

MOORISH IBERIA (711-1492): AL-ANDALUS



MOORISH IBERIA (711-1492): AL-ANDALUS

Description

Through the investigation of primary and secondary sources, students in this lesson will identify, understand and be able to explain the details of Al-Andalus (Moorish Iberia), including how Muslim forces came to rule over Christian Iberia, the cultural contributions Iberian Moors developed, and ultimately what led to their downfall after such a long rule.

Subjects

World History
European History
Art
Art History
US History

Grade Level

11-12

Duration

90 minutes

Tour Links

- Muslim Wall, Madrid
- Islamic Cultural Center, Madrid
- Great Mosque, Cordoba
- Granada, Spain
- Toledo, Spain

Essential Questions

- Where was Al-Andalus?
- Who were the Moors? How were they able to conquer Christian Iberia in the 7th century CE?
- What was the Reconquista? How were Christian knights and monarchs able to re-take the Iberian Peninsula from their Moorish neighbors?
- What legacy did the Moors leave in Spain? Is there anything left of Moorish culture in modern Spain?

Academic Summary

Praise be to God, who ordered that he who speaks with pride of Al-Andalus may do so without fear and as boldly as he pleases, nor meet any that may contradict him ...

Al-Shaqundi, "Of the Excellence of Al-Andalus"

... and there was no one who did not weep abundantly with pleasure giving thanks to Our Lord for what they saw, for they could not keep back the tears; and the Moorish sultan and the Moors who were with him for their part could not disguise the sadness and pain they felt for the joy of the Christians, and certainly with much reason on account of their loss, for Granada is the most distinguished and chief thing in the world ...

Contemporary Christian account (unnamed) of the surrender of Granada to Spanish forces, 02 Jan 1492

On 02 Jan 1492, Muhammad XII, Sultan of Granada and last ruler of the Nasrid dynasty, surrendered the Emirate of Granada to King Ferdinand II of Aragon and Queen Isabella I of Castile, united Catholic Monarchs of Spain. The Reconquista was over. For over 700 years, Christian soldiers and kingdoms had been fighting Muslims for control of the Iberian Peninsula. Seven centuries of fighting were over. Seven centuries of division were over. Seven centuries of Moorish control were over. Catholic Spain would go on to explore and dominate the New World. Spanish institution, religious practices and language dialects would be brought to the corners of the globe. Over the next few centuries, through the use of the Catholic Inquisition and Auto-da-fe practices, Muslims in Spain were either forced to leave the peninsula, forced to convert to Catholicism or executed by the state as criminals. Over time, much of Moorish Spain (known as Al-Andalus) was forgotten by a Christian population determined to show the Reconquista as God's will. After centuries of mistrust, that trend is reversing. Moorish Spain was a center of culture, artistic achievements, exceptional literary works and scientific advances far above anything Christian Europe could hope to produce. Cordoba, the longtime capital of Al-Andalus and a world-renowned center for learning and tolerance, boasted a population of over 100,000 at a time when Europe was struggling to recover from the Dark Ages.

Through the investigation of primary and secondary sources, students in this lesson will identify, understand and be able to explain the details of Al-Andalus (Moorish Iberia), including how Muslim forces came to rule over Christian Iberia, the cultural contributions Spanish Moors developed, and ultimately what led to their downfall after such a long rule.

Objectives

1. Students will identify, understand and be able to explain the details of Al-Andalus (Moorish/Muslim) period in Spanish history from the early days of the Moorish conquest in the 7th century to the collapse of the last Muslim stronghold in 1492.
2. Students will identify, understand and be able to explain the contributions to art, architecture, language and culture that the Moors made to Spanish culture.
3. Students will identify, understand and be able to explain what happened to the Moors in Spain and whether their legacy still exists in modern Spain.

Procedures

I. Anticipatory Set

- Writing / Question: What happened to the Romans in Spain? (5 min)
- Handouts – Copies of documents and readings from the websites listed (5 min)

II. Body of Lesson

- Lecture / PPT – (20 min)
- Video – Moorish Spain (15 min)
- Independent Activity – Students read the articles and sources on Al-Andalus, taking notes as appropriate. (20 min)
- Suggestion: Have the students read some of these articles and sources for homework before class.
- Group Activity – Socratic Seminar: Discussion on Al-Andalus and the Muslim contributions to Spanish art, architecture, language and culture. (15 min)

III. Closure

- Assessment / DBQ – Essay: Explain in detail the contributions made to Spanish culture by the Moors during the Al-Andalus period.

Extension

On tour: Prado Museum

While on tour, you will visit the Prado Museum to see the world-famous paintings of El Greco, Goya and Velázquez, among other collections from the 12th to the 19th centuries. Spain's most famous collection has works from Moorish artists as well. Students will have the opportunity to see for themselves how the Al-Andalus period of Spanish history is portrayed in a variety of media from both Christian and Muslim sources.

Web Links

Lesson Plan Websites

- fordham.edu/halsall/source/711Tarik1.asp
“Al Maggari: Tarik’s Address to His Soldiers, 711 CE, from the Breath of Perfumes” (primary source) – from the Muslim leader who led the conquest of Hispania.
- libro.uca.edu/
LIBRO: The Library of Iberian Resources Online (website) – tremendous online resource by the American Academy of Research Historians of Medieval Spain – contains many primary and secondary sources – highly recommended for students and teachers.
- fordham.edu/Halsall/source/moorishpoetry.asp
“The Poetry of Spanish Moors, Selections” (primary sources) – on the Medieval Sourcebook at Fordham University.
- saudiaramcoworld.com/issue/199205/the.art.of.islamic.spain.htm

The Art of Islamic Spain (website)
- islamic-arts.org/2011/when-spain-was-islamic/
“Islamic Arts and Architecture: When Spain was Islamic” (article)
- starinc.brinkster.net/spablogs/thomasv/.../spain-under-muslim-rule1.ppt
Spain under Muslim Rule PowerPoint from Star Prep Academy (CA) website
- youtube.com/watch?v=ULptVmaMjYw
Historic Centre of Cordoba (video) – UNESCO TV video
- youtube.com/watch?v=wBsDDGCIFLQ&list=PL3823597FA2408AE8
When the Moors Ruled in Spain (video) – UKNova video (this is the first part of 11), originally shown on British television, does a great job in explaining the history of Moorish Spain and its link to today’s culture. Highly recommended for students and teachers.
- teachingchannel.org/videos/choosing-primary-source-documents?fd=1
Reading Like a Historian: Primary Source Documents (video) – great 2 minute video on how to incorporate primary sources into the Common Core and history classes – from Shilpa Duvoor of Summit Preparatory Charter High School in Redwood City, CA – highly recommended for teachers.
- pbs.org/programs/citiesoflight/
“Cities of Light: The Rise and Fall of Islamic Spain” – PBS website
- islamicspain.tv/For-Teachers/LessonPlans.htm
“Cities of Light: The Rise and Fall of Islamic Spain” – lesson plans in PDF format – these lesson plans go directly with the video listed below.

Background Information

- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Andalus
“Al-Andalus” – Wikipedia article
- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umayyad_conquest_of_Hispania
“Umayyad conquest of Hispania” – Wikipedia article
- en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reconquista
“Reconquista” – Wikipedia article
- passports.com/group_leaders/on_the_road/spain/madrid
On the Road: Madrid – city facts from Passports Educational Travel
- passports.com/group_leaders/on_the_road/spain/cordoba
On the Road: Cordoba – city facts from Passports Educational Travel
- passports.com/group_leaders/on_the_road/spain/granada
On the Road: Granada – city facts from Passports Educational Travel

Other Relevant Passports Lesson Plans

- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/peru/pizarro-and-the-conquest-of-the-incas
Conquistadores in the New World – Pizarro and the Incas
- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/spain/al-andalus-islamic-spain
Al-Andalus: Islamic Spain
- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/spain/reconquista-of-iberia
Reconquista in Iberia
- www.passports.com/lesson_plans/turkey/byzantine-istanbul-fall-of-constantinople-1453
Byzantine Istanbul – Fall of Constantinople 1453

Key Terms

- Al-Andalus
- Cordoba
- Ferdinand II and Isabella I
- Granada
- Iberian Peninsula
- Islam
- Madrid
- Medieval
- Moorish Culture
- Mosque
- Reconquista

