Theme Card
5 pillars to 5 concepts

- The life of Muhammad
- Islamic sacred space—The Mosque;
- Muslim textiles
- decoration patterns in Islamic art—tesselations to arabesque
- the art of calligraphy and the Quran.
Characteristics of Islamic Art

• Draw from the Islam faith as well as the diverse cultures that make it up
• Unlike Christian... it is aniconic or non-figurative
• Lots of geometric patterns & arabesques-scrolling vines designs
• Expanding patterns suggest timelessness
The Ka'aba (literally "the cube" in Arabic) is an ancient stone structure that was built and re-built by prophets as a house of monotheistic worship. It is located inside the Grand Mosque in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. The Ka'aba is considered the center of the Muslim world, and is a unifying focal point for Islamic worship. Granite-covered in black cloth with verse of the Qur'an written on it.
The Dome of the Rock is not a mosque, but a Muslim shrine. Like the Ka'ba in Mecca, it is built over a sacred stone. This stone is believed to be the place from which the Prophet Muhammad ascended into heaven during his Night Journey to heaven.
Title: Cutaway drawing of the Dome of the Rock

Octagon with an octagon

Golden dome

Dome sits on a tall drum, pierced with windows

Sits on an arcade of alternating piers and columns

Ambulatories
Marble veneer and mosaics cover the inside. In a frieze, the view must walk clockwise then counterclockwise to read inscription. Pure light shines down onto the lower rock.
Title: Frieze, detail of façade of the palace at Mshatta

Zig-Zag molding with triangular components

Triangular rosette carved in high relief

Intricate carvings in low relief of scrolls with animals and birds, urns and candlesticks

2 lions drink from urns from which the tree of life grows
Minaret - tower from which the criers call
Qibla wall - Mecca facing wall
Mihrab - niche of the qibla
Masquara - enclosure for dignitary
Iwan - large vaulted chamber
Recycled columns from a wealthy roman province

2 tiers of arches

Increases interior space as well as air flow

**Horse shoe arch**
- rounded arch that Curves passed its Supports

Alternating red Brick and white stone
Title: Dome in front of the Mihrab, Great Mosque

Date: 965

Dome held by a web of intersecting arches

No supporting piers

Lavish patterns and mosaics with the inscriptions, geometric motifs, and stylized vegetation

Light hangs from center of the dome

Unique floral shape
**Title:** Elements of Architecture: Arches and Muqarnas

**Horseshoe arch**

**Pointed arch** - arch which come to a point instead of a curve top

**Muqarnas** - is a squinch, interlocking load bearing niche shaped vaults, very ornamental
Title: Page from the Qur'an (Surah II: 286 and Title Surah III) in kufic script
Medium: Black ink pigments, and gold on vellum
Size: 8⅜ X 11⅞" (21.8 X 29.2 cm)
Date: 9th century

Page from Qur'an

Early ones only have 3-5 lines per page

Red shapes are punctuation marks

Brown ink
Flat horizontals are elongated

Heading in gold and embellished

Large letters for sharing book

Calligraphy on vellum
Title: Bowl with kufic border
Medium: Earthenware with slip, pigment, and lead glaze
Size: diameter 14½" (37 cm)
Date: 9th–10th century

White glaze mimic Chinese porcelain

Kufic writing as decoartion

Black glaze on white slip

“Knowledge, the beginning of it is bitter to taste, but the end is sweeter than honey”

Letters elongated to fill the bowls rim
Title: Textile with elephants and camels (known today as the Shroud of Saint Josse)
Medium: Dyed silk
Size: largest fragment 20½ X 37" (94 X 52 cm)
Date: Before 961
Silk luxury item, made and personalized with a blessing in Kufic for a Commander
Animals? Upside down?
Title: Court of the Lions, Palace of the Lions, Alhambra, Granada
Date: 1354–91
Source/Museum: Spain

Alhambra was a paradise on Earth
12 stone lions surround a fountain in a courtyard, originally a garden,
Miradors-projecting room with courtyard on windows on 3 sides
Colonnaded arcade with double columns, holding horseshoe and pointed arches
Title: Muqarnas Dome, Hall of the Abencerrajes, Palace of the Lions, Alhambra

Date: Built between 1354–91

2 stories was designed as winter music room

Star shaped vault created with muqarnas

Reminiscent of lace

Arched windows allow for light to enter space

Created good acoustics
Title: Courtyard, Masjid-I Jami, Isfahan Iran
Date: 11th–18th century 14th-century iwan vault, 17th-century minarets

In modern Iran

Was originally a hypostyle mosque but was refitted with 2 domes, then four iwans- large vaulted chamer with monumental arched opening
Now a 4 iwan mosque

Blue title work

Pointed arches, gateway flanked by 2 minarets
Title: Tile Mosaic Mihrab, from the Madrasa Imami, Isfahan
Medium: Glazed and cut tiles
Size: 11'3" X 7'6" (3.43 X 2.29 m)
Date: Founded 1354

2 types of language Kufic on inner and cursive muhaqqaq on outer

Outer tells of the duties of the believer and heavenly rewards, inner is 5 pillars of Islam

Originally from a madrasas- school for advance study (university) now at the MET

Contrasting color scheme

11 ft tall and would have been on the qibla or Mecca facing wall

Mosaic, painstaking?
Title: Qibla wall with mihrab and minbar, Sultan Hasan Madrasa-Mausoleum-Mosque Complex
Date: 1356–63

Mosque, Madrasa, mausoleum complex

Iwan were used as classroom

Architectural elements?

Something odd?
Minarets- fluted walls and needle nosed spires 295 high, 12.5ft in diameter
Royal mosques were allowed more that 2 minarets
Dome in 102 ft in diameter, larger then Hagia Sophia, mosque and masdrasa, hospital, burial ground, and charity kitchen, starts square and shift to octogon
Interior

Open expanse under the vast dome

Dome appears to by floating on light

Double an triple arches

Through arches you can see the meeting of the squared walls

Lavish decorations on dome ceiling, decorated arches alter colors
Title: Griffin
Medium: Bronze
Size: height 42⅞" (107 cm)
Date: 11th century

Griffin no Girffin

Bronze

Ornate and large bronze ornament
Probably a water spout

Incised carvings of feathers, scales, and trappings

Thighs have animals in medallions with kufic lettering

Balance and detail

Almost 4 feet tall

Was spolia of war probably Egyptian but stolen by the Pisans
Artist: Shazi
Title: Pen Box
Medium: Brass with inlaid silver, copper, and black organic material
Size: height 2", length 12½", width 2½" (5 X 31.4 X 6.4 cm)
Date: 1210–11

Educated leaders showed their class by getting personalized goods. Brass box inlayed with silver inscriptions of honor and blessings. Scrolls as well as animal figures lace through the kufic lettering. Belonged to chief vizier who died 10 years later in an invasion.
Title: Mamluk glass oil lamp
Medium: Glass, polychrome enamel, and gold
Size: height 12" (30.5 cm)
Date: c. 1355

Made with sand and ash

Adapted early glass practices to new forms

They were innovated in the application of enameled decorations of gold and other colors

Many floral motifs weave their way up and around the body and neck of the base

Registers invert the gold and purple to create separation and contrast
**Title:** The Macy Jug  
**Medium:** Composite body glazed, painted fritware and incised (glaze partially stained with cobalt), with pierced outer shell  
**Size:** 6 5/8 X 7 3/4" (16.8 X 19.7 cm)  
**Date:** 1215–16

Painted under glazed bowls and jugs were decorated with curving vines and leaving Double walled effect  
Turquoise over black  
Animals and mythical creatures walk freely through the tangle of vines  
Luster, a transparent glaze with a metallic sheen was applied over the colored areas
a. Kilim weaving pattern used in flat-weaving

b. Symmetrical knot, used extensively in Iran

c. Asymmetrical knot, used extensively in Turkey
Title: Banner of Las Navas de Tolosa

Medium: Silk tapestry-weave with gilt parchment

Size: 10'9 ⅞" X 7'2 ⅝" (3.3 X 2.2 m)

Date: 1212–50

This banner was a trophy this is only the detail from the center.

Calligraphy panels down the side.

Eight pointed star pattern design in the center.

Robe like ribbons in gold.

Orbs of cream from the parts.

Stylized vegetation fill the brackets around the center star.
**Title:** Qur’an frontispiece (right half of two-page spread)

**Medium:** Ink, pigments, and gold on paper

**Size:** 24 X 18" (61 X 45.7 cm)

**Date:** c. 1368

**Illuminators- manuscript illustrators**

Executed not figurative geometric designs for Qur’an

**Stylized plants and flowers**

Stylized plants and flowers surround a starburst the radiates the word of God

**Contrast between layers**

Contrast between layers allow for the layering of designs

**Illuminators and scribe collaborated**
Artist: Kamal al-Din Bihzad
Title: The Caliph Harun Al-Rashid Visits the Turkish Bath
Medium: Ink and pigments on paper
Size: approx. 7 X 6" (17.8 X 15.3 cm)
Date: c. 1494

Titled floors

High ceilings

Depicts life at a bath house, point arched windows and decorative motif add to the not quite right perspective

Abstract details and asymmetric design

Balance?
Title: Illuminated Tugra of Sultan Suleyman
Medium: Ink, paint, and gold on paper
Size: removed from a firman and trimmed to 20½ X 25⅞" (52 X 64.5 cm)
Date: c. 1555–60

Tugras symbolize authority of sultans of officials given the symbol
Often on coins and buildings
This one is oversized and Elaborate
In 7 minutes please explain both similarities and difference between Byzantine scared places and Islamic