

Section 2

The Formation and History of the UAE

GRASP | ABSORB | APPRECIATE



Section 2: The Formation and History of the UAE

Through your work on this section you will be gaining the following Abu Dhabi knowledge:

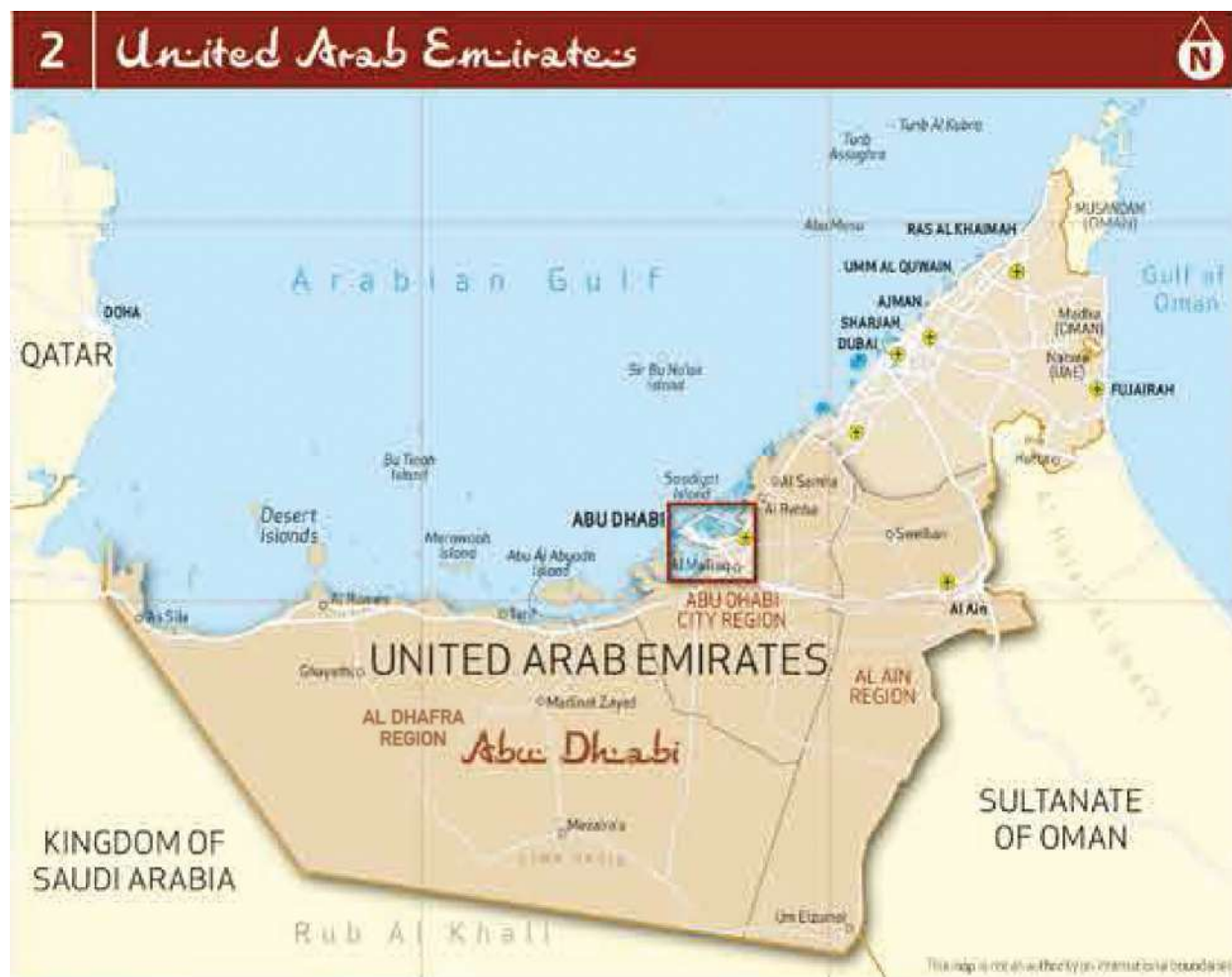
- Introduction to UAE history:
 - a. Ancient trade routes in the Arabian Peninsula
 - b. Early settlement patterns
 - c. The pearl industry
 - d. The Trucial States
 - e. Discovery of oil
- Key milestones for the UAE
- Tribes in the UAE

You will also be able to:

- LO3 Give an overview of the history of the UAE and the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, including the late Sheikh Zayed and his legacy

*"He who does not know his past cannot make the best of his present and his future, for it is from the past that we learn."*¹

Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan



¹ Source: http://www.uaeinteract.com/docs/Sheikh_Zayed_in_quotes/18411.htm

History of Abu Dhabi and UAE

Introduction

The United Arab Emirates is a federal monarchy on the south-east tip of the Arabian Peninsula. It borders Oman in the east and Saudi Arabia in the south, it shares maritime borders with Qatar in the west and Iran in the north. It consists of seven Emirates: Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al Quwain, Ras Al Khaimah, and Fujairah. These cover 83,600 square kilometres (32,400 square miles) and include 200 islands. The UAE was founded initially with six members on the 2nd December 1971 (Ras Al Khaimah joined on the 10th February 1972) and is the only federation of separate states in the Arab world.

Archaeological finds suggest a long history of human settlement in the region. In fact, there is evidence that people have lived there for over 100,000 years. Human settlement probably began in the Paleolithic period with early Bedouin nomads travelling through the region. As time went by, trade and social interaction created a greater need for settled communities, but it also brought the dangers of invasion, piracy and war. The region experienced many centuries of change in terms of industry and influence but recent years have seen oil and gas bring prosperity. Through an enlightened ruler, the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan of Abu Dhabi, a proud nation and a strong economy has been created.

What started as a primitive settlement of several hundred palm huts in the desert has now become the proud and successful Emirate of Abu Dhabi. Today, the UAE is a modern, oil-exporting country with a highly diversified economy, a global hub for tourism, retail and finance, and home to the largest man-made seaport, a mega-tall skyscraper and snow slopes in shopping malls.

DID YOU KNOW? The British had significant involvement in the region until the late 1960s. They held maritime treaties with the Trucial Rulers from 1820 and these treaties, including the Treaty of Perpetual Maritime Peace of 1853, created a relatively peaceful period.

DID YOU KNOW? The Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) envoy, Al-Ala'a Bin Al-Hadhrami, was sent to the province of Bahrain (which covered the coastal line from Kuwait to North Oman from 629 AD) to invite them to Islam. See the Religion in the UAE section for more information.

Early settlement

For thousands of years, the Bedouin tribes lived on varied terrain, self-sufficient and with lives built around family values. They moved between the sea for fishing and the desert where they could graze their animals. The oasis was vital to survival as a water source but it was also where they harvested crops, primarily dates. Dates were a vitamin-rich staple in the nomadic diet, portable for long journeys across desert, mountains and sea.

The camel was central to nomadic existence and traditional family and community life in harsh environments such as the desert. Camels provided a dependable source of food and milk as well as transport, the bride's dowry to marriage, a sacrifice and a payment of Zakat [charitable gifts]. Their tough skin and wool was used for household items and they were even highly esteemed in poetry.

Around 3000 BC, the climate in the region began to get dryer, forcing many nomadic tribes to settle and begin farming and trading with each other. This shift in lifestyle is evident in the settlements from the late Bronze and Iron Ages. Irrigation systems, such as the falaj, were developed so that crops could be grown more efficiently and trading routes became more and more important.

DID YOU KNOW? There are over 160 words for camel in the Arabic language. Camels are now essentially used for racing, which enjoys the patronage of the current Rulers.

The timeline for early settlement of the region

Paleolithic Age 6000 BC - 3500 BC

Nomadic
Fishing
Grazing

Bronze Age 3200 BC - 1300 BC

Settlements
Agriculture
Copper mining
Trading

Iron Age 1300 BC - 300 BC

Settled communities
Irrigation
Established trade routes
Farming



Irrigation system

Ancient trade routes in the Arabian Peninsula

As the nomadic communities settled, and trading between different settlements grew, trade routes began to emerge across the Arabian Peninsula. By the early 7th century, these were stretching as far as Europe, India and Asia. These routes were hugely influential in the development of the region and many are still famous today such as the Spice and Silk Routes. The main route across Arabia became known as the Incense Route or the Incense Road of Antiquity. It was part of an extensive network of land and sea trading routes linking the countries in the Mediterranean with Eastern and Southern sources of incense, spices and other luxury goods such as silk. These precious products were brought from the south of the Arabian Peninsula, up the Red Sea coast and across the Sinai Desert to Egypt. There they were loaded onto ships and sailed to destinations across the Mediterranean Sea.

The Incense Routes were mostly controlled by the Arabs who brought frankincense and myrrh by camel caravan from southern Arabia and for trade with India, Africa and East Asia. This included a variety of exotic spices, precious stones, ebony, silk and fine textiles such as carpets. There was also trade in the rare woods, feathers, animal skins and gold from Africa. This period made the region immensely prosperous, with taxes levied on the caravans and also on the merchants setting up trading posts all along the routes. Julfar, in Ras Al Khaimah, became a wealthy port and pearling centre, hosting the great wooden dhows that sailed across the Indian Ocean. After Baghdad emerged as the main centre for Islamic civilisation, eastern Arabia greatly benefited from the increased demand for foreign goods from the city.

Of course, it was not just trade that flowed through these routes; they also acted as cultural channels and forms of communication between the civilisations of east and west, north and south. For example, long-distance trade with the Greeks, Romans and Persians introduced artistic and cultural changes which can be seen in art, design and cuisine throughout the UAE today.

Pearl industry

The pearl oyster or *lulu* (*qamasha*) was the main source of economic wealth in the region before the discovery of oil. Pearl oysters occur naturally in the calm water and shallow banks (fasht) of the Gulf. Exactly when the people of the region first began to harvest this valuable resource is not known: individual pearls have been found in excavations on archaeological sites that date back at least 7,000 years. There are mentions of the beauty of the Gulf pearls in ancient Greek literature from the 3rd century ('The Sophists at Dinner' – sometimes known as the oldest cookbook). We do know that pearls were traded extensively in Roman times and the Arab geographer, Al Idrisi, mentions that in 1154 Julfar, in Ras Al Khaimah, was already a major pearling centre. Certainly, historical accounts indicate that Julfar's fame had spread far and wide by the 15th century.

In 1517, the Portuguese writer Duarte Barbosa recorded that *"Here [Julfar] is a very great fishery as well, of seed pearls; and the Moors of Hormuz come hither to buy them and carry them to India and many other lands"*.

The expansion of pearl fishing really changed the settlement habits of the nomadic communities from the interior and their agricultural-based lifestyle to that of the coastal fringes. Many families settled in places like Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah and Ras Al Khaimah. However, the risks of the pearling industry were very great and the life of a pearl diver was dangerous and often short.

The decline of the pearl industry began before World War II and was due to many factors, including the production of cheaper cultured pearls in Japan in 1921. This was followed by the economic depression of the 1920s and '30s which ruined the wealth of many potential customers, and then a ban was imposed on pearl imports by the Indian Government in 1947. This was very hard on families who had specialised in pearl diving and did not have other family businesses.

The Trucial States

In 1498, Portuguese explorer, Vasco de Gama, circumnavigated the Cape of Good Hope to establish a sea route to India. He was the first European to reach India by sea, opening up this lucrative trade route and bypassing the camel caravans which had provided the Arab merchants with much of their wealth for centuries. By 1515, the Portuguese occupied Julfar near Ras Al Khaimah and built a customs house where they taxed the region's flourishing trade with India and the Far East.

Over the next 100 years, there was fierce rivalry between the European countries, particularly the Dutch and the French, to control the trade with India and with the Gulf. By the middle of the 17th century, however, it was the British who came to dominate. The rich cargoes provided tempting targets for pirates who regularly harassed European ships, despite the presence of European and Omani warships to protect them. As a result, the whole area acquired the name of the 'Pirate Coast'. The conflict led to a series of interventions by the British to stop the piracy and, in 1820, the British imposed a General Treaty of Peace on the nine Arab Sheikdoms and established a garrison in the region.

Raids continued intermittently until 1835, when the Sheikhs agreed not to engage in hostilities at sea by signing the Maritime Truce. In 1853, they signed the Treaty of Peace in Perpetuity with Britain under which the Sheikhs agreed to a perpetual maritime truce. The British enforced it and disputes between the Sheikhs were referred to the British for settlement. As a result of this series of treaties, the area became known as the Trucial Coast and the Emirates as the Trucial States.

Primarily in reaction to the colonial ambitions of other European countries, Britain and the Trucial Sheikdoms established closer bonds with the 1892 treaty similar to treaties entered into by Britain with other Arabian Gulf principalities. The Sheikhs agreed not to enter into relationships with any foreign government other than Britain without its consent. In return, the British promised to protect the Trucial Coast from all aggression by sea and to help in case of land attack. The area was known as the Trucial Coast until the British Government decided to withdraw from the region in the late 1960s and the subsequent creation of the UAE in 1971.

The main concern of the British was to protect trade by sea and they did not wish to become involved in inter-tribal politics. Throughout this period, the strongest group within the Bedouin tribes was the Bani Yas. The Bani Yas were originally based in Liwa, an oasis deep in the Empty Quarter desert, but moved their base to Abu Dhabi in 1793. They maintained an uneasy peace with the other tribes of the interior but diminishing resources caused unrest and inter-tribal troubles over land continued to use up the resources of the British.

DID YOU KNOW? Separate families within the Bani Yas moved to Abu Dhabi and to Dubai; the tribal group in Abu Dhabi is called Al Bu Falah and the tribal group in Dubai is known as Al Bu Falasah.

Discovery of oil

At the beginning of the 20th century, Abu Dhabi was a subsistence economy made up of small fishing villages, pearling, camel herding and farming in the oases. The decline of the pearl industry in the 1930s created significant hardship for the local population with the loss of their largest export. The economy was struggling and many people were suffering. However, the discovery of oil in Iran, Iraq, Bahrain and then Saudi Arabia was to change all of this.

World War II delayed developments in the region, but the Sheikhs of Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah were already in discussions about oil exploration in the Trucial States and, in 1939, Sheikh Shakhbout bin Sultan Al Nahyan granted the first oil concessions.

The first oil find was under an old pearling bed in the Gulf, Umm Shaif, in 1958 and then they struck oil in the desert at Murban in 1960. The first cargo of crude oil was exported from Jabel Dhanna in Abu Dhabi in 1962. As oil revenues increased, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan began a comprehensive programme to build new schools, housing, hospitals and roads. When Dubai's oil exports commenced in 1969, Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum, the Ruler of Dubai, also used oil revenues to improve his people's quality of life.

There were two oil companies:

- Petroleum Development (Trucial Coast – PDTC) later renamed Abu Dhabi Petroleum Company (ADPC) whose partners included BP. They were responsible for onshore exploration
- Abu Dhabi Marine Areas Ltd. (ADMA), a joint venture between BP and Campagnie Francaise des Petroles (later Total) of France. They were responsible for offshore exploration.

On 6th August 1966, Sheikh Shakhbout was succeeded by his younger brother, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan. In 1971, Sheikh Zayed became president of the newly-created UAE and the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company was founded (ADNOC). In December 1974, the company gained a 60% interest in ADPC and ADMA. In Dubai, the Emirates National Oil Company (ENOC) was formed to manage oil production in Dubai.

Today, oil production in the UAE is in the region of 2.3 million barrels per day and it possesses the sixth largest proven oil reserves in the world. It is the world's seventh biggest oil producer and the fourth largest net oil exporter, representing 15% of OPEC's total oil output.

The key aspects of history that you should be aware of are:

- The early settlements – specifically how the patterns of living changed from nomadic herdsmen and fishermen to more settled communities
- Ancient trade routes – that carried the valuable markets of spice, silk and incense around the world and how this changed the fortunes of the traders of Arabia.
- The pearl industry – the rise and fall of pearl fishing in the region and the key challenges it faced
- The Trucial States – the treaties with the British that protected and supported the Sheikdoms of the region.
- Discovery of oil – the effect of oil exploration, the companies involved and then the huge impact production had on the future of the UAE

Key milestones for the United Arab Emirates

Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan

In 1966, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan became Ruler of Abu Dhabi, a post he held for a period of 38 years. He became the principal driving force behind the formation of the United Arab Emirates; Sheikh Zayed recognised that the wealth generated by oil had the potential to transform the fortunes of Abu Dhabi and the Emirates. He came to power with a vision for the development and modernisation of the country. A key priority was developing the country's infrastructure, which included building new roads, constructing a bridge to link Abu Dhabi Island to the mainland and establishing schools, housing, medical services, a seaport and an airport. These major investments created employment and opportunity.

It improved the lives of ordinary people; modern roads were laid over the desert and fresh water and electricity connected to every house; a modern education system was established and literacy classes were introduced. It was possible for Bedouins in the desert to receive medical services from a clinic for the first time.

Independence

On 6th August 1966, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan became Ruler of Abu Dhabi. Sheikh Zayed had a clear vision for the future of the region and believed that working in cooperation for the good of the people should be the ultimate goal. Even before he began negotiations on creating a union, he ensured that a large part of the Emirate's oil revenue went into the Trucial States Development Fund. In 1968, Britain announced it would withdraw from the Gulf by 1971. This created a huge opportunity for unification of the Emirates and the creation of a partnership which would be much more formal than the Trucial States had been. This prompted Sheikh Zayed, Ruler of Abu Dhabi, and Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Ruler of Dubai, to begin planning a federation. On February 18 1968, the two rulers met at Al Sameeh on the border between Abu Dhabi and Dubai. This historic meeting marked an agreement to merge the two Emirates, to conduct foreign affairs, defence, security and social services jointly, and to adopt a common immigration policy. Other administrative matters were left to the jurisdiction of the local government of each Emirate. The agreement became known as the Union Accord and was the first step towards uniting the Trucial Coast as a whole.

In February 1968, the nine states gathered at a constitutional conference in Dubai to agree an 11-point plan. This included Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al Quwain, Ras Al Khaimah, and Fujairah plus Bahrain and Qatar. Over the next three years, the states worked on creating a constitutional and legal framework for the Union. In the summer of 1971, external events led to the independence of Bahrain and Qatar. On 18th July 1971, the six Emirates of Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al Quwain and Fujairah agreed to the formation of a new federation – the United Arab Emirates. This was formally announced on 2nd December 1971; Ras Al Khaimah joined the following year on the 10th February 1972.

The rulers of the other Emirates unanimously elected Sheikh Zayed as the first President for a period of five years and Sheikh Rashid as vice-president. The Supreme Council elected Sheikh Zayed several more times until he passed away. He is remembered as the builder of the nation and as 'a loving father to the nation's citizens' (*'Baba Zayed'*).

Further your knowledge

To find out more about the UAE's first elections, visit the following link:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/6182581.stm

1987 - 2006 A Time of Growth

- 1990** - Sheikh Rashid Bin Said Al Maktum passes away and is succeeded by his son, Sheikh Maktoum Bin-Rashid Al Maktoum as Ruler of Dubai and UAE vice-president
- 1991** - UAE joins forces with the allies against Iraq after the invasion of Kuwait
- 2004** - UAE President Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan passes away and is succeeded by his son, Sheikh Khalifa
- 2005** - Sheikh Khalifa announces plans for the UAE's first elections. Half of the members of the FNC will be elected by a limited number of citizens
- 2006** - Sheikh Maktoum Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Prime Minister and vice-president and Ruler of Dubai passes away and is succeeded by his brother Sheikh Mohammad bin Rashid Al Maktoum
- 2006** - First elections held

Tribes in the UAE

Lineage is very important in Arab culture and most Emirati nationals can tell you to which tribe they belong. The name of the tribe or branch of the tribe, may be part of their name for example HH Sheikh Zayed as Zayed bin ("son of") Sultan (his father) Al Nahyan (family of Nahyan). On marriage, women keep their father's name so for example Sheikh Zayed's wife was HH Fatima Bint ("daughter of") Mubarak (her father) Al Ketbi (her family name).



The family name could be the name of an ancestor from countless generations ago who is considered the patron of the many groups of families making up the tribe.

The main two tribal groupings are Qawasim and Bani Yas. These two emerged as the leading powers in the region around the 18th century. The Qawasim were land and sea traders and dominated the region of the Emirates of Ras Al Khaimah and Sharjah. The Bani Yas were agricultural and pastoral tribes based in what are now Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

Members of the tribe were traditionally bound by bonds of mutual assistance and a concept of honour to immediate blood relatives. The strength of these bonds and a mutual dependence provided the basis for the strength of the tribe.

The Bani Yas can be traced back to Yas Bin Amer, whose tribe came from the tribe of Nizar Bin Maid bin Adnan. Adnan is thought to be one of the two ancestors (along with Qahtan) of all the tribes of southern Arabia. The Bani Yas were based in Liwa oasis but grew very powerful throughout the region through numerical superiority and military prowess. Because of this, many tribes sought to join up with the Bani Yas for protection and security and it became a confederation of about 20 different sub-sections. In 1793, a sub-section of this tribe called Al Bu Falah resettled in Abu Dhabi and it is from this sub-section that the present day rulers of Abu Dhabi, the Al Nahyan family, come.

A traditional Bedouin tribe, the members of the Al Bu Falah spent the winter with their camels in the desert and went pearl fishing in the summer. In 1833, a large influential group of the Bani Yas moved to Dubai under the leadership of Maktoum bin Buti Al Maktoum and this family continues to rule Dubai to this day.

Other sections of the Bani Yas tribe included:

Al Rumaithat - this group traditionally depended upon the fishing and pearling industries

Al Bu Mahair - like the Rumaithat, this group were fishermen and pearl divers

Al Qubaisat - one of the largest groups who settled in the Liwa oasis

Al Mazrouei - the main Bedouin section of the Bani Yas, they lived in settlements in the Liwa oasis and depended on camels, pearling boats and date plantations

Al Hawamil - another large section of the settled population in the Liwa oasis who owned goats and sheep as well as fishing boats and pearling boats

Al Maharbah - these were both nomadic and settled communities and were involved in the pearling industry with a small fleet of 40 boats

Al Mishaghin - this was a small group of Bedouin families who settled in Dubai and were a sub-section of the Al Bu Mahair

Al Sudan - this group was spread out along the entire coast and was dependent on the sea for its livelihood. They played an active part in the fishing and pearling trade but were also traders.

This traditional tribal grouping became the basis of a nation-state which covered a large and geographically diverse territory. The coherence of the group was due to the fact that the sections and sub-sections and allied groups did not live separate existences but shared community life and intermarried in the villages of the Liwa oasis. They were mutually dependent, bound together by their code of honour. The nomads of one tribe cared for the camels of another tribe and those with no boats of their own went on the boats of others. Most families also had relatives living in Abu Dhabi so an urban social mix was also growing.

Knowledge Bank: The Formation and History of the UAE

Overview of the history of Abu Dhabi and the UAE

1. Early settlement

- Bedouin tribes lived in varied terrain and were self-sufficient with lives built around family values. They moved between the sea for fishing and the desert where they could graze their animals
- The oasis was vital to survival for the Bedouin as a water source but it was also where they harvested crops such as dates
- Dates were a vitamin-rich staple in the nomadic diet, portable for long journeys across desert, mountains and sea
- The camel was central to nomad existence; they provided food and milk as well as transport. Their tough skin and wool was used for household items

2. Ancient trade routes in the Arabian Peninsula

- As nomadic communities settled, trade routes began to emerge right across the Arabian Peninsula
- By the early 7th century, trade routes stretched as far as Europe, India and Asia
- Trade routes were hugely influential in the development of the region and many are still famous today such as the Spice and Silk Routes
- The main route across Arabia became known as the Incense Route or the Incense Road of Antiquity
- The Incense Routes were mostly controlled by the Arabs who brought frankincense and myrrh by camel caravan from southern Arabia and for trade with India, Africa and East Asia

3. Pearl industry

- The pearl oyster or lulu was the main source of economic wealth in the region before the discovery of oil
- Pearl oysters occur naturally in the calm water and shallow banks of the Gulf
- Individual pearls have been found in excavations on archaeological sites that date back at least 7000 years
- The expansion of pearl fishing changed the settlement habits of nomadic communities from their agricultural-based lifestyle to that of the coastal fringes
- Many families settled in places like Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah and Ras Al Khaimah
- The risks of the pearling industry were very great and the life of a pearl diver was dangerous and often short
- The decline of the pearl industry began before World War II and was due to many factors including the production of cheaper cultured pearls in Japan in 1921

4. The Trucial States

- In 1498, a Portuguese explorer established a sea route to India
- The Portuguese explorer was the first European to reach India by sea, opening up a lucrative trade route and bypassing the camel caravans
- By 1515, the Portuguese occupied Julfar near Ras Al Khaimah and built a customs house where they taxed the region's flourishing trade with India and the Far East
- Conflict led to a series of interventions by the British to stop the piracy and, in 1820, the British imposed a General Treaty of Peace on the nine Arab Sheikdoms and established a garrison in the region
- In 1853, the Treaty of Peace in Perpetuity was signed with Britain under which the Sheikhs agreed to a perpetual maritime truce

- The British enforced the Treaty and disputes between the Sheikhs were referred to the British for settlement. As a result of this series of treaties, the area became known as the Trucial Coast and the Emirates as the Trucial States
- The British promised to protect the Trucial Coast from all aggression by sea and to help in case of land attack. The area was known as the Trucial Coast until the creation of the UAE in 1971
- Abu Dhabi is four hours ahead of UTC (Co-ordinated Universal Time – formerly known as GMT).

5. Discovery of oil

- The decline of the pearl industry in the 1930s created significant hardship for the local population with the loss of their largest export
- The economy was struggling but the discovery of oil in Iran, Iraq, Bahrain and then Saudi Arabia was to change all of this
- In 1939, Sheikh Shakhbout bin Sultan Al Nahyan granted the first oil concessions
- The first oil find was under an old pearling bed in the Gulf in 1958
- Oil was then struck in the desert at Murban in 1960
- The first cargo of crude oil was exported from Abu Dhabi in 1962
- There were two oil companies:
 - Petroleum Development (Trucial Coast) Ltd (PDTC)
 - Abu Dhabi Marine Areas Ltd (ADMA)
- Today, oil production in the UAE is in the region of 2.3 million barrels per day
- The UAE is one of the world's biggest oil producers

6. Key milestones for the United Arab Emirates

- In 1966, Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan became Ruler of Abu Dhabi
- Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan became the driving force behind the formation of the United Arab Emirates, a post he held for 38 years
- In 1968, Britain announced it would withdraw its position in the Gulf by 1971
- On 18th February 1968, an historic agreement, the Union Accord, was signed between Abu Dhabi and Dubai in Al Sameeh
- In February 1968, nine states convened a constitutional conference in Dubai and developed an 11-point agreement
- During summer of 1971, Bahrain and Qatar declared independence
- Six Emirates united as one nation on 2nd December 1971; Ras Al Khaimah joined the following year
- Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan is remembered as the builder of the nation and as 'a loving father (Baba) to the nation's citizens'

7. Tribes in the UAE

- Most Emirati nationals can tell you which tribe they belong to
- The name of the tribe may be part of their name. For example:

a. HH Sheikh Zayed as Zayed bin ("son of") Sultan (his father) Al Nahyan (family of Nahyan)



b. On marriage, women keep their father's name so, for example, Sheikh Zayed's wife was HH Fatima bint ("daughter of") Mubarak (her father) Al Ketbi (her family name).

- The two main tribal groupings are the Qawasim and the Bani Yas.
- The Qawasim were land and sea traders and dominated the region of the Emirates of Ras Al Khaimah and Sharjah
- The Bani Yas were agricultural and pastoral tribes based in what is now Abu Dhabi and Dubai
- In 1833, a large influential group of the Bani Yas moved to Dubai under the leadership of Maktoum bin Buti Al Maktoum and this family continues to rule Dubai to this day.
- Sections of the Bani Yas tribe included:
 - Al Rumaithat
 - Al Bu Mahair
 - Al Qubaisat
 - Al Mazrouei
 - Al Hawamil
 - Al Maharbah
 - Al Mishaghin
 - Al Sudan