The Early Middle Ages

FIND OUT ABOUT:
- The break-up of the Roman Empire and the rise of the Germanic kingdoms
- The Visigoths
- The Byzantine Empire
- Islam

KNOW HOW TO:
- Analyse a Byzantine mosaic
- Compare maps showing the spread of Islam

Constantinople, the new Rome

In AD 324, the emperor Constantine I founded the city of Constantinople on the site of ancient Byzantium. The new city quickly became a great metropolis. Situated on the Strait of Bosporus, it controlled trade routes between Europe and Asia. Merchants and travellers came from all over the world to the city and were amazed by the extraordinary wealth of Constantinople.

WORK WITH THE IMAGE

- What surrounded the city?
- Look at the labelled constructions. What were they used for?
- Why do you think Constantinople was called the new Rome?
‘The City’

The Muslim writers who visited Constantinople called it ‘The City’, using the Greek term: *eis ten polin* (‘towards the city’). This is the origin of the city’s modern name, Istanbul.

The writings of medieval travellers are exceptional historical sources. They describe the people, trade and customs of the places that they visited.

- How does this traveller describe Constantinople?
- Is this type of writing an objective source? Explain your answer.

HOW DO WE KNOW?

The writings of medieval travellers are exceptional historical sources. They describe the people, trade and customs of the places that they visited.

Merchants travel to Constantinople from many different countries by land and sea. There is no similar city anywhere in the world, except for Baghdad.

The Greeks have great stores of gold and precious stones. They wear silk robes decorated in gold. They ride on horses and look like princes. There is an abundance of cloth, bread, meat and wine. The wealth of Constantinople is found nowhere else in the world.

The Jewish traveller Benjamin of Tudela, *The Itinerary*, 12th century (adapted)
Who were the ‘barbarians’?

The Romans believed that they were superior to the peoples who lived outside the Roman Empire. They called the Germanic tribes ‘barbarians’, which meant ‘foreign’, but also ‘savage’. They thought that they were violent and uncivilised.

However, the Roman senator Tacitus considered that the Germanic tribes had many good qualities, and wrote a book about them called Germania. He admired their election of only their best leaders as chieftains, and praised the men’s loyalty to their wives. One of Tacitus’s aims in speaking so well about the Germanic tribes was to criticise some features of Roman society.

- In groups, discuss how modern Europeans view people from other continents. Do we sometimes have similar prejudices to the Romans?
- Find out how the following terms are used in modern English. How do you think they acquired their meanings?
  - Hun
  - Vandal
  - Goth

Rome and the ‘barbarians’

The Romans considered that all the peoples living beyond Roman borders were barbarians:

- The Huns were nomadic animal herders who travelled across the Asian steppe. They continually attacked the Germanic peoples who lived further west, which sometimes forced them to cross the frontier into the Roman Empire.
- The Germanic peoples lived in the north and east of Europe. Many eastern tribes were nomadic, but in north-west Europe they became livestock and crop farmers. They were organised into tribes: each tribe had an assembly that elected a chieftain.

Near the frontier, the Germanic tribes participated in economic exchanges: they sold the Romans amber, wood and slaves. Some of them joined the Roman army or held property inside the empire. However, there were also Germanic raids on Roman territory so the Romans built fortifications along the Rhine and Danube rivers.

The Germanic tribes became a real threat in the 3rd century AD, when the Roman Empire suffered a serious economic and social crisis. This crisis, along with military weakness, led to a series of migrations across the borders.

- Some Germanic tribes carried out violent attacks on Roman towns.
- Other tribes established settlements on the Roman side of the frontier where they lived peacefully alongside the local population.

The division of the Roman Empire

In AD 395, the emperor Theodosius divided the Roman Empire into two parts:

- The Western Roman Empire, whose capital was Rome.
- The Eastern Roman Empire, whose capital was Constantinople.

Each territory had its own emperor and institutions.

The Western Roman emperors were weak, and could not resist the attacks of the Germanic tribes and the Huns. The Eastern Roman Empire became known as the Byzantine Empire, and lasted for another 1,000 years.
The invasions and the fall of Rome

The authority of the western emperors was greatly weakened by a series of violent invasions, which intensified in the 5th century. Under their ruler Attila, the Huns repeatedly attacked the Roman Empire. They also attacked several Germanic tribes, who entered Roman territory in search of greater security.

The Huns advanced into Gaul (modern France), where they were defeated in the Battle of the Catalaunian Plains (451). Soon afterwards, Attila died and his empire collapsed. However, by then the Germanic peoples already controlled most of the territory of the Western Roman Empire. They felt little loyalty to the emperor who had lost most of his military authority.

The Western Roman Empire ended in AD 476 when a Germanic chieftain, Odoacer, deposed the last western emperor, a boy named Romulus Augustulus. However, its real power had collapsed well before this time.

WORK WITH THE MAP

1. Describe the territories of the Western and Eastern Roman Empires.
2. Find the Iberian Peninsula. Which tribes invaded this territory?

ACTIVITIES

3. What was the connection between the Roman Empire and the Byzantine Empire?
4. Match the dates to the events.
   - 451 • End of Western Roman Empire
   - 3rd century • Battle of the Catalaunian Plains
   - 395 • Crisis in the Roman Empire
   - 476 • Division of the Roman Empire
5. Imagine you are Romulus Augustulus as an adult (He lived for at least 30 years after the fall of Rome). Write a few lines describing what happened when you were a child and how you feel about it today.
The emergence of the Germanic kingdoms

The Western Empire broke up into a number of smaller kingdoms between the 5th and the 7th centuries:

- The Franks established a kingdom in Gaul (France).
- The Visigoths and Suevi controlled much of the Iberian Peninsula.
- The Ostrogoths (and later the Lombards) ruled in Italy.
- The Angles and the Saxons settled in Britain.

Each kingdom was ruled by a king, who had a council to help him to govern. At first, the kings were chosen by nobles, but many were deposed or assassinated. Over time, the monarchy became hereditary.

In some areas, military power was held by dukes, who were usually chieftains who had conquered several towns. Counts and bishops held great power in cities.

The Germanic tribes followed unwritten laws that were passed down orally from one generation to the next.
The Germanic and Roman populations

The Germanic peoples formed a minority in many parts of the former Roman Empire. At first, the Germanic and post-Roman populations kept their own laws, customs and religion. However, they gradually began to form unified societies.

- **Language.** In Romanised regions, new languages, like Spanish, Catalan, Galician, French and Italian, were based on Latin. In regions where Germanic influence was stronger, languages such as German, Dutch and English developed.

- **Law.** The new laws were a combination of Roman law and Germanic customs. Over time, they were compiled and written down.

- **Religion.** The Germanic tribes were pagan, but many of them converted to Arianism, which was a Christian heresy. Eventually, the Germanic kingdoms converted to Roman Catholic Christianity.

Post-Roman society

- **Cities.** Urban life became much less important than in Roman times. Long distance trade declined, although there were local markets where people exchanged farm products.

- **Rural life.** Most people were peasants who lived in villages. The main activities were crop and animal farming.

- **Monasteries** appeared. Monks lived in monasteries in accordance with a rule, which was a set of religious obligations. Monasteries also owned large areas of land, which they received as donations.

A Germanic reliquary, used to hold holy objects.
Who were the Visigoths?

The Visigoths were a Germanic tribe from the north of Europe. In the 3rd and 4th centuries, the Visigoths often raided Roman towns, but they also made alliances with the Romans. For example, they supplied the Roman armies with soldiers in exchange for land or food. However, these alliances were often broken, and there were many conflicts:

- In 378, the Visigoths defeated the Roman army in the Battle of Adrianople, killing the Emperor Valens.
- In 410, the Visigoths entered Rome and destroyed much of the city. This attack was known as the Sack of Rome.

In 415, the Visigoths made an agreement with the Romans to fight against the Vandals, Alans and Suevi in Hispania. They expelled the Vandals and Alans, and pushed the Suevi into the north-west of the peninsula. In return, the Visigoths received lands in south-west Gaul, where they founded a kingdom. Toulouse was its capital.

The Visigoths in Hispania

In 507, the Franks expelled the Visigoths from Gaul, and the Visigoths returned to the Iberian Peninsula. Toledo was the capital of the new Kingdom of the Visigoths. There were several important developments from the late 6th century onwards:

- King Leovigild (568-586) conquered the Kingdom of the Suevi and acquired other territories.
- His son Reccared (586-601) converted to Catholicism, which became the religion of the whole kingdom.
- Under Recceswinth (649-672), the laws of the kingdom were unified.

In the late 7th century, there were continual conflicts between the kings and the nobility. The kingdom ended when the Muslims invaded the peninsula in 711.

The organisation of the kingdom

The Visigoths had an elected monarchy: this caused conflicts between rivals for the throne.

- The king was advised by a council called the Aula Regia.
- The provinces were governed by dukes and counts.
- Religious and political decisions were taken at assemblies. The King, the Aula Regia and the clergy all participated in these assemblies.
Society and the economy

The Visigoths ruled the Iberian Peninsula, but they were only a small minority of the population. Consequently, the Kingdom of the Visigoths was influenced by the language, culture and religion of the Hispano-Roman majority.

- The most important political positions were held by nobles and clergymen. They also owned much of the land.
- Most of the population were peasants. Free peasants had small plots of land. There were also slaves who belonged to the nobles or the Church, and worked on their land.
- Agriculture was the main economic activity. However, there were also expert craftsmen who made weapons and jewellery.

ACTIVITIES

In groups of three, investigate the culture and art of the Visigoths.

- Each student in your group chooses one category (People, Architecture or Craftwork) and looks for information on the Internet.
- Explain your findings to the other members of your group. Then, prepare an illustrated poster on Visigoth culture and art together.

People. Saint Leander and Saint Isidore were two leading Visigoth intellectuals.

- What relationship did they have?
- What city did they live in?
- What positions did they hold?
- Which one of them wrote Etymologies? What does this book contain?
- What other interesting facts did you find?

Craftwork. The Visigoths were expert craftsmen of jewellery and weapons. Many examples have been found on the Iberian Peninsula.

- Where and when was the Treasure of Guarrazar found?
- How many pieces were originally found?
- Describe them. What materials were used?
- Can the pieces still be seen today? Where?

Architecture. San Juan de Baños and San Pedro de la Nave are two surviving Visigoth churches.

- Where is each church found?
- Describe the churches. What material was used? How big are they? What is the decoration like?
- The Visigoths used horseshoe arches and barrel vaults. Research these two architectural features. Then, try to find them in interior photos of the two churches.
The Byzantine Empire was a well-organised state. The emperor, or basileus, was the administrative, military and religious leader. State officials conducted government business, diplomats represented Byzantium in other territories, and there was a powerful army.

Justinian’s conquests were the last attempt to reunite both halves of the empire. However, the Byzantine Empire did not have the resources to defend such vast territories:

- In the 6th century, the Lombards expelled the Byzantines from the north and centre of the Italian Peninsula.
- In the 7th century, the Visigoths expelled them from the Iberian Peninsula.
- During the 7th and 8th centuries, the Muslims conquered the Mediterranean coasts of Africa, Syria and Palestine.

Later, the Turks conquered most of the remaining territory of the Byzantine Empire. They captured Constantinople in 1453, and the Byzantine Empire finally disappeared.
**Byzantine society**

Byzantine society had a **pyramid structure**. From the top down, the social classes were:

- The **basileus**.
- The **Patriarch of Constantinople** was the highest religious authority; the **high clergy**; the **palace and military aristocracy**.
- **Artisans, merchants, soldiers** and **free peasants**.
- **Servants** and **slaves**.

Byzantine society was essentially urban. The government, religious authority, the military, and the main economic activities were all based in **cities**. Major cities included Constantinople, Thessaloniki, Alexandria, Ephesus and Damascus.

City **markets** offered handicrafts made of silk and luxurious tapestries. Trade flourished, and Byzantine coins circulated throughout the empire and beyond.

**Religion**

The Byzantine Church (or **Orthodox Church**) gradually separated from the Roman Catholic Church. Religious differences finally led to the **East-West Schism** in 1054. This was a split between the Orthodox Church, which recognised the Patriarch of Constantinople, and the **Roman Catholic Church**, which only accepted the authority of the Pope.

The Church played an important role in Byzantine society. However, it was sometimes a source of tension. For example, in the 8th century, **iconoclasm** was an official movement that prohibited the worship of images. Many religious **icons** were destroyed. However, the Church was divided on this issue, and the policy was changed.

**Culture and art**

**Greek** replaced Latin as the main language of the Byzantine Empire.

As a result of its geographical location, and the importance of its trade and other contacts, the Byzantine Empire played a key **cultural role**. It received and passed on cultural influences across the Islamic world, Asia and Europe. Greek culture and the Orthodox religion spread into Eastern Europe.

The Byzantines built churches with **Greek cross plans** and **domes**, like the Hagia Sophia Church in Constantinople and the Basilica of San Vitale in Ravenna, Italy. Their interiors were richly decorated with **mosaics** and **icons**.
The origins of Islam

Islam is one of the world’s three great monotheistic religions, along with Judaism and Christianity. It originated in the 7th century on the Arabian Peninsula, which was a desert region mainly populated by tribes of nomadic animal herders. Before Islam, most Arabs were polytheistic, and Mecca was their holy city.

Medina and Mecca were cities in the west of the peninsula, near the Red Sea. Caravans carried spices and silks from East Asia to these important trade centres.

Muhammad (570-632), a merchant from a wealthy family, was from Mecca. When he was 40 years old, he began to preach a new religion: Islam. He believed there was only one God, Allah. The merchants in Mecca did not accept Muhammed’s teachings, so in 622 he escaped to Medina. This event became known as the Hegira, and marks the beginning of the Muslim calendar.

Muhammad built an army in Medina, and eight years later, he conquered Mecca. At the time of Muhammad’s death in 632, Islam had spread throughout the west of the Arabian Peninsula.
The five pillars of Islam

Muhammad’s teachings were written in the Quran, the sacred book of Islam. The Quran establishes five rules for all Muslims, which are known as ‘The Five Pillars of Islam’:

- **Faith.** Muslims believe that ‘there is no god but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet’.
- **Prayer.** Muslims pray five times a day. On Fridays, a religious figure called an Imam leads their collective prayers in a mosque.
- **Pilgrimage.** They should travel to Mecca at least once in their lives.
- **Fasting.** During the month of Ramadan, they must not eat or drink during the day.
- **Charity.** They must give to the poor.

The Quran also sets out rules for daily life. For example, Muslims are not allowed to eat pork, drink wine or gamble.

• Look on the Internet for photos and illustrations of three mosques around the world using the keywords ‘Famous mosques’. How similar are they to the illustration on this page?
The Orthodox Caliphate (632-661)
The Muslims created a vast empire, which eventually extended far beyond the Arabian Peninsula. This process began soon after Muhammad’s death in 632, when armies led by the Arabs spread Islam through jihad, or holy war.

During the earliest stage of the Islamic Empire, known as the Orthodox Caliphate, members of Muhammad’s family ruled from Medina. They chose each new caliph, who was the political and religious leader of all Muslims. However, there was a great dispute over the fourth caliph, Ali. In 661, Ali was assassinated and the Umayyad family took control. The Orthodox Caliphate controlled the Arabian Peninsula, Persia and Egypt, and came into conflict with the Byzantine Empire.

The Umayyad Caliphate (661-750)
The Umayyad family made the caliph a hereditary ruler. Damascus was named the new capital, and Islamic territory was divided into provinces, called emirates.

Islam spread the most during this period. Muslim armies conquered vast territories from Persia to the Iberian Peninsula. Their military advance in Europe was stopped by the Franks in 732.

In 750, Abu al-Abbas led a rebellion that nearly killed the entire Umayyad family. Only Prince Abd al-Rahman escaped, and fled to the Iberian Peninsula.

The Abbasid Caliphate (750-1258)
The Abbasid family moved the capital to Baghdad. There were many disputes over power during this period, and the empire began to disintegrate. The Abbasids lost control over many territories, such as Al-Andalus on the Iberian Peninsula. The Turks, a Muslim people from the Asian Steppe, grew stronger and challenged Abbasid rule.

During the Abbasid period, cities grew and Baghdad became a major trade centre. In 1258, a Mongol army sacked Baghdad and killed the last Abbasid caliph.

ACTIVITIES
1. Match the descriptions to the caliphates. Then, write sentences in your notebook.
   - The greatest spread of Islam
   - Turkish rise to power
   - The capital was Medina
   - Orthodox Caliphate
   - Umayyad Caliphate
   - Abbasid Caliphate
2. Discuss these terms with a partner:
   - jihad
   - caliph
   - emirate
Political organisation

The *caliph* held political and religious power. He also led the army, decided laws and acted as the supreme judge.

Different officials helped the caliph to govern:

- The *viziers* were ministers.
- The *qadis* were judges of Islamic law.
- The *walis* were provincial governors.
- The *emirs* were princes or nobles, who often came from the caliph’s family. The emir was a governor (like a wali), but also held military authority.

The caliph also led a powerful *army*, in which the cavalry played an important role.
As the Islamic Empire expanded, the original Arab conquerors became only a minority of its total population. The new ethnic groups included the Berbers in north-west Africa and the Persians. Many groups converted to Islam, and Arabic was the main language of the empire. However, Christians and Jews were allowed to practise their own religion because they shared the Islamic belief in a single God. Society was divided into different classes:

• The ruling aristocracy. These were mainly Arabs, and included large landowners and the families of rulers. They had political and economic power.

• Other influential groups: small landowners, merchants and artisans did not participate in politics, but they were wealthy.

• The lower class. These were street vendors, servants, landless peasants and poorer artisans. They were the majority of the population, and they lived in harsh conditions.

Women had to submit to the authority of their fathers, and later their husbands. The Quran allowed each man to have four wives, whom he should treat equally. Only boys were educated.

**ACTIVITIES**

1. With a partner, investigate Muslim cultural achievements on the Internet. Find extra information and complete a table like this one in your notebook.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Advances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Astronomy</td>
<td>• Detailed maps of celestial bodies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maths</td>
<td>• The use of 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The invention of algebra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• The perfection of arithmetic and trigonometry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medicine</td>
<td>• ........</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>• ........</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature</td>
<td>• Translation of Greek and Roman philosophers, which allowed these writings to reach the east</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Islamic art

Islamic art was influenced by the art of conquered cultures, but it developed its own distinctive style. Islam did not allow artists to represent the human body, but exceptional art was created in several fields:

• In **architecture**, brick, plaster and wood were used as building materials. There were columns, pillars and various types of **arches**, such as the horseshoe arch and the lobed arch. Buildings were covered by domes and flat wooden roofs.

• Plaster, ceramics and paint were used to decorate buildings with geometric patterns, floral motifs (**arabesque**) and **inscriptions**. Stained glass and reflective tiles created effects of light and shadow. **Water** was also part of the decoration: it made a relaxing sound, cooled the atmosphere and reflected light.

• Islamic artists also worked with ceramics, glass, ivory, leather, bronze and wood.

**ACTIVITIES**

2 With a partner, discuss the social classes in medieval Islamic society. What was the position of women?

3 Think of one member of Islamic society. Imagine a typical morning in their life, and write a short text about it.

4 Say a cultural field. Your partner names one advance made by the Islamic culture.

5 What materials and structures were used in Islamic architecture? How were buildings decorated?

**THINK ABOUT IT**

Muslims believe that Allah is infinite. And Islamic artists believed their geometric patterns could help people to think about the infinite.

• Find an Islamic geometric pattern on the Internet. Does it make you think of anything?

• Copy and colour a pattern that you like, and discuss it with your classmates.
1. Copy and complete the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Territory</th>
<th>GERMANIC KINGDOMS</th>
<th>BYZANTINE EMPIRE</th>
<th>ISLAM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stages</td>
<td>Each kingdom evolved independently.</td>
<td>......</td>
<td>......</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political organisation</td>
<td>......</td>
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<td>Social classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Culture and art</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Write the date of each event and put them in chronological order. Then, place them on a timeline.

- Romulus Augustulus deposed
- Umayyad Caliphate begins
- Visigoths expelled from Gaul
- Muhammad escapes to Medina
- Justinian’s reign begins
- Roman Empire divided

4. What major event marked the end of each caliphate? Add them to your timeline.

5. Describe the spread of Islam during each caliphate.

6. Did the Visigoths control all the Iberian Peninsula in the mid-6th century? Explain your answer.

7. Are the following sentences true or false? Correct the false ones in your notebook. Then, listen and check your answers.

   - a. The first Visigoth kingdom was created in the Italian Peninsula.
   - b. The Aula Regia advised the Visigoth king.
   - c. Gold coins were introduced during the reign of Justinian.
   - d. The Byzantine emperor was known as the caliph.
   - e. Muslims must travel to Medina at least once.
   - f. The Byzantine army sacked Baghdad in 1258.

8. With a partner, discuss the importance of each historical figure.

   - Attila
   - Odoacer
   - Reccared
   - Justinian
   - Muhammad
   - Abu al-Abbas
9. Explain the significance of each event. In what year did each occur?
   - The division of the Roman Empire into two halves
   - The Battle of the Catalaunian Plains
   - The Hegira
   - The rebellion of Abu al-Abbas
   - The East-West Schism

10. Answer the questions.
   a. Were there any similarities between Germanic, Byzantine and Islamic societies?
   b. How did each culture record its laws?

11. What culture does this building belong to? Name and explain the features labelled A, B and C. Can you identify any other features?

The Legacy of the Early Middle Ages

The Germanic tribes, the Byzantine Empire and Islam all influenced later civilisations.

The Germanic tribes:
- New languages emerged, such as English, German, Danish and Swedish.

The Byzantine Empire:
- Laws. The Code of Justinian was the model for later compilations in Europe, and influenced modern law.
- The Orthodox religion is practised today in countries such as Russia, Lithuania and Bulgaria.
- The Cyrillic alphabet was adapted from the Greek alphabet, and is used today in several East European countries.

Islam:
- Islam is the religion of millions of people.
- Arabic numbers and zero are used throughout the world.
- Scientific advances included the development of the compass, paper, gunpowder, irrigation techniques, trigonometry and algebra.

12. Which languages use the Cyrillic alphabet today?

13. Do you think Islam and Christianity are similar or completely different religions? Explain your answer.

14. During the Middle Ages, many advances spread through the influence of the Islamic world. Which ones do you think are still relevant today?

15. Find out what the majority religion is in the following countries: Russia, Lithuania, Belarus, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece and Macedonia. Why do you think this is the majority religion?
The mosaic of Justinian is found in the church of San Vitale in Ravenna, Italy. This church is an exceptionally important example of Byzantine art. In order to analyse this mosaic, we need to think about the figures, how and where they are placed, their clothing and the use of symbols.

**Figures**

1. **The Emperor Justinian** is wearing a crown, with a halo around his head. He is holding a golden bowl.
2. **Belisarius** was the general who conquered Ravenna. He is wearing a toga.
3. **Julian**, the banker who financed the church at San Vitale, is also wearing a toga.
4. **Maximianus**, Archbishop of Ravenna, is wearing a religious robe and holding a cross.
5. **The clergy** are holding a perfume burner and a bible.
6. **Imperial guards** are holding a shield (with the symbol of Christ) and spears.
7. **An official** is wearing a toga.

1. Read the information about the figures in the mosaic. What role did they play in the Byzantine Empire?
2. Describe the emperor’s clothes. Is anyone else dressed like him?
3. Describe the archbishop’s and clergymen’s clothes. What is each of them holding?
4. What do Justinian’s crown and halo represent?
5. Why is Justinian in the centre of the mosaic? Which figures are closest to him?
6. Can you see all of the guards’ faces? What does this say about them?
7. Look on the Internet for images and information about the mosaic of Theodora. Use the keywords ‘Theodora San Vitale Ravenna Mosaic’. Prepare an illustrated fact file on this mosaic by analysing it in the same way as the mosaic of Justinian.
THINK LIKE AN HISTORIAN. The spread of Islam today

By studying history, we can understand much better why some religions are predominant in certain parts of the world.

Today, Islam has more than 1.2 billion followers. They mostly live in the northern half of Africa, south-west Asia, Indonesia, Bangladesh and a few regions in Europe, such as Albania.

COUNTRIES WITH A MAJORITY MUSLIM POPULATION

1. Compare this map to the map of the spread of Islam in the Middle Ages on page 19.
   a. Where did Islam originate? Is that region Islamic today?
   b. How far did Islam spread in the Middle Ages? Is there a Muslim majority in all those regions today?
   c. When did Islam expand the most? In the Middle Ages or more recently?
   d. In the 7th century, was there a single Islamic state, or were there many states? Is the situation the same today?
   e. In which regions do the majority of the population practise Islam today?
   f. Which regions have a Muslim majority today, but were not Muslim in medieval times?

2. Answer the questions.
   a. What were the reasons for the spread of Islam in the Middle Ages?
   b. Why do you think there is not a Muslim majority in Europe?
   c. And in America?
   d. Are there any similarities between the modern spread of Islam and the history of Islam in the Middle Ages?