The Umayyads and Abbasids
• The Umayyad Caliphate was founded in 661 by Mu‘awiya the governor or the Syrian province during Ali’s reign.

• Mu‘awiya contested Ali’s right to rule, arguing that Ali was elected by Uthman’s killers.
• To consolidate Syrian authority Mu‘awiya moved the capital of the Empire to Damascus.

• Loosely controlled provincial territory, allowing local rulers a large degree of autonomy.
• Before his death in 680 Mu‘awiya elects his son Yazid as his successor.
• Since the previous Caliphs had been voted into power, this act angered many powerful political families within the empire.
• Ali’s son Hussein was encouraged by Shi’a supporters to challenge Yazid’s right to rule.
The Second Arab Civil War

• After Mu’awiya’s death in 680 Hussein set out to Kufa to meet up with Shi’a rebels.

• In October Hussein’s caravan was intercepted outside of Karbala by Yazid’s forces and Hussein was killed.
• Opposition to Yazid’s rule continued grow and upon his death in 683 a struggle for succession ensued.

• Al-Zubayr with Shi’a and Qay support battled Marwan a prominent political player under Mu‘awiya.
• In 684 Marwan defeated Al-Zubayr and became the new Caliph.

• He was succeeded by his son Al-Malik in 685.

• Al-Malik continued to battle Al-Zubayr and his forces for control over the empire.
End of the Second Civil War

• In 691 Al-Malik brokers and agreement with Qaysi leadership promising them esteemed positions in the military and in the Umayyad gov’t for their loyalty.

• In 692 Al-Malik defeated Al- Zubayr and ended the second civil war.
Al- Malik

• Streamlined the tax system using introducing Greek and Persian models.
• Standardized the arab coin (Denars in the west and Dirhams in the east)
• Centralized government authority
• Made Arabic the official language for administration in the empire
Al- Malik

• Al-Malik also maintain a balance between Yamani and Qaysi groups in the Umayyad military and Government.

• Al-Malik was succeed by his son Al-Walid in 705
Al-Walid (705-716)

- Al-Walid continued Al-Malik’s political programs and maintained a balance of power between the Yamans and the Qays.
- Under Al-Walid the Empire reached its greatest territorial expansion.
- The empire stretched from the Sind in the East to Spain in the West.
Decline of the Umayyads

• Hisham was the last son of Al-Malik to rule. His reign lasted from 724-743.

• Under his rule there were three major threats to the empire
Threats to the Empire

• The Khazar Turks from Southern Russia invaded the Caucuses 730-738
• Berber Revolt in North Africa 739-742
• Khurasani province is invaded by Turks from central Asia 732-738
These invasions and rebellions exhaust Syrian military forces, leaving the Empire vulnerable to attack.

In 743 Hisham dies and His son Yazid feuds with Al-Walid II for control of the empire.
• Al-Walid II is assasinated in 744 and Yazid III occupies the throne for six months before he dies.

• In 755 the governor of the Armenian province Marwan captured Damascus with the help of Qay supporters.
Problems for Marwan II

- Marwan II ruled from 744-750
- He drove Yamani groups out of the capital, a moved that alienated them politically.
- Also, since he wasn’t a member of the ruling branch of the Umayyad family his rule was not widely accepted.
Feuding erupts

• Yamani groups opposed Marwan’s rule from the beginning.

• After a series of Yamani rebellions in Syria Marwan resorted to bloody repression of Yamani groups.
• Iraqi Qays supported a member of the Alid family for Caliph and Abbasid groups revolted in Khurasan.
• Yamani forces continued to rebel in Syria and Iraq
• Marwan defeats combined rebellion forces in a decisive battle in Kufa in 748. However, his military forces are severely weakened.
Meanwhile Abu Muslim leads an Abbasid rebellion in Khurasan capturing the provincial capital and driving out the Syrian Governor.

Abu Muslim becomes the new governor of Khurasan and sends his forces west to challenge Umayyad authority in Iraq.
• In 749 Khurasani forces capture Kufa and elects Abu Al-Abbas the new Caliph
• Al-Abbas takes the title of Al-Saffah
• In 750 Khurasani forces capture Damascus. Marwan II flees and is later killed in Egypt.
Reasons for Abbasid Success

• Gained support of the Muslim community in Khurasan
• Many Muslims believed the Umayyads had abandoned simple life of previous Caliphs by surrounding themselves with wealth.
• Shia movement fueled the Abbasid takeover.
Baghdad

- In 762 the Caliph Al-Mansur relocated the capital from Kufa to Baghdad.
- The site is strategically located on a main route between Syria, Egypt, and Iran.
- The city quickly developed into a great commercial center for conducting international trade.
Abbasid Central Gov’t

- Arab caste supremacy is swept away and universal equality for all Muslims is embraced.
- Arab privileges in the military are abolished.
- Abbasids allow for representation from Khurasani Persians, Christians, Jews, Shi’a groups and Arabs.
Abbasid Bureaucracy

• Under the Abbasid rule the Islamic bureaucracy was extended.
• Three types of bureaus developed.
• Chancery - Records and correspondences
• Bureaus of tax collection
• Bureaus to pay calipal expenses (armies, courts, pensions)
Provincial Gov’t

- While the central government acted as the nerve center for the Caliphate the provincial governments varied in their relationship to the empire.
- Directly controlled provinces had a governor appointed by the Caliph who split power with a Treasurer and a Judiciary.
- Also Provincial governors were not allowed long terms in office.
Provincial Gov’t

• **Indirectly Ruled** were usually further away from the capital and more difficult to control.

• In these territories the Caliph did not appoint a governor, but supported the local leadership.

• Indirectly ruled territories had more autonomy.
The Abbasid Decline

- By the mid 9th century the Abbasids had lost control over almost all of its Provinces. Distance hampered efforts to move armies and control local administrators.
- Most subjects retained local loyalties. Shi'i dissenters were particularly troublesome, while slave and peasant risings sapped empire strength.
- Mongol invasions in the 13th century ended the very weakened state. Despite the political decline, Islamic civilization reached new cultural heights, and Islam expanded widely in the Afro-Asian world through conquest and peaceful conversion.
Questions

• What caused the second Arab civil war?
• What political reforms were made under the reign of Al-Malik and why were they important.
• What factors led to the end of the Umayyad Caliphate?
• What role did Shi’a groups have in the Abbasid revolution?
Questions

• How did the Abbasid government differ from that of the Umayyads?

• What led to the decline of the Abbasids?

• What similarities and differences can you identify in the spread of Islam to India, Anatolia, West Africa, and Spain?
The Impact of the Christian Crusades

• West European Christian knights in 1096 invaded Muslim territory to capture the biblical Holy Land. They established small, rival kingdoms that were not a threat to the more powerful surrounding Muslim leaders.

• Most were recaptured near the close of the 12th century by Muslims reunited under Saladin. The last fell in 1291.

• The Crusades had an important impact upon the Christian world through intensifying the existing European borrowing from the more sophisticated technology, architecture, medicine, mathematics, science, and general culture of Muslim civilization.
The Crusades

• Europeans recovered much Greek learning lost after the fall of Rome.

• Italian merchants remained in Islamic centers after the Crusader defeat and were far more important carriers of Islamic advanced knowledge than the Christian warriors.