

RETHINKING THE REGION:

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

UNIT:

PLURAL IDENTITIES

TOPIC Cosmopolitan Alexandria	
LESSON OVERVIEW	Over the course of two days, students will gain an understanding of the multifaceted nature of life in Alexandria during the early- to mid-20 th century. They will read and analyze a text to gain background knowledge on the city and then each group will create a timeline and discuss the implications of historical events on the city. Finally, students will participate in “Café Conversations” where they will represent a variety of characters in Alexandria at that time. Each student will determine their character’s stance towards a historical event using evidence from the texts.
ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why was Alexandria considered a cosmopolitan city? • How did the events in 1950’s Egypt affect the various people in Alexandria?
LESSON OBJECTIVES	<p><u>Learners will be able to:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand how the rise of Nasser and pan-Arabism affected Egypt. • Understand the multifaceted nature of life in Alexandria.
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 origin of the information.</p> <p>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</p>

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ideas develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.3 Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

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.11-12.3 Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.6 Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning, and evidence.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.7 Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.8 Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

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
- Understand the development and connectedness of Western civilization and other civilizations and cultures in many areas of the world and over time

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 circumstances of time and place influence perspective
- 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

Standard 2, Key Idea 3

- 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

Standard 2, Key Idea 4

- 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)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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) <p><u>Standard 3, Key Idea 2</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Locate and gather geographic information from a variety of primary and secondary sources (Taken from National Geography Standards, 1994)
MATERIALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Voices from Cosmopolitan Alexandria”: http://www.bibalex.org/attachments_en/Publications/Files/2013032016331232778_voicesfromcosmopolitanalexandria.pdf Timeline of Events Character Chart Graphic Organizer Text: “Cosmopolitan: A Tale of Identity from Ottoman Alexandria”: http://dash.harvard.edu/bitstream/handle/1/3892592/jasanoff_cosmopolitan.pdf?sequence=2
NOTE TO TEACHER	Through this role-play conversation, students will understand the multifaceted nature of Alexandrian life. They will represent a character and perspective and come to understand the multitudes of experiences across lines of gender, ethnicity, class, and occupation that shaped Alexandria at this time.
PROCEDURE DAY 1	<p>1. <u>Background on Alexandria (30 minutes)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Groups of three read background text about Alexandria in the mid-20th century. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Preface b. Intro of “Voices” c. http://dash.harvard.edu/bitstream/handle/1/3892592/jasanoff_cosmopolitan.pdf?sequence=2 (Teacher Note: Choose excerpts from this text, as you see fit.) As they read, they should underline what they consider key information. When they are finished, each student should write down any remaining questions.

- In their groups, students share what they thought was most important.
2. **Time Line (10 minutes)**
- In same groups, teacher hands out timeline of mid-20th century events.
 - In groups, students discuss what the effects of these events might have been on Alexandria, based on what they read.
 - NOTE: This can also be cross-linked with the lessons on Political Movements and Nation and Empire.
3. **Preparing for “Café Conversation” (20 minutes)**
- Teacher selects characters and biographies from the text “Voices from Cosmopolitan Alexandria.” Make sure that there are many different types of characters across ethnic, gender, and religious lines. It is up to the teacher to choose the multiple roles.
 - Teacher selects an issue from the timeline that will frame the discussion among the characters. Here are possibilities:
 - a. World War II
 - b. 1952 Revolution
 - c. 1956 War (Suez)
 - d. 1961 Nationalization of the private sector
 - Teacher assigns students a character. Depending on the size of the class, the teacher could assign each student a different character, though the likely scenario will be that the teacher will need to divide the class into two or three groups and have multiple students playing the same character.
 - Give students the background narrative of their character from the collection “Voices from Cosmopolitan Alexandria.” This includes the story, images, etc.
 - Upon reading the narrative and looking at the accompanying pictures, each student fills out a character chart for his/her character. This includes information about gender, age, family status (married, single, number of children, etc.), occupation, education level and significant life events.
 - After filling out the chart, students hypothesize how they feel about the event and matter at hand (chosen from one of the four above). They should free-

	<p>write about this, providing at least three pieces of evidence that might support their stance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If multiple students are playing the same character, they can work together to develop the character chart and discuss how this character might feel. • Teacher should ensure that students accurately represent their character’s point of view before the Café Conversation begins.
<p>PROCEDURE</p> <p>DAY 2</p>	<p>1. <u>Café Conversations 35 minutes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students settle into characters and review notes from day before. • Explain to students again that they will get into character for a conversation. Teachers and students should establish common norms for having the conversation. Explain that while they are getting into character, they must also treat the topic with seriousness and respect. • Divide the class into 3-4 groups (jigsaw) so that each group has students representing different personalities. In this format, many Café Conversations will be happening simultaneously. If one group ends early, you can let them go around the room and listen to the conversations other groups are having. • Explain to students that during the conversation, each will represent his/her assigned character in a discussion about the assigned topic. Students will begin the conversation with introductions. After this is done, the conversation will start with a possible question posed by one pre-selected character: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. What are your feelings about siding with the Allies in the War? b. How do you feel about Nasser and the Revolution? c. How do you feel about all of the British and French being expelled during this Suez crisis? d. How do you feel about the nationalization of foreign assets? <p>The conversation should run for about 20 minutes, but can be extended.</p> <p>2. <u>Journal writing (15 minutes)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After the Café Conversations have wrapped up, each student will write a personal journal entry reflecting on their experience at the café. The journal

	<p>entry should be 1-2 pages. These are possible prompts.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. What was your character’s point of view going into this event? How did it feel for your character to hear these different perspectives? Why and how, if at all, was your character influenced by other characters? b. How did it feel for you to participate in this conversation? During what part of the conversation did you feel most comfortable? Least comfortable? Why do you think that is? c. What did you learn about this moment in history from participating in this activity? How does it make you understand what was happening in Egypt at this point in time? <p>3. <u>Debrief (10 minutes)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whip-around: One thing you learned and one thing you want to know more about. <p>4. <u>Questions for Further Reflections/Connection to Today:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For a final assessment, students may write an essay about the topic from their own perspective, explaining the ways in which it impacted the city.
<p>ADDITIONAL RESOURCES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read: http://blogs.denverpost.com/captured/2013/07/09/egypt-1952-revolution-free-officers-movement-military-rule/6183/