

# Saladin

A Reading A-Z Level Z2 Leveled Book  
Word Count: 1,979

LEVELED BOOK • Z<sup>2</sup>

# Saladin

## Connections

### Writing

How did Saladin positively impact Egypt and the Middle East? Write an essay explaining your thoughts using details from the book and outside resources as support.

### Social Studies

Research to learn more about the religion of Islam. Create a brochure that includes its beginnings, its ties to Jerusalem, and the significance of the Five Pillars of Islam. Present your brochure to your class.

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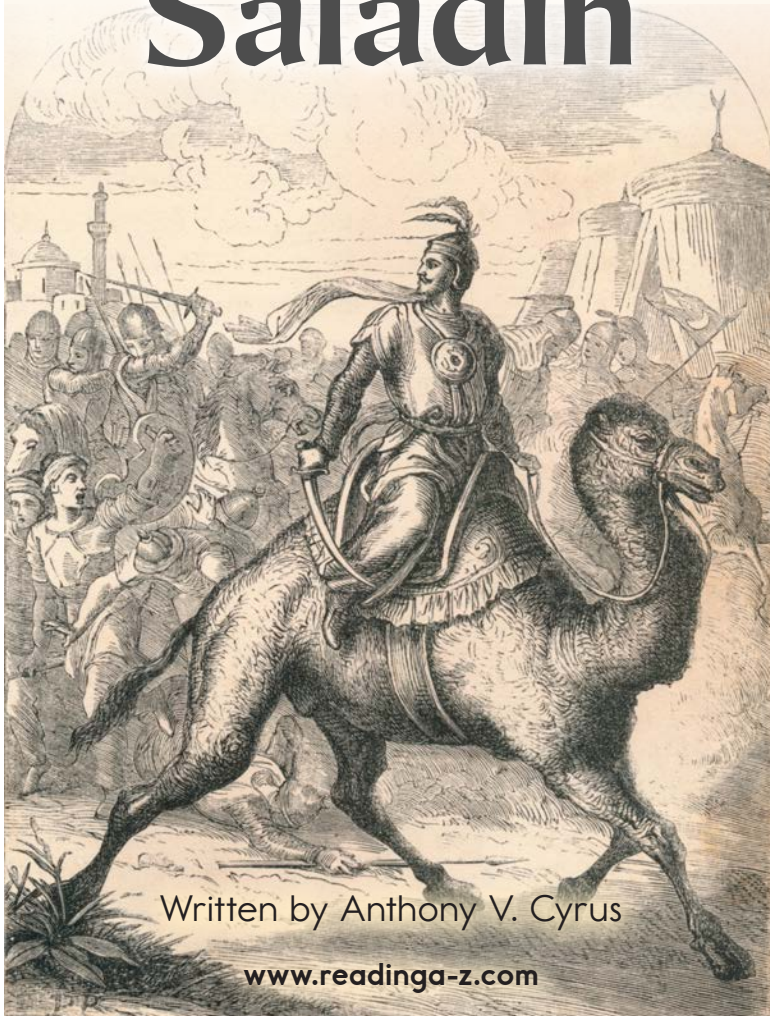
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## Focus Question

What lessons can be learned from Saladin's leadership?

## Words to Know

advocated	integrity
antagonistic	intellectual
besieged	mausoleum
desecrated	pilgrimage
ethnicity	reinforcements
harassed	sporadically

Front cover: Saladin faces his enemies after the Battle of Hattin.

Title page: Saladin rides a camel in a battle with the Crusaders.

Page 3: Today, Middle Eastern countries include Turkey, Cyprus, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran, Israel, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Jordan, Egypt, Sudan, Libya, and the countries on of the Arabian peninsula.

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Front cover, back cover: Saladin orders the execution of 200 Templars and Hospitallers, Nicolle, Pat/Private Collection/© Look and Learn/Bridgeman Images; title page: © The Print Collector/Hulton Archive/Getty Images; page 4 (main): © Alexey Stiop/123RF; page 4 (inset): © Universal Images Group/Universal Images Group/Getty Images; page 6: © Photos.com/Photos.com/Thinkstock; page 7: © DEA/De Agostini/Getty Images; page 8: © travelpixs/Alamy Stock Photo; page 10: © De Agostini Picture Library/Getty Images; page 11: © Pictures From History/The Image Works; page 15 (left): © Granger, NYC; page 15 (right): © Pantheon/Pantheon/SuperStock; page 16: © traveler1116/iStock/Getty Images Plus/Getty Images; page 17 (left): © imageBROKER/imageBROKER/SuperStock; page 17 (right): © David Lyon/Alamy Stock Photo; page 18: © Eye Ubiquitous/REX/Shutterstock; page 19 (left): © The Art Archive/The Art Archive/SuperStock; page 19 (top right): © J.D. Dallet/age fotostock/SuperStock; page 19 (bottom right): First Crusade, Escott, Dan/Private Collection/© Look and Learn/Bridgeman Images

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### Correlation

#### LEVEL Z2

Fountas & Pinnell	Y-Z
Reading Recovery	N/A
DRA	70+



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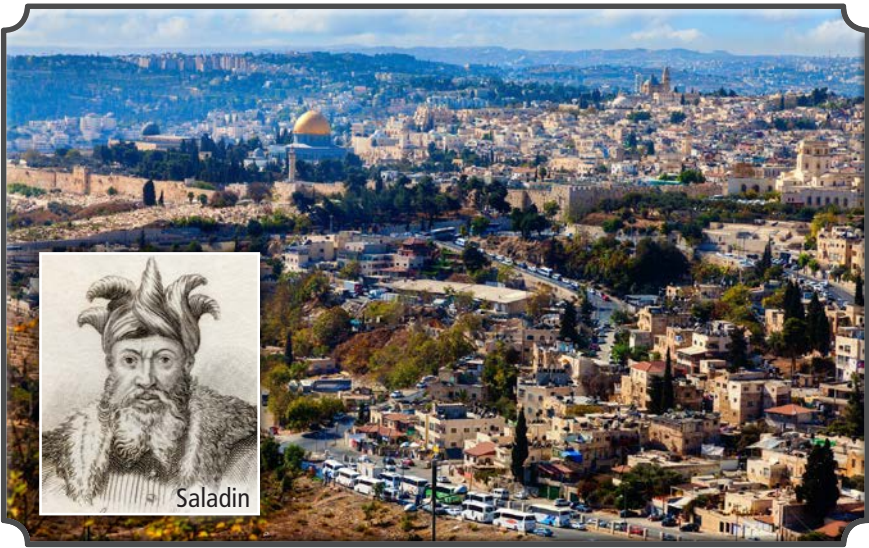
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Jerusalem is one of the world's oldest cities. Today it is the capital of Israel.

**The World of Saladin**

Nearly nine hundred years ago, a boy named Saladin lived in the Middle East, a region with a wealth of culture and history. He would grow up to become perhaps the most famous Muslim military leader of all time.

The complex region where Saladin was born is the birthplace of three major world religions: Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. Followers of the three religions share the city of Jerusalem, home to many sacred buildings and other sites. People's passions about this region run deep.

The Middle East has long been embroiled in conflict. Nearly forty years before Saladin was



born, in 1099, Western European Christians—known as Franks—captured the important shared religious homeland of Jerusalem. They promised safety to the city’s Muslim and Jewish residents but instead slaughtered thousands of them. Years later, Saladin was determined to reclaim Jerusalem for Muslims.

### Young Saladin

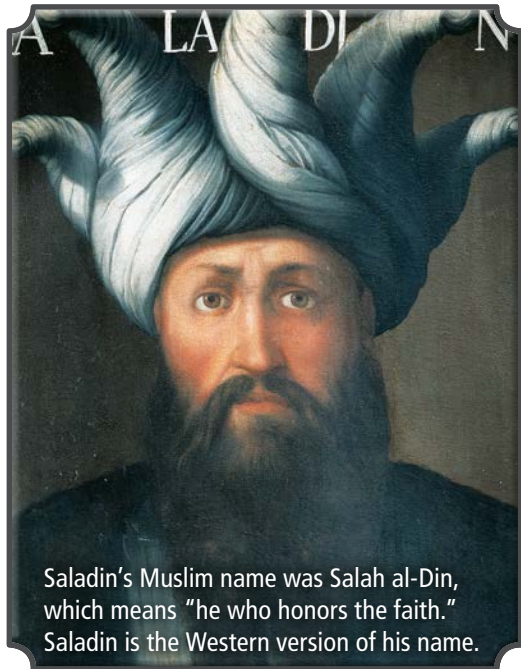
Saladin was born in 1137 or 1138 to a prominent Muslim family in Tikrit, Mesopotamia—far from Jerusalem. Today, what was Mesopotamia is mostly Iraq, but also parts of Syria, Turkey, and Iran. Saladin was the son of a wealthy chief of Kurdish **ethnicity**. The family left Tikrit when Saladin was an infant. They moved west to Aleppo, in northern Syria, which was part of the Turkish Empire and under the leadership of Sultan Zengi. Saladin’s father entered Zengi’s service soon after.

A few years later, Saladin and his family moved again, this time to Baalbek and then to Damascus. By age seven, Saladin attended school at a mosque. He was well educated in a variety of fields, including science, math, poetry, philosophy, religion, and Arabic history and culture. His interests generally lay in **intellectual** rather than military pursuits.

Saladin grew up learning about his religion and following the Five Pillars of Islam: faith, prayer, fasting, the giving of alms, and **pilgrimage**. The Muslim society placed a strong emphasis on leading a spiritual life, having a personal connection with Allah (God), and purifying one’s inner self. Religion was not a superficial practice; instead, it was a living reality that involved embodying principles such as justice, generosity, love, mercy, nobility, and humility.

The Five Pillars of Islam	
<b>Faith</b>	Muslims declare their faith: “There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his messenger.”
<b>Prayer</b>	Muslims pray facing Mecca five times a day: dawn, noon, afternoon, evening, and night.
<b>Fasting</b>	During the holy month of Ramadan, Muslims cannot eat or drink from dawn to dusk.
<b>Almsgiving</b>	It is the duty of Muslims to give a portion of their income to poor and needy people.
<b>Pilgrimage</b>	If possible, Muslims must make a pilgrimage to Mecca once in their lives.

Saladin's life changed when Zengi's son Nur al-Din assumed control of part of his father's kingdom after Zengi died in 1146. Saladin's father became governor of Damascus, and Saladin's uncle Shirkuh became a military general. Saladin joined Nur al-Din's army at age fourteen and assumed the role of the sultan's chief aide a few years later. Nur al-Din became Saladin's role model. The sultan was rich and powerful, but he led a simple, honorable life and used his wealth for the benefit of his people. Nur al-Din believed that every man was equal, and he ruled with fairness and generosity. Saladin vowed to become the same kind of man.



Saladin's Muslim name was Salah al-Din, which means "he who honors the faith." Saladin is the Western version of his name.



The Citadel of Saladin, in Cairo, Egypt, was built on Saladin's orders between 1176 and 1184 for protection from the Crusaders.

### Taking Command

Saladin continued to learn and eventually assumed more of a leadership role in the military. During his late twenties, he traveled to Egypt on several military expeditions under the command of his uncle Shirkuh for the purpose of preventing Egypt from falling under Frankish control. Egypt was in a state of political turmoil, and its ruler, called a *vizier*, kept trying to get the Muslims and Franks to fight each other so he could avoid fighting either group. After Shirkuh's forces repeatedly drove out the Franks, Shirkuh decided that he wanted to take over Egypt. The vizier planned to have Shirkuh assassinated, but Egypt's religious leader viewed Shirkuh as a liberator and made him the new vizier. Shirkuh became ill and died only nine weeks later. At age thirty-one, Saladin rose to become the new vizier as well as the commander of Egypt's troops in 1169.

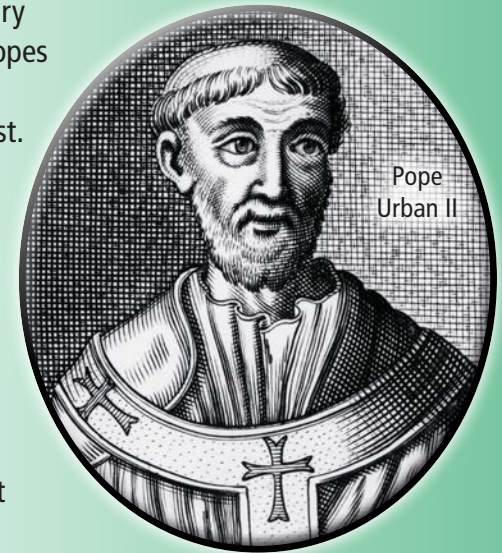
Saladin then founded the Ayyubid (eye-YOO-bid) dynasty and vowed to free Jerusalem and the surrounding area from Frankish control. A new Muslim era had begun. Saladin improved Egypt's economy and built many schools that attracted scholars from Europe and Asia, which resulted in Egypt eventually becoming an important intellectual center. Saladin could have lived in the former ruler's four-thousand-room palace but preferred a small, simple house, and he gave away most of the palace's riches. As a leader, he demanded no flattery; instead, he commanded loyalty by the strength of his character and by his gentle, generous nature.

### Fighting the Crusaders

In the 1180s, the Franks, who had conquered Jerusalem eighty years earlier, were fighting among themselves over who should rule the holy city. Raymond of Tripoli was respectful of Muslim ways, in contrast to Raynald of Châtillon (sha-tee-YOHN), a treacherous man who was **antagonistic** toward Muslims. Raynald emerged as the ruler of the Muslim trade routes, and Guy of Lusignan (loo-zee-NYON), a French knight, became king of Jerusalem. Before Raynald's victory, Arab and Frankish traders had passed through lands peacefully, and open warfare had been avoided, even though they clashed **sporadically**.

## The Crusades

Crusades were military campaigns ordered by popes that called for Christians to fight in the Middle East. Their goals were to stop Muslim expansion and reclaim the holy city of Jerusalem and other captured areas. Catholic followers believed that if they fought, their sins would be forgiven. Pope Urban II ordered the First Crusade in 1095.



Raynald broke treaties with Saladin, attacked Muslim trade caravans, and raided coastal towns. Saladin launched a war against the Franks, and vowed to kill Raynald. His main objectives were to drive the Franks out of the region, reclaim the holy city, and encourage Islam.

In early July 1187, Saladin's army captured the town of Tiberias and **besieged** the castle, which belonged to Raymond of Tripoli. Raymond **advocated** giving up Tiberias rather than fighting, but Guy decided to try and save the castle before it fell to Saladin's forces. Consequently, King Guy mobilized a Crusader army of twenty thousand. The Crusaders' forward movement through a hot,



barren plain on their way to Tiberias was halted when the troops ran out of water while being constantly **harassed** by Saladin's forces. The next morning, they continued toward the village of Hattin, where Saladin's army attacked them. Although the Franks fought with determination, Saladin's army soundly defeated them, killing many on the field. King Guy and Raynald were taken captive, as were many of Guy's knights, and many soldiers were sold into slavery. Raymond escaped but died a few weeks later.

After the Battle of Hattin, Saladin spared King Guy's life but fulfilled his threat to execute Raynald. Saladin then released the men who were held in Raymond's castle at Tiberias and took control of it.



The Muslim victory at the Battle of Hattin was a devastating defeat for the Franks.

## Saladin's Battles Against the Franks, 1187–1192



Saladin laid siege to Jerusalem and took the holy city two weeks later on October 2, 1187. The Muslim takeover of Jerusalem was a crushing blow for the Crusaders. But in contrast to the Christian takeover of Jerusalem in 1099, in which thousands of Muslims were killed, Saladin's armies did not kill many Christians. No Christian holy shrines were **desecrated**, and followers were allowed to visit them. Saladin also allowed Christian prisoners in Jerusalem to buy their freedom under the condition that they didn't then attack Muslims.

Saladin's brother arranged for the freedom of a thousand captive people who had no money, and Saladin freed all elderly poor people. The remaining Christians were made slaves but were not killed.

Saladin had finally accomplished his goal of returning Jerusalem to Muslim control. Next was the coastal city of Tyre, the strongest remaining Christian fortress. Once he captured that stronghold, his dream of a peaceful, united Muslim empire would be achieved. This was easier said than done, however. Frankish refugees congregated in the fortress at Tyre, which became the core of Christian resistance. Earlier, Saladin had put off dealing with Tyre in favor of retaking Jerusalem. That decision would cost him; the Christians in Tyre were able to strengthen their defenses, and they refused to surrender.

Around the same time as the attempt to capture Tyre, Saladin freed King Guy. Along with his supporters, Guy went to the city of Acre, which was under Muslim control, and laid siege. Saladin did not take Guy's efforts seriously because Acre was fortified with Muslim soldiers, and the Franks were vastly outnumbered. However, Saladin didn't account for the fact that **reinforcements** from Europe were on the way. By the time Saladin and

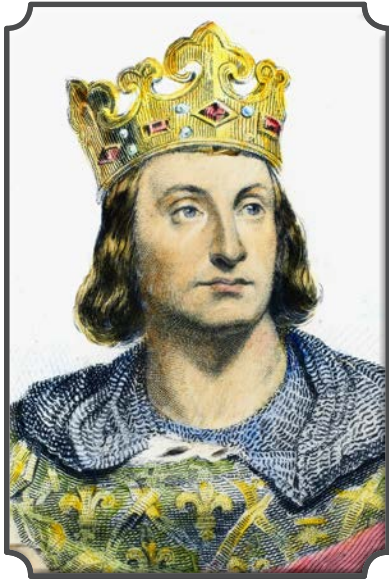
his army arrived at Acre, the Christians had built up their numbers so much that Saladin couldn't dislodge them. A siege lasting 638 days took place with Muslims inside the fortress, surrounded by Guy's Christian supporters who, in turn, were surrounded by Saladin's army.

### A Formidable Opponent

The news that the Muslim forces had taken Jerusalem took time to reach Europe, but when it did, it prompted Europe to launch the Third Crusade. King Richard I of England, often referred to as Richard the Lionheart, was among the European kings who raised armies with the intention of taking back the holy city. In the end, Richard led the effort, which was supported by the English and French armies, along with others.

The spring of 1191 saw the arrival of the leaders of the Third Crusade and their armies: first Philip Augustus of France, and Richard the Lionheart a few weeks later. Richard was a brilliant commander who forced Muslim troops at Acre to surrender only a month after his arrival. According to the terms of surrender, the Muslims inside the fortress had to pay for their release. Saladin couldn't raise the funds quickly enough, so Richard slaughtered the three thousand prisoners he had taken.





Philip Augustus of France



Richard the Lionheart

In August 1191, Richard marched Frankish troops about 130 kilometers (80 mi.) south toward Jaffa, determined to capture it. During the trek, Saladin's archers attacked them unceasingly. Saladin hoped that Richard's army would weaken, but Richard kept his men strong. Instead, Saladin's army grew weaker; they had been fighting for years, and they now faced a rested army from Europe led by a brilliant military commander.

Saladin couldn't prevent Richard from capturing Jaffa and other coastal cities, so he instead took his army to Jerusalem to fortify it against the Franks. Frankish troops followed in January 1192, but due to brutal weather conditions

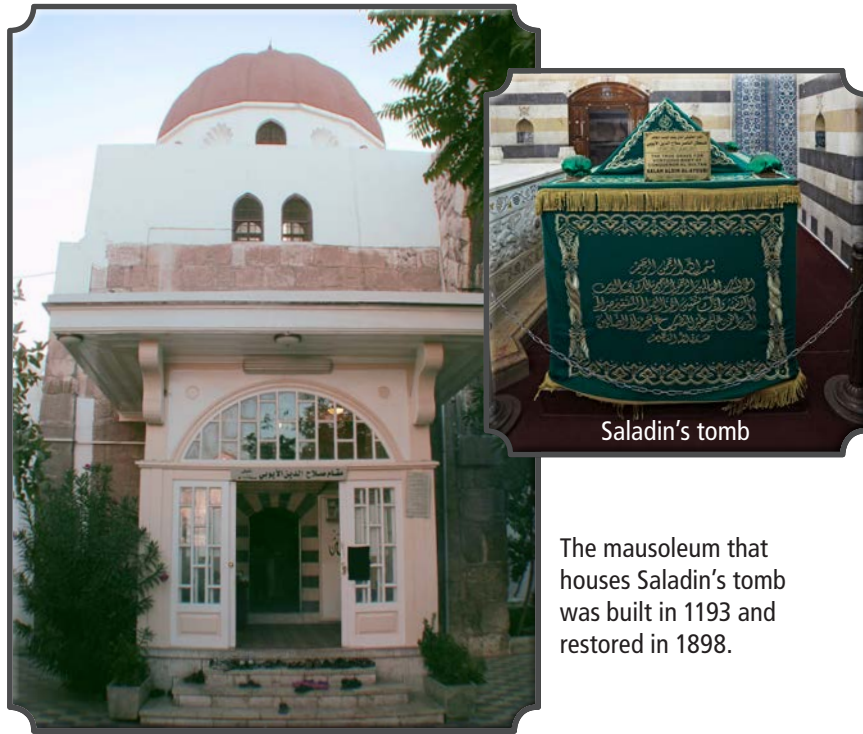
they were unable to reach the city and had to turn back. Then Richard found out that in his absence from England, his brother John was trying to seize his lands. Richard decided to return home with his troops, but before he did, he tried once more to take Jerusalem. The story goes that he beheld it from outside the city, realized he didn't have a big enough army, and turned away.

Saladin's brother negotiated a truce with Richard; Saladin and Richard never actually met. The truce, signed on September 2, 1192, lasted three years. Saladin's terms were generous: he allowed the Franks to keep the coast between Tyre and Jaffa. The rest of the land, including Jerusalem,

would be Muslim land, but Christians would be allowed free access to holy places. That truce ended the Third Crusade.



Saladin's honorable conduct won him enduring respect and appreciation from the Christian world.

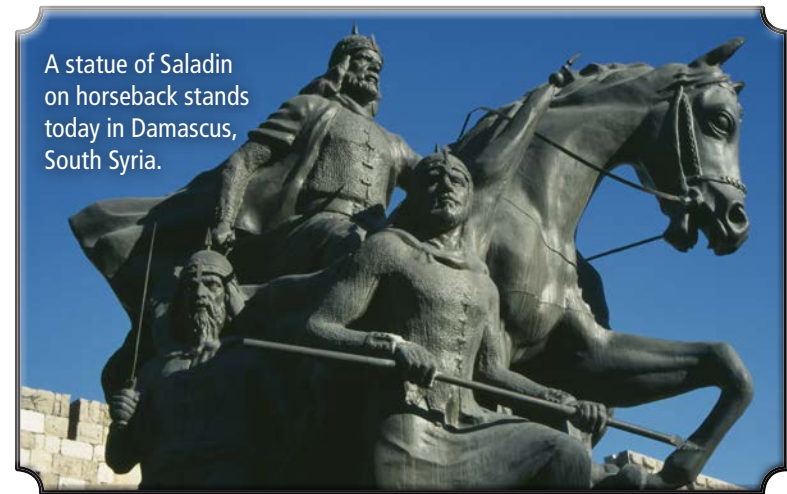


Saladin's tomb

The mausoleum that houses Saladin's tomb was built in 1193 and restored in 1898.

### Home to Damascus

After the truce was signed, Saladin went home to Damascus. He died just six months later, on March 4, 1193, at age fifty-five or fifty-six. Because he never cared much for money or a lavish life, he gave everything away, so there was no money for a proper burial. He was later buried in a **mausoleum** built by his son in Damascus. After Saladin's death, his family continued to rule over Egypt and nearby lands until 1250, when another group gained power. Jerusalem remained mostly under Muslim rule for centuries.



A statue of Saladin on horseback stands today in Damascus, South Syria.

### An Honorable Leader

Saladin was, and continues to be, revered by the Muslim world for uniting them and for reclaiming Jerusalem for Islam. Despite the fact that Christians lost control of Jerusalem to him, many also held Saladin in high esteem. Regardless of religion, people recognized Saladin as a notable leader—fierce in battle and compassionate to friend and foe alike. He was highly regarded throughout Europe and the Middle East as a man of great **integrity**, intellect, and military skill who was generous to his enemies and who inspired respect in everyone he met. When Saladin was near death, he told his oldest son, “I have become as great as I am because I have won men's hearts by gentleness and kindness.” Saladin set an example of an honorable leader during his lifetime, and he continues to set an example today.



## The Life of Saladin



1137 or 1138: Born in Tikrit, Mesopotamia

1152–1169: Serves under Syrian ruler Nur al-Din

1169: Becomes vizier of Egypt and commander of Egypt's Syrian troops



October 2, 1187: Recaptures Jerusalem after two-week siege

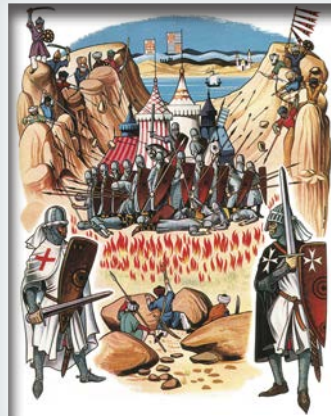
1189: Third Crusade begins

July 12, 1191: Siege of Acre ends

March 4, 1193: Saladin dies in Damascus

1174: Nur al-Din dies; Saladin launches effort to unite the Muslim states

1185: Succeeds in uniting the Muslim states



July 4, 1187: Battle of Hattin

August 4, 1192: Battle of Jaffa ends

September 2, 1192: Truce between Saladin and Richard the Lionheart

## Glossary

<b>advocated</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	supported or recommended (p. 10)
<b>antagonistic</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	showing or feeling strong dislike, opposition, or hostility toward another person or group (p. 9)
<b>besieged</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	surrounded a place with armed forces in order to attack or capture it (p. 10)
<b>desecrated</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	disrespected, damaged, or destroyed a sacred or respected object or place (p. 12)
<b>ethnicity</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	the state of belonging to a group of people with a common cultural heritage or nationality distinguished by customs, characteristics, language, and common history (p. 5)
<b>harassed</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	bothered or annoyed nonstop, often using pressure or fear (p. 11)
<b>integrity</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	the quality of being fair, honest, and moral (p. 18)
<b>intellectual</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	of or relating to serious study or logical thought; scholarly (p. 5)
<b>mausoleum</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a large tomb or a structure that contains several tombs (p. 17)
<b>pilgrimage</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a journey to a sacred or special place such as a shrine (p. 6)
<b>reinforcements</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	extra supplies or people sent to strengthen or support a military force (p. 13)
<b>sporadically</b> ( <i>adv.</i> )	occasionally, irregularly, or at random intervals (p. 9)