

EXPLORING TERMS

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- Students will learn critical vocabulary about the Middle East.
- Students will learn about the ethnic and religious diversity of the Middle East.
- Students will study the map of the Middle East and begin to associate different countries with their ethnic, linguistic and religious identities.

VOCABULARY & CONCEPTS

Arab	ethnicity	Kurd	Persian
Armenian	Israeli	monotheism	political geography
Christian	Jew	Muslim	Turk

MEDIUM

Slideshow with maps and statistics



MATERIALS NEEDED

- *Student Worksheet* (pg. 3) with self-assessment
- Unit 1, Lesson 3 slideshow from CD or Web site
- *Teacher Answer Sheet* (pg. 4-6) with assessment answers

TIME

60 minutes

LESSON STEPS

1. Explain to students that they will take a self-assessment to test some of their knowledge about the Middle East before beginning this unit. The pre-test will not be graded.
2. Have students complete the self-assessment on the *Student Worksheet*. Review the *Teacher Answer Sheet* while students are taking the self-assessment.
3. Project the slideshow and use the *Teacher Answer Sheet* to guide instruction about the ethnic, linguistic and religious geography of the Middle East. The slideshow contains a slide for each question in the self-assessment, followed by a slide that displays the correct answer. Use the maps in the slideshow to illustrate the correct answers as indicated in the *Teacher Answer Guide*.

REFERENCES

Central Intelligence Agency. The World Factbook. <<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/>>

National Geographic. Atlas of the Middle East. Washington, D.C.: National Geographic Society, 2003.

Sela, Avraham. Political Encyclopedia of the Middle East. New York: Continuum, 1999.

U.S. Census Bureau. "People: Origins and Language."

< http://factfinder.census.gov/jsp/saff/SAFFInfo.jsp?_pagelId=tp7_origins_language>

NAME

DATE

DIRECTIONS

Answer the questions. This self-assessment will help you figure out what you already know about the Middle East and where your information comes from.

1. Circle the groups that live in the Middle East:

Arabs Armenians Kurds Persians Jews Turks

2. Arabs are...

A) A religious group B) A language group C) A national group D) An ethnic group

3. All Arabs are Muslims. TRUE FALSE

4. All Arabs speak Arabic. TRUE FALSE

5. All Arabs live in the Middle East. TRUE FALSE

6. Circle the religions that originated in the Middle East:

Bahai Buddhism Christianity Hinduism Islam Judaism Zoroastrianism

7. What is the definition of a “Muslim”?

8. What is the definition of a “Christian”?

9. What is the definition of a “Jew”?

10. All Israelis are Jews. TRUE FALSE

11. What nation in the world has the largest Jewish population? _____

12. What nation in the world has the largest Christian population? _____

13. What nation in the world has the largest Muslim population? _____

14. Most Muslims live in the Middle East. TRUE FALSE

15. All Middle East nations have a Muslim majority. TRUE FALSE

16. All Middle East nations have an Arab majority. TRUE FALSE

17. What is the largest ethnic group in the Middle East without a country of its own?

1. Circle the groups that live in the Middle East:

- Arabs** **Armenians** **Kurds** **Persians** **Jews** **Turks**

Use maps on slides 3-8 to illustrate answer.

2. Arabs are...

- A) A religious group B) A language group C) A national group **D) An ethnic group**

Answer on slide: A) **No**. Arabs are NOT a religious group although MOST Arabs are Muslims, there are Christian and even Jewish Arabs. B) **Yes** and **No**. Although the Arabic language is a core and defining aspect of Arab culture, some Arabs, particularly immigrants of non-Arab nations such as the United States, do not speak Arabic. C) **No**. There are 22 different nations with majority Arab populations, therefore Arab does not suggest one particular nation. D) **Yes**. Ethnicity is defined by religion, language, nationality or culture, therefore Arabs ARE an ethnic group.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The term al-'arab was first used to describe the nomadic peoples of the Arabian Desert in Egypt between the Nile and the Red Sea. Avraham Sela suggests that "the reasonable working rule is to define Arabs as all those who speak Arabic as their mother tongue, feel themselves and are seen by others to be Arabs, are formed by the heritage of Arab history and civilization and do not possess, though speaking Arabic, a different national identity – such as the Jews" (36).

3. All Arabs are Muslims.

TRUE

FALSE

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

There are Christian Arabs in Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq. There are Jewish Arabs living in Israel.

4. All Arabs speak Arabic.

TRUE

FALSE

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

There are many people of Arab descent in the United States who speak English and not Arabic. Wherever there are Arab communities outside the Middle East the younger members often will speak the dominant language of the country where they are living.

Although Arabic is the official language of most Middle Eastern countries, all of the countries of the Middle East include speakers of many languages. The National Geographic Atlas of the Middle East shows Egypt with 11 languages spoken, Syria with 17, Iraq with 23, Israel with 36 and Iran with 71 (69)!

5. All Arabs live in the Middle East.

TRUE

FALSE

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In 2000, the U.S. Census reported for the first time on the population within the U.S. who claim Arab descent. The 1.2 million counted by the census marked a 40% increase of Arab Americans over the 1990s. The majority of the U.S. Arab population comes from Lebanon, Syria and Egypt (U.S. Census Bureau). Arab people live throughout the world, especially in the continents of Europe, Asia and Africa that surround the Middle East. Arab people also live in large numbers in South America, particularly in Ecuador and Honduras, as well as in Western Australia.

6. Circle the religions that originated in the Middle East:

Bahai

Buddhism

Christianity

Hinduism

Islam

Judaism

Zoroastrianism

Use map on slide 19 to identify the birthplaces for each religion.

Bahai – Iran (Persia)

Christianity – Israel (Palestine)

Islam – Saudi Arabia (Arabia)

Judaism – Israel (Palestine)

Zoroastrianism – Iran (Persia)

Hinduism – Pakistan/India

Buddhism – India

7. What is the definition of a “Muslim”?

Answer on slide: *A Muslim is a follower of the religion Islam.*

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In Arabic, “Islam” means one who submits to the will of God.

8. What is the definition of a “Christian”?

Answer on slide: *A Christian is a follower of the religion Christianity.*

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Christians typically believe in Jesus as Christ the Messiah.

9. What is the definition of a “Jew”?

Answer on slide: *People who practice Judaism are called Jews, but “Jew” is also considered an ethnic term for people descended from Jews even if they no longer practice Judaism, such as “secular Jews.”*

10. All Israelis are Jews.

TRUE

FALSE

11. What nation in the world has the largest Jewish population?

Answer on slide: *The United States, with 5.6 million Jews.*

Use map on slide 30 to illustrate answer.

12. What nation in the world has the largest Christian population?

Answer on slide: *The United States, with 224 million Christians.*

QUESTION | **Look at the next slide (33). Which areas have a larger percentage of Christians a part of their total population than the U.S.?**

SUGGESTED ANSWER | Parts of Latin America, Western Europe and Greenland.

13. What nation in the world has the largest Muslim population?

Answer on slide: *Indonesia, with 180 million Muslims.*

14. Most Muslims live in the Middle East.

TRUE

FALSE

QUESTION | **Which countries have the largest populations of Muslims?**

SUGGESTED ANSWER | Use maps on slide 38-39 to illustrate the answer. As you present the answers, identify which are in the Middle East (only Turkey, Iran, Egypt – Pakistan is not typically included in Middle East). Also, identify which of these countries have Arab majorities (only Egypt).

15. All Middle East nations have a Muslim majority.

TRUE

FALSE

Use map on slide 42 to illustrate answer.

16. All Middle East nations have an Arab majority.

TRUE

FALSE

Use map on slide 45 to illustrate answer.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

While the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has a South Asian majority, less than 20% of these are citizens of the UAE (Central Intelligence Agency).

17. What is the largest ethnic group in the Middle East without a country of its own?

Answer on slide: *Kurds*

Use map on slide 48 to illustrate answer.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

There are approximately 25 million Kurdish people spread throughout many Middle East nations. The Kurds are often considered the largest ethnic group in the world without a state. Palestinians and Roma (gypsies) are two other “stateless” people.

Although the Kurds were promised an independent Kurdistan by the Europeans during colonial rule, the Post WWI Map of the Middle East created by the European powers divided the Kurds among Turkey, Iraq, Iran and Syria.