

First Crusade Lesson Plan

Central Historical Question:

What happened when Crusaders entered Jerusalem during the First Crusade?

Materials:

- First Crusade PowerPoint
- Copies of Documents A-C
- Copies of Reading Guide

Plan of Instruction:

1. Introduction: Use PowerPoint slides to review or help establish background information on the First Crusade.
 - a. Highlight:
 - i. Slide 2: *In 1095, Byzantine Emperor Alexios I contacted Pope Urban II about the threat of Turkish armies against Constantinople and the Fatamid Muslim's control of Jerusalem. In November, 1096, Pope Urban II considered Alexios' plea at the Council of Claremont, and called for a crusade against the Muslim Turks.*
 - ii. Slide 3: *Large numbers of nobles, knights, and peasants responded to Urban II's call. In 1096, crusading armies set out to Constantinople.*
 - iii. Slide 4: *Prior to the Crusades, there was infighting between Sunni Seljuk Turks, who had conquered a lot of land and the Shi'ite Fatamid Caliphate. Just before the First Crusade, the Fatamids captured Jerusalem from the Seljuk Turks. Knowing the Crusaders were coming, the Fatamids expelled all Christians from Jerusalem.*
 - iv. Slide 6: *Crusading armies arrived at the gates of Jerusalem in the summer of 1099. After a failed attempt to take the city, the army broke through the city walls on July 17. They took the city after a costly battle that some estimate involved 100,000 casualties.*
 - v. Slide 7: *Christians believed they were fighting the Crusades in the name of Jesus to take back the place of his birth from infidels. Muslims believed they were defending land that was theirs. From their perspective, Christians were brutal invaders.*
 - vi. Slide 8: *Introduce day's historical question. Today, we will look at 3 documents written from Christian and Muslim perspectives to investigate the question: What happened when Crusaders captured Jerusalem during the First Crusade?*

2. Introduce/review skills of sourcing and corroboration. Points to highlight:
 - a. *Historians create historical accounts, in part, by comparing multiple documents and perspectives of different people. Focusing on perspective is important because it helps evaluate possible biases and the trustworthiness or reliability of a document.*
 - b. *Checking the source information on a document is a good place to begin evaluating perspective. Before reading, ask yourself: Who wrote this document? When was it written? What type of document is it? Based on this information, see if you can go even further by trying to determine why the document was written, and make a prediction on what the document might be about.*
 - c. *While reading the document you can continue analyzing perspective. Pay close attention to the author's argument or narrative and the words and phrases they use to make their argument or describe their version of history. Ask yourself: How does this document make me feel about this topic? What words or phrases does the author use to describe people and events?*
 - d. *Our task today is to compare and contrast 3 documents from the First Crusade, and in particular the capture of Jerusalem. You are going to explore different perspectives on this event while considering what happened when the Crusaders captured Jerusalem.*
3. Pass out Document A along with Reading Guide.
 - a. Highlight the document's source to establish when, where, and by whom this document was created.
 - b. Ask students to predict what Raymond d'Augiliers might say about the capture of Jerusalem.
 - c. Students read the document. While they read, students underline words and phrases that make them think this document is written from a Christian Crusader's perspective.
 - d. Share out what students underlined.
4. Pass out Document B.
 - a. Highlight the document's source to establish when, where, and by whom this document was created.
 - b. Ask students to predict what Ibn al-Athir might say about the capture of Jerusalem.
 - c. Students read the document. While they read, students underline words and phrases that make them think this document is written from the Muslim perspective.
 - d. Share out what students underlined.

5. Corroboration
 - a. Students identify 1-2 similarities and 1-2 differences between the 2 documents
 - b. Share out.

 6. Pass out Document C. Explain to students that they are going to read a third document without any source information. Their task is to read the document, consider how it compares to the others and try to determine if the document comes from a Muslim or Christian writer.
 - a. Students read document and underline words, phrases, or sentences that might indicate the perspective of this document.
 - b. Students draw on evidence from all 3 documents to decide if Document C is more similar to Document A or B.
 - c. Students draw from evidence in the document to decide if it is written from a Muslim, or Christian perspective.
 - d. Share out answers.
 - e. Share with students the source information of Document C (final slide in the PowerPoint).

This document is from the French chaplain Fulcher of Chartres, a Christian, who participated in and wrote first-hand accounts of the First Crusade. In this excerpt, written sometime between 1100 and his death in 1127, he describes the Crusaders taking Jerusalem.

 7. Discussion
 - a. Based on these sources, what happened when Crusaders entered Jerusalem during the First Crusade?
 - b. What are the primary similarities and differences of these documents?
 - c. Are these trustworthy accounts? Why or why not?
 - d. What other primary source documents might you read to better answer today's historical question?
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Citations

Document A

Raymond d'Aguiliers, "The Siege and Capture of Jerusalem," in *The First Crusade: The Accounts of Eyewitnesses and Participants*, ed. August. C. Krey (Princeton: 1921), 257-62.

Document B

Ibn Al-Thir, "The Franks Conquer Jerusalem," in *Arab Historians of the Crusades*, Francesco Gabrieli, translated by E.J. Costello (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 10-11.

Document C

Fulk (or Fulcher) of Chartres. (?1100-1127). Gesta Francorum Jerusalem Expugnantium [The Deeds of the Franks Who Attacked Jerusalem], in *Parallel Source Problems in Medieval History*, eds. Frederic Duncalf, F. and August Krey (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1912), 109-115. Retrieved October 16, 2012, from: <http://www.fordham.edu/Halsall/source/fulk2.asp>

Document A: Raymond d'Aguiliers (Modified)

Raymond d'Aguiliers was an eyewitness to the First Crusade. He followed the crusading armies army to Jerusalem and wrote a history of his experiences. The passage below is a modified excerpt from his account of the Crusaders' siege of Jerusalem that he wrote sometime after the First Crusade.

Finally, our men took possession of the walls and towers, and wonderful sights were to be seen. Some of our men (and this was more merciful) cut off the heads of their enemies; others shot them with arrows, so that they fell from the towers. It was necessary to pick one's way over the bodies of men and horses. In the **Temple of Solomon**, men rode in blood up to their knees and **bridle reins**. Indeed, it was a just and splendid judgment of God that this place should be filled with the blood of the unbelievers, since it had suffered so long from their **blasphemies**. Some of the enemy took refuge in the Tower of David, and, petitioning Count Raymond for protection, surrendered the Tower into his hands.

How the pilgrims rejoiced and exulted and sang a new song to the Lord! On this day, the children of the apostles regained the city and fatherland for God and the fathers.

Source: *Raymond d'Aguiliers, "The Siege and Capture of Jerusalem," exact date unknown.*

Vocabulary

Temple of Solomon: Temple of Solomon was a Jewish temple, first destroyed by the Babylonians and then by the Romans in 70 CE. In the 600s CE, Muslims built the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock on the same site.

bridle reins: headgear and rope used to control a horse

blasphemies: speech or behavior that is inappropriate towards God.

Document B: Ibn al-Athir (Modified)

Ibn al-Athir (1160-1233) was an Arab historian who wrote a history of the first three crusades, though he only witnessed the third one. The passage below is a modified excerpt from his account of the siege of Jerusalem during the First Crusade.

Jerusalem was taken from the north on the morning of July 15, 1099. The population was put to the sword by the Franks, who pillaged the area for a week. A band of Muslims barricaded themselves into the Tower of David and fought on for several days. They were granted their lives in return for surrendering. The Franks honored their word, and the group left by night for Ascalon. In the **Al-Aqsa Mosque** the **Franks** slaughtered more than 70,000 people, among them a large number of **Imams** and Muslim scholars, **devout** men who had left their homelands to live lives of religious seclusion in the Holy Place. The Franks stripped the Dome of the Rock of more than forty silver **candelabra** and more than twenty gold ones, and a great deal more booty. Refugees reached Baghdad and told the **Caliph's** ministers a story that wrung their hearts and brought tears to their eyes. They begged for help, weeping so that their hearers wept with them as they described the sufferings of the Muslims in that Holy City: the men killed, the women and children taken prisoner, the homes **pillaged**.

Source: Excerpt from Ibn al-Athir's "The Complete History," written in 1231.

Vocabulary

Al-Aqsa Mosque: see note on Temple of Solomon above.

Franks: Christians

Imams: Islamic leader

devout: very religious

candelabra: large candlesticks

Caliph: Islamic ruler

pillaged: rob violently

Document C: ?

At the noon hour on Friday, with trumpets sounding, amid great commotion the Franks entered the city. . . Men joyfully rushed into the city to pursue and kill the nefarious enemies, as their comrades were already doing. Many of our enemies fled to the roof of the temple of Solomon, and were shot with arrows, so that they fell to the ground dead. In this temple almost 10,000 were killed. Indeed, if you had been there you would have seen our feet colored to our ankles with the blood of the slain. But what more shall I relate? None of them were left alive; neither women nor children were spared.

Vocabulary

nefarious: wicked or criminal

First Crusade Reading Guide

Document A: Raymond d'Aguiliers

- 1) Read Document A. While you are reading, underline any words, phrases, or sentences that indicate that this document was written from a Crusader's perspective.
- 2) Share with your partner what parts of the document you underlined, and why you underlined those parts.

Document B: Ibn al-Athir

- 1) Read Document B. While you are reading, underline any words, phrases, or sentences that indicate that this document was written from a Muslim perspective.
- 2) Share with your partner what parts of the document you underlined, and why you underlined those parts.

Corroboration Identify 1-2 <i>similarities</i> and 1-2 <i>differences</i> of these accounts	
Similarities	
1)	
2)	
Differences	
1)	
2)	

Document C: ?

- 1) Read Document C. While you are reading, underline any words, phrases, or sentences that might indicate the perspective of the document's author.
- 2) Which document is Document C more similar to?

Document A

Document B

Explain your choice. Use 2-3 specific examples from the documents in your explanation:

- 3) Do you think this document is from a Christian or Muslim perspective? Why?