


# Mathematics

Modern mathematics was made possible by Islamic scholars.

This was because Muslim mathematicians in Baghdad gathered ideas from both ancient Greece and India, as well as adding contributions of their own. In addition to studying subjects such as arithmetic and geometry, they also founded the science of algebra – a word that comes from the Arabic *al-jabr*, a term describing a method of solving equations.



Mortar and pestle

## ARABIC NUMBERS

The numbers we use today began life in India. The Indians used place-value (which gives a value to a number according to its position) and the zero, which was unknown in the West. These ideas, which made arithmetic much easier than before, were in use in India in the 6th century. They were taken up by Muslims by the 9th century and probably passed to Europe in a 12th-century translation of an Arabic book on mathematics.