

NAME:

DATE:

PERIOD:

DBQ FOCUS: Islamic Contributions to Culture



Document-Based Question Format

Directions: The following question is based on the accompanying Documents (The documents have been edited for the purpose of this exercise.)

This question is designed to test your ability to work with and understand historical documents.

Write a response that:

- Has a relevant **thesis** and **supports that thesis with evidence** from the documents.
- Cites evidence from included source perspectives.
- Analyzes the documents by grouping them in as many appropriate ways as possible.
- Does not simply summarize the documents individually.
- Takes into account both the sources of the documents and the author's points of view.
- 700-850 words; 12 point Times New Roman font. Please see rubric for additional grading information.
- **Questions should be completed by Wednesday, January 27th. Outline due on Friday, January 29th. Paper due on February 5th.**

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. Islamic contributions to Medieval Europe were numerous, affecting such varied areas as art, architecture, medicine, agriculture, music, language, and technology. From the 11th to 13th centuries, Europe absorbed knowledge from the Islamic civilization. Of particular importance was the rediscovery of the ancient classic texts.*

Question

Why were the Muslims able to make such great contributions and how did these contributions impact the world?

Document 1

Source: This excerpt, from the textbook *World History: Patterns of Interaction* (Beck, Black, Naylor, Shabaka. Evanston, IL: McDougal Littell, 1999), explains why Muslims both preserved existing knowledge and extended it.

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... Mohammad himself. After the fall of Rome in A.D. 476, Europe entered a period of upheaval and chaos, an era in which scholarship suffered... In the early 800's... the House of Wisdom opened in Baghdad. There, scholars of different cultures and beliefs worked... translating from Greece, India, Persia, and elsewhere into Arabic.

Student Analysis

What were the reasons for Muslim interest in learning?

Document 2

Source: The Islamic capital of Cordova was described by a contemporary as the "jewel of the world." The Islamic schools and universities were preferred by European scholars such as Abelard and Roger Bacon. Philip Hitti describes Cordova in *Capital Cities of Arab Islam* (University of Minnesota Press, 1973).

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 at a 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...

Student Analysis

What conditions in Cordova does this author cite as evidence of the high level of Islamic civilization and scholarship?

Document 3

Source: Physician al-Razi wrote a medical reference encyclopedia, the *Comprehensive Book and Treatise on Smallpox and Measles*. Ibn Sina (Avicenna) wrote the five-volume *The Canon of Medicine*. These books were translated into Latin and other languages and influenced doctors in Europe. The illustration below, from an Islamic medical book, and the explanation from the textbook *World History: Patterns of Interaction*, show the level of medical expertise of Islamic doctors.

Medical Reference Books

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.

Student Analysis

How did Muslim medical knowledge impact Western civilization?

Document 4

Source: Al-Khwarizmi, a Muslim mathematician, studied Indian sources and wrote a textbook in the 800's about al-jabr (the Arabic word for algebra), which was later translated into Latin and used throughout Europe. Muslim mathematicians also adopted Arabic numerals from the Indians and used them in place-value system.

$$3x = 15$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 135 \\ + 20 \\ \hline 155 \end{array}$$

Student Analysis

What is the impact of these mathematical advances on Western Civilization?

Document 5

Source: Using scientific observation and their understanding of mathematics and optics, Muslim scholars made advancement in trigonometry and astronomy as well as mapmaking. They used astrolabe (figure A) and the armillary sphere (Figure B) to study the skies and make calculations for their calendars and maps.

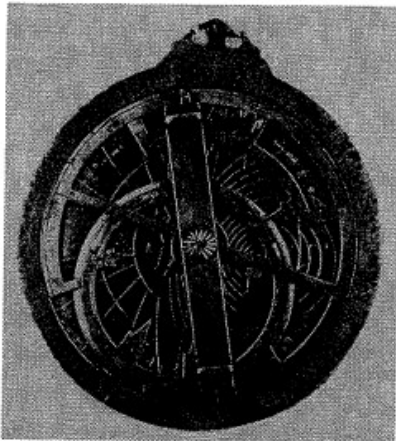


Figure A



Figure B

Student Analysis

How did these instruments impact Muslim and Western civilization?

Document 6

Source: The standard for Arabic literature and poetry is the Quran, which influenced Sufi poets. Read these two excerpts and answer the questions that follow.

In the name of the Merciful and Compassionate God. That is the Book! There is no doubt therein... God, there is no doubt but He! He will surely assemble you on the resurrection day...

Student Analysis

How did the Quran influence literature and poetry?

Document 7

Source: Muslim architects blended features from various sources, including the Byzantine Empire, as well as added new features. Study this photo of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, and answers the questions that follow.



Student Analysis

What are the distinctive architectural features of this building?

Document 8

Source: Between 750 and 1350, the Muslim merchants built a trade network throughout their empire, as this excerpt from *The Gates of India* by Sir T.H. Holdich (London: MacMillan, 1910) explains.

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 slave-owner and the merchant to follow.

Student Analysis

Why and where were the Muslims able to establish a trading empire?

Document 9

Source: Historian J.H. Kramers describes the benefits that Europeans received from Muslim industry in *The Legacy of Islam*. (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1931).

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.

Student Analysis

What were the commercial or trade benefits that Europeans gained from Islamic commerce and industry?

Islamic Contributions- DBQ Rubric

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

	20	17	15	13	11
Thesis	Contains a well developed thesis that clearly addresses the question	Strong thesis (contains general analysis)	Clear thesis – needs general analysis	Undeveloped thesis (simple thesis); thesis does not fully address question	No thesis
Analysis of Documents	Effective analysis of key issues in the documents	Good analysis of key issues (needs more)	Needs more analysis of key issues	Lacks analysis of key issues	Poor or no analysis of key issues
Use of Documents/ Evidence	Excellent use of documents and substantial number of <i>documents</i> are used	Good use of documents (at least 1 more)	Adequate use of documents	Poor use of documents	No documents used
Use of Outside Information	Supports thesis with substantial and relevant outside information (outside knowledge goes beyond the documents)	Good use of outside info. (needs more)	Includes some outside information (but clearly needs more); may contain historical errors or facts irrelevant to the question	Lacks outside information; contains major historical errors	No outside information; facts are not specific, accurate, or relevant
Organization and style	Is clearly organized and well-written	Addresses all areas of the prompt; may lack some balance between major areas	Fairly well-organized essay; Addresses all areas of the prompt but essay may lack balance.	Weak organization	Poor organization
Punctuation, grammar, and syntax.	May contain minor errors	May contain errors.	May contain several errors	Many errors.	Many errors that make the paper difficult to read.

Total: _____/120