Routes to Baghdad

Trace how trade carried money, knowledge, and culture.

7.H.5 "Analyze the scientific, cultural, and economic influences of Muslim civilizations including trade routes and banking systems."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one trade-route detail, circle one payment detail, and number two details about how knowledge or culture moved so you can explain how these influences connected.

More Than Goods

1. Imagine a merchant arriving in Baghdad around 900 CE with pepper from India. Ships crossed the Indian Ocean and sailed into the Persian Gulf to Basra. From there, goods traveled inland to Baghdad, a city linked to routes across West and Central Asia. Merchants exchanged spices and cloth for other goods, then sent purchases toward distant markets. These routes brought more than products: travelers carried languages, stories, and practical knowledge. Baghdad became a meeting place because its connections let people and ideas move along with goods.

2. Long trips made carrying piles of coins risky. In parts of the Muslim world, merchants could use a *sakk*, a written order that allowed a trusted agent in another city to pay money. Such arrangements depended on trust and records; they were not accepted by every trader everywhere. A merchant could settle a payment without hauling all the coins across a dangerous route. This banking practice helped trade work across distant cities. It also connected merchants to agents who could handle payments far from home.

3. Trade also helped knowledge travel. Scholars in Baghdad studied writings from Greek, Persian, and Indian traditions and translated some into Arabic. The scholar al-Khwarizmi wrote about ways to calculate using Indian numerals. Clear calculations could help merchants keep accounts and compare prices. Paper-making techniques, first developed in China, reached Muslim lands through Central Asia; paper made it easier to copy texts. As books and travelers moved, ideas and stories circulated in new places. Scientific work and cultural exchange grew alongside the trade networks that connected cities.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Baghdad's trade connections help make it a meeting place for different cultures?

2. How could a sakk make trade across distant cities less risky?

3. How could al-Khwarizmi's writing support a merchant's work?

4. How did translation and paper-making together help ideas travel?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine you are advising a new merchant in Baghdad around 900 CE who wants to trade in another city. In four sentences, suggest a route or connection, a way to handle payment, and a way knowledge or culture might travel with the goods; explain how your choices help.

ANSWER KEY

Routes to Baghdad

GRADE 7 · 7.H.5

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one trade-route detail, circle one payment detail, and number two details about how knowledge or culture moved so you can explain how these influences connected. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Baghdad's trade connections help make it a meeting place for different cultures?	**Routes linked Baghdad to other regions, and travelers brought languages, stories, and knowledge along with goods.**
2	How could a sakk make trade across distant cities less risky?	**A trusted agent in another city could pay the merchant, so the merchant did not have to carry all the coins along a dangerous route.**
3	How could al-Khwarizmi's writing support a merchant's work?	**He wrote about ways to calculate using Indian numerals. Clear calculations could help a merchant keep accounts and compare prices.**
4	How did translation and paper-making together help ideas travel?	**Scholars translated writings into Arabic, and paper made texts easier to copy. Books could then carry ideas to new places.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Travel from Baghdad to Basra, then take a ship through the Persian Gulf to reach buyers. Arrange payment through a sakk and a trusted agent so you do not carry piles of coins. Use clear calculations to compare prices, as al-Khwarizmi wrote about doing with Indian numerals. Share stories with people you meet, since travelers carry ideas as well as goods.

Accept other routes and cultural exchanges supported by the passage. The four-sentence response should explain how its route, payment method, and movement of knowledge or culture would help the imagined merchant.