Across the Mediterranean

Trace how leadership, travel, and trade shaped the spread of Islam.

SS24.8.3 "Trace and analyze the spread of Islam through the Mediterranean region under the caliphs from 632 to 1258, including the consolidation of the Qur'an. 3a Outline the founding and development of Islam under Muhammad..."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline three events or decisions that helped Islam spread, circle the two different views of leadership after Muhammad's death, and number two examples of Islam's influence in different regions.

A Community Crosses Regions

1. In the early 600s, Mecca in Arabia was a busy trading city. Muhammad taught that there is one God and that people should care for the poor. Muslims believe he received God's messages, later collected in the Qur'an. When his followers faced opposition, Muhammad and his community moved to Medina in 622. This migration, called the Hijra, marked a new beginning: Muhammad led a growing religious and political community there. In 630, his followers took control of Mecca. By his death in 632, many Arabian tribes had joined the new faith.

2. After Muhammad died, caliphs led the expanding Muslim community. Their armies gained Syria and Egypt in the eastern Mediterranean; later rulers extended control across North Africa and into Iberia in 711. Trade, travel, and teaching also spread Islamic beliefs beyond areas won by armies. To protect a shared text as the community grew, Caliph Uthman ordered a standard written version of the Qur'an in the mid-600s. Muslims later disagreed about leadership: Sunnis held that the community could select a caliph, while Shia believed leadership rightfully belonged to Ali, Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, and his descendants.

3. In North Africa, Arabic became a language of government and learning under Muslim rulers. Merchants crossed the Sahara, linking North African cities with West African trading centers through exchanges of gold, salt, and other goods. In Iberia, Muslim-ruled cities such as Córdoba brought together scholars who studied medicine, mathematics, and earlier Greek writings. Some ideas reached other parts of Europe through translation and trade. Political control changed over time: the Umayyads ruled from Damascus, and the Abbasids later ruled from Baghdad. The Mongols captured Baghdad in 1258, ending Abbasid rule there.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the move to Medina help Muhammad build Islam as more than a set of beliefs?

2. How did Uthman's decision address a challenge created by the community's growth?

3. What disagreement about leadership divided Sunnis and Shia after Muhammad's death?

4. Trace one influence of Muslim rule or trade in North Africa and one cultural influence in Iberia.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine traveling from Arabia through North Africa to Iberia in 900 CE. Write a six-sentence report tracing how two earlier events or decisions helped create the connections you see, describing one political or economic influence in North Africa and one cultural influence in Iberia, and explaining how an idea might reach other parts of Europe.

ANSWER KEY

Across the Mediterranean

GRADE 8 · SS24.8.3

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline three events or decisions that helped Islam spread, circle the two different views of leadership after Muhammad's death, and number two examples of Islam's influence in different regions. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the move to Medina help Muhammad build Islam as more than a set of beliefs?	**In Medina, Muhammad led a growing community with both religious and political leadership.**
2	How did Uthman's decision address a challenge created by the community's growth?	**He ordered a standard written version of the Qur'an so the growing community could share the same text.**
3	What disagreement about leadership divided Sunnis and Shia after Muhammad's death?	**Sunnis held that the community could select a caliph. Shia believed leadership rightfully belonged to Ali and his descendants.**
4	Trace one influence of Muslim rule or trade in North Africa and one cultural influence in Iberia.	**Arabic became a language of government in North Africa. In Iberia, scholars in Muslim-ruled cities studied medicine, mathematics, and Greek writings.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I travel from Arabia to North Africa and then Iberia in 900 CE. Muhammad's move to Medina in 622 helped build a community with religious and political leadership. After his death, caliphs expanded Muslim control across North Africa and into Iberia. In North Africa, I find officials using Arabic to govern cities. I meet merchants who exchange goods across the Sahara, linking North Africa with West Africa. In Córdoba, scholars study medicine and Greek writings, and their ideas can travel to other European regions through translation and trade.

Accept other passage-supported examples of regional influence. For the report, look for six sentences, two earlier events or decisions, influences in both North Africa and Iberia, and a plausible path for ideas to reach other parts of Europe.