

RETHINKING THE REGION:

New Approaches to 9-12 U.S. Curriculum on the Middle East and North Africa

UNIT: EMPIRE AND NATION

TOPIC Revolutionary Poetry	
LESSON OVERVIEW	The lesson will begin with a brief discussion about the contemporary Arab Uprisings using video clips, images and newspaper articles. Students will read three poems from the 1920s and they will identify language in the poem that refers to revolution, uprising, dissatisfaction, etc. Students will discuss how the poems apply to the recent uprisings and they will end the lesson with a free write session in which they must agree or disagree with a historian's statement and support their opinion using evidence from the poems and the class discussion.
ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are reasons for revolutions? • When is a revolution over? What happens afterwards? • In what ways does popular culture reflect people's lives from a particular historical period?
LESSON OBJECTIVES	<p><u>Learners will be able to</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the importance of studying history to understand current events. • Understand the varying catalysts for revolution. • Understand the value and role that popular culture plays in revolution.
STANDARDS	<p><u>Common Core Standards</u></p> <p><i>Common Core Grade 9-10:</i></p> <p>CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and</p>

origin of the information.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

Common Core Grade 11-12:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.9 Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

New York State Standards

Performance Indicators Students will:

Standard 2, Key Idea 1

- Analyze historic events from around the world by examining accounts written from different perspectives
- Understand the broad patterns, relationships, and interactions of cultures and civilizations during particular eras and across eras
- Analyze changing and competing interpretations of issues, events, and developments throughout world history

Standard 2, Key Idea 2

- Evaluate the effectiveness of different models for the periodization of important historic events, identifying the reasons why a particular sequence for these events was chosen
- Explain the importance of analyzing narratives drawn from different times and places to understand historical events
- Analyze evidence critically and demonstrate an understanding of how

	<p>circumstances of time and place influence perspective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate key events and developments and major turning points in world history to identify the factors that brought about change and the long-term effects of these changes <p><u>Standard 2, Key Idea 3</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyze the roles and contributions of individuals and groups to social, political, economic, cultural, and religious practices and activities Explain the dynamics of cultural change and how interactions between and among cultures has affected various cultural groups throughout the world <p><u>Standard 2, Key Idea 4</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interpret and analyze documents and artifacts related to significant developments and events in world history Analyze different interpretations of important events, issues, or developments in world history by studying the social, political, and economic context in which they were developed; by testing the data source for reliability and validity, credibility, authority, authenticity, and completeness; and by detecting bias, distortion of the facts, and propaganda by omission, suppression, or invention of facts (Taken from National Standards for World History) Analyze how the forces of cooperation and conflict among people influence the division and control of the Earth’s surface (Taken from National Geography Standards, 1994)
MATERIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poems Free write handout
PROCEDURE DAY 1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <u>Activate Background Knowledge (10 minutes)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teacher begins class by asking students if they have ever heard of the Arab Uprisings (aka “The Arab Spring”). <ol style="list-style-type: none"> If no one has, teacher explains briefly that the Arab Uprisings began in Tunisia and spread across the MENA region. If some have, teacher can follow by asking whether this was the first

revolution of its kind in MENA.

- c. Teacher will then explain that there have in fact been several Egyptian revolutions (if students have done Lesson 2, with the timeline, then the teacher can refer to that). The teacher will briefly discuss the Egyptian Revolution of 1919 when the Egyptians joined together to oust the British and the Tunisian Revolution of 1954 when Tunisia gained independence from the French (and even these were not the first revolutions in the region).
- d. The teacher will then move the discussion to the more contemporary Arab Uprisings. Teacher may wish to use a short video clip or share images/newspaper articles that provide an overview of the Arab Uprisings (see further resources section for ideas).

2. Poetry and the Arab Uprisings (10 minutes)

- Hand out poems and instruct students to read the poems in silence.
- Prompt students to underline any words that stand out to the students. In particular, students should think of the words that they can connect to revolution, uprisings, dissatisfaction with the status quo, etc.

3. Discussion: Before Revolution (15 minutes)

- Discussion questions:
 - a. What stands out for you in the first two poems?
 - b. What is the driving force idea or emotion behind the poems?
 - c. Verses from these poems have been heard in the more recent Arab Uprisings. How can these readings of the revolution in the early 20th century be applied to the recent revolutions in the MENA region (for example, Egypt)?

4. Discussion: After Revolution (25 minutes)

- Discussion questions:
 - a. This third poem was written several years after the Egyptian Revolution. What kinds of issues does this poem raise?
 - b. Do you think the revolution was a success?

	<p>c. What do you think inspired al-Shabi to write these poems?</p> <p>d. What do you think he hoped this poem might achieve?</p> <p>e. Why do you think al-Shabi’s poem was evoked during the more recent Arab Spring?</p> <p>f. What emotions are evoked when you read these poems?</p> <p>g. Why might poetry be such a powerful tool?</p> <p>h. Can you think of other instances in which poetry has been used in politics?</p> <p>i. The contemporary Arab Uprisings began in Tunisia and then spread to other parts of the MENA region (and beyond), including Egypt. What can these poems teach us about what we might expect after the Arab Uprisings?</p> <p>5. Free Writings (5 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hand out sheet with Basheer Nafi quote (alternatively, teacher can project/write it on the board). <p style="margin-left: 40px;">“My feeling is that we are witnessing a second wave of the Arab liberation movement... In the first wave, the Arabs liberated themselves from colonial powers and foreign domination. I think now, the very heart of the Arab world, the backbone of the Arab world, is leading the move towards freedom and democracy and human rights.” From Al-Jazeera interview with historian Basheer Nafi: http://blogs.aljazeera.com/blog/middle-east/live-blog-311-egypt-protests.</p> Instruct students to spend five minutes making a case on whether they agree with this statement based on what they’ve learned from the poems today (and from their own personal knowledge of the Arab Uprisings).
<p>ADDITIONAL RESOURCES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read: “Arab spring: an interactive timeline of Middle East protests”: http://www.theguardian.com/world/interactive/2011/mar/22/middle-east-protest-interactive-timeline Read: “Arab Spring, Fall, and After: An update on the leaders and countries where protests have turned violent”

(summaries): <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2011/11/23/world/middleeast/Arab-Spring-and-Fall.html?scp=5&sq=arab%20spring&st=cse>

- **Watch:** “How the Arab Spring began” (BBC video clip): <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-16212447>
- **Browse:** What does the Arab Spring mean to young people? Students submit photos and add a reflection (slideshow): http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/speakout/world/jan-june12/arabspring_01-20.html
- **Watch:** A one-hour 2011 episode from Al Jazeera’s monthly program *Empire*. The episode explores topics like the catalyst of Tunisia, the impact of youth activism & social media, the influence and control of the media, the role of the West, democratization, etc. (*YouTube*): <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QxY87ZkT618>
- **Read:** Occupy Wall Street to compare the Arab Spring to other ongoing social movements (slide show): <http://www.nytimes.com/slideshow/2011/10/03/us/20111004-OCCUPY.html>
- **Read:** The Arab Spring: <http://kellogg.nd.edu/outreach/arabspring.shtml>

Poetry, Art, Music

- “The Poetry of Revolution” (*Huffington Post*): http://www.huffingtonpost.com/john-lundberg/the-poetry-of-revolution_b_828282.html
- “The Poetry of Revolt” (*Jaddaliya*): <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/506/>
- “Tunisian Poet’s Verses Inspire Arab Protesters” (NPR): <http://www.npr.org/2011/01/30/133354601/Tunisian-Poets-Verses-Inspire-Arab-Protesters>
- “Tunisia’s Lessons in Revolution” (*The Egyptian Independent*): <http://www.egyptindependent.com/opinion/tunisia-lessons-revolution>
- Translations of Abu al-Qasim al-Shabi’s “If the People Wanted Life One Day”: <http://arablit.wordpress.com/2011/01/16/two-translations-of-abu-al-qasim-al-shabis-if-the-people-wanted-life-one-day/>
- Hip-Hop’s response to the Arab Awakening:

<http://www.movements.org/blog/entry/soundtrack-of-the-arab-awakening/>

- “The Revolution has a Soundtrack”: <http://www.aaiusa.org/blog/entry/The-Revolution-Has-A-Soundtrack/>
- “Art Attack: How Graffiti Was Used to Condemn the Regime’s Oppression in Egypt”: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/art-attack-how-graffiti-was-used-to-condemn-the-regimes-oppression-in-egypt-8533466.html>
- Alternate translations of the poems are available at <http://aasilahmad.net/abu-al-qasim-al-shabi-the-poet-of-the-tunisia-and-egyptian-revolution/>