



English

Class: 12th

Subject: English

Lesson 10: THE JEWEL OF THE WORLD

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❖ Exercise Short Questions:

1. Early career of Abd-al-Rahman I, his escape and adventures:

Ans:

- In 750 AD, the Abbasids overthrew the Umayyads; most were killed.
 - **Abd-al-Rahman**, age 20, escaped with courage and skill.
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- Crossed the Euphrates; his younger brother drowned.
 - Traveled through Palestine and North Africa, escaping assassins.
 - **Finally reached Ceuta**, then crossed to Spain, where he gradually established Umayyad rule.

2. How did Abd-al-Rahman deal with the Abbasid-appointed governor?

Ans:

- The Abbasid caliph sent a governor to challenge him.
- Abd-al-Rahman killed the governor, preserved his head in salt and camphor, and sent it to Baghdad.

3. What did the Abbasid caliph say on receiving the governor's head?

Ans:

He exclaimed: "Thanks be to Allah for having placed the sea between us and such a foe!"

4. How did Abd-al-Rahman make himself strong and beautify his capital?

Ans:

- Built a well-disciplined army of 40,000 Berbers with good pay.
- Strengthened Cordova with walls, aqueducts, palace, and gardens.
- Introduced exotic plants and water features in his villa.

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- Built the Masjid of Cordova as a religious and cultural centre.

5. All-round progress under Abd-al-Rahman III:

Ans:

- Reconquered lost provinces and stabilized rule.
- Proclaimed himself Caliph, marking the start of Umayyad caliphate in Spain.
- Cordova became a cultural, economic, and political centre, rivaling Baghdad and Constantinople.
- Flourished in commerce, agriculture, industries like leather, silk, glass, and swords.
- The city had libraries, masajid, paved streets, suburbs, and attracted scholars and artisans from across Europe and Asia.

6. What did Al-Hakam do to promote learning and scholarship?

Ans:

- Patronized scholars and established 27 free schools.
- Expanded the University of Cordova, inviting teachers from the East.
- Built and enriched a library of 400,000 manuscripts.
- Purchased important works like the Aghani.
- Promoted literacy so that nearly everyone could read and write, making Cordova a centre of learning.

❖ Important Short Questions:

1. In which year was the Umayyad dynasty in Damascus overthrown?

Ans: 750 AD – The Abbasid family overthrew the Umayyad dynasty in Damascus. Most members of the Umayyad family were killed, marking the beginning of Abbasid rule.

2. Who escaped the Abbasid massacre of the Umayyads?

Ans: Abd-al-Rahman I – A courageous and intelligent 20-year-old, he survived the Abbasid attack and later established Umayyad rule in Spain.

3. How old was Abd-al-Rahman when he escaped?

Ans: 20 years old – He was young but showed exceptional bravery, leadership, and resourcefulness.

4. What happened to Abd-al-Rahman's younger brother at the Euphrates?

Ans: His 13-year-old brother panicked, swam back to the bank, and was killed, while Abd-al-Rahman successfully crossed the river and escaped.

5. Which route did Abd-al-Rahman take after escaping the Euphrates?

Ans: He traveled south-west through Palestine and then North Africa, facing many hardships and threats, eventually reaching Ceuta.

6. Where did Abd-al-Rahman find refuge in North Africa?

Ans: He was sheltered by his maternal uncles, the Berbers, who offered him protection and support.

7. How did Abd-al-Rahman gain support in southern Spain?

Ans: Across the strait from Ceuta, Syrian troops from Damascus recognized him as their leader, and gradually, cities opened their gates to him, allowing him to establish control over Spain.

8. How did Abd-al-Rahman deal with the governor sent by the Abbasid caliph?

Ans: The Abbasid caliph sent a governor to challenge him. Abd-al-Rahman killed the governor, preserved his head in salt and camphor, and sent it to Baghdad.

9. How large was Abd-al-Rahman's army, and who made up the soldiers?

Ans: He had around 40,000 soldiers, mostly Berbers. They were well-trained, disciplined, and loyal due to fair pay and good treatment.

10. What title did Abd-al-Rahman and his successors use in Spain instead of caliph?

Ans: Amir – He and his successors did not take the caliphal title but ruled Spain independently, free from Abbasid authority.

11. How did Abd-al-Rahman I contribute to the arts of peace after consolidating his realm?

Ans: He focused on urban development, architecture, gardens, and culture, showing that he was as skilled in peace as in war.

Introduced exotic plants, built palaces, villas, and gardens, and promoted intellectual activities in Spain.

12. What structures and improvements did Abd-al-Rahman I make in Cordova?

Ans:

- Built an aqueduct to supply pure water.
- Constructed city walls.
- Built a palace and villa outside Cordova with gardens and water channels.
- **Imported peaches**, pomegranates, and a palm tree from Syria.

13. What was the significance of the Masjid of Cordova built by Abd-al-Rahman I?

Ans:

- Founded two years before his death in 788.
- Became a major shrine of western Islam, rivaling Jerusalem and Makkah.
- Later transformed into a Christian cathedral in 1236, still known today as La Mezquita.

14. What was the Guadalquivir, and what construction was made over it?

Ans:

- The Guadalquivir was a river (name from Arabic meaning “the great river”).
- Abd-al-Rahman built a bridge over it, later expanded to seventeen arches, enhancing transportation and trade.

15. How was Abd-al-Rahman I’s court in Cordova described in terms of magnificence?

Ans:

- One of the most glorious courts in Europe.
- Received envoys from Byzantium, Germany, Italy, and France.
- Cordova had half a million inhabitants, 700 masajid, 300 public baths, rivaled only by Baghdad and Constantinople.

16. What was al-Zahra, and who started its construction?

Ans:

- Al-Zahra was a royal palace northwest of Cordova.
- Construction started by Abd-al-Rahman III in 936.
- It had 400 rooms, marble from Numidia and Carthage, imported columns, golden statues, and employed 10,000 workers with 1,500 beasts of burden.

17. How did Abd-al-Rahman III maintain law and order in his state?

Ans:

- Kept a standing army of 100,000 with a bodyguard of 3,750 Slavs.
- Suppressed treason and brigandage and limited the influence of old Arab aristocracy.

18. What were the main sources of income and expenditure in Abd-al-Rahman III's state?

Ans:

- Royal revenue: 6,245,000 dinars.
- One-third for army, one-third for public works, and the remainder kept in reserve.
- Income came from commerce, agriculture, taxation, and trade.

19. How did Abd-al-Rahman III reconsolidate Muslim Spain after civil disturbances?

Ans:

- Took power at age 23.
- Reconquered lost provinces, reduced them to order, and governed with intelligence and ability.
- **Proclaimed himself caliph**, establishing the Umayyad caliphate in Spain.

20. How did Cordova become a major cultural and economic centre under the Umayyads?

Ana:

- Became a highly cultured city, rivaling Constantinople and Baghdad.
- Had 113,000 homes, 21 suburbs, 70 libraries, masajid, palaces, and bookshops.
- **Famous for weaving**, leather, silk, glass, pottery, metals, swords, and agriculture.
- **The city attracted artists**, scholars, craftsmen, and traders from Europe, Africa, and Asia.

21. What was the Generalife, and why was it famous?

Ans:

A famous Moorish garden in Spain, terraced like an amphitheatre, irrigated with streams, known for its shades, waterfalls, and soft breeze.

22. What were the main agricultural exports of Seville?

Ans:

- Cotton, olives, and oil.

23. Which products were exported from Malaga and Jaen?

Ans: Saffron, figs, marble, and sugar.

24. Which words in modern nautical vocabulary show Arab supremacy at sea?

Ans: Admiral, arsenal, average, cable.

25. What type of coinage did the government maintain?

Ans: Dinar (gold) and dirham (silver), modeled on Eastern patterns.

Arab money was used even in Christian kingdoms of the north for almost 400 years.

26. Who was Al-Hakam, and how did he support learning?

Ans:

- Successor of Abd-al-Rahman III, a scholar and patron of learning.
- Established 27 free schools and patronized the University of Cordova.

27. How did the University of Cordova gain prominence?

Ans:

- Preceded Al-Azhar (Cairo) and Nizamiyah (Baghdad).
- Attracted students from Europe, Africa, and Asia.
- Masjid enlarged and decorated; professors invited from the East.

28. How large was Al-Hakam's library, and what was its significance?

Ans: 400,000 books, cataloged in 44 volumes, with 20 sheets of poetry per volume.

Highly prized by scholars; manuscripts personally studied by Al-Hakam.

29. How advanced was literacy and culture in Andalusia under Al-Hakam?

Ans: Nearly everyone could read and write; the region was far ahead of Christian Europe, where learning was limited to a few churchmen.

Note:

This chapter is designed to provide a solid foundation of knowledge, with the goal of deepening understanding and encouraging further exploration of the subject. The content has been carefully selected to support effective learning and inspire students to engage with the topic more deeply.

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Purpose: To contribute to education by offering insightful, valuable content that enhances learning and understanding.

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