

LESSON TITLE: Arab Americans the Automobile: Voices from the Factory

Lesson Overview

This lesson plan will cover Arab immigration to America, immigration policy in the United States and how it impacted Arab Americans and the discrimination that Arabs have faced here. Immigrants interviewed for the Arab Americans and the Automobile: Voices from the Factory collection came to the United States in four periods that span the twentieth and twenty-first century. The first unit covers each Arab American immigration period and examines the push and pull factors that brought Arabs here. A brief synopsis of Arab American immigration is provided and written using secondary sources. Students will then examine primary sources from the oral history collection that illustrate the varying timeframes that Arabs came to Detroit. This unit will also discuss the push and pull factors that brought Arab Americans to Detroit. While the Voices in the Factory collection covers those who came to work in the automobile industry, students will examine more oral histories and immigration documents that show Arab Americans also worked as entrepreneurs, working as peddlers and store owners. They will also read newspaper excerpts that discuss these push and pull factors, which brought many immigrants to the United States throughout the 20th century.

The second unit will focus on diversity within the Arab American community, highlighting the ethnic and religious diversity in the Detroit area. Students will read newspaper articles and oral histories from the collection that demonstrate different cultural and religious practices the community has established since arriving. The session will also examine immigration policy in the United States, and how it relates to Arab American immigration. Students will examine secondary sources from the US State Department as it relates to the Immigration Act of 1924 and Immigration Act of 1965, which played an important role in those who came to America. Additionally, they will examine primary sources that include cartoons and congressional hearings, illustrating the debate that had been happening in America for decades, which has resulted in discrimination and stereotypes about who they are and what they have contributed.

The third and final unit will cover the discrimination and stereotypes that Arab Americans have been subjected to over the last century. Students will investigate primary sources including oral histories from the collection, and analyze other media images that depicting common stereotypes of Arabs. Students will be asked to analyze the contrasting information to determine the difficulties that Arab Americans have faced in the United States.

Compelling Question

Did Arab Americans achieve the “American Dream”?

Supporting Questions

- What factors led to Arab immigration to America?
- What were the push and pull factors that brought Arab Americans to Detroit?
- What immigration policies shaped Arab immigration to America?
- In what ways is the Arab American community in Detroit diverse?
- What types of difficulties have Arab Americans faced in the United States?

Objectives

Students will

- Explain two of the most important immigration laws in the 20th century and its impact on immigration
- Describe the different periods of Arab American immigration in the 20th/21st centuries
- Explain the push-pull factors that brought Arab Americans to the United States
- Examine and analyze the stereotypes that have been perpetuated over the last century about Arab Americans

Social Studies Standards

8.2 Domestic Policies

Investigate demographic changes, domestic policies, conflicts, and tensions in post-World War II America.

8.2.1 Demographic Changes – use population data to produce and analyze maps that show the major changes in population distribution and spatial patterns and density, including the Baby Boom, **new immigration**, suburbanization, reverse migration of African-Americans to the South, and the flow of population to the Sunbelt.

8.2.2 Policy Concerning Domestic Issues – analyze major domestic issues in the post-World War II era and the policies designed to meet the challenges by: • describing issues challenging Americans, such as domestic anti-communism (McCarthyism), labor, poverty, health care, infrastructure, **immigration**, and the environment

Time Required

3 class sessions

Recommended Grade Level

High School 9-12th grade

Instructional Resources for Lesson

- **Instructional Resource Guide**
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1SusrycpEDXt09diz6LlgR4_y5rfuTCpT_ZVyblw0Sk/edit
- Powerpoint presentation to accompany the lesson template and Instructional Resource Guide
https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1YC-x1d6V0ioxzqlZoj_AwpwxnY9khNDDGyDBEk2OzQw/edit#slide=id.g59070aaad0_0_89

Lesson Preparation

(List for the entire lesson OR List for each Session of the Lesson)

For Session 1:

- Arab American immigration periods
- Push and pull factors of Arab American immigration

For Session 2:

- Diversity of Arab American population in the US
- US Immigration Policy

For Session 3:

- Discrimination and stereotypes of Arabs

Lesson Instructional Sequence

The slides for each session are here:

https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1YC-x1d6V0ioxzqIzOj_AwpwxnY9khNDDGyDBEk2OzQw/edit#slide=id.g59070aaad0_0_212

Session 1: Arab American immigration waves, Push and pull factors of Arab immigration

1. Display **Slide 2** and introduce students to the concept that Arab Americans have entered the United States for centuries, but began entering in larger numbers in the 1880s. Explain that Arabs have settled in cities across America, including Detroit, but that it's tricky to track their movement. Currently, the US Census does not provide a box for Arab Americans to check, so instead they often check "white" or "other". As a result, it's difficult to obtain data on their demographics. Direct students to examine the graph on Slide 2 and see if they notice any patterns or if anything stands out that would be significant.
2. Give students Document 1 in the Instructional Resources packet. Give students about 10 minutes to read through the document. Once students have finished reading, discuss the different immigration periods. Have students consider how immigration has shaped Detroit over the 20th and 21st centuries, comparing it to the Trends in Arab American Immigration on Slide 2. Do you see any patterns begin to emerge knowing a little bit more about the history behind their immigration?
3. Have students read Documents 2 (oral history excerpts). Show **slide 3**. Have students discuss what each oral history tells us about the Arab immigration experience. Are all immigration stories the same? Ask students if they know any immigrants and what they know about other experiences.
4. Give students 5-10 minutes to answer the questions, which can be found in Interactive Notes.
5. Show **Slide 4** and give students ample time to look at Document 3. These are samples of immigration papers and passports that Arab Americans would have carried. Ask students to fill out the table that follows the images of these immigration papers.
6. Before students begin reading Document 4, talk about push and pull factors. Push factors are what drove immigrants out of their home countries, and pull factors are what drew immigrants to come to America. Push factors can be conflict or lack of jobs. Pull factors could be better education or living circumstances in the new country. Do not discuss Arab push and pull factors just yet, but ask them to be mindful of these two themes as they read the following documents.
7. Show **Slide 5** and print out Document 4 for students. Have the students read the following excerpts. What is on the screen and on the document are similar.
8. Show **Slide 6**, and give students Document 5. What is show on the screen has 2 oral history quotes, but the Document for the students has a few more quotes to read through. Give students about 5 minutes to read these.
9. The newspaper excerpts and the oral histories all suggest different push and pull factors for Arab immigrants. Have students fill out the Push and Pull Factor table. Discuss the push and pull factors that students listed and have them fill out the push-pull worksheet in their Document notes.
10. When you're done discussing students answers to potential push/pull factors, show **slide 7** and compare their lists to what is on the screen. Are there others that students can think of?
11. Ask students to consider if other immigrants besides Arabs also have push and pull factors. Are these push pull factors similar or different?
12. At the end of this session, have each student individually fill out the Session 1 Summary Sheet. Give them about 10 minutes to develop their answers.

Session 2: Diversity in the Arab community and Immigration Policy in the United States

1. Open this class session by recapping Session 1, by highlighting that Arab Americans immigrated to the United States in 4 periods. Show **Slide 8**. Because they have been coming to the Detroit area for over 100 years, explain that the community is now very diverse ethnically and religiously. This session will focus a little more on the diversity of the Arab Americans, which was alluded to in Session 1.
2. Keep Slide 8 up and have the students read Document 6. Give the students about 5 minutes to read and give them the Interactive Notes for this document and give them another 5 minutes to fill this out. For the teacher:

This document is giving us information about Arab Americans and their religious diversity. It is providing statistics about the Arab American population and dispels the myth that all Arabs are Muslim. Explain to the students that many are also Christians.

3. Show **slide 9** and have students look at Document 7. These are just recipes from the Aliya Hassan Collection at the Arab American National Museum, and provide a very brief look at what some Arab Americans cook. Ask the students if they recognize any of the ingredients. You can also ask the students if they know of or have tried any Arab American dishes, and have them name the dishes. (Some examples, falafel, shawarma, tabouli). Explain to the students that Arab Americans have their own cooking traditions, but they often infuse them with more Americanized foods (example: falafel pizza at a restaurant in Dearborn, MI). Explain to the students that the examples of these recipes demonstrates cultural diversity through cooking. Different people in different parts of the Arab world tweak recipes as well. Have students fill out the Interactive Notes sheet for this document.
4. Show Slide 10 and 11 (both show excerpts of oral histories that appear in the Instructional Resources). Based on what has been discussed and what is highlighted in the oral history excerpts in Document 8, have students discuss diversity among Arab Americans. What do the oral histories reveal about the perceptions of religion among Arab Americans? Have students fill out the Interactive Sheet for Document 8.
5. Considering the diversity of Arab Americans, it would be good to have students locate the Arab countries on a map. Pull up a map (Google Maps, a physical map in the classroom) and have students try and locate some of the Arab countries they are familiar with. Show **Slide 12** and go over any countries they may have missed. The Middle East and North Africa is such a large area, ask students to consider the diversity and how that may impact cultural and social practices. Some possible answers: culinary preferences, fashion, home practices, religion, etc. Ask students if they think all Arabs are the same? Emphasize that not all Arabs are Muslim.
6. Continue discussing the diversity of Arab Americans in the Detroit area specifically. Emphasize that it's difficult to map them out because information on Arab Americans is not collected on the US Census. You can highlight that many Lebanese, Iraqi and Yemeni immigrants are in the Dearborn area, while Chaldeans tend to live in the northwest suburbs of Detroit. Many Palestinians or Maronite Lebanese live in places like Canton and Livonia. Highlight the established community that has been here, which is a large reason why Arabs have continued to migrate to Detroit in different periods. With many mosques, churches, community centers/social clubs and businesses, Arabs are still attracted to Metro Detroit.
7. Show **Slide 13**, a map which illustrates historical locations of Chaldeans in metro Detroit and where some places of worship are today. As we learned earlier, Chaldeans have been migrating to the Detroit area since the 1950s, and this illustrates their movement around the city and out into the suburbs.
8. Show **Slide 14**, which illustrates the historic location of Muslims in Detroit with places of worship over time. Like Chaldeans, Muslims have been arriving since the 1880s, but more have migrated here in recent periods of immigration. Emphasize that not all Arabs are Muslim, but some of the mosques shown are utilized by many Arab Muslims.
9. Show **Slide 15**, illustrating the Maronite Catholic population in Metro Detroit over time. Maronite Catholics are a small religious sect who immigrated from Lebanon. They were some of the earliest Arab immigrants to arrive in the early 20th century and established businesses in Detroit, but eventually migrated into the suburbs. Show students the churches that are labeled on the map to illustrate the migration.
10. Explain to students that Slides 13, 14, and 15 are not exhaustive of all the religious groups found within the Arab community, but will help to illustrate where these groups have been overtime, and the overlap these communities have had in metro Detroit. It also demonstrates the migration and movement from the city of Detroit to the suburbs since they arrived. Explain to students that many immigrants moved to the city of Detroit and then migrated into the suburban areas for different jobs or other opportunities.
11. Bridge the conversation to discussing immigration policy. Despite the diversity and contributions the Arab community has brought to the Detroit area, Arab immigrants and others have faced incredibly tough situations to get here. Show **slide 16** and have students read Document 9 (Immigration Act of 1924 excerpt from State Dept website). After reading, have students outline what led to new immigration restrictions and have them reasons for immigration quotas. Possible answers include: 1917 immigration law led to immigration restriction based on literacy exams and wanting to keep non-whites outside of the United States.

12. Show **Slide 17**. Discuss with the students that anti-immigrant sentiment was high in the 1880s when immigration in the United States began to increase in large numbers. Discuss the Chinese Exclusion Act, which prohibited Chinese immigrants from entering the United States. Though this law was focused specifically on the Chinese, discuss themes that immigrants would take jobs or were filthy people.
13. Show **Slides 18, 19, and 20**. Use these cartoons as examples that anti-immigrant sentiments were not limited to those from “the east” like Chinese but also European immigrants like those from Eastern Europe, Italy, etc. Use the cartoon examples to illustrate that anti-immigrant sentiments intensified in the 1880s, and grew from there, leading to the Immigration Act of 1924. Have students answer the questions: *List some ways that immigration was affected by the 1924 policy*. Ask students to consider anti-immigrant sentiments today. Are there any similarities?
14. Show **Slide 21** and discuss the Immigration Act of 1965, which repealed the immigrant quotas from 1924. Have the students read document 10 and document 11.
15. Print out 3 sheets per student of the Interactive Questions for each student. Have the students fill each sheet out for Documents 9, 10, and 11. Discuss their answers as a large group. Ask students to list adjectives used to describe prior immigrant laws. Ask them to explain what Congressional leaders were proposing with the new law around 1965. Discuss the effects of the 1965 act on Arab immigration. Consider the third and fourth waves of immigration.
16. At the end of the session, have students fill out Session 2 Summary Sheet. Discuss the answers together.

Session 3: Discrimination and stereotypes of Arabs in the United States

1. This last session will discuss discrimination, stereotypes and perceptions that Arab Americans have faced and still face today. Show **Slide 22**, and have students read Document 12. Discuss the different ways Arab men and women are portrayed. Ask if any images of Arabs come to mind.
2. Have students read through Document 13 (show **Slide 23**), which feature oral histories about how Arabs have been discriminated against or stereotyped.
3. Show **Slide 24** and have them look at Document 14 (though it may be easier to just look at the slide) and begin talking about how media perpetuates these images, and this is not something new. Have them look closer at Document 14. Discuss what they see represented.
4. Have students take a look at Document 15 and show **Slide 25**. This slide depicts a lobby card for a movie (*The Sheik*) in 1921. Discrimination of Arabs (and immigrants, in general) has been ongoing. Ask students to list out some of the stereotypes shown here.
5. Move on to **Slide 26** (also part of Document 15 in the Instructional Resources), which depicts an actual advertisement for *The Sheik*. Have students stay in their small groups and discuss the same questions: what does this depict? What stereotypes are shown about Arab men? What about Arab women?
6. Print out 4 copies of Interactive Notes for each student. They will fill out a sheet for Documents 12, 13, 14, and 15. Give them 10-15 minutes for this task and then discuss their answers.
7. Now move on to **Slide 27**, which corresponds with Document 16 in the resources packet. Talk about how Arab Americans are doctors, lawyers, engineers, mothers, fathers, entrepreneurs and many other things and have built a vibrant community in Michigan. These individuals are depicted here. How does this contrast with the images in the previous slides/documents?
8. Optional assignment: Arab American contributions are covered here and would be a good resource: <http://arabstereotypes.org/who-are-arab-americans/arab-american-culture/contributions>
9. Show **Slide 28**. Have students look at Document 17, which lists several famous Arab Americans (not just local Arabs). Give students about 5 minutes to look through this list. Ask if they can think of any to add (it's okay if they cannot).
10. Optional Assignment to go with this: go online and research other famous Arab Americans and have students list them.
11. While still viewing Slide 28, have students consider the occupations and lives of Arab Americans that were discussed in Document 16. Consider the Arab American stereotypes discussed and compare it to the photograph in Document 15 (optional: you could show Slide 26 here as well).
12. Print out 2 copies of Interactive Notes for each student. Give them 5-10 minutes to fill it out and then discuss. Suggested questions for discussion: In what ways have Arab Americans contributed to American society? Are stereotypes harmful to Arab Americans? How would you feel if someone said or wrote mean things about you?

13. Conclude session by recapping that Arabs are an incredibly diverse group of people who have been immigrating here since the 1880s. Like other immigrants, they have faced setbacks in immigration policy and discrimination, but have found a way to integrate themselves into American society, contributing financially, politically, socially and culturally.

At the end of this session, have students fill out the Lesson Assessment. Give them 20-25 minutes.

Suggestions for Lesson Assessment

- Have students fill out the Lesson Assessment in the Instructional Resources Document.
- Ask students to write out their perceptions of immigrants/Arabs before beginning the unit. Have them write their perceptions after the units are completed.

Possible Enrichment/Extension Activities

- Have students watch video clips from the Arab American Digital Scrapbook stories:
<http://aanm.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/landingpage/collection/p16806coll11>

Teacher Resources for Additional Information

- <http://arabstereotypes.org/> from the Arab American National Museum
- Arab Americans: History, Culture and Contributions by the Arab American National Museum - <http://arabamericanmuseum.org/umages/Arab-Americans.pdf>
- Arab Americans in Metro Detroit: A Pictorial History
- Arab Detroit: From Margin to Mainstream, edited by Nabeel Abraham and Andrew Shryock
- Arab Detroit 9/11, edited by Nabeel Abraham, Sally Howell and Andrew Shryock
- Reel Bad Arabs by Jack Shaheen
- Reel Bad Arabs video - <https://wayne.kanopy.com/video/reel-bad-arabs-how-hollywood-vilifies-people> (teacher discretion advised for younger grades)