Geography Practice

The City of Baghdad

Baghdad was first settled more than 3,800 years ago. However, it did not become a great city until the late A.D. 700s, after the Abbasids made it their capital in 752. The Abbasids built their new capital on the west bank of the Tigris River. At its center was the Round City, a huge government complex that took four years to build. It contained the city’s main mosque, government offices, and palaces for the caliph and his family.

Over time, buildings spread out to the west and east across the river. By the early 830s, Baghdad covered about 23 square miles and had a population of more than 900,000 people. The city had become the center of Muslim learning, with dozens of museums, libraries, hospitals, mosques, and religious schools.

As the Abbasids lost power, however, Baghdad lost its standing and influence. The Mongols completely overran the city in 1258. And later foreign rulers neglected the city’s many historical buildings. In recent years, wars have taken a further toll on Baghdad. Even so, some of the city’s most important historical sites survive.
PRACTICE
Use the map to complete the activities and answer the questions.

1. On what bank of the Tigris River is the site of the Ancient Round City?

2. On what bank of the Tigris River is the Baghdad Museum?

3. Draw a circle around the Old City area.

4. What building marked on the map suggests a connection to the city’s Abbasid founders?

5. About how far is the main market from the Presidential Palace?

APPLY

6. With a partner, research the Round City of Baghdad. In the space below, draw a sketch map of the Round City showing the location of the city walls and main gates, government offices, the caliph’s palace, the main mosque, and the city markets.