Routes of Influence

Trace how systems shaped life across three regions

SS24.8.3c "Analyze the influence of Islamic cultural, economic, and political systems in Africa, Arabia, and Europe."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Number the paragraphs by region: Africa, Arabia, and Europe. In each paragraph, circle one cultural, economic, or political practice and underline a result of that practice.

Trade, Travel, and Learning

1. In the 1300s, caravans carried salt across the Sahara to the Mali Empire and returned north with gold. Muslim merchants helped connect Mali to markets in North Africa and beyond. Mali's rulers collected taxes on trade, which helped them govern a large territory. In 1324, Mansa Musa traveled through Cairo toward Mecca on a pilgrimage. His journey displayed Mali's wealth to people far from West Africa. He later supported mosques and Islamic learning in Timbuktu, where teachers and students helped make the city a center of study.

2. In Arabia, Mecca drew Muslims from many regions for the annual pilgrimage, or hajj. Pilgrims bought food and supplies along the way, bringing business to towns on their routes. In Mecca, visitors could meet people who spoke different languages and exchange ideas about law and learning. Local rulers managed the city, while rulers along some routes helped protect travelers. These political choices made travel possible for more pilgrims, though the journey remained costly and difficult. Religious practice thus connected communities and also shaped trade and government.

3. In Europe, Muslim rulers governed parts of the Iberian Peninsula for centuries. In Córdoba, especially during the 900s, rulers supported scholars and libraries, helping the city become a center of learning. Centuries later, after Christian rulers took Toledo, scholars there translated some Arabic-language works on medicine and astronomy into Latin. Muslim, Jewish, and Christian scholars all took part in intellectual life across medieval Iberia. These translations gave Latin-reading Europeans access to knowledge preserved and developed in Islamic societies. Political control changed, but cultural exchange continued across religious boundaries.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Muslim merchants and Mali's rulers each help trade strengthen the Mali Empire?

2. How could a pilgrimage to Mecca affect both business and the exchange of ideas?

3. How could political choices along pilgrimage routes influence cultural exchange in Mecca?

4. After Christian rulers took Toledo, how did Islamic learning continue to influence Europe?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you advise a medieval ruler planning a town on a busy trade route. In five or six sentences, propose one economic or political action and one cultural action inspired by the passage. Name two regions that shaped your plan, and explain how each action could affect people in the new town.

ANSWER KEY

Routes of Influence

GRADE 8 · SS24.8.3c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Number the paragraphs by region: Africa, Arabia, and Europe. In each paragraph, circle one cultural, economic, or political practice and underline a result of that practice. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Muslim merchants and Mali's rulers each help trade strengthen the Mali Empire?	**Merchants connected Mali to distant markets. Mali's rulers taxed trade, gaining resources that helped them govern.**
2	How could a pilgrimage to Mecca affect both business and the exchange of ideas?	**Pilgrims bought supplies in towns along their routes and met people in Mecca with whom they could exchange ideas.**
3	How could political choices along pilgrimage routes influence cultural exchange in Mecca?	**Rulers along some routes helped protect travelers. This allowed more pilgrims to reach Mecca and exchange ideas there.**
4	After Christian rulers took Toledo, how did Islamic learning continue to influence Europe?	**Scholars translated Arabic-language works on medicine and astronomy into Latin, giving Latin-reading Europeans access to that knowledge.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

I would advise the ruler to collect modest fees from traders, inspired by Mali in Africa. The fees could pay guards to protect travelers, which might bring more merchants to town. I would also open a school where visitors could share and translate useful texts, inspired by Toledo in Europe. The school might help local healers learn new methods. Together, these actions could make the town a safer place to trade and a place where ideas spread.

Accept other passage-based practices and effects when the causal link is clear. For Part 3, look for two distinct actions, two named regions, and an explained effect for each action.