### Topic: Impressions and Introductions - where and what is the Middle East?

**Grade Level:** 7-9  
**Lesson 1**

#### Objective

to get students thinking about the topic, ask students what countries they think are in the Middle East, and write on board; solicit as many answers as possible

#### Blank Map Activity

After exhausting all possible answers, give students an unlabeled world map, and ask them to circle/outline where the Middle East is; if they want to/can, tell them to place individual countries as well.

#### Resources

Computer/projector; writing board/utensils; copies of blank and unlabeled world maps for students

#### Opening Activity: What is the Middle East?

Ask students *what* they think of when they hear the phrase ‘Middle East,’ any nouns or adjectives are fine. Again, solicit as many answers as possible and record on the board. After exhausting all options, organize the results into categories: geographic, political, religious, economic, and ethnic. Some of the suggestions might fit into more than one category; some may be completely irrelevant. Have students make suggestions about the different categories for various characteristics.

Explain to students that they will conduct group presentations (roughly ten minutes each) based on these categories. Organize the class into five groups (count off), and assign them the categories (one group will focus on political characteristics, and so on). The groups will evaluate the nature of their theme both within the Middle East, and in the larger world as it relates to the Middle East. The question is: **is the Middle East different from the rest of the world? If so, how?**

#### Concluding Activity

Have students organize in their groups to begin work on planning presentations (for day 3 of unit); go around the room to make sure all groups understand the assignment
### Topic: Background and physical geography of the Middle East

**Grade Level:** 7-9  
**Day:** 2

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<th>Objective</th>
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| ask students to write down at least two ideas to the question: why are states and countries shaped the way they are?  
Comparative point: talk about the shape of students’ state (e.g. Virginia), and discuss how its borders came to be (geographic features like mountains or rivers? Colonial decisions? Climate differences?) |

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<th>Teaching: Physical Geography of the Middle East</th>
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<th>Resources</th>
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<th>Opening Activity: What is the Middle East?</th>
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<td>Using Google maps to survey the region, demonstrate the various physical characteristics of the Middle East. Students must be able to identify: Middle East as crossroads of Europe, Africa, and Asia, the Sahara desert, Water features i.e. Mediterranean Sea, Red Sea, Black Sea, Arabian Sea, Persian/Arabian Gulf, Nile River, Tigris River, Euphrates River, &amp; Jordan River</td>
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<th>Teaching/map reading activity</th>
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| Emphasize that European powers drew most of the borders of Middle East countries- ask students to consider, what might be the problems of drawing arbitrary lines?  
Using map “European colonialism in the Middle East,” have students answer the following questions in complete sentences and turn in:  
1. What countries were British colonies? French? Were there other European colonial powers?  
2. When did most countries become independent?  
3. Which countries stayed independent? |

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<th>Remainder: Group Work on Presentations</th>
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| Answer any questions or confusions, then give students time to organize by groups to work on their presentations; go around to all groups to assess students’ progress/readiness to present in the next class and give help/support where needed.  
Encourage students to use various visual aids in their presentations (posters, PowerPoint, videos, etc.) and provide technical assistance as needed. |
# Student Group Presentations on Characteristics of the Middle East

**Grade Level:** 7-9  
**Day:** 3

## Introduction

Begin class by soliciting volunteers to begin the presentations (presentations should last approximately 10 minutes); establish an order for presentations and assign a time keeper to monitor time.

## Resources

- Computer/projector
- Writing board

## Student Presentations

There should be time for at least four groups to present; encourage applause after each presentation and help the groups transition smoothly.

Inform students that they will write a reflection paper (at least one page typed, double spaced) on what they learned about the Middle East, and whether or not they were surprised by the information presented by the groups (due during the 5th lesson); ask them to take notes.

## Concluding Activity

Thank students for their presentations, remind about quiz on Friday.
## Student Group Presentations on Characteristics of the Middle East

### Grade Level: 7-9

### Day 4

### Introduction
Review the previous day’s presentations, begin transition to final group(s). Remind students of writing assignment and encourage note taking.

### Resources
Computer/projector; writing board

### Student Presentations
Final group(s) will present.

### Discussion: review presentations and prepare for writing assignment ‘what is the Middle East?’
Remind students of writing assignment, what have you learned about the nature of the Middle East? Is it easy to define? Is it distinct or unique? If so, what are the characteristics that define it? Ask students to consult their notes to participate in the discussion as well as prepare ideas for the writing assignment: what have you learned about the Middle East?

### Review for quiz: map activity/game
Divide students into two groups; each group will alternatingly send a member up to the computer to answer a question, for points. Use geography games available at:

http://www.sheppardsoftware.com/Middle-east_Geography.htm

Start with Level 1-Beginner (click on correct countries), and work way up. If possible, offer small prize to winning group to encourage participation and attention.
### Assessment: Map Quizzes

| Grade Level: 7-9 | Day 5 |

**Introduction**

Seat students for quiz; explain that they will first name 20 countries on a map; then, when everyone is done, that quiz will be collected, and they will name the 10 labeled physical features on a second map.

### Assessment: Two Map Quizzes

Allow all students to finish first quiz and collect before distributing second.

### Class discussion: reflection based on writing assignment

Before students turn in papers, ask for volunteers to share their thoughts to review the material and reflect on what students have learned.

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