

## Lesson Plan Title: IMAM ABU HANIFA AND THE ATHEIST

**Essential Questions:** What are schemata and how they benefit us as readers? Why do good readers make predictions before and during reading?

**Rationale:** One habit of good readers is to make predictions by comparing one's prior knowledge, or schema, with new information. Good readers do this before reading a text (after previewing it) and continuously revise their predictions as they read. In doing so, they garner more interest in the text, create goals (and therefore motivation) for reading, and deepen their comprehension and later recall by becoming active, rather than passive, readers.

Finally, reading *Imam Abu Hanifa and the Atheist* will help students further understand the Islamic worldview by reading about a debate over the existence of a Creator.

### Learning Outcomes:

Students will

- Write a journal entry discussing the schema they brought to this reading and practice using new vocabulary in their writing.
- Infer the meanings previously unknown words by using morphemes and context clues.
- Define and utilize their 'schema' to make predictions about a text before reading
- Explain different methods they can use to determine the meaning of unknown words while reading
- Compose unique sentences using newly learned vocabulary
- Reframe predictions and correct their schemata as needed
- Write and revise journal entries
- Logically support assertions
- Appraise how well they followed directions for their writing
- Identify the purpose of making predictions before and during reading
- Make inferences about characters and intentions in a non-fiction story
- Define 'connotation' and explain how connotations affect meaning

### Required Materials:

#### Vocabulary

<u>Grade 6:</u>	<u>Grade 7:</u>	<u>Grade 8:</u>
<i>Circulation</i>	<i>Subscribe</i>	<i>Lackey</i>
<i>Corrupt</i>	<i>Schema</i>	<i>Preponderance</i>
<i>Erupt</i>	<i>Predict</i>	<i>Scoff</i>
<i>Lumber</i>		<i>Schema</i>
<i>Subcontinent</i>		<i>Predict</i>
<i>Schema</i>		
<i>Predict</i>		

### Step-By-Step Procedures for Imam Abu Hanifa and the Atheist

#### I. Pre-Reading

*If you have not yet included a mini-lesson on using context clues and affixes to find the meanings of new words, do this first. If you have not practiced using dictionaries with the students, then please see the lesson plan for Chapter 1, The Muslim World 650-850 C.E. and do so.*

1. Have students use their dictionaries and thesauruses to find each of their vocabulary words, writing their definitions in their vocabulary section of their notebooks, and figuring out the correct pronunciations from the pronunciation keys. Help them find the correct definitions since they do not have the words in context. Also tell them to leave space after each so they can return and write sentences for them.
2. Post the essential questions in the classroom and review them with the students. Explain what schema means, and ask them why it's helpful to think of theirs before, during, and after reading.
3. Read the title of the selection and ask students to use their schema to predict what it's about. They can refer to what they know about Imam Hanifa, this period in Islamic history (from lesson one), and what they know about the relationship between atheism and Islam to generate ideas. Do not correct or alter their ideas – just let them brainstorm. They can correct them themselves while reading. You should also share your schema and predictions, but do not tell everything and consider being incorrect with your prediction/s so you can show students how to revise them as they read.

## **II. Reading**

1. Read the story out loud to the class. Periodically stop reading to discuss how the text relates to the students' schemata and also to orally revise predictions and make new predictions. The teacher may need to take the lead in doing so (model thinking for the class).
2. Also ask students if they need to revise their schemata? (Perhaps their schemata was incorrect due to naiveté or having learned incorrect information?)
3. Also while reading, stop at the following words to determine their meaning using context clues: *atheist, sealant, embark, disembarked*. Consider their affixes and roots: *a-, theist, seal, -ant, dis-*. Students can record the meaning of these affixes in their vocab. logs.

## **III. Post-Reading**

1. Ask: "What central Islamic concept is at the center of this story?"
2. Distribute copies of *Imam Abu Hanifa and the Atheist – Comprehension Questions* and allow students to complete them in groups. They can write answers on a separate sheet of paper if they prefer.
3. After completion, grade the sheets or mark them for completion and then discuss the answers as a class. Always ensure students support their assertions with the text or with their prior knowledge.
4. Distribute directions for the JE and have students complete it.
5. Once they're completed, distribute 4-5 different colored highlighters to each student. Using a different color for each, have them highlight these parts of their introduction: introduction of the topic, definition of *conjuring your schema*, definition of *making predictions*, and a preview of what's to come. Then in another color, have them highlight their conclusion and put a check next to it if they followed directions (shared whether or not they needed to revise their predictions and whether they needed to revise their schema as they read, and why). Next, tell them to check that they underlined their vocabulary words. Finally, explain that what's not highlighted is the 'meat' of their writing. This is actually the most important part – it is the entire reason for writing -- and should be explained well.
6. They can read their entries aloud to the class if they wish, or meet with partners to share with each other.
7. Again review the Essential Questions with the class and discuss possible answers.

### **Cross-curricular ideas:**

- The science teacher can use this reading as a springboard to discuss the Big Bang and theories of evolution, intelligent design, and creationism.
- The social studies teacher can discuss the rich history of debate and the diversity of thought in historic Muslim lands.
- The social studies class can also explore the history of atheism.

- In private Islamic schools, the Islamic studies teacher can use this time to explain the four madha-hib and imams of each, as they will all be mentioned again in this anthology, and students should have prior understanding of them.

## **COMMON CORE STANDARDS**

### **Literature**

**#1:** Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

**#4:** Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings

### **Language**

**#4:** Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 7 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

- Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
- Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., belligerent, bellicose, rebel).
- Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.
- Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).

**#5:** Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

- Interpret figures of speech (e.g., literary, biblical, and mythological allusions) in context.
- Use the relationship between particular words (e.g., synonym/antonym, analogy) to better understand each of the words.
- Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., refined, respectful, polite, diplomatic, condescending).

**#6:** Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

### **Writing**

**#2:** Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.

- Introduce a topic clearly, previewing what is to follow; organize ideas, concepts, and information, using strategies such as definition, classification, comparison/contrast, and cause/ effect; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., charts, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
- Develop the topic with relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples.
- Use appropriate transitions to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among ideas and concepts.
- Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.
- Establish and maintain a formal style.
- Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented.

**#4:** Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

**#10:** Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Speaking and Listening #1: Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 7 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.

- a. Come to discussions prepared, having read or researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence on the topic, text, or issue to probe and reflect on ideas under discussion.
- b. Follow rules for collegial discussions, track progress toward specific goals and deadlines, and define individual roles as needed.
- c. Pose questions that elicit elaboration and respond to others' questions and comments with relevant observations and ideas that bring the discussion back on topic as needed.
- d. Acknowledge new information expressed by others and, when warranted, modify their own views.

## FADEL ISLAMIC SCHOOL STANDARDS GRADES 7-9

### Language

#4: Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 7 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.

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- b. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek or Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., belligerent, bellicose, rebel).
- c. Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning or its part of speech.
- d. Verify the preliminary determination of the meaning of a word or phrase (e.g., by checking the inferred meaning in context or in a dictionary).

#5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

- a. Interpret figures of speech (e.g., literary, biblical, and mythological allusions) in context.
- b. Use the relationship between particular words (e.g., synonym/antonym, analogy) to better understand each of the words.
- c. Distinguish among the connotations (associations) of words with similar denotations (definitions) (e.g., refined, respectful, polite, diplomatic, condescending).

#6: Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

## Imam Abu Hanifa and the Atheist – Comprehension Questions

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Answer each question to the best of your ability, using clues found in the story.

\*\*Be sure to reference the text to support your answers\*\*

1. In the middle of the story, we read that, “The Muslims increased in apprehension and eventually it had passed midnight, and the atheist had a smile on his face.” In the context of this story, why do you think he has a smile on his face?
2. What point is Abu Hanifa trying to make when he talks about planks of wood rising to the surface of the water and nails coming up from the sea floor to hold planks together?
3. While Abu Hanifa explains the reason for his tardiness, we read that, “The atheist meanwhile was listening with a smile on his face.” At this point in the story, why is the atheist smiling?
4. Near the end of the story, in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> paragraphs, the atheist recounts Abu Hanifa’s story and says he doesn’t believe a word of it, then Abu Hanifa again reviews the story while asking, “You don’t believe a word of it?” Why does Abu Hanifa again repeat the story and what the atheist said? What purpose does this serve? (How does it make him a good debater?)
5. The term *connotation* means an idea or feeling associated with a word. For example, the word *yell* feels strong and usually has a negative connotation, while the word *holla* sounds more light-hearted and has a positive connotation. Both words, however, are synonyms. A person could write, “He’ll *yell* at his friends,” or “He’ll *holla* at his friends.” Even though the words essentially mean the same thing, their connotations give the sentences very different meanings.
6. The last sentence of this story states, “The atheist, astonished at his reply, got up and fled.” Why might the word *fled* be used here instead of similar words like *left*, *ran*, or *jogged*? Why does the connotation of the word *fled* make this word more suitable here than any other?
7. Did you notice that Abu Hanifa is named in this story, but ‘the atheist’ is not? Give one reason why the atheist might not have been given a name. Would the story have been different if the atheist had a name, or if Abu Hanifa did not (and was called ‘the Muslim’ instead)?

## Reflective Journal Entry Assignment for *Abu Hanifa and the Atheist*

Directions: In this lesson you learned that *schema* means all the information that readers already have in their minds when they reading something new (their prior or background information). They then use this information to help make sense of what they read. A person who has no *schema*, or no prior knowledge about anything he or she reads, will likely not understand his reading nor enjoy it.

In a journal entry that is no less than one full page, explain what schemata (plural for schema) you already had in your mind that helped you understand this reading. For example, did you think of a time you saw religious people and atheists argue their beliefs about the creation of the world? Did you think of information about Imam Abu Hanifa (perhaps from his biography or from another class) that helped you predict what might happen in the story? Did you think of what you read in the introduction to chapter 1, about how important knowledge and learning were during these times, and how important religion was? (You do not have to answer all these questions – they are just to help you get started.)

For your JE, follow this outline:

- I. Introduce your topic, define what it means to *conjure your schema* and *make predictions*, and give the reader an idea of what you will write about
- II. Use separate paragraphs for different parts of your response
- III. Conclude by sharing whether or not you needed to revise the predictions you made before reading the text and whether you needed to revise your schema as you read, and why.
- IV. Finally, correctly use four of your vocabulary words for this section in your writing and underline them as you go.