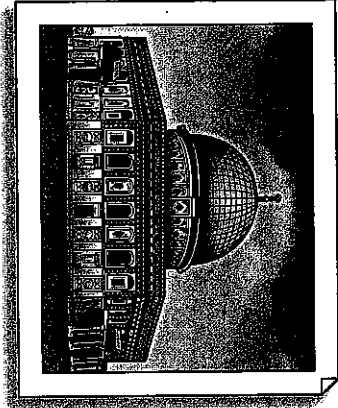


Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Islamic Empire

The Arabs were nomadic people who lived in the Arabian Peninsula. By the 600s A.D., communities began to grow as trade increased. The city of Mecca became an important stop on a trade route. A mix of people, including Christians and Jews, lived in Mecca. The idea of believing in one God, who was called *Allah* in Arabic, was not new to Arabia. Mecca was a mixed religious environment around 570, when Muhammad was born.



Born in Mecca to a merchant family, Muhammad had a great interest in religion. He often spent time alone praying or meditating. When Muhammad was about 40 years old, he went to the hills to meditate. Muhammad said that while he was meditating, Allah sent him a message. In this message, Allah told Muhammad that Allah was the one and only God. He said that people should abandon all other gods and worship only Allah.

Muhammad came back from the hills and said he was a prophet of Allah. He began to preach that everyone should follow him and convert to Islam. "Islam" means "submission to the will of Allah." Followers of Islam are called Muslims.

As he gathered more followers, Muhammad became both a religious and a political leader. Some people did not like Muhammad's beliefs and acted violently toward him and his followers. Muhammad built an army to defend his group. The Muslims took over Mecca in 630, and most of the people converted to Islam. Two years later, as Islam began to spread throughout the Arabian Peninsula, Muhammad died.

After Muhammad's death, the Arabs were left with a problem. Muhammad had not said who should take over after him. His father-in-law, Abu Bakr, was chosen to be the new leader. Under Abu Bakr, the Muslims expanded throughout Arabia and beyond.

The Muslims defeated the Byzantine army and took control of Syria. They took Egypt and northern Africa. By 650, the Arabs had conquered the entire Persian Empire. The Islamic Empire continued to grow. Spain, northern Africa, and Mesopotamia were brought under Arab rule during the Umayyad Dynasty. Many people in all these places converted to Islam.

The Islamic Empire eventually split into separate kingdoms after being invaded by the Mongols from China. Although the Islamic Empire had come to an end, the religion of Islam continued. With over a billion followers, Islam is one of the world's major religions.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Crusades

In the 1060s, the Seljuk Turks, who were Muslims, invaded the Byzantine Empire. The Byzantine army needed help defending the empire, so the emperor asked for help from Pope Urban II. Although Byzantine emperors and Roman Popes were rivals, the Pope said he would send help. He agreed to send help because the Seljuk Turks had also taken over the Holy Land. The Holy Land included Jerusalem and other places in Palestine where Jesus had lived and taught.



Pope Urban II met with a group of bishops and noblemen in 1095. He said, "From Jerusalem and the city of Constantinople comes a grievous report... An accursed race... has violently invaded the lands of those Christians." The Pope called for a Crusade to free the Holy Land from the invading Muslims. He said people who joined the Crusades would have all their sins forgiven.

By 1096, thousands of European knights were on their way to the Holy Land. Some knights joined the Crusades because they believed strongly in their religion. Many went because they hoped to win wealth and land. Others traveled to the Middle East because they wanted adventure.

Christian knights captured Jerusalem in 1099. They massacred the Muslim and Jewish people who lived in the city. The Muslim leader Saladin took Jerusalem back in 1187. The Third Crusade tried and failed to take the city back. Crusaders decided to attack other Muslim lands, but these attacks all ended in defeat. During the Fourth Crusade, the crusaders fought against Christians instead of Muslims! The crusaders captured and looted Constantinople, the Byzantine capital.

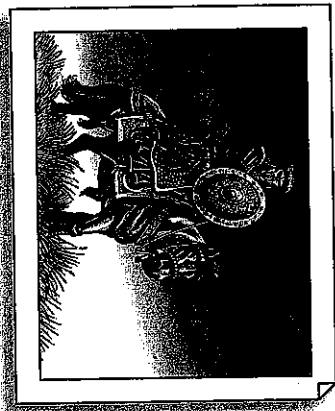
The Crusades continued off and on for 200 years. Each time the crusaders won, they turned the captured lands into Christian kingdoms. The Muslims took back the lands, which resulted in more knights being sent from Europe. Christians and Muslims committed terrible acts against each other in the Middle East in the name of religion. The Crusades left behind religious hatred that would last for centuries.

In Europe, the Crusades had a major political effect. During the Crusades, European noblemen sold their lands to join the fight. This caused them to lose power in their communities. As the nobles lost power, kings created stronger central governments. By the mid-1400s, there were four strong nation-states in Europe: Portugal, Spain, England, and France.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Genghis Khan and the Mongols

A belt of dry grassland called the steppe stretches 5,000 miles across Europe and Asia. The Mongols were nomadic people who lived on the eastern steppe. They lived in small groups called clans. Around 1200 A.D., one of the Mongol clan leaders decided to bring all the Mongols under his leadership. He conquered the other groups, one by one. This man became known as Genghis Khan, or "universal ruler" of all the Mongol clans. Once he took leadership of the Mongols, Genghis Khan wanted more. With an enormous army, he successfully took over many lands beyond the Mongolian borders.



Under Genghis Khan, the Mongols were extremely organized. An effective military planner, he grouped troops in armies of 10,000. Each army was like a moving city. Soldiers brought family members, horses, and livestock with them. Mongol women were responsible for the needs of the camp. They also took care of the wounded.

Mongol soldiers were excellent horsemen. When traveling, each soldier had three extra horses. By changing horses, they could keep riding for many days and nights at a time. Sometimes, Mongol messengers traveled as far as 120 miles in a day. Each cavalry warrior had leather armor, a lance, and a dagger, as well as a bow and arrows.

The Mongols used tricks to confuse their enemies. The soldiers made their foes believe they had more men than they actually had. The Mongols did this by dressing prisoners or lifelike dummies as Mongol warriors. They also used spies. Sometimes a small Mongol unit would attack and then pretend to run away. The small unit led enemy soldiers to the rest of the Mongol army. Then, the larger Mongol army surprised and slaughtered the enemy forces.

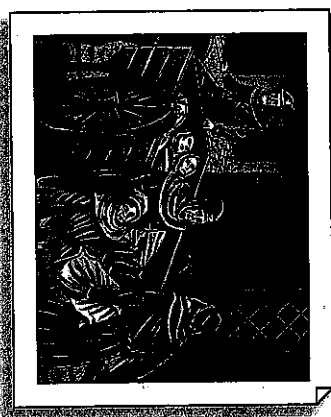
Genghis Khan used fear as a tool to conquer Asia. The Mongols destroyed one city after another, killing many of the people who lived in them. The populations of some cities were wiped out completely. Sometimes, conquered peoples were forced to serve as troops for the Mongols against their own allies. People heard about the terrible things the Mongols did to those who stood up to them. The rumors about the Mongols' cruelty frightened people. After hearing such terrible stories, many towns surrendered to the Mongols without a fight.

The Mongols conquered much of Asia. By 1221, Central Asia was under Mongol control. Genghis Khan died from an illness in 1227. Those who ruled after him kept expanding the Mongol Empire, conquering territory from China to Poland.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## The Black Death Hits Europe

In the fall of 1347, Italian trading ships left the Black Sea port of Caffa. They headed for the island of Sicily. During the trip, sailors started getting sick and dying. Soon after the ships arrived in Messina, Sicily, townspeople became sick and died. The Black Death, another name for the bubonic plague, had arrived in Italy. The disease had already killed millions in Asia and the Middle East.



The bubonic plague is a disease that is spread by fleas on rats. It had broken out before in Europe, Asia, and North Africa. A new epidemic, or outbreak, of the disease started in China in the 1200s.

It was normal for rats to be on ships and city streets during the Middle Ages. Flea-covered rats were common in crowded cities. Most people did not bathe, and almost all people had fleas and lice. Fleas carrying the disease jumped from rats onto people. Then, fleas jumped from person to person, spreading the disease quickly. The Black Death followed trade routes. Infected fleas from rats in Chinese cities leaped onto the clothes and packs of traders who were traveling west. In this way, the disease spread from Asia to the Middle East. In 1348 and 1349, the plague spread through France and Germany. The next year, it moved to England and Scandinavia.

After being bitten by an infected flea, black spots appeared on a victim's skin. Then the infected person started spitting up blood. After a few days of painful sickness, the victim of the Black Death died.

As many as 25 million Europeans died of the plague. Entire villages disappeared. People did not understand what caused the plague, and they were terrified. Many believed God was punishing them for their sins. The Church suffered a loss of power because prayers did not help. Some people thought the Jews caused the plague by poisoning town wells. A new outbreak of anger toward Jewish people started, and thousands of Jews were killed.

The plague affected Europe's economy. As workers and employers died, survivors demanded higher pay. Their labor was more valuable now because there were fewer people to do the work. Many noblemen ignored the peasants' requests for higher wages. So, angry peasants revolted, or fought against the nobles, in places like England and France.

One person out of every three was killed by the epidemic in Europe. The bubonic plague spread death and caused many social problems. Western Europe would not fully recover from the effects of the Black Death for over 100 years.