



# Who Are Arab Americans?: An Introduction

Time: 1-2 class sessions

Grade Level: 7-12

**Purpose (What will students learn from this lesson?):** The purpose of this lesson on who Arab Americans are is to promote cultural understanding, challenge stereotypes, and foster understanding about the Arab American community. Through this lesson, students will develop an introductory understanding of who Arab Americans are and where they come from.

## **Unit Enduring Understandings Alignment:**

*Unit 2 - Stories: The collective narratives of my people.*

- We understand that our roots and indigeneity were established prior to colonization and that they are a source of knowledge, connection and healing.
- We understand and embrace the historical contributions, intellectual knowledge and cultural wealth of our people.
- We understand and place a high value on the stories of resilience, survival and resistance of our people.

## **Lesson Guiding Questions:**

- Who are Arab Americans?
- What are Arab American immigration stories?
- What are the similarities/differences between the Middle East and the Arab World?

## **Essential Skills:**

**Critical Thinking Skills:** Students need to be able to analyze historical interpretations and distinguish between valid arguments, which are supported by evidence and sound

reasoning, and fallacious arguments, which are flawed or unsupported.

**Evaluating Evidence:** Students must be able to identify bias and prejudice in historical interpretations by examining the evidence presented and considering the perspective or agenda of the author or source.

**Contextual Analysis:** Students should understand the social, cultural, political, and economic context in which historical interpretations were made in order to assess the potential bias or prejudice present.

**Communication Skills:** Students should be able to effectively articulate their analysis of historical interpretations, highlighting any bias or prejudice they have identified, with clear and persuasive arguments.

**Empathy and Perspective-Taking:** Students should be able to put themselves in the shoes of various historical actors and consider how bias and prejudice may have influenced their interpretations.

**Reflective Thinking:** Students should be able to critically reflect on their own biases and prejudices and take them into account when evaluating historical interpretations.

**Ethical Reasoning:** Students should be familiar with ethical principles and be able to consider the ethical implications of bias and prejudice in historical interpretations.

### **Cultural Wealth (Yosso, p. 78):**

1. **Aspirational capital** refers to “the ability to maintain hopes and dreams for the future, even in the face of real and perceived barriers. This resiliency is evidenced in those who allow themselves and their children to dream of possibilities beyond their present circumstances, often without the objective means to attain those goals” (p. 77-78).
2. **Linguistic capital** includes “the intellectual and social skills attained through communication experiences in more than one language and/or style... Linguistic capital reflects the idea that Students of Color arrive at school with multiple language and communication skills. In addition, these children most often have been engaged participants in a storytelling tradition, that may include listening to and recounting oral histories, parables, stories (cuentos) and proverbs (dichos)” (p. 78-79).
3. **Familial capital** refers to “those cultural knowledges nurtured among familia (kin) that carry a sense of community history, memory and cultural intuition... This form of cultural wealth engages a commitment to community well-being and expands the concept of family to include a broader understanding of kinship. Acknowledging the racialized, classed and heterosexualized inferences that comprise traditional understandings of ‘family’, familial capital is nurtured by our ‘extended family’, which may include immediate family (living or long passed on) as well as aunts, uncles, grandparents and friends who we might consider part of our familia. From these kinship ties, we learn the importance of maintaining a healthy connection to our community and its resources”

(p.79).

**Ethnic Studies Principles Alignment:**

- Cultivate empathy, community actualization, cultural perpetuity, self-worth, self-determination, and the holistic well-being of all participants, especially Native peoples and people of color

**Standards Alignment:**

- **Historical Research, Evidence, and Point of View**  
Historical and Social Sciences Analysis Skills Grades 9-12
  1. Students distinguish valid arguments from fallacious arguments in historical interpretations.
  2. Students identify bias and prejudice in historical interpretations.

**Materials:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <a href="#">Slides to teach the lesson</a></li><li>● Journal or teacher’s system for recording notes/ideas.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <a href="#">Student notetaker force copy</a></li></ul>
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**Modifications, Accommodations, Resources for Multilingual Students :**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Translanguaging</li><li>● Sentence stems provided for discussion responses and/or written responses.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Pair monolingual students with bilingual students</li><li>● Provide bilingual dictionaries.</li></ul>
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[Critical Vocabulary](#)

## C1: Cultural Rituals and Energizer

**Description:** This energizer contributes to setting the “culture” of the classroom while also connecting the main concepts of lesson plan to the students prior experiences/knowledge/interests.

STEP	DESCRIPTION	TIME
Step 1	Land Acknowledgement: US land and Palestine land acknowledgement.	10 min




	*Pass out or link a force copy of the <a href="#">student notetaker</a> for use for the lesson.	
<b>Step 2</b>	<b>Ancestor Acknowledgement: Edward Said</b> Share the ancestor acknowledgement.	<b>5 min</b>
<b>Step 3</b>	<b>Cultural Energizer: Slides 5-11</b> What is the Arab World? Locate any countries that are part of the Arab world.	<b>15 min</b>

## C2: Critical Concepts

**Description: True or False about whom Arab Americans are and are not.**

STEP	DESCRIPTION	TIME
<b>Slide 12-15/ Step 1</b>	<b>Critical Concept: Slides 12-15</b> Pose the true/false questions to students and ask for volunteers to share their answers with evidence. For example, "I think this statement is (true/false) because _____." Following student sharing, reveal the answer and either read or invite a volunteer to read the answer. Direct students to take <a href="#">notes</a> .	<b>7 min</b>

## C3: Community Collaboration

STEP	DESCRIPTION	TIME
<b>Step 1</b>	<b>Arab American Immigration Stories</b> Watching three stories of immigration students will <a href="#">reflect</a> : View the stories and <a href="#">take notes</a> on why each person/family came to the United States.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Joe Borrajo</li> <li> Sarah Abuharaz</li> <li> Fatme Faraj</li> </ul>	<b>30 min</b>

## C4: Conclusive Dialogue/Critical Circular Exchange

<b>Connection:</b> How is this relevant to students? How is it relevant to the unit? How do you bring back to the PURPOSE of the unit?	The purpose is for students to have a better understanding of who Arab Americans are. This is meant to be an introduction only.
<b>Assessment:</b> How will the students be assessed?	After viewing the immigration stories, ask students to <a href="#">share</a> the reasons that the different Arab Americans shared that they immigrated to the United States and write in these charts. Then have them write a personal reflection on how their understanding of Who Arab Americans are has changed.
<b>Evaluation:</b> How will the effectiveness of this lesson plan be evaluated?	If students can articulate the differences and similarities between the Arab world, the Middle East, Muslims, etc., then they have reached the objective of this foundational introductory lesson. Utilize student work on the <a href="#">student note taker worksheet</a> to evaluate understanding.

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### Teacher Resources:

Arab American Heritage Month Christina Knight | April 2, 2023

<https://www.thirteen.org/blog-post/arab-american-heritage-month/>

Smithsonian Arab American Heritage Month (2022)

<https://www.si.edu/spotlight/arab-american>

Lesson Plan Contributors: Samia Shoman, Theresa Montañó, Guadalupe Carrasco Cardona, and Tricia Gallagher-Geurtsen.