

*Art and Architecture Cultural Diffusion*

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| **Introduction**  |
| The rise and spread of Islam had an impact on Asia, Europe, and Northern Africa. Islamic dynasties were in power in various parts of the world during the Medieval time period. This resulted in a spread of cultural Islamic influence as well, with art and architecture having Islamic inspiration throughout Europe, Asia, and Northern Africa. This lesson examines the Islamic influence on art and architecture in the area known as the Iberian peninsula, with particular examples from modern-day Spain such as the Alhambra. This lesson could be conducted in a 7th grade classroom or in a high school World History or Art History class.  |
| **Indiana Standards Connections:**  7.1.5 Explain the influence of Muslim civilization on the growth of cities, the development of trade routes, political organizations, scientific and cultural contributions, and the basis for the early banking system to other cultures of the time. WH.3.5 Trace the spread of Islam and its impact throughout Southern Europe, Northern Africa, and Asia.VA:Re9.1.5a Appraise the impact of an artist or a group of artists on the beliefs, values, and behaviors of a society.  | **Compelling Question(s):**   How can culture influence art and architecture?  How does conquest lead to the spread of culture?       |
| **Lesson Objectives:** Students will be able to: describe how art and architecture can demonstrate the influence and convergence of religious and cultural backgrounds.  |
| **Materials**  |
|  1. Photos of the Alhambra from Virtual Tour/Gallery/Details

<https://www.alhambradegranada.org/en/info/galleryofphotographs.asp>1. Model(s) of the Alhambra (from the Digital Toolbox materials)
2. Articles for more information:

[Smart History - The vibrant visual cultures of the Islamic West, an introduction](https://smarthistory.org/islamic-west-introduction/)[Europeana - The medieval art of Alhambra: How Nasrid art influenced Europe's artists](https://www.europeana.eu/en/blog/the-medieval-art-of-alhambra-how-nasrid-art-influenced-europes-artists)[Khan Academy - Art of the Islamic world in the Medieval era - The Alhambra](https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/ap-art-history/early-europe-and-colonial-americas/ap-art-islamic-world-medieval/a/the-alhambra)[Met Museum - Artistic interaction among cultures in Medieval Iberia](https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/ccmi/hd_ccmi.htm) |
| **Learning Plan**  |
| **Activities** 1. Show students a few of the images of the Alhambra, such as the following:

A picture containing manhole cover, outdoor object  Description automatically generated1. Ask students to infer from what culture/part of the world this image is from. Have them discuss in small groups and then share out. More than likely, students will pick up on the detail of the writing which looks like Arabic.
2. Share with students that this image (and others like it if shown) come from the Alhambra palace in Spain.
3. Students can then be led in an exploration regarding the historical background of the Alhambra, with particular focus on how the building housed the Islamic Nasrid dynasty which followed the Umayyad conquering of the Iberian Peninsula in 716. This time period saw an influx of Islamic culture being introduced to and adopted in Europe. There could be discussion of the Spanish-Arabic/Catholic-Islamic relations during the time period. (More information can be found on the Digital Toolbox materials as well as the links listed above).
4. Students can then examine the Nasrid helmet. The teacher can find other images of Spanish helmets and/or images of Islamic art with a similar pattern for students to compare. The [Met Museum website](https://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/24900?searchField=All&amp;sortBy=Relevance&amp;ft=nasrid+military&amp;offset=0&amp;rpp=20&amp;pos=1) has more images of Spanish and Italian armor.
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| **Assessment Suggestions**   Students can complete an exit slip on which they identify two ways art and architecture demonstrates how cultural diffusion and influence occurred during this time period. They could also be given another example of art, architecture, or other artifact and asked to examine it for cultural references. The latter would be more appropriate for older students.  |
| **Extensions** Students could explore other examples of cultural diffusion by examining how Arabic music and dance had an impact on Spanish culture. Links are provided in the Digital Toolbox materials for exploration into the Arabic influence on flamenco dancing.  |

Alhambra Activity Possibilities

Some of the best opportunities for education are *integrative*—meaning that students are able to make connections across disciplines to reinforce the knowledge that they are developing. For example, they may be learning about Renaissance Italy in World Studies at the same time that they read Dante’s *Inferno* in English class while also studying Botticelli in Art. Feel free to combine and adapt some of the ideas across disciplines and standards to best suit your particular context. You can also collaborate with other teachers at your school or supplement the resources provided by contacting your librarian.

**Note: The following ideas are meant to give general guidance for teachers to include artifacts and other material culture in their classrooms. They are not meant to be treated as comprehensive activities or lessons that are one-size-fits-all for any classroom. They should be personalized to best fit the needs of a teacher’s individual context in accordance with prior student learning, student abilities, available resources, and any curricular guidance.**

**Art**

**Visual Arts – Responding:**

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| Anchor Standard 7: Perceive and analyze artistic workEnduring Understanding: Individual aesthetic and empathetic awareness developed throughout engagement with art can lead to understanding and appreciation of self, others, the natural world, and constructed environments. Essential Question(s): How do life experiences influence the way you relate to art? How does learning about art impact how we perceive the world? What can we learn from our responses to art?  |
| VA:Re7.1.1a | Select and describe works of art that illustrate daily life experiences. |
| VA:Re7.1.6a | Identify and interpret works of art or design that reveal how people live around the world and what they value. |
| VA:Re7.1.6a | Identify and interpret works of art or design that reveal how people live around the world and what they value. |
| VA:Re9.1.5a | Appraise the impact of an artist or a group of artists on the beliefs, values, and behaviors of a society |
| VA:Re7.1.Ia | Hypothesize ways in which art influences perception and understanding of human experiences. |
| VA:Re7.1.IIa | Recognize and describe personal aesthetic and empathetic responses to the natural world and constructed environments |
| VA:Re7.1.IIIa | Analyze how responses to art develop over time based on knowledge of and experience with art and life |

**Visual Arts – Connecting:**

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| Anchor Standard 11: Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding. Enduring Understanding: People develop ideas and understandings of society, culture, and history through their interactions with and analysis of art. Essential Question(s): How does art help us understanding the lives of people of different times, places, and cultures? How is art used to impact the videos of a society> How does art preserve aspects of life?  |
| VA:Cn11.1.1a | Understand that people from different places and times have made art for a variety of reasons. |
| VA:Cn11.1.2a | Compare and contrast cultural uses of artwork from different times and places. |
| VA:Cn11.1.3a | Recognize that responses to art change depending on knowledge of the time and place in which it was made |
| VA:Cn11.1.4a | Through observation, infer information about time, place, and culture in which a work of art was created. |
| VA:Cn11.1.6a | Analyze how art reflects changing times, traditions, resources, and cultural uses. |
| VA:Cn11.1.7a | Analyze how response to art is influenced by understanding the time and place in which it was created, the available resources, and cultural uses |
| VA:Cn11.1.8a | Distinguish different ways art is used to represent, establish, reinforce, and reflect group identity |
| VA:Cn11.1.IIa | Compare uses of art in a variety of social, cultural, and historical contexts and make connections to uses of art in contemporary and local contexts. |
| VA:Cn11.1.IIIa | Appraise the impact of an artist or a group of artists on the beliefs, values, and behaviors of a society. |

*Students can be asked to consider how art reflects time periods, beliefs, cultures, traditions, etc. In exploring the Alhambra, students are examining how Islamic culture had an influence on architecture and how the details of the building reflect Islamic cultural visual traditions. Comparison with other works of art can allow students to see the stretch of this influence.*

**Social Studies**

**Grade 6: History, Places, and Cultures in Europe and Americas**

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| 6.1.2 | Describe and compare the beliefs, the spread and the influence of religions throughout Europe and Mesoamerica. |
| 6.3.10 | Explain the ways cultural diffusion, invention, and innovation change culture.  |
| 6.3.11 | Differentiate between the terms anthropology, archaeology, and artifacts while explaining how these contribute to our understanding of societies in the present and the past.  |

**Ethnic Studies**

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| ES.4.1 | *Students examine historical and contemporary economic, intellectual, social, cultural and political contributions to society by ethnic or racial group(s) or an individual within a group.*  |

**Geography and History of the World**

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| GHW.2.1 | *Map the development over time of world religions from their points of origin and identify those that exhibit a high degree of local and/or international concentration.*  |
| GHW.2.2 | *Differentiate among selected countries in terms of how their identities, cultural and physical environments, and functions and forms of government are affected by world religions.*  |

**World History and Civilization**

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| WH.3.4 | Trace the spread of Islam and its impact throughout Southern Europe, Northern Africa and Asia. |

*Students can be asked to examine the ways in which artifacts allow us to learn about time periods and cultures, in this case with specific consideration of Islamic/Arabic influence on other areas of the world. They could trace the spread of Islamic art and architecture on a visual representation such as a map.*

**Language Arts**

**Writing Skills:**

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| 4.W.5  | Conduct short research on a topic. * Identify a specific question to address (e.g., What is the history of the Indy 500?).
* Use organizational features of print and digital sources to efficiently locate further information.
* Determine the reliability of the sources.
* Summarize and organize information in their own words, giving credit to the source
* Present the research information, choosing from a variety of formats.
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| 5.W.5 | Conduct short research assignments and tasks on a topic.* With support, formulate a research question (e.g., What were John Wooden’s greatest contributions to college basketball?).
* Identify and acquire information through reliable primary and secondary sources.
* Summarize and paraphrase important ideas and supporting details, and include direct quotations where appropriate, citing the source of information.
* Avoid plagiarism and follow copyright guidelines for use of images, pictures, etc.
* Present the research information, choosing from a variety of sources.
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*Students could conduct research projects in which they examine examples of cultural diffusion. This could be specifically focused on Islamic/Arabic cultural influences or they could find other examples of art and architecture that have been influenced by cultures of the past.*