Arabic B2, lesson 16: reading a history text

عالِم ج عُلَماء
scholar, scholars

حَضارَة
civilisation

عُصور وُسْطى
Middle Ages

قَصَدَ
to head for

فَلَك
astronomy

طِبّ
medicine

بِلاد
countries, lands

آثار
remains, monuments

تُرْجِمَ
it was translated

اِشْتُهِرَ

it became famous

A city of learning

كانَتْ قُرْطُبَةُ في العُصورِ الوُسْطى مَدينَةً كَبيرَةً.

اِشْتُهِرَتْ بِمَكْتَباتِها وَعُلَمائِها.

قَصَدَها الطُّلّابُ مِنْ بِلادٍ بَعيدَةٍ لِيَتَعَلَّموا الطِّبَّ وَالفَلَكَ وَالرِّياضِيّاتِ.

وَتُرْجِمَتْ فيها كُتُبٌ كَثيرَةٌ.

وَما زالَتْ آثارُها تُزارُ إِلى اليَوْمِ.

▶ **Show the translation**

Reading a history text means spotting three things:

- the **narrative past**: كانَ + adjective or noun (كانَتْ مَدينَةً كَبيرَةً), then past verbs telling the facts;
- the **passive**, very frequent for facts with no precise doer: فُتِحَ, بُنِيَ, اِشْتُهِرَتْ, تُرْجِمَتْ;

- **time markers**: في العُصورِ الوُسْطى, في القَرْنِ العاشِرِ, مُنْذُ سَنَواتٍ, بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ, ما زالَ... إِلى اليَوْمِ.

The phrase **لِيَتَعَلَّموا** (so that they learn) shows purpose with لِـ + subjunctive (the ن drops: يَتَعَلَّمونَ → لِيَتَعَلَّموا).

To remember history vocabulary, group it by family: عالِم, عِلْم, عُلَماء, تَعَلَّمَ... share the root ع ل م.

Note: this text describes general facts; for precise dates always check a history book.

Time markers

Expression	Meaning
في العُصورِ الوُسْطى	in the Middle Ages
في القَرْنِ العاشِرِ	in the tenth century
مُنْذُ سَنَواتٍ	for years
بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ	after that
إِلى اليَوْمِ	to this day

Match each word with its meaning.

طِبّ	medicine

فَلَك	scholars
آثار	civilisation
عُلَماء	remains
حَضارَة	astronomy

Check Start again

Present in five sentences a city or monument of your country with كانَ, a passive and a time marker.

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