



A teacher's guide
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based upon the picture book
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This classroom guide is designed for students in first through third grade. It is assumed that teachers will adapt each activity to fit the needs and abilities of their own students.

It offers activities to help teachers integrate *One Wish: Fatima al-Fihri and the World's Oldest University* into the curricula.

All activities were created in conjunction with the Common Core and other relevant content standards.

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To learn more about M.O. Yuksel, visit her at <https://www.moyuksel.com>. To learn more about Mariam Quraishi visit her at <https://www.instagram.com/mariamque/?hl=en>.

Before You Read...

Before reading *One Wish: Fatima al-Fihri and the World's Oldest University*...

Look closely at the Front Cover ~

- Read the title aloud.
- Describe what you see.
- Who do you think the woman is?
- Imagine you are the person in the illustration. How does this pose make you feel?
- Where do you think this story takes place? What clues on the cover tell you this?
- Can you guess what the story might be about?



Study the endpapers.

- Compare and contrast the front endpapers with the back endpapers. What is the same? What is different?
- Why do you think the illustrator chose the Al-Qarawiyyin Courtyard for the endpapers?

English Language Arts

Reading Comprehension

Now read or listen to the book.

Help students summarize in their own words what the book is about.

- When and where did Fatima live?
- What was Fatima’s first word that she recited from the Qur’an?
 - Why was this word important to young Fatima?
- Explain in your own words what “knowledge was like the full moon—lighting the dark night bright” means.
- What subjects did Fatima study?
- What was Fatima’s one wish?
- Why does Fatima’s family end up in Fez, Morocco?
 - How does Fatima feel about being in Fez?
 - What is a souq?
 - Why did Fatima like the souq?
- What does Fatima do with “the fortune left to her by her father and husband to honor them and serve the community she so loved?”
- Describe the kind of school Fatima dreams of building.
- What does fasting mean?
 - Why does Fatima fast while she is building the school?
- How did Fatima’s wish come true?
- Who studied at Fatima’s school?



Let’s talk about the people who made *One Wish*.

- Who is the author?
- Who is the illustrator?
- What kind of work did each person do to make the book?

Now, let's look closely at the illustrations.

- Look closely at how people are dressed in *One Wish*. How would you describe their clothing?
- Conduct an Internet search for clothing styles around the world in the ninth century.
- How do styles from other countries in the ninth century compare to the clothing that Fatima wore in Morocco?
- Draw your own person wearing clothing from this period.
- Display the finished drawings in the classroom.

Who is Fatima? ~ Character Study

Read *One Wish* paying close attention to Fatima's personality. Record your thoughts regarding her character traits in a chart like the one below. Feel free to add additional character traits as you see fit.

Character Trait	Definition	How does Fatima show this character trait?	How might you show this character trait in your own life?
Determination			
Persistence			
Compassion			
Generosity			

After gathering information regarding Fatima’s character, give students a Venn diagram and have them compare and contrast Fatima with a character from a different book. This person can be a real person or fictionalized character.

The refrain “she believed she could” is used often in the story. Why is believing in yourself and your dreams important?

The Glossary of *One Wish*

One Wish contains some words which may be new for students.

Create flashcards of the words found in the glossary near the end of the book. Then create a matching game like Memory in which kids match the words to their definitions.

Fast	Hadith	Inheritance	Iqra	Islam
Minaret	Mosque	Muslim	Prophet	Quill pen
Qur’an	Refugee	Souq	Sadaqah jariyah	University

Additional Exploration:

- Practice the pronunciation of each word or phrase.
- Come up with a way to remember what the word means. Using Total Physical Response and a partner, students can create an action that symbolizes the word and helps them remember it.
- Assign pairs of students a word from the glossary. Have them define their word and present it to the rest of the class.



My One Wish ~ a creative story

Lead students in a discussion about wishes.

- What was Fatima’s wish?
- Did it come true? How?
- How did Fatima make the world a better place?
- What can you do to make your school/community/world a better place?

- What are some things that you need to achieve this wish?

Create a fictional story about your wish of a better school/community/world coming true! Include how you were able to achieve this wish. Be imaginative. Each story should include a beginning, a middle and an ending.

Optional: Create the story together as a class.

My School

There are many kinds of schools for students of all ages. Even schools that are near each other can vary a lot.

Describe your own school.

- What kinds of classes are offered?
- Who attends your school?
- Who teaches at your school?
- What makes your school a wonderful place to attend?
- What changes would you make to your school if you could?

Describe the type of school you would like to build.

- What kinds of classes would be offered?
- Who would attend?
- Who would teach?
- What would make your school special?



History

Female Firsts

Fatima al-Fihri established the oldest and continuously operating university where students could learn from many teachers.

Did you know that history is filled with females who contributed to the world or changed the world for the better?

Type the phrase “*first woman to*” into a search engine and see how many pioneers you can find.

Write a thank you letter to one of these women or to Fatima. How has their accomplishment influenced your life?

The letter should include:

- Detail about what you found inspirational about this woman’s life.
- An example of how you could plan to use this inspiration for your own wishes and dreams.
- A thank you for the inspiration.

Fatima’s legacy

An eulogy is a speech that is often given at a funeral to highlight the key events of a person’s life and their legacy or what they leave behind.

Write an eulogy for Fatima, based on the back matter information provided in *One Wish* and your own research.

Design a statue to honor Fatima al-Fihri. What elements of her life would you include? Then, in groups of 3-4, re-create a “still or frozen image” of one of the statues.

Share these statues with the rest of the class as eulogies are read.

Students of the University of Al-Qarawiyyin

Read the back matter and use the timeline to research and write about a famous person who attended the University of Al-Qarawiyyin.

Possible sources for information:

- Nonfiction books
- Encyclopedias
- The Internet

Take notes and gather as much information as possible on the following five topics about your chosen student

- General biographical information



- Famous work
- Legacy
- Fun facts

Once the information is gathered, work to create either an illustrated poster or booklet of your person.

Social Studies

The Wish in Me

Brainstorm a list of wishes that you might have that you want to achieve in your life.

The Project:

- Have each student lay down on a large piece of paper while someone traces their body with a pencil. (Students may also trace their hand, if tracing the whole body is not an option).
- Once the student has the silhouette of their body, they can write about their wishes inside the outline.
- Then students can decorate their silhouette. Photos and other images can be added to create a collage.



What is a University?

Fatima al-Fihri is credited with creating the oldest continuously running university in the world. It was her wish to create a place “where scholars from around the world could teach about history, geometry, poetry, and more. A school where students could earn degrees and become anything they wanted.”

- What is a university?
- Who goes to a university?
- What would you like to study at a university?
- What would you like to become when you’re older?

Conduct an internet search of universities you could attend to when you’re older to study what you wish.

Speak to a high school guidance counselor, or invite one to your class, to discuss the many options open to you.

To learn more about the benefits of higher learning, visit:

<http://www.childrensuniversity.manchester.ac.uk/learning-activities/student-life/an-introduction-to-student-life/the-benefits-of-a-higher-education/>

Fatima Wouldn't Give Up

Someone who perseveres over something that they struggle with is someone who makes a good role model or someone to "look up to". Why would Fatima al-Fihri be a good role model?

Introduce the idea of "Perseverance" or "never giving up".

- Sing "The Itsy-Bitsy Spider". How does the spider show perseverance? What obstacles does the spider have? Why does the spider continue to try?
- Read "The Carrot Seed" by Ruth Krauss. How does the boy in the story show perseverance? What obstacles does the boy have? Why does the boy continue to try?
- What about Fatima al-Fihri? What obstacles stood in her way? Why do you think she continued to try?

Mural Activity

Tell the class that they will be working together to make a mural of Fatima's story. First brainstorm a list of the things they want to include in the mural. Use many art supplies to make the different objects and characters with markers, glue, scissors, and colored paper.

When everyone is finished, arrange the pictures on a large piece of bulletin board paper. Then use quotes from the story to make labels for the different pictures on sentence strips.

Don't be afraid to reach for your dreams! Have children write down or draw at least one of their wishes or something that they want to accomplish.

Display these dreams near the mural with the title "Our Wishes."



Geography

Destination: Al-Qarawiyyin

As a class, locate Al-Qarawiyyin, in Fez, Morocco, on a map and or/globe. Then, conduct research of the university and Morocco on the Internet.

Visit these sites to start your research:

<https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/explore/countries/morocco/> - morocco-marrakech-

[market.jpg](#)

<http://www.ducksters.com/geography/country.php?country=Morocco>

Research one fun fact from each of the following categories:

- History
- Culture
- Music and dance
- Diet
- Shelter
- Climate
- Geography
- Economy

Gather photographs of the university and Fez.

Then, plan a week-long fictitious trip to Fez, Morocco. Be sure to plan transportation to and within Fez, food, what to pack, what to do and see. Detail your trip in a daily itinerary. Include a budget, taking into account the local economy and the US dollar.

