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The Center for South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies (CSAMES) is a U.S. Department of Education Title VI National Resource Center devoted to the study and teaching of the Middle East and South Asia, a large region of the globe, home to nearly one-fifth of the world’s population and to some of the oldest civilizations and cultures.

Middle East Outreach

For us, outreach is an essential part of our mission to increase awareness of the Middle East and its many disparate countries and peoples. Part of this involves working to deconstruct popular misconceptions and religious and cultural stereotypes. In order to help K-12 educators teach their students about this complex region, we offer a variety of carefully crafted pedagogical tools introducing different facets of the Middle East, its countries, societies, and cultures. In addition to these teaching materials, we also offer a small lending library of books, videos, and cultural objects to supplement our teaching resources and help teachers create deep and engaging lesson plans.

Our approach is to present materials offering a closer look at all issues contributing to national identities in the Middle East. In doing so, however, we blur boundaries, focusing on similarities and not just on differences.

Middle East Resources

Our curriculum units are designed to be stand-alone lessons appropriate for many age levels, or to serve as a basis for creating learning experiences to suit a wide range of grade levels and course requirements. Available for free download from our website in a ready-to-use format, each unit has an informative and rich basic component which can be treated as a source for comprehensive information suitable for middle school classes. This core can also be a starting point for research into a particular subject for students in higher grades.

In addition to these units, we also offer information sheets on the twenty-eight countries within our region for use in class and to aid student research. These sheets contain specific information regarding these countries’ population, ethnic make-up, climate, and languages. Other information sheets discuss the flags, currencies, and capital cities and cover basic information regarding them. Many of these sheets are accompanied by activities reviewing the material.

Many of these curriculum units focus on a varied blend of cultural, social, traditional, and religious issues, each discussed in appropriate depth. In order to foster curiosity many of these units focus on hands-on activities, such as making a Ramadan Lamp, designing your own currency, or creating a Turkish carpet.

It is our hope that together with these materials educators can help their students gain a worldly and nuanced view of the socio-cultural heritage of the Middle East. This will help them to have a deeper understanding of their world and the world of others.

Available Units:

- Crossing Borders
- Dress and Veiling
- Festivals
- GLocal
- Islamic Mathematics
- Magic Carpet
- Music and Arts
- Technology
- Just for Fun

Information Sheets:

- Fact Sheets
- Capitals
- Currency
- Flags