Introduction
For more than six centuries, from about 1290 until 1922, the Ottoman Empire was one of the world’s great powers. The center of the empire was located in Anatolia, in the region of modern day Turkey. At the height of its influence in the 1500s, it was the mightiest empire on earth. It nearly surrounded the Mediterranean Sea, covering much of southeastern Europe, northern Africa, and the Arab Middle East.

The Safavids were a ruling dynasty that dominated Persia, known as Iran today, in the 1500s and 1600s. Named for an ancestor by the name of Safi al-Din, who ruled in the late 13th century, the Safavid family became the spiritual leaders among a number of Turkish tribes east of Asia Minor establishing their empire near the Caspian Sea.

The Mughals were a Muslim dynasty in India founded in the 16th century by a descendant of both Genghis Khan and Timur-i Lang named Babur. The dynasty ruled most of the Northern Indian subcontinent until the mid-18th century.

Task 1 – Background Information
Click on the links below and read the background info first in order to become more informed on the Gunpowder Empires. These sites are important because they will provide basic information about each empire. After the research is complete, answer the following questions, and complete the required paragraph.

- Ottoman Empire - BBC
- 6 Ottoman Facts
- Ottoman Video Clip
- Safavid Empire - BBC
- Safavid article
- Safavid Video Clip
- Mughal Empire - BBC
- PBS: Mughal Empire
- Mughal Video Clip

1. What were the similarities and differences between the three Muslim empires?

2. What weaknesses were common to all of the Muslim empires?

3. What were the differences and comparisons in the social and economic organization of the Ottomans, Safavids, and the Mughals?

4. What were the reasons for the decline of the Mughal dynasty?

5. What were the causes of the Ottoman decline in the 17th century?

6. What were the reasons for the decline of the Safavid empire?

7. Choose one of the following empires and write a 1-paragraph summary on who you consider to be the most influential ruler of that empire.
   a) Ottoman Sultan   b) Safavid Shah   c) Mughal Emperor
Task 2 – The Gunpowder Empires

Explore each Gunpowder Empire and answer the questions associated with each empire. You may use the following links and information to help you write your paragraph argument on which ruler of the empires was the most influential, too.

**Ottoman Empire**

- Suleiman the Magnificent
- Roxelana
- The Wife of Suleiman
- Janissaries
- Ottoman Science

1. Why does Suleiman the Magnificent deserve his status as a great legal reformer and administrator?

2. How does the account of a European visitor summoned into her presence indicate that the wife of Suleiman was a formidable intelligence gatherer for her husband?

3. What were the origins and impact of the career of Roxelana in the Ottoman Court?

4. Why was the recruitment of troops from non-Muslim people considered a good idea?

5. How did the Janissaries become more than merely a military institution?

6. What is Lady Mantagu’s opinion of Ottoman society and their attitudes towards medical preparations? What is her opinion of Western doctors?

**Safavid Empire**

- Safavid Empire - BBC
- Abbas I

1. What was the title of the leaders of the Safavids?

2. How did the use of art in the Safavid Empire differ from that of Renaissance Europe?

3. What is Sufism?

4. Why do you think the Sufi believe knowledge should come from teachers and not just books?
5. How did Abbas I change the military in the empire? In what ways was this change unusual?

6. What does secular mean?

Mughal Empire

- History of Aurangzeb  
- Akbar the Great

1. Use the History of Aurangzeb site and its links to Aurangzeb's religious policies to explain how his religious policies, intolerance for rival politics on the subcontinent, and his expensive military campaigns eroded the foundations of the empire laid by Akbar without providing a new basis for its administration.

2. Using the link for Akbar the Great, explain why Akbar developed the Din-i-Ilahi. Explain how well the values embodied in this religion would have served the Mughal Empire if it had been widely adopted. Could it have been widely adopted? Who might have opposed its adoption?

Taj Mahal: Using the following link to read the descriptions and watch the video. Identify all of the following for the Taj Mahal. [https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/252/](https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/252/).

Title or designation

Name of the artist/creator/architect

Culture of origin

Date of creation

Materials

Purpose