Name Class Date

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Ivan III of Moscow was declared his country’s co-ruler when he was a young boy.  
His reign began as a way for his father, then the crown prince, to try to ensure his  
family’s claim to the throne. During his more than 40 years as the grand prince of  
Moscow, Ivan successfully led his country and helped complete the unification of  
Russian lands. ♦ *As you read, note events in Ivan’s life that happened for political reasons.  
Then, on a separate sheet of paper, answer the questions that follow.*

**Ivan III (1440–1505)**

Ivan III, known as Ivan the Great, was born  
into a family of rulers at a time when Russia  
was besieged by struggles for power and ter-  
ritory. Civil war raged between those who  
supported his father, Crown Prince Vasily II  
of Moscow, and those who supported Ivan’s  
uncles. When Ivan was just six, his  
father was arrested and blinded by  
a cousin. Ivan was hidden in a  
monastery before later being  
handed over to his father’s captors.

His father was eventually  
released, and to further establish the  
family’s claim to the throne, Ivan,  
then ten years old, was made a co-  
ruler. Though he did not participate  
in the governance of Moscow at  
that young age, he did receive  
experience in the arts of war and politics.

After his father’s death in 1462, Ivan  
became the grand prince of Moscow. Ivan  
centralized government by stripping some  
princes of land and authority. He also started  
the *pomestie* system, which granted estates to  
servants of the grand prince on a lifetime  
basis, on the condition of their loyal service.

Under Ivan’s rule, Moscow gained inde-  
pendence from the Mongol Tatar empire of

the Golden Horde. Additionally, Russia’s  
empire was expanded by the annexation of  
major East Slavic principalities. One princi-  
pality that Ivan acquired was Tver, which had  
been Moscow’s major rival since 1300. Ivan’s  
marriage to Maria, Princess of Tver, helped to  
make the acquisition possible.

In 1467, Maria died, leaving  
Ivan with one son, the heir to the  
throne. To help secure his family’s  
dynasty, Ivan married again, this  
time to a niece of the last Byzantine  
emperor.

After the death of Ivan’s son  
from his first marriage, a battle  
broke out over who would be  
Ivan’s heir. The contenders were  
Ivan’s son Vasily from his second  
marriage and his grandson Dmitry, who was  
his eldest son’s son. Ivan initially chose  
Dmitry, but Vasily rebelled and defected to  
the Lithuanians, bitter enemies of Russia. Ivan  
then changed course. In 1502, he named  
Vasily his co-ruler and sent Dmitry to prison.

Ivan’s last years were not eventful, and he  
died in 1505. Despite his many achievements,  
it is said that his people did not mourn his  
passing.

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**1.** What is the *pomestie* system?

**2.** How were Ivan III’s marriages politically  
motivated?

**3. Predict Consequences** What might have hap-  
pened in Russia had Ivan not changed course  
and named Vasily as his successor?

**4. Draw Conclusions** Why do you think Ivan  
chose the niece of the Byzantine emperor as  
his wife?

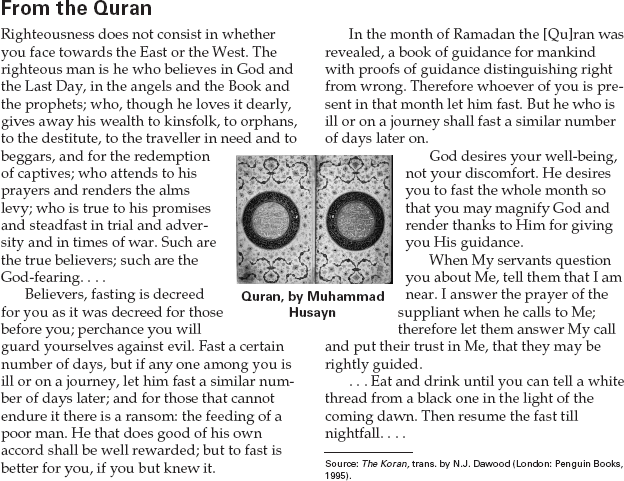
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**32**

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The Quran, the holy scriptures of Islam, contains 114 *suras,* or chapters. Muslims  
believe that the Quran is the actual word of God, or *Allah,* as revealed to the prophet  
Muhammad. This excerpt, from the second *sura,* tells believers what they should do  
to be righteous and faithful Muslims. ♦ *As you read, think about what different religions  
require of their believers. Then, on a separate sheet of paper, answer the questions that follow.*



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**1.** What must a Muslim do who cannot fast  
during Ramadan?

**2.** At what point in the day do Muslims have to  
stop eating and begin their fast?

**3. Make Inferences** The word *Islam* means “to  
submit to God.” What evidence can you find  
in this *sura* that submitting to the will of God  
is important to Muslims?

**4. Make Comparisons** What does a Muslim  
have to do to be righteous? How does this  
requirement compare with the requirements  
of other religions?

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**33**