The Reconquest of Iberia (711-1492)

**Description**

Through the investigation of primary and secondary sources, students in this lesson will identify, understand and be able to explain the details of the Reconquista, 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.

**Subjects**

European History

World History

**Grade Level**

11-12

**Duration**

90 Min

**Standards Compliance**

College Readiness: R1: Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; and cite specific evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

College Readiness: R5: Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and large portions of the text relate to each other and the whole.

College Readiness: R9: Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.

College Readiness: SL1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

College Readiness: W1: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

College Readiness: W2: Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

College Readiness: W8: Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital resources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.

College Readiness: W9:  Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

**National History Standards**

***National Center for History in the Schools***

WHS Era 5: 2Bc: Analyze the success of Christian states in overthrowing Muslim powers of central and southern Iberia.

WHS Era 5: 7Af: Analyze ways in which encounters, both hostile and peaceful, between Muslims and Christians in the Mediterranean region affected political, economic, and cultural life in Europe, North Africa, and Southwest Asia.

WHS Era 6: 1Ab: Analyze the major social, economic, political, and cultural features of European society, and in particular of Spain and Portugal, that stimulated exploration and conquest overseas.

HT 3B: Compare multiple perspectives of various peoples in the past by demonstrating their differing motives, beliefs, interests, hopes and fears.

HT 3C: Analyze cause-and-effect relationships bearing in mind multiple causation including (a) the importance of the individual in history; (b) the influence of ideas, human interests, and beliefs; and (c) the role of chance, the accidental and the irrational.

HT 4A: Formulate historical questions from encounters with historical documents, eyewitness accounts, letters, diaries, artifacts, photos, historical sites, art, architecture, and other records from the past.

HT 4C: Interrogate historical data by uncovering the social, political, and economic context in which it was created; testing the data source for its credibility, authority, authenticity, internal consistency and completeness; and detecting and evaluating bias, distortion, and propaganda by omission, suppression, or invention of facts.

**Experiential Learning Components**

Plaza de Colon, Madrid

Cathedral of Seville

Royal Cathedral of Granada

Alcazar of Toledo

**Classroom Learning Components**

Companion lesson plan in compliance with, or exceeding, applicable standards.

**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 role did Ferdinand and Isabella play in the Reconquest?

Is there anything left of Moorish culture in modern Spain?

**Key Terms**

Al-Andalus

Cordoba

Ferdinand II and Isabella I

Granada

Iberian Peninsula

Islam

Madrid

Medieval

Moorish Culture

Mosque

Reconquista

**Academic Summary**

***Primary Source***

 … 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*

***Secondary Summary***

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 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.  Historians today contrast the Iberian Reconquista with the Crusades of the Holy Land.

Through the investigation of primary and secondary sources, students in this lesson will identify, understand and be able to explain the details of the Reconquista, 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**

• Students will identify, understand and be able to explain the details of the Reconquista in Iberia from the early days of the Moorish conquest to the collapse of the last Muslim stronghold in 1492.

• Students will identify, understand and be able to explain the contributions to art, architecture, language and culture that the Moors made to Spanish culture.

• Students will identify, understand and be able to explain what happened to the Moors in Spain, how Christian forces were able to complete the Reconquista, and whether a legacy of the fight still exists in modern Spain.

**Procedure**

**I.  Anticipatory Set**

• Writing / Question:  What does the word “crusade” mean today? (5 min)

• Handouts – Copies of documents and readings from the websites listed. (5 min)

**II. Body of Lesson**

• Lecture / PPT – The Spanish Reconquest (20 min)

• Video –  Moorish Spain (15 min)

• Independent Activity – Students read the articles and sources on the Reconquista, 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 the Reconquista, why it succeeded and whether there is any legacy of the conflict today in Spain. (15 min)

**III. Closure**

• Assessment / DBQ – Essay: Explain in detail how Spanish Christians were able to retake the Iberian Peninsula.

**Links**

***Lesson Plan Websites***

[www.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](http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/711Tarik1.asp)

[www.explorethemed.com/Reconquista.asp](http://www.explorethemed.com/Reconquista.asp)

Islamic Spain and the Reconquista (interactive map) – highly recommended for students and teachers

[www.heritage-history.com/www/heritage.php?Dir=wars&FileName=wars\_reconqu...](http://www.heritage-history.com/www/heritage.php?Dir=wars&FileName=wars_reconquista.php)

Reconquista 717-1492: Christian Kingdoms of Spain vs. Moslem Moors (website)

[libro.uca.edu/](http://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.

[www.islamic-arts.org/2011/when-spain-was-islamic/](http://www.islamic-arts.org/2011/when-spain-was-islamic/)

“Islamic Arts and Architecture: When Spain was Islamic” (article)

[www.slideshare.net/chusteacher/the-christian-kingdoms-the-spanish-reconq...](http://www.slideshare.net/chusteacher/the-christian-kingdoms-the-spanish-reconquest)

The Christian Kingdoms: the Spanish Reconquest (PowerPoint) from Maria Jesus Campos, history teacher at IES Parque school in Madrid, Spain

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=ULptVmaMjYw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ULptVmaMjYw)

Historic Centre of Cordoba (video) – UNESCO TV video

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=wBsDDGCIFLQ&list=PL3823597FA2408AE8](http://www.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.

[www.teachingchannel.org/videos/choosing-primary-source-documents?fd=1](http://www.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.

[www.pbs.org/programs/citiesoflight/](http://www.pbs.org/programs/citiesoflight/)

“Cities of Light: The Rise and Fall of Islamic Spain” – PBS website

[www.islamicspain.tv/For-Teachers/LessonPlans.htm](http://www.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***

[www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Andalus](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Al-Andalus%C2%A0)

“Al-Andalus” – Wikipedia article

www/en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umayyad\_conquest\_of\_Hispania

“Umayyad conquest of Hispania” – Wikipedia article.

[www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reconquista](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reconquista%C2%A0)

“Reconquista” – Wikipedia article

[www.passports.com/group\_leaders/on\_the\_road/spain/madrid](http://www.passports.com/group_leaders/on_the_road/spain/madrid)

On the Road: Madrid – city facts from Passports Educational Travel

[www.passports.com/group\_leaders/on\_the\_road/spain/cordoba](http://www.passports.com/group_leaders/on_the_road/spain/cordoba)

On the Road: Cordoba – city facts from Passports Educational Travel

[www.passports.com/group\_leaders/on\_the\_road/spain/granada](http://www.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/pizzarro-and-the-conquest-of-the-incas](http://www.passports.com/lesson_plans/peru/pizzarro-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](http://www.passports.com/lesson_plans/spain/al-andalus-islamic-spain)

Al-Andalus: Islamic Spain

[www.passports.com/lesson\_plans/spain/reconquista-of-iberia](http://www.passports.com/lesson_plans/spain/reconquista-of-iberia)

Reconquista in Iberia

[www.passports.com/lesson\_plans/turkey/byzantine-istanbul-fall-of-constan...](http://www.passports.com/lesson_plans/turkey/byzantine-istanbul-fall-of-constantinople-1453)

Byzantine Istanbul – Fall of Constantinople 1453

**Credit**

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