Name _____ Date _____

The Rise of Islam and Achievements of the Islamic Golden Age

Directions: Read the passage and look over the table of scholars. Answer each question using what they tell you.

From Mecca to Baghdad

Muhammad was born in Mecca, a trading town in western Arabia, in about 570 CE. Muslims believe that in about 610 CE, God began sending him messages through the angel Gabriel. These messages were later gathered into the Quran, which Muslims believe is the word of God. Muhammad taught that there is only one God.

Many powerful people in Mecca opposed him. In 622 CE, Muhammad and his followers moved to the town of Medina. This journey, called the Hijrah, marks the start of the Islamic calendar. By the time Muhammad died in 632 CE, most of Arabia was united under Islam. Later leaders, called caliphs, spread Muslim rule across a vast area.

In 762 CE, the caliph al-Mansur founded Baghdad on the Tigris River as his capital. Ships reached its docks from East Africa, India and even China, carrying goods and travelers. Papermaking, a Chinese invention, had spread west across Asia, and by the late 700s CE paper was made in Baghdad. Paper made books cheaper to copy.

The caliphs kept a royal library in Baghdad called the House of Wisdom. Scholars in the city translated old Greek and Persian books into Arabic. Not all of them were Muslims. Hunayn ibn Ishaq, one of the most famous translators, was a Christian. Scholars also tested old ideas and wrote new books. Historians often call this time the Islamic Golden Age. In 1258 CE, a Mongol army sacked Baghdad. By then, many Arabic books had already been translated into Latin for scholars in Europe.

Three scholars of the Islamic Golden Age: where each lived and worked, and what each is known for

Scholar	Where he lived and worked	Known for
al-Khwarizmi (about 780 to 850 CE)	Baghdad, at the House of Wisdom	Wrote a math book whose title gave us the word algebra. His books also helped bring the digits 0 to 9, which began in India, to Europe.
Ibn al-Haytham (about 965 to 1040 CE)	Born in Basra; worked in Cairo	Used experiments and math to explain that we see when light from objects enters our eyes.
Ibn Sina, also called Avicenna (980 to 1037 CE)	Born near Bukhara; worked in Persian cities such as Hamadan	Wrote The Canon of Medicine. Some medical schools in Europe were still teaching from it in the 1600s.

1. Which statement best expresses the central idea of this passage about Mecca and Baghdad?

A. Muhammad was born in Mecca in about 570 CE.

B. Scholars in Baghdad copied old books but added no new ideas.

C. The Mongols destroyed Baghdad in 1258 CE, so all of its learning was lost.

D. Islam spread from Arabia, and Baghdad grew into a center of learning whose books reached far beyond it.

2. According to the passage, what do Muslims believe about the Quran?

A. It is a history of the caliphs, written in Baghdad.

B. It is a book of laws written by the caliph al-Mansur.

C. It is the word of God, sent to Muhammad through the angel Gabriel.

D. It is a collection of Greek books translated into Arabic.

3. Why does the Islamic calendar begin in 622 CE?

A. That year Muhammad was born in Mecca.

B. That year Muhammad and his followers moved from Mecca to Medina.

C. That year a Mongol army sacked Baghdad.

D. That year the caliph al-Mansur founded Baghdad.

4. According to the passage, where was papermaking first invented?

A. Baghdad B. Egypt C. China D. Spain

5. According to the passage, which is one way Baghdad's location helped the city?

A. Mountains around it kept travelers away.

B. It was the only city in the world that made paper.

C. It was the town where Muhammad was born.

D. Its place on the Tigris River let ships bring goods and travelers from distant lands.

6. Which two statements about the scholars in Baghdad does the passage support? Select 2.

☐ A. They used only books first written in Arabic.

☐ B. They translated old Greek and Persian books into Arabic.

☐ C. They were not allowed to write new books.

☐ D. They included people of more than one faith.

☐ E. They all came from Mecca.

7. Use the table of Golden Age scholars to complete the sentences.

Word bank
Medina • algebra • Cairo • alphabet

The word _____ comes from the title of a math book by al-Khwarizmi. Ibn al-Haytham was born in Basra and later worked in the city of _____.

8. Science classes today teach that we see objects because light from them enters our eyes. According to the table, which scholar explained seeing this way?

A. Ibn Sina B. al-Mansur C. al-Khwarizmi D. Ibn al-Haytham

9. According to the table, what part did al-Khwarizmi play in the history of the digits 0 to 9?

A. He learned the digits from scholars in Europe.

B. His books helped bring the digits, which began in India, to Europe.

C. He invented the digits at the House of Wisdom.

D. He replaced the digits with Roman numerals.

10. Ibn Sina died in 1037 CE. According to the table, what shows that his work still mattered in Europe centuries later?

A. His math book gave us the word algebra.

B. He explained how light from objects lets us see.

C. He founded the city of Baghdad on the Tigris River.

D. Some medical schools in Europe were still teaching from his book in the 1600s.

11. Which sentence is an opinion that would not belong in an objective summary of this passage about Mecca and Baghdad?

A. Baghdad was founded on the Tigris River in 762 CE.

B. Hunayn ibn Ishaq translated books into Arabic.

C. The scholars of Baghdad were the smartest people who ever lived.

D. A Mongol army sacked Baghdad in 1258 CE.