

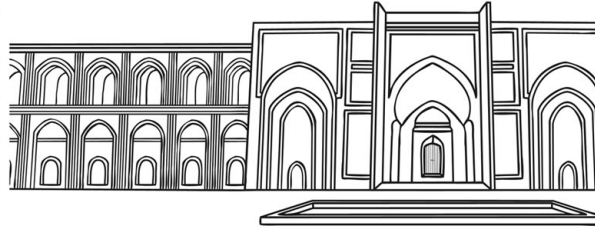
Baghdad Summary

Location

The location of Baghdad was crucial. Its mild climate, easy to defend position and its proximity to both water and established trade routes made Baghdad a great success. Major roads crossed through the city and many traders set up markets around the entrances.

Education

Life in Baghdad was extremely exciting with great advances in maths and science. This led to an atmosphere of learning. The great works of philosophy from Greek scholars like Plato and Aristotle were translated and their ideas openly discussed. The main library in Baghdad was named Bayt al-Hikma, meaning the House of Wisdom. This was where all scientific and mathematical works were stored. Often, books had only one written copy. Libraries stored them so scholars could access them and use them for research. Baghdad became a large, well-educated and multicultural city where people were making advances in medicine, science, astronomy, philosophy and mathematics.



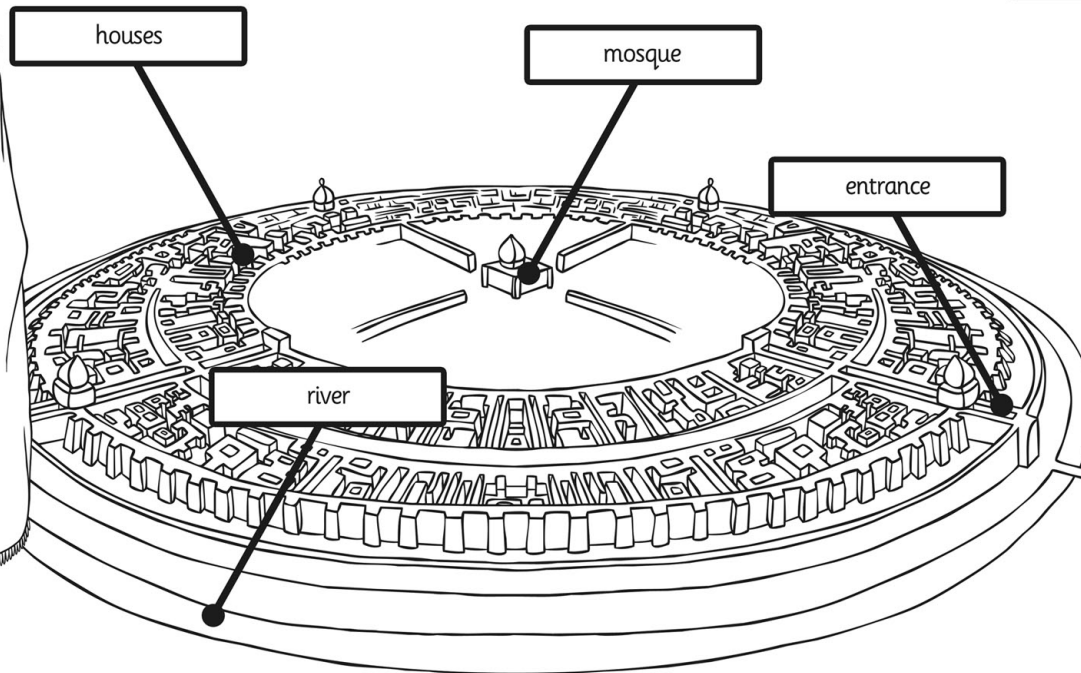
Agriculture

The Golden Age of Islam witnessed a fundamental transformation in agriculture known as the 'Arab Agricultural Revolution'. Muslim engineers adopted the water mill technology used by the Greeks in the lands they conquered. They developed excellent methods of irrigation techniques. This period saw the refinement of sugar production which was transformed into a large-scale industry. It was the Arabs and Berbers who built the first sugar refineries and established sugar plantations.

Trade and Banking

The bustling markets and shops around the mosque contained goods from many places due to Baghdad's position on the Silk Road. Traders from all across the known world flocked to Baghdad to sell their merchandise. Communication between people increased during this period as goods were traded between east and west. Baghdad, at the heart of the route to the east, benefitted from this. Not only this, but ideas too were exchanged through this contact. The continents of Europe, Africa and Asia became international.

Due to widespread trading, a banking system developed which encouraged more people to settle in or close to the city. As the population increased, they spilled out of the round city into the surrounding area, where they settled on the fertile banks of the Euphrates and Tigris rivers.



The City

Baghdad was built in AD 752 as the new capital of the Islamic empire by the second Abbasid caliph, al-Mansur. Following traditional Persian design, it was built in a circle about 1km in diameter, with the mosque and guard headquarters in the centre and the houses around the city walls. It is thought that people led a spiritual existence, with city life centred on the mosque in the heart of the round city.

At the height of its success, there were estimated to be around one million people living in Baghdad.

