

6b: Synectics: Concluding Activity on Al-Andalus

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Overview and Purpose of the Lesson:

Synectics is an activity that helps students internalize new information. Students must think creatively to synthesize what they've just learned by comparing it with some randomly selected common or familiar object. By engaging in this mental exercise, students create mental "hooks" to the new information which in turn helps move that information from short term to long term memory. Besides all of these benefits to learning, the activity is also fun.

Objectives:

The student will be able to:

Identify and describe major characteristics of medieval Spain.

Materials Needed:

Synectics Chart – one per group of students

Synectics Example – overhead transparency or projected with computer

Time:

One class period or less

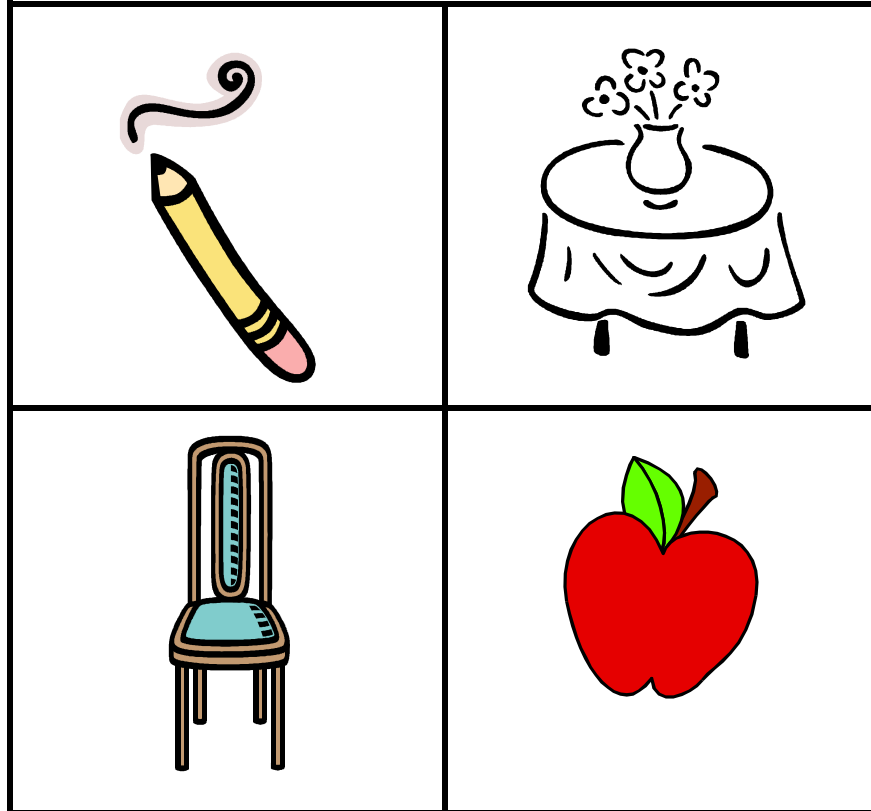
Procedure:

1. Begin by placing students in groups of four people.
2. Have each team choose four common everyday objects and draw those objects, one per box, on their synectics chart.
3. Write the following sentence stem on the board:
Medieval Spain was like a _____ because...
(Because there is no obvious connection between medieval Spain and the selected objects, students must think about the physical attributes and/or functions of each to develop unique and insightful connections about medieval Spain.)
4. Show students the example and discuss. Perhaps perform a "think aloud" for students to demonstrate the thinking process necessary to come up with a logical sentence.
5. Students write the completed sentences inside the box with the object.
6. Have each group share their results with the entire class.

Assessment:

Since this is a scaffolding activity meant to help students internalize new information, it would not in itself be assessed. However, analogies based on this activity could be used as part of a unit assessment.

Synecchics Example:



- Medieval Spain was like a pencil because pencils are used to write and in medieval Spain, poetry was written and enjoyed by many.
- Medieval Spain was like table because a table is a place for eating and entertaining, and in medieval Spain, many new foods entered Spain from other lands, and customs of fine dining like separate courses at banquets, table linens and fancy sweet desserts were introduced.
- Medieval Spain was like a chair because a chair is like a throne for a ruler, and many times in history, wars and intrigues over power changed the rulers who sat on those thrones.
- Medieval Spain was like an apple because apples grow in orchards, and medieval Spain was famous for its agriculture, orchards and beautiful gardens.



Synectics Chart