Chapter 1
The World in 1500: Six Cities

People
Mehmet II: young Ottoman sultan who led fierce conquest of Byzantium.
Gentile Bellini: an important Renaissance painter invited to serve in Ottoman court.
Isaac Tzarafati: a Jewish rabbi who left Eastern Europe to live in Ottoman Empire and encouraged others to do so.
Sonni Ali: a determined and ruthless Songhay Emperor who controlled West Africa.
Askia Muhammed: Songhay army commander who seized power, became Emperor and went to Makkah and was then made caliph for West Africa.
Isabella of Castile: the queen of Spain who sent Columbus to find a new route to Asia.
Montezuma II: the Emperor of the Aztecs when Europeans landed, and then conquered his lands and peoples.
Chengzu: the emperor of China in the Ming dynasty, who made Beijing his capital, sent naval expeditions, and supported new technology and culture.
Akbar: the young Mughal Emperor of India who encouraged learning, trade, and built Red Fort at Agra.
Shaikh Salim: a Hindu holy man who advised Akbar, making a prediction about his family.

Terms
Byzantine Empire: the Roman Christian empire in the eastern Mediterranean, which fell to the Muslims.
Islam: the religion developed in Arabia from the revelations of the prophet Muhammed, and which spread rapidly.
Songhay Empire: a Muslim empire of West Africa, centred in Timbuktu.
Qur’an: the sacred book of Islam that is studied to know the teachings of Allah.
Moors: a Muslim people of North Africa.
Aztec Empire: the empire in central America controlling the area of Mexico at the time of European contact.
teocalli: the ceremonial centre of Aztec religion, next to the imperial palaces, where human sacrifice was performed.
Middle Kingdom: a Chinese description of their Empire, reflecting the idea that the rest of the world was focused on its power and culture.
Forbidden City: the centre of the Emperor’s capital, a grand place where ordinary persons were not allowed.
Mughal Empire: the northern Indian empire established by the invading Muslims from Persia and Afghanistan.

1. This was the ancient city of Byzantium. It was the centre of Eastern Orthodox Christianity and had been named Constantinople (for Constantine, the first Christian Emperor). The city was conquered by Muslim Turks called Ottomans in 1453 CE and was then renamed Istanbul by Sultan Mehmet II.
2. 
- Islam allowed Jews and Christians to live among Muslims.
- Mehmet II repopulated the city with a variety of people and cultures. For example, Venetians given area.
- Istanbul became a strong linking centre between Europe and Asia.
- Various cultures were allowed their own places of worship, languages, and customs.

3. 
- Askia Muhammed seized power and started a new dynasty. He became a devout Muslim and made the pilgrimage to Makkah with an huge caravan. He returned as caliph, or leader of Muslims in all of West Africa.
- Its mosques were the focus of community.
- Its 150 schools taught religious knowledge.
- Great respect given to religious scholars.

4. Christian Spaniards had defeated Muslim Moors and pushed them out. Queen Isabella ordered that all trade pass through Seville. A “House of Trade” was opened as a monopoly. A new royal mint was built for the gold and silver being brought back (which caused Seville to become the economic centre of the Empire.)

5. 
- The Roman Catholic Church was the dominant institution: 27 parish churches and 38 monasteries.
- An increase of religious intolerance meant that Jews and Muslims had to either convert or leave.
- The Church owned 10 percent of the land.
- It was a very public religion — processions through the streets on holy days, especially the feast of Corpus Christi.
- Members of guilds and religious brotherhoods would carry lavishly decorated floats.

6. 
- Its size: 300,000 people (perhaps the largest city in the world at that time)
- Its artistry: built on a grid pattern of canals and roads
- Its architecture: a great pyramid-shaped temple for sacrifices at the centre.
- Its location: built on salt marshes in the middle of a lake, with causeways etc.

7. They created a new capital as the “imperial city,” and based the Emperor’s power on his title, “Son of Heaven.” They established a central bureaucracy and kept firm control over it. They also made the Mandarin language the standard.
8.  
- China was the world’s greatest maritime power.  
- Seven expeditions, each for two years or more.  
- The fleets were very large. (300 ships to Armada’s 130)  
- “Treasure Ships” were longer. (4 times Columbus’ longest)  
- Their technology included waterproof bulkheads and mechanical steering devices.  
- They sailed to Vietnam, the coasts of India, Sri Lanka, east Africa, the Persian Gulf, and Arabia.  
- They collected tribute gifts from foreign rulers, and brought exotic collections back to China.

9.  
He did not like Delhi since his father died there, and he had nearly been assassinated there. He built a brand new fortress (the Red Fort) and a great capital at the existing city of Agra. Then he built a grand new capital, and named it Fatehpur Sikri (city of victory). It included a mosque, which was a replica of the holy place in Makkah.

10.  
- Unique in religion: a great mosque, yet with an inscription honouring Jesus.  
- Unique in products: a great variety of merchandise was available, including precious stones.  
- Unique in its court: the king kept a zoo of exotic animals.  
- Unique in its monuments: beautiful buildings, particularly the Taj Mahal and the tomb of Shaikh Salim.