

History

Enquiry: How was Baghdad connected to the wider world?

## **The Rise of Islam**

Mr Cooper



## End of empires

For hundreds of years the Roman Empire had been fighting the equally powerful Persian Empire. The fighting happened mainly in the Middle East. This made the Middle East a difficult place to live and travel across. The people living in the border areas, including many Christians and Jewish people, were tired of being in the middle of fighting. Eventually the two empires were weakened by the endless fighting.



# A new religion

At the start of the 7th century a man called Muhammad lived in a town called Mecca. Mecca was located in Arabia, just south of the Middle East. Muhammad said he received a revelation from Allah, the Arabic word for God. He told the people in his community they had to change the way they lived and to worship Allah.



# A new religion

What he said divided the people who lived in Arabia. Some people were attracted to Muhammad's message but others but others were upset and decided to fight against Muhammad and his followers. After eight years of fighting, Muhammad was victorious. He died in 632 AD, having united the Arab tribes.



# Age of expansion

After Muhammad died, a series of men called caliphs took over his role as leader of the Islamic empire. The Islamic empire and the land it controlled became known as the caliphate. The caliphs saw how weak the Roman and Persian Empires were and decided to invade their lands. The Muslim conquerors were amazingly successful and took control of large amounts of land in the Middle East and North Africa.



# Age of expansion

Usually the Muslim conquerors left the locals alone to live and worship as they liked, provided the locals agreed to pay tax to the Muslims. In only 70 years, the Muslims created one of the largest empires to have ever existed. The caliphate stretched from India in the East to Spain in the West. For the first time, this area was united into one area free of borders and fighting.



# Comprehension Questions

1. Which two empires had been fighting each other for a long time?
2. What was the name of the man who founded the religion of Islam?
3. What did Muhammad do to the Arab tribes?
4. What was of the name of Islamic empire?
5. What did Muslim conquerors do to the people in the lands they took over?

