

## Baghdad circa 900CE

### Year 5

**Key end points** of the 'Baghdad 900CE' unit are:

- The Islamic Empire spread rapidly after Mohammad's death
- Baghdad is a city that was built a long time ago near the river Tigris by Caliph Al-Mansur who was the leader of the Abbasid Caliphate
- Many people came to Baghdad to trade and to study
- Many important books were translated into Arabic by scholars in Baghdad
- In 1258 CE, Baghdad was invaded and much of the city was destroyed

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This unit builds chronologically from the Romans unit in LKS2 and has been written to be taught in Y5. The unit relies on the children having some prior knowledge of Islam from Religious Education. The content of this unit briefly covers the rise of Islam, but teachers may want to explore its impact and legacy further, perhaps by studying Islamic art and architecture, if following PKC art, this is something that will come up in the next half-term. This unit covers the National Curriculum requirements to study a non-European society that provides contrasts with British history.

Studying Baghdad in 900 CE challenges any current conceptions that children may have of the region and develop an appreciation of its significance as a centre for learning in world history. The unit offers an opportunity for children to compare the construction of Baghdad with other European settlements they have studied, for example the rebuilding of London after the Great Fire of London.

The content of this unit links directly with the geography curriculum building on knowledge from 'Rivers' and 'Settlements', both of which are taught in Y3. In this unit, children look at the location of Baghdad as a crossing point for traders due to its proximity to the River Tigris. Children will use their prior knowledge of what factors lead to settlements developing locations to understand why Caliph Al-Mansur built Baghdad. Their understanding of rivers will help them to recognise the importance of the River Tigris. Children finish the unit with a powerful mental image of the waters of the River Tigris running black from the ink washed from books seized by the Mongols from the House of Wisdom.

During this unit, children are building on well-established substantive concepts of power, religion, civilisation and conflict. Again, as has happened throughout their history curriculum, they see people rise and fall, power change hands and a violent end to a golden age in the history of a city. They also have a chance to build on their ideas of scholarship and wisdom through looking at the focus on academic study in Baghdad in c.900CE.



In this unit the children will learn about how historians find out about Baghdad, using sources from the time including written accounts. The children will have opportunities to handle these sources and make interpretations.

Lesson sequencing:

This unit begins by looking at the Rise of Islam and the Islamic Empire. This lesson provides the political context required to understand the significance of the building of the Baghdad at this time. It is essential that before learning about the city of Baghdad, all children have some prior knowledge of Islam. Lesson 2 explains how Baghdad was constructed in 762 CE, introducing Caliph Al-Mansur, the location of the city next to the Tigris River and its significance. Lesson 3 builds on the knowledge taught in lesson 2 and looks in more depth at the layout of the city and why the city was popular with people at this time. Lesson 4 looks in more depth at how significant Baghdad was globally as a place to learn and trade. In this lesson, the children learn about the 'House of Wisdom' and the importance of translation and books for sharing knowledge. Finally, in lesson 5 the children learn about the decline of Baghdad and the Mongol attack which brought the golden age of the city to a violent end.

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**Key substantive concepts** focused on in this unit are dynasty, empire, **civilisation**, and **invasion**.

**Key disciplinary concepts** focused on are **continuity & change**, and **sources & evidence**.