The emergence of Islam

The Arabian Peninsula in the 6th Century

Desert except some oases
Nomadic people
Caravans to trade
Crossroad between Asia and the Mediterranean

Most of population polytheist
herders and farmers
also small cities like...
Mecca: commercial and religious centre
Kaaba sanctuary (black stone. A meteorite?)
pilgrimage centre to adore idols
Muhammad, the prophet

Personal life
- Was born in Mecca, 570
- Was an orphan, raised by his uncle (a merchant)
- Got in contact with Jews and Christians
- 7 children with a widow

He died in 632. He had linked Arabia politically and religiously with the Islam

Sacred personality

According to Koran
- Meditating in a cave, the angel Gabriel announced
  - He had been chosen by Allah (God) as the new prophet
  - He preached a new religion (Islam)
  - Had to run away from Mecca to Medina (Hijra, 622) [Spanish: Hegira]
    - Beginning of Islamic calendar
    - Conquered Mecca, destroyed Kaaba idols (except the black stone)
What is Islam?

Islam is the religion of the Muslims, preached by Muhammad. His teachings were collected in the Koran shortly after his death.

BEWARE!! Don’t confuse “Muslim” with “Arabian”.

KORAN: Holy book for Muslims, made up of 114 chapters (surahs), containing the Islamic beliefs and religious obligations. It dictates codes of behaviour (no pork, no gambling, no alcohol, jihad…). Five commands stand out (the pillars of Islam).

THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

1. Declaration of faith: “There is no god but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet”.
2. Praying five times a day anywhere. On Friday the prayer must go to the mosque.
3. Giving to charity.
4. Fasting during Ramadan (the ninth month).
5. Go on a pilgrimage to Mecca once in your life if possible.