



## Teaching the Middle East: A Resource for High School Educators

### The Question of Identity: Ethnicity, Language, Religion, and Gender, Before Islam - Part II: The Concept of Ethnicity

Dr. Martin Stokes (Fellow of St. John's College, Oxford University)

#### Lesson Plan 1: What is Ethnicity?

**General Description of Lesson Plan:** Students will get a chance to analyze their own ethnicity as well as that of the peoples of the Middle East.

**Created By:** Blake Noel, Bronzeville Scholastic Institute, Chicago, IL

**Subject Area(s):** History, Sociology

**For Grade Level(s):** 8-12

**Time Needed:** One week

#### **Outcomes/Objectives:**

Students will be able to analyze their ethnicity. Students will be able to visualize their ethnicity and identity. Students will be able to address stereotypes about the peoples of the Middle East. Students will be able to reflect on ethnicity as a varied and potent aspect of identity.

**Materials:** Paper and colored pencils, magazines and computers with printers (for images for student's ethnicity charts)

#### **Suggested Procedure(s):**

Students will create their own ethnicity chart (see example below):

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### Sample Ethnicity Chart

<u>Race</u>	<u>Origin</u>	<u>Language</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Cultural Traits</u>	<u>Cuisine</u>	<u>Experiences</u>
Multi-racial	America	English	African Religion	Loud Music	Curry and Roti	Graduation
African American	Chicago	Mid-West accent	Ancestors	Love and Basketball	German Potato Salad	Championship Game
European-American	Mid-West	Hip Hop slang	Christened	Sneakers/Jordans	Haystacks	Getting my driver's license
West Indian	Guyana	Code switching	Episcopalian	Streetwear	Rum Cake	First Love
Black	Big City 'Ghetto'	Northern Dialect	Drums			Concerts
						Freestyle rhyming
						Watching action films
						Traveling

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The teacher will create a color key distinguishing the various relevant aspects of ethnicity, which should include religion, language and dialect, national and regional origins, skin color, cultural traits, shared experiences, political beliefs, etc. Students will use their color pencils to fill in the required information. Students will create a collage of images corresponding to the descriptions from the chart.

This activity provides the teacher the opportunity to share their own ethnic identity and heritage as well as prime the pump for the characteristics that students should notice. For instance, if the teacher believes that nationality is an important aspect of Middle Eastern ethnicities, then s/he could stress the ideas of patriotism and national borders in this introduction. Also teachers must set expectations for the chart, depending on grade-level, anywhere from 3-10 words per category is a good baseline. The finished product should be a very colorful depiction of student's ethnicity.

As a wrap-up for this activity, students can present their ethnicity charts/collages and/or post them on a wall in the classroom, incorporating both student ownership of the space and a focus on the content. This activity should take 30-45 minutes, as students need time to think about a topic as broad as their ethnicity.

Students will begin the next activity by building on their prior knowledge. Ask the students to create a simple version of the ethnicity chart for a person in the Middle East. The categories should remain the same as before, but students should only be required to find 2-3 words for each and they should be allowed to work in groups. The teacher should try to provide a safe environment for students to discuss the experiences, which drive their notions of Middle Eastern ethnicity<sup>1</sup>.

After completing this brief activity, students should begin taking notes on Modules A-E and the Examining Stereotypes sections 1, 2, and answering the three questions that follow each. It's important that students attempt to take notes in a variety of formats so as to find a comfortable fit as long as the format focuses student's attention of the important information. Depending on time, the note-taking portion could last 45-135 minutes. I would suggest a 90-minute block, where students get a chance to really delve into the topic.

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<sup>1</sup> Alternately the following variant of the lesson can be substituted: Following the activity of creating the personal ethnicity charts/collages, the teacher should have the students find an article (or some other form of media) focusing on people in the Middle East, and use the format of the ethnicity chart to chart out the aspects of identity they see in the article. Ask students to note which aspects of identity come from people quoted in the article and which come from the article itself. (This could be done as homework or as an in class activity). After they have completed this activity, have the students read the Examining the Stereotypes section of the module. Then have the students return to the ethnicity charts they created from reading the articles, give them time to think about the ways in which the article they read reproduces and disrupts those stereotypes that the module discusses. Finally have a class discussion where the students can share what they have learned and discuss the different news sources/types of media that their information came from.

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After completing the notes, ask students to take out their Middle Eastern ethnicity charts and create a new version on the backside of the paper. This time students should be able to identify at least 5-10 terms for each category in about 15 minutes. To wrap up this activity, ask students to identify the areas where their previous thinking was incorrect or stereotypical. This can be done as either a short written-response, Exit Ticket, or through a classroom discussion.

### **Evaluation/Assessment Strategies:**

As an assessment for this activity, students should be asked to complete a written response to the guiding questions. Their ethnicity charts can be evaluated using the included rubric.

### **Use these guiding questions to spur discussion in your classroom:**

1. What is your ethnicity?
2. What stereotypes about the Middle East were proven false during this activity?
3. What are important components of ethnic identity in the Middle East?

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### Evaluation Rubric:

### Making A Collage: Ethnicity Charts

Teacher Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

CATEGORY	4	3	2	1
<b>Titles and Text</b>	Titles and text were written clearly and were easy to read from a distance. Text varied in color, size and/or style for different text elements.	Titles and text were written clearly and were easy to read from close-up. Text varied in color, size and/or style for different text elements.	Titles and text were written clearly and were easy to read from a distance. There was little variation in the appearance of text.	Titles and text are hard to read, even when the reader is close.
<b>Number of Items</b>	The collage includes 15 or more items, each different.	The collage includes 10-14 different items.	The collage includes 9 different items.	The collage contains fewer than 9 different items.
<b>Attention to Theme</b>	The student gives a reasonable explanation of how every item in the collage is related to the assigned theme. For most items, the relationship is clear without explanation.	The student gives a reasonable explanation of how most items in the collage is related to the assigned theme. For most items, the relationship is clear without explanation.	The student gives a fairly reasonable explanation of how most items in the collage are related to the assigned theme.	The student's explanations are weak and illustrate difficulty understanding how to relate items to the assigned theme.
<b>Creativity</b>	Several of the graphics or objects used in the collage reflect an exceptional degree of student creativity in their creation and/or display.	One or two of the graphics or objects used in the collage reflect student creativity in their creation and/or display.	One or two of the graphics or objects were made or customized by the student, but the ideas were typical rather than creative (e.g. apply the emboss filter to a drawing in Photoshop).	The student did not make or customize any of the items on the collage.