



Teaching the Middle East: A Resource for High School Educators

The Middle East as Seen Through Foreign Eyes Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries

John Woods, Professor of Iranian and Central Asian History and of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, The University of Chicago, and Alexander Barna, Outreach Coordinator, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Chicago

Lesson Plan 2: Examining Images for Meaning

General Description of Lesson Plan: Using peer groups, students will examine several images from the image bank to see what is expressed, what message the image constructs and to what trope that image belongs.

Created By: Michael C. Shea, Kenwood Academy High School, Chicago, IL

Subject Area(s): World history, Social Studies

For Grade Level(s): 9-12 Regular & honors

Time Needed: Three class periods

Outcomes/Objectives:

Students will actively look at images in order to develop greater media literacy skills and also place images in a historic and modern critical context.

Materials:

Images from module image bank, digital projector, laptop/desktop computer

Suggested Procedure(s):

1. Assign students to peer groups of 3-4
2. Assign images from the [Image Resource Bank](#) to the groups according to the chart to the right.
3. Students will examine each image in their set using the *Looking at Images* instructions below.

1	2, 8, 10
2	3, 11, 6
3	4, 6, 9
4	14, 9, 11
5	7, 5, 13
6	12, 15, 5
7	13, 9, 1
8	1, 15, 5

Teaching the Middle East: A Resource for High School Educators

Lesson Plan 2: Examining Images for Meaning

4. Students should now offer an evaluative interpretation of what they see in each image. Teachers may use the attached (optional) worksheet. To facilitate discussion the teacher may guide students by asking them to explain what this image says about Arabs, Muslims and/or Islam using the list of observed details.

5. Students should discuss what trope(s) best apply to each image using the following list from Woods module:

- a) Faceless horde
- b) Mindless entity
- c) Brute force
- d) Violence
- e) Irrationality
- f) Barbarian
- g) Savage
- h) Demon and devil
- i) European imagination

6. Using the presentation guidelines below, students will then present their images to the class [teacher should allot no more than 5 min per image and hold all questions to the end of the presentation].

7. Written evaluation-debrief

Looking at images:

Each student group should closely examine each image assigned to them by making note of 1) what they see, followed by 2) interpreting what they see.¹ It is important that students follow the instructions exactly to avoid distorting the activity.

Directions:

- a) Identify what is “in” the image while avoiding subjective terms that may color ones opinion—instruct students to be absolutely literal and concrete.
- b) Create a list of the artifacts within the image observed
- c) Examine the list of observed artifacts in the context of the subject, title and artist.

¹ Students often have difficulty with this procedure, naturally moving to state what they “think they see” rather than stating precisely what is there. If this process is new, please model the lesson for students using another image.

Teaching the Middle East: A Resource for High School Educators

Lesson Plan 2: Examining Images for Meaning

Presentation Guidelines:

1. Each group will present their three images to the class and briefly describe the image including several significant details in each image.
2. The main focus of the presentation should be the evaluative interpretation, which includes the assignment of trope(s) that best apply to each image.
3. Students may conclude their presentation with the possible danger in this kind of reductionism—in short, what stereotype is reinforced through this image and why is it bad.

Evaluation/Assessment Strategies:

- 1) Peer group-teacher evaluation
- 2) Group Presentation-Image Analysis
- 3) Peer group-student

Use these guiding questions to spur discussion in your classroom:

1. Describe what you see in the image.
2. Does it match the tropes discussed in this lesson? Which ones? In what way?
3. Have you seen images matching these tropes before? Where? How did you respond?

Teaching the Middle East: A Resource for High School Educators

Lesson Plan 2: Examining Images for Meaning

Analyzing Images Worksheet

Image Title:	
Observed detail:	
Analysis (use notebook you need more room)	
Trope(s)	

Image Title:	
Observed detail:	

Teaching the Middle East: A Resource for High School Educators

Lesson Plan 2: Examining Images for Meaning

Analysis (use notebook you need more room)	
Trope(s)	

Image Title:	
Observed detail:	
Analysis (use notebook you need more room)	
Trope(s)	

Image Title:	
---------------------	--

Teaching the Middle East: A Resource for High School Educators

Lesson Plan 2: Examining Images for Meaning

Observed detail:	
Analysis (use notebook you need more room)	
Trope(s)	

Teaching the Middle East: A Resource for High School Educators

Lesson Plan 2: Examining Images for Meaning

Evaluation Rubric:

Collaborative Work Skills: Peer Collaboration

Teacher Name: _____

Student Name: _____

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
Time-management	Routinely uses time well throughout the project to ensure things get done on time. Group does not have to adjust deadlines or work responsibilities because of this person's procrastination.	Usually uses time well throughout the project, but may have procrastinated on one thing. Group does not have to adjust deadlines or work responsibilities because of this person's procrastination.	Tends to procrastinate, but always gets things done by the deadlines. Group does not have to adjust deadlines or work responsibilities because of this person's procrastination.	Rarely gets things done by the deadlines AND group has to adjust deadlines or work responsibilities because of this person's inadequate time management.
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.
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.