

Day 1 Introduction

Mapping Activity: Students will demarcate the Middle East on a map distributed by instructor. After they have had time to complete this activity discuss why there are variations on the maps and then address why the region “Middle East” is not a naturally occurring geographical place but an element of geopolitics constructed by the United States and Great Britain. Also ask students to identify the five largest Muslim countries on the map.

Day 2

Ask students to identify terms and images they associate with the Middle East. Discuss their lists and then discuss assumptions, misconceptions, generalizations, and stereotypes about the Middle East and where they come from especially propaganda and the dehumanization of people Americans believed to be the enemy. Show film clips (e.g. Aladdin and Reel Bad Arabs) then ask students to identify stereotypes and discuss the Hollywood effect.

Day 3

Students do research to determine the number of Muslims in the world and the number in the United States. They will also identify some famous Arab-Americans. Next ask students to address the negative stereotypes and possible ways to overcome them. If time permits, compare this to other peoples who have been discriminated against throughout history.

Day 4

History—Beginning of Islam

Guiding questions: Students work together

Who are Muslims beginning with Muhammad?

What were the revelations and from whence did they come?

When and where did Islam begin and how did it spread?

Who were the initial converts?

When was the Quran compiled and what did it consist of?

What is monotheism?

What is Islam’s core message (five pillars)?

Are all Muslims Arab and are all Arabs Muslim?

What is theocracy?

Does Islam promote violence and terrorism?

What is the meaning of jihad?

Does Islam oppress women?

Days 5-8

How does Islam compare and contrast to Judaism and Christianity?

Divide class into groups. Each group will research one of the three religions. Each group will prepare an oral presentation of the religion they were assigned. When one group is presenting the others are taking notes. After all three presentations, groups will compare their individual notes and create a compare/contrast report to be turned in to instructor for grading.

Day 9

Students collaborate to create a room sized timeline of major events involving Islam beginning with the life of Muhammad. The class as a whole will decide which events are significant enough to be included.

Days 10-14

Teacher will deliver direct instruction on events involving the Middle East. Suggested topics are: Struggle over the ancient holy land, Jews and the Holocaust, creation of the Nation of Israel after WWII, effect of Israel's creation on the Palestinians, six day war, formation of PLO, attacks on Israel (raids, suicide bombers, rocket attacks) and Israel's retaliation, Hamas and Hezbollah, 9/11 attack on the U.S., Islamophobia after 9/11, Al-Qaeda, and Isis.

Wrap-up

Based on what students have learned in this unit, they will attempt to answer the following questions:

Is Islam a religion that supports and encourages terrorism?

Is Islam intolerant of non-Muslims?

Is jihad being waged against the west?

What motivates suicide bombers?

Did the U.S. war on terror lead to the establishment of Isis?

What is the solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict?

Can a peaceful one be found?