

The Spread of Islam from the 7th-21st Centuries

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Overview:

The purpose of this activity is to provide students with knowledge of how and when Islam spread to various regions, and to locate regions where Muslims form a demographic majority or significant minorities, from the 7th to the 21st centuries.

Objectives:

Students should be able to:

- relate the spread of Islam to historical events and processes of historical change
- trace the spread of Islam chronologically and regionally
- assess the importance of cultural and political factors in the spread of Islam
- evaluate the importance of shifts in economic and political power, and cultural influence among states and regions in the spread of Islam.
- use a map key to identify and locate regions of the eastern hemisphere (Afroeurasia, a modern geography term that combines the contiguous continents of Africa, Europe and Asia) to locate regions of the world that have majority Muslim populations today, and to describe their geographical features.

Procedure:

1. Assign or read as a class **Handout 1a: The Spread of Islam in History**. Study questions at the end of the reading give suggestions for comprehension, discussion activities.
2. Draw particular attention to the difference between the rapid expansion of territory under Muslim rule and the spread of Islam among the populations. Discuss previous ideas students may have about the spread of Islam by the sword, or about “instant conversion” of regions to any world faith. Explain that conversion has usually been a gradual process. Ask students to list the reasons why people might have changed from the religion they grew up with? What influences might play a role in their decision (social, political and economic). Is it more challenging for individuals to join a faith when it is a minority or when many people are converting? How do the poverty and persecution, or the wealth and power of members of the faith affect individual choice about conversion? How might people learn about the beliefs of a faith, and what role do spiritual leaders play? What other role models, such as traders, travelers, and teachers might influence people? For further reading, see Jerry H. Bentley, *Old World Encounters* (Oxford University Press, 1993) on the spread of world religions.

3. **Adaptation:** For middle school level or lower reading ability students, a modified version of the reading is provided in **Handout 1a★**. Use the modified or regular Handout 1a in an alternative procedure: Read and discuss the first three introductory paragraphs as a class to explain the basic process by which Islam spread. Divide the rest of Handout 1a or 1a★ into sections by headings or paragraphs, beginning with “The Process of Conversion” and subsequent sections. Assign each section or set of paragraphs to a group of students who will be responsible for explaining it and showing the regions it discusses on a classroom map. In a round robin format, groups each present their part of the spread of Islam narrative in chronological order. Each group can take questions and raise discussion points from the audience with the help of the teacher.
4. Study Question #6 may be used for younger students to create a timeline. Older students may make notes for a preview timeline before they move to the chronology activity, and Study Question #7 anticipates work on the maps of the spread of Islam and modern Muslim regions. These activities may substitute for the chronology activity for middle school students.
5. Distribute **Handout 1b: Chronology of the Spread of Islam**. Discuss the introduction to preview the type of information the students will find in the chronology. Explain the difference between a chronology and a timeline. If not already discussed using the narrative in Handout 1a, explain or reinforce the difference between the historical concepts of expanding Muslim-ruled territory and the spread of Islam among the population of lands in Africa, Asia and Europe, and elsewhere. Discuss events in the first century of Muslim history, then the period from 750 to 1200 CE, then 1200 to 1500 CE. Students should note items on the chronology that represented advances as well as setbacks for the spread of Islam.
6. **Adaptation for middle school:** See #3, above, for adapted Handout 1a★. Teachers may find it useful to break up the chronology into parts to correspond to historical periods or geographic regions being studied, using it in conjunction with individual units. By doing so, students can focus on 5 or 6 items at a time. If the class is making a world history timeline on the wall or in a notebook, they can insert these events along into the larger timeline. Discuss how these events may relate to events taking place in other regions and cultures.
7. **Correlating the chronology to geography:** Make a master copy of the chronology Handout 1b by making an enlarged photocopy. Cut the chronology into strips with one item on each. Distribute the strips among members of the class. Color the strips with pink, yellow, green or blue highlighters, using one color for chronology items on the first century of Islam from 622–750 CE, a second color for 800-1500 CE, a third color for 1500-1900 CE, and a fourth color for the 20th century. Using removable tape, have students attach each strip to the classroom wall map of the world (preferably a physical map rather than a modern political map) on the appropriate location. By posting the strips on the map, the colors will show the sequence of the spread of Islam over the centuries. Make a map key using the same colors and post it near the map.
8. **Pre-modern and modern events in the spread of Islam:** Discuss the second half of the chronology, from 1500 to the present, which includes political, military and economic milestones, and discuss how they affected social and religious conditions in Muslim regions. How did these events and historical trends affect the spread of Islam? Discuss ways in which the establishment of European economic dominance and colonial control affected the spread of Islam, or the relative strength of Muslim influence in their own and other lands. The latter items discuss the spread of Islam to the industrialized countries, and the post-colonial situation in Muslim countries.

9. **Media activity:** Using the general trends described in the last 4-6 items in the chronology, have students collect national and international newspaper, TV or Internet news reports related to these issues. Each student should briefly present their news item and explain or ask for discussion on how it relates to the spread of Islam and religious affairs in those countries. News about Islam in Europe and North America is of particular interest.
10. **People by the Numbers:** Using the map of modern countries in **Handout 1c: Muslim Population Percentage by Country**, discuss those which are majority, large minority and small minority Muslim countries. Using an atlas, gazetteer or other up-to-date reference, have students select several countries on the map and find out their current population. Using a calculator and the map key, figure out the percentage range of Muslim population in these countries. Answers will be a range, such as "above 50%" of 50 million population = at least 25 million, or 1%-10% of 1 billion = 10 million to 100 million. Students will realize that Muslim minorities in countries with large populations may be more numerous than Muslim majorities in countries with small populations.
11. **Do the Math:** Make a four-column chart on a whiteboard, flipchart or poster. In groups or as a class, list regions from the chronology, such as Syria, Iraq, Iran, Egypt, North Africa, Indonesia, etc. In the second column list the dates when Islam was first introduced by conquest, trade or migration. In the third column list the century (approximate date) when the region became the majority faith or write "minority" in the space. In the fourth column, write the number of years the region or country has been majority Muslim. **Extension:** Do the same exercise for the spread of other world faiths such as Christianity, Buddhism, or Hinduism.
12. Identify countries mentioned in the *Frontline: Muslims* video on the demographic map, **Handout 1c**. How might the different issues raised in the video relate to the location of these places? For example, which involve majority Muslim countries? Which countries are in the Middle East? What language is spoken in each country? Which countries in the video came most recently to Islam? In which countries do Muslims live as small minorities?

Handout 1a: The Spread of Islam in History

A Slow Process. Hearing that Muslims conquered territory “from the Atlantic to the borders of China,” many people reading about Muslim history often wrongly imagine that this huge region instantly became “Islamic.” The rapid conquests led to the idea that Islam spread by the sword, with people forced to become Muslims. In fact, however, the spread of Islam in these vast territories took centuries, and Muslims made up a small minority of the population for a long time. In other words, the expansion of territory under Muslim rule happened very rapidly, but the spread of Islam in those lands was a much slower process. The paragraphs below explain how and when that happened.

“Let there be no compulsion in religion.” The Qur’an specifies, “Let there be no compulsion in religion” (2: 256). This verse states that no person can ever be forced to accept religion against their will. It tells Muslims never to force people to convert to Islam. Anyone who accepts Islam under pressure might not be sincere, and conversion in name only is useless to them, and harmful to members of the faith community.

Prophet Muhammad set a precedent as the leader of Madinah. Under his leadership, the Muslims practiced tolerance towards those of other religions. They were parties to the Constitution of Madinah and to treaties with the Muslims, discussing religious ideas with the Jews, Christians and polytheists (believers in many gods). The Qur’an records some of the questions that they put to Muhammad about Islam. Later Muslim leaders were required to be tolerant, based on the authority of both the Qur’an (in this and many other verses), and the Sunnah, or example of Muhammad. With few exceptions, Muslim leaders have adhered to it over time.

Becoming Muslim. To accept Islam, a person only has to make the profession of faith (shahada) in front of two or more witnesses. Even after a person has accepted Islam, he or she may take a long time to learn and apply its practices, going through many different stages or levels of understanding and practice over time. As Islam spread among large populations, this process was multiplied across a whole population. Different individuals and social classes may have different understandings of Islam at the same time. Also, many local variations and pre-Islamic customs remained, even after societies had been majority Muslim for a long time. This has been a source of diversity among Muslim cultures and regions.

The Process of Conversion. The Prophet Muhammad preached Islam at Makkah and Madinah in Arabia for about twenty-three years. For the first ten years (612 to 622 CE), he preached publicly at Makkah. After the migration to Madinah he preached only in his own house—which was the first masjid—only to people who came to hear him. Preaching in houses or in the masjid became the pattern in Islam.

The first two khalifahs required most of the inhabitants of Arabia who had been pagans to affirm their loyalty as Muslims. Christian and Jewish communities were allowed to continue practicing their faiths. In Yemen there are still Jewish communities. Outside Arabia, however, the khilafah did not force non-Arabs to become Muslims. Historians are surprised that they did not even encourage them to become Muslims. Only Khalifah ‘Umar ibn ‘Abd al-‘Aziz (ruled 717–720) made an effort to encourage people to accept Islam, and sent out missionaries to North Africa and other areas. During the early khilafah (632–750), non-Arabs began to accept Islam of their own free will. New Muslims migrated to Muslim garrison cities, to learn about Islam and possibly to get jobs and associate themselves with ruling groups. Whatever their reasons their actions became more common over the years, and expanded the Muslim population. These migrants became associates, or *mawali*, of Arab tribes. The *mawali* also tried to convince their relatives and members of their ethnic group to become Muslims. Some migrant Arab and *mawali* families made important contributions in preserving and spreading Islamic knowledge. They became scholars of Islamic law, history, literature and the sciences. In this way, Islam spread in spite of political rulers, not because of them.

During the years of the Umayyad khalifahs from 661–750 CE, the overwhelming majority of non-Arab population of the Umayyad—which stretched from Morocco to China—were not Muslims. Toward the end of that time, the North African Berbers became the first major non-Arab group to accept Islam.

Within a few centuries, Christianity disappeared almost completely from North Africa—as it did from no other place in the Muslim world. Jews remained as a small minority, with many living in Muslim Spain. Iranians of Central Asia were the second major movement in the spread of Islam, beginning in about 720 CE. Both of these early groups of converts caused problems for the central government. In North Africa, Berbers set up an independent khalifah, breaking the political unity of Islam. In Central Asia, the revolution arose that replaced the Umayyad with the Abbasid dynasty. After this time, Islam was no longer the religion of a single ethnic group or of one ruling group.

Developing a Muslim culture. In the central lands, the gradual spread of Islam is difficult to trace. Some scholars, such as Richard Bulliet, think that in Egypt, few Egyptians had become Muslims before the year 700, and Islam reached 50 percent of the population in the 900s, three hundred years after the arrival of Islam. By about 1200, Muslims were more than 90 percent of the population. In Syria, Islam spread even more slowly. There, the 50-percent mark was not reached until 1200, nearly six hundred years after the arrival of Islam. Iraq and Iran probably reached a Muslim majority by around 900 CE, like Egypt. In much of Spain and Portugal, Islam became established between 711 and about 1250. After the Reconquista by Spanish Catholics was completed in 1492, and many Muslims and Jews were expelled from Spain, Islam continued to exist until after 1600. Islam may never have been the majority faith during the 700 years of Muslim rule. Spain, Portugal and Sicily are the only places where which Islam has ever been driven out.

In the East, Muslim law treated Zoroastrians, Buddhists, and Hindus just as it treated Jews and Christians. Muslim rulers offered them protection of life, property, and freedom of religious practice in exchange for the payment of a tax, as an alternative to military service. In Sind (India), the Buddhist population seems to have embraced Islam over about two centuries (712–900). Buddhism disappeared entirely. Hinduism in Sind declined much more slowly than Buddhism.

All of the lands described above were territories under Muslim rule. After the decline of unified Muslim rule, Islam spread to lands outside its boundaries. Anatolia (or Asia Minor), which makes up most of modern Turkey, came after 1071 under the rule of Turkish tribesmen who had become Muslims. Islam spread gradually for centuries after that.

When the Ottoman Turks reached south-eastern Europe in the mid fourteenth century, most Albanians and Bosnians and some Bulgarians became Muslims. Beginning in the fifteenth century, however, Islam did not spread rapidly in this area, perhaps because the population resented or disliked the centralized government of the Ottoman Empire. Strong feelings about religion and ethnicity in the region may also have been a cause.

Continuing Spread. Beginning in 1192, other Muslim Turkish tribesmen conquered parts of India, including the area of present-day Bangladesh. The number of Muslims there gradually increased in India from that time. The people of Bangladesh were Buddhists, and, beginning about 1300, they—like the Buddhists of Sind—rapidly embraced Islam, becoming a Muslim majority in that region. Elsewhere in India, except for Punjab and Kashmir in the north-west, Hinduism remained the religion of the majority.

In South India and Sri Lanka, traders and Sufis, or mystical followers of Islam, spread Islam and carried it to Southeast Asia by 1300 CE. Over the next two centuries in today's Indonesia—the Spice Islands—Islam spread from Malaysia to Sumatra and reached the Moluccas in eastern Indonesia. Entering a land where Buddhism, Hinduism and traditional faiths of the island people existed, it took several centuries before practice of Islam became established as it was practiced in other Muslim lands. In Central Asia, Islam gradually spread to the original homelands of the Turks and Mongols, until it was the main religion of nearly all Turkic-speaking peoples. Islam spread into Xinjiang, the western part of China, where it was tolerated by the Chinese empire. Much earlier, in the 8th and 9th centuries, a group of ethnic Chinese Han had accepted Islam. These groups continue to practice Islam today. Islam spread to China through the seaports such as Guanzhou, where the earliest Chinese masjid exists.

Africa. Before 1500, Islam spread widely in sub-Saharan Africa. The first town south of the Sahara that became majority Muslim was Gao on the Niger River in Mali before 990, when a ruler accepted Islam. Over the centuries, many rulers followed. By 1040, groups in Senegal became Muslims. From them Islam spread to the region of today's Senegal, west Mali, and Guinea. After the Soninke of the Kingdom of Ghana became Muslims about 1076, Islam spread along the Niger

River. Muslims established the kingdom of Mali in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, and Songhai from 1465 to 1600. Farther east, Kanem-Bornu near Lake Chad became Muslim after 1100. In West Africa, like Turkestan, India, and Indonesia, it was traders and later Sufis who introduced Islam, and many rulers accepted it first, followed by others. African Muslim scholars became established in the major towns like Timbuktu, and they taught, wrote and practiced Islamic law as judges. By 1500, Islam was established in West Africa throughout the Sahel belt and along the Niger River into today's Nigeria.

In East Africa, traders had spread Islam down the coast by the tenth century, and it gradually developed further in the following centuries. In the Sudan, south of Egypt, the population of Nubia gradually became Muslim during the fourteenth century, through immigration of Muslim Arab tribesmen and preaching Islam, and because Christian rule became weak in the region. Muslim rule and influence, however, did not extend south of Khartoum, where the Blue and White Niles before 1500 CE.

Strong Governments and the Spread of Islam. By understanding that the expansion of Muslim rule was different from the spread of Islam among populations, we can see an interesting trend. Ironically, Islam has spread most widely and rapidly among the population at times when Muslim rule was weaker and less unified. When Muslim political regimes were weak, decentralized, disunited, or completely absent, Islam as a religion flourished and often spread to non-Muslims. Influence by traders, Sufis and influence of Muslim culture in the cities aided the spread of Islam to new areas. On the other hand, strong states like the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans during the fifteenth century, or the Sultanate of Delhi and the Mogul empire in northern India, had little success in spreading Islam, though they did gain territory. Non-Muslim populations seem to have viewed these powerful Muslim rulers negatively, and so they resisted conversion to Islam. Whoever did embrace Islam in such circumstances, if not for material gain, usually did so because of the efforts of merchants, teachers and traveling Sufi preachers, who were not part of the government. Although the conversion of rulers has often influenced other people in a society to accept Islam, these conversions were not the result of conquests. As in West Africa, East Africa and Southeast Asia, they were far from the ruling centers, but came to know about Islam through the example and teaching of traders and travelers who came in their wake.

Study Questions:

1. In what important way was the conquest of territory by Muslims different from the spread of Islam?
2. How many centuries do historians think it took from the time Islam was introduced until it became the religion of the majority population in Egypt, Syria, Iran, and Spain?
3. To which regions did Islam spread mainly as a result of trade and travel?
4. How do you think the development of Islamic law might have been affected by the fact that Islam was a minority faith at the time of the early Muslim scholars of law? How might laws tolerating other religions have affected the spread of Islam among the population?
5. Construct a time line tracing the spread of Islam using the dates in the text above.
6. Locate the regions mentioned in the text on a map, and make labels showing the dates when Islam was introduced and reached a majority of the population there. Compare your map with handout #XX, showing the spread of Islam by locating the places you identified on that map.

Resources for further reading:

Khalid Blankinship, "The Spread of Islam," in *World Eras: Rise and Spread of Islam, 622-1500*, S. L. Douglass, ed. (Farmington, MI: Gale, 2002), pp. 230-232.

Richard Bulliet, *Conversion to Islam in the Medieval Period: An Essay in Quantitative History* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1979).

Richard Bulliet, *Islam: the View from the Edge* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994)

Handout 1a★ : The Spread of Islam in History

A Slow Process. In the first century after Muhammad died, Muslims conquered territory stretching from the Atlantic to the borders of China. People often assume that this huge region instantly became “Islamic” with the arrival of Muslims. This notion led to the idea that people were forced to become Muslims, and that Islam spread by the sword. In fact, the spread of Islam in these lands took many centuries. Although Muslims were the ruling group, they were a small minority of the population. In other words, the expansion of territory under Muslim rule happened very rapidly, but the spread of Islam in those lands was a much slower process. The paragraphs below explain how and when that happened.

“Let there be no compulsion in religion.” The Qur’an states, “Let there be no compulsion in religion” (2: 256). This verse tells Muslims never to force people to convert to Islam. Anyone who accepts Islam under pressure might not be sincere. Converting to a religion by force, or only in name, would be useless and harmful to any faith community.

Prophet Muhammad set a precedent, or example, as the leader of Madinah. Under his leadership, Muslims practiced tolerance toward persons with other religious beliefs. Muslims made treaties and agreements with people of other religions. They discussed religious ideas with Jews, Christians and polytheists (believers in many gods). The Qur’an and Muhammad’s example required Muslim leaders to be tolerant of the People of the Book, or Jews and Christians, and to allow them freedom of worship. With few exceptions, Muslim leaders have followed these policies over time.

Becoming Muslim is a simple act. To accept Islam, a person only has to make the profession of faith (shahada) in front of two or more witnesses. After that, it may take a long time to learn and apply Islamic practices. As Islam spread, this process was multiplied across large populations. Many local variations in understanding as well as customs remained from people’s lives before accepting Islam. These continued even after societies had been majority Muslim for a long time. This has been a source of diversity among Muslim cultures and regions.

The Process of Conversion. The Prophet Muhammad preached Islam publicly at Makkah and from his home in Madinah for about twenty-three years. His house in Madinah became the first masjid. Christian and Jewish communities were allowed to continue practicing their faiths. Non-Arabs were neither forced nor expected to become Muslims. As people in lands under Muslim rule learned about the faith and traveled to Muslim cities, some began to accept Islam by choice. When they returned home, they shared their religious knowledge with family and friends. Many of the families of early non-Arab converts went on to become important scholars of Islamic knowledge. They played important roles in preserving and developing Islamic law, history, literature and sciences.

Although the rulers of the Umayyad khalifah (661-750 CE) were Muslim, The overwhelming majority of non-Arab population of the Umayyad (661-750 CE) — which stretched from Morocco to China—were not Muslims. Eventually, the North African Berbers became the first major non-Arab group to accept Islam. The Iranians of Central Asia followed them. In time, both groups of converts broke

away from the khalifah government and set up their own governments. Islam was no longer the religion of a single ethnic group. It was no longer ruled by one government.

Developing Muslim culture. In Egypt, Iran and Iraq, scholars believe that Islam reached approximately 50 percent of the population by the 900s, three hundred years after its arrival. From then on, conversion rates slowly increased in the region. Islam also spread to Spain and Portugal between 711 and about 1250. After the 1492 Spanish Reconquista, many Muslims and Jews were expelled from Spain. Islam spread in other places, however, such as Anatolia (Asia Minor) after 1071. When the Ottoman Turks reached south-eastern Europe in the mid 1300s, many Albanians, Bosnians and Bulgarians became Muslims.

Continuing Spread. Beginning in 1192, Muslims conquered parts of India, including lands in today's Bangladesh. Although the number of Muslims in South Asia gradually increased, Hinduism remained the religion of the majority in India. Muslim rulers generally treated Zoroastrians, Buddhists, and Hindus just as it treated Jews and Christians. They were offered protection of life, property, and freedom of religious practice in exchange for paying a tax. Muslim citizens paid other types of taxes, and served in the army.

In South India and Sri Lanka, traders and Sufis, or mystical followers of Islam, spread Islam and carried it to Southeast Asia by 1300 CE. In Central Asia, Islam gradually spread to the original homelands of the Turks and Mongols. Islam spread into Xinjiang, the western part of China, where the Chinese empire tolerated it. Early in Muslim history, a group of ethnic Chinese, the Han, had accepted Islam. Both groups continue to practice Islam in China today.

Islam in Africa. Before 1500, Islam had already spread widely in sub-Saharan Africa. The first town south of the Sahara that became majority Muslim was Gao on the Niger River in Mali. After the Soninke of the Kingdom of Ghana became Muslims around 1076, Islam spread along the Niger River. Muslims established the kingdom of Mali in the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries, which was later taken over by the Songhai from 1465 to 1600. In the thriving capital city of Mali, Timbuktu, African Muslim scholars taught, wrote and practiced Islamic law as judges. Farther east, Islam spread to Kanem-Bornu near Lake Chad after 1100. In West Africa, like Turkestan, India, and Indonesia, traders and later Sufis introduced Islam. Often, rulers in these places accepted it first, followed by others.

In East Africa, Arab traders had spread Islam down the coast by the tenth century. In the Sudan, during the fourteenth century, Islam spread through migration of Muslim Arab tribesmen.

Governments and the Spread of Islam. In summary, the expansion of Muslim rule was different from the spread of Islam among populations. It spread mainly among people in the cities and countryside, and not by the efforts of governments. Ironically, Islam has spread most widely and rapidly among the population at times when Muslim rule was weaker and less unified. When Muslim political regimes were weak, decentralized, disunited, or completely absent, Islam as a religion flourished and often spread to non-Muslims. For example, traders, Sufis and the influence of Muslim culture in cities aided the spread of Islam to new areas that were not ruled by Muslims. On the other hand, strong states like the

Ottoman Empire in the Balkans during the fifteenth century, the Delhi Sultanate or the Mughal Empire in northern India, had little success in spreading Islam, even though their territory grew. In some places, a ruler's conversion often influenced people in the society to accept Islam. These conversions, however, were not the result of conquests. Merchants, teachers, and traveling Sufi preachers were the agents who helped spread Islam. Finally, according to Islamic beliefs, it is not a Muslim who causes someone to accept Islam, but God who opens a person's heart to faith.

Study Questions:

1. How was the growth of territory ruled by Muslims different from the spread of Islam among the people who lived in those lands?
2. How long do historians think it took from the introduction of Islam until it became the religion of the majority population in Egypt, Syria, Iran, and Spain?
3. Where did Islam spread mainly as a result of trade and travel?
4. Make a time line that traces the spread of Islam, using the dates in the text above.
5. Locate the regions mentioned in the text on a map, and make labels showing the dates when Islam was introduced there.

Handout 1b: Chronology of the Spread of Islam

Over the past 1425 years, Islam has spread from the small trading town of Makkah on the Arabian Peninsula to become a world religion practiced on every continent. Like other world religions, Islam has been spreading ever since its origin, both through migration of Muslims to new places, and by individuals who have accepted Islam as their religion, having chosen to convert from other religions.

During the first century after the Hijrah, rapid expansion of the territory under Muslim rule took place as a result of military campaigns. This territory did not instantly become “Islamic,” meaning that most people rapidly became Muslims. In fact, the spread of Islam among the population took centuries, even in the regions conquered in the 7th century CE.

The following timeline marks dates when various regions were first introduced to Islam. It also gives the dates when Muslims probably became a majority of the population in those regions. It also marks important dates in the past two hundred years or so, when Muslim majority regions were conquered by groups of other faiths. During the past century, many Muslim regions were colonized by European nations, with Muslim countries formed after independence. Religious life in those countries was much affected by foreign rule. In turn, emigration by Muslims and travel by non-Muslims has resulted in introducing Islam to Europe and the Americas. The timeline also records trends in cultural and religious influence by Muslims and by non-Muslims that affect the spread of Islam.

- 622 Muhammad and the Muslims migrated from Makkah to Madinah at the invitation of the Madinans. Muhammad became the city’s leader, and the first Muslim community was established.
- 630 Makkah surrendered to the Muslim force, placing the city under Muslim rule. Many members of Quraysh accepted Islam shortly after.
- 632 Muhammad died, leaving much of the Arabian Peninsula under Muslim rule.
- 634-650 Muslim armies defeat Byzantine and Persian imperial armies, bringing Syria, Iraq, Egypt and Iran under Muslim rule, including the cities of Jerusalem, Damascus, and Alexandria.
- 711-715 Spain, Turkistan and Sind (northern India) were brought under Muslim rule.
- 750s Muslim soldiers settled in Chang’an (Xian), the largest city in China. Muslim merchants also visited and settled in southern Chinese ports.
- *ca. 800-850 Islam became the faith of the majority of people in Iran.
- 819 The Samanids became the first independent Muslim state in northeastern Iran and Central Asia. By the 900s CE, Islam became the majority religion in that region.
- *ca. 850-900 Islam became the majority religion in Iraq, Egypt and Tunisia.
- *ca. 940-1000 Islam became the majority religion in Muslim-ruled parts of the Iberian Peninsula (today’s Spain and Portugal).
- 1099-1187 Western European Crusader armies held Jerusalem.
- 11th c Muslim traders in West Africa began to spread Islam. Muslims settled in the Champa region of Vietnam and introduced Islam.
- 1040s The Almoravids, a Muslim Berber ruling group spread Islam in Mauritania and other parts of west Africa. They campaigned against the Soninke kings of Ghana.
- 1060s The Almoravids ruled in the Maghrib and Muslim Spain (al-Andalus). The empire of Ghana weakened.
- *ca.1200 Islam became the majority religion in Syria.

- 13th c. Ghana's empire collapsed and Mali rose. Rulers of Kanem, near Lake Chad, became Muslim
- End 13th c Muslims lived in northern ports of Sumatra (today's Indonesia). Muslim traders had close trade and cultural contacts in the trading cities on the east Indian coast, such as Gujarat.
- ca.1300 Islam became the majority faith in Anatolia (part of today's Turkey).
- 1295 the Ilkhan ruler Ghazan "the Reformer" was the first Mongol leader to become Muslim, along with most of his Mongol generals.
- 1324-25 Mansa Musa, king of Mali, made the pilgrimage journey to Makkah, strengthening Mali's links with Islam.
- 14th c. Mali, Gao, and Timbuktu, cities on the Niger River in west Africa became important centers of Muslim trade and scholarship
- 15th c. A ruler of Malacca converted to Islam, while that port city was becoming an important stop on the China-Indian Ocean trade routes. From Malacca, Islamic influence spread in the Malay peninsula and nearby islands.
- 1453 Ottoman forces conquered the city of Constantinople, ending the Byzantine Empire.
- 1085-1492 Spanish Christian forces carried out Reconquista in the Iberian Peninsula.
- 1495 Muslims and Jews were expelled from Spain, while others were forced to convert to Christianity.
- 1501-1600 Safavid rulers in Iran established a strong Shi'i Muslim state, arts and culture flourish.
- 1526-1707 Mughal India was established and reached its greatest size and cultural influence. Religious tolerance toward Hindus varied among rulers. Both Muslim and Hindu influences contributed to Mughal culture, politics and the arts.
- 1500-1570s Ottoman Muslim Turks united most of Southwest Asia and North Africa (often called the Middle East) under their rule. The Ottoman Empire expanded into Eastern Europe. Religious tolerance policies gave non-Muslim minorities autonomy in worship and religious law.
- 1500-1680 Muslim empires and small states expanded the territory under Muslim rule and influence, such as Kanem-Bornu, Songhai, Bondu, Nubia and Ethiopia. European economic and military pressure increased in coastal areas of West and East Africa.
- 1500-1600 Muslim rule replaced Hindu rule in the Indonesian islands of Sumatra and Java
- 1500-1600 Central Asian Muslim states weakened as overland trade on the old Silk Roads declined, and sea trade by Europeans increased. The Russian Empire expanded into Central Asia, defeating Muslim states near the border Europe and Asia.
- 1748-1800 The Safavid Empire in Iran ended. British and Russian military and economic influence in the region grew.
- 1608-1670 Islamic political, religious and cultural influence grew in Malaysia and Indonesia, while Dutch economic and political pressure also grew.
- 1641 Dutch forces conquered Malacca, a major port in Southeast Asia, which was the gateway to the China Sea and the Pacific.
- 1669-1774 Ottoman territories in Eastern Europe were lost to Europeans and Russians. Ottoman government weakened, and European economic pressure grew.
- 1761-1800 Hindu Marathas and Sikhs challenged Mughal rule over parts of India. British control of Indian territory expanded to the Ganges River plain.

- 1725-1898 Muslim states and reform movements extend Islamization in West Africa, North Africa and the Sudan, including Abd al-Qadir in Algeria, Uthman dan Fodio in Nigeria, Samori Ture in and Muhammad al-Mahdi in the Sudan. These movements, which include military challenges, oppose British and French political control of these African regions.
- 1830-1882 French invaded and colonized Algeria and Tunisia. British forces occupied Egypt. North African nationalist and religious movement challenged British and French colonial power.
- 1803-1818 Delhi fell to the British in 1803, and British rule was established all over India.
- 1800-1910 Dutch control of the Indonesian islands expanded. Religious reform movements in Sumatra and Java opposed colonial rule. These movements helped spread Islam and Muslim cultural and political influence.
- 1802-1925 Wahhabi Muslim reformers call for returning to a more purist interpretation of Islam, and revolted in Iraq, Syria and Arabia in 1802. Wahhabi influence continued in Arabia, leading to the founding of Saudi Arabia in 1925 by Ibn Saud.
- 1800-1920 Russia and China imposed direct rule on Central Asian Muslim states. Muslim revivalist movements, led by Sufi orders such as the Naqshbandi, opposed colonial rule. Attempts to assimilate Chinese Muslims to Confucianism added to pressure on Muslims from European economic and military power.
- 1917-1949 The Russian and Chinese Revolutions brought anti-religious and communist ideas and strong central governments. Persecution of Muslims and other religious groups brought cultural and religious disaster to those regions. Practice of religion was strongly limited.
- 1900-1912 Britain colonized Nigeria. France conquered Morocco and the Sahara. Italy conquered Libya. European rule contributed to the spread of Islam and the growth of Muslim institutions in these areas.
- 1908-1920 The Ottoman Empire was broken up at the end of World War I, ending 700 years of rule. Many of its territories were already under European colonial rule. Modern Turkey was carved out of Anatolia. The Treaty of Versailles and the League of Nations established French mandates (temporary rule) over Lebanon and Syria, and British mandates over Iraq, Palestine and Jordan. The Jewish Zionist movement gained British support to establish a Jewish state in Palestine.
- 1800-1945 Traditional Muslim educational institutions declined with European political and economic takeover. Islamic *awqaf* (charitable foundations) were taken over by governments. European influence over schools made a sharp division between religious and secular education, and many upper class parents sent their children to European-model schools and missionary schools established by churches in Muslim countries.
- 1900-1948 With the support of the Zionist movement and growing persecution of Jews in Russia and Europe, Jews acquired land and settled in Palestine under the British Mandate. British exited their mandate and Jews established the State of Israel in 1948. Many Muslim and Christian Palestinians lost their land, homes and lives, and became refugees.
- 1900-1938 Nationalist independence movements in Asia and Africa included the growth of Muslim political parties in India, Indonesia, Egypt and in North Africa and China. Efforts to retain Islamic education and preserve

- 1945-1990 Independence movements and war-weakened European colonial powers gain independence for Muslim countries from Central Asia to Africa and Europe. Borders often reflected former colonies. Post-colonial governments were committed to secularization and controlling of Islamic influence, believing that modernization can best be achieved with religion under state control. Muslim movements opposed these views and secular governments.
- 1800-2000 European and American citizens' learn about Islam and Muslim culture in popular media and education. European and American universities opened departments of Islamic and Muslim studies. Books, television, Internet and movies, cultural institutions like museums provide information on Islam. Immigration By 1980, most European and US curriculum include study of Islam and Muslim history. Muslim publications and organizations challenged western misunderstanding of Islam and Muslims.
- 1920-2000 Muslims emigrate to European former colonial powers, the United States, and Latin America, especially after 1945, and in the US, after 1975. African Americans join movements influenced by Islam, and some enter Islam. By 2000, nearly 40% of the American Muslim population of 4-6 million are African American. By 2000, Muslims formed large minorities in France, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy and the United Kingdom. Significant Muslim minorities in western industrialized countries lead to increased participation of Muslims in those societies and the growth of religious, educational, civic and cultural institutions.

Sources:

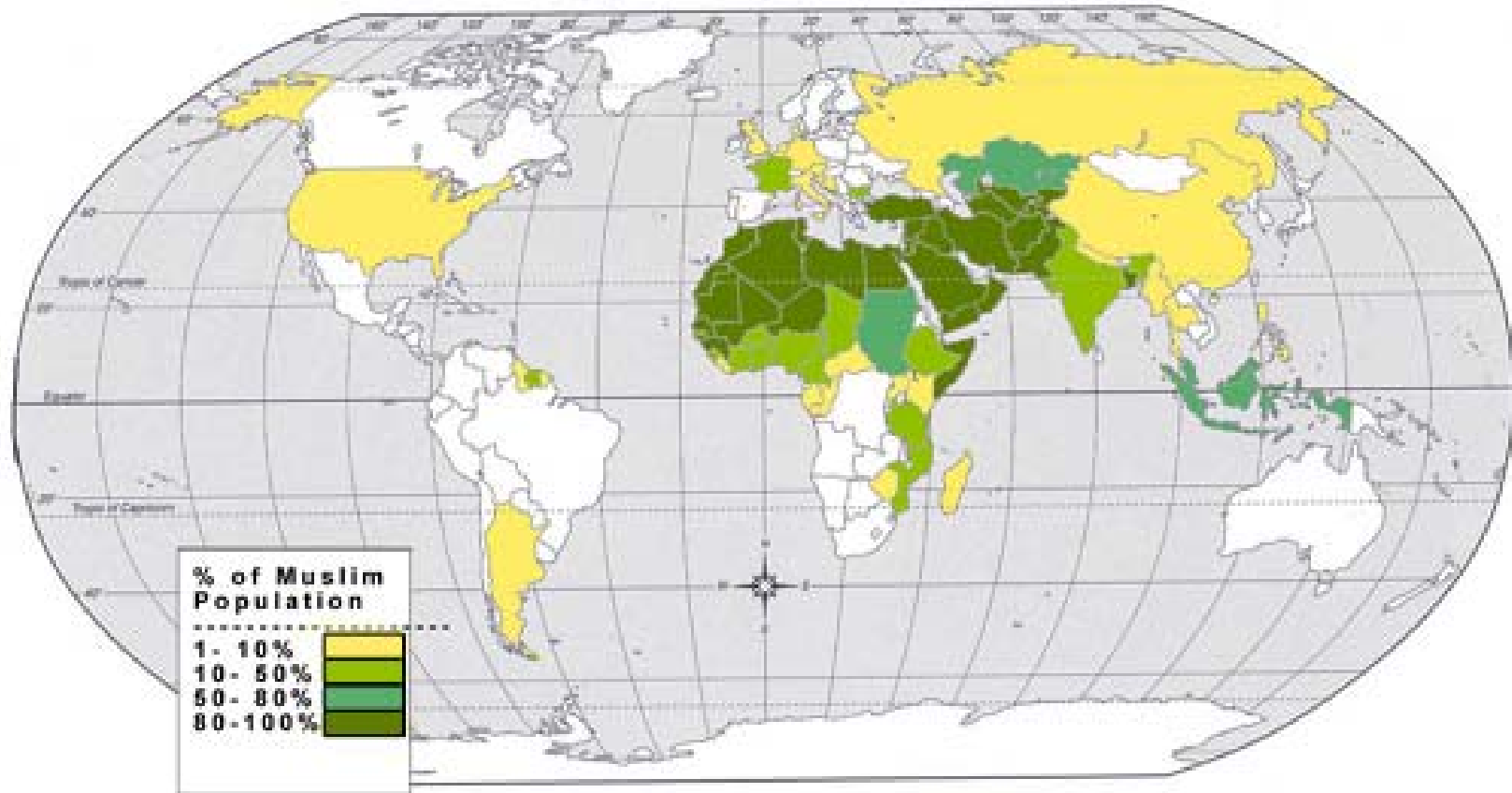
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Handout 1c: Muslim Population Percentage by Country



(Source of date: Guardian Newspapers Ltd. 2001)