

Year 6 History Knowledge Organiser - The round city: Baghdad

Baghdad: The Perfect City

1. In 762 a great Muslim ruler, al-Mansur laid the first brick to begin the building of a new city: Baghdad.
2. Until then, Baghdad had been just a tiny village. People had settled there when the Persians were ruling.
3. But now the Muslim Arabs had conquered the land and wanted to build a famous city.
4. The Arabs studied the stars and used astrology to help plan the city.
5. Al-Mansur set fire to cotton seeds to see the layout of his city before he laid the first brick.



Perfect place for the perfect city

1. For years farmers had been taking water from the River Tigris and the River Euphrates to irrigate the land and grow crops.
2. The rich farming land was attractive to the Arabs. The land had been part of Alexander the Great's enormous empire.
3. By the middle of the eighth century Islam had grown from the Indus Valley to Spain. So they needed a new capital city.
4. Baghdad was in the middle of the whole Islamic world, it had rich farming land and had good connections to distant lands.

Building the perfect city

1. Al-Mansur sent out a decree to find the most skilled workmen from all over the Middle-East. He could pay them well because his people paid taxes.
2. Each brick had to be made from mud and baked in the sun as there was no natural stone nearby.
3. Each of the four gateposts had a huge dome and faced north-east, north-west, south-west and south-east.

The House of Wisdom

1. The caliphs wanted Baghdad to be more than just a beautiful city.
2. As traders travelled in to the city they brought knowledge of distant lands, sometimes they brought books.
3. Scholars were sent to Persia, North Africa, India and China to collect treasured texts to keep in Baghdad.
4. The House of Wisdom paid scholars from all over the Islamic world to translate texts into Arabic.
5. They used the old texts to make new knowledge that has changed the world!
6. Knowledge had to be copied and recopied on to scrolls.
7. In the eighth century, traders learnt how to make paper in China and brought the knowledge back. Printing of books began.
8. By the eleventh century the caliphs and their scholars wanted to find ways to share their knowledge so they built colleges called madrasas.
9. In the twelfth century, Europe copied the madrasas and built universities, using all the old and new knowledge protected in Baghdad.

Astronomy, Maths and Geography

1. Scholars translated the most famous maths book, the book of Geometry by the Greek mathematician Euclid.
2. The book organised all the maths knowledge the Greeks had built up over 2000 years!
3. The book was protected and translated into many different languages.
4. The Arabs also learnt maths knowledge from India; our numeral system came from Hindu people in India. The Persians knew of this system before the Arabs arrived.
5. Maths was needed to measure land, canals, buildings, the price of goods and most importantly, to calculate the movement of the stars.
6. Stars are important to the Muslim religion; they must always know the direction of Makkah when praying and use the new moon to track their religious calendar.
7. Maths and Astronomy helped the Arabs with Geography - calculating distances and making maps. They combined this with knowledge from the Chinese to develop the compass.



Important People

Euclid - Greek mathematician who wrote the Book of Geometry.

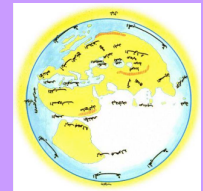
Ptolemy - Greek Astronomer who worked out that the world must be round.

Al-Masudi - Great map maker who made some of the first maps of the World.

Gaylen - Greek doctor who proved our arteries carry blood and performed new methods of surgery.

Razi - collected medical knowledge from Greek, Indian, Arab and Persian doctors to write an encyclopaedia.

Al-Masudi's map of the World, made using the stars and his travels.



Vocabulary

1. Al-Mansur	A Muslim ruler in 762 CE.
2. Baghdad	Built to be the capital of the Muslim world.
3. Dirhams	Coins from the reign of al-Mansur, made to celebrate the new city.
4. Astrologers	People who study the stars and use them to predict the future.
5. Descendants	Your children, their children and all that come from them forever.
6. Silk Roads	Land routes used to trade goods between countries.
7. Decree	An order sent out by a ruler which must be followed.
8. Peter out	Spread out to nothing.
9. Madrasas	Colleges for learning.
10. Astrolabe	A device used to find your position by using the stars.
11. Astrology	Not a recognised Science - a way to predict the future with the stars.
12. Optics	The study of the eye and sight.