

6a: Factors Contributing to Tolerance and Intolerance in the History of Al-Andalus

Author: Ernest O’Roark

Overview and Purpose of the Lesson:

The purpose of this lesson is to provide students with an understanding of the nature, causes, and consequences of tolerance in a society. The activities achieve the objectives through the use of Medieval Spain as a case study. Students first explore and define the concepts of tolerance and diversity. The concepts are then applied to societies and events in Spain during the Middle Period. Finally, students are asked to identify cause and effect relationships for both tolerant and intolerant societies.

Performance Objectives:

The student will be able to:

- Define and identify examples of tolerance and diversity.
- Explain the causes and results of tolerant vs. intolerant societies in Medieval Spain.

Materials Needed:

- Graphic Organizers: Tolerant and Intolerant Societies
- Video: *Cities of Light*

Time: 2 to 4 class periods, depending on how much of the video is used.

Procedure:

1. Introduction: Explain to students that in this lesson they will be exploring how people have historically dealt with the fact that, for various reasons, their society may be made up of more than one cultural, religious, or ethnic group. When such a society exists, how are minorities treated? What are the consequences for the society as a result of how it decides to treat its minority groups?
2. Discussion: Place the terms “diverse” and “tolerance” on the board or overhead. Ask students to think about the terms and how they may have heard them used in the past. Have students volunteer definitions for each. The result of this discussion will likely be something similar to the following:
 - Diverse: Varied; made up of many things (or people) that are different from one another.
 - Tolerance: A willingness to put up with people whose opinions or ways differ from one’s own, and to allow them to express their differences in social situations, to allow participation of different groups on an equitable basis.
3. Explain that due to circumstances of geography and history some societies find themselves to be more diverse than others. A society that is not diverse is *homogeneous* – made up of a single cultural, religious, or ethnic group. Diverse societies can decide for various reasons to either be tolerant or intolerant.

4. Brainstorming: Divide the class into groups. Assign each group to brainstorm and record possible answers to one of these sets of questions:

- What would be the characteristics of a tolerant diverse society? What would it be like? Why might it decide to be tolerant?
- What would be the characteristics of an intolerant diverse society? What would it be like? Why might it decide to be intolerant?

Have students share their answers in a full-class discussion. (As with any brainstorming activity, the teachers should not make any comments regarding the accuracy of student's ideas. All ideas are accepted.)

5. Graphic Organizers: Give half the class the "Tolerant, Diverse Society" graphic organizer and the other half the "Intolerant Society" graphic organizer. Review and explain the format of the graphic organizers.
6. Video Introduction: Explain to students that they will be viewing a video about Spain during the Middle Ages. Medieval Spain makes an exceptionally good case study, since it was a very diverse society in a time when the question of tolerance vs. intolerance was becoming a major issue. As a result of various political, religious, and social forces, the people of Spain were often faced with the question of whether their diverse society should be tolerant or intolerant. Sometimes they chose to be tolerant and at other times they chose intolerance. Half the class is to look for and note the circumstances that resulted in a tolerant society and the characteristics that society had as a result of being tolerant and diverse. The other half of the class is to look for and note circumstances that resulted in a society becoming intolerant and the characteristics such a society possessed.
7. Video: The video consists of eight chapters, each of which illustrates a phase of Spain's medieval history. They vary in length from about 10 to 20 minutes. The entire video or select segments may be shown. It is recommended that discussion take place between each segment to clarify the story for students, answer questions, and discuss the progress of the graphic organizers. Students may also be asked to make predictions about the next segment based on its title and what they've seen so far.
8. Small Group Discussion: Assign students who have the same graphic organizer to work in small groups to share and refine the notes they've collected.
9. Full Class Discussion: Give students a blank copy of the graphic organizer they do not already have. Moderate a discussion in which students are asked to share and discuss what they believe are the key ideas they collected. Students should note these key points on their blank graphic organizers.

Assessment:

- Give students a hypothetical society and have them categorize the society as tolerant or intolerant and then select from a list of other characteristics that would likely be true of that society.
- Give students a hypothetical society that is faced with an influx of immigrants for some reason. Some in the society argue for tolerance, others for intolerance. Have students respond, write an opinion or letter or debate the issues.
- Create a cause-and-effect matching using specifics from the graphic organizers and video.

- Play or write “what if” in which students speculate about how the history of Spain might have been different if it had remained tolerant and diverse, or how European history might have been different if Spain had never been diverse, or other scenario.

Lesson Set-up Aids for the Teacher

Conditions and events that help foster tolerance: Questions to consider

- What happens in the film that helps or allows the society to be tolerant?
- What do the experts say about how and why the society was tolerant?
- What political, economic, or social conditions helped people, especially leaders, decide to make tolerance a characteristic of their society?

Conditions and events resulting from tolerance: Questions to consider

- What happens in the film that is at least somewhat a result or consequence of tolerance? What took place that was possible because the society was tolerant?
- What do the experts say about the results of tolerance? What achievements are described? What problems?
- What forms does tolerance take? What are the characteristics of a tolerant, diverse society? How can you tell that the society was tolerant?
- Were there any advantages for the society to be tolerant? Were there disadvantages?
- Overall, were the effects of tolerance more positive or negative? Were conditions better or worse when the society was tolerant?

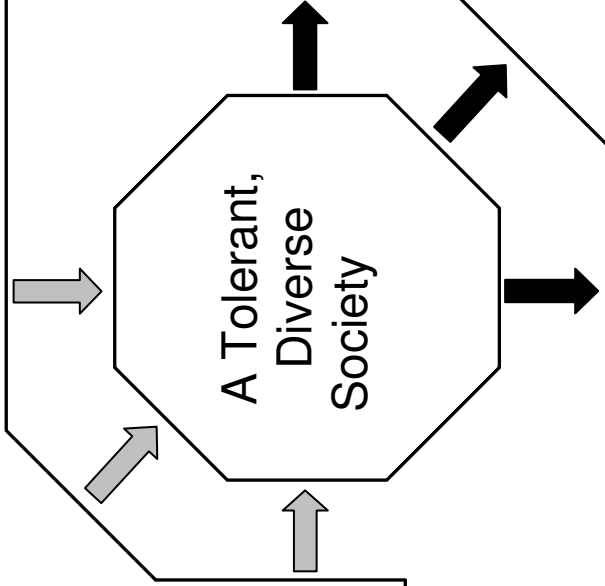
Conditions and events that contribute to intolerance: Questions to consider

- What happens in the film that makes the society become intolerant?
- What do the experts say about how and why the society became intolerant?
- What political, economic, or social conditions made people, especially leaders, decide to make intolerance a characteristic of their society?

Conditions and events resulting from intolerance: Questions to consider

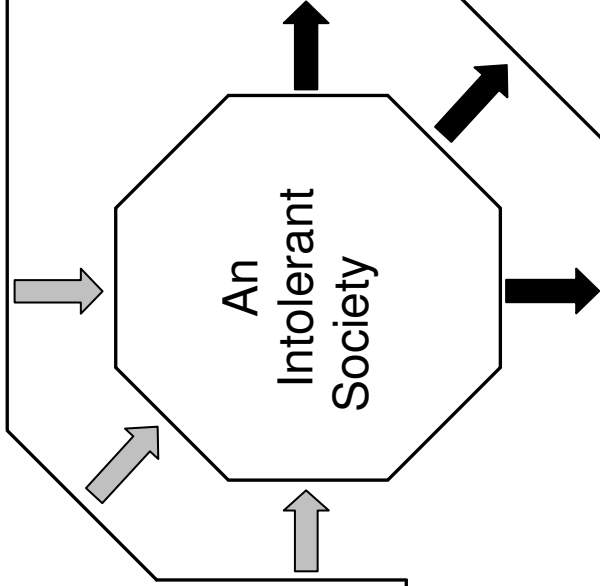
- What happens in the film that is at least somewhat a result or consequence of intolerance? What took place largely *because* the society was intolerant?
- What do the experts say about the results of intolerance? What achievements are described? What problems?
- What forms does intolerance take? What are the characteristics of an intolerant society? How can you tell that the society was intolerant?
- Were there any advantages for the society to be intolerant? Were there disadvantages?
- Overall, were the effects of intolerance more positive or negative? Were conditions better or worse when the society was intolerant?

Conditions and events that help foster tolerance



Conditions and events resulting from tolerance

Conditions and events that contribute to intolerance



Conditions and events resulting from intolerance

