

Arab: How You See Me

Resources

- [Arab: How You See Me \(4:05\)](#)
- [Arab: How You See Me \(Lesson Slideshow\)](#)

Identities & Themes

- Identity affirmation
- Racial bias/racism
- Bias, prejudice, and stereotypes
- Microaggressions
- Asian American and Pacific Islander
- Gender stereotypes
- Religion/Faith

Summary of Resource

This video features a diverse group of Arab Americans talking about their identity and experiences of being Arab in America.

Before you teach

Vocabulary

Ethnicity - A social construct that divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as shared sense of group membership, values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history, and ancestral geographical base.

Examples of different ethnic groups are: Cape Verdean, Haitian, African American (Black); Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese (Asian); Cherokee, Mohawk, Navaho (Native American); Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican (Latino); Polish, Irish, and Swedish (White). (SOURCE: [Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook](#), edited by Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, and Pat Griffin, Routledge, 1997.)

The Middle East is a region that includes western Asia as well as Egypt and North Africa. According to the [Arab American Institute](#)

- There are more than 3.5 million Arab Americans in the U.S.
- More than 80% of Arab Americans are U.S. citizens.
- Arab Americans represent 22 countries in Asia and North Africa.

Learn more about Arab Americans in your state by visiting the [Arab American Institute's webpage](#).

Important Notes: It is important to make the distinction for students that not all Arab Americans are Muslim and not all Muslims are of Arab descent. Arab Americans are Christians, Muslims, Jews, atheists, etc., just as Muslims can be of any race or ethnicity.

You may also need to explain some history or give some context for students around the biases and stereotypes that Arabs are faced with in America.

One woman in the video mentions former President Trump, and there is a discussion question in the lesson to unpack this. Regardless of your political views, policies under the Trump presidency, including travel bans, made life more difficult for Arab and Muslim Americans by reinforcing stereotypes and prejudices that already existed.

Teacher Reflection Questions

- What messages do you receive about Arab and Muslim Americans? Where do these messages originate?
- In what ways might Arab American students and their families see positive representations of themselves in your classroom, school, and community?
- If another student or adult made a negative or biased comment about Arab and/or Muslim Americans, how would you respond? What knowledge or resources might you need to feel comfortable calling out these negative comments?

Materials Needed for Lesson

- [Arab: How You See Me \(Lesson Slideshow\)](#)
- Ability to project a video and slideshow
- Journal or notebook

Process of Implementing

- Project the [Arab: How You See Me \(Lesson Slideshow\)](#).
- Introduce the lesson and the vocabulary and things to know, making sure to distinguish between Arab as an ethnicity versus Muslim as a religious identity.
- Show the video.
- After showing the video, give students time to complete a written reflection to at least one of the journal prompts.
- Lead students through the discussion questions. Provide additional statistics and background information as applicable to the discussions.

Journal Prompts

- What feelings, thoughts and reactions did you have as you watched this video?
- Think about books, movies, or TV shows that have Arab American characters. How are they portrayed? Why do you think that is?
- Why does the first woman say that she has a complex identity because she is Arab, Muslim, and a woman? How is your own identity complex like this?

Discussion Questions

*Essential questions are in bold.

- **Why does the first woman say that she has a complex identity because she is Arab, Muslim, and a woman? How has this complex identity affected the way people see and interact with her?**

- Consider these statements by people in the video:
 - *“At that instant, they felt threatened by (my dad).”*
 - *“As an Arab, I don’t have the right to say what I’m thinking about.”*
 - *“They’ll say things like ‘oppressed’, ‘backward’, ‘veil’...”*
- **Why might it be hard to balance being Arab and being American?**
- Why would someone apologize to the Arab American woman for Trump? How did Trump’s presidency make life more difficult for some Arab Americans?
- **How can the media also be used to reinforce stereotypes? What are examples from books, TV, movies, video games, music, and the news that do this?**
- **How can the media be used to educate others about Arab American identity and diverse experiences? What are examples from books, TV, movies, video games, music, and the news that do this?**
- Why is it so hard to “be yourself”, as the last speaker says? Why isn’t being yourself considered “normal”?

Condition for Belonging: Identity Affirmation

ABE Connection

Empathy and Understanding

You as an adult learner will:

- Expand your capacity to understand, name, and process your own emotions.
- Increase your ability for perspective-taking by being responsive to another person's feelings and frames of reference.
- Foster positive social connections between students and their families across all differences.

Students will:

- Expand their capacity to understand, name, and process their own emotions.
- Increase their ability for perspective-taking by being responsive to another person's feelings and frames of reference.
- Foster positive social connections with peers across all differences.

Healthy Complex Identities

You as an adult learner will:

- Increase awareness and understanding of your own social identities and cultural contexts, both past and present.
- Make visible and support the personal and social identities and lived experiences of all students and their families.

Students will:

- Demonstrate self-awareness, confidence, family pride, and positive social identities.
- Explore their varied social identities and lived experiences.

*Language borrowed and adapted from Derman-Sparks et al. *Anti-Bias Education for Young Children and Ourselves*. National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2020.

SEL Connection

Self-Awareness

Demonstrate & practice:

- Identify feelings & needs
- Perspective-taking
- Listening & communication skills
- Strengths in self, community, & culture
- Relationship between feelings, thoughts, behaviors, & judgements/bias
- Level of optimism

Self-Management

Demonstrate & practice:

- Regulating one's emotions & compassion for self & others
- Pause between stimulus & response
- Healthy boundaries
- Setting & monitoring personal & academic goals
- Resilience in the face of obstacles

Social Awareness

Demonstrate & practice:

- Empathy & understanding
- Awareness of strengths in self & others
- Reflective listening
- Recognizing family, school, community resources & cultural competence