MAIN IDEAS

1. **Government** The Umayyads created a strong Muslim kingdom, al-Andalus, on the Iberian Peninsula.

2. **Geography** Córdoba, the capital of al-Andalus, became a thriving economic and cultural center under the Umayyads.

3. **Culture** Al-Andalus enjoyed a flowering of culture and learning in the 1000s and 1100s.

TAKING NOTES

**Reading Skill:** Identifying Issues and Problems

Learning how people responded to problems in history can help identify solutions to today’s problems. Use a chart like the one below to note the issues and problems that Abd al-Rahman III faced when he came to power and the ways he responded to them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues and Problems</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal revolts</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Threats from North Africa</td>
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Minbar This minbar, where Muslim religious leaders preached, was made by craftworkers in Córdoba.

CALIFORNIA STANDARDS

7.2.4 Discuss the expansion of Muslim rule through military conquests and treaties, emphasizing the cultural blending within Muslim civilization and the spread and acceptance of Islam and the Arabic language.

7.2.5 Describe the growth of cities and the establishment of trade routes among Asia, Africa, and Europe, the products and inventions that traveled along these routes (e.g., spices, textiles, paper, steel, new crops), and the role of merchants in Arab society.

7.9.7 Describe the Golden Age of cooperation between Jews and Muslims in medieval Spain that promoted creativity in art, literature, and science, including how that cooperation was terminated by the religious persecution of individuals and groups (e.g., the Spanish Inquisition and the expulsion of Jews and Muslims from Spain in 1492).
Muslim Rule in Spain

Build on What You Know Only Abd al-Rahman escaped the Abbasid massacre of Umayyad leaders in 750. He fled to the Iberian Peninsula. There he began to build a kingdom that would match the Abbasid Empire in culture and wealth.

The Return of the Umayyads

ESSENTIAL QUESTION How did the Umayyads create a strong Muslim kingdom on the Iberian Peninsula?

When Abd al-Rahman arrived in Spain, he found a divided land. Various Muslim factions fought for control. However, no single group held on to power for very long. Abd al-Rahman quickly took action to unite all these groups.

Uniting Muslim Spain Abd al-Rahman already had a following in Spain—the people still loyal to the Umayyads. He strengthened his position by making treaties with other Muslim groups. When he felt strong enough, he attacked the ruling factions and defeated them. In 756 he declared himself emir of al-Andalus—Muslim Spain. He made Córdoba his capital.

Defending Muslim Spain News of Abd al-Rahman’s success quickly spread east to Abbasid lands. Many Umayyad loyalists headed westward to Spain. Their arrival in al-Andalus greatly strengthened Abd al-Rahman’s government and army.

Abd al-Rahman faced several internal revolts during his reign. Also, he had to fight off threats from outside forces. However, none of these threats seriously challenged his rule. When Abd al-Rahman died in 788, al-Andalus was strong and united.
A Great Leader

Al-Andalus reached the height of its power some 125 years later during the reign of the eighth emir, Abd al-Rahman III. When he came to power in 912, al-Andalus faced many problems. Rebel groups throughout the land challenged the government’s authority. Christian armies regularly launched attacks on the northern border. In the south, Muslim opponents threatened to invade from North Africa. However, Abd al-Rahman III was determined to preserve Umayyad power. He built a huge standing army. Many of the soldiers were non-Muslims from all over Europe. Some were mercenaries, or soldiers paid to fight.

Over the next few years, Abd al-Rahman III put down all internal revolts. He then pushed the Christians back from his northern border. He strengthened the southern border by taking control of the northwestern tip of North Africa. By 929, he was so sure of his power that he declared himself caliph of Córdoba. He wanted everyone to know he was ready to challenge the power of the Abbasid and Fatimid caliphs.

REVIEW What changes did the Umayyads bring to Spain?

The Glory of Córdoba

ESSENTIAL QUESTION What was the basis for Córdoba’s greatness under the Umayyads?

Soon, people all over Europe and the Muslim world knew of Abd al-Rahman III and his great capital city, Córdoba. By 1000, Córdoba was the largest city in Western Europe. Its population stood at about 500,000 people. That made it several times larger than other major European cities such as London, Paris, or Rome.

A City of Wonders Córdoba truly was a splendid city. Its streets were paved and, by night, were lit by lamps. A water system fed the 900 public baths and the many fountains located around the city. Citizens could wander through dozens of beautiful gardens.
An Economic Center  All this splendor was made possible by Córdoba’s prosperous economy. The city had hundreds of workshops that produced silk, leather, carpets, paper, weapons, and crystal glass. All of these goods were in great demand throughout Europe. And merchants traveling overland and by sea carried them all of the way to Central Asia and India.

Farming flourished in the countryside around Córdoba. Water wheels irrigated the fields. Farmers grew rice, figs, cherries, apricots, peaches, cotton, and olives. They sold their products at the more than 4,000 markets scattered throughout the city.

A Great Cultural Center  Córdoba also was a major center for culture and learning. By the late 900s, the city had 70 libraries. The largest of these had about 400,000 books. (In contrast, most European Christian libraries of the time only had a few hundred manuscripts.) Muslim scholars translated many books into Latin. These books often found their way to Europe, where Christian scholars eagerly studied them.

The caliphs of Córdoba were anxious to outshine their Abbasid rivals. They actively encouraged scholars to leave Baghdad for al-Andalus. These new arrivals brought fresh ideas and different approaches to learning with them. They also added to Córdoba’s reputation as one of the world’s great cities.

**REVIEW** Why was Córdoba a great city during Umayyad rule?
A Golden Age in the West

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION** What cultural developments took place in al-Andalus in the 1000s and 1100s?

The atmosphere of learning in Córdoba helped create a golden age for culture throughout al-Andalus. Scholars there made important contributions to the study of mathematics, astronomy, geography, medicine, and philosophy.

**Mathematics, Astronomy, and Geography** The scholars of al-Andalus built on or extended the work of earlier mathematicians, such as al-Khwarizmi. They often put their mathematical learning to practical use. For example, they employed mathematics to create accurate calendars. They also developed tables that showed the location of the sun and other planets at various times of the year. Other scholars made the study of astronomy easier. They built precision instruments for viewing the skies. They also constructed a planetarium with model planets that moved.

Some scholars were more interested in Earth than the skies. They wrote geographic studies of various regions, including Spain, North Africa, and the Arabian peninsula. Al-Idrisi made perhaps the greatest contribution to the study of geography. In 1154, he completed an encyclopedia of geographic knowledge. It contained about 70 maps and descriptions of the geography of many world regions. He based his work mostly on the travels he had taken when he was a young man.
Doctors in al-Andalus borrowed heavily from their counterparts in Baghdad. However, they also made important contributions of their own. Some doctors wrote about the doctor-patient relationship. One such study suggested that doctors should be kind and understanding. It encouraged them to accept patients’ criticisms and insults without complaint. This study also suggested that doctors show respect for their patients by keeping themselves clean and behaving with dignity. Other medical scholars wrote about ways to treat diseases. For example, one suggested that changes in diet always should be tried before medicines or other kinds of treatment.

The greatest doctor of the time was al-Zahrawi (al•zah•RAH•wee). He was interested in all aspects of medicine. In the late 900s, he published a 30-volume medical encyclopedia that covered everything from the description of diseases to how to prepare and administer medicines.

The most important part of the encyclopedia dealt with surgery. This section described many different kinds of operations. It also included illustrations of about 200 surgical instruments, some of which are shown at right.

Over the years, European scholars translated parts of the encyclopedia into Latin. As a result, al-Zahrawi’s work became required reading for medical students all over Europe. It remained a part of medical training well into the 1500s.

**History Makers**

**Al-Zahrawi (936–1013)**

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Many doctors were all-around scholars. Ibn Rushd, for example, worked as a doctor. However, he was better known as a philosopher. His studies of Plato and Aristotle were considered his most important work. Latin translations of these studies helped reintroduce classical Greek philosophy to Europe.
A Golden Age for Jews  Jews had lived in Spain since Roman times. They often faced persecution. Under the Umayyads, however, they were welcomed, not rejected. Some Jews held high government offices. Samuel ha-Nagid, for example, served as the first minister to the Muslim leader of Granada. Others acted as advisers to Muslim rulers. Hasdai ben Shaprut served as Abd al-Rahman III’s personal doctor. He also advised the caliph on other issues, including foreign affairs. For example, he helped the caliph to negotiate peace treaties with several Christian kingdoms.

In this welcoming atmosphere, Spanish Jews flourished. A Sephardic (suh•FAHR•dihk), or Spanish-Jewish, culture with its own language—Ladino—developed. (Sephardic comes from the Hebrew word meaning “Spain.”) Jews who faced persecution in Christian lands flocked to al-Andalus to enjoy this freedom. They contributed greatly to the golden age of al-Andalus.

A Great Scholar  Among the many Jewish scholars of al-Andalus, Maimonides (MY•MAHN•uh•DEEZ) stands above all others. He was born in 1135 to a family that had lived in Córdoba for many years. When he was young, the Almohads (AL•moh•HADZ)—a group of Muslims from North Africa—seized control of the city. Unlike the Umayyads, the Almohads did not allow non-Muslims to practice their own religions. Rather, they demanded that everyone living in Córdoba convert to Islam. Maimonides and his family refused and, after a while, fled to North Africa. They eventually settled in Cairo. There, Maimonides became known as a great writer, doctor, and philosopher.

Maimonides wrote about and taught many subjects, including religion, science, and medicine. His best-known work, The Guide for the Perplexed, was published in 1190. In it, he tried to show that religious faith could be supported by the study of philosophy. His work influenced both Muslim and Christian thinkers.
The Decline of Al-Andalus  By the time of Maimonides’ death in 1204, al-Andalus had begun to fall apart. Different Muslim factions fought for control. Other Muslim groups broke away and formed their own smaller kingdoms. Christians in the north took advantage of this disarray and launched attacks. By the 1240s, they had pushed as far south as Córdoba and Seville. As you’ll read in Chapter 10, over the next 250 years Christian forces slowly regained control of the entire Iberian Peninsula.

**REVIEW** What contributions to learning did scholars of al-Andalus make?

**Lesson Summary**
- The Umayyad dynasty that was driven out of Baghdad established the kingdom of al-Andalus on the Iberian Peninsula.
- Córdoba became a major city under Umayyad rule.
- Culture flourished in al-Andalus in the 1000s and 1100s.

**Why It Matters Now . . .**
Al-Andalus served as a meeting place for the cultures of Southwest Asia, North Africa, and Europe. Europeans regained knowledge of Greek and Roman civilizations through Muslim scholars.

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**Terms & Names**
1. Explain the importance of
   - al-Andalus
   - Córdoba
   - Abd al-Rahman III
   - mercenary

**Using Your Notes**

**Identifying Issues and Problems** Use your completed chart to answer the following question:

2. **How did Abd al-Rahman III hold on to power? (7.2.4)**

**Issues and Problems**
- Internal revolts
- Attacks from Christian forces to the north
- Threats from North Africa

**Main Ideas**
3. **What helped the Umayyads to succeed after losing power to the Abbasids? (7.2.4)**
4. **What economic and agricultural activities took place in and around Córdoba? (7.2.5)**
5. **Why were the 1000s and 1100s a golden age for al-Andalus? (7.9.7)**

**Critical Thinking**
6. **Making Inferences** Why do you think Abd al-Rahman III declared himself caliph of Córdoba? (7.2.4)
7. **Comparing and Contrasting** How are Córdoba and Baghdad similar? How are they different? (7.2.5)

**Internet Activity** Use the Internet to research the Great Mosque (also known as the Mezquita) in Córdoba. Use your findings to create a four-page visual essay on the mosque. (7.2.5)

**INTERNET KEYWORDS:** Córdoba, Great Mosque, Mezquita