



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

Center for Middle Eastern Studies

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Assignment Description (For Teachers)

Title: Medieval Muslim Scientists – a 1-day activity

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Purpose/Connection to the Curriculum: This is an activity designed for high school World History or Middle East Studies classes. The goal is for students to learn about and share information about the mathematical and scientific advances that occurred during the medieval “Golden Age of Islam.”

Suggested Procedures:

1. Give each student
 - a ½-sheet of paper with a description of one of the mathematicians or scientists.
 - a blank chart
2. Direct students to fill out the first box with their historical figure’s name and most important accomplishment.
3. Have students move around the room to find people with different historical figures. They can share their information and learn information from others in order to fill out the chart. (Note: I make a rule that each student must summarize the information in their own words and only they can write information on their chart.)
4. After each student has filled out a sheet, share information as a class on the important figures and their achievements. Together discuss the impact of these developments on modern math/science/technology.

Extending the Lesson:

Have students watch the BBC documentary “Arabic and Islamic Civilization” (about 1 hour long) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vMDjF64mGLw> . It’s surprisingly engaging, and students end up very interested in how perfume is made, how soap works, how the camera was invented, etc. (It’s especially effective in reaching the math-science oriented students who are sometimes less engaged in Social Studies/Humanities courses.)