The Arabian Peninsula and Surrounding Lands
Geography Skills
Analyze the maps in “Setting the Stage”. Then answer the following questions and fill out the map as directed.

1. Locate the continents that surround the Arabian Peninsula and label them on your map.

2. Locate the body of water Arab traders crossed to reach Europe. Label this body of water.

3. Label the other oceans and seas on your map.

4. What cities on the Arabian Peninsula do you think would have been important trading centers? On your map, circle each one. Why do you think these cities became important trading centers?

5. How would the route of a trader traveling from Makkah to Cairo differ from that of a trader traveling from Makkah to Baghdad?

6. Lightly shade the areas on your map that were under Islamic rule by the year 750. After spreading along the northern coast of Africa, Muslim armies crossed the Strait of Gibraltar where Africa and Europe nearly meet. After conquering that peninsula, they were likely slowed by what physical feature?

7. According to the map, which city on the Arabian Peninsula is closest to Cairo? How do you think this might have affected the relationship between these two cities?
8. Locate the physical feature that formed the southern boundary of Islamic lands in Africa. Label this feature. Why do you think the empire stopped here?

Critical Thinking
Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

9. How might the location of the Arabian Peninsula have contributed to the rapid spread of Islam?

10. Based on what you have learned about the religion, economy, and physical geography of medieval Europe, why do you think the Muslims were not able to conquer most of that continent?

11. How did the location of the Arabian Peninsula help the Muslims conquer territory beyond the Arabian Peninsula?
How did Islam originate and spread?

Muhammad began the religion of Islam in the 7th century. Look at the map showing the modern-day distribution of the followers of Islam, called Muslims. Then answer the following questions:

- Which pattern on the map represents the highest concentrations of Muslims? The lowest?

- In what regions of the world do the most Muslims live? The fewest?

- Based on this map, in what region of the world do you think the Islamic faith may have originated? Why?

Muslim Population, 2006
Key Content Terms
As you complete the Reading Notes, use these terms in your answers.

- Islam
- polytheism
- monotheism
- boycott
- Muhammad
- prophet
- Muslim
- siege

Section 2

1. Describe Makkah around the time of Muhammad’s birth. Use the following terms and underline them in your description: desert, prosperous, trading city, merchants, religious center.

2. Why was the Ka’bah built, and how was it used at the time of Muhammad’s birth?

3. Explain the ties that most Arabs shared during this time. Use the following terms and underline them in your explanation: government, culture, language.
If your class is doing the activity for this lesson, complete all the Reading Notes for each section. (Note: If your class is not doing the activity, skip the first question of each section.)

Section 3
1. Walk around the room to find the four words or terms that best match the part of the story you just heard. Write the English translations of the Arabic words here.

2. Write a four- to five-sentence summary of Muhammad’s early life.
Section 4
1. Walk around the room to find the four words or terms that best match the part of the story you just heard. Write the English translations of the Arabic words here.

2. Where was Muhammad, and what was he doing, when the angel Gabriel told him, “You are the messenger of God”?

3. What does Muslim mean?

4. What is the holy book of Islam called? What does it contain?

Section 5
1. Walk around the room to find the four words or terms that best match the part of the story you just heard. Write the English translations of the Arabic words here.

2. What did Muhammad teach when he preached to the Makkans?

3. Why did Makkah’s leaders try to prevent the spread of Muhammad’s message?

4. Why is Jerusalem a holy city for Muslims?
Section 6
1. Walk around the room to find the four words or terms that best match the part of the story you just heard. Write the English translations of the Arabic words here.

2. On the timeline below, place each of the following events. Make sure you include the date for each event. One example is done for you.
   - Muhammad and his followers leave on the hijrah.
   - Muhammad develops a new Muslim community in Madinah.
   - Fighting breaks out between the Muslims and Makkans.
   - Makkans make a truce with the Muslims.
   - Muhammad’s army captures Makkah; he rededicates the Ka’bah to Allah.
   - Muhammad delivers his Last Sermon.

619 C.E. Muhammad’s uncle Abu Talib dies and Muslims come under more attacks in Makkah.

600 C.E. 650 C.E.
Suppose that you are an Arab merchant living in the late 7th century. You have just traveled to Makkah and Madinah for business, and have met Muhammad and his followers. On a separate sheet of paper, write a short letter to a family member or a friend telling about your experience. In your letter, be sure to explain who Muhammad is and what he is teaching.