

Explanation of some important terms

1. **Archives:** The term refers to a collection containing of primary sources such as records, documents, manuscripts or other materials of historical interest. These sources are used for the reconstruction of historical events. In present times, most government and nongovernment organisations, maintain archives to collect, preserve and disseminate such records and materials. There are also archives that keep audio-visual records. In contemporary times digitisation has helped archives in the better preservation and handling of massive volumes of records and documents of all kinds.
2. **Caliphs/Khalifa:** The word Caliph or *Khalifa* literally means ‘successor’ or ‘substitute’. The word was used to describe the successors of Prophet Muhammad. The first successor who became the first *Khalifa* in 632 CE was Abu Bakr. He was followed by Umar, Usman and Ali respectively. All of them are known as the rightly guided Caliphs who were closely associated with Prophet Muhammad during his lifetime. After Ali, the Caliphate passed on to the Umayyads (661-750 CE) who ruled from Damascus and therefore to the Abbasids (750-1258 CE) who had their centre at Baghdad. However, by the time Ottomans of Turkey laid claims to this institution, its authority had waned considerably. It was finally abolished in 1924 when Mustafa Kamal Atatürk converted Turkey into a secular state.
3. **Nastaliq:** The term refers to the popular style of Persian calligraphic writing which, evolved during the 15th-16th centuries. Mir Ali of Tariz is often considered as the pioneering and the most famous practioner of this style. The style features long horizontal strokes and exaggerated rounded forms. The fluid style of nastaliq was quite a favourite with Akbar. Muhammad Husyn of Kashmir (c.1575-1605), was one of the finest practioners of this style in Akbar's court, who had been honoured with the title “Zarīn Qalam” (golden pen).
4. **Shikaste:** The term refers to a form of cursive writing wherein the natural pauses (gaps) between letters and words used to be joined by the calligrapher making it a unique style. As opposed to the nastaliq style it was a much denser and more difficult form to execute and read.

Source: NCERT (2017) *Dictionary of History for School Children (Trilingual)*, National Council of Educational Research & Training, New Delhi.