

Unit 3: Language and Ethnicity

Lesson 1: Ethnic Minorities in the Arab World

About this Lesson:

In this lesson, students consider the ways in which select ethnic minorities are included and excluded from the region. This lesson introduces students to four ethnic minorities in the Arab world and challenges them to consider how each group's identity fits within the shared identity of the Arab world. The Arab world is traditionally defined by a shared geographic region (Middle East and North Africa), language (Arabic), ethnicity (Arab), and religion (Islam). This lesson aims to break down that definition and introduce students to other ethnic groups in the region, some of whom speak other languages and practice other religions.

Time:
50 minutes

The primary exercise in this lesson asks students to redefine the Arab world by isolating ethnicity, religion, language and geographic divisions and see how that changes the inclusion and exclusion of ethnic minorities. By exploring the interplay between the dominant Arab culture and the various ethnic minorities in the region, students are challenged to expand their understanding of the Arab world as a diverse region with multiple identities and experiences.

In this lesson, students will:

- read a short text about ethnic minorities in the Arab world
- discuss how various factors define the identity of the region
- create a map of the Arab world based on one factor of identity in the region

Key Terms

Bedouin: An ethnic group of nomads found primarily in Saudi Arabia, Syria, Jordan, and Israel/Palestine.

Ethnic group: A group of people who share customs, religion, origins, and/or ancestry.

Imazighen: An ethnic group indigenous to North Africa, often called Berbers. Native language is Tamazight. Pronounced: Im-ah-zi-ghen (gh like a french r).

Kurd: An ethnic group predominantly living in an area often called Kurdistan, which includes parts of Iran, Turkey, Syria, and Iraq. Their native language is Kurdish.

Nubian: An ethnic group from ancient Nubia, parts of present day Egypt and Sudan.

Enduring Understandings

- Peoples of the Arab world have diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, each with a distinctive character and identity.
- There is a strong connection between language and identity which creates unique challenges for linguistic minorities.

Curriculum Framing Questions

- Peoples of the Arab world have diverse ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, each with a distinctive character and identity.
- There is a strong connection between language and identity which creates unique challenges for linguistic minorities.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- distinguish between various ethnic populations of the Arab world and how they relate to the Arab world.
- explore how elements of identity define membership in the Arab world.

Assessment & Evaluation of Student Learning

- Participate in discussion of characteristics of the Arab world and ethnic minorities within it.
- Create a map that redefines the Arab world based on a single factor of identity.

Materials Needed in Class

- Ethnic Minorities in the Arab World Handout
- Ethnic Minorities in the Arab World Discussion Guide
- Ethnic Minorities in the Arab World Discussion Notes for Teachers
- Ethnic Minorities in the Arab World Map Handout

Implementation

1. Ask students how the Arab world received its title and what defines it? Be sure students discuss the shared Arab ethnicity, Arabic language, geographic location, and dominant religion (Islam). Explain to students that while this might be the majority experience in the region, there are many other ethnicities in the Arab world. These ethnic groups may have other languages and religions, and may be found only in a subregion of the Arab world.
2. Distribute the Ethnic Minorities in the Arab World handout which provides brief descriptions of four ethnic groups in the Arab world, Kurds, Bedouin, Nubians, and Imazighen. Give students time to read silently
3. Divide students into small groups and ask them to discuss the questions on the handout:
 - 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"?
 - Consider each minority group you read about and discuss how these groups fit into the various dimensions of Arab world-membership.
 - Are some of these shared features more important than others?
 - What does it mean to share some of these features with the majority Arab Muslims and not others (or have multiple geographies, ethnicities, languages etc)?
 - To whom might these questions of identity and inclusion be important?
 - How might they impact the lives of individuals?

You may use the notes in the Discussion Notes for Teachers to help guide students in their discussions.

4. If time allows, bring the class together to share their discussion.

Homework:

Students will design a map redefining the Arab world by one of the factors of identity discussed during the lesson (language, geography, religion, ethnicity). See handout for directions.

Common Core State Standards 9-10

Speaking and Listening

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.5 Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

Language

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

History/Social Studies

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.7 Integrate quantitative or technical analysis (e.g., charts, research data) with qualitative analysis in print or digital text.

Common Core State Standards 11-12

Speaking and Listening

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.5 Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest.

Language

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.11-12.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

History/Social studies

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.