INTRODUCTION

“Languages are the bedrock of the world’s cultural heritage. Every language offers a rich and unique insight into different ways of thinking and living as well as into the history of the myriad of cultures and peoples across the globe.”

-British Council, Languages for the Future

In 2015, Qatar Foundation International worked in partnership with the British Council to create the Arabic Language and Arab Culture Education Pack, a document available both in print and digitally. It offers primary school teachers in the United Kingdom and elsewhere a rich introduction to the Arab world through lesson plans and other teaching materials.

Expanding on this original vision, Qatar Foundation International has tailored the Education Pack into this updated Arab World Resource Kit, targeting elementary classrooms in the United States. In addition to providing elementary teachers and students an introductory background to the history and geography of the Arab world and the basics of the Arabic language, this kit provides Common Core standards-aligned lesson plans in Mathematics and English Language Arts which teachers can use as stand-alone activities or integrate into their existing curriculum. Beyond the standards, you will find a “taste” of the vibrant and multilayered Arab culture—from Arab contributions to science and technology, to contemporary and traditional Arab music, to popular dishes from Arab cuisine.

The Arab world is a fascinating, diverse geographical region stretching from southwest Asia to northwest Africa. It has an immensely rich culture and history and one of the world’s great languages that is spoken by more than 300 million people. Yet there are few resources that provide background on this part of the world in the elementary classroom. Explore this whole kit, or go straight to the sections that fit your classroom interests and needs, which can be accessed individually. However you use it, we hope that this resource can serve as the beginning of your and your students’ journey into a language and culture that hold much significance in the world today.

Download British Education Pack
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The following introductory lesson will give students a taste of Arab culture, and is appropriate to use by itself or as an introduction to other activities and lessons in this Resource Kit. Within this lesson you will find a listening activity, several visual activities, and a language arts activity which provide a very general background on geography, history, and storytelling in the Arab world.
LISTENING ACTIVITY

Begin by telling students that today we are going to find out about the Arab world, where the main language spoken in each country is Arabic. Ask students if they have ever heard any Arabic.

As a first introduction to the Arab world, show your students the music video for the song “as-salaamu ‘alaykum” by popular Egyptian singer Hakim, set in a busy city in Egypt.

Have students listen to the traditional greeting they have just heard repeated in the video: 
**as-salaamu ‘alaykum** (“Peace be with you!”) and its response **wa ‘alaykum as-salaam** (“And also with you!”) and then have them practice saying it to each other as a class and then in pairs. If you have any Arabic speakers in class, invite them to help you present this greeting and prepare some other short phrases in Arabic to teach the class and translate.

You could just have students listen and/or watch the video a second time, or here are some additional ideas for how you might use the video to begin to discuss Arab culture with your class.

**Suggested Activities**

- Have students count how many times they hear the phrase “as-salaamu ‘alaykum” in the video. Why do you think this phrase is repeated so many times? (For example, it is repeated every time the singer takes on a new role; he is greeting people, he is welcoming people to the city; etc.)

- Have students observe the different professions that the singer takes on in the video, and try to make a list of them as a class. (Mechanic, cafe worker serving coffee and tea, doctor in the hospital, ticket taker on the bus, bus driver, gas station attendant, food delivery person, traffic officer).

- Have students notice things that look different from how they are in their own town or city, and talk about similarities and differences. For example, what is the cafe like, compared to cafes they’ve been to? How do people pay for the bus in the video, and how is this similar to or different from buses students have been on? How does the singer deliver food in the video, and is this like a delivery the students have seen before? How is traffic controlled in the video, and what happens at the end? How is this similar to or different from traffic students have seen before? You may want to represent these comparisons with a Venn diagram.

Click on the Arabic words to hear pronunciations
Over 300 million people around the world today speak Arabic as their first language and today we are going to find out a little more about the culture and history that unite these millions of people. According to UNESCO, there are currently 22 countries in the Middle East and North Africa where Arabic is an official language, and it is these countries that constitute the Arab world.

Many other countries also use greetings and expressions, like “as-salaamu ‘alaykum,” which come from Arabic, because Arabic is the language of the Qur’an, Islam’s holy book, and Islam is widely practiced in non-Arab countries. In fact, the majority of Muslims do not live in the Arab world but in South and Southeast Asia.

Although Arab countries share many commonalities, the Arab world is extremely diverse in terms of culture, religion, and even language. Even though Arabic is the official language of each country in the Arab world, other languages are spoken too. In addition, the Arabic language itself can sound very different depending on which country or region you are visiting, as there are many differences in dialects and accents.
VISUAL ACTIVITY SLIDE 1/2
Map: Ask These Questions

- Can you recognize any of the Arab countries highlighted on the map? Perhaps some of you have visited these countries or have friends and family who live there.

- Do you know the names of any countries where Arabic is the major language? Do you know the names of any of the countries on the map? Also have students point out some of the major bodies of water on the map, such as the Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea, the Nile, the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, etc. (Teachers, note that if students answer Iran, Turkey, Afghanistan, or other non-Arab countries, this is a good opportunity to talk about how these countries are not Arab because Arabic is not one of the major languages there.)

- Now show your students the labeled map of the Arab world. These are the member countries of the League of Arab States, a regional organization formed in 1945 that focuses on the economic and political interests of the Arab world. Have the class repeat after you the names of these countries (Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen).
There are many famous landmarks in Arab countries. Do you recognize any of these? Have you or other members of your family traveled to see them? Within the visual activities, you will find a set of landmarks available as a slideshow, and descriptions of these landmarks that you can share with your students.

- **The Pyramids and Great Sphinx at Giza in Egypt.**
  The pyramids were built over 4,000 years ago to house the remains of the pharaohs who ruled over Ancient Egypt. They are guarded by the Great Sphinx — a mythological creature with the body of a lion and the head of a person believed to be the pharaoh Khufu. Archaeologists believe the Great Sphinx to be one of the largest and oldest statues in the world. The eyes on the face alone are six feet tall, and the ears over three feet tall!

- **The Al-Haram Mosque or “Grand Mosque” in the city of Mecca, Saudi Arabia.**
  It is the largest mosque in the world and surrounds one of Islam’s holiest places, the Kaaba. The Kaaba is a cube-shaped building, draped in a silk and cotton covering. Every year millions of Muslims travel to Mecca to complete the Hajj, or pilgrimage. The journey is one of the five pillars of Islam, central to the faith. It is a spiritual pilgrimage that every adult Muslim tries to perform at least once in their lives, if they can afford to and are physically able to make the journey.
**VISUAL ACTIVITY SLIDES 4/5**

**Landmarks: Ask These Questions (Continued)**

- **Petra in Jordan** is an ancient city located between the Dead Sea and the Red Sea. The city is half human-constructed and half carved into the rock. It is often referred to as the Rose City because of the pink color of the rock. Petra is famous for a water system built to supply water for 30,000 people and gardens, and you might also recognize it from the movie *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*!

- A World Heritage Site is at **Baalbek in Lebanon** which has beautiful examples of the remains of Roman architecture including aqueducts, roads, and a grand temple of Jupiter. There are also many other examples of Roman architecture in other parts of the Middle East and North Africa, like Palmyra in Syria, Leptis Magna in Libya, Jerash in Jordan, and El-Jem in Tunisia.

- Two modern landmarks can be found today in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE). The luxurious **Burj Al Arab Jumeirah Hotel in Dubai** opened in 1999 and is famous for its sailboat shape on an island in the sea. A fun fact is Andre Agassi and Roger Federer actually had a tennis match in 2009 on its helipad. Another site, at 828 meters high (about half a mile, or seven and a half football fields!) is the **Burj Khalifa Tower**, which is currently the world’s tallest building and contains an elevator with the longest travel distance in the world up to its 160 stories! Did you know that a scene from *Mission Impossible Ghost Protocol* was filmed there?

* Teachers can just show 4:00 to 4:10 to avoid the dialogue, which may not be appropriate for lower elementary school students.
LANDMARKS: SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

• Ask students to draw a picture of themselves on an imaginary visit to one of these sites. Their picture should include the name of the site and the country where it is located.

• Ask students to write about going on a visit to one of these sites: how would they get there, who would go with them, what would they see and hear and experience at the site, etc. The format could be a story, an essay, or a letter to a friend.

• Ask students to create a travel brochure for one of these landmarks. It could have a “marketing” approach to tourists, with a list of all the compelling features that a visitor would find at the site.

• Ask students to choose one site and look closely at its photograph, then brainstorm and write down adjectives describing it. The students can then use these adjectives, using connecting words and a few nouns to write a poem about this site.
VISUAL ACTIVITY SLIDE 8
Inventions and Discoveries

Did you know that during the Middle Ages there was a Golden Age of inventions and discoveries in the Arab world that shaped how we live today? This was roughly between the 8th and 13th centuries CE. Discoveries made then include windmills, early cameras, toothbrushes, and even coffee. One story told about the invention of coffee is that an Arab goat herder discovered that coffee beans gave his goats a boost of energy, so he boiled the coffee berries to make a version of the drink we know today.

Great emphasis was placed on learning and scholarship at the time, and there was a keen interest in science, astronomy, and medicine. Large libraries were built in cities and a woman called Fatima al-Fihri in Morocco founded the first university. Hospitals were built providing free care for anyone who needed it, and a surgeon called al-Zahrawi designed and made surgical instruments like those used today. He also discovered that catgut could be used for internal stitches as it dissolves away naturally. Apparently, he found this out when his monkey ate the strings (made of catgut (dried fibers from animal intestines)) from his lute and they dissolved inside him! An engineer called al-Jazari also built an amazing clock in the shape of an elephant. It was more than 20 feet high, decorated with dragons and moving people and powered by falling metal balls and a hidden water system.
The Arab world is also famous for its literature and storytelling traditions. One such storyteller was Luqman Bin ‘Ad. He was a wise man who wrote many animal fables.

As you listen to these two short fables think about what is the moral behind each story and if they remind you of any other fables you have heard.

**COMMON CORE STANDARDS**

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.2.2**
Recount stories, including fables and folktales from diverse cultures, and determine their central message, lesson, or moral.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.3.4**
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, distinguishing literal from nonliteral language.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.4.4**
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including those that allude to significant characters found in mythology (e.g., Herculean).

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### The Lion and the Fox*

The lion was the king of the forest, and all the other animals, being afraid of him, tried to stay on friendly terms with him. Many years went by and the lion, who was now growing old, could not hunt as easily as before. Running and stalking were not as easy as when he was young. He decided to retire to a cave and pretend he was sick. Of course all the animals would want to come and visit their King whom they believed to be sick. But whenever an animal came to visit him and show concern, the lion would eat them.

One day a fox stood by the door but would not go in. From inside, the lion asked, “Why don’t you come in my friend?”

“I was going to,” answered the fox, looking down at the ground outside the cave, “but now I see footprints of animals who went in but I don’t see any of their footprints coming out!”

### The Bragging Rooster*

Two roosters got in a nasty fight one day. When the battle was over, the loser rested in the shade of a pomegranate bush. The winner flew up to a high fence where he flapped his wings proudly and crowed loudly, bragging of the fight he had just won.

A vulture, seeing him, swooped down quickly and grabbed the proud rooster in his powerful claws and flew away with him.

* Fables reproduced with kind permission from Audrey Shabbas and AWAIR
LANGUAGE ARTS ACTIVITY

Suggested Activities to do after reading the fables

- Have students illustrate one of the two fables—through drawing, painting, cartoon, etc.

- Discuss the meaning of the words “showing concern” and “being proud” and how these two concepts are expressed in the fables. Have students come up with examples of “concern” and “pride” from their own lives, or have them draw a picture of a time they showed concern or a time they were overly proud (in the sense of pride shown in the second story).

- Develop a dramatization of “The Lion and the Fox.” Create a “cave” in the classroom (be as simplistic or as complex as you like) and have the students write dialogues between the different animals during their visits to the lion. Have each child take on the role of an animal who went to pay the lion a visit, including one student who is the fox and repeats the memorable line about why he is not going in!
AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ARABIC LANGUAGE & THE ART OF CALLIGRAPHY

SKILLS & OUTLOOKS
• Communicating
• Creative thinking
• Developing a positive sense of identity and being open to new ideas

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
• To learn about the main features of the Arabic language and how to greet someone in Arabic.
• To write some simple words in Arabic and explore the art of Arabic calligraphy and ‘calligraffiti’

MATERIALS
• Calligraphy pens/markers or brushes, paints, markers, animal templates, posterboard

COMMON CORE STANDARDS
CSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.K.6
Use words and phrases acquired through conversations, reading and being read to, and responding to texts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.K.1.B
Continue a conversation through multiple exchanges.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.1.5
With guidance and support from adults, demonstrate understanding of word relationships and nuances in word meanings.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.3.5  & CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.L.4.5
Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships and nuances in word meanings.
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Modern Standard Arabic (or MSA) is the standardized form of Arabic that is understood throughout the Arab world. It is used by much of the written, spoken, and visual news media, as well as in literature and schools.

It is considered to be the formal register of Arabic and is therefore the written form non-native speakers usually study when they are first learning the language. However, just as English varies from country to country, and even region to region in the United States, Arabic has many variations in spoken dialects. These dialects, often referred to as Colloquial Arabic, can vary across the Arab world, so much so that someone from Lebanon may have a hard time understanding someone from Tunisia speaking in his or her dialect. But with the wide reach of television, Facebook, and other modern media, exposure to all forms of Colloquial Arabic is increasing across the Arab world, creating new forms of communication for Arabic speakers--and offering non-native speakers more resources for studying and learning spoken forms of Arabic.
INTRODUCTION
Greetings

Explore with your class the nature of verbal and nonverbal greetings. Why do we use them? (To acknowledge someone, ask how they are, connect with them on a personal level, make them feel special, let them know we care, etc.) How many different greetings do we use in English? (Hello, hi, hey, how are you, a smile, a nod of the head, etc.) Ask your students to demonstrate how they might greet a friend, an elderly relative, their teacher, or the President. How many greetings in other languages do your students know? (Bonjour, buenos días, ciao, etc.) Do they know what they mean in English?

The most common greeting across the Arab world is:

**AS-SALAAMU `ALAYKUM!**
(PEACE BE WITH YOU!)

And the response is:

**WA `ALAYKUM AS-SALAAM!**
(AND ALSO WITH YOU!)

Suggested Activity

Listen to the audio pronunciation below. Have your students heard or used this greeting before? (If you have not already done the Introductory Listening Activity, divide students into pairs and encourage them to practice this greeting and response with each other.)
Another common greeting in the Arab world is “HELLO”

**MARHABAN!**
مرحبا

Although the way you say it varies from dialect to dialect, all parts of the Arab world will understand you if you use the following phrase to ask, “WHERE ARE YOU FROM?”

**MIN AYNA ANTA?** (Asking a male)
من أين أنت؟

**MIN AYNA ANTI?** (Asking a female)
من أين أنت؟

And the response, “I AM FROM…”

**ANA MIN…**
انا من ...

(Possible answers are, “Ana min Michigan, or Ana min Chicago, etc., for both males and females.) Encourage your pupils to practice asking each other where they are from and answering in Arabic.

To complete the conversation, students can use the “PEACE BE WITH YOU” greeting and response again, or they can say another form of goodbye:

**MA’ AS-SALAAMA!**
مع السلامه!

Click on the Arabic word or phrase to hear pronunciation.
ACTIVITY A

What’s In A Word?

There are many English words in use today which came from Arabic many hundreds of years ago when Arab scholars were world leaders in science and technology and trade. These words include: algebra, average, calendar, candy, coffee, cotton, magazine, mattress, saffron, sherbet, sofa, sugar, syrup, tambourine, traffic, and zero, to name just a few. Of course, many English words such as radio, television, computer, Facebook, Twitter, mobile (phone), and sandwich have also now entered the Arabic language today.

Suggested Activities

• Share the English words that originated from Arabic with students. Help them understand the meaning of any words that are new to them. Ask them to group the words into different categories. What kind of categories do they come up with? (Mathematics, agriculture, food, spices, furniture, music, etc.) What does this tell us about the kinds of things the Arab world shared with the English-speaking world?

• Use the sheet, found in the link below, to show students examples of words from many different languages that have entered the English language. Have them work in pairs to discuss which language and country they think each word originates from and then place the word on its country of origin on the map. Can they give reasons for their decisions? Gather the whole class together to discuss whether similar choices were made. Reveal the correct answers and discuss whether they were surprised about any of the individual words and how many have been borrowed from other languages and countries.

Download worksheet
ACTIVITY B
Writing In Arabic

It may be hard at first for someone who doesn’t read Arabic to recognize the different letters. Like English, the Arabic language has an alphabet, but unlike English, the alphabet consists of 28 letters and is written from right to left.

When Arabic letters are written, they follow rules to connect to each other, just like cursive handwriting in English. Some letters connect and others don’t, and each letter looks just a little different depending whether it is at the beginning of a word, in the middle, or at the end. In the example to the right, notice how the letter ت (like “t” in English) looks at the beginning, middle, and end of a word. No matter where this letter is found in a word, it always has the characteristic two dots above it. Similarly, all the letters in Arabic have a unique identity, like dots above and below the line, which identify them to the reader.

Download Arabic alphabet
ACTIVITY B
Suggested Activities

• Have students refer to the alphabet chart. Have them practice saying the letters of the alphabet in alphabetical order, remembering to read the chart from right to left! If they are enjoying making these new sounds, have them work in pairs where one person makes the sound of a letter and the other person has to point to that letter on the chart.

• Have students practice saying and writing these Arabic words (below), first tracing over them and then carefully copying them, remembering to move their pens or pencils from right to left and including the dots (which are an important part of the letters!).

Click on the Arabic word to hear pronunciation

بيت – HOUSE
بااب – DOOR
قطة – CAT
كرسي – CHAIR
طاولة – TABLE
CALLIGRAPHY
Making Art With Words

Calligraphy is a very distinctive and important feature of Arab culture and can be seen in art forms and historical periods across the Arab world.

Explain to your students that the word calligraphy means “beautiful writing” and requires a lot of skill and practice to master in any language. Arabic calligraphy can be found not just in books, but also on many different materials and as a decoration on buildings, pottery, rugs, and furniture. It is a highly valued art form in the Arab world.

Share these images of Arabic calligraphy with your students. By changing the shape and size of the Arabic letters and adding decoration, artists truly make the words look beautiful. The words themselves might be written in gold or other bright colors, and letters and words may be outlined or placed against a background pattern, or inside geometric or floral borders.
CALLIGRAPHY
Suggested Activities

• Discuss why people might choose to produce this “special” writing and encourage your students to create their own enlarged decorated version of one of the Arabic words they have been learning. Provide materials such as calligraphy markers or other markers, pens, or paintbrushes and have them write their word on a piece of stiff paper and decorate around the word with a frame and pattern.

• Use the “Write your name in Arabic tool” in link below to create an Arabic spelling for each student’s name by typing the name as it is pronounced (i.e., Francesca should be written “Franchesca” and John as “Jon”) so that the tool knows how to get the spelling right in Arabic. Print it out, and have the students each copy and create their own Arabic name plate! Encourage them to decorate with colors and pattern designs that express their own identity.

Write your name in Arabic tool

JOHN SMITH
 jon سميث
جون سميث
CALLIGRAPHY

Making Art With Words (Continued)

Some Arabic calligraphers form words into geometric shapes or the shape of plants and animals.

The following calligraphic art was commissioned by Qatar Foundation International to celebrate the fifth year of Arabic being offered at Washington Latin Public Charter School in Washington, DC— it is the words of the school logo in the shape of their mascot, the lion. Click below for other examples of calligraphy from the Saudi Aramco image collection.
CALLIGRAPHY
Suggested Activity

As a class, brainstorm a few animals that students are interested in. Have the whole class also brainstorm words or short phrases that describe each animal and make a list for each in front of the class. Then have your students create an outline of one of the animals. (They could copy from images found in books or online, draw from their imagination, or use the templates for lion, mouse, snake and cat included in the link below.) They can then fill in the outline of the animal with some of the words or a phrase, in the style of Arabic calligraphy, even though they are using English--remind them to play with the sizes and shapes of the letters, or even create the outline of the animal using the letters and words if they feel moved to!
CALLIGRAFFITI
Making Street Art with Calligraphy

Calligraffiti is a contemporary art form that combines traditional handwriting with graffiti street art.

With your students, explore and find out more about this new art form and artists, such as eL Seed, who blend Arabic calligraphy and street culture. In 2012 eL Seed finished his largest piece on the minaret of the Jara Mosque in Tunisia (pictured here). Approved by the town governor and the imam (prayer leader) of the mosque, the art on this minaret spreads a message of unity and tolerance. eL Seed also conducted a one-week workshop with students of different ages at the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, Qatar. Show your students the following video to get a sense for both how the art is made, and what messages it can carry.

See calligraffiti video
CALLIGRAFFITI
Suggested Activity

Ask your students, what message would they want to see put on a billboard or painted on the side of a building? Brainstorm some ideas as a class or in small groups. Then, working in either small groups or as a whole class, create your own “calligraffiti” mural, using some of the techniques seen in the video or simple markers on posterboard. Make the message in English so that it can be posted and read by others at school, use both languages together, or choose an Arabic word to create and make beautiful. Some examples:

- السلام (salam) PEACE
- الحبّ (hubb) LOVE
- الأمل (‘amal) HOPE
- الوحدة (wahda) UNITY
- التعاون (taeawun) COOPERATION
3 MATHMATICS, PATTERNS, & THE ARAB WORLD

SKILLS & OUTLOOKS

• Critical Thinking
• Creative Thinking
• Communicating

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

• To learn to count in Arabic from 0-10 and recognize and write the numerals.
• Explore tessellation, shape and symmetry in patterns.

MATERIALS

• Copies of the number cards 0-10 in Arabic, copies of geometric patterns provided, tracing paper, & colored pencils and markers

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.K.CC.A.3
Write numbers from 0 to 20. Represent a number of objects with a written numeral 0-20 (with 0 representing a count of no objects).

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.1.G.A.2
Compose two-dimensional shapes (rectangles, squares, trapezoids, triangles, half-circles, and quarter-circles) or three-dimensional shapes (cubes, right rectangular prisms, right circular cones, and right circular cylinders) to create a composite shape, and compose new shapes from the composite shape.

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.1.G.A.3
Partition circles and rectangles into two and four equal shares, describe the shares using the words halves, fourths, and quarters, and use the phrases half of, fourth of, and quarter of. Describe the whole as two of, or four of the shares. Understand for these examples that decomposing into more equal shares creates smaller shares.

CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.4.G.A.3
Recognize a line of symmetry for a two-dimensional figure as a line across the figure such that the figure can be folded along the line into matching parts. Identify line-symmetric figures and draw lines of symmetry.
MATHEMATICS

Introduction

Mathematicians from Arab history are renowned for introducing a wealth of new learning in the field of mathematics to the west. This includes algebra, the concept of zero, fractions, the decimal numbering system, sine and cosine, and geometry. In fact, the word “algebra” is an Arabic word meaning “the reunion of broken parts,” which describes the functions Algebra performs. For younger students, just knowing that the concept of zero came from Arabic may be enough to show how much our understanding of math owes to Arab civilization!

Suggested Activities

• Introduce to your class the names and symbols of the numbers 0 to 10 in Arabic. Unlike Arabic words, these numbers are read from left to right—that is, the placement of their place value (ones, tens, and hundreds digits, etc.) is the same as that us in the United States. Examples: 932 is ٩٣٢.

• Notice how the numerals are similar to the ones we use in English. The symbols used in English are actually called “Arabic numerals” or “Indo-Arabic numerals” because Europeans learned how to write them from Arabs. Interestingly, the symbols used in Arabic are called “Indian numerals” because they came to the Arab world from India.
MATHEMATICS, PATTERNS, & THE ARAB WORLD

**MATHEMATICS**

More Suggested Activities

- To help your students become familiar with the names of numbers in the Arabic world, give each member of the class a photocopied number card and ask them to stand up when they hear their number called out. Once this has been done a few times, split the children into teams. Shuffle up the numbers and give one to every child in the team. Time how long it takes for them to sort themselves into ascending numerical order (any children who don’t have cards can still get up to help their team). Repeat the activity with the next team, going in descending numerical order.

- Using the Bingo cards, have your students practice recognizing the numerals used in Arabic by calling out numbers at random. When a pupil achieves three in a row, they call out “Bingo!” or “Ana!” (Me!) in Arabic.
Like calligraphy, geometric designs using mathematical shapes, repetition, and symmetry are an important feature of Arab art and culture. Combining just a few shapes can create beautiful interlocking patterns. Many of these shapes repeat regularly, forming complex polygons and star patterns. A shape known as the Arabesque is also based on geometry and symmetry, but it incorporates floral and vegetal motifs.

Suggested Activities

• Show your students some examples of Arab art and architecture decorated with intricate, repeated geometric patterns.
• See the examples on this page and from the Islamic Art website.

Go to online examples
TESSELLATION

As we have already seen, intricate calligraphy and geometric patterns are frequently used to decorate objects and are an integral part of architecture and buildings. The term “Islamic art” refers not only to religious art but to styles of art particular to predominantly Muslim societies, such as those in the Arab world. Unlike most other religious faiths, Islamic art generally does not use images of people or animals but does include designs of plants and flowers. Secular art is also present in Islamic societies; it uses the main principles of Islamic art and often includes illustrations of animal forms.

Suggested Activities

- Tessellation is an important element of these geometric designs. Provide students with the definition of tessellation (see right) or ask them to discover its meaning by looking at examples of it on the Islamic Art website (see link on previous page).
- MC Escher, a 20th century Dutch graphic artist who is well-known in the United States, became fascinated by the tessellation he saw in the Alhambra in Granada, Spain and the famous mosque “La mezquita” in Cordoba, Spain. He went on to create many famous tiling patterns, and you or your students may have seen some of the work that was inspired by his fascination with tessellation. You can see some of his work with symmetry and repeated pattern on the artist’s official website.

TESSELLATION

noun | tes·sel·la·tion | (te-sel-ə-shən|

“A tessellation is created when a shape is repeated over and over again covering a plane without any gaps or overlaps”
• Ask your students to point out different shapes and examples of tessellation. You can also look for rotational symmetry. Provide each student with a copy of the geometric pattern from the first link below. This complex design is actually based on one simple shape repeated in different ways. Have your students identify the initial shape and find a six-pointed star, a triangle, a large diamond, a hexagon, and lines of symmetry incorporated into the design. Ask them to use tracing paper to trace all the types of 2D shapes and then use markers or colored pencils to shade in the shapes and create a decorative symmetrical pattern.

• Share with your class the pattern instructions from the second link below. Your students can then scan their designs and use a paint program to reflect and tessellate their image to create a repeated pattern. Or you can copy and paste in any program (or by hand!) to create the tiling effect.

• Your students can find out more about designing their own complex geometric patterns using activities from the last two links below.
CELEBRATIONS, FESTIVALS, AND DAILY LIFE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ACROSS THE ARAB WORLD

SKILLS & OUTLOOKS

• Communicating
• Developing a positive sense of identity
• Being open to new ideas

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

• To learn about the daily life of children in different countries in the Arab world

MATERIALS

• Copies of children’s letters
• “Tree Day Celebration” poem
• Mirror by Jeannie Baker

COMMON CORE STANDARDS

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.K.1
With prompting and support, ask and answer questions about key details in a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.1.4
Ask and answer questions to help determine or clarify the meaning of words and phrases in a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.3.1
Ask and answer questions to demonstrate understanding of a text, referring explicitly to the text as the basis for the answers.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.5.9
Integrate information from several texts on the same topic in order to write or speak about the subject knowledgeably.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.3.2
Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Although many people in the West associate the Arab world with Islam, this region is in fact home to people from many different religious faiths.

The earliest Christians were from places that are part of the today’s Middle East and North Africa, and there continue to be large populations of Christians in many Arab countries. For much of history, Jews have lived throughout the Arab world alongside Muslims and Christians, and some Arab countries still have small Jewish populations. Additionally, there are many branches of both Christianity and Islam practiced across the Arab region, and other religious groups such as the Druze (found in the Eastern Mediterranean).

Through the following letters from children in Lebanon, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, your students can catch a glimpse of the religious and cultural diversity that is present.
LETTER ACTIVITY
“Celebrations and Daily Life”

Explain that you have a selection of letters from young people living in three Arab countries (Lebanon, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia) today, telling us about their lives. They describe many aspects of daily life including what happens during and after school, the holidays that they celebrate, and their favorite foods. Read the letters (either read them aloud or have your students read them, based on your knowledge of your students’ reading level) as a class, or divide the class into small groups and hand out a couple of letters to each group. Either as a whole class, or within their small groups, have students discuss and record their responses to the questions below.

Download letters
LETTER ACTIVITY
Ask These Questions

• What are the names of the children who wrote the letters and what countries do they come from? Can you find where they live on a world map?
• What do they particularly enjoy doing?
• What similarities and differences can you see between your lives and theirs?
• What is the most interesting or surprising piece of information you read in the letters?
• If you could ask one of the letter-writers a question, what would it be?

Suggested Activities

Have your students draft a reply to one of the letters, writing about their own school or daily life.

- Or -

Ask your students to make a short presentation or film about a typical day in their own lives. What would they tell someone who had never been to their town or city? What would they tell someone who had never been to the United States?
"Tree Day Celebration" by Ibtisam Barakat

A Tree Day celebration, also called Arbor Day, is a day designated each year to celebrate the importance of trees in our environment and to encourage the planting of trees. In many countries around the world, people organize festivals to mark Arbor Day, which in the United States is celebrated on the last Friday of April. Depending on their location on the globe, other countries have tree festivals according to the best time of the year to plant trees there.

The poem, “Tree Day Celebration,” by Ibtisam Barakat, takes place in Ramallah, a Palestinian city in the West Bank. This region of the Middle East is rich in fig trees as well as other types of trees, like olive, orange, and oak. Before reading the poem, ask students: have they ever seen a fruit tree? What kind? Do they see any fruit trees growing in their community? Have they ever planted a tree? Then, read the poem out loud as a class two times.
EXPLORING FESTIVALS AND DAILY LIFE THROUGH POETRY

Suggested Activities

• As a class, listen to the author reading the poem aloud (available through the link on the previous page). Ask the students if they noticed anything different in the poem when the author read it.

• Ask students, who are the two “characters” in this poem? Explain, referring to how the poet describes the tree.

• Brainstorm what stories the student could tell the tree.

• Brainstorm what stories the tree could tell the student.

• Refer to this picture of the “five finger-shaped leaves” of the fig tree. Explain why the poet describes the leaves this way. How does this contribute to making the fig tree seem like a living character?

• Write a short letter to the poet, Ibtisam Barakat, and tell her what you like about her poem.

• Put on a short play that shows the story of this poem, with one person playing the student and the other playing the tree.

• Write a poem about a tree of your choice. You could tell the tree a story of your own, or have the tree tell a story of its own.
CHILDREN’S BOOK ACTIVITY

*Mirror* by Jeannie Baker

In this activity, students will compare “a day in the life” of a child in Morocco and Australia using *Mirror* by Jeannie Baker. This children’s book is meant to be closely observed and manipulated by the reader, so it is ideal to share it with students in a small group setting. 3-5 students working with a teacher can carefully turn the pages of the two simultaneous stories—one about a young boy accompanying his father on an errand in urban Australia, the other about a young boy accompanying his father on an errand in rural Morocco. The story in Australia opens with a paragraph in English and is read from left to right, while the story in Morocco opens with a paragraph in Arabic and is read from right to left. Have students turn a page on each side simultaneously to study and compare the wordless narration of both stories. In this book, students can compare a life lived in a “Western” country (Australia) to a life lived in an Arab country (Morocco).
CHILDREN’S BOOK ACTIVITY
Suggested Activities

• Discuss as a group: what do students notice that is the same and different in each of the pictures? Make a list of items or events that are common to both stories, and things that are unique to each story. (For example, in both stories the boys travel, but in Australia they go by car and in Morocco they go by donkey.)

• Have students illustrate a similar story about a day in their own lives, using markers or colored pencils or any kind of art materials you would like. You could create many scenes and panels like the story in the book, or just do a simple 3-panel or even single-scene story. Have them think about what the scenes will look like and what would be important to include: the setting (are there buildings? Trees? Mountains?), the people (who are the people they encounter?), the objects they use (where do they eat, what tools do they use during the day, etc). Then discuss as a group what might be similar or different in their own lives and compare their illustrations to the ones in the two stories in Mirror. Do they include any of the same objects or events? How are their lives similar to or different from the life of the boy in Australia? How are they similar to or different from the life of the boy in Morocco?

• Have one group (or groups) of students write down the story of the day in the Moroccan boy’s life, and have another group (or groups) of students write down the story of the day in the Australian boy’s life. Then read aloud the stories of each boy to the class and compare them: what was similar and what was different?

• Discuss with students what it would be like to live the life of each of the two boys for a day. Whose life would they prefer to try, and why? Also introduce the idea that there are rural areas in Australia (just like there are rural areas in the US), and there are urban areas in Morocco (just like there are urban areas in the US). These are just examples of life in each of the countries, and the scenes would be very different if the author had chosen to illustrate life from a different location in each country! Have students imagine a rural scene in their own country and an urban scene in their own country. How would these be similar to or different from the scenes in the book?
SUGGESTED READING LIST

Here is a list of other recommended picture books to introduce students to the Arab world, if you would like to expand your classroom or school library! These books are award winners selected by the Middle East Outreach Council (MEOC) each year for their contribution to meaningful understanding of the Middle East.

Complete list of MEOC award winners

When the Animals Saved Earth: An Eco-Fable
retold by Alexis York Lumbard
illustrator Demi
Wisdom Tales, 2015

The Olive Tree
by Elsa Marston
illustrator Claire Ewart
Wisdom Tales, 2014

The Story of Hurry
by Emma Williams
illustrated by Ibrahim Quraishi
Seven Stories Press, 2014

The Librarian of Basra
by Jeanette Winter
Harcourt, 2005

Hands Around The Library: Protecting Egypt’s Treasured Books
by Karen Leggett Abouraya
illustrated by Susan L. Roth
Dial Books, 2012

How Many Donkeys: An Arabic Counting Tale
by Margaret Read MacDonald and Nadia Jameel Taibah
illustrated by Carol Liddiment
Albert Whitman & Company, 2009

Silent Music: A Story of Baghdad
written and illustrated by James Rumford
Roaring Brook Press, 2008

Four Feet, Two Sandals
by Karen Lynn Williams and Khadra Mohammed
illustrated by Doug Chayka
Eerdmans’s Books for Young Readers, 2007

The Butter Man
by Elizabeth Alalou and Ali Alalou
Charlesbridge Publishing, 2008

The Best Eid Ever
by Asma Mobin-Uddin
illustrated by Laura Jacobsen
Boyds Mills Press, 2007

* Click on the title to go to the publisher

CELEBRATIONS, FESTIVALS, AND DAILY LIFE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ACROSS THE ARAB WORLD
5 MUSIC FROM THE ARAB WORLD

SKILLS & OUTLOOKS
- Collaborating
- Creative Thinking
- Being open to new ideas

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
- To find out about Arab music traditions
- To learn and perform a song in Arabic

RESOURCES
- Internet access

COMMON CORE STANDARDS
SEE THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR MUSIC EDUCATION TO APPLY THEIR PK-8 STANDARDS IN TEACHING THESE LESSONS
MAKING ARAB MUSIC

Traditional and classical music is an important feature of Arab culture. Musicians can be seen playing instruments in artwork from over 800 years ago and roving musicians helped spread their music to Europe. Arab musical instruments can be broadly classified into three categories: string instruments, wind and reed instruments, and percussion.

Many modern western instruments have their roots in these traditional instruments. Popular instruments include the qanun, a stringed instrument played on the lap which resembles a zither, and the oud, which is likely an ancestor of the contemporary guitar.

Historians trace the origin of the oud to ancient Egypt; many think that this pear-shaped wood instrument was the predecessor of the European lute. Wind and reed instruments include the nay, an end-blown flute, and the mijwiz, a short double-flute with two reeds. Percussion instruments include the popular daff, similar to a tambourine, and the durbakkah (also known as dumbek), which is an hourglass-shaped drum.
ARAB MUSIC TODAY

Classical Arabic music still plays an important role in Arab culture, and traditional musicians such as the late Egyptian vocalist Umm Kulthum remain among the most popular singers. At the same time, today Arab pop music is also popular among young people and with the audiences of successful television shows such as Arabs Got Talent! You can learn more about Umm Kulthum, and access free lesson plans about her music, at the Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture website.
ARAB MUSIC
Suggested Activities

(Share with your students the songs “Aal Maya” and “Tele‘et ya maHla nourha” from the World Song Book in the British Council World Voice program.)

- The song “Aal Maya” illustrates how traditional music is shared across the Arab world. It was originally performed by Diyab Mashhoor, an Iraqi, but is also sung widely in Jordan, Syria, and Palestine. It is a simple song that first describes a scene of a spring where people, in the olden days, went to fill buckets with water to take them to their homes. The singer then talks about devotion and love for his/her country. Traditionally, a soloist sings each verse and a group of singers join in for the Aal Maya chorus.

The second song featured is “Tele‘et ya maHla nourha”. This is one of the most famous folk songs in the Arab world and tells the story of a female peasant’s day which starts at sunrise when she milks the cows. Each song has easy to follow audio files, films, a pronunciation video, music, and song sheets.

- Another very rich resource for learning about and teaching music from the Arab world is the Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture song tools. This rich resource allows a teacher to learn and teach the Arabic lyrics and music to a song by listening and repeating, with separate tracks for percussion, strings, vocals, and diction (which allows you to hear the words pronounced in rhythm, with no melody). There is also a tool with just the accompaniment and a record button that allows you to record yourself and your students singing along! Have fun listening to the music, watching a video performance linked on the site, or learning to sing and play along with some of the rhythms and melodies.

Go to Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture

Go to World Song Book
FOOD FROM THE ARAB WORLD

SKILLS & OUTLOOKS
• Collaborating
• Creative Thinking
• Being open to new ideas

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
• To find out more about Arab cuisine
• To prepare and taste food from the Arab world

MATERIALS
• Recipes for different foods
• See individual recipe for necessary materials
MAKING ARAB FOOD

If you have access to a kitchen, or even if you don’t, introduce your students to Arabic food by making some delicious food to share as a class. Simply mash up chickpeas with tahini and other simple ingredients to make hummus, stuff some dates with nuts and dip them in coconut or sesame, or blend up mint leaves with lemon juice and sugar and ice to make a refreshing lemonade right in your classroom--all you need is a blender or food processor!
HUMMUS WITH TAHINI حمص بطحينة  
Hummus b’TaHeena

This traditional Arabic breakfast food is well-known in the Western world today. In the Arab world, it is often served freshly made with hot chickpeas in individual bowls with a basket of warm Arabic bread and perhaps some pickles on the side.

**INGREDIENTS**
- (2) 16 oz. cans cooked chickpeas/garbanzo beans (or 2 lbs. of pre-cooked beans)
- 1/3 cup tahini sesame paste
- Juice of one lemon (or 1/3-1/2 cup fresh lemon juice)
- 2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- * Optional: 1 or 2 cloves of garlic, minced

**DIRECTIONS**

Using a food processor or blender, blend the chickpeas together (leaving a few whole ones aside for garnish later). Add the tahini, lemon juice, garlic (if desired), oil, and salt, and blend until the whole mixture is a creamy consistency. Adjust seasonings to taste. Pour into a shallow bowl and garnish with a drizzle of extra olive oil, the whole chickpeas you set aside, and some chopped parsley if desired. For an authentic breakfast, serve with warm Arabic bread, also known as pita in the United States.
STUFFED DATES تمر بجوز Tamar bi-joz (Tamar rhymes with “summer”)

For thousands of years, date palms have been grown and cultivated in the Middle East, most likely originating in Mesopotamia, or the region of modern-day Iraq. These palm trees produce dates, a sweet fruit that comes in a variety of shapes, sizes, hues, and tastes. Dates offer a lot of nourishment; they contain sugar, minerals, fat, fiber, and protein.

INGREDIENTS

• 1 lb. Medjool dates (approximately 25-30 dates)
• 1 cup coarsely chopped walnuts or chopped almonds
• 1/4 cup honey
• 2 tbsp. water
• 1/2 cup shredded coconut or sesame seeds

TOOLS

• Small knife to slit dates open
• Bowls for coconut, sesame seeds, and syrup
• Wax paper on which to place the dates
• 1 Tablespoon (tbsp.)
• 1/4 and 1/2 cup
• Mixing spoon

DIRECTIONS

• Wash hands. Slit each date open on one side and remove the pit. Place the dates on a sheet of wax paper.
• Open the pitted dates enough to stuff each one with about 1 tablespoon of chopped nuts. Close each date and return to wax paper.
• In a bowl, dissolve the honey into the water.
• Pick up a date on one side and dip the other side in the honey-water mixture; let extra liquid drip off.
• Choose either coconut or sesame as your dipping option.
• Dip the wet side of the date into either the coconut or sesame seeds. Place the coated date back on the wax paper.
• Serve as a snack or dessert.
MINT LEMONADE بولا pile
Juice bars--offering blends of fresh fruit juices such as apple and carrot, and smoothies made with rich cream--are a common sight around the Arab world, with children and adults alike lining up around the block during the day and into the evening at the most popular spots. This refreshing beverage is a common menu item at seaside cafés in Beirut, Lebanon, and can also be found in other parts of the Eastern Mediterranean region. It is a refreshing treat on a hot day!

INGREDIENTS

• Fresh bunch of mint leaves
• 6 lemons, juiced
• 2 cups ice cubes (fewer or more, to taste)
• Sugar (start with 1/4 cup, add to taste)

DIRECTIONS

Place the ice in a blender and crush until very fine. Add the lemon juice, whole mint leaves, and sugar (for a sweet beverage, add at least 1/2 cup sugar). Blend again until well combined. The beverage should now be a bright pale green with tiny flecks of mint leaves. Pour into glasses and garnish with an extra sprig of mint.
We hope your students enjoyed learning some simple Arabic and finding out about the Arab world. If you want to find out more, the following links contain additional information and resources:

A number of lesson plans and teaching resources to help you introduce Arabic language and culture: http://arabalicious.com/

This is a great free app for learning the Arabic alphabet: https://itunes.apple.com/us/book/lets-explore-arabic-alphabet/id879152581?mt=11

This link is to a short film, *1001 Inventions and The Library of Secrets*, which tells the story of some of the inventions in the Golden Age of Islam: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JZDe9DCx7Wk

The following BBC learning zone clips show children talking about prayer and the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca for the Hajj: http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningzone/clips/muslim-prayer/5965.html
http://www.bbc.co.uk/learningzone/clips/a-trip-to-mecca/3920.html

Useful resources for beginners Arabic, or those who want to learn more about the language: http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/other/arabic/guide/facts.shtml

Many beautiful examples of Pattern in Islamic Art can be found at:
http://patterninislamicart.com/
http://www.mia.org.qa/en/ (The Museum of Islamic Art, Qatar)
http://www.vam.ac.uk/page/i/islamic-middle-east/ (V&A, Islamic Middle East Gallery)

An Alphabetical listing of Arab contributions to world civilization:
http://www.salon.com/2002/01/08/alphabet/

If you’d like to see more recipes or learn more about food in the Arab world (particularly the Eastern Mediterranean):
http://almashriq.hiof.no/general/600/640/641/khayat/title.html

This site will help you to learn the numbers in Arabic: http://www.rocketlanguages.com/arabic/learn/counting-in-arabic/
To learn more about Arabic calligraphy and the Arabic alphabet, watch the introductory video here:
http://calligraphyqalam.com/index.html

Use this fun tool to see your name written in Arabic calligraphy instantly:
http://www.firdaous.org/write-name-arabic-calligraphy.htm?13-a

Further work on exploring and designing complex geometric patterns can be found at:
http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/t/teachers-resource-maths-and-islamic-art-and-design/Explore and design more complex geometric patterns

QFI’s Mosaic Tile Generator application introduces students to fundamental concepts of Islamic art and architecture through exploration and creation of a mosaic tile art. Students design and share their own mosaic tiles after learning principles of tessellation and geometry and the history of mosaic tiles in Islamic art:
http://qfi.org/get-involved/apps-resources/mosaic-tile-app/

El Seed is a well-known Calligraffiti artist. You can see examples of his work at the following websites:
http://elseed-art.com/
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qpFz5Rxg6eU
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K7e4QBxtCl8

Other articles about Calligraffiti can be found at:
http://everitte.org/gallery/ (Examples of calligraphic art by the artist Everitte Barbee)

An example of someone creating a zoomorphic calligraphy drawing using English can be found here:
https://egotistsclub.wordpress.com/tag/calligraphy/