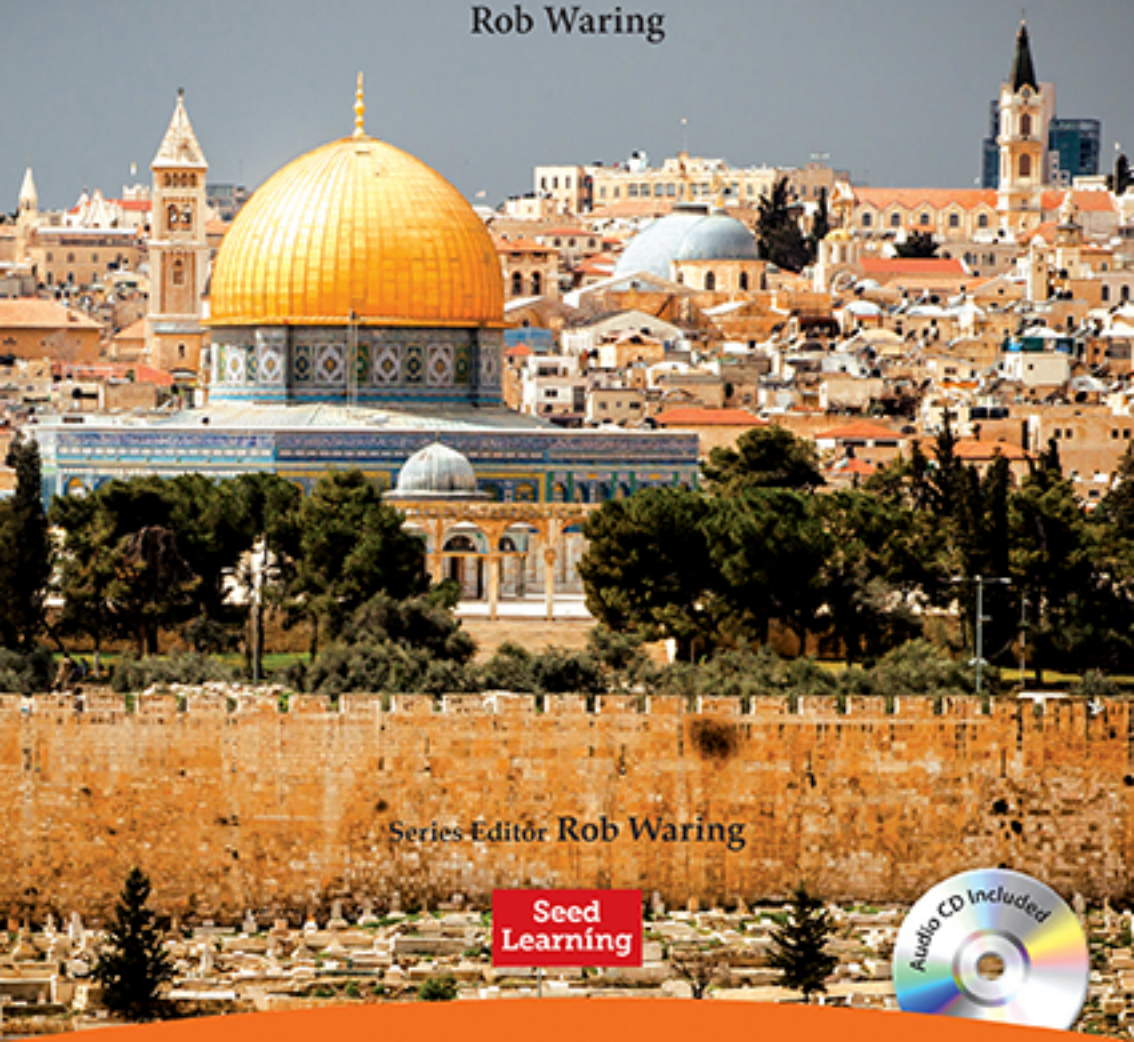


WORLD HISTORY READERS

Level 2 - ②

Wars in the Middle East

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Seed
Learning



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Conflicts

We often hear stories about fighting in the Middle East. The Arabs and Jews. Israel and Palestine. ISIS or ISIL. The Shia and the Sunni.

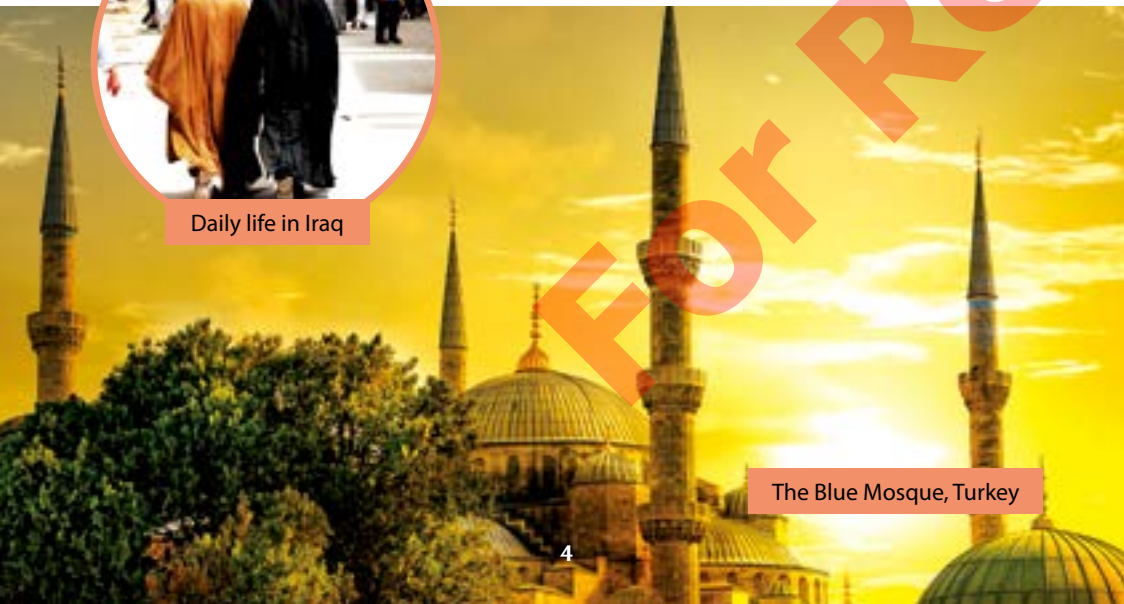
Why are there conflicts? Is there a solution?



A message saying
"The Prophet Muhammad"



Daily life in Iraq



The Blue Mosque, Turkey

Two Groups

After the founder of Islam, Muhammad, died in 632 AD, two groups of Muslims who follow Islam had different ideas about who should lead the religion — the Shia and the Sunni Muslims.



Iraqi men



Iraqi women
voting



Muslims praying in Mecca, Saudi Arabia

الله

Allah – God, written in Arabic



The burial place of Abu Bakr

The Sunni Muslims, who make up about 85% of the Muslim population, believe that Muhammad's trusted friend Abu Bakr should have been the next leader.

The Shias believe Muhammad's cousin Ali ibn Abi Talib was chosen to lead by Allah, their God. The Shia Muslims make up about 10-15% of the world's Muslims.



Shrine of Ali ibn Abi Talib

Since the 7th century, the two groups have disagreed and do not consider the others "true Muslims."

Same and Different Beliefs

Both Shias and Sunnis share many of the same religious practices and many basic beliefs. However, they differ in their system of laws and their religious belief systems.



Sunni regions in the Middle East

Sunnis are in the majority in Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. The Shias are in the majority in Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, and Palestine.



People praying in Kirkuk, Iraq



Koran, the holy book of Islam



A signpost



A Syrian soldier



Life in Palestine

The Sunni people are concerned with power of Allah in the physical world.

The Shias think more about the rewards in the afterlife and believe more in sacrifice—even to the point of death.



In the past 50 years, tensions have grown between the Sunni and Shia populations. Tensions have also grown because foreigners are now on ancient Middle Eastern land.



A child playing in a destroyed city



US airplanes bombing a city in Syria

Comprehension Questions

1. The tension in the Middle East started...
 - (a) after Muhammad died.
 - (b) in 1916.
 - (c) in the 1970s.
 - (d) recently.
2. What is the holy book of Islam called?
 - (a) Sunni
 - (b) Shia
 - (c) Bible
 - (d) Koran
3. Sunni people concern themselves with...
 - (a) Allah in this world.
 - (b) sacrifice.
 - (c) rewards.
 - (d) fighting.
4. Allah means...
 - (a) belief.
 - (b) religion.
 - (c) God.
 - (d) Shia.
5. Sunni and Shia people have the same laws and basic beliefs.
 - (a) True
 - (b) False
 - (c) They have the same beliefs but not laws.
 - (d) They have the same laws but not beliefs.
6. How did some people respond after the USA and others entered the Middle East?
 - (a) They were happy.
 - (b) They bombed cities in those countries.
 - (c) They made a deal.
 - (d) They calmed tensions.
7. Which is NOT true about ISIL and Al Qaeda?
 - (a) Most people dislike them.
 - (b) They do not want foreigners in their homeland.
 - (c) They are non-violent.
 - (d) They want a new Islamic state.
8. In May 1948...
 - (a) the Arab-Israeli war began.
 - (b) Lord Balfour offered support for to the Jewish people.
 - (c) the Ottomans left Israel.
 - (d) Israel became a country.
9. Who controls Jerusalem today?
 - (a) The international community
 - (b) Jews
 - (c) Arabs
 - (d) Different groups
10. The Six Day War...
 - (a) was in 1967.
 - (b) expanded Israel's lands.
 - (c) didn't solve the problems.
 - (d) All of the above

Glossary

- **afterlife** the life some people believe begins after death
- **conflict** fighting or disagreement
- **divide** to separate; to break up
- **in a majority** most of; the biggest group
- **Islam** a religion based on belief in one God and the teachings of Muhammad
- **ISIL** Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant
- **Muslim** someone whose religion is Islam
- **Arab** a person from Western Asia or North Africa who speaks Arabic
- **religious** having a strong belief in a religion
- **reward** something good that you get because you have done something good
- **sacrifice** the act of giving up something
- **Shia** a member of the second largest religious movement in Islam
- **solve** to find the answer or fix a problem
- **Sunni** a member of the largest religious movement in Islam
- **tension** a feeling of fear or anger between people or countries
- **violent** with aggressive force, often physical

Key 1. (a) 2. (d) 3. (a) 4. (c) 5. (b) 6. (b) 7. (c) 8. (d) 9. (d) 10. (d)