

## TOPIC: BYZANTINE EMPIRE

### I. Byzantine Empire (c. 500-1453 AD)

A) After the western area of the Roman Empire was conquered by invading Germanic tribes in the year 476 AD, the eastern portion of the Roman Empire survived and became known as the Byzantine Empire.

B) Key features and achievements of the Byzantine Empire :

1) The people of the Byzantine Empire were mainly Greek in language and culture.

2) Constantinople- The capital city of the Byzantine Empire. It was a great location for trade because it was located along major waterways and it was a crossroads of (link between) Europe and Asia.

3) Eastern Orthodox Religion- This was the branch of Christianity that was practiced by the people of the Byzantine Empire (the Hagia Sophia was a famous church in Constantinople).

4) Justinian Code- Written system of laws created by Emperor Justinian that was later adopted by various European civilizations. It was largely based on laws of the Roman Empire).

5) Preservation of Greek and Roman Culture- The Byzantines preserved (saved) and passed on important texts created by the Greeks and Romans.

C) Cultural Diffusion- The Byzantine Empire had a major influence on the neighboring civilization of Russia. Through contact with the Byzantine Empire, Russia received:

1) The Eastern Orthodox Religion (which is still practiced in Russia today)

2) The Cyrillic Alphabet (writing system still used in Russia today)

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## TOPIC: THE GOLDEN AGE OF ISLAM

### I. Islam (ALSO DISCUSSED EARLIER IN PACKET)

A) Monotheistic religion that believes in one God (called Allah).

B) Followers of Islam are called Muslims.

C) Koran (Qu'ran)- The Holy Book of Islam.

D) Five Pillars- Religious and moral/ethical duties and obligations that are required of all Muslims (i.e.- Make a pilgrimage to Mecca, pray five times daily, etc.).

E) Muhammad (lived 570-632 AD)

1) The founder of Islam who was born in Mecca (the holiest city of Islam).

2) He is believed by Muslims to be the last of God's prophets (messengers to the people).

### II. Golden Age of Islam (c. 700-1200 AD)

A) After Muhammad- Shortly after the death of Muhammad, Muslim armies swept out of the Arabian peninsula and conquered vast areas of land that included much of the Middle East, the northern coast of Africa, and even southern Spain.

B) During this period, the Islamic (or Muslim) world experienced a Golden Age- There were amazing achievements in math, science, medicine, philosophy, and art. Some of the key achievements of this period include:

1) The creation of medical encyclopedias.

2) Improvements in math (especially algebra).

3) Artwork that included calligraphy (beautiful writing), woolen carpets, and textiles.

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## TOPIC: THE MIDDLE AGES

### **I. Introduction to the Middle Ages (400-1400 AD)**

A) The Middle Ages is the period of time in Europe after the collapse of the Roman Empire and before the Renaissance.

#### B) Feudalism

1) Political system of the Middle Ages in which kings throughout Europe gave land away to nobles in return for their loyalty and military service.

2) Nobles that received land from the king had to serve as knights (warriors on horseback) and fight when necessary. Knights had to follow chivalry (a code of behavior that stressed loyalty and bravery).

3) Feudalism is considered to be a decentralized political system because kings gave away much of their power to nobles, who each controlled their own local areas.

4) In the feudal system, land was the basis of wealth and power. Those with more land were considered to be more wealthy and powerful.

5) Feudalism brought social stability, order, and structure to the Middle Ages.

#### C) Manorialism

1) During the Middle Ages, most people lived on manors (areas of land owned by a noble).

2) Each manor had homes, farmland, artisans, water, and serfs (peasants that could not leave the land and who performed farm labor for the noble).

3) Since each manor was mostly self-sufficient (provided for its own needs), trade decreased during the Middle Ages.

D) Religion- During the Middle Ages, the Roman Catholic Church (especially the Pope) was very wealthy and influential in Western Europe.

### **II. Crusades (1100-1300)**

A) The Crusades were the religious wars of the Middle Ages in which Christians from Europe fought to regain control of the Holy Land from Muslims. The Holy Land is a sacred area of the Middle East that includes the city of Jerusalem.

#### B) Causes of (reasons for) the Crusades:

1) European Christians believed they would be forgiven for their sins if they fought for God.

2) European Christians believed the Holy Land should not be controlled by Muslims.

3) Many poor Europeans wanted to escape from feudalism.

4) Many Europeans hoped to gain wealth from the Middle East.

#### C) Effects (results) of the Crusades:

1) After years of fighting, trade between Europe and the Middle East increased (Italian cities such as Venice gained control over much of this trade since they had a central location in the Mediterranean Sea).

2) Europeans learned about the many achievements that Muslims had made during their Golden Age (i.e.- achievements in math, science, medicine, philosophy, and art).

3) Feudalism in Europe began to decline as many nobles had been killed and many serfs had escaped.

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## TOPIC: GOLDEN AGE OF CHINA (THE TANG AND SONG DYNASTIES)

### **I. Golden Age of China: The Tang and Song Dynasties (600s-1200s)**

A) The Golden Age of China took place during the Tang and Song Dynasties. Like all Golden Ages, this was a period of tremendous achievements in the arts, science, math, and literature.

B) Key achievements of the Tang and Song Dynasties:

- 1) The Chinese invented gunpowder (which was later adopted by civilizations in Europe and the Middle East).
- 2) The Chinese invented the compass (which improved sailing/navigation by sea).
- 3) The Chinese invented block printing (a method of printing in which ink is placed on carved wooden blocks that are pressed onto paper).
- 4) The Chinese created works of art using porcelain (beautiful clay).

C) Other key facts about the Tang and Song Dynasties:

- 1) The Chinese conducted long distance trade with other civilizations on land (using the Silk Road) and by sea (from their coastal port city of Canton).
- 2) Cultural Diffusion- Buddhism became popular in China during this period as the ideas of this religion entered China due to trade using the Silk Road.
- 3) The Chinese continued to use civil service exams to select highly qualified people to work in their government.