TRAVEL WITH FATIMA FROM KAIROUAN TO FES

Find out how long it took for the Al-Fihri family to flee to Fez,
Haus der Astronomie
BRIEF DESCRIPTION

During this activity students are asked to imagine the landscape of Northern Africa by looking at photos. Using a map, they estimate the distance that Fatima Al-Fihri travelled together with her father and sister from Kairouan (Tunisia) to Fez when they had to migrate to Morocco.

GOALS

Through this exercise, the students get a sense for the long distances that people had to travel from one city to another during the 10th century AD. They can also compare the time it would take to travel a similar distance in present day. This helps to appreciate the burden refugees have to endure while travelling by foot.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After this activity the students will be able to:

• calculate/estimate the duration of travel when the speed and the distance are given.
• name the continent where Tunisia and Morocco are located.
• describe the predominant climatic conditions in Northern Africa.

EVALUATION

• Ask the students: If a camel/horse/car/pedestrian can travel so many km per day, how many km can they travel in two, three, ten days (twice, three times, ten times as many)?
• Ask the students which continents they know. Provide a globe and let the students find Morocco and Tunisia. Ask them, what lies between those countries and Europe (the Mediterranean Sea).
• Ask the students, what kind of landscape they expect in Northern Africa. Is it grassland, desert, or jungle?
MATERIALS

- Photos of landscapes of Tunisia and Morocco
- Map showing a section of Northern Africa with Tunisia and Morocco.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

(Missing)

FULL ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION

Read the story about Fatima's life. Look at the images below and try to identify typical landscapes and photos of cities in Tunisia and Morocco.
Look at the section of the map below showing Tunisia and Morocco. Can you identify the location of Kairouan in Tunisia (where Fatima used to live) and Fez in Morocco? The distance between these two cities is approximately 1,630 km. Fatima travelled with her father and her sister from Kairouan to Fez on camels in a caravan. Camels travel on average 40 km per day. How many days did it take Fatima and her family to reach Fez in Morocco? (Answer: 41 days!!!) Primary school students can draw a short line representing the distance a camel can travel in 1 day, and then count the number of times that short line goes between the two cities.
CURRICULUM

Space Awareness curricula topics (EU and South Africa)

The journey of ideas, Migration

CONCLUSION

This activity uses storytelling to introduce a historical figure that was important for the transport of knowledge. At the same time, it connects her fate to the modern challenge of migration. The students develop a sense for the vast distances refugees have to travel and how migration can be a chance to connect for the ones who seek a new home and the ones who welcome them.

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Fig. 48 Travelling with Fatima (Credits: Google maps)