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Milestones of World History
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10200 Jefferson Blvd., Culver City, CA 90232

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Printed in Canada

ISBN: 978-0-7825-2802-2

Product Code: NYS196 v3.0

To order: www.socialstudies.com or 800-421-4246

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UNIT 4 Empires and Cultures of Asia

395 to 1641

622
Islam begins to spread.

BCE < > CE

500

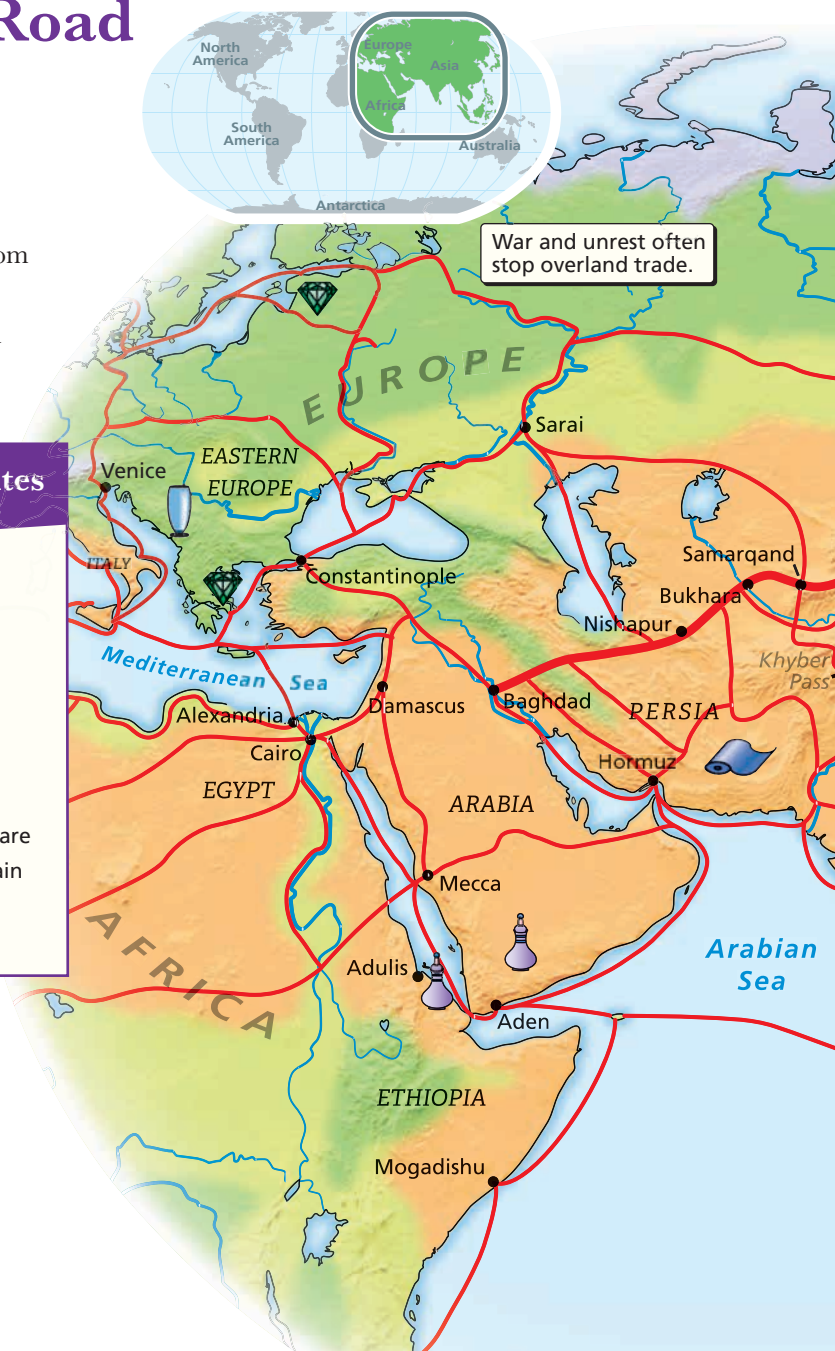
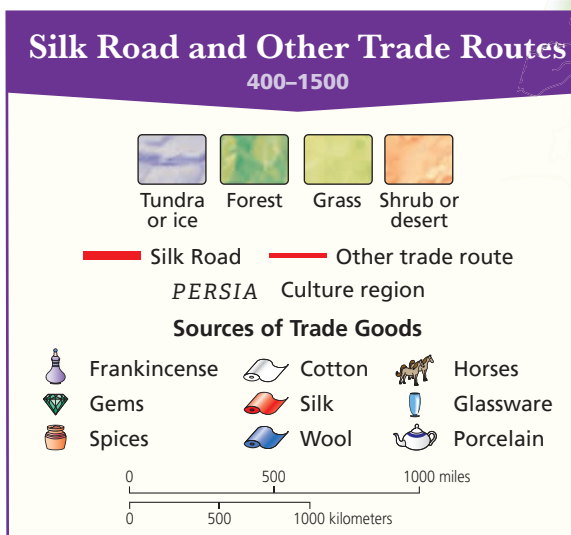
395
Byzantine Empire separates from Western Roman Empire.

By 620
Hindu-Arabic numbers used in India.

Ideas Travel the Silk Road

Between 400 and 1500 CE, cultures of Asia, Africa, and Europe came into closer contact with one another.

- The Silk Road and other trade routes helped link distant areas. Trade and travel increased.
- Traders and armies brought ideas and inventions from one region to another.
- Religions such as Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism linked large regions.



A

From the 700s to the 1400s, the **Arab** world was the center of scientific discovery. Many advances were made in science and medicine, as shown by this text on the human eye.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

B

The digits 0–9 that are used by people all over the world today are called Hindu-Arabic numerals. This system was developed in India over hundreds of years and then spread westward.

800–1200
Khmer kingdoms
flourish in Southeast Asia.

1054
Eastern and Western Christianity split into two separate churches.

1398
Mongol ruler Timur invades Delhi.

1453
Ottoman Turks conquer Byzantine Empire.

1000

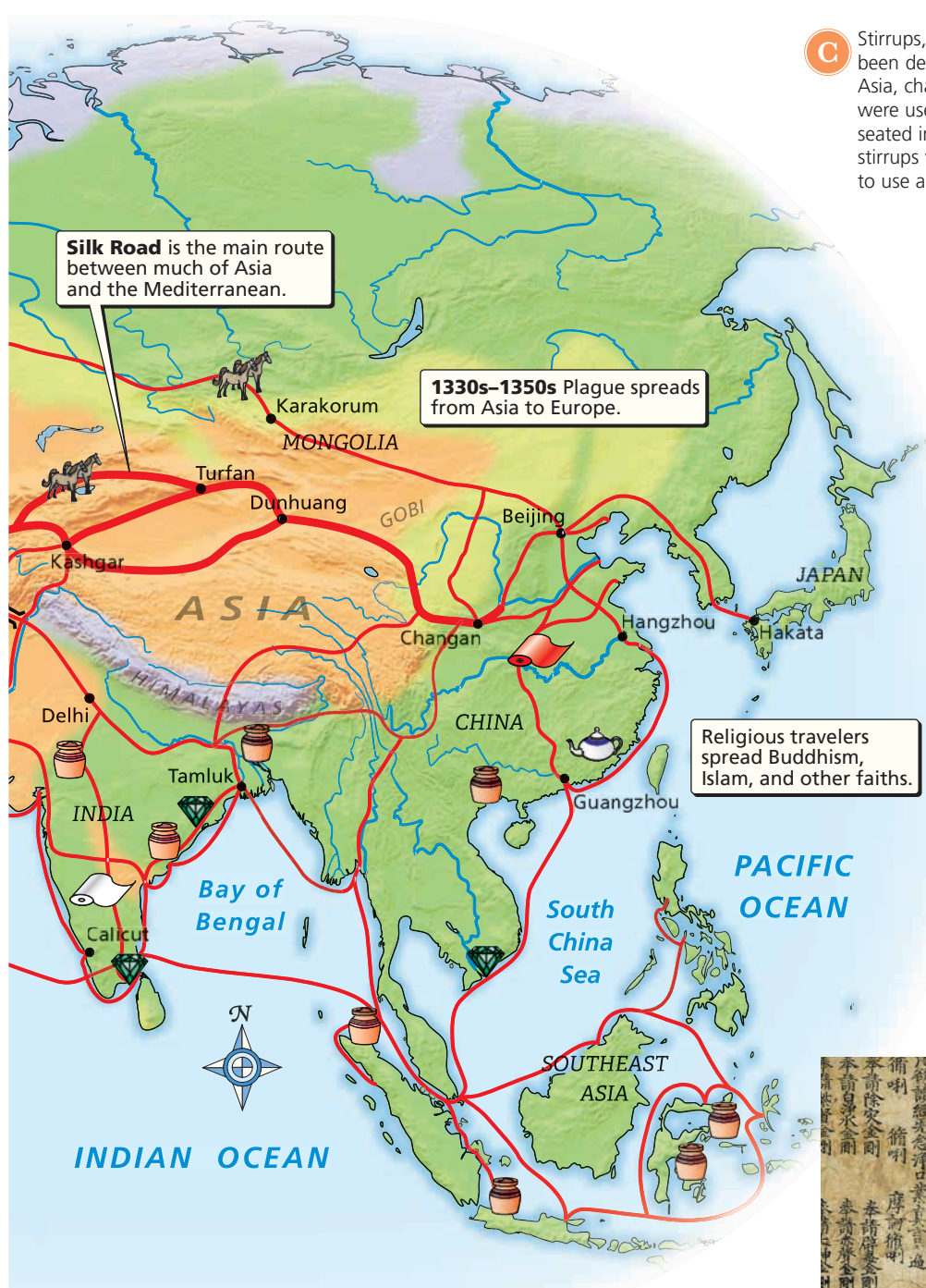
1500

751
Chinese expansion into Islamic lands is halted.

1180–1603
Japan is engulfed by civil wars.

1279–1368
Mongols conquer and rule China.

1640
Japan expels European traders.



C Stirrups, thought to have been developed in Central Asia, changed how horses were used in war. A rider seated in a saddle with stirrups was better able to use a weapon.



D Chinese sailors were the first to use magnetic compasses. Unlike navigation by the stars, navigation by a compass could be used any time of day in any weather conditions and allowed for more accurate navigation.

E Printing, invented in China, allowed many copies to be produced quickly, making information more widely available. Printing used paper, also invented in China, which was much cheaper than other writing materials.





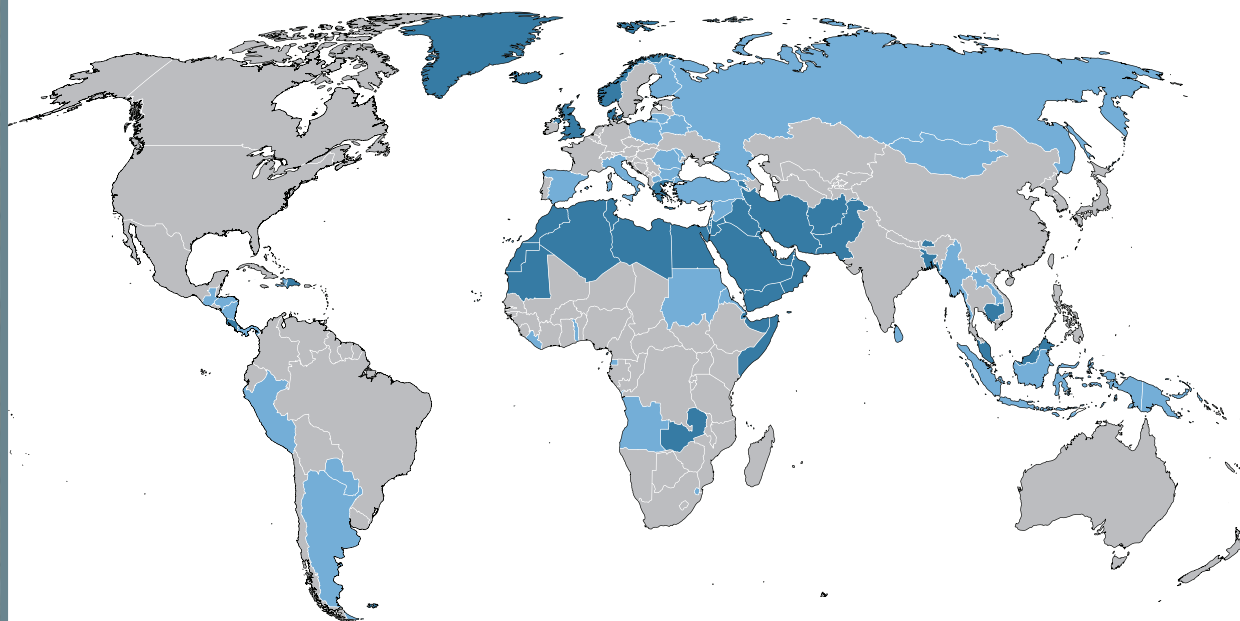
HISTORICAL ISSUES TODAY

What role should religion play in shaping society?

A religion is an organized set of shared beliefs, values, and rituals. Religion has helped people throughout history make sense of harsh realities like floods, fires, or sudden death, and it provides a sense of purpose, destiny, and meaning. Religion has also been central in many conflicts, invasions, and wars.

While not every nation has an official religion, the personal religious beliefs of powerful leaders can influence their policymaking. For example, while the U.S. Constitution enforces a separation of church and state, almost all U.S. presidents have been Christian, and many states have laws with religious bases.

What role should religion play in the world today? There are many perspectives on this issue. Here are two of them.



Forty-three countries have an official religion. Of those countries, 27 name Islam as their official religion, 13 name Christianity, 2 name Buddhism, and 1 names Judaism.

Religion in Government

- Official state religion
- Preferred religion
- No official or preferred religion

Religion is a solid foundation for society, and it benefits the individual and the larger community.

- Religion is good for society. It provides stability, which is especially important in times of dramatic change.
- Religion is good for the individual. It helps each person know what is expected of them and provides rules for how they can live a good life.
- The vast majority of people are religious. It is unrealistic to believe that decisionmakers always separate their personal beliefs from their professional actions, so religion has undoubtedly influenced many world events and laws.
- Being part of a religious community can advance child health and decrease mortality. For example, in the African nation of Mozambique, those mothers who were better connected to the Protestant religion had more access to health information and care, and their children suffered from less malnutrition.

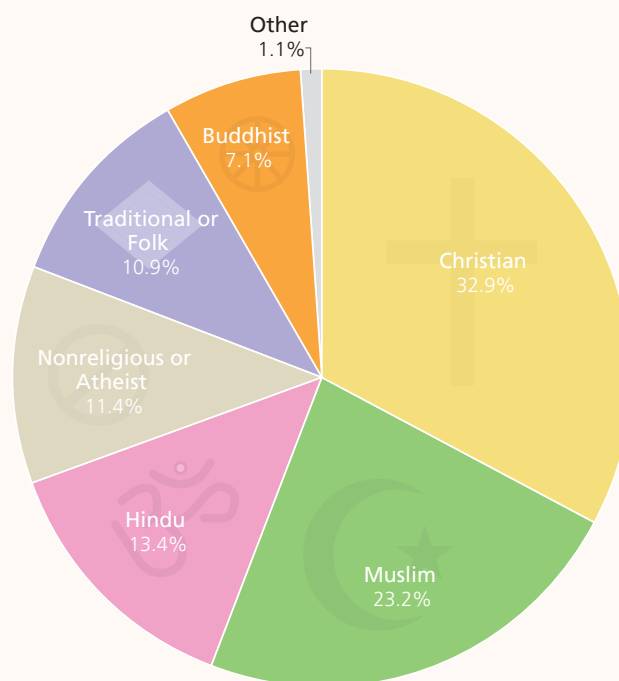


Religious centers are important gathering places in communities. Here, people gather at a Buddhist temple in Thailand. Thailand is 95 percent Buddhist.

Religion divides people and promotes discrimination and bigotry.

- Religion is a holdover from ancient times, and it has not kept pace with advances in modern society. When religious beliefs are incompatible with scientific truths, it can hinder the advancement of society.
- Instead of bringing people together, religion divides them. It has been used to justify wars and the mistreatment of people throughout history.
- Laws grounded in religion wrongfully restrict the rights of nonbelievers. This includes the restriction of civil rights for members of many minority groups.

Major Religions 2017



With 2.2 billion followers, Christianity is the dominant religion in the world today. Islam follows with 1.6 billion followers. By 2050, it is estimated that there will be roughly the same number of Christians and Muslims.