Unit 4: Gender Roles

Lesson 1: Gender and Culture

About this Lesson

In this lesson, students consider how gender expectations are constructed and construed in their community and in the Arab world. This foundational analysis prepares students to investigate gender roles and expectations through the rest of the unit. In this lesson, students use the iceberg model (see Unit 1, Lesson 3 for more information) to separate their observations from their interpretations and explore how gender roles are developed, negotiated and varied within a culture and between culture to culture.

Students will read the article “Is Pink ‘Pink’ in Saudi Arabia,” by Lisa Wade, which serves as a reminder that the cues that indicate gender identity themselves can vary greatly between cultures. In other words, what one culture interprets as belonging in a “female domain” in one community may seem neutral or even masculine in another context. This lesson also utilizes a collection of photos of males and females in the Arab world as a way for students to observe various expressions of gender. Students are asked to record their observations and then interpret the photos. When looking at these photos, students are asked to consider their own cultural interpretations as well as how they could be interpreted within Arab culture.

In this lesson, students will:

- read Is Pink “Pink” in Saudi Arabia, by Lisa Wade.
- use the iceberg model to understand gender roles and assumptions in their culture and in the Arab world.
- look at photographs of Arab men, women, and children.

Enduring Understandings

- Gender roles are built, defined, and fulfilled by social and cultural norms and can vary from culture to culture.

Curriculum Framing Questions

- How does culture impact the parameters of assigned gender roles?
By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- reflect upon their expectations of gender roles and how gender roles are established differently in the Arab world.
- compare gender roles between their own cultures and Arab cultures.

Assessment & Evaluation of Student Learning

- Create two iceberg diagrams illustrating gender roles in the student’s community and in the Arab world.
- Engage in active discussion about gender roles in America and the Arab world.

Materials Needed in Class

- Gender in My Community Homework Assignment
- Icebergs: In My Community and In the Arab World
- “Is Pink ‘Pink’ in Saudi Arabia?” by Lisa Wade
- Photographs from the Arab World

Implementation

Before Class

1. Before implementing the lesson, assign students to reflect on gender and gender roles in their community by completing the Gender in My Community Homework Assignment. They will need the In My Community Iceberg.

In Class

2. Ask students to share their observations from last night’s homework. Based on students’ discussion of gender dynamics, ask them to create a class definition of gender.

   The definition used in this curriculum is: Gender roles are the culturally established set of behaviors and expressions that are socially acceptable for a specific sex. You may share this with them.

3. Ask students what they know about gender roles in the Arab world. Use the following questions to guide the discussion:

   - Are there particular expectations for males or females in the Arab world? What are they? How did you acquire this knowledge?
What do you expect from a unit about gender roles in the Arab world? What has shaped those expectations?

If it didn’t come out in the opening conversation, remind students that, like in America, there are traditional expressions of gender identity for males and females in the Arab world. There are also diverse ways that individuals negotiate and contest their gender roles. One’s identification as either male or female informs social cues and interactions, and how they are interpreted. It is important to remember that the cues themselves can be quite different than those established in other cultures.

4. Distribute the article “Is Pink “Pink” in Saudi Arabia” and the iceberg worksheet labeled “In the Arab World.” Instruct students to read the article and record any relevant information in the visible section of their iceberg.

5. Debrief with students about the article. What does the author say about pink in Saudi Arabia? What values or associations are attached to pink in western culture?

6. Introduce the Photographs from the Arab World. Explain that students will make observations and interpretations of gender in the Arab world based on a set a photographs from the region. Project the photos provided for the whole class to see and as you look each photo, ask students to:

   • **Observe**: What do you see in the photo? Describe it. (Students may skip to interpreting or evaluating the photo, but try to get them to first just observe)
   • **Interpret**: What do the actions and interactions in the photograph mean? Does it mean something different in the Arab world than in your community?
   • **Evaluate**: What do you think of the images? What might someone in the Arab world think of them?

As students look at the photos, they should continue writing notes on the visible side of their Arab world iceberg.

*Note for teachers: Encourage students to think about the following: physical contact between individuals in the photos, location of the photos (public or private space), clothing people are wearing, and similarities & differences between single and mixed gender groups.*
7. End the lesson with a concluding discussion of gender. You may use the following questions to guide your discussion:

- Do you notice any patterns that relate to gender in these images? What are they? Are there exceptions to the patterns?
- Can you draw any conclusions about what lies below the waterline in your Arab world iceberg i.e. what these photos mean within the context of Arab culture?
- In this lesson, we discussed the idea of gender as a construct of society. What do you think of that concept? Does it change how you understand gender in the Arab world? in your community?

Common Core State Standards 9-10

Reading: Informational Texts

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.2 Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.7 Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person’s life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.

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.9-10.2 Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source.

Language

- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.L.9-10.1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
• 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.9-10.9 Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

Common Core State Standards 11-12

Reading: Informational Text
• CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.2 Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.
• CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

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.11-12.2 Integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) in order to make informed decisions and solve problems, evaluating the credibility and accuracy of each source and noting any discrepancies among the data.

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.
• CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.
• CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.9 Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

National Standards for Foreign Language Education

Standard 2.1: Students demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the culture studied