Recommended Books for High School
* = a Middle East Outreach Council (MEOC) book award winner

** Fiction and Poetry **

Ten Things I Hate About Me by Randa Abdel-Fattah
An Australian teenager of Lebanese descent struggles to reconcile her conflicting identities.
**Combine this with the film "Muslims: An In-Depth Look at What It Means To Be a Muslim in the 21st Century."**

* Where the Streets Had a Name by Randa Abdel-Fattah
13-year-old Hayaat, believing that a handful of soil from her grandmother’s ancestral home in Jerusalem will save her grandmother’s life, travels with her friend Samy across Israeli checkpoints to reach the village. The story is one of humor, adventure, family love, and vivid characters (including a Jewish Israeli couple who assist the young people).

The Language of Baklava by Diana Abu-Jaber
This coming of age story explores the cultural tensions faced by a young Jordanian-American girl and her family. Food plays a central role.

A Child in Palestine by Naji al-Ali
These satirical cartoons criticize the Israeli occupation, corruption of the regimes in the region, and the suffering of the Palestinian people.

The 99 by Naif Al-Mutawa
This comic book features a team of superheroes based on Islamic culture and religion.

Zahra’s Paradise by Amir and Khalil
Zahra’s Paradise is a graphic novel set in Iran after the elections of 2009. It brings together fiction and real people and events and has been compared with Persepolis.

The Bridge on the Drina by Ivo Andric
This internationally-acclaimed Bosnian novel describes (as a series of short stories set in different time periods) a small town in Bosnia during the years of Ottoman rule. A teacher can easily use one or two stories, rather than the whole novel.

Forgotten Fire by Adam Bagdasarian
Although the book is a work of fiction, it is based on the true experiences of the author's great-uncle, who was an Armenian teenager during the genocide of 1915.

The Little Black Fish by Samad Behrangi
This Iranian short story is made to be read aloud. It has many different levels of meaning - about breaking out of one’s narrow environment and learning about the wider world. Even more interesting is the fact that the author, a school teacher might have been murdered in 1968 at the age of 29 by the shah’s secret police because of the way he encouraged his elementary school students to think freely and look at the social problems of their country. This small book also is
written half in Persian, so kids can see what the language looks like and how the cover of a Middle Eastern book is the back of an American one (since they write from right to left).

**The Shepherd’s Granddaughter** by Anne Laurel Carter  
Palestinian teen Amani tends her extended family’s sheep until Israeli settlers encroach on their land. The family’s resistance – with the help of sympathetic Israelis – forms the underpinning of this coming-of-age story.

**Funny in Farsi** by Firoozeh Dumas  
This comedic memoir tells anecdotes from the author’s life growing up as an Iranian immigrant in the U.S. Also see her follow-up memoir, Laughing without an Accent.

**Parvana’s Journey** by Deborah Ellis  
A sequel to The Breadwinner, this book follows 12-year-old Parvana. Separated from her family, she sets off looking for them in war-torn Afghanistan during the time of the Taliban.

**The Kite Runner** by Khaled Hosseini  
This well-known novel not only explores the impact of the Taliban regime on Afghan society, but also treats the way that the Afghan expatriate community tries to adapt to life in America.

**Emails from Scheherazade** by Mohja Kahf  
This is a book of poetry describing Arab immigrants to America and their experiences.

**The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf** by Mohja Kahf  
This novel tells about a Muslim girl growing up and entering adulthood in Indiana, “exploring the fault lines between ‘Muslim’ and ‘American.’”

* **Wanting Mor** by Rukhsana Khan  
An Afghan girl with a cleft palate struggles to make a life in post-Taliban Afghanistan.

* **The Apprentice's Masterpiece: A Story of Medieval Spain** by Melanie Little  
A young adult novel set in 14th-century Spain tells the story of a family with a secret at a time when the Inquisition brings intolerance and torture. Written in elegant free verse, this is a dramatic story set in a troubling time.

* **Figs and Fate** by Elsa Marston  
This is a wonderful collection of short stories about teens growing up in the Arab world.

**Santa Claus in Baghdad and Other Stories about Teens in the Arab World** by Elsa Marston  
This is a wonderful collection of short stories. (The title story, “Santa Claus in Baghdad,” can be compared with “The Gift of the Magi.” Be sure to see the film – below – made from the former story.)

**Ismailia Eclipse** by Khaled Mattawa  
This is a collection of poems by a Libyan-American writer.
Dawn and Dusk by Alice Mead
A 13-year-old Kurdish boy and his family struggle to survive during the time of the Iran-Iraq War (and the Iraqi poison gas attack on some Kurdish villages).

Exit Wounds by Rutu Modan
In this graphic novel, a young Israeli man searches for his father, who may or may not have been killed in a suicide bombing attack.

The Feminine Art by Weam Namou
Set in the U.S. and Iraq in the early 1990s, the book deals with issues of love, arranged marriages, and the search for happiness.

The Flag of Childhood: Poems from the Middle East; * Nineteen Varieties of Gazelle; The Space between Our Footsteps (high school) by Naomi Shihab Nye
These three books of poetry are by Middle Eastern poets.

My Name is Red by Orhan Pamuk
A non-traditional mystery set in the 15th century Ottoman Empire. The author is a famous Turkish writer.

The Essential Rumi by Jalal al-Din Rumi
This is a collection of the poetry by Rumi, the great 13th century Persian poet.

My Name is Aram by William Saroyan
A coming-of-age story set in an Armenian immigrant community in the early twentieth century.

Damascus Nights by Rafik Schami
One of the city’s greatest storytellers is struck dumb, and his friends must tell him stories from myth, history and contemporary Syria to reawaken his tongue.

A Hand Full of Stars by Rafik Schami
A Syrian teenager, long before the current troubles, learns that: “If you tell the truth in Syria, you must pay with your life.”

Habibi by Craig Thompson
Set in a fictional Islamic fairytale landscape, this graphic novel tells a story that extends across ancient Middle Eastern geographies, religions, mythologies, and migrations—containing both Arab and Christian histories—to tell about Dodola, a runaway child bride, and Zam, the orphan she rescues in the slave market where they first meet.

Cairo by G. Willow Wilson and M.K. Perker
This graphic novel is a modern fable set on the streets of the Egypt. A stolen hookah and a genie change the lives of five strangers forever.

* A Bottle in the Gaza Sea by Valérie Zenatti
Inspired by a true story, A Bottle in the Gaza Sea is the story of Tal Levine, an Israeli teenager
who longs to strike up a correspondence with "someone on the other side." She convinces her brother, who is serving in the Israel Defense Forces along the Gaza border, to throw a bottle containing a message into the Gaza Sea in the hopes that someone will pick it up and respond. In this way, she meets "Gazaman," a Palestinian.

Personal Accounts

I Want to Get Married: One Wannabe Bride's Misadventures with Handsome Houdinis, Technicolor Grooms, Morality Police, and Other Mr. Not Quite Rights by Ghada Abdel Aal
This is a young Egyptian woman’s humorous blog about her adventures in “dating.”

Return to Childhood: The Memoir of a Modern Moroccan Woman by Leila Abouzeid
This is the memoir of a woman growing up during the time of Morocco’s struggle for independence.

Thura's Diary by Thura Al-Windawi
A girl describes her life in Iraq during the 2003 U.S. military action.

* Tasting the Sky by Itbisam Barakat
This is a beautifully written book about her childhood as a Palestinian refugee. Young people can relate to her vivid tale of youth, family relationships, and overcoming adversity.

If You Could Be My Friend ed. by Litsa Boudalika
Two teenagers, Mervet Akram Sha’ban and Galit Fink, one Palestinian and one Israeli teenager, corresponded with each other for three years when “introduced” by a Belgian film director, producing a documentary in Israel.

* The Illustrator's Notebook by Mohieddin Ellabbad
The book is an award-winning autobiography (with photographs and drawings) of an Egyptian illustrator focusing on his art and how art is connected with his personal experience and the broader context of Egypt’s history.

Children of War: Voices of Iraqi Refugees by Deborah Ellis
This book provides an opportunity for students to read interviews with Iraqi refugee children and see how the war has affected their lives.

Three Wishes: Palestinian and Israeli Children Speak by Debora Ellis
This book is a collection of accounts of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict by children ages 8-18.

Waltz with Bashir: A Lebanon War Story by Ari Folman and David Polonski
This graphic novel is based on the award-winning movie, a reconstruction of a soldier's experience during Israel’s war in Lebanon.

* How to Understand Israel in 60 Days or Less by Sarah Glidden
This graphic "novel" is a true account of the Jewish author’s "birthright" tour of Israel and her attempt to understand the complex history of the nation.
Encounters with the Middle East: True Stories of People and Culture That Help You Understand the Region by Nesreen Khaskan and Jim Bowman
The book contains different (and readable) stories about Westerners' encounters with the Middle East.

The Photographer by Didier Lefevre and Emmanuel Guibert
Part photojournalism and part graphic memoir, The Photographer tells the story of a 1986 Doctors Without Borders mission which traveled into northern Afghanistan by horse and donkey train at the height of the Soviet occupation.

Baghdad Journal: An Artist in Occupied Iraq by Steve Mumford
In this graphic “novel,” the artist documents the everyday scenes of Iraq in watercolors and drawings painting a human side of the war. Mumford draws and paints daily activities of American platoons and Baghdad residents.

Palestine by Joe Sacco

Persepolis and Perselopis II by Marjane Satrapi
The two-volume memoir in graphic novel style describes the author’s childhood during the Iranian Revolution, her schooling abroad during the Iran-Iraq War, and eventual return to her homeland. Note: She describes a sexual encounter in book 2. **See the acclaimed animated film version (in the Multi-Media section below).

This book is a collection of interviews and photos with Palestinians in the West Bank’s refugee camps.

When I Was a Soldier by Valerie Zenatti
This memoir describes a teenage Israeli girl’s required two years of service in the military.

Non-Fiction/Reference

* Al-Kindi: The Father of Arab Philosophy by Tony Abboud
This book is part of a 6-volume series "Great Muslim Philosophers and Scientists of the Middle Ages."

Suleyman and the Ottoman Empire by John Addison
A brief overview of the subject along with a series of short, primary source documents.

Picturing Iran: Art, Society and Revolution Ed. by Shiva Balahgi and Lynn Gumpert
A book showing modern Iranian visual culture of the 1960s and 1970s (just before and during the revolution). Some of the posters shown in the book would be useful in helping students to understand the reasons behind the revolution.
Saddam Hussein: A Biography by Shiva Balaghi
*The recent biography (December 2005) describes the life of the former Iraqi leader.*

*Although written at a middle school level, this beautifully illustrated book contains information – and illustrations of interest to high school students too. It is comprised of short articles on developments in the medieval Muslim world: from advances in medicine, math, and science to the transmission of ancient knowledge to the development of military bands.*

* The Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Arabia by Mary Beardwood
*This detailed encyclopedia entry focuses on the geography, cultures, and, especially, the flora and fauna of the Arabian Peninsula. With many photographs, charts, maps, figures, asides, this exhaustive and beautifully illustrated text will answer every question you never knew that you had about Arabia on subjects from pearling to fossils, migratory birds to the many uses of the date palm. The sheer breadth of information will eliminate the narrow geographic and social stereotypes so many students have about the Middle East.*

* Al-Khwarizmi: The Inventor of Algebra by Corona Brezina
*This book is part of a 6-volume series "Great Muslim Philosophers and Scientists of the Middle Ages."

Equal Rights Is Our Minimum Demand: The Women’s Rights Movement in Iran, 2005 by Diana Childress
*This well-written account of the women’s rights movement in Iran does not only cover developments in 2005 but provides an overview of women’s life throughout the history of modern Iran.*

The Essential Koran, translated and edited by Thomas Cleary
*This is an introductory selection of readings from the Muslim holy book.*

*Encyclopedia of Muslim-American History*, ed. by Edward E. Curtis IV
*This illustrated two-volume encyclopedia includes some 300 articles covering historical and contemporary issues, events, people, court cases, themes, and activism relating to Muslim-American history. The reference also includes 50 original documents, a master chronology and an extensive bibliography.

Democracy in the Middle East, edited by John C. Davenport.
*From The World in Focus series, the book offers a variety of views on the prospects for democracy in the Middle East and the U.S. role in promoting democratic developments.*

Muhammad and the Arab Empire by John Duckworth
*A brief overview of the subject along with a series of short, primary source documents.*

* Iran: Opposing Viewpoints, ed. by Laura K. Egendorf
*The collection of articles offers many different perspectives on modern Iran. The book addresses such issues as whether Iran is a threat to global security, how the U.S. should respond to Iran,*
and the status of human rights. (The purpose is to show students different sides of the same issue.)

* A History of the Muslim World to 1405: The Making of a Civilization by Vernon O. Egger
This book is written in a clear style, presents sophisticated themes, avoids clichés common in introductory works, and is accessible to the high school audience.

Islam by Jamal J. Elias
This is an overview of the Muslim religion, essential in understanding modern developments in the Middle East.

The Everything Middle East Book by Jacob M. Fellure
This is an easy-to-read overview of Middle Eastern nations, histories, and conflicts.

The Middle East and the Islamic World Reader, edited by Marvin E. Gettleman and Stuart Schaar
This collection of documents spans Islam and Middle Eastern history. (Over half the book is on 20th century conflicts and issues.)

The Waiting Room (online at Cartoon Movement) by Sarah Glidden
http://www.cartoonmovement.com/comic/10
Written in a documentary style, Sarah Glidden’s 20-page cartoon account tells of Syria’s displaced Iraqis, the largest urban refugee population ever.

* Women in the Middle East: Tradition and Change by Ramsay M. Harik and Elsa Marston
This comprehensive look at Middle Eastern women and their struggle to incorporate both tradition and change in their daily lives is a major contribution to resources on this topic of wide interest. Of particular note, the revised edition includes two chapters that cover the experience of women in Afghanistan and women’s health issues region-wide.

* Celebrate Ramadan and Eid Al-Fitr with Praying Fasting, and Charity (National Geographic, “Holidays Around the World” series) by Deborah Heiligman
Although it is at a low reading level, this book is even interesting to adults due to its great pictures and clear explanations. (It is National Geographic book, so the photography is amazing!)

Mecca by Shahrukh Husain
From the Holy Cities series, this is a basic introduction to the city of Mecca.

Understanding Islam and the Muslims by Islamic Affairs Department of the Embassy of Saudi Arabia
An introduction to Islam in a brief booklet with bright photographs.

* The Iranian Revolution by Brendan January
This well-written book, part of the Pivotal Moments That Changed the World series, focuses on the Iranian revolution of 1979.
* Avicenna (Ibn Sinna): Muslim Physician and Philosopher of the 11th Century by Aishe Khan
This book is part of a 6-volume series "Great Muslim Philosophers and Scientists of the Middle Ages."

Oil in the Middle East by John King
This book contains beautiful photos and well-written narrative about modern diplomatic and political developments in the Middle East.

* Iraq by Dale Lightfoot

Islam: Faith, Culture, and History by Paul Lunde
The book is an overview of Islamic religion, history, and culture.

* Mosque by Daud Macaulay
The book describes the construction of a 16th century Ottoman mosque.

Inside Story: A 16th Century Mosque by Fiona MacDonald and Mark Bergin
Detailed illustrations and clear explanations make this a terrific resource book with information about the building, religious background, and history surrounding the construction of a mosque.

* Teen Life in the Middle East, edited by Ali Akbar Mahdi
This compilation offers insights into the interests, family and social lives, religious practices, and culture of teens in twelve profiled countries.

* Extraordinary Women from the Muslim World by Natalie Maydell and Sep Riahi
This book introduces readers to 13 Muslim women in history who have lived extraordinary lives and influenced their communities in a positive way, often overcoming extreme hardship and inaccurate stereotypes that have been placed on the role of women in Islam. In addition to showing the impact these women have had throughout the years, Extraordinary Women from the Muslim World seeks to make a difference in the lives of Islamic women today, inspiring them to fervently pursue their goals. All proceeds from the special edition hardback series will be donated to Islamic Relief to benefit the women and children of Sudan.

The Arab Americans by Alixa Naff
This book describes the experiences and contributions of Arab-Americans.

The Ottomans: Empire of Faith by Dr. David Nicolle
A comprehensive history of the Ottoman Empire with maps and illustrations.

Jerusalem by Saviour Pirotta
From the Holy Cities series, this is a basic introduction to the city of Jerusalem.
The African and Middle Eastern World, 600-1500 by Randall L. Pouwels
A history of medieval Africa and the Middle East with beautiful photographs and maps.

* Albucasis (Abu Al-Qasim Al-Zahrawi): Renowned Muslim Surgeon of the 10th Century
by Fred Ramen
This book is part of a 6-volume series "Great Muslim Philosophers and Scientists of the Middle Ages."

* Historical Atlas of Islam by Malise Ruthven and Azim Nanji
This beautifully illustrated history of Islam provides a broad overview of the economic, social, political, and cultural history of the Islamic world from the birth of the Prophet Muhammad to the present. Brief essays address pivotal moments and movements and eras, and color maps and photographs effectively complement the text throughout.

Footnotes in Gaza by Joe Sacco
This is a journalistic graphic "novel" of an Israeli massacre in the Palestinian town of Rafah during the Suez War and life in Gaza today.

* Al-Biruni: Master Astronomer and Muslim Scholar of the 11th Century
by Bill Scheppler
This book is part of a 6-volume series "Great Muslim Philosophers and Scientists of the Middle Ages."

Approaching the Qur'an by Michael Sells
A copy of the Muslim holy book, it also comes with commentaries as well as an Audio CD of Qur'an readings.

Foods of Iran by Barbara Sheen
This book has lovely photographs and explanations about Iranian food.

* Averroes (Ibn Rushd): Muslim Scholar, Philosopher, and Physician of the 12th Century
by Liz Sonneborn
This book is part of a 6-volume series "Great Muslim Philosophers and Scientists of the Middle Ages."

Every Man in this Village Is a Liar by Megan K. Stack
A reporter describes her experiences covering Middle Eastern wars from 2001.

Early Islam by Desmond Stewart
Part of the "Great Ages of Man" series, this book has vivid pictures and maps to illustrate the history of Islam during medieval times.

* The Middle East Today by Dona J. Stewart
This book gives political, geographical, and cultural perspectives of the Middle East today.
* Islamic Design: A Genius for Geometry by Daud Sutton
  Focusing on Islamic geometric patterns, simple and complex, man-made and in nature, this book offers unique insight into Islamic culture.

Pride of Baghdad by Brian K. Vaughan and Niko Henrichon
  This graphic “novel” is based on the true story of a group of lions that escaped from the Baghdad zoo during the American bombing in 2003. It asks questions about liberty: whether it can be given or must be earned, whether it is better to die free or live in captivity. a refugee camp, tells of two Afghani girls who share one pair of sandals.

* A Brief History of Saudi Arabia by James Wynbrandt
  In recent years, Saudi Arabic has experienced changes that have both altered the internal structure of the country and affected its foreign relations. This book manages to steer an even course through a subject that is often treated with skepticism or defensiveness.

Medieval Cuisine of the Islamic World by Lilia Zaouali
  This book gives a culinary history of the Islamic world and provides recipes.

Videos

Persepolis (from the memoirs of Marjane Satrapi)
  This animated true story includes both the author’s graphic novels in the Persepolis series. It tells of the author’s youth in Iran just before and during the revolution, her struggle to adapt to life in Vienna when her parents send her to study abroad during the Iran-Iraq War, and her return to Iran as a young adult. (For reasons which become clear at the end of the story, it is in FRENCH with English subtitles). 96 minutes.

Promises
  Promises presents a powerful portrait of seven Palestinian and Israeli children who live in and around Jerusalem. As filmmaker B.Z. Goldberg, who was raised in Israel, notes, "They live no more than 20 minutes from each other, but they are each growing up in very separate worlds." Promises doesn't attempt to explain them, but lets the kids speak for themselves. The results are funny, sad, and ultimately quite profound.

Santa Claus in Baghdad (the short story of Elsa Marston)
  This is a beautiful short fictional story that can be compared with “The Gift of the Magi.” Iraqis living during the bleak time of international sanctions just before the overthrow of Saddam Hussein try to find gifts for people that they love. (Note: The story can be found in the collection of short stories by Elsa Marston in the Book section above.) 35 minutes.