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## Islamic Art and Culture

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# Pre-visit Activities: Islamic Art and Culture

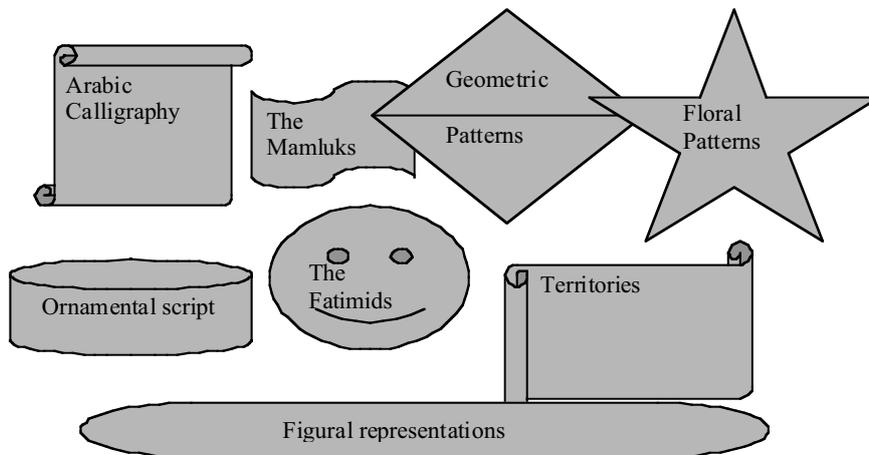
## d ISLAMIC ART AND CULTURE

### a Pre-reading class discussion about Islamic Culture and Islamic Art

In groups talk about the following:

- 1 What do you know about Islamic Art?
- 2 Have you ever been to an Islamic art gallery? If yes, when and where?
- 3 Look at the pictures your teacher will give you about Islamic art. How do you feel about them? Can you describe any of them?
- 4 You are going to read an article about Islamic Art in Egypt. What do you expect to find out ?

### b Look at the following words and put them in the correct column.



Words I / we know	Words I / we are not sure of	Words I / we would like to know

# Pre-visit Activities: Islamic Art and Culture

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## c Reading 'Islamic Art in Egypt'

Egypt was conquered by the Arabs in the 7th Century CE. Arabs introduced Islam to Egypt. Their ideas about art were very different from those in Christian Egypt. Therefore, few traditions from ancient or Christian Egypt were used. However, Islamic Art was influenced by many ideas and styles from other civilizations. The main influences were from Mesopotamia (modern Iraq), which contained the main Islamic centres.

During the reign of the Fatimids in the 10th Century, the Ayyubids in the 12th Century and the Ottomans in the 16th Century, new fashions and techniques were introduced. Although there were a lot of political problems during those periods, it was possible to travel widely in the Muslim territories, which encouraged the wide scale of interchange in ideas.

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**Islamic Art and Decoration consist of three main forms:**



### **A** Arabic Calligraphy

Arabic is written from right to left, like other Semitic Scripts or Mandarin. Arabic calligraphy is the art of beautiful or elegant handwriting.

In the Islamic World, calligraphy has traditionally been highly respected because it was used in the copying of the Quran (the Holy Book for Muslims) and that raised Arabic calligraphy to the status of art. Arabic calligraphy was used on all kinds of objects - objects of everyday use as well as entire wall surfaces, mosques' furniture, the interiors and exteriors of mosques, tombs and al-Kabaa, the most famous sanctuary of Islam.

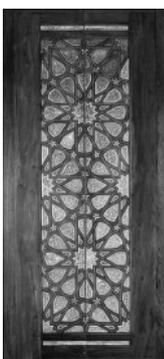
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# Pre-visit Activities: Islamic Art and Culture



**B** **Arabesques**, which means floral or plant-like designs.

Vegetal (floral patterns) were widely used in Islamic Art, as Islam does not encourage the representation of figures, especially in religious settings like mosques. In Islam the drawing of God, Angels and all Prophets is absolutely forbidden.



**C** **Geometrical designs**, using a limited number of geometric shapes in many different ways.

Using geometry in Islamic Art can be explained as representing harmony in our world; the same geometry can be found in the shapes of a snowflake, in a wasp's nest and the arrangement of the petals in a flower.

The three elements can be found in one object.

**Read the text about Islamic Art in Egypt and tick True / False in the table below**

	True / False
1 Islamic Art reflects the Islamic faith.	
2 Arabic is written from left to right.	
3 Quran is the Holy Book of Muslims.	
4 Using figural representations is forbidden in mosques	
5 Calligraphy, Geometric and Arabesque can be found in one object	
6 Visiting Islamic galleries can help people to understand each other's culture	
7 Islamic Art was not influenced by other civilizations	
8 Calligraphy was used on all kinds of objects	

# Visit Activities: Islamic Art and Culture

## Visit Activity A

Look at the six pictures. Choose six of the descriptions below which match and describe the six pictures. Match the descriptions to the pictures.



**Object 1**

Description Letter \_\_\_\_



**Object 2**

Description Letter \_\_\_\_



**Object 3**

Description Letter \_\_\_\_



**Object 4**

Description Letter \_\_\_\_



**Object 5**

Description Letter \_\_\_\_



**Object 6**

Description Letter \_\_\_\_

## Descriptions

- a A clear blue glass cup with lines around the top.
- b A carved animal bone chess piece in the form of a kneeling archer.
- c A reddish brown slip pottery bowl.
- d A complete glass mug with a single handle, made from an opaque dark blue glass, with white and yellow glass mosaic fragments in the wall.
- e A bone gaming piece that looks like a doubled headed horse.
- f A clear green glass cup in perfect condition.
- g A burnished basin inscribed in Arabic from the Mamluk period.
- h A large glass weight, with top handle above (damaged), clear dark blue green.

# Visit Activities: Islamic Art and Culture

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## Visit Activity B: Find Me and Label Me!

### The Talking Objects (1)

#### Object A

My number in the Petrie Museum is 74848

And this is my picture. Can you find me?



Have you found me? Yes / No.  
If No, please ask for help.

If Yes, Where have you found me?  
Gallery 1 or Gallery 2

#### Complete these sentences about me:

- 1 You are made of \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 You were written in Arabic for \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 You were found in \_\_\_\_\_ (place)
- 4 You were found at \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 I think people used you for \_\_\_\_\_

#### Now select an object you like / dislike.

Draw it below then describe it and say why you like / dislike it.



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# Visit Activities: Islamic Art and Culture

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## Visit Activity B: Find Me and Label Me!

### Object B

My number in the Petrie Museum is 58942  
And this is my picture. Can you find me?



Have you found me? Yes / No.  
If No, please ask for help.

If Yes, Where have you found me?  
Gallery 1 or Gallery 2

### Complete these sentences about me:

- 1 You are made of \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 You are made in the form of \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 You are carved on \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 You were made in \_\_\_\_\_ (period)
- 5 You were found at \_\_\_\_\_

### Now select an object you like / dislike.

Draw it below then describe it and say why you like / dislike it.



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# Visit Activities: Islamic Art and Culture

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## Visit Activity B: Find Me and Label Me!

### Object C

My number in the Petrie Museum is 22120  
And this is my picture. Can you find me?



Have you found me? Yes / No.  
If No, please ask for help.

If Yes, Where have you found me?  
Gallery 1 or Gallery 2?

### Complete these sentences about me:

- 1 You are made of \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 You were found in \_\_\_\_\_ condition
- 3 You were found at \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 You were made in \_\_\_\_\_ (period)
- 5 You were used for \_\_\_\_\_

### Now select an object you like / dislike.

Draw it below then describe it and say why you like / dislike it.



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# Post-visit Activities: Islamic Art and Culture

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## The Talking Objects (2)

### Activity 1



Hello,  
do you remember us?  
I believe we met at the Petrie  
Museum last week. Did you  
enjoy the visit?

Text letter \_\_\_\_\_

**1**



Today we are going to tell  
you more about

Text letter \_\_\_\_\_

**2**



But first things first, you  
need to read the three texts on the  
next page and match them to  
our pictures

Text letter \_\_\_\_\_

**3**

# Post-visit Activities: Islamic Art and Culture

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## **Text A**

I was found in Egypt I am made of copper so I belong to the metal work family. Muslim artisans crafted beautiful boxes, basins, bowls, and jugs and decorated them with arabesques and Arabic Calligraphy and other highly stylized plant forms specializing also in brass and bronze, luxuriously inlaid with gold, silver and copper. The beautifully shaped metal wares used at meals and banquets were regarded as a sign of family's prosperity. Bronze household goods were prized for their durability and natural beauty. Apart from a variety of different bronzes, alloys based on copper were particularly widely found.

## **Text B**

I was found in Egypt but I do not know in which part. I am made of bone. I belong to the Fatimid Period which means that I am about 1000 years old. In the museum I was classified as a gaming piece. In the museum I am described as a bone gaming piece in the form of a doubled headed horse. I am carved on both sides with heads in profile. It is thought that I am a chess piece. Researchers say that is a known fact that chess was introduced to Europe via Muslim people travelling from Baghdad to Cordoba (modern Spain) in the year 822 CE.

## **Text C**

I am made of glass and I belong to the modern period (1900CE). I was described as a class cup, pushed up base, clear cobalt blue with many lines around the top. I was found in a perfect condition. This is what historians wrote about my group. At the time of the Arab conquest in the seventh century CE, glass making had flourished in Egypt and western Asia for more than two millennia and glass makers in those regions went about their business despite the political, social and religious changes which were taking place around them.

# Post-visit Activities: Islamic Art and Culture

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## Activity 2

Read the texts again carefully and answer the questions:

1 What is the most modern object? What is it made of?

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2 Which object belongs to the Fatimid Period? Can you describe it?

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3 What is the object in text A made of? What was it used for?

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4 Where is the calligraphy on the copper bowl?

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## Activity 3

Explain the following sentences in your own words

a \_\_\_\_\_ were regarded as a sign of family prosperity. (Text A)

b I was classified as \_\_\_\_\_ . (Text B)

c \_\_\_\_\_ went about their business \_\_\_\_\_ . (Text C)

# Post-visit Activities: Islamic Art and Culture

## Language work: Passive 3 (was offered... / were given... etc)

### We use the passive when:

- we do not know who or what caused the action, or
- when we do not think that it is important, or
- when we do not want to mention it

### Look at the examples:

#### Example 1

**A** Somebody found these objects in 1892. (*active*)

**B** The objects were found in 1892. (*passive*)

#### Example 2

**A** Somebody cleans the museum every day. (*active*)

**B** The museum is cleaned every day. (*passive*)

### How do we form the passive? Look at the table below

The active form	What happens?
1 Somebody <i>built</i> the house in 1935.	<p>1 First we start with the object (the house).</p> <p>2 Then we look at the verb. If it is in the past we use verb 'to be' which is 'was' in this case, because the house is single.</p> <p>3 After that we use the past participle from the verb 'build' which is 'built' because it is an irregular verb.</p> <p>4 Finally, we continue the rest of the sentence as it is.</p> <p>Let us apply the rule now:</p> <p style="text-align: center;"> <b>1</b>      <b>2</b>      <b>3</b>      <b>4</b>            The house   was   built   in 1935.         </p>

# Post-visit Activities: Islamic Art and Culture

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**Work in pairs.**

Try to find more examples from the texts on page 10 and add them to the table below. The first one has been done for you.

<b>Text A</b>	<b>Text B</b>	<b>Text C</b>
1 I was found in Egypt		