The Crusades were a series of wars in which Christians fought Muslims for control of Middle Eastern lands. The Crusades were destructive, but ultimately opened a wider world to Europeans and increased the pace of change.

In 1071, Seljuk Turks conquered Byzantine lands in Asia Minor and then moved into the Holy Land. The Byzantine emperor asked Pope Urban II for help, and Urban launched the Crusades to free the Holy Land. Only the First Crusade was a success for Christians, who captured Jerusalem in 1099. In the Second Crusade, Jerusalem fell to the great Muslim leader Saladin. He agreed to reopen the city to Christian pilgrims after crusaders failed to take Jerusalem in the Third Crusade. By the Fourth Crusade in 1202, knights were fighting other Christians to help Venice against its Byzantine trade rivals. Crusaders captured and looted the Byzantine capital, Constantinople.

The Crusades left a legacy of hatred in the Middle East and Europe. They also produced vast changes in society. In the Middle East, Muslims began to reunify. In Europe, trade increased. The Crusades encouraged the growth of a money economy. Monarchs gained the right to collect taxes to support the Crusades. The experiences of crusaders in the Muslim world introduced Europeans to new places. In 1271, Venetian Marco Polo headed for China and returned home to write a book. His and the crusaders’ experiences brought new knowledge to Europe.

Religious zeal continued in Europe, however. Around 1100, Christian kingdoms in Spain began a struggle called the Reconquista, or reconquest. The purpose was to expel Muslims, who had lived there since the 700s. In 1469, Ferdinand and Isabella married, unifying Spain. They captured the last Muslim stronghold, Granada, in 1492. Under Muslim rule, Christians, Jews, and Muslims had been able to live together. However, Ferdinand and Isabella wanted to impose religious, as well as political, uniformity on their diverse peoples. So, with the help of the Inquisition, they launched a brutal campaign against Muslims and Jews. Those found guilty of heresy were burned at the stake. More than 150,000 people, mostly Muslims and Jews, fled Spain, taking their skills and learning with them.

Review Questions
1. How did the Crusades change Europe?
2. What was the Reconquista?

VOCABULARY STRATEGY
What does diverse mean in the underlined sentence? An antonym for diverse is similar. Use the antonym to help you figure out the meaning of diverse.

READING SKILL
Identify Causes and Effects List one cause and one effect of the Inquisition.