Constantinople to Istanbul Graphic Organizer

1. Read each paragraph then write a short summary and define any unfamiliar vocabulary.
2. Under Text Dependent Questions write higher order thinking questions to reflect your reading.

	Summary/Vocabulary	Text Dependent Questions
No European capital was more cosmopolitan than Constantinople. Its geographical position across the main route between Europe and Asia, its port 'the finest and most secure I have ever seen', in the words of the Sieur de Combes in 1688, made it the natural capital of Anatolia, the Balkans and beyond. In its last centuries as capital of the Byzantine Empire, it was not only the holy city of the Orthodox world, but also a cosmopolitan trading center, with Venetian, Genoese, Muslim, Jewish, and Slav.		
	Summary/Vocabulary	**Text Dependent Questions**
Not content with conquering and sacking the city in 1453, the Ottoman Sultan Mehmet II also gave it a new population. By a deliberate act of imperial social engineering, to establish its new Ottoman character, the Sultan deported much of the remaining Byzantine population of about 30,000 people.		
	Summary/Vocabulary	**Text Dependent Questions**
Like the founder of the city, the Emperor Constantine, eleven hundred years earlier, Mehmet II personally supervised the creation of his new imperial capital. He commanded his pashas and viziers – 'the pillars of the empire' – to build houses and		

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mosques in the capital. Between 1463 and 1470 he built the great mosque and college of Fatih, on the site of, and using materials from, the burial place of the Byzantine emperors, the Church of the Holy Apostles.		
	Summary/Vocabulary	**Text Dependent Questions**
Constantinople was acquiring a Muslim character: it already had its great Muslim shrine, at Eyup outside the city walls near the head of the Golden Horn. The Sultan's revered spiritual guide Akshemsedin had conveniently found there the grave of a companion of the Prophet, Abu Ayyub al-Ansari, who had died fighting in the Arab army besieging Constantinople in 669. The dynasty soon began to hold the inauguration rituals of a new Sultan – his ceremonial 'girding with the sword of Osman' – in this charismatic shrine, which is still a popular pilgrimage site for Muslims in Turkey today.		
	Summary/Vocabulary	**Text Dependent Questions**
The city was not entirely Muslim, however, until the late twentieth century. Mehmet II was a ruler with an open mind. Interested in Greek as well as Ottoman and Persian culture, he was eager to present himself to posterity as the new Alexander the Great. Partly out of necessity, since he needed their skills, he imported Slavs, Greeks, Jews and Armenians, immigrants dependent on the		

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Ottoman government, into his new capital. Known as alem penah – refuge of the universe – the Ottoman capital became an experiment in imperial multi-culturalism.		
	Summary/Vocabulary	**Text Dependent Questions**
Mehmet II believed that a multitude of races increased the power of the monarchy, by enabling it to balance one against the other. Slavs who had converted to Islam came to compose the largest element in the Janissaries, the elite force of the Sultan's guard. In the sixteenth century it was said that Sclavonian (Serbo-Croat) was the language most often heard in Topkapi Palace.		
	Summary/Vocabulary	**Text Dependent Questions**
Known as Istanbul for Turks, Constantinople for Europeans, Tsarigrad for Slavs, polis for Greeks (the city – there is no other), Kushta for Jews, the new Jerusalem for Armenians, Asithane (house of state) for Arabs, Kostantinyye or Dar as-Saadet ('house of happiness' – since it had the happiness to possess the Sultan) for the Ottoman government, in later years the city was also called 'Islambol' or full of Islam by some Muslims.		
	Summary/Vocabulary	**Text Dependent Questions**
Following the Ottoman conquest of Egypt in 1517, and the Sultan's acceptance of the role		

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of Caliph of the Muslims and 'guardian of the two holy places' (Mecca and Medina), the city acquired a new epithet as 'seat of the caliphate'. Mosques built by Selim I (r. 1512-20), Suleyman the Magnificent (r. 1520-66), his daughter Mihrimah Sultan, Sultan Ahmet (r. 1603-17) and Mahmud I (r. 1730-54) gave the city its incomparable Muslim skyline of domes and minarets.		
	Summary/Vocabulary	**Text Dependent Questions**
A growing number of government buildings, barracks, powder factories, a naval arsenal and palaces demonstrated the government's mastery of the city. The government tried to regulate everything, from the color of the slippers worn by minorities, to the angle of houses built along the Bosphorus.		
	Summary/Vocabulary	**Text Dependent Questions**
Nevertheless, Constantinople was the only Muslim capital to have permanent Christian embassies. They were a window between two hostile worlds. Their protection (and imperial decrees bought from the Ottoman government) enabled French and English merchants, priests and scholars to operate with relative freedom in the Ottoman empire. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Constantinople was, for many, a destination on the Grand Tour.		
	Summary/Vocabulary	**Text Dependent Questions**

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The modern city of about 12 million is nearly totally Turkish and Kurdish, despite an influx of traders from eastern Europe and central Asia. Its new and exclusively Muslim character, however, does not stop Istanbul and Turkey, as in the days of the Ottoman sultans, from yearning to be part of the 'system of Europe', and to join the European Union.		

Credit: By Philip Mansel
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