

# Two Arab Centers of Learning and Culture

## English Effective Communication

### PROCEDURE

Divide the class into pairs. Give each student a copy of either the A or B reading sheets. The students read the short articles silently by themselves and use a dictionary or consult the teacher if they don't understand a word or phrase. After the students have read and understood the articles, the teacher takes the articles away. Then student A will communicate what was in A's article to student B, and student B will communicate what was in B's article to A. Then all of the students take a test to see how much information they were able to communicate.

## Cordoba

When people think of the cultural and intellectual center of Europe, they often think of Paris. But, in the Middle Ages, the greatest city of Europe was in fact in Cordoba, which was an Arab city in Spain.

In fact, most Arab scholars considered Europe to be a dirty and unimportant place. They thought Cordoba was a much more cultured city.

At around the tenth century, Paris had a population of about 40,000, whereas about half a million people lived in

## Baghdad

Perhaps, you know that the European Renaissance was a time of great learning. But do you know how Arab civilization helped the Renaissance to begin.

Before 1100 A.D., Arab civilization, which was situated in the Middle East and around the Mediterranean, was a place of great learning. There were many libraries, writers and scholars.

The center of this great civilization was the city of Baghdad. In the 800s A.D., the

Cordoba.

A typical library in European cities would contain a few hundred books, but the libraries of Cordoba contained over 400,000 works.

Cordoba was a very tolerant city, where Christians, Muslims, and Jews all lived together. It also, had some of the greatest architecture in Europe. Cordoba was famous for its mosques and public baths. But Cordoba is not an Arab city today. In 1236, Cordoba was captured by the Christian Kings of Spain. And to this day it remains a Spanish city.

great Caliph Al-Mamun created a school of translation in Baghdad.

This school translated most of the Ancient Greek books on philosophy, medicine, and mathematics. This was very fortunate for Europeans because most of these books were destroyed in Europe. When the Europeans got these books from Arabs, a new age of learning began in Europe.

But the Arabs did not just translate; they also created many great works themselves. In fact, algebra, which is a very important part of math, was founded by an Arab scientist called Al-Khwarizmi.

## Cordoba

What do people usually think is the intellectual center of Europe?

What was the greatest city in Europe in the Middle Ages?

Where is Cordoba located?

What did Arab scholars think of Europe in the Middle Ages?

How many people lived in Paris?

How many people lived in Cordoba?

How many books did a typical

## Baghdad

What was the time of great learning in Europe called?

Where was Arab civilization located?

What was it like before 1100 A.D.?

What was the center of Arab civilization?

When did the great Caliph Al-Mamun live?

What did he create?

What did the school translate?

library have in Europe?

How many books were in the libraries of Cordoba?

Who lived in Cordoba?

What architecture is famous in Cordoba?

When was Cordoba captured?

Who captured Cordoba?

Why was this fortunate for the Europeans?

What did the Arab scholars do besides translating?

Who founded algebra?