



MONARCHS WHO SHAPED HISTORY: **QUEEN ISABELLA I OF SPAIN**

6 SPANISH CLASSROOM LESSON PLANS BASED ON AP
SPANISH LANGUAGE & CULTURE COURSE THEMES



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General Information

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INTRODUCTION

MONARCHS WHO SHAPED HISTORY:

QUEEN ISABELLA I

This guide is for Spanish teachers who wish to make their language instruction and cultural lessons about the target language come alive through virtual tourism in the world language classroom. These lesson plans could be used in preparation for future travel with students or in lieu of travel for those students or teachers who are unable to do so.

The lesson plans are designed for high school students, and are written to correspond to the six themes making up the AP Spanish Language and Culture:

- Beauty and Aesthetics
- Contemporary Life
- Families and Communities
- Global Challenges
- Personal and Public Identities
- Science and Technology

The lessons can be equally valuable if your students are not taking the AP exam.

The lessons can be conducted in either or Spanish or in English. Feel free to adapt activities to use with either individuals or groups of students.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Susan Braun taught public school in Indiana for eight years before taking a break to raise her own children. She has taught studies about European royalty to students, both during the regular school year and during summer enrichment sessions. She was awarded a Lilly Endowment Teacher Creativity Fellowship and a National Endowment for the Humanities Summer Study Scholarship, and used both to study European royalty while visiting sites in Germany and England.

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INTRODUCTION TO FOREIGN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION AND AP FRENCH LANGUAGE & CULTURE COURSE THEMES

The following high school lesson plans for the study of Spain's Queen Isabella I are planned for learning and thinking around the six course themes making up the AP Spanish Language & Culture exam. These themes are broad enough to apply equally well for students who are not in an AP Spanish class.

These lesson plans will assist students to engage in the three types of communication recommended by ACTFL standards:

- **Interpersonal Communication:** Learners interact and negotiate meaning in spoken, signed, or written conversations to share information, reactions, feelings, and opinions.
- **Interpretive Communication:** Learners understand, interpret, and analyze what is heard, read, or viewed on a variety of topics.
- **Presentational Communication:** Learners present information, concepts, and ideas to inform, explain, persuade, and narrate on a variety of topics using appropriate media and adapting to various audiences of listeners, readers, or viewers.

The AP Spanish Language & Culture course is structured around 6 themes:

- Beauty and Aesthetics
- Contemporary Life
- Families and Communities
- Global Challenges
- Personal and Public Identities
- Science and Technology

Themes facilitate the integration of language, content, and culture, and promote the use of the language in a variety of contexts. The themes may be combined, as they are interrelated.

6 LESSON PLANS TO EXPLORE THE LIFE AND IMPACT OF QUEEN ISABELLA I

QUEEN ISABELLA I

Isabella I was queen of the central region of modern-day Spain known as Castile from 1474 until her death in 1504. She reigned with husband Ferdinand II of Aragon, a region in northeastern Spain. Isabella was an amazing woman of her times, with her actions resulting in the unification of Spain, the Spanish Inquisition, and the support of Christopher Columbus' voyages to the lands that became known as the New World. Isabella's reign provides rich material for Spanish students to use the Spanish language in exploring AP Spanish Language and Culture themes in interpersonal, interpretive, and presentational communication.



King Ferdinand of Aragon and Queen Isabella of Castile.

LESSON 1: BEAUTY AND AESTHETICS

1. Students can get an overview of Isabella's life by reading a biography of the queen: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Isabella-I-queen-of-Spain>
2. *As they read, instruct students to make note of Isabella's contributions to education, art, and literature.*
3. Isabella was an advocate of education and saw to it that all her children, including her daughters, were well-educated. She also wanted to see books become more available, and to this end worked for increased printing of books in Spain. Instruct students to choose one of Isabella and Ferdinand's children to research and write a paragraph on. What can they learn about that child's education? How did it impact his or her later life?
4. As homework, assign students to compose an email message to a friend, briefly describing one aspect of Isabella's impact on the arts during her reign. This is excellent preparation for the Interpersonal Writing/Email Reply portion of the AP Spanish Language and Culture exam.



Isabella of Castille.

LESSON 2: CONTEMPORARY LIFE

1. Isabella's greatest impact on contemporary life stems from her support of Christopher Columbus and his voyages to the New World. Sources vary on whether her support of Columbus was actually more "approval" than financial.

Instruct students to individually look online for three reputable sources of information on Isabella's support of Columbus. Then, students will form groups to discuss the resources found. Which appear most trustworthy? Some resources may be dropped and others added as a result of the discussion.

2. As homework, have students write a persuasive essay using their three sources, presenting a viewpoint on what Isabella's support of Christopher Columbus entailed. This is great practice for the Presentational Writing/ Persuasive Essay portion of the AP Spanish Language and Culture exam.



Queen Isabella I and Christopher Columbus.

LESSON 3: FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES

1. Students can review Isabella's life through this brief biography: http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Isabella_of_Castile
2. Isabella's half-brother, King Henry IV of Castile, arranged Isabella's betrothal to Ferdinand when she was six. He tried to make several different marriage matches for Isabella, but she evaded all suitors except Ferdinand. Lead a class discussion on romances and marriages among leaders today: what has changed? Is there anything that remains the same? Was Isabella typical or unusual for her time in her insistence on choosing her own mate?
3. Ferdinand and Isabella had five children, many of whom were fascinating in their own rights; for instance, Joanna "the Mad" of Castile, or Catherine of Aragon (who later became British King Henry VIII's first wife). Assign students to choose one of the royal children to research and write a paragraph on. Then, divide the class into groups based on the child they chose, and let them discuss their findings.
4. One of the things Isabella I is most known for during her reign is the Spanish Inquisition, in which she ordered the conversion of Muslim and Jewish subjects. The Inquisition has become a cliché example of wrong-intentioned policy, but have students dig into it a bit deeper. What might have led Isabella and Ferdinand to institute this policy? What are some other, more humane, ways they could have realized their goals?



Spanish Inquisition.

LESSON 4: GLOBAL CHALLENGES

1. Students can prepare for the lesson by reading about the interactions between Ferdinand and Isabella and Christopher Columbus: <https://rsc.byu.edu/christopher-columbus-latter-day-saint-perspective/years-spain-columbus-finds-sponsor>
2. During the late 1400s, countries were anxious to locate a more direct route to China in order to facilitate trade. Christopher Columbus was one of the sailors who was eager to explore, but Ferdinand and Isabel were not the first he asked for support. After students read the article above, they can spend more time researching Columbus' attempts at finding support. Have the students outline his process.
3. Pair up students and have them prepare a discussion back and forth, in Spanish, with one student playing the role of Isabella and the other playing Columbus as he seeks support. This is great practice for the Interpersonal Communication/Simulated Conversation portion of the AP Spanish Culture and Language exam.
4. Slavery did not begin in colonial America; it was an issue in the 1400s as well. As homework, instruct students to research the Native Americans who were brought to Europe from the New World. What were some issues raised by their treatment? What was Isabella's opinion?



Landing of Columbus.

LESSON 5: PERSONAL AND PUBLIC IDENTITIES

1. Students can review Isabella's life through this biography: http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Isabella_of_Castile

They can also read a biography of her husband and joint-sovereign, Ferdinand: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ferdinand-II-king-of-Spain>

2. In groups, students can create Venn diagrams listing the traits Isabella and Ferdinand had in common, and those they possessed individually.
3. Isabella and Ferdinand's ruling motto was "*Tanto monta, monta tanto, Isabel como Fernando.*"
Hold a class discussion over the meaning of this motto.
4. Isabella was known as a powerful leader, especially for a woman of that time. As homework, assign students to create an outline listing her accomplishments, focusing on those that were unusual for a woman around 1500. Some areas to explore might be her involvement in military conflicts as well as in religious issues.



La Rendición de Granada

LESSON 6:

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. It can be difficult to imagine what was known in the fields of science and technology during the time of Isabella, 500 years ago. For an overview of scientific thinking at the time, particularly as it related to Columbus' voyage, students can read this article: <https://www-istp.gsfc.nasa.gov/stargaze/Scolumb.htm>
2. For more on Columbus' process of procuring support for his journeys from Ferdinand and Isabella: <https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/history/explorers-travelers-and-conquerors-biographies/christopher-columbus>
3. Have students form groups and create skits in which they roleplay the monarchs and Columbus, using the information they have learned.
4. Students can read more about the technology used in Columbus' ships here: <http://www.marineinsight.com/maritime-history/christopher-columbus-ships-vessels-that-discovered-america/>
Here is a brief video on the ships to watch: <http://www.history.com/topics/exploration/christopher-columbus/videos/columbus-ships-are-marvels-of-engineering>
5. Hold a class discussion on the technology of the ships. How did the three ships differ?
6. As homework, assign students to choose one of Columbus' three ships, and write a paragraph on the technology used in its construction.



Replica of Columbus' ship the Pinta.

CONCLUSION

After learning more about Queen Isabella I, your students are probably eager to explore the actual lands where she reigned. Indeed, overseas travel is the best way to rapidly facilitate fluency in a foreign language. First-hand visits also solidify learning in a way that's difficult to duplicate in the classroom. Travel makes a lifelong impact on students and teachers alike, bringing culture and language to life in a vibrant way.

Whether in person or via virtual tourism, we hope you and your students enjoy learning more about Spain's Queen Isabella I!



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