – AD 1040	Proved that light travels in straight lines Invented the first camera

Vocabulary

Islam	A religion founded by Muhammad, who was born in Mecca in AD 570. People who practise Islam are called Muslims.
Caliph	A caliph is the leader of a caliphate - a political-religious form of government of a Muslim community. A caliph had to be Muslim, male, fair, just and law-abiding.
Dynasty	A succession of rulers of a country or civilisation. Generally the next ruler in the dynasty inherits the title.
Scholar	A person dedicated to learning, often at a high level and in a particular area of study.
Silk Road	A network of trade routes linking China to the Middle East and Europe, first used to carry Chinese silk.
Civilisation	The stage of human social and cultural development and organization that is considered most advanced.
Barter	To exchange good rather than pay for goods with money.

The House of Wisdom

Bayt al-Hikma, the ‘House of Wisdom’, was founded by Caliph Harun al-Rashid. It was a library and research facility which collected and translated writing from many cultures, including Persian, Indian, ancient Greek and Roman texts. By AD 900, the House of Wisdom stored more books than anywhere else in the world and was attracting the most brilliant minds to study there.





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Key Dates

AD 632	Muhammad dies and Muslims struggle to agree who should be the next caliph.
AD 752	Caliph Al-Mansur builds Baghdad as the new capital of the Islamic empire on the river Tigris. It was close to established trade routes, such as the Silk Road, and became known as the cultural and learning capital of the world.
AD 830	The House of Wisdom is built in Baghdad.
AD 1000	Al-Zahrawi finishes his medical book, Al Tasrif. It will be used by doctors for another 500 years.
AD 1258	The Siege of Baghdad. Islamic lands and attacked and the House of Wisdom is destroyed. Millions of books were thrown into the river. The city never recovered its former glory, but the ideas lived on.



How did Baghdad compare to London during this time period?

Baghdad population: over a million	London population: approximately 20,000
Millions of books, many thousands of readers.	Very few books, only very rich or educated people could read.
Clean water and good drainage in cities.	Very little drainage in cities, water supplies were unsafe.
Advanced mathematics used Arabic numbers and the concept of 'zero'.	Basic mathematics, with Roman numerals and no concept of 'zero'.
General peace across a huge Islamic empire.	Many wars between Christian kingdoms.

