



Teaching the Middle East: A Resource for High School Educators

The Geography of the Middle East

Geoff Emberling, Chief Curator, Oriental Institute Museum of the University of Chicago

Lesson Plan 1:

The Diversity of the Geography of the Middle East

General Description of Lesson Plan: Students will examine the map of the Middle East and a series of visuals/images that illustrate the variations of the region.

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Subject Area(s): World History

For Grade Level(s): Grades 9 – 12

Time Needed: An introductory lesson---one class period

Outcomes/Objectives:

- To examine the map of the Middle East
- To identify geographical diversity
- To draw conclusions about stereotypes of the Middle East

Materials: Access the links to the four online maps—relief, elevation, political, Map collection.

The map of the Middle East associated with this module (Image #1).
Images # 2 – #15 associated with this module.

Suggested Procedure(s):

As individuals, ask students to describe the Middle East. Students should make a list of the ideas/terms that characterize their perceptions.

Invite students to select a partner. Student pairs will examine the map (Image #1) together and decide to what areas their list of ideas/terms apply. Then student pairs should speculate on the types of geographical features that might be present in this region.

Next, student pairs should examine Images # 2 – #15 to evaluate the accuracy of their speculations. Students should make a list of the various physical features that characterize the geography of the Middle East.

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As a whole class, students will imagine how such diverse geography might affect the climate, people, and way of life in this region. Students and teacher can examine the online sources of maps to confirm their observations and initial assessments. Then, students will discuss the nature of stereotypes and the narrowness that preconceived notions impose on understanding of the region.

Evaluation/Assessment Strategies:

- The thoughtfulness of the pairs of students and the quality/depth of the examination of the photos.
- The understandings cultivated by the whole class discussion.

Rubric:

Class Discussion: Geography of the Middle East

Teacher Name: _____

Student Name: _____

CATEGORY	25	21	18	15
Contributions	Routinely provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion. A definite leader who contributes a lot of effort.	Usually provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion. A strong group member who tries hard!	Sometimes provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion. A satisfactory group member who does what is required.	Rarely provides useful ideas when participating in the group and in classroom discussion. May refuse to participate.
Problem-solving	Actively looks for and suggests solutions to problems.	Refines solutions suggested by others.	Does not suggest or refine solutions, but is willing to try out solutions suggested by others.	Does not try to solve problems or help others solve problems. Lets others do the work.
Attitude	Never is publicly critical of the project or the work of others. Always has a positive attitude about the task(s).	Rarely is publicly critical of the project or the work of others. Often has a positive attitude about the task(s).	Occasionally is publicly critical of the project or the work of other members of the group. Usually has a positive attitude about the task(s).	Often is publicly critical of the project or the work of other members of the group. Often has a negative attitude about the task(s).
Working with Others	Almost always listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others. Tries to keep people working well together.	Usually listens to, shares, with, and supports the efforts of others. Does not cause "waves" in the group.	Often listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others, but sometimes is not a good team member.	Rarely listens to, shares with, and supports the efforts of others. Often is not a good team player.

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Develop two-three guiding questions specific to this lesson plan:

1. What are the characteristics of the geography of the Middle East?
2. In what ways do the photos/visuals of the Middle East inform student understandings of the Middle East?
3. How are stereotypes challenged by visual evidence?