

Critical Inquiry Unit Plan
Refugee Experiences from the Middle East
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With all of the conflicts between the United States and the Middle East, I believe that it has become very important to educate students about the perspectives of people from this area. Since the attacks on 9/11, people from Middle Eastern countries have been faced with a lot of discrimination and racism in the United States. By selecting a text that highlights some of the experiences of families who flee their war-torn homelands, I aim to educate students about the life experiences of people who are often stereotyped as “terrorists” and discriminated based on the actions of a small group of people. The focus of this unit will be to offer students the chance to understand the refugee experience. The text that will act as an anchor for this unit is *Shooting Kabul* by N. H. Senzai, the story of a boy named Fadi and his family’s migration to California after the Taliban rose to power in Afghanistan. According to Google Books (2020), the description of the book is as follows:

Fadi never imagined he’d start middle school in Fremont, California, thousands of miles from home in Kabul—and half a world away from his missing six-year-old sister, Mariam. Adjusting to life in the United States isn’t easy for Fadi’s family, and as the events of September 11 unfold, the prospects of locating Mariam in war-torn Afghanistan seem slim. When a photography competition with a grand prize of a trip to India is announced, Fadi sees his chance to return to Afghanistan and find his sister. But can one photo really bring Mariam home?

Before reading this book, I would make sure that I share all of my plans and lessons with parents. This text could be seen as controversial because it talks about acts of terrorism, 9/11, and it is from the perspective of a Middle Eastern boy. The beliefs that some parents may have could potentially spark some resistance from parents to allow their student to read this book. I stand behind its value and will kindly offer my opinion as to why it is important.

Along with this anchor text, I plan to incorporate other resources such as relevant news articles, picture books, films, and community organizations to help give my students the best look at these experiences. Other works/resources that I plan on using include:

- *The Journey* by Francesca Sanna
- *The Arrival* by Shaun Tan
- Refugee Outreach Collective talk in class
- <https://www.unrefugees.org/news/syria-refugee-crisis-explained/>
- <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/01/31/trump-administration-expands-travel-ban-110005>
- <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/numbers-syrian-refugees-around-world/>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=25bwiSikRsI>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x882J0JLba0>

Some of the main questions that I want students to answer are:

- What is a refugee?
- Why is it important to understand the perspectives of refugees?
- What are biases, and how do they impact our perceptions of certain peoples?
- What does this text show about American views of refugees from certain areas?

Throughout my lesson, I will incorporate Common Core State Standards and Standards from the NCET/IRA. The standards that I have selected for this lesson are as follows:

CCSS.R.10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.R.10.2: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CCSS.R.10.6: Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of literature from outside the United States, drawing on a wide reading of world literature.

CCSS.W.10.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.)

CCSS.SL.10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on *grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues*, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

- a) Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
- b) Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed.
- c) Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.

- d) Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

NCET/IRA Standards:

Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

All of my field experience has been done in the Kalamazoo Public School District, I am catering this unit to the community and demographics of the schools that I am familiar. Because Kalamazoo is considered a safe haven for refugees, I believe that this topic fits well into the lives and communities of the students that I would be teaching in this district. Having worked at Loy Norrix High School in a 10th grade English class, this is the grade level that I would be teaching this unit to. This unit will be roughly 3-4 weeks long, leaving some room for some flexibility depending on student needs. The main goal of this unit and specifically this text will be to focus on issues that refugees face. Once this unit has finished, students will have gained a great deal of empathy for those who have had to flee their homes to seek safety and freedom. To follow the critical inquiry framework, this unit will be mostly made up of discussions about the issues that we discuss in class. Although writing and some research-based assignments will be given, I believe that through dialogue with each other students have the best opportunities to come to their own conclusions and follow their own lines of inquiry. Having discussions at the center of this unit will also help to support ELL students. Discussions not only help give ELL students opportunities to practice speaking in English, but it also gives them plenty of exposure to language through observing native speakers. The discussions that take place throughout this unit

will begin with a summary of the assigned reading. From there, we will move into more critical inquiry discussion questions where students will be asked to analyze certain parts of the text.

On the first day of the unit, I will show students a few short videos offering a definition regarding what a refugee is. These videos will be meant to introduce students to the topic and have a short discussion about it:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=25bwiSikRsI>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x882J0JLba0>

I will have questions prepared for students to answer based on what they saw, varying in the level of thinking that students will employ. At the start of the unit, I would ask questions that are simply meant to check students' understanding. Some of the questions I would ask on the first day would be, "what is a refugee?", "what are some reasons people leave their home?", and "can you think of any reasons why people fleeing their home would want to come to the United States?". Although I would be facilitating the discussion, I would encourage the students to lead as much as possible, asking each other questions and building off of their own ideas. To help with this, I will have students write down anything that they didn't know before the videos or anything that they thought was interesting. This would be simply meant to get them to think about what they are watching to discuss. The following detailed lesson plan offers the specifics of this lesson:

UbD TEMPLATE: Critical Inquiry: Refugee Unit Week 1 60-minute Lesson Day 1	
Content Standard(s):	CCSS.SL.10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on <i>grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues</i> , building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

- e) Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.
- f) Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed.
- g) Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions.
- h) Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented

CCSS.R.10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

NCET/IRA Standards:

Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

Student Objectives	
<p>Skills:</p> <p>Students will be able to...</p> <p>S1: Empathize with others who have the experiences of needing to flee their homes.</p> <p>S2: Collaborate with peers to thoroughly understand multiple perspectives that are not commonly shared.</p>	<p>Knowledge:</p> <p>Students will know...</p> <p>K1: What is defined as a refugee</p> <p>K2: That there are many different reasons that people flee their homes.</p>
<p>Understandings:</p> <p>Students will understand that...</p> <p>U1: Students will understand that the global conflicts may create situations where groups of people seek asylum elsewhere.</p> <p>U2: Students will understand that it is important to under any implicit biases held towards refugees from certain areas and why they need to be challenged..</p>	
<p>Essential Question(s):</p> <p>EQ1: Why do people leave their homes?</p> <p>EQ2: Why is it important to understand their perspectives?</p>	
<p>Lesson Guiding Question(s):</p> <p>LQ1: what is a refugee?</p> <p>LQ2: why might people seek refuge in the United States?</p> <p>LQ3: why are refugees from certain areas of the world not as welcome in the U.S. as others?</p>	
<p>I Can Statements:</p> <p>I can define what a refugee is.</p> <p>I can acknowledge implicit biases held towards refugees in the U.S..</p>	
Outcomes and Evidence	
<p>Tasks that will elicit student understanding (connect each task with the appropriate skill/knowledge/understanding):</p>	

Students will watch two short videos offering definitions for what a refugee is. Afterward, they will have a discussion using the leading and essential questions listed above.		
Formative Assessment(s): “Exit slip” will be given to students after they watch the videos, asking them to note anything that they thought was interesting about the videos or anything that they didn’t know before watching them.		
Differentiated Instruction: Group discussion, exit slip, provide audiobooks for students who would rather not read print.		
Student Accommodations (if applicable): Text-to-speech, speech-to-text technology will be available. Videos will be played with subtitles for students to read.		
Learning Plan		
Learning Activities: An outline of the entire lesson. This includes teacher and student tasks for: opening, lesson body describing the methods of instruction, closure. Pacing includes the time stamps for how long each section will take.		
Pacing (time)	OPENING:	
	Teacher:	Student:
15 minutes	Introduce topic of refugee to students. Play two short videos defining what makes a refugee, and have students take note of anything interesting or newly learned from the video. This will act as an “exit slip”.	Watch videos and note anything interesting or newly learned. (exit slip)
	LESSON BODY:	
	Teacher:	Student:
35 minutes	Bring whole class together for discussion. Ask students to share some of the things that they wrote down for the exit slip. Fill in gaps in student discussion with leading/essential questions listed above. Encourage students to discuss with each other, sharing and building off of each other’s ideas.	Participate in discussion with whole class. Be active in engaging with peer’s thoughts and ideas, respecting any differing opinions and thoughts. Ask any questions that may come up during the discussion.
	CLOSURE:	
	Teacher:	Student:
10 minutes	Introduce main text for unit, <i>Shooting Kabul</i> . Give a quick book talk about it and how it relates to today’s lesson. Assign books to students. (Audiobooks will also be available for students who would rather not read print)	Listen to the book talk. Get copy of book.

We will begin reading the text as a class the day after the above lesson is taught. Once students have been exposed to the topic, they will be tasked with reading the novel. This book will take roughly 3 weeks to finish, budgeting some time to incorporate other texts and information. During the initial reading, I want students to really focus on reading the material,

ideas, perspectives, and experiences of the characters in the book. There will be no reading worksheets or homework course-packs assigned. However, I will have students note things that they like or dislike, questions that they have about the reading, and throughout the unit conduct some research/analysis of news articles related to the topics of the unit. This research and analysis will be meant to compliment things that they are learning about through their reading.

Students will be asked to read at least one chapter a day, weekends included. I will budget class time to either read the text aloud myself, or have students do independent reading of at least one chapters. If pace is kept with readings done every day, students will be able to finish the book in roughly three weeks. Students are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the reading from the previous day with the class, asking questions and examining likes and dislikes about the text. As students complete their readings, discussion questions found in the back of the book will be used to help guide their thinking as they read. Within their reading is where I will incorporate other resources, such as picture books and news articles for students to enhance their understanding of the topic.

During the first week of reading the text, I will bring in two picture books to the class to show other forms of literary representations of refugee experiences. These texts will be *The Journey* by Francesca Sanna and *The Arrival* by Shaun Tan. I will do a read aloud of these texts, asking students to draw comparisons between these two picture books and what they have read in *Shooting Kabul*. Some of the questions that I would ask students are “what are some common themes across all three of these texts?”, “how are these experiences similar/different?”, and “what are some conclusions that can be drawn regarding these experiences?”. By asking these questions, I hope to engage students in deeper thinking about the perspectives shown in all of these texts, connecting them to their own understanding of the reading. The discussion would

lead to a better understanding of the experiences portrayed in *Shooting Kabul* as students continue to read.

During the second week of reading, students will be asked to conduct some research regarding refugees in their community. I will provide students with some articles providing information/perspectives regarding refugees and immigration policies that have been implemented. Students will grab chrome books and asked to research refugees in Kalamazoo, MI (the community that I would be working in) to see what news/information they could find about refugee support organizations, the number of refugees housed in the community, etc. One of the main goals of this lesson is to make students aware of how their community is shaped by these conflicts that force people to flee to safer areas. This task will make good use of the Internet and the information that it can easily provide to students about whatever interests them regarding the given topic. To get students familiar with news about the topic, I will provide them with the following articles to review as guided practice:

- <https://www.unrefugees.org/news/syria-refugee-crisis-explained/>
- <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/01/31/trump-administration-expands-travel-ban-110005>
- <https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/numbers-syrian-refugees-around-world/>

While we are all going over these articles, I want students to keep in mind how they all connect to the question, “why do we see such low numbers of Syrian refugees in the United States compared to other countries?” By thinking about this question, students will be critical analyzing views that our nation has towards Syrian refugees and why that contributes to such low numbers of refugees from Syria coming into the U.S. within the last 5 years.

After students read through these articles, I will ask them to do some independent research. Now, students will be able to do some digging into a topic about refugees that they find interesting related to their community. Students can look at the number of refugees housed in Kalamazoo, the refugee population of other areas of Michigan and why these places have gained such a high refugee population. While students are researching, I will ask them to keep track of their findings with notes to hold a discussion about what each student has found. The students will finish out Week Two of this unit with more discussion regarding their daily reading.

Moving into Week Three, students will be finishing the book. I will bring in a community organization to speak to the class about what they do for refugees in the community. In the Kalamazoo area, there is an organization by the name of Refugee Outreach Collective (ROC). This organization offers all different types of support to resettled families such as transportation, food, tutoring, and teaching English. By bringing in this organization, students will gain a better understanding of how refugees connect to the community that they live in. In preparation for the guest speaker, I will ask students to come up with questions that they would like to ask the speaker. Students will be in charge of leading a discussion with the speaker. Finishing the last few chapters over the weekend, students will have the text completed by week four.

If all goes well, students will have finished *Shooting Kabul* at the end of Week Three. With what remains of week four, students will be given their final project. After being exposed to a lot of material about refugees and their experiences, I will ask students to write a journal with a minimum of 20 journal entries, describing what their life would be like if they were put into a similar situation as the refugees they just learned about. Students will be given class time to work on this assignment and will be expected to discuss/present their projects with the class. The details for this lesson are as follows:

UbD TEMPLATE: Critical Inquiry: Refugee Unit Week 4 60-minute Lesson Day 3	
<p>Content Standard(s):</p> <p>CCSS.SL.10.1: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on <i>grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues</i>, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas. b) Work with peers to set rules for collegial discussions and decision-making (e.g., informal consensus, taking votes on key issues, presentation of alternate views), clear goals and deadlines, and individual roles as needed. c) Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that relate the current discussion to broader themes or larger ideas; actively incorporate others into the discussion; and clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions. d) Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented <p>CCSS.R.10.1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.</p> <p>CCSS.W.10.4: Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.</p> <p>NCET/IRA Standards: Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.</p>	
Student Objectives	
<p>Skills:</p> <p>Students will be able to...</p> <p>S1: Empathize with others who have the experiences of needing to flee their homes.</p> <p>S2: Collaborate with peers to thoroughly understand multiple perspectives that are not commonly shared.</p> <p>S3: Apply their learning about a different perspective and demonstrate their understandings by placing themselves in that perspective.</p>	<p>Knowledge:</p> <p>Students will know...</p> <p>K1: What is defined as a refugee</p> <p>K2: That there are many different reasons that people flee their homes.</p> <p>K3: That it is important to understand where people come from before making assumptions.</p>
Understandings:	

Students will understand that...		
U1: Students will understand that it is important to consider the privilege most people have of not having to flee their homes for safety.		
Essential Question(s): EQ1: Why do people leave their homes? EQ2: Why is it important to understand their perspectives?		
Lesson Guiding Question(s): LQ1: what is a refugee? LQ2: why might people seek refuge in the United States? LQ3: why are refugees from certain areas of the world not as welcome in the U.S. as others?		
I Can Statements: I can define what a refugee is. I can acknowledge implicit biases held towards refugees in the U.S. I can place myself into another person's perspective so that I can better understand their experiences and where they come from.		
Outcomes and Evidence		
Tasks that will elicit student understanding (connect each task with the appropriate skill/knowledge/understanding): Students will write at least 10 journal entries as if they needed to flee their home. What caused you to flee? How did you flee from the threat? Where did you go and why? Was it easy to leave your home?		
Formative Assessment(s): Students will share what they wrote about in their journal entries and the class will talk about each student's entry.		
Differentiated Instruction: Group discussion, journal writing (spoken to class if desired)		
Student Accommodations (if applicable): Text-to-speech, speech-to-text technology will be available. Options to speak rather than write.		
Learning Plan		
Learning Activities: An outline of the entire lesson. This includes teacher and student tasks for: opening, lesson body describing the methods of instruction, closure. Pacing includes the time stamps for how long each section will take.		
Pacing (time)	OPENING:	
	Teacher:	Student:
5 minutes	Students will do warmup entry slip. They will be asked to write down any changes to their perspectives about refugees. Did their perspectives change, and if they did, how did they and why?	Complete entry slip
	LESSON BODY:	
	Teacher:	Student:
45 minutes	Students will share out to the class what they wrote their journals about, answer questions like "What caused you to flee? How did you flee? Where did you go and why? Was it easy to leave your home?".	Be prepared to discussion and turn in a completed set of at least 10 journals. Answer the questions posted and/or any others

		that your learning led you to.
	CLOSURE:	
	Teacher:	Student:
10 minutes	When discussion is done debrief about unit. Ask students what they liked, didn't like, what they wish they could have done more of, etc. Final thoughts on book and the topic as a whole.	Provide honest feedback about the unit, book, and learning that took place.

By putting themselves in the perspectives of people that they just read about, I believe that students will be able to arrive a solid understanding of how difficult it is to come from those experiences. This assignment is meant to be creative and reflective, asking students to highlight the information that they have learned for the last 3 weeks and apply them to their own lives. Having gained a strong level of empathy for the refugee experiences, I believe that this is a good closing assessment for students to demonstrate what they have learned about a perspective that is not their own. Students may become passionate about offering relief to resettled families and may look to volunteer at organizations such as ROC, and other students may not. Regardless of how passionate students become about the issues, they learned about a perspective that is not theirs and have gained insight into the experiences of a group of people that is often stereotyped and mistreated. The lesson will have been a success if I was able to have my students actually think critically about the material that they had learned and how that information applies to them as well as be useful in the community.

The main goal of this unit is to show students another perspective that is becoming more and more a part of their community. With the views that many Americans have towards refugees, especially in today's political climate, I believe that it is important that students try to understand the lives and experiences of their peers and fellow community members. To work towards

removing such hate from our society, students and those who are growing up in safe havens for refugees need to be made aware of what these people are going through and why they are here. They deserve empathy for their struggles. If stereotypical views about these people continue to shine through American society, no progress can be made towards social justice.

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