

1 The Middle Ages

The Middle Ages began with the Fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476 A.D. It ended with the conquest of Constantinople and the fall of the Eastern Roman Empire (the Byzantine Empire) in 1453. We divide this period into the **Early Middle Ages** (5th–11th centuries), the **High Middle Ages** (11th–13th centuries) and the **Late Middle Ages** (13th–15th centuries).

In **Western Europe**, the Germanic kingdoms replaced the Roman Empire. Wars and invasions created instability during the Early and High Middle Ages. Monarchs granted the nobility power and lands in exchange for military aid. In the Late Middle Ages, political stability increased. Urban economic development provided **hereditary monarchs** with more resources, so they began to limit the nobility's power.

In **Eastern Europe**, the main power was the Byzantine Empire. It declined when Islam and the Muslim Empire emerged in the 7th century. In the High Middle Ages, the Muslim world fragmented and the **Crusades**¹ began.

In the Early Middle Ages there was an **economic** crisis. Trade in the cities declined and people migrated to the countryside. **Subsistence agriculture**² became the main activity. Many farmers became the **serfs**³ of the high nobility. The lower nobility became the **vassals** of these lords. They defended the **fiefdoms**⁴ in return for protection. In the Late Middle Ages, the invasions ended and people returned to the cities. As a result, the **bourgeoisie**⁵ gained influence and the urban population increased.

In Western Europe, the invaders eventually converted to Christianity. The **church** became powerful and religious wars were frequent. Religion greatly influenced art. The **Romanesque** and **Gothic** styles emerged. At the end of this period, a renewed interest in classical antiquity led to the Renaissance. The start of the Renaissance marked the transition to the Early Modern Age.

¹**Crusades**: expeditions to recover Jerusalem, the holy city of Christianity, from the Muslims.

²**subsistence agriculture**: farming that produces enough to feed the local population.

³**serf**: person who had to work on a noble's land and couldn't leave.

⁴**fiefdom**: lands a lord controlled.

⁵**bourgeoisie**: middle class.



Church of San Juan Bautista, Baños de Cerrato, Palencia

CLIL activities

1 In your notebook, copy these in chronological order.

- growth of cities
- migration to the countryside
- growth in the importance of Christianity
- the Renaissance
- the end of the Western Roman Empire
- the end of invasions in Europe

2 Which empire lost importance during the Middle Ages?

3 Listen to the four people. Match them to these positions in Medieval society.

- | | |
|-----------|-------------|
| a. serf | c. merchant |
| b. vassal | d. monarch |

4 What helped bring economic stability in the Late Middle Ages?

5 Discuss with a classmate why you think religion had so much influence on art at this time. Use these words.

converted church wealth commissioned

2 Invasions

Between the 3rd and 10th centuries, there were **mass migrations**¹ in Europe. First the **Germanic** peoples migrated, then the **Slavs** and **Magyars** from the east, the **Vikings** from the north and the **Muslims** from the south.

When the Western Roman Empire fell, Germanic peoples had already established kingdoms there. The **Ostrogoths** inhabited the Italian Peninsula and the **Suebi** occupied the north of the Iberian Peninsula. The **Visigoths** settled in southern Gaul, but the **Franks** conquered them, becoming the most powerful of these peoples.

The main activity of these **rural warlike**² **tribes** was farming. The Germanic **nobility** took control of the land and so became the dominant social group. Monarchs ruled with the help of an advisory council. There were frequent conflicts among the nobles, creating **political instability**.

The **Slavs** established small kingdoms from the **6th century** onwards in Central and Eastern Europe. The **Vikings** originated from Denmark and the Scandinavian Peninsula. They conquered parts of England and France in the **9th and 10th centuries**, and also colonised Iceland and Greenland. In the **9th century** the **Magyars** migrated towards Ukraine, settling in Pannonia and establishing the **Kingdom of Hungary**.

¹**mass migration:** people moving in large numbers to live in a new place.

²**warlike:** violent, regularly involved in conflict.



CLIL activities

- 6 Look at the map. In your notebook write which present-day European states each of the Germanic kingdoms corresponds to.
- 7 Listen to the historian talking about Viking longboats and take notes. Then write a short description of a *drakker* and explain what the Vikings used their ships for.
- 8 Discuss with a classmate why you think there were so many mass migrations in this period.
People migrated because (of)...
- 9 How do you think life changed for the inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula after the Romans left and the Visigoths ruled?
less/more stability danger culture

3 The Byzantine Empire

The Eastern Roman Empire resisted the Germanic invasions and lasted for a thousand years. It was called the **Byzantine Empire**, after the Ancient Greek city of Byzantium. Emperor Constantine the Great made Byzantium the capital of the empire in 330 A.D, renaming it Constantinople.

The Byzantine Empire reached its maximum size during **Justinian's reign** (527–565 A.D.). Under Justinian, the Byzantines defeated the Vandals in **North Africa** and the Ostrogoths on the **Italian Peninsula**. They also defeated the Visigoths in the south of the Iberian Peninsula, **founding**¹ the province of **Spania**.

From the 7th–10th centuries, the Byzantine Empire **declined**² as it lost lands to other peoples. The **Neo-Persian Empire** attacked it from the east, **draining**³ Byzantine resources. In the 7th century, the **Muslims** conquered over half the empire. The Byzantines then adopted defensive strategies against invasions from the **Slavs in the north** and **Muslims in the south**.

The Byzantine Empire had a centralised **political system**. The emperor, or **basileus**, held absolute power: he ruled through his government and powerful army. The empire had provinces called **themes**. A governor, or **stratego**, governed each one. Justinian established the **Codex Justinianus**, a law code for all of the empire.

¹**found:** establish.

²**decline:** become less powerful.

³**drain:** use until very little remains.



CLIL activities

- 10 Answer the questions in your notebook.
 - a. Who were Constantine the Great and Justinian?
 - b. Which peoples did the Byzantines conquer to expand their empire?
 - c. Which peoples caused the decline of the Byzantine Empire?
- 11 Listen and write the important laws from the *Codex Justinianus* that the students talk about.
- 12 In a small group, discuss why the Byzantines invaded the lands shown on the map. *They invaded ... so they could...*
- 13 What's the modern name for Constantinople?

The economy and society

The main economic activity was agriculture. The Byzantines farmed large estates called **latifundia**. Urban **artisans** made valuable products. Trade was very important, as the main routes between Europe, Asia and Africa crossed the empire. As a result, cities in the Byzantine Empire remained vital, unlike those in Western Europe.

The most powerful **social group** consisted of the **basileus** and the **landowning** high clergy and nobility below him. Next were the **artisans, traders, soldiers** and **free farmers**. The least powerful social group were the **serfs** and **slaves**.

Culture and religion

The Byzantine Empire was an important **cultural centre** because it was the crossroads between the Christian and Muslim worlds. Until **Justinian**, it conserved the **Roman legacy**¹ and **lifestyle**. Later, the Byzantines adopted Hellenic culture, making **Greek** the official language.

The emperor controlled the **church**, which **persecuted heretics**². The church also had to face two major conflicts.

- Between the 8th and 9th centuries, the **Iconoclastic Wars** occurred. Some Byzantine emperors **prohibited the worship of religious icons**, but they eventually reversed this decision.
- In the 11th century, the **East-West Schism** took place. This was the result of conflict between the Pope and the Patriarch of Constantinople. This conflict led to the division of the Christian church in 1054.

Art and architecture

Byzantine art was incredibly decorative and included **mosaics**³, **paintings, icons** and **sculptures**. **Flat bright colours** and **rigid figures facing forwards** were its typical characteristics. Common **themes** in Byzantine art included **religion** and the **glorification of the emperor**. Byzantine **icons** portrayed holy figures with a **halo** on a **gold background**.

Byzantine **architecture** featured **semi-circular arches** and large **domes** on **pedentives**⁴ with thick **buttresses**⁵. Architects used the **Greek cross** and **basilica floor plans**⁶. The best example is the **Hagia Sophia Basilica** from Justinian's reign.

¹**legacy**: benefit that comes from the past.

²**heretic**: person who doesn't follow official religious doctrine.

³**mosaic**: design made of small coloured pieces of stone or tiles.

⁴**pedentive**: architectural feature supporting a dome.

⁵**buttress**: pillar attached to a wall.

⁶**basilica floor plan**: base shaped like a basilica; rectangular.



Virgin of Vladimir

CLIL activities

14 In your notebook, describe the religious conflicts that occurred during the Byzantine Empire.

15 Listen to the documentary and explain the importance of these dates in the history of the Hagia Sophia.

360 A.D. 415 A.D. 537 A.D. 1453 1935 2020

16 Look at the photo and tell a classmate what features of Byzantine art it shows.

It portrays... They have...

The artist used...

17 Why do you think the Byzantines built large, highly decorated churches but the Germanic peoples built small, simple churches?

4 Islam: political and economic developments

In the 7th century, Muhammad founded the religion of Islam on the **Arabian Peninsula**. Previously, nomadic tribes inhabited this region. They were **polytheists**¹ who farmed livestock and traded in groups called **caravans**. Their capital, **Mecca**, was the centre of these trade routes and it was also their place of worship.

In **610 A.D.**, **Muhammad**, a trader from Mecca, claimed the Angel Gabriel had appeared with news of a new **monotheistic**² religion, Islam. Muhammad's enemies expelled him and his followers from Mecca in **622 A.D.**, so they **moved to Medina**. This event, called **Hegira**, marks the first year of the Islamic calendar. Muhammad became successful in Medina and formed an army, conquering Mecca in 630 A.D. When he died in 632 A.D., most of the Arab tribes were under his control.

Islam means 'submission'. The holy book of Islam is the Koran. It contains the **Five Pillars of Islam** that all Muslims must obey. These are: **belief in a single God**, Allah, and his prophet Muhammad; **praying** five times a day, facing Mecca; giving **charity** to the poor; **fasting**³ in the month of Ramadan; and going on a **pilgrimage**⁴ to **Mecca** at least once.

Muhammad's successors, the **caliphs**, governed a series of empires called **caliphates**. The main ones were the Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates. The Muslim Empire extended from the Iberian Peninsula to India. Its rapid expansion was due to the motivation of the **jihad**⁵; the **decline of the neighbouring empires**; and Muslim **diplomacy**⁶.

¹**polytheist**: person who believes in many gods.

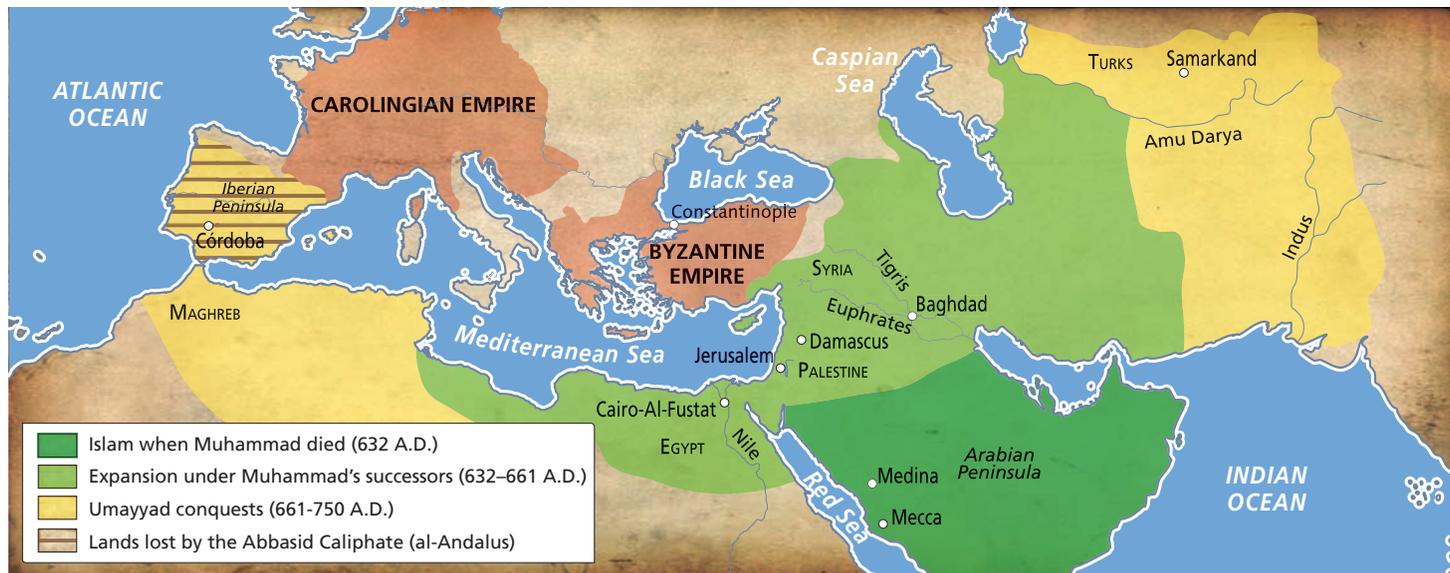
²**monotheistic**: believing in one god.

³**fasting**: not eating for a period of time.

⁴**pilgrimage**: journey to a holy place to show religious devotion.

⁵**jihad**: war against people viewed as the enemies of Islam.

⁶**diplomacy**: skill in negotiating.



CLIL activities

18 In your notebook complete these sentences. Use the map to help you.

- Islam began in...
- Under Muhammad's successors, Islam extended to...
- During the Umayyad conquests...

19 Listen and answer the questions.

- What and where is the Kaaba?
- Why's the Black Stone important?

20 In a small group, discuss why diplomacy is important to make a country prosperous.

If a country has good relations with other countries...

The political organisation and economy of the caliphate

The **caliph** ruled with the aid of officials. **Viziers**¹ were in charge of tax collection and the government. Over time they became very powerful and the caliphs became symbolic rulers. **Emirs**, or *walis*, governed the provinces.

The Arabs were **livestock farmers**. They kept goats and sheep and used camels and horses for transport. **Agriculture** was less important on the Arabian Peninsula, as only the **oases**² and coastal regions were fertile. The Arabs made efficient use of water, developing **agricultural irrigation systems**, which they exported to the lands they conquered. These included **waterwheels** to extract water, **wells** and **reservoirs** to store it, and **dykes**³ to transport it. The Arabs introduced new techniques for preserving food, such as **pickling** with oil and vinegar. They also brought new crops to Europe and the Mediterranean from the Orient, such as **rice** and **cotton**.

In the cities, **craftwork** was important, but **trade** was the main source of wealth: the caliphate became the crossroads of trade routes between Europe, Africa and Asia. To facilitate trade, all the lands in the caliphate began to use the **same currencies**: the **gold dinar** and the **silver dirham**.

¹**vizier**: minister.

²**oasis**: place in the desert that has a source of water.

³**dyke**: small channel.



CLIL activities

- 21 In your notebook, explain the roles of these people in the caliphate.
 - a. caliph
 - b. vizier
 - c. emir
- 22 Which agricultural advances did the Muslims spread? Which of these do we still use today?
- 23 Listen to the podcast about the Silk Road. Make a list of the technologies, ideas and other things that spread along it.
- 24 Look at this list of products and the routes on the map. Write which raw materials these products used and where those raw materials came from.
 - a. cloth
 - b. perfume
 - c. jewellery
 - d. weapons.
 - e. furniture
 - f. salted food
- 25 Discuss with a classmate who you think lived better: people in the caliphate or people in the Christian kingdoms.

5 Islam: society and culture

Society consisted of diverse ethnic groups and religions: Muslims, Jews and Christians. There were three main social groups.

- The **landowning aristocracy controlled** politics, agriculture and trade. Families of **Arab** origin held the main political positions. Below them were the **important families from the conquered lands** who converted to Islam.
- The next group consisted of traders, artisans and landowning farmers. It included Muslims and **dhimmi**¹.
- At the bottom were the **slaves**. They were of Turkish, Slav and African origin. If they converted to Islam, they gained their freedom because Muslims couldn't legally be slaves.

Muslim society was **patriarchal**². Women had to obey their father or husband. They did domestic tasks but could also work in some professions. Some upper-class women became famous intellectuals, such as Fatima al-Fihri, who founded the world's first university. Despite these social differences, men and women were equal before Allah and had the same religious obligations.

Islam had an important cultural impact.

- It **spread**³ knowledge and technology **across the three known continents**. Examples include chess, the compass and paper.
- It **collected, conserved and spread classical knowledge**, founding great libraries.

Arabic became the common language: every Muslim had to learn it to read the Koran. Famous literary works in Arabic include *One thousand and one nights*. The Muslims made great advances in **astronomy** and **mathematics**. In **medicine**, new techniques emerged. **Avicenna** compiled all the medical knowledge of the time in his work *The canon of medicine*. This was the main source of reference for centuries. The most important author was **Averroes**. He made **Aristotle's philosophy** popular in the 12th century.

¹**dhimmi:** non-Muslims living in Islamic lands who could practise their religion in exchange for paying a special tax.

²**patriarchal:** men hold all the power and authority.

³**spread:** extend to other places.



Page from *The canon of medicine*

CLIL activities

- 26 In your notebook, describe the position of these people in Muslim society.
- | | |
|---------------------|-----------|
| a. Arab aristocrats | c. slaves |
| b. dhimmi | d. women |
- 27 Listen and answer the questions about developments in medicine.
- What improvements did the Muslims make?
 - Which ones are still medical practice today?
- 28 Match the developments to **astronomy, mathematics or philosophy**.
- The Muslims introduced Arabic numerals and the decimal system.
 - Averroes translated Aristotle's works.
 - They produced tables to chart the movements of the Sun and the Moon.
- 29 Research a story from *One thousand and one nights* and write a summary to present to the class.

How people lived in Muslim cities

Muslim cities were important due to commercial prosperity.

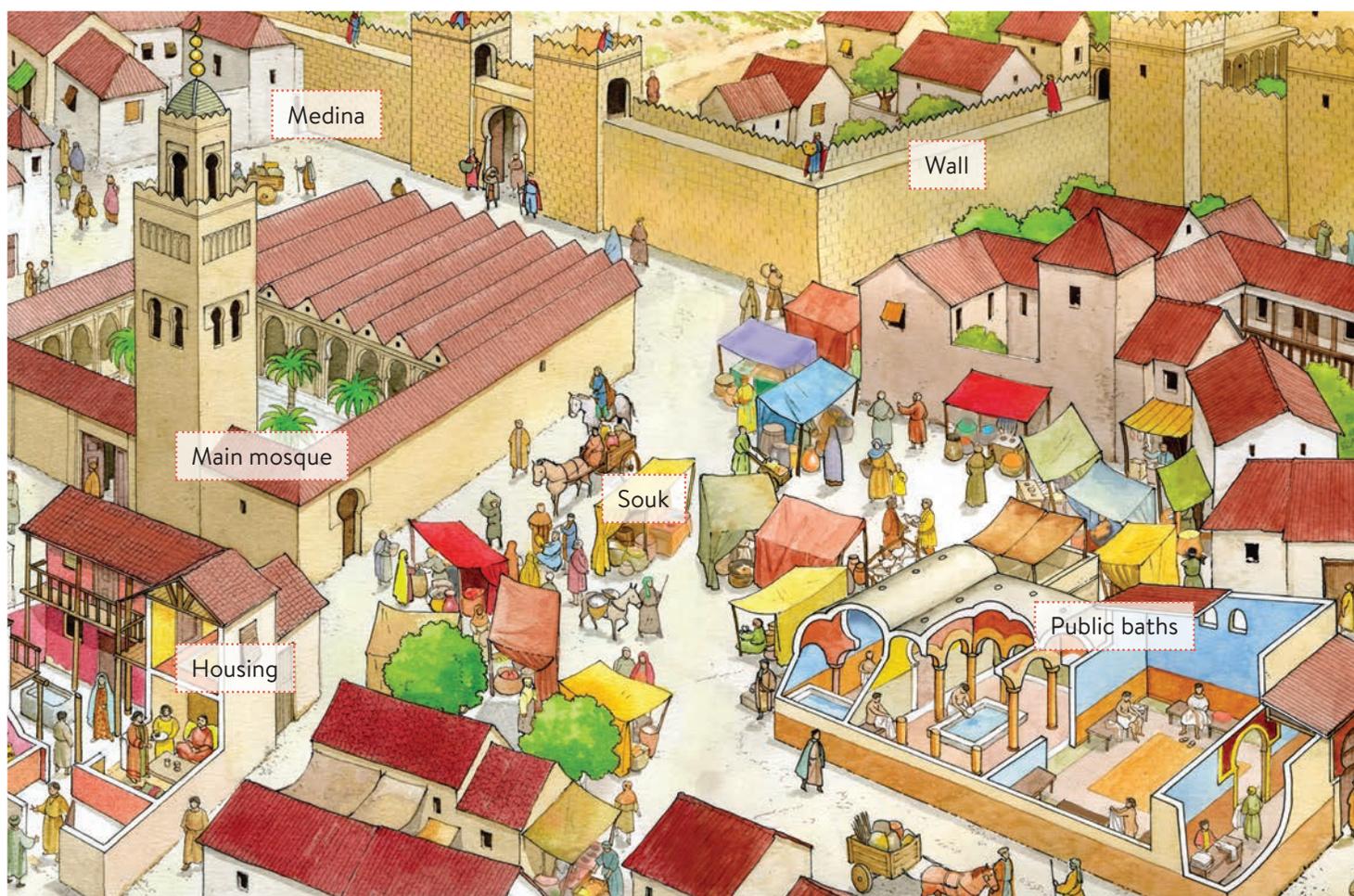
The **medina** was the walled city centre. It contained **religious buildings**, such as the main mosque and the **madrasahs**, schools for studying the Koran. **Military buildings** included the **citadel** (*alcazaba*), a fortified palace which soldiers protected. **Civil buildings** included the **souk**¹, the **corn exchange** (*alhóndiga*) and **public baths**. The **residential area** had an irregular layout with narrow streets and a **sewerage system**². Houses consisted of rooms with small windows around a **courtyard** containing a pool.

Outside the medina there were **cemeteries** and **neighbourhoods** called **arrabales**, where the poor lived. Certain economic activities, such as **tanning**³, were also located there.

¹**souk**: market.

²**sewerage system**: pipes that remove human waste.

³**tanning**: treating animal skins to produce leather.



CLIL activities

- 30 In your notebook, match these places to the descriptions: *alcazaba*, *alhóndiga*, *arrabal*.
- a poor area in the suburbs of a city
 - a military building, castle or citadel
 - a type of market for agricultural produce
- 31 Listen to the students talking about a Muslim city. What mistakes do they make?

- 32 With a classmate, discuss why you think Muslim cities were more important than other cities.

trade prosperous advanced population

- 33 Write a short story about a day in the life of a Muslim merchant. Include what activities he did and where he did them.

He lived/worked in the ... He usually/often/never...

6 Islamic art

Decorative design was very important in Muslim art because the Koran prohibited the portrayal of human or holy figures. Therefore, artists used **calligraphy** (Arabic writing), **arabesque and foliate ornaments**¹ and **lattice-work**² in painting, sculpture, mosaics and ceramics.

Muslim architecture used cheap materials, such as **brick**, covered **tiles** and rich decoration. The Muslims adopted features from different cultures: **semi-circular arches** and **coloured keystones** from the Romans, **golden domes** and **vaults**³ from the Byzantines, **lobed arches** from the East and **horseshoe arches** from the Visigoths.

The main Muslim buildings were the **mosques**. The Muslims also built **palaces**, such as the Umayyad Palace in Damascus, and **mausoleums**⁴, such as the Taj Mahal in India.

¹**arabesque and foliate ornament:** organic shape.

²**lattice-work:** geometric shapes.

³**vault:** roof in the form of an arch.

⁴**mausoleum:** monumental tomb.

DECORATIVE FEATURES



Arabesque

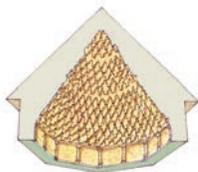


Calligraphy



Lattice-work

VAULTS AND DOMES



Muqarnas vault



Caliphal ribbed vault



Segmented dome

ARCHES



Stilted semi-circular arches



Lobed arch



Horseshoe arches with coloured keystones

CLIL activities

34 Answer the questions in your notebook.

- Why doesn't Muslim art include representations of people?
- How did Muslims make cheap building materials more attractive?
- Which cultures did the Muslims take elements of their architecture from?

35 Listen to the tour of the Great Mosque of Córdoba and explain what architectural elements these words refer to.

- a. *mihrab* c. *qibla* d. minaret

36 Decorate a page of your notebook using typical decorative features from Muslim art. Describe it to a classmate.

