

# Unit 3: Language and Ethnicity

## Lesson 1: Ethnic Minorities in the Arab World

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### Ethnic Minorities in the Arab World: Discussion Notes for Teachers

In this lesson, students are asked the following:

#### What if the Arab world was defined by just one of the four factors: language, geography, religion or ethnicity?

- How would that change the Arab world?
- How might that impact the ethnic minority groups you read about?
- Are there areas or groups of people who would be added to or excluded from the "Arab World"?

#### Discussion points for teachers:

Defining the region just by **language** would unequivocally exclude the Kurds, Nubians, and Imazighen, though not the Bedouin. It could also expand the borders of the Arab world to include diaspora Arabic-speaking groups (in Europe and North America, for example).

Defining the region by **geography** alone would include the ethnic groups more wholly, depending on the geographical borders one chooses. It could also create further separation between ethnic groups that span outside of the traditional Arab world, such as the Imazighen.

Defining the region by **religion** could also be considered more inclusive, though historically these indigenous groups were converted to Islam during Islamic expansion in the 8th century. Additionally, looking at the Arab world through the lens of religion alone could raise questions about levels of religiosity resulting in exclusion of certain ethnic groups as well as many individual Muslims and those of other religions.

If the Arab world was to be defined by Arab **ethnicity** alone, all other ethnic groups would be excluded. It might also raise questions about intermarriage and the pureness of one's ethnicity.