# Paths of Islam

Origins, leadership, and change across regions

**WH.3.2** "Examine the origins and spread of Islam, including Islam's division into the Sunnis and Shiites, and Islam's early impact on West Asia, Southern Europe, and North Africa."

NAME _____ DATE _____

## 1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

**YOUR JOB** Underline two details about Islam's origins, circle the two views of leadership after Muhammad's death, and number the three regions where the passage describes effects of Islam's spread.

### From Arabia to the Mediterranean

1. In the early 600s, Muhammad began preaching in Mecca, on the Arabian Peninsula. Muslims believe he received revelations from God, later collected in the Quran. His message called people to worship one God and care for those in need. Opposition in Mecca led Muhammad and his followers to migrate to Medina in 622. There, he helped build a religious and political community. By his death in 632, Islam had spread across much of Arabia.

2. After Muhammad died, Muslims disagreed about who should lead the community. Those who became known as Sunnis accepted leaders chosen through consultation, beginning with Abu Bakr. Those who became known as Shiites held that Ali, Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, and his descendants had a special right to lead. The division developed over time. It concerned leadership and religious authority, not whether Muhammad had preached Islam. Under later rulers, Muslim armies carried Islam into West Asia and across North Africa.

3. In West Asia, Muslim rule connected cities such as Damascus and Baghdad to new networks of trade and learning. Arabic became a major language of government and scholarship. From North Africa, Muslim forces crossed into the Iberian Peninsula in 711, bringing Islamic rule to part of Southern Europe. Over time, merchants, scholars, and local converts also helped spread Islamic beliefs and practices. In North Africa and Iberia, Arabic and Islamic institutions shaped city life, while Christian and Jewish communities continued to live there under changing conditions.

## 2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did opposition in Mecca affect the development of Muhammad's community?

2. How did Sunni and Shiite views of leadership differ after Muhammad's death?

3. Trace the route into Southern Europe and name one change that followed there.

4. Compare one effect of Islam's spread in West Asia with one effect in North Africa.

## 3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A museum sign says, "Islam's history was only a story of conquest." Write four sentences that revise this claim using Islam's origins, the Sunni-Shiite split, and two different ways Islam changed regions beyond Arabia.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · WH.3.2

## PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two details about Islam's origins, circle the two views of leadership after Muhammad's death, and number the three regions where the passage describes effects of Islam's spread. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

## PART 2 · ANSWERS

| # | QUESTION | ANSWER |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | How did opposition in Mecca affect the development of Muhammad's community? | **It led Muhammad and his followers to migrate to Medina, where he helped build a religious and political community.** |
| 2 | How did Sunni and Shiite views of leadership differ after Muhammad's death? | **Sunnis accepted leaders chosen through consultation; Shiites held that Ali and his descendants had a special right to lead.** |
| 3 | Trace the route into Southern Europe and name one change that followed there. | **Muslim forces crossed from North Africa into the Iberian Peninsula. Arabic and Islamic institutions later shaped city life there.** |
| 4 | Compare one effect of Islam's spread in West Asia with one effect in North Africa. | **In West Asia, Arabic became important in government and scholarship. In North Africa, Arabic and Islamic institutions shaped city life.** |

## PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Islam began in Arabia when Muhammad preached belief in one God and built a community in Medina. After his death, Sunnis accepted leaders chosen through consultation, while Shiites held that Ali and his descendants had a special right to lead. Armies carried Islam into North Africa, but merchants and scholars also helped spread its beliefs and practices. In West Asia, Arabic became important to scholarship, while in Iberia, Islamic institutions shaped city life alongside continuing Christian and Jewish communities.

Accept accurate paraphrases that distinguish the leadership views and connect regional changes to the spread of Islam. For the museum sign, look for four sentences that address origins, the division, and two distinct regional effects.