

Target audience – Human geography

Time required – 15 minutes

## Activity

Students will explore the diffusion of Islam using geospatial analysis tools.

## Social Studies Standards

**APHG: III.B1.** Explain cultural patterns as they vary by place and region.  
**APHG: III.B2.** Explain the diffusion of cultural traits through time and place.  
**APHG: III.B3.** Compare and contrast ethnic and universalizing religions and their geographic patterns.

## Learning Outcomes

- Students will provide map-based evidence to support the categorization of Islam as a universalizing religion.
- Students will evaluate the roles of language and trade in the diffusion of Islam.

## Level 2 GeoInquiry Requirements

- A free school ArcGIS Online organization account ([www.esri.com/schools](http://www.esri.com/schools)). Instructors or students must be signed in to the account to complete this activity.
- Approximately 0.5 credits will be used per person in the completion of this activity as scripted.

**Map URL:** <http://esriurl.com/humanGeoInquiry6>

## ? Ask

### Why is Islam a universalizing religion?

- Click the link above to launch the map.
- In the upper-right corner, click Sign in. Use your ArcGIS Online organization account to sign in.
- With the Details button underlined, click the button, Show Contents of Map (Content).
- Make sure that only two layers are turned on: Language Families of the World and Islam.
- ? From its hearth in Saudi Arabia, to which regions did Islam diffuse? [*Northern Africa, Central Asia, parts of South and Southeast Asia, and Europe*]

## ! Acquire

### Which languages are associated with Islam?

- See the Overlay Layers ToolTip on the next page.
- Click the button, Analysis. Expand the group, Manage Data. Choose Overlay Layers.
- In the Overlay Layers tool, set the following parameters:
  - 1 Set to: Language Families of the World.
  - 2 Set to: Islam.
  - 3 Choose Intersect, and keep Output as Areas.
  - 4 Name the layer, **Language\_Islam\_<your initials>**.  
 Uncheck the Use Current Map Extent check box.  
 Always click Show Credits to ensure acceptable credit usage  
 Click Run Analysis.

## 🔍 Explore

### What information did the Intersect tool create?

- Turn off two layers: Language Families of the World and Islam.
- Click an area on the map and view the pop-up.
- ? What information does the pop-up include? [*Language family, language branch, religion, and area in square miles*]

## Analyze

### How did language support the diffusion of Islam?

- Hover over the layer name, Language\_Islam.
- Click the button, Change Style. (See Tooltip below for more information.)
- From the first drop-down list, choose Language Family, and then click Done.
- Click the layer name, Language\_Islam, to show the legend.
- ? How many languages families are included in the predominantly Islamic areas? [10]
- ? Which language family has the largest territorial extent? [*Afro-Asiatic*]
- ? Which Afro-Asiatic language branches are associated with Islam? [*Semitic, Berber, and Cushitic*]
- The most widely spoken Semitic language today is Arabic. The Q'uran is written in Arabic.
- ? How did language support the diffusion of Islam westward? [*A common language family helped spread Islam westward.*]

## Act

### How did trade influence the diffusion of Islam?

- Turn on the layer, Old Silk Roads.
- ? Which language families and regions were connected to Islam by the overland Silk Roads? [*Altaic in Turkey and Central Asia; Indo-European in Iran and southwest Asia*]
- ? How did the maritime trade routes affect the diffusion of Islam? [*Locations farther away, such as Malaysia, Indonesia, and part of the Philippines, adopted Islam*]
- ? Why do you think some areas along the route did not adopt Islam? [*Other religions were established; linguistic differences*]

### CHANGE STYLE

- Hover over a layer name to expose context buttons.
- Click the button, Change Style.
- Select the attribute or field to map.
- Select the Drawing Style of the data.
- Press the Done button.

### OVERLAY LAYERS

- Combines two or more layers into a single layer.
- In an Intersect, the results show only the parts that are common to both layers.
- The result layer name must be unique, so consider adding three initials after the layer name.

## Next Steps

Continue using an ArcGIS Online organizational account ([www.esri.com/schools](http://www.esri.com/schools)) to dig deeper into data using the analysis tools, and save your maps to your account.

THEN TRY THIS...

- Use an Overlay Layers analysis to identify the link between European languages and the diffusion of religion through relocation diffusion.
- Create a Cascade story map showing the influence of local culture on places of worship around the world.



### TEXT REFERENCES

This GIS map has been cross-referenced to material in sections of chapters from these high school texts.

- *Human Geography: A Short Introduction* by Oxford University Press — Chapter 10
- *Human Geography: People, Places, and Culture* by Wiley Press — Chapter 5 & 6
- *The Cultural Landscape* by Pearson — Chapters 5 & 6