

LO: To find out about the House of Wisdom and the Siege of Baghdad.

The House of Wisdom

Bayt Al-Hikma, or 'The House of Wisdom', was built in AD 830 in Baghdad. It was founded by Caliph Harun Al-Rashid. He encouraged learning and invited scholars of different faiths to his court and treated them with great respect.

The House of Wisdom was a library and research facility which collected and translated scientific writing from many languages including Persian, Indian, Ancient Greek and Roman texts.

Have a look at the video link 'House of Wisdom' for more information.

Scholars from the House of Wisdom would travel widely to collect texts from all over the world. They would bring them back to translate them into Arabic. By the second half of the 9th century, the House of Wisdom stored more books than anywhere else in the world and was attracting the most brilliant Arab and Persian minds to study there.

A lot of original research happened. For example, the famous mathematician Al-Khwarizmi worked there and is famous for his contributions to the development of algebra.



On the right is a 13th century Arabic translation of *Materia Medica*, an ancient book of medicine.

On the left is a page from Al-Khwarizmi's *al-Jabr*.



The Siege of Baghdad, 1258

Mongols from Asia attacked Islamic lands. They destroyed the House of Wisdom, burned Baghdad and killed thousands of people. They threw millions of books into the river which turned the water black with ink! The city never recovered its former glory, but the ideas lived on...

TASK:

I would like you to create an image of the Siege of Baghdad and explain what happened there. You could draw, paint use lego or do anything that clearly shows what happened there!