

1.1 Prophet Muhammad: Early Years and Foundation

A. Ancestry and Early Life (Birth to 8 years)

- **Ancestry:** Born in 570 CE (Year of the Elephant) into the Banu Hashim clan of the Quraysh tribe in Makkah.
- **Parents:** His father, Abdullah, died before his birth. His mother, Aminah, died when he was six years old at Abwa.
- **Foster Care:** Following the custom of Makkan nobility, he was sent to the desert to be nursed by Halima Sa'dia. This provided him with a healthy environment and mastery of the pure Arabic language.
- **Guardianship:** * Abdul Muttalib: His grandfather cared for him from ages 6 to 8.
 - **Abu Talib:** His uncle took over after the grandfather's death. Despite being poor, Abu Talib treated Muhammad (PBUH) better than his own children.

B. Early Influences and Business

- **Bahira the Monk:** During a trade journey to Syria at age 12, a Christian monk named Bahira recognized signs of Prophethood in Muhammad (PBUH) and warned Abu Talib to protect him from enemies.
- **Work as a Shepherd:** In his youth, he worked as a shepherd. This taught him patience, responsibility, and leadership over a "flock."
- **Business Success:** Known as Al-Amin (The Trustworthy) and As-Sadiq (The Truthful), he became a successful merchant.

C. Marriage to Khadijah (RA)

- **The Proposal:** Khadijah, a wealthy widow and businesswoman, hired him to lead her caravan to Syria. Impressed by the report of her servant Maysara regarding Muhammad's (PBUH) honesty and the high profits, she proposed marriage via her friend Nafisa.
- **The Marriage:** Muhammad (PBUH) was 25, and Khadijah was 40. This was a monogamous marriage that lasted 25 years.

- **Children:** They had two sons (Qasim and Abdullah, who died young) and four daughters (Zainab, Ruqayyah, Umm Kulthum, and Fatima).
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Importance of Early Life for Future Work

According to the Edexcel syllabus, you must analyze why these early years were a "foundation":

1. **Character Credibility:** His titles (*Al-Amin*) meant that when he started preaching, the Makkans could not call him a liar, even if they disagreed with his message.
 2. **Financial Stability:** Marriage to Khadijah gave him the financial freedom to spend months in meditation at the Cave of Hira.
 3. **Emotional Support:** Khadijah was the first to believe in him. Her reassurance after the first revelation was vital for his mental strength.
 4. **Resilience:** Being an orphan (refer to Surah Ad-Duha 93:6) made him empathetic toward the poor and marginalized, which became a core theme of his mission.
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Past Paper Questions & Examiner Guidance

Typical Exam Questions (Paper 1, Section A)

1. (a) Describe the main events of the Prophet's life from birth to parenthood. (6 Marks)
2. (b) Explain why the Prophet's marriage to Khadijah was significant for his later work. (6 Marks)
3. (d) "The Prophet's experiences as an orphan were the most important part of his preparation." Assess this statement. (12 Marks)

Examiner Report Insights (Common Pitfalls)

- **Focus on Detail:** Examiners note that students often confuse the two journeys to Syria. The first (age 12) was with Abu Talib; the second (age 25) was for Khadijah.
- **Development of Points:** In "Explain" (b) questions, do not just list facts. You must link the fact to the *impact*.
 - *Basic:* He was known as Al-Amin.

- ***Developed:*** He was known as Al-Amin, which provided him with instant credibility when he began to preach Islam, as his enemies could not accuse him of dishonesty.
- **Section (d) Requirements:** To get Level 3/4 (9–12 marks), you must include:
 - Reference to a sacred text (e.g., Qur'an 93:6: "*Did He not find you an orphan and give you shelter?*").
 - A balanced argument (e.g., comparing the influence of his ancestry vs. his marriage).
 - A clear, reasoned conclusion.