

An Elementary Level Annotated Bibliography of Middle Eastern and Arab World  
Themed Literature

By

Roberta Robinson

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### Abstract

“Multicultural literature helps children identify with their own culture, exposes children to other cultures, and opens the dialogue on issues regarding diversity” (Colby & Lyon, p. 24). Middle East and Arab world themed literature is dispersed among multiple sources. There is no comprehensive, primary level (K-5), source of Middle East and Arab themed literature. This bibliography is divided into two distinct sections. The first section contains 95 Middle East and Arab world themed children’s books, written by authors about their own culture, authors married to a native of a culture, or authors who have spent some part of their lives in the country they wrote about. There are a few exceptions. In those cases, the author’s research was exceptional. The collection provides a concentrated source of material for teachers to use with their students about many Middle Eastern and Arab cultures. Stories about people residing in those countries as well as people from those cultures residing in the United States or another western country. Literature about these cultures is necessary if students are to grow into informed citizens, able to understand various points of view. Multicultural education should begin in elementary school before stereotypes are permanently fixed in their thinking. The second section contains 31 resource books for teachers. These books provide historical and cultural information to help teachers with background information.

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“The direction in which education starts a man will determine his future life”

(Plato, trans. 1871).



## Chapter One

### Introduction

“Ethnic stereotypes are especially harmful in the absence of positive ethnic images” (Wingfield & Karaman, 2008, p. 140).

Muslims, Middle Easterners and Arabs represented as “other” has a long history, “Down to the Middle Ages, especially during the Crusade Wars and along the Arab expansion in Europe until the very days of the Third Millennium, the West promotes almost the same stereotypes for Arabs and Muslims” now as it did then (Ridouani, para. 3).

One thread that led to a fascination with Arabs and the Middle East has its roots in a translation of the *Arabian Nights* published in the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in France. It was extremely popular and led to an entire industry of décor and apparel, spurred on by artists’ interpretation of the stories in the *Arabian Nights*.

Although the tales have a strong spirituality, it was the themes of sexuality, love, violence, humour and guile that left an indelible impression of the Eastern World as being poetical, erotic and violent. In addition, the caliphs, vizirs, odalisques and eunuchs who parade through the pages became clichés in the Orientalist [*artists*] repertoire (Thornton, 1994, p. 4).

The influence of a group of artists known as the Orientalists can be seen in modern versions of *Arabian Nights*. In *Stories from the Arabian Nights*, retold by Naomi Lewis (1987) and illustrated by Anton Pieck, the first illustration depicts an exotic setting with a scantily clad woman and a king with a menacing face. In *The Story of the Adventures of Aladdin and Other*

*Tales*, (part of the *Golden Fairy Tale Collection*) there is an illustration of a Middle Eastern man with a very prominent hooked nose and an intimidating expression. (Holeinone, 1990, p. 10).

Many artists had never been to the Middle East, but embellished tales of encounters by various individuals who interacted with people in the Ottoman Empire. These embellished tales coupled with visual images contributed to the exotic imaginings about the Middle East. The idea of harems and the inability for Westerners to enter added to the mystique of the Middle East. Simultaneously, religious zealots decried the ideas of women, slaves forced to live in harems and the practice of men having multiple wives. The Sultan and other wealthy, influential men attached to the Ottoman court, maintained households with multiple wives. Europeans were correct about the women in the palaces being slaves, most were, but they were not usually from the Middle East. However, in the minds of Western Europeans all Muslim women must be slaves.

According to documents used by scholars to study the status of women in the Ottoman Empire, average women conducted business, owned businesses and property, could and did go to court and sue men if necessary and won (Gerber, 1980; Thompson, 2003). Firmly rooted in exotic stereotypes, Westerners generally do not understand the word harem denotes the physical living quarters set aside for the women of a Muslim household. The word hareem, refers to all female relations residing in a household.

Given that America's history is rooted in Western Europe, it is not surprising the impressions of life in the Middle East and Arab world traveled across the Atlantic along with Europeans.

The history of stereotypes of Arabs and Middle Easterners in the United States, no doubt has its origins in Western Europe and in the United States, dates to the silent movie era (Shaheen, 2015). The stereotypes have been expanded over time fueled by politics and the media. Most Americans believe the terms Arab, Muslim and Middle Easterner are interchangeable, therefore, stereotypes have been assigned indiscriminately to anyone who appears to fit the popular profile. There are two types of stereotypes to consider. There are the media representations of Arabs, Muslims and Middle Easterners and there are the negative labels ascribed to some vague unknown “other”. When I first returned to the United States from having been air lifted out of Iran because of the revolution, it seemed everywhere I went, Iran was the topic of conversation. People were outraged at the overthrow of the Shah and the expulsion of Americans and along with those criticisms came invectives hurled about. It is not surprising, given the long history of negative stereotypes of Arabs and Middle Easterners, that “For many decades, Arab Americans have reported that, as children, they were called ‘camel jockeys,’ ‘towel heads,’ ‘greasy Lebs’, and ‘sand niggers’” (Wingfield, 2006, “Anti-Arab discrimination in the schools”, para. 1).

Stereotypes of Arabs, Muslims and Middle Easterners have been found in a host of places, children’s games, books, cartoons, movies and television, to name a few. They are not confined to popular television programs, but can be found in all manner of media, intended for adults and children. Children have been routinely exposed to negative stereotypes in movies and cartoons. Disney’s *Aladdin* movie and *Ali Baba*, a cartoon, are two examples researchers mention frequently (Morgan, 2012; Shaheen, 2015). Stereotypes of Arabs, beginning in the 1920s, in films, children’s games, books, magazines, cartoons, bumper stickers, political cartoons and all manner of items, have been documented. For nearly 100 years the American

public, including children, has been indoctrinated to view Arabs and Muslims as the enemy or villain from multiple sources (Shaheen, 2012; Shaheen, 2015). Stereotypes of Arabs, Muslims and Middle Easterners are perpetuated in television programs and movies. The most common portrayals for men are that all Arabs and Middle Easterners live in the desert and ride camels. Arab men are most frequently depicted as terrorists, oil-rich sheiks, barbarians or villains. Women are portrayed covered by veils, wearing hijabs, as exotic belly dancers or completely submissive.

These common stereotypes may have diminished in children's literature published since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, but the wars in Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan and other political clashes in the regions have provided considerable material for modernized versions of old stereotypes:

1. The West as savior, fighting for democracy where only despots rule. (Pan, 2005).
2. Oil rich sheiks trying to control oil prices and distribution, followed by the narrative of America's determination to not depend on Middle East oil. (Schiavenza, 2015).
3. Girls prevented from receiving an education. ("What are some typical misconceptions" 2002).
4. Women forced to cover themselves from head to toe and having a man accompanying them when they leave the house. (Schiavenza, 2015).
5. White families helping young boy refugees from the war in the Sudan, expands to a narrative of white people, Westerners, coming to the rescue of "less advanced cultures". (Baig, 2013). When has there ever been an Arab hero?
6. The theme of the West as culturally and intellectually superior to Middle East and Arab cultures. (Said, 1997).
7. Women as mysterious and/or exotic (Disney's *Aladdin*).

In summary without positive images, knowledge of the variety of cultures, the geography of the Middle East and Arab world and some basic understanding of Islam, an opposing, more positive narrative about Middle Easterners and Arabs is not possible.

### **The Way Forward**

“New and broader global visions are needed to prepare children and youth to be informed, engaged, and critical citizens in the new millennium” (Suarez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004, pp. 2-3).

The above quote directly addresses the issue facing educators today: How to prepare students to live in a complex world driven by rapid changes through technology. The impact of media influence on society makes the work of educators especially important. Media focus on the Middle East, Arabs and Muslims since the events of 9/11 is unprecedented and has not necessarily led to a better understanding of Middle Easterners, Arabs or Muslims. Researchers have noticed the lack of understanding and teaching resources (Al-Hazza & Bucher, 2008; Finkle & Lilly, 2008; Merkle & Pearson, 1978; Webb, 2012). The annotated bibliography of Middle East and Arab world themed literature is meant to be a starting point in addressing those issues. Webb (2012) points out that Middle East and Arab countries are constantly in the news:

Yet, teachers and professors have had almost no idea of what kinds of text, materials, or approaches they might use to teach authentically about the Middle East, and, especially, to explore the lives, perspectives, and evolving experiences of the people who live there (p. ix).

The media’s role in forming public opinion, contributing to and sustaining stereotypes, presents an opportunity for educators to encourage a counterbalance to negative narratives. These

stereotypes, for decades, have found their way into print and visual media (Shaheen, 2015) and educational material:

Most texts and audiovisual materials were marred by ethnocentric or biased perspectives which in one fashion or another depicted the Middle East as a “trouble spot” and implied that its people were unable to solve their own problems. Its people were visualized for the most part as either Bedouin nomads on camels or oil rich sheiks driving Cadillacs (Merkle & Pearson, 1978, p. 462).

There is a need to address this one-sided view of Middle Easterners and Arabs, because Islamophobia has long lasting effects (Khan, 2006; Lazim, 2002; Moller, 2014; Morgan, 2012; Ridouani, 2011). Many children in the United States are the future citizens of a democracy with a leading role in the world. The current media rich environment has become an integral part of children’s worlds and a driving force in their educational lives. “By shunning the mass media, educators are missing the obvious: that is, that more public education is done by the media than by teachers, professors, and anyone else” (Bartolome & Madedo, 1997, p. 223). Children watch television, have access to the Internet, play video games (some of which contain violent content) and most likely hear radio broadcasts while riding in a car. Researchers (Mcmillan & Morrison, 2006; O’Keefe & Clarke-Pearson, 2011; Wartella & Jennings, 2000) have devoted a substantial amount of time investigating how much time children spend interacting with media. Lemish’s (2015) remark captures the essence of this research:

First, children of both genders and all ages, races, religions, classes and geographical regions of the world use media on a regular basis, enjoy them tremendously, and learn more about the world from them than from any other socializing agent (p. 1).

We live in a world where communication between and among people everywhere happens with lightning speed. In today's political climate there is a tendency toward unfettered, spontaneous, sharing of opinions, most particularly since the advent of social media such as Facebook and YouTube. Facebook has a total of 1,710,000,000 and YouTube a total of 1,000,000,000 visitors a month as of September 2016 ("Top Social Networking", 2016). Information transmitted through the media can impact consumer's perceptions and frequently, opinions are accepted as fact. Adults and children are consumers of internet generated information. Li, Meng and Yu (2011) reported, "More and more Web users depend on the Web to acquire information. Unfortunately, not all information on the Web is truthful" (p. 63). This is a problem if opinions expressed through the Web are accepted as fact by readers of all ages. Adults can fact check any information they encounter on the web, children have not reached the level of maturity to fact check. The world-wide interconnectedness of individuals, most particularly children, makes it imperative educators prepare students for their role in a global society.

Teachers are charged with the responsibility of preparing students for their futures as participants in an increasingly multicultural and global society. Curriculum, designed to help students become active participants as global citizens, should have a multicultural foundation that includes a social justice component. Without the ability to define, examine and explore potential solutions to socially constructed injustices, prejudice against targeted groups will continue. Addressing this issue began with the Civil Rights Movement. Consequently, Southern Poverty Law Center, begun in 1971 and American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee founded in 1980 are two examples of agencies formed to expand the work begun by the Civil Rights Movement. The most current media targets, the Middle East and the Arab world, are generally not addressed in current curriculum in the same way other marginalized groups are

addressed. The injustices against cultures of the Middle East and the Arab world should be addressed with the same intensity as has been done with teaching about Hispanic, Asian, Native and African Americans injustices. Injustice is not the sole representation of the lives of minority people, it is only part of their lives and history. The Civil Rights movement instigated efforts to make a place for multicultural literature in school curriculum that represented other aspects of lived experiences by minority cultures in the United States. The Middle East and Arab cultures are only represented from a western oriented historical perspective. (Ewing, 2008; Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2004). An elementary level Middle East and Arab world themed annotated bibliography will fill the literature gap. Elementary grades are defined for the purposes of this paper as kindergarten to grade five.

### **Statement of the Problem**

We are a multi-cultural society whether we like it, or not. Perhaps those too frightened to admit that can be eased into the notion by introducing them first to their neighbor's literature. And the best place to start is in kindergarten (Levy, 1995, "Scared of Being 'They,'" para. 3).

Since the events of 9/11, stories involving Muslims, Arabs, Middle Easterners and events in the Middle East and the Arab world have been and continue to be on television, radio, the Internet, and social and print media. The Middle East and Arab world, and the people living there or Americans whose culture originated in the Middle East and the Arab world, have been portrayed negatively and culturally unidimensional (Jackson, 2010; Kincheloe & Steinbert, 2004; Powell, 2011; Shaheen, 2015).

Learning about the diverse cultures of the Middle East and the Arab world should begin in elementary school. This can be difficult to achieve because "Historically, multicultural



education as an aspect of American teacher-education programs has centered the focus of its advocacy for inclusive school curricula on African-American, Hispanic-American, Native-American, Asian-American, and European Immigrant cultures” (Samiian & Smith, 1995, p. 169). Therefore, resources for those cultures are readily available, however elementary literature, materials and resources for teaching about the people from the Middle East and the Arab world, are widely scattered. Materials about African Americans and other minority groups became increasingly available because there was and still is a demand for literature and other teaching materials stemming from the Civil Rights Movement. To change the popular, primarily negative, narrative about the Middle East, the Arab world, or Americans whose heritage resides either in the Middle East or the Arab world, readily available resources are necessary.

### **Purpose of this Research**

“If teachers are expected to teach students about diversity using multicultural literature, they have to first be exposed to this literature themselves” (Lowery & Sabis-Burns, 2007, p. 53).

The primary purpose of this research is to create an annotated bibliography focusing on the people and cultures of the Middle East and the Arab world as a path to inclusion for American children whose culture originates in either the Middle East or the Arab world. Currently, literature is widely dispersed among different multicultural/or global literature websites. Additionally, the South Asian countries of Pakistan and Afghanistan are sometimes mistakenly included in these lists. Books set in Pakistan or Afghanistan are typically designated Middle East stories. Middle Eastern, Arab nations and South Asian countries have notable Muslim populations, consequently there is a tendency to characterize them all as geographically situated in the Middle East and all Muslims as coming from the Middle East (Cainkar, 2002; Hing, 2002).

An annotated bibliography of elementary literature about the people from and the cultures of the Middle East and the Arab world will provide educators with an easily accessible concentrated source of literature. It will help teachers make distinctions between the cultures in those areas and connections with Middle Eastern, Arab and Muslim communities in the United States. Literature, used to teach children about other cultures, was a focus when multicultural curricula was developed stemming from the Civil Rights Movement and is an accepted method of fostering inclusion. Rasinski and Padak (1990) believe "...books can provide or contextualize diverse perspectives in very personal concrete terms" (p. 578). Children in schools in the United States, whose ancestry resides in either the Middle East or the Arab world, will see themselves positively reflected in literature found in school and classroom libraries.

A secondary purpose is to review research that supports the need for using multicultural education within a social justice framework in a global world context because according to Banks (2004):

Literate citizens in a diverse democratic society should be reflective, moral, and active citizens in an interconnected global world. They should have the knowledge, skills, and the commitment needed to change the world to make it more just and democratic (p. 291).

Multicultural literature helps students see value in both the differences and similarities between and among people. It can provide information, different perspectives, and prompt inquiry (Barry, 1990; Bishop, 1997). Multicultural literature has flourished because of the multicultural education movement, and in large measure was intended to serve the purposes of a multicultural education. The purpose of multicultural education is to address social justice issues through school/education reform (Banks, 1999; Nieto, 2004; Smolen & Oswald, 2011).

I argue that global citizenship education should start at the elementary level. Multicultural literature and literature about the cultures of people whose heritage resides in the Middle East and Arab world needs to be an integral part of the curriculum. “It is in the first years of a student’s education that fundamental values in regard to tolerance, as well as the celebration of diverse identities, can be developed as the building for future culturally competent human beings” (Cimillo, 2011, p. 2). In the context of globalization, continuing conflicts in the Middle East and the Arab world and the negative press related to those conflicts, it is imperative students are exposed to alternative narratives beginning at the elementary level. “Schools should help students to understand how cultural, national, regional, and global identifications are interrelated, complex, and evolving” (Banks, 2008, p. 134).

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

#### **Locating the Middle East and Arab World**

The “Middle East” is a flexible geographic term that shifts depending on the user and the era. We will also use the term because it is currently in dominant usage over other descriptors of overlapping territory that have waxed and waned in prominence over time (Scharnweber, 2016, p. 2).

I have chosen to use the term Middle East because it is the most recognizable term used to describe the area between eastern Europe and the western borders of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Countries of the Middle East and the Arab world overlap each other geographically. Some countries in the Middle East are also part of the Arab world. For the purposes of this paper, the countries of the Middle East include Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria,

Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Yemen, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain and Kuwait. The countries of the Arab world are those member nations of the Arab League: Algeria, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. There are political and social differences (Haboush, 2007, p. 183). and “These countries differ in terms of racial and ethnic mix, religious composition, and economic development” (Haboush, 2007, p.185).

The media plays an important role in the misidentification of Arabs, Muslims, Middle Easterners and Islam (Ahmed & Matthes, 2017; Morgan, 2012). The American public generally conflates Arab, Muslims and Middle Easterners to mean the same thing. Muslims are not always Arabs and Arabs are not always Muslims, not all people from the Middle East are Arabs or Muslims (Abukhattala, p.160.). Turks and Iranians are Middle Easterners and mostly Muslim but they are not Arabs. Indonesians are primarily Muslims but are not Arabs or Middle Easterners. The Lebanese are Arabs, but not all Muslims. The first Lebanese immigrants to come to the United States were Christians. (Khalaf, 1987, p. 17).



*Figure 1: Present Day Middle East and North Africa. Image courtesy of David Poell. Reprinted from: A Season of Revolution by The Pluralist Advocate. Retrieved December 28, 2016 from <http://www.pluralistnation.com/politics/foreign-policy/a-season-of-revolution> Copyright Pluralist Nation.*

The Middle East and Arab world cultures have some things in common, but each country expresses those commonalities differently. Geography, economy, language and religion affect how a culture develops over time. Countries whose primary language is Arabic speak different dialects. Modern Standard Arabic is the language used to share information across the Arabic speaking world. Arabic speaking countries all use the Arabic alphabet, as does Iran, but Iranians speak Farsi. Turkey is situated in the Middle East and Turkish is the language, but a Latin script alphabet is used not the Arabic alphabet. Arabic is a Semitic language, Farsi, an Indo-European language and Turkish is related to the languages of Central Asia. An ethnic group largely excluded is the Kurds. They are the fourth largest ethnic group in the Middle East, they speak Kurdish and live primarily in eastern Turkey, north western Iran, northern Iraq and northeastern Syria. They speak four dialects of Kurdish, a language belonging to the Indo-Iranian group of languages.

Islam is the religion most associated with the Middle East and Arab world, and most of the people living in those countries identify themselves as Muslim. There are two main sects of Islam, Sunni and Shia. Sunni is considered the most orthodox. The Shia sect came about after Muhammad's death. The countries with mostly Sunni Muslims are Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkey and Syria. The countries with mostly Shia Muslims are Iraq, Iran, Pakistan and India. Pakistan and India are not part of the Middle East or the Arab world. Muslims settled in India and then from India to Pakistan.

As of 2010, there were an estimated 1.6 billion Muslims around the world, making Islam the world's second-largest religious tradition after Christianity. And although many people, especially in the United States, may associate Islam with countries in the Middle East or North Africa, nearly two-thirds (62%) of Muslims live in the Asia-Pacific region, according to a Pew Research Center analysis. In fact, more Muslims live in India and Pakistan (344 million combined) than in the entire Middle East-North Africa region (317 million) (Desilver & Masci, 2017, p. 1).

### **Multicultural Education, Social Justice, Diversity and Global Citizenship**

“Citizens in this century need the knowledge, attitudes, and skills to function in their cultural communities and beyond their cultural borders” (Banks, 2004, p. 292).

The purpose of multicultural education is to address social justice issues through school/education reform (Banks, 1999; Nieto, 2004; Smolen & Oswald, 2011). As Cai (2002) points out, “It is a movement to claim space in the literature and in education for the historically marginalized social groups, rather than one to renovate the craft of literature itself” (xiii).

A primary goal of multicultural education is to help students function in a multicultural society and to “...become advocates for social justice” (Bishop, 2012, p. 9). Images and stories in literature can have the power to transport the reader to another time and place, or to metaphorically, walk in another's shoes. Improving academic success and helping students understand their role in a democratic, diverse society is another aspect of multicultural education. A counter narrative focusing on the ordinary lives of Middle Easterners and Arabs, living in the United States and in their home countries, needs to be part of a multicultural curriculum if social justice issues, such as identity, related to these groups are to be acknowledged. “Students need to

understand how multicultural issues shape the social, political, economic and cultural fabric of the United States as well as how such issues fundamentally influence their lives (Gay, 2003, p.30).

The United States has a diverse population and New York is a microcosm of that diversity. According to Luban (2017) “There are as many as 800 languages spoken in New York City, and nowhere in the world has more than Queens, according to the Endangered Language Alliance” (p. 1). Queens county, one of the four counties on Long Island, sits on the western end of Long Island next to Kings county. Public schools are tasked with providing an education for this multicultural population and since the advent of the World Wide Web, education that prepares students to negotiate and navigate the Web has taken on greater significance because of an increasingly interconnected world. The opinions of Renyi and Lubeck (1994) about the interconnectedness of cultures are as appropriate now, perhaps even more so, than ever before:

In truth, the lines between cultural diversity at home and abroad are increasingly artificial in all aspects of life, including trade and commerce, science and technology, and culture, ethics, and politics. Cultural interconnections are far more complicated and less understood by U.S. citizens than is revealed by unilateral thinking about our internal problems in isolation from the rest of the world (p. 4).

There is a significant population of Middle Easterners, Arabs and Muslims in New York and they should see themselves as part of a greater multicultural society rather than singled out as the “other”. Children need to view themselves as part of a diverse world not as observers of that world. A multicultural world picture is one in which members realize that no culture stands alone, and societies have contributed ideas and practices to each other for millennia. These exchanges continue but at an increasingly rapid pace. Such complex interconnectedness requires

critical thinking, and the ability to collaborate, cooperate and compromise. Gomez (1991) believes “Early childhood educators can influence the development of positive attitudes in young children by learning about and promoting the various cultures represented among the children they teach” (p. 1). It is important to recognize that children develop stereotypes early from the attitudes of other children, family, caregivers and exposure to media. Polarization does not contribute to a productive society and without understanding there can be no progress. The challenge for educators is to adopt a pedagogy of social justice and inclusiveness, a multicultural approach, that supports and embraces diversity, while guiding students toward ideals that encourage diversity, equitable distribution of power and opportunity among ethnic groups in the United States and internationally (Sleeter & Grant, 1987, p. 429).

Castagno (2009) explains:

I understand multicultural education to be education that focuses on equity, culture, and power by requiring high academic expectations for all students; infusing multiple perspectives, cultures, people, and worldviews into the curriculum; and equipping students with an understanding of issues of power, privilege, oppression, and ideas about how they might work toward social justice (p. 48).

Social justice is a framework that expands and embraces change, but with a focus on helping students to address unfairness and inequity by first examining their own assumptions about privilege and how privilege contributes to socially constructed and institutionalized oppression of the “other”. “When we teach students how to critique the injustice in their world, we should help them to formulate possibilities for action to change the world to make it more democratic and just” (Banks, 2004, p. 291). The earlier in their academic years students are made aware of the concept of social justice, the greater the possibility of social justice values remaining with



them through all their academic years, providing students with the tools to address the inequities experienced by Americans and immigrants who are part of the Middle East and Arab cultures.

“Students can learn to think deeply about social justice concepts such as tolerance and respect for all people through the implementation of multicultural education” (Cimillo, 2011, p. 2).

Marginalization of Middle Eastern and Arab people is strongly connected to United States foreign policy in the regions. I remember my years of living in Iran right up to the Iranian revolution, when my family and I were air lifted out of the country around the same time the Shah left. None of the factors contributing to the revolution that I witnessed were in the popular press. While the stereotyping of Arabs and Middle Easterners has been firmly established for one hundred years (Shaheen, 2015), the Iranian revolution and subsequent events intensified and expanded already established stereotypes. Multicultural education and global citizenship education are necessary because events in other parts of the world have social and psychological consequences to people in the United States. Multicultural education and global citizenship education have common elements, but multicultural education addresses issues nationally and global citizenship education, internationally.

Both seek to increase students’ civic responsibility through broader understanding of human commonalities and human diversity. Both can help students to develop skills of informed decision making on issues of equity within the national community [multiculturalism] and the global community [globalism]. Both are complementary and can be implemented simultaneously (Ukpokodu, 1999, p. 300).

The 21<sup>st</sup> century presents challenges to every aspect of individuals’ lives and education is key in helping future citizens of the world to navigate the complexities of being global citizens (Klein

& Tye, 1979; Hugonner, 2007; Bennett, 2011). A Global Citizenship Education document published on the UNESCO website (2014), describes learning outcomes in three domains:

Cognitive ▪ Learners acquire knowledge and understanding of local, national and global issues and the interconnectedness and interdependency of different countries and populations ▪ Learners develop skills for critical thinking and analysis

Socio-Emotional ▪ Learners experience a sense of belonging to a common humanity, sharing values and responsibilities, based on human rights ▪ Learners develop attitudes of empathy, solidarity and respect for differences and diversity

Behavioural ▪ Learners act effectively and responsibly at local, national and global levels for a more peaceful and sustainable world ▪ Learners develop motivation and willingness to take necessary actions. (p. 22).

Global citizenship initiative has become a driving force in global education and the way forward in education. It is especially important in the United States because of the still predominant 20<sup>th</sup> century attitude toward globalization.

Globalization threatens both the identities of the original residents of the areas in which new-comers settle and those of the immigrants and their children. Integrating immigrants and the subsequent generations into the receiving society is a primary challenge of globalization; failing to do so, however, will have long-term social implications (Suarez-Orozco, 2004, p. 173).

An important element of that preparation is helping elementary students “read the world” through multicultural literature.

### **Multicultural Literature**

“The power of literature in the lives of young children is awesome and far reaching. Children can be exposed to information not only about their lives but about other global realities as well” (Boutte, Hopkins & Waklatsi, 2008, p. 94).

The subject of multicultural literature in the United States is complex and deeply embedded, historically, within the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s. Some background information about the origins and uses of multicultural literature is necessary for understanding the need for sources of literature about current marginalized cultural groups. Multicultural literature emerged from the demands of African American communities for schools to develop a more inclusive curriculum (Banks & Banks, 1989; Banks & Banks, 2004; Bishop, 2012; Botelho & Rudman, 2009; Cai & Bishop, 1994). The genre of multicultural children’s literature was initially concerned with racism and sexism. However, as other marginalized groups advocated for inclusion in curriculum and literature, multicultural literature expanded to include them. (Botelho & Rudman, 2009; Dasenbrock, 1987). In 1967 The Council on Interracial Books for Children (CIBC) was formed to promote the expansion of inclusive curriculum and literature (Botelho & Rudman, 2009).

Eventually the number of marginalized groups increased and began to make demands. Publishers responded, and multicultural literature no longer focused on just race and sexism. This expansion led to several definitions of *multicultural literature*. The original goal of the CICB was to “address the issues of racism and sexism in children’s literature” (Banfield 1998, p. 17). These were issues of concern for African Americans. They were also issues for Asians or Asian Americans and Native Americans therefore, literature about these groups was included in the work of the CICB (Banfield, 1998). Over time the genre of multicultural literature expanded

to include homophobia, ableism, classism, and language discrimination (Botelho & Rudman, 2009, p. 75). Glazier and Seo (2005) define multicultural literature “as literature that represents voices typically omitted from the traditional canon” (p. 686). Publishers’ definition of multicultural literature is based on the types of books they publish, books translated from other languages, nonfiction books about cultures from all over the world and books about marginalized groups in the United States (Cai & Bishop, 1994).

The proliferation of definitions led to discussions focusing on formulating a single definition for *multicultural literature*. There is not just one right definition, but “... the way multicultural literature is defined reflects belief (stance) and impacts literature choices as well as how the literature will be used” (Smolen & Oswald, 2011, p. 1). As Levy (1995) explained, “Like the term ‘post-modern’, ‘multi-cultural’ seems to have taken on a life of its own, meaning different things to different people. To some it’s all inclusive. To others, it’s exclusive. Us against them.” (p. 1).

Cai & Bishop (1994) believe that:

What all these definitions have in common is an agreement that multicultural literature is about some identifiable “other” – persons or groups that differ in some way (for example, racially, linguistically, ethnically, culturally) from the dominate white American cultural group. (pp. 57-58)

The problem defining multicultural literature is because “...the definition of multicultural literature is contingent not on its literary characteristics, but on the purpose it is supposed to serve” (Cai & Bishop, 1994, p. 58). Smolen & Oswald (2011) also believe that “Multicultural literature has been defined in a variety of ways depending on cultural specificity” (p.1).

Bishop (1997) and Nieto (2004) define multicultural literature as reflecting the diversity of the pluralistic society of the United States and the world. I believe multicultural literature is a way for children to become acquainted with their own culture and the cultures of others. Multicultural literature reflects ways of life, differences in beliefs, opens the way toward understanding diverse perspectives and has the potential to challenge stereotypes when introduced by culturally aware teachers.

Books about diverse cultures can be integrated into the social studies curriculum. “Promoting reading of children’s books with social studies themes is an important role for the classroom teacher” (Farris & Fuhler, 1994, p. 380). Multicultural literature can bring the world of geography to life, beyond where a village, town, city or country might be on a map. “...differences in culture due to location and or time period can be examined by students” (Farris & Fuhler, 1994, p.382). Multicultural literature can lend itself to teaching children how cultures have exchanged information from ancient to modern times in every area of life. Including multicultural literature in social studies, history, and math, enables teachers and students to go beyond a single textbook, allowing for multiple sources of information, and points of view (Henderson & Young, 2011, p. 59). Including literature representing the diversity of the Middle East and Arab world can position the contributions of those cultures within the larger framework of the diverse society of the United States.

Who writes the stories is a key issue in the world of multicultural literature. Cultural authenticity, in part, is about whether the authors of multicultural books are members of the culture they are writing about because, if they are not, there is the possibility of inadvertent misrepresentation (Fox & Short, 2003, p. 11). There are multiple perspectives on the topic of cultural authenticity. There are challenges for writers who write about cultures other than their

own. Most writers understand and acknowledge the difficulties of writing about the past or life in a foreign country. “When it comes to writing about American parallel cultures, however, some writers believe that, because Americans share a social and cultural context, it takes only imagination, craft, and possibly some research into factual information” (Bishop, 2003, p. 31). Part of the problem for those writers is the influence of the writer’s own cultural and social milieu (Bishop, 2003). “Across ethnic, cultural, and national boundaries, and across time, children’s literature has long been considered a vehicle for transmitting moral and cultural values as well as entertaining” (Bishop, 2003, p. 25). Therefore, authors who write about cultures they do not belong to must go beyond the superficial and “make the effort to enter the world of that culture” (Cai, 2003, p. 172). Some researchers believe that authors must belong to the cultures they write about. Other researchers believe extensive research about a culture can produce multicultural literature as authentic as a native writer from that culture. They can still “...depict cultural traditions, behaviors, and language and present an authentic perspective while also drawing on human universals” (Noll, 2003, p. 189). The key is meticulous research.

### **Issues with Middle East and Arab World Themed Literature**

“A good story lets you know people as individuals in all their particularity and conflict; and once you see someone as a person - flawed, complex, striving - then you’ve reached beyond stereotype” (Rochman, 1993, p. 19).

An issue when considering books about Middle Easterners or Arabs is the conflation of Muslims, Middle Easterners and Arabs as all meaning the same and all Middle Easterners and Arabs as followers of Islam (Aukhattala, 2004). Conflation destroys cultural identity by categorizing all as one. The categories can be confusing because there are books about Muslims, about people in South Asia mistakenly labeled as Middle Eastern or with an Islamic theme.

There are stories focusing on the cultures of the Middle East and Arab world and stories of people whose heritage is the Middle East or the Arab world living ordinary lives outside the Middle East or Arab world. Each of these categories is distinct but it can be difficult to see the differences if readers are not aware that there are differences as well as similarities. The books in this bibliography focusing on Middle East and Arab world cultures will include books with characters coping with being Muslim or aspects of Islamic belief that create dilemmas, because there is also a need for teachers to understand children who are Muslims and for those children to see themselves reflected in the literature available to them. “The Muslim population often appears invisible and misunderstood in American society” (Callaway, 2010, p. 217).

Publishers are prone to select titles describing exotic situations. There is also a tendency for well-meaning authors to write about the plight of women and girls in places of conflict. These kinds of focused narratives reinforce negative stereotypes unless there are equally compelling stories that challenge popular stereotypes. *The Other Side of the Sky* (Ahmedi, 2005), *I am Malala* (Yousafzai, 2013), *Kids of Kabul*, (Ellis, 2012) and *Nasreen’s Secret School*, (Winter, 2009), are a few popular books written about oppressed girls overcoming injustice. These titles are often included in lists of books about the Middle East. Not one story is set in a Middle Eastern or Arab country. The stories are heartwarming, popular and they fit the Western narrative of the oppressed female. An example of conflation is in this Literacy & NCTE blog. Member Brandy French (2016) wrote about asking her students how they saw the Middle East. She reported their responses as predictably negative: “Muslim extremists, deserts, guns, bombs, poverty, terrorism, oppressed women, and hatred of America” (French, 2016). Her solution was to begin the school year by reading *I am Malala* (Yousafzai, 2013), a story about a Pakistani girl, set in Pakistan, not in the Middle East or the Arab world. The author constantly referenced how

this story changed her students' thinking about the Middle East and how they learned that Islam is a religion promoting peacefulness, hospitality, kindness and generosity. I was pleased to read about her efforts to help students better understand the people of the Middle East, but she still conflated the terms. The discussions with her students focused on Pakistan, Afghanistan, Muslims and Islam. I have been asked why I make these distinctions. I make these distinctions because as a teacher who has lived with families in many of these countries, I understand how crucial identity is to the healthy development of children. Stonebanks (2004) discusses his experiences of being bullied as a child and called names because other students thought he was from Pakistan based on the color of his skin and how ashamed he was when he could do nothing to defend himself. He is Iranian. He writes:

My concern lies with the implications to the youngest victims of this created perception within North America, namely, elementary-school-aged children of imagined and constructed Pan-Arab origin, and all the innuendos and assumptions that go hand in hand with it (Stonebanks, 2004, p. 88).

After 9/11 reports of hate crimes against anyone thought to be Arab or Muslim began to appear in the media. The Huffington Post (2012) published a list of hate crimes against Sikhs between 2001 and 2012 because attackers thought they were Arab or Middle Eastern terrorists ("History of Hate", 2012). According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, "Since 9/11 Sikhs frequently have been targets of anti-Muslim violence in the United States" (2013, para. 4). Lack of knowledge by white Americans has caused violence against innocent people. In addition to assuming all Arabs, Muslims and Middle Easterners are potential terrorists, there is the added problem of mistaken identity. This lack of knowledge by adults can be passed on to children. Reports of bullying between children because of mistaken ethnic identity have happened.



Another issue is the problem of finding Middle East and Arab themed literature. The *Washington Report on the Middle East* published an article focusing on children's books on the Middle East:

There is still a large gap, however, in the publishing of well-written, interesting books about Arabs and Islam. It is a fact, but sad that many children receive their sole knowledge of Arabs and Muslims from films and television, which very often portray these people as terrorists or religious fanatics with harmful intentions toward the United States (Shedd, 2001, p. 104).

Lorna Collier (2016) wrote an article in the *Council Chronicle* about the importance of diverse literature for students. The article was comprised of interviews with professors and teachers. Sandra Osorio called attention to the difficulty of finding diverse literature and the lack of adequate preparation of teacher candidates to teach with diverse literature. Osorio commented, "It takes time for you to investigate it, find it either from the library or order a copy – it's not like you can just grab it from the book shop – and then you must read through it to make sure it is appropriate" (Collier, 2016, p. 15).

Children need to experience literature that represents the diversity, beliefs and practices of people from the Middle East and Arab world. Unfortunately, there is little diversity in the minds of average Americans, who see Arabs, Middle Easterners and "...Muslims as the irrational, fanatic, sexually enticing, and despotic others" (Kincheloe, 2004, p. 1).

Reading stories about Middle East and Arab world cultures, and the ordinary people from those cultures, helps children develop an understanding of and appreciation for the diversity of the Middle East and Arab world. Children whose background is either Middle Eastern or Arab

should see themselves reflected in the curriculum and in stories they read. “When students are provided that mirror – when they see characters like themselves described in the pages they are reading – they are often more drawn to and interested in the texts” (Collier, 2016, p. 14). The public is aware of immigrants from embattled Middle East and Arab countries wanting to enter the United States and just as aware of the government’s efforts to keep them out. “The cultural fabric of our global society is constantly changing, becoming richer and more textured as it interweaves the lives of people from all over the world” (Chaudhri, 2013, p. 26). School and classroom libraries need to reflect these issues and changes and pursue the goal of changing the narrative from negative to positive. “Information and images about how people really live now is what enables young children to build connections to people who are from different cultures, while countering stereotypes that children have already absorbed” (Derman-Sparks, 2013, para. 21).

### **Teacher Education**

As anti-Muslim sentiments continue to deepen, particularly after the recent terror attacks and the rise of Donald Trump’s anti-Muslim campaign, we must use our position as educators to ensure that our students have a critical eye and are able to separate the violent actions of ISIS from the lives of the one billion Muslims who exist across the world (Elbardouh, 2016, “What can teachers do?”, para. 7)

Teachers cannot escape the reality of “...globalization, trans-nationalism, and the changing geopolitical landscape” (Zine, 2004, p. 112). When we think of teacher education in today’s world, helping teachers deal with repercussions from world events is at the top of the list. It is not enough for teachers of students in grades 6 through 12 to include discussions of problems associated with an ever-expanding world and problems surrounding the Middle East

and Arab world. Teachers are as vulnerable to acquiring stereotypical beliefs and prejudices about the Middle East and Arab world as anyone and students, whose introduction to the people from the Middle East and Arab world comes primarily from media, will arrive at the doorstep of middle and high school with deeply entrenched stereotypes.

Knowledge of the geography of the Middle East and the Arab world and some basic understanding of Islam is important. Hoot, Szecsi and Moosa (2003) report “Increasing numbers of Muslim children attend programs for young children, yet many teachers appear to know very little about Islam” (p. 85). Primary grade teachers have reported they learned very little about Islam in school. Teacher education programs need to include curriculum “...addressing basic factual information relative to the Islamic religion, pre-service education must concern itself with modifying pre-service teachers’ incorrect schemata relative to Islam” (Mastrilli & Sardo-Brown, 2002, p. 160). Without a basic understanding of the diversity of Muslims, the Middle East, the Arab world and Islam, teachers will be ineffective in shifting “the popular media discourse away from the negative, essentialized referents and tropes of object “Otherness” ascribed to Muslims” (Zine, 2004, p. 114). The needs of Muslim students in public schools as an issue is not new, but since the events of September 11, there has been an increase in the need to address this problem. (Haynes, 1998; Hoot, Szecsi & Moosa, 2003; Jackson, 2010; Seikaly, 2001; Taggar, 2006).

A review of research addressing development of teacher education curriculum, professional development workshops or elementary curriculum to meet the needs of Middle East and the Arab world students, who may or may not be Muslim, is not within the scope of this paper. Creating an annotated Middle East and Arab world themed bibliography is a small step in providing teachers with material for developing a more inclusive multicultural curriculum and to address social justice issues. This material will assist teachers in helping students develop a

counter narrative, open the door to global citizenship education, provide literature in which Arab, Middle Eastern and Muslim students see reflections of their cultures and contribute to positive identity development. How much a teacher understands determines the effectiveness of instruction. Teachers should include appropriate background information before introducing multicultural literature to students. This will help students approach multicultural literature more open-mindedly. “When students enter unfamiliar cultural milieu, the teacher can initially provide sensory materials to create a backdrop for the story” (Dietrich & Ralph, 1995, p .2).

### **Chapter Three**

#### **Methodology**

“There’s definitely a dearth of good English-language material, particularly fiction, on Muslims and Arab-Americans, confirms Hazel Rochman, an expert on multicultural literature for children and editor at Booklist (Glick, 2001, p. 13).

#### **Book Selection**

I focus on elementary level picture books, not only because I am an elementary teacher, but because my experience led me to believe young children are more receptive to learning about other cultures. Cultural stereotypes begin to develop at an early age and I believe introducing a variety of cultural perspectives early on can be beneficial. “Current research indicates not only that elementary children are developmentally ready for a global perspective, but that this may be a more appropriate age at which to introduce it” (Diakiw, 1990, p. 296).

Two hundred twenty titles were collected from a search of 32 websites (Appendix B) using the descriptors: multicultural literature, children’s multicultural literature, Middle East literature, children’s Middle East literature, international literature, international children’s literature, global literature, global children’s literature, multiethnic children’s literature, Arab

children's literature, annotated bibliography of Middle East children's literature, Muslim children's literature and multicultural literature and the Middle East.

### **Book Selection Issues**

An issue in searching for Middle East and Arab world literature is that frequently books about Pakistan, Afghanistan and India are included on website lists titled *Middle East*. According to the Central Intelligence Agency website, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India are not designated as countries in the Middle East. Trying to determine which countries are in the Middle East, what countries are Arab countries and which countries are in South Asia can be confusing. This researcher has elaborated on which countries belong in each group. When searching websites looking for books about the Middle East or Arab world, a common search term is Middle East. But if the websites found include countries of south Asia, the searcher is unknowingly misled. Two examples of websites that include South Asia are *The Pragmatic Mom* website list titled: Top 10: Best Middle Eastern American Children's Books and *The Appalachian State University's Middle East and Arab Americans in Children's Literature*, included 8 titles for Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Another issue is just being able to find Middle East or Arab themed literature for the elementary levels. *Good Reads* website: Best Multicultural Books for Children listed 4 Middle East or Arab themed titles of over three hundred. The *I'm your neighbor* is a multicultural book list site that has Middle East or Arab themed titles, but the site is not easy to navigate. Two headings are *Browse Books by Community* and *Browse Books by Setting*. However, once you have navigated to either of these areas, there are sometimes books included which are not in the designated geographic area.

The cultures of Pakistan, Afghanistan and India are not considered the Middle East or Arab world therefore they are not included in the bibliography. Books about Israel were not chosen because, during my searches, I discovered they were easily available. I looked at the library catalogue in the library of an elementary school in Great Neck, NY. That library has 8 books about Passover, 21 books about Israel, 41 books about the Holocaust, 28 books about Hannukkah and one book about the Wailing Wall. That is a total of 99 books about one culture/country. There is a total of only 114 books about 8 Middle East and Arab Countries and 10 books about Ramadan. Of the 114 books a few are folk tales and the rest are primarily about ancient history and multicultural crafts. Also excluded were the Ali Baba and Aladdin stories because they are popular and readily available. Disney has produced cartoon movies of Aladdin that have had some controversy with regard to language and stereotyping of Arab culture (Shaheen, 2015). Books about many aspects of Israeli life are as numerous as books about Black, Native, Hispanic and Asian Americans.

### **Determining the Bibliography Style**

The book review style is determined by the purpose of the bibliography and the goal of the bibliographer. There are several categories of book reviews, each one with its own guidelines. Reviews may contain aspects of any of three types:

Descriptive reviews report factual information about the story and illustrations of a book. Analytical reviews discuss, compare, and evaluate literary elements (plot, characterization, setting, theme, style, and point of view), the illustrations, and relationships with other books. Sociological reviews emphasize the social context of a book, concerning themselves with characterizations of particular social

groups, distinguishable ethnic characteristics, moral values, possible controversy, and potential popularity (Norton & Norton, 2003, p. 75)

Kirkus reviews are primarily descriptive, they include title, author, illustrator, publisher, ISBN, date published and a brief summary. The "... reviews in the *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books* tend to be descriptive, but they also mention literary elements" (Norton & Norton, 2003, p. 76). Al- Hazza and Bucher (2008) provide title, author, illustrator, publisher, year published, summary and where to find reviews of each book but no review of their own. Review type tends to conform to the needs of the specific reviewer.

This bibliography is intended as a resource for introducing elementary students to the cultures of the Middle East, Arab world and people from the Middle East and Arab world living in North America and/or a Western country. Teachers generally have little time therefore a rubric rating system would be cumbersome. A rating system requires a leveled rubric with definitions of each level, for each category. Instead of reading the reviewer's information for each book, teachers would have to constantly return to the rubric for each aspect included in the rubric (Appendix C). According to Miller, "Rubrics are a beast. They are time-consuming to construct, challenging to write and sometimes hard to use effectively" (Miller, 2012, para. 1). A descriptive bibliography is the best choice to meet the author's purpose.

### **Book Organization**

Books are grouped alphabetically by country first and within each country, listed alphabetically by author's last name. Other category identifiers, art, history, prejudice, refugee and Islam will be listed after the last of the country categories. Books in these categories will be listed alphabetically by author. Each title listed in every category will include: author, illustrator,

title, date of publication, publisher, ISBN, number of pages, genre, synopsis, dual language and book awards. Discrepancies in historical information or setting will be noted and evaluation of stereotypes when necessary.

The goal in developing this bibliography is to select a variety of texts that offer some insight into the lives of ordinary people from or living in the Middle East or Arab world. The Middle East and Arab world are comprised of multiple cultures therefore one story will not speak for all. But the variety of books from many cultures will help teachers understand the complexity of the regions and the nuanced differences between the cultures.

### **Findings**

“Reading is more than just a pleasant, and informative experience” (Smith, 1988, p. 176).

### **Developing the Collection**

I have been collecting books for decades. I love to read. My collection was purchased over many years, at first, solely for my own pleasure and later for use with my students. I chose multicultural books because in my first teaching position I had nine students, each one multilingual and each one from a different country. I started by collecting different versions of popular folk and fairy tales. Next, I purchased any book that was about cultures of the Middle East, the Arab world or cultures in South Asia because I was sharing my life experiences with my students and realized I could supplement my stories with books. There weren't many available at the time and I purchased books without regard for who the authors were. It wasn't until I was invited to present at a meeting of the Nassau Reading Council in 2014, that the idea of a multicultural bibliography came to me. The topic focused on multicultural education, and while I did bring examples of books that could be used, participants were asking for more. As I



searched for books for future professional development workshops, I realized how few books were readily available for the cultures of the Middle East and the Arab world. My search also led me to the realization that many books on Middle East book lists were about cultures in South Asia. I wanted books that focused on the lives of people in the Middle East and Arab world, the lives of immigrants, and those that offered a view of some of the differences. I saw a pattern in the topics. Many books focused on the plight of women and girls in Muslim countries, primarily Afghanistan and Pakistan. While those stories certainly have merit, based on the research question of my dissertation proposal as to whether multicultural literature challenges or reinforces stereotypes, I felt these stories might reinforce more than challenge. These discoveries led me to the idea of finding books that focused on the ordinary lives of people living in South Asia, the Middle East and the Arab world as well as people from those cultures living in western countries. During this time, as I listened to the news, or conversations around me, the cultures of the Middle East and the Arab world were frequently spoken of as one monolithic culture and often included South Asian countries. There seemed to be a lack of understanding of the many cultures existing within Middle Eastern and Arab countries (see Appendix A). Those conversations led me to decide to focus on just the Middle East and Arab world for the bibliography because they are most frequently in the news, not well understood and the least taught at the elementary level.

### **Looking at Stereotypes**

The literature review included research exploring public perceptions of Muslims, Arabs and Middle Easterners and long-standing stereotypes found in literature and media of all types. Before the books were read and chosen for inclusion in the bibliography, I researched and compiled a list of common stereotypes, in anticipation of finding them in the books. What I

discovered when I read the books, was that they were written by authors writing about their own cultures, or by authors who lived/live in the Middle East or Arab world or are married to someone from the Middle East or Arab world. The stereotypes portrayed in the media were not appearing in these books.

It wasn't until I read *It Was Just A House* (Kraver, 2014) that I realized I should be aware of stereotypes of Americans in books written by authors about their own cultures. *It Was Just A House* is about a family who lost their home and are living in a Jordanian refugee camp. It was to be included in the Refugee section. The problem is, at the end of the story the refugees are helped to endure their situation by an angelic, very blond, very beautiful, westerner, who brings the light with her into the very dark, door-less refugee building with a dirt floor. The text lends itself to the image: "After a moment of awe, we release each other. The woman's presence grows stronger as she delicately steps closer, her bare feet on the dirt floor, too" (Kraver, 2014, p. 31). Then, "Unmindful of the dirt floor, she kneels with her lovely slacks as she extends her arms. The woman presents a basket. It's a beautiful woven basket – as beautiful as her golden hair and pale skin" (Kraver, 2014, p. 32). The stereotype of the white person, appearing wealthy, wearing clothes that are obviously not appropriate for a refugee camp is a book that reinforces the stereotype of western superiority. I wondered about this stereotype especially because the author looks exactly like the woman whose presence is so uplifting in the story. This book raised the question of reverse stereotypes. There are stereotypes that cross borders from one country to the next. Some of the most common negative stereotypes of Americans are: (a) Americans are rude; (b) geographically ignorant; (c) ignorant of other cultures; (d) lacking family values; (e) American women are promiscuous; and (f) Americans are arrogant (Gibson, Banihani & Gibson, 2017; Global Connections, n.d.; Hargis, 2013; Levy, 2014; Wojnar, 2008).

### Books Excluded

There were a few books I chose not to include. Two volumes, *The Adventures of Iman* were poorly written with incorrect information and were clearly meant for Muslim children. No reviews were found on the internet. A search for the author could not be done because the author only provided a last initial. The story line is about Iman a heroic Muslim girl whose prayers and faith in God give her the powers to fight the wrongs she encounters. The stories are religious and the Surahs quoted in the stories, according to the four Qur'ans in my collection, do not match the author's interpretation.

A series of graphic novels, *Jannah Jewels*, by Umm Nura, features four young girl super heroes who work together to solve mysteries. The stories combine Islamic history and famous Muslims from the past, as the girls travel around the Islamic world to historical places fighting villains and solving mysteries, all the while still observing daily prayer schedules and rituals. There are twelve books in the series at this time. The Jannah Jewels is the name of these four heroes, who receive guidance from the Qur'an. These books are meant for Muslim girls, since the girls receive guidance from verses in the Qur'an that not only help them to solve the mysteries, but also remind them of how they should behave according to the words of Allah. The religious focus of the books makes them inappropriate for this collection.

When I first found *The Street Cats of Marrakech*, I thought I had another picture book for the Moroccan section of the bibliography. After reading it I was greatly disappointed. Having been to Marrakech several times, I felt the illustrations did not depict that vibrant, very colorful city, to advantage. The story takes the reader on a tour through the city through the eyes of a single cat, Luhut. Only one other cat is mentioned briefly, therefore the title is misleading.

Lastly, the story begins with Luhut lying on what must be a comfortable, colorful cushion, but

ends with his joining a homeless woman to sleep on the street. My goal in choosing books is to help children learn about the cultures of the Middle East and Arab world. This story does not meet that criteria.

In my search for books I found what I thought would be a wonderful addition. A series of books: *The Adventures of Bella & Harry*. In each book in the series Bella and Harry, two little dogs, visit a different city. I purchased the *Let's Visit Istanbul!*, with high hopes. I read the book, the author is not from the Middle East or Arab World, but the story was engaging and information about the various sites was accurate, but the author referred to Islam as the “Muslim Religion”. An error to be sure. Muslims are people not a religion. I contacted her and gently pointed out the error. She felt that was an acceptable error, I did not and chose not to include that book.

### Discussion

“The winners won’t be just those with more I.Q. It will also be those with more P.Q. (passion quotient) and C.Q. (curiosity quotient) ...to not just learn but to learn for a lifetime” (Friedman, 2013, para. 8)

Working toward my doctorate provoked considerable reflection on choices and decisions that guided me through the process of writing the dissertation and compiling the bibliography. Until I began the tasks of formulating and executing a dissertation plan, metacognition was a word I thought of only in terms of helping my students understand their own learning processes. Upon reflection, I discovered that for me learning is a never-ending journey because a sense of curiosity drives me to keep asking questions. The need to answer those questions sometimes led to more questions, but more often to new ways of thinking about what I was doing.

When I first conceived of the idea of an annotated bibliography I thought in broad terms. Just multicultural books. A bibliography of multicultural books. But in my search, I realized how few books about the Middle East were on the most popular lists of multicultural books (see Appendix B). My research sometimes led to contacting authors. I was lucky enough to correspond with Elsa Marston, whose books are in my collection. I asked her advice about creating a bibliography and her responses were encouraging. That was the beginning of my quest for Middle East books. Even though the goal was Middle East books, I bought anything related to the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia. I later realized I was unconsciously choosing books mostly about countries I had been to during my time overseas. While I was collecting books, I was reading and writing about multicultural education. What I learned about multicultural education led me to examine the language used in the media, (TV, radio, internet, and texts). When the topic was the Middle East, the terms Muslims, Middle Easterners, Arabs and terrorists were used interchangeably. Then in 2012 I attended a workshop in Denver, Colorado, sponsored by the Middle East Outreach Council. Jack Shaheen was the guest speaker. His presentation about the history of Arab stereotypes was enlightening. In 2013 I attended a teacher institute focusing on the history of Islam, Muslims and contemporary issues, at Dar al Islam, New Mexico. In 2014 I attended a summer institute at Yale University titled: Worlds of Islam: Regional Perspectives on Unity and Diversity. My experiences in Middle Eastern and Arab countries, the institutes I attended, the many casual conversations with teachers since I began teaching and contact with Elsa Marston and Jack Shaheen all contributed to my focusing on the distinction between Middle East, Arab, Muslim and South Asian cultures in my own thinking. Although I always thought of the people in those countries as separate, I never carefully examined how or why it was important. As I read more I connected my earlier

observation about the interchangeability in the media of the terms Arab, Muslim, Middle Easterner and terrorist with the idea of the bibliography and the distinctions between cultures.

The title of the bibliography reflects my decision to focus on mostly picture books for children in kindergarten to grade five. Picture books are the most frequently chosen books for teaching in those grades and the easiest for children to understand. I read each book, researched reviews, awards and the authors. As I read the books I kept an art words vocabulary list to help me describe the illustrations. I also had a list of the common stereotypes about Muslims, Arabs and Middle Easterners available for reference as I read each book. I wasn't finding those stereotypes. Why? The answer was the authors. Almost without exception all the books were written by authors from the cultures, authors married to someone in the culture, or authors who lived, or had lived and/or worked in the cultures they wrote about. That was a revelation to me. Having to examine each book for authenticity meant paying careful attention to the authors.

The last section of the bibliography is for teachers. My first thought was to include only expository books about the contributions of the Islamic world. As I examined my choices my thoughts turned to the question of what exactly did I think teachers needed to know about Arab, Middle East and Muslim cultures? Which topics could I include that would help them have a more rounded understanding? To come to a decision meant exploring the books I own. My personal library contains about 1,600 books, excluding cookbooks. They are not catalogued, but shelved in sections labeled children's books, folktales, women's issues, personal interests, dictionaries, teaching texts, and research. Some books are cross-overs. Some, for instance, can be found either in the personal interest or the research section. Which section sometimes depends on available space, or a project I might be working on. After searching through my books, I decided teachers should know something about Arab children and contemporary issues about Middle

Easterners, Arabs and Muslims in America. I was going to stop there, but again, another question. I am a literacy teacher, what could I include that would help teachers know something about the role of writing in Islam? I looked through my foreign language books and found two that I thought would work. A new section was added. Written Arabic does more than transmit thoughts and ideas, it is an art form in and of itself. Buildings are profusely adorned with Arabic script. Arabic calligraphy can be found in illuminated manuscripts, paintings and ceramics.

I thought I had finally completed the bibliography. As I was organizing papers on my desk my eye caught the list of stereotypes. The word “women” jumped out at me and crashed into the phrase “women in the news” in my head. Another section of the bibliography was born in that instant. I had many experiences with women I encountered in the Arab world and the Middle East. I never met one that actually fit the stereotype of the helpless, dominated, meek veiled woman. A few more books were added to the bibliography. Thinking about the categories in the teacher’s section led to an examination of the reason for this focused bibliography: to provide children with the means of countering existing stereotypes of Arabs, Muslims and Middle Easterners. Teachers need more than literature for children, therefore the resource section has been expanded to 31 titles.

This journey has been as exciting and as eye-opening as any I have ever taken. I have ideas for extending the bibliography to include titles from Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, novels for grades six to twelve, lesson plan web sites and other credible resources that will help teachers.

### Afterthoughts

Stereotypes of Arabs, Middle Easterners and Muslims have been part of the media's stock of characterizations since the days of silent films. As I reflect on the realization that nearly all the books in the bibliography are written by individuals from the various cultures, I think I understand the difference between children's books from the 20<sup>th</sup> century and those in my bibliography. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century books with stereotypes of Arabs, Muslims and Middle Easterners, the stereotyped characters were part of any kind of story written by various children's authors. Stock characterizations are merely plugged in to a story. In the book *A Is For Arab* (Tchen & Manghnani, Eds., 2012), there are several examples, *Felix the Cat Shatters the Sheik*, *Walt Disney's Uncle Schrooge: The Mines of Solomon*, And *The Book of Sounds ABC*. I think cartoon and children's movie makers did the same thing. They spun stories and drew from "stock" stereotyped images. I believe any number of such examples can be found with stereotypes of Asian, Native, Hispanic and Black Americans. These books were not written about the various cultures of the Middle East or Arab world. In fact, in my research, as I reflect upon it now, for the books in the children's section I found only about 25 books published between 1951 and 1999 (48 yrs.) about the cultures of the Middle East or Arab world. But between 2001 and 2018 (17yrs.) I found 70. In the years that produced high numbers of books published I tried to determine if the spike was connected to a political event. Mine was a cursory look, to see if a thread could be found to follow. I did find an article in the January/February 1998 issue of *Aramco World* magazine (Clark, 1998) discussing the problem of a 7-year-old Muslim student who wasn't able to write a report on Muhammad because he was unable to find material in his school library. According to the author "Publishers of Islamic books for children sprang up in the 1970's in both the United States and Britain, responding to the needs of two



groups: the growing Muslim immigrant communities, and smaller but significant body of Western converts to Islam” (p.32). The author recounts how the publishing of books for Muslims about Islam led to fables and stories about heroes and treasures of the East being published. A project for another time.

## Bibliography

### Children's Section

#### Algeria

**Kessler, Cristina.** *One Night: A Story from the Desert.* Illustrated by Ian Schoenherr, (30 pp.).

The Putman & Grosset Group, 1995. ISBN: 9780698116672. Picture book.

Muhamad is a Tuareg who lives in the Sahara with his family and community members. He introduces us to his family and community members, to the rituals and traditions of the Tuareg, and what daily life is like for a Tuareg boy. This story offers a glimpse of the rapidly vanishing life of the Tuareg. The reader should note that Tuaregs are Muslims, but the women do not cover their faces, the men do.

**Meddour, Wendy.** *A Hen in the Wardrobe.* (151 pp.). Frances Lincoln Children's Books,

2012. ISBN: 97818478022555. Novel.

The Ramadan family has a problem. Mr. Ramadan is sleepwalking and creating havoc so there isn't much sleeping for the rest of the family. In an attempt to help his dad, Ramzi seeks help in finding a doctor. Mr. Ramadan finally agrees to see the doctor, who discovers the problem. The solution however is not so simple. Mr. Ramadan reveals he is a Berber from the mountains of Algeria; the doctor's diagnosis is nostalgia and his solution is for the family to leave England for a visit to Mr. Ramadan's village. But will this visit cure Mr. Ramadan? This humorous story offers an interesting portrait of Berber village life as well as addressing the issue of immigrants adjusting to living in a different culture. This book is easy to read, and the illustrations enhance the humor in every chapter. There is a glossary of Arabic terms for readers.

**Awards:** John C. Laurence Award; First place: Islamic Foundation's International Writing Competition; Shortlist: Muslim Writer's Award 2011.

### **Bahrain**

**Johnson, Julia. *Saluki: Hound of the Bedouin*.** Illustrated by Susan Keeble, (52 pp.). Stacey International, 2012. ISBN: 9781906768904. Picture book - Historical fiction.

The author carefully weaves historical fact and fiction in this story of the relationship between the Bedouin and the Saluki. Readers are transported to a time and lifestyle that is disappearing and in some places already has disappeared. The relationship between Bedouin and Saluki has existed for centuries. The Saluki, thought to be the oldest dog breed, has been traced back to ancient Mesopotamia. This is a well-researched, timeless, beautifully illustrated story that sheds light on the actual life of the Bedouin. Although there are conflicting reports about whether there are still traditional Bedouin in Bahrain. I have chosen Bahrain as the cultural origin of this story since research confirms there were traditional Bedouins before the oil industry transformed Bahrain and the breeding of Arabian Salukis is well established in Bahrain.

### **Egypt**

**Brandenberg, Alik. *Mummies Made in Egypt*.** Illustrated by Alik Brandenberg, (28 pp.). HarperTrophy, 1979. ISBN: 9780064460118. Picture book - Non-fiction.

Mummies were important to the ancient Egyptians and they are a fascination for young people. Alik, with straightforward language and detailed drawings, tells the story of the why and how of Egyptian mummies. Many of her drawings are modeled after drawings from ancient Egyptian tombs. Ancient Egyptians worshiped many gods and anyone trying to learn about ancient

Egyptian religion might find it confusing. She singles out those gods most associated with the ritual of the dead.

**Awards:** Reading Rainbow Book; IRC, CBC Children's Choice; Notable Children's Trade Book in the Field of Social Studies (NCSS/CBC); Garden State Children's Book Award (New Jersey).

**Gerrard, Roy.** *Croco'nile*. Illustrated by Roy Gerrard Farrar, (32 pp.). Straus & Giroux, 1994.

ISBN: 9780374316595. Picture book.

The setting is ancient Egypt in this vividly illustrated, rhymed narrative about the adventures of a boy, Hamut and his sister, Nekatu, who stow away on a boat and end up miles away from their village. They are saved by their friend the crocodile. The story is delightful, and the illustrations are an introduction to the culture of ancient Egypt. Children reading this book will enjoy the challenge of translating the hieroglyphics in the story using the hieroglyphic alphabet key included in the book.

**Hassanein, Amany.** *Goha and His Donkey (Retold by Author)* Illustrated by Valeri Gorbachev, (16 pp.). Richard C. Owen Publishers, Inc. 1999. ISBN: 9781572741805. Picture book - Folktale.

Goha is a familiar character all over the Arab world. Each country has its own version of stories with Goha as a fool or a wise man. In this story Goha and his son are out walking with their donkey. As they walk along Goha is criticized by everyone, first for letting his son ride the donkey, then, because he is riding, and his son is walking, and next because they are both walking. He comes to the conclusion you cannot please all of the people all the time.

**Johnson-Davies, Denys.** *Goha the Wise Fool*. Illustrated by Hany El Saed Ahmed, Hag

Hamdy Mohamed Fattouh and Ahmed Mohamed Hamed El Sayed, (40 pp.). Philomel Books, 2005. ISBN: 9780399242229. Picture book - Folktale.

Here are 15 Goha stories, funny and full of wisdom. Goha is one of the most beloved characters in the Middle East and Arab world. Each country has their version of these stories. Folktales provide insight into the values of a culture. Folktales enable cultures to make connections across time and space. It is worth mentioning the illustrations are hand sewn appliques traditionally used to decorate tents, known as Khiyamuyas in Arabic. They are now almost exclusively made in the Cairo tentmakers souk. There is a photograph of two of the illustrators engaged in making appliques in Cairo.

**Awards:** Parents Choice Award, 2005.

**Jeunesse, Gallimard, Claude Delafosse and Philippe Biard. *Pyramids: A First Discovery***

**Book.** Illustrated by Philippe Biard, (35 pp.). Scholastic Inc., 1994.

ISBN: 9780590427869. Picture book - Non-fiction.

The mysteries of the pyramids of ancient Egypt have held people in thrall for as long as anyone can remember. Even young children often know about them. And along with the fascination, comes many questions. This little book of drawings, and the use of transparent plastic pages, offers a wonderful overview of the building, use and some history of the pyramids.

**Heide, Florence Parry & Judith Heide Gilliland. *The Day of Ahmed's Secret.*** Illustrated by

Ted Lewin, (30 pp.). Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, 1990. ISBN: 9780688088941.

Picture book.

Ahmed lives in Cairo and helps his father deliver bottled gas to customers. He drives a donkey drawn cart. Many of his deliveries are in the old city according to the illustrations, where the streets are too narrow for automobiles. As Ahmed works, he thinks about the secret he will share with his family at the end of the day. He can write his name! The authors offer no hint of how or where he has learned to write his name. While some may see this as a major flaw in the story, there is the possibility of using the question of how and where he learned to write his name as a topic for discussion and/or research about life in Cairo for some of the children living there.

**Matze, Claire Sidhom.** *The Stars in My Geddoh's Sky*. Illustrated by Bill Farnsworth, (30 pp.).

Albert Whitman & Company, 1999. ISBN: 9780807576106. Picture book.

Alex's grandfather, Geddoh, visits from Egypt. During his visit he shares stories about Egypt. Alex and his grandfather grow very close and Alex is worried he will not see his grandfather again. His grandfather shares a special constellation with Alex and reminds him that even though they live far apart they share the same sky. This comforts Alex. This is a delightful story of love and the power of story to help family connect to each other no matter where they live. The author's descriptions of Egypt are made more vivid by the illustrations.

**Roth, Susan L. & Karen Leggett Abouraya.** *Hands Around the Library: Protecting Egypt's*

*Treasured Books*. Illustrated by Susan L. Roth, (32 pp.). Dial Books for Young Readers,

2012. ISBN: 9780803737471. Picture book - Non-fiction.

Karen Leggett Abouraya participated in the protests in Egypt that were a part of what is known as the Arab Spring. She marched in Alexandria. When the marchers headed toward the library there was the very real possibility that the library could be damaged or destroyed. The library

director called on many of the marchers to create a barrier around the building to protect it from some of the angrier protestors. Everyone who heard the library director's plea formed a chain, everyone holding hands, until the library was surrounded. This is Karen's story, and an inspirational story of the importance of that library to the people of Alexandria, even in the midst of such heated protest.

**Awards:** All in 2013: Arab American Book Award; Notable Social Studies Trade Books; Bank Street College of Education Best Children's Books; Cooperative Children's Book Center Choices; Notable Books for a Global Society: International Reading Association; National Council of Teachers of English Orbis Pictus Nonfiction Recommended Book; Best Books for Young Children: Children's Africana Book Awards Committee.

**Rius, Maria, Gloria Verges & Oriol Verges. *Journey Through History: Prehistory to Egypt.***

Illustrated by Maria Rius, (30 pp.). Barrons, 1988. ISBN: 9780812033908.

Picture book - Historical fiction.

This delightfully illustrated history and engagingly written text will help children understand the beginnings of civilization. The story follows children as they move through a museum looking at and commenting on displays of prehistoric to ancient Egyptian exhibits. There is a guide to parents with a short description of some major developments in history: Fire, Stone and Metals, Agriculture and livestock, Settlements, Early trade, The city, Writing and Egyptian civilization.

**Wolf, Bernard. *Coming to America: A Muslim Family's Story.*** Photographs by Bernard Wolf,

(46 pp.). Lee & Low Books, Inc. 2003. ISBN: 9781584301776. Picture book - Non-fiction.

This is the story of the Mahmoud family. They are Egyptian and immigrated to America from Alexandria. The photo essay takes us through the transitions, adjustments, difficulties and joys of settling in a new land. Children will learn something about how the Mahmoud family builds a new life in America and maintains the traditions of their culture and religion. This book is a timely addition to any classroom or school library. Immigrants and in particular, Muslim immigrants are an important topic of conversation.

### Iran

**Adl, Shirib.** *I is for Iran*. Photographs by Kamyar Adl, (26 pp.). Frances Lincoln Books for Children, 2011. ISBN: 9781847802118. Picture book.

This is a beautiful alphabet book with photographs of Iran to represent every letter of the alphabet. Food, holidays, architecture, ancient ruins, shopping daily life. The photographs are luscious, the end papers exquisite and the richness of the Iranian culture shines through each image.

**Jalali, Reza.** *Moon Watchers: Shirin's Ramadan Miracle*. Illustrated by Anne Sibley O'Brien, (36 pp.). Tilbury House Publishers, 2017. ISBN: 9780884485872. Picture book.

Shirin and her family are Iranians who live in the United States. The narrator is Shirin. The story revolves around Ramadan, the month of fasting for Muslims. Shirin and her father watch for the new moon to begin the month of Ramadan. Each family member is participating except for Shirin, everyone says she is too young. She finally convinces her parents to let her fast for a part of the time. Explanations about rituals related to Ramadan are imbedded in the story as well as how each family member copes with fasting from sunup to sundown. The authors included a



small detail, a Turbah, a small prayer stone made from clay. The Turbah is used primarily by Shia Muslims. The quality of the illustrations complements the tranquility of the story.

**Khodadad, Kaviani. *Mehregaan: The Triumph of Liberty Over Tyranny*.** Illustrated by

Kaviani Khodadad, (43 pp.). CreateSpace, 2017. ISBN: 9780692892794. Picture book -

Legend.

This is the story of one of the three major holidays celebrated in Iran. It dates back to before Islam came to Persia, and Zoroastrianism was the religion and Ahura Mazda the deity. This story is told in rhyme with vibrant illustrations. Social Justice is a major theme. The book also contains a glossary and an explanation of how Iranians celebrate this holiday in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

**Khodadad, Kaviani. *Norooz with My Family*.** Illustrated by Kaviani Khodadad, (36 pp.).

CreateSpace Publishing Platform, 2017. ISBN: 9781542930161. Picture book - Realistic

fiction.

Norooz is the Iranian New Year and family members are gathered together to share stories about the holiday. Written in rhyme, this story provides accurate explanations, history and rituals associated with Norooz. It is a time of great excitement when family members work together house cleaning, shopping, and preparing special foods. The deep, rich, intensive colors of the illustrations are evocative of ancient Persia.

**Mirsadeghi, Nazanin. *The Story of Spring and Norooz (An Untold Tale of Persian New Year)*.**

Illustrated by Sanam Hooshvar, (24 pp.). Bahar Books, 2017. ISBN: 9781939099662.

Picture book.

The story of Norooz, English language edition, is told in the style of a fairy tale. Norooz is the Persian New Year and is celebrated in the spring beginning with the vernal equinox. The celebration may have originated with Zoroastrianism, a religion that predates Islam, going back more than 3,000 years. The illustrations are bright, cheerful and whimsical a complement to this engaging story about Norooz.

**Robert, Na'ima bint.** *The Swirling Hijaab*. Illustrated by Nilesh Mistry, (22 pp.). Mantra Lingua Ltd, 2002. ISBN: 9781852691639. Picture book - Farsi and English.

A little girl takes the reader on an imaginary journey as she plays with her mother's hijaab. A ship's sail, a fort, a Bedouin tent and so much more. The language is straightforward and the colorful illustrations match each of her imaginary uses of the hijaab. This small story presents a picture of a little girl doing the same things many children do with their favorite blankie.

### Iraq

**Halls, Kelly Milner and Major William Sumner.** *Saving the Baghdad Zoo: A True Story of Hope and Heroes*. Illustration and photography credits listed on copyright page, (64 pp.). Greenwillow Books, 2010. ISBN: 9780061772023. Picture book: Non-fiction.

The invasion of Iraq in 2003 left the entire country devastated. Army Captain William Sumner was assigned the task of saving the animals roaming the destroyed country. He coordinated an international group of experts to accomplish this task. The photographs document the people, places, animals and events of each step of this extraordinary story. Given the seriousness of the task, the tone of the story is one of optimism.

**Awards:** Parent's Choice Silver Award Honor, 2010.

**Heide, Florence Parry and Judith Heide Gilliland.** *The House of Wisdom.* Illustrated by

Mary GrandPre, (38 pp.). DK Publishing, 1999. ISBN: 9780789425621. Picture book -

Historical fiction.

The authors and illustrator have skillfully and beautifully woven a story around the historical figure of Ishaq, the son of Hunayn, a scholar in 8<sup>th</sup> century Baghdad and the House of Wisdom. Both Ishaq and Hunayn were renowned as scholars and translators. The House of Wisdom was a library, the center of intellectual life, learning and research, where scholars from all over the known world gathered to study and work. The Caliph sent emissaries out into the world to collect books in any language to bring to the library for translation into Arabic. Love of learning, exploration and reading are passions brought to life on every page. Ishaq has a love of learning but watching the caravans returning to Baghdad, fires his imagination and determination to go with a caravan and explore while collecting books for the library. This is his story.

**Henderson, Kathy.** *Lugalbanda: The Boy Who Got Caught Up in a War: An Epic Tale*

*From Ancient Iraq.* Illustrated by Jane Ray, (77 pp.). Candlewick Press, 2006. ISBN:

9780763627829. Picture book - Myth.

According to the author, this Sumerian story translated from cuneiform clay tablets, is the oldest written story, dating back to about 2600 BCE. The author has included some history and information about the Sumerian culture. Lugalbanda was a prince with seven older brothers, all princes and each commanding their own army. When his brothers marched off to war, Lugalbanda followed them. After days of marching, Lugalbanda fell ill. Too far from the palace, he was placed in a warm cave and left with food, water, an ax and a dagger. Frightened, he prayed to the goddess to keep him safe and help him heal. His prayers answered, he set out with

his supplies to find his brothers. Along the way he encounters a fierce bird, the Anzu bird (mythical bird with magic powers), with a chick in the nest. When the Anzu parents fly away, he makes his way to the nest, feeds the chick, leaves treats and decorates the nest. The parents return and want to know who did this. Lugalbanda comes out of hiding, the bird repays him for his kindness by helping him find his father and brother and bestowing a gift on him. This is a story about courage and kindness. The story is beautifully told, and the history makes this book excellent for social studies.

**Awards:** Parent's Choice Award, 2006.

**Kuntz, Doug and Amy Shrodes. *Lost and Found Cat: The True Story of Kunkush's***

*Incredible Journey.* Illustrated by Sue Cornelison, (42 pp.). Crown Books for Young Readers, 2017. ISBN: 9781524715472. Picture book - Non-fiction.

The journey of a family fleeing Mosul, Iraq in the dead of night for a new life in Norway is one of bravery and kindness. Not wanting to leave their beloved cat Kunkush behind, the children work to keep the smugglers from realizing they have their pet with them. However, when they reach the shores of Lesbos the landing was difficult and Kunkush, wet and frightened was separated from the family. Volunteers helped the family search for him, but to no avail. They had to leave on the next leg of their long journey. Two volunteers eventually found Kunkush, and with great determination, using social media and flyers searched for and found Kunkush's family. The subdued illustrations help convey the sense of love and hope. There are photographs of parts of the journey, the family, the volunteers and of course, Kunkush.

**Moss, Carol. *Science in Ancient Mesopotamia.*** Illustrations by Drew Brook Cormack

Associates, (63 pp.). Franklin Watts, 1998. ISBN: 9780531159309. Expository text.

The author traces the path of science through the “land between the rivers”. With Iraq so much in the news, information about the contributions of the Mesopotamians can be part of not only science lessons, but of history as well. This book is easy to read for upper elementary students. It includes a glossary, an index, and a list of resources, with a note reminding readers that sites disappear and are often replaced with different ones.

**O’Connor, Karen.** *A Kurdish Family: Journey Between Two Worlds*. Photograph

Acknowledgements are numerous and can be found on Page 56, (56 pp.) Lerner Publications Company, 1996. ISBN: 9780822597438. Non-fiction.

The author, with the help of translators, takes the reader on a visual tour of the plight of the Kurds. One family is the focus of this immigration story. They were forced to flee Iraq to a refugee camp in Turkey because of war. Eventually they were able to resettle in the United States, but not before they endured tremendous hardship. The difficulties of the Kurds is not a popular topic, so not much is known about them and their desire to have a home called Kurdistan. They are currently located in southeastern Turkey, northern Syria, northern Iraq, and northwestern Iran. They were not consulted after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire when the Europeans drew the political lines that formed the countries in the area.

**Rumford, James.** *Silent Music: A Story of Baghdad*. Illustrated by James Rumford, (32 pp.).

A Neal Porter Book - Roaring Book Press, 2009. ISBN: 9781596432765.

Ali lives in Baghdad and loves music, dancing and playing soccer, but he loves calligraphy most of all. He likens calligraphy to music, silent music playing in his head as he practices his words, over and over again. His hero is Yakut a famous calligrapher who lived in Baghdad in the thirteenth century and during a war, climbed to the top of a tower to record the battle below. Ali

takes refuge into the sanctuary of his calligraphy when the bombs and missiles are dropping all over his city. Rumford, who is a master calligrapher, has skillfully woven calligraphy into every scene on each page making each illustration unique.

**Awards:** Bank Street Best Children’s Book of the Year; Michigan Great Lakes Great Books Award Master List; NCTE Notable Children’s Books in the Language Arts; Capitol Choices Noteworthy Titles for Children and Teens; CCBC Choice; IRA Notable Books for a Global Society; American Library Association Notable Children’s Book; NCSs-CBC Notable Trade in the Field of Social Studies; Charlotte Zolotow Award/ Honor Book; Jane Addams Children’s Book Award Honor Book.

**Robinson, Anthony & Annemarie Young. *Mohammed’s Journey: A Refugee Diary.***

Illustrated by June Allen, (32 pp.). Frances Lincoln Children’s Books, 2009. ISBN: 9781845076535. Picture book - Non-fiction.

The authors retell Mohammed’s story using Mohammed’s words. Mohammed is Kurdish, his father was killed by Iraqi soldiers and he and his mother are forced to flee Kirkuk. They make their way, traveling through Iran, all the way through Turkey, to Istanbul and finally to England and safety. He describes the hardships he and his mother endured while trying to get to a safe place, how this experience affected him, his struggles and triumphs making adjustments to his new life and his hopes and dreams for the future. The illustrations and photographs offer the reader a glimpse of Mohammad’s life. There is a section at the end of the book with information about Iraq that offers context for this story.

**Stamaty, Mark Alan. *Alia’s Mission: Saving the Books of Iraq.*** Illustrated by Mark Alan

Stamaty, (32 pp.). Dragonfly Books, 2004. ISBN: 9780375857638. Picture book-

## Non-Fiction.

Alia loves books, they hold the history of her country, and so much more. They are treasures and Alia is determined to save the books in her library from destruction because of war. She enlists the help of her friends and neighbors and together they manage to save 30,000 books. The library and the remaining books are destroyed by fire. This graphic edition of Alia's story includes details about how the books were removed from the library, where they were first housed, how they were collected and moved again to Alia's house and the houses of a few close friends. Included are scenes depicting the chaos war brought to Baghdad. In contrast to Jeanette Winter's version, Stamaty's is black and white with only a splash of color in the title. The last page includes a few paragraphs about the famous libraries of ancient Egypt and Iraq. Any teacher using this book would need to understand why the invasion of Iraq by the United States took place to be ready to engage in a discussion when students raise questions.

**Awards:** Middle East Outreach Council Book Award for 2005.

**Winter, Jeanette. *The Librarian of Basra: A True Story from Iraq*.** Illustrated by Jeanette

Winter, (32 pp.). Harcourt, Inc., 2005. ISBN: 9780152054458. Picture book.

A colorful version of Alia's determination to save the books of the library she worked in for fourteen years. Alia loves books, she thinks they are treasures, each one filled with stories, history and information. Many of the books contain the history of her country. War is coming, and Alia is determined to save her treasures. Friends and neighbors help her and in the end 30,000 books were saved. The colorful, straightforward illustrations provide clear visual impressions of the fear and tension experienced by the characters as they struggle to save the books.

**Awards:** Middle East Outreach Council 2005 Honorable Mention.

**Winterberg, Philipp.** *Am I Small?* Illustrated by Nadja Wichmann, (32 pp.). Philipp

Winterberg, 2014. ISBN: 9781499507232. Picture book - Bi-lingual English/Kurdish.

Tamia wants to know if she is small. She sets about to find an answer by going along and asking each creature she encounters the same question: Am I Small? The tiny creatures tell her no, the very large creatures tell her yes, the just right creatures tell her she is just the right size. It's all about perspective! This charmingly illustrated book will help children accept themselves and learn something about perspective.

### Jordan

**Al Abdullah, Her Majesty Queen Rania.** *The Sandwich Swap.* Illustrated by Tricia Tusa,

(32 pp.). Triumph Books, 2010. ISBN: 9781423124849. Picture book.

Salma and Lily were best friends. In school they did everything together, they sat together at lunch. Secretly Lily thought Salma's sandwich of chickpea paste was awful and Salma thought Lily's sandwich of peanut butter and jelly was gross. One day, Lily told Salma she thought her lunch was yucky. What began as an argument between two friends ended up in a cafeteria food fight! When the principal reprimanded them, they were sorry they argued. The next day, Lily had the courage to ask Salma if she wanted to taste her sandwich, Salma offered Lily a bit of hers. They decided they each liked the sandwich of the other. The next day the girls went to the principal to ask permission for a special event, a peanut butter and jelly/hummus on pita school lunch party. The light, breezy illustrations add a bit of whimsy, matching the quality of voice of the text.



**Awards:** Parent's Choice Award, 2010.

**Azzoubi, Rana. *Through a Mud Wall*.** Illustrated by Omar Wisam, (84 pp.). Rana Azzobi,

2007. ISBN: 9789957860608. Novel.

Nadia and Walid are excited to be off for a family visit to their grandfather's farm. Always looking for some excitement, they join their cousins Mohammad and Omar ready for an adventure. Against the wishes of the adults, the kids investigate a nearby cave and just as they discover what they think is treasure, they are chased out of the cave by a neighbor. They go to uncle Kareem for help. When the contents of the cave are identified, everyone is shocked. Adventure and humor make this a delightful read. The author is Jordanian, and her stories are based in part on her own life experiences. There is a glossary of Arabic terms.

**Azzoubi, Rana. *Million Star Hotel*.** Illustrated by Omar Wisam, (91 pp.). RaMa for

EduCulture, 2009. ISBN: 9789957513023. Novel.

Nadia is not happy. Her mom's friends are visiting from New Mexico and their son Joey, Nasty Joey, as Nadia thinks of him, is not her favorite person. The two families are bound for Wadi Rum to camp and for a ride in a hot air balloon over the Wadi. As the families head for home across the desert in two jeeps, Nadia's father realizes the other jeep is having trouble. He leaves the jeep with Nadia and Joey parked on a spot of hard packed sand, telling them to stay put. It's dark and Nadia and Joey are bored. They decide to head out after dad. But the desert is not a place to go wondering. Hoping to find Bedouin, they find a pickup truck instead. Believing it will stay parked all night, they crawl in the back and look at the stars, waiting for morning. That's when the trouble begins. There is a glossary of Arabic terms.

### Kuwait

**Addasi, Maha.** *The White Nights of Ramadan.* Illustrated by Ned Ganno, (32 pp.). Boyds

Mills Press, 2008. ISBN: 9781590785232. Picture book.

Although Ramadan, the Islamic month of fasting during the daylight hours, is fairly familiar, the celebration of Girgian (gur-gee-ANN) is observed in the countries of the Arabian Gulf. It begins in the middle of Ramadan when the moon is full and lasts for three nights. Noor and her brothers are eager to celebrate. The children dress in fancy clothes and carry decorated bags, going from house to house getting candy. Everywhere Ramadan lanterns (fanouses) glow in the night. After returning home the children take baskets of food to the mosque for the poor. This is a story that could be paired with one about Halloween. The illustrations are colorful and add to the sense of festivity of the story. There is an Author's note and a glossary.

### Lebanon

**Aktar, Nasreen.** *Samira's Eid.* Illustrated by Enebor Attard, (30 pp.). Mantra Lingua Ltd, 2009.

Translated by Azza Habashi. ISBN: 9781846116506. Picture book - Arabic and English.

The story of the festival of Eid al-Fetr as celebrated by one family. Eid al-Fetr marks the end of Ramadan, the month of fasting for Muslims worldwide. The story within a story is a focus on the actual fasting that is the point of Ramadan and how the children in the family experience it. The book includes a glossary, a map of Islamic countries, Islamic art activities, making Eid holiday cards, and recipes for traditional holiday food.

**Askar, Saoussan & Robert Munsch.** *From Far Away.* Illustrated by Micael Marchenko,

(22 pp.). Annick Press (U.S.) Ltd, 2014. ISBN: 9781550373967. Picture book.

Saoussan and her family were forced to leave Beirut, Lebanon because of war. Her home was destroyed and they were in grave danger. This is Saoussan's story, told from her perspective, of her first days in an English-speaking school in Canada. Although this story is classified as fiction, Robert Munsch wrote this story based on letters that Saoussan wrote to him when she was five years old. Together they bring to life, in easily readable prose, the fear a child experiences when there is a language barrier and no one to translate. The illustrations are as engaging as the little girl in the story.

**Heide, Florence Parry & Judith Heide Gilliland. *Sami and the Time of the Troubles*.**

Illustrated by Ted Lewin, (32 pp.). Clarion Books, 1992. ISBN: 9780395720851. Picture book.

War has come to Lebanon and Sami and his family hide in the basement while bombs drop, and the sound of gunshots can be heard. On these days, the adults cannot go to work or the children to play. Their mother has decorated the basement with colorful rugs to remind them of better days. They listen to a radio to find out if it is safe to go outside. As the family reaches the street, children are carrying signs and shouting in protest against the war. Ever hopeful the adults will listen.

**Lovelace, Maud Hart. *The Trees Kneel at Christmas*.** Illustrated by Carie-Claude Monchaux,

(112 pp.). ABCO & Daughters Publishing, 1951. ISBN: 9781562399993. Novel.

This story is about a Lebanese family. They are Christians, and grandmother is telling Afify (Afeefee) and Hanna the story about how the trees kneel at Christmas in Lebanon, but, she explains, not in Brooklyn. Afify is sure if she could go to her secret place in the park she would

see the trees kneel. This author learned about the trees from the Lebanese families she was friends with. This story is different because Christianity is not usually associated with Arabs, but Christianity in Lebanon can be traced to the time of Christ. In this story readers will learn of the Lebanese traditions associated with Christmas. The illustrations are indicative of the 1950s.

**Shefelman, Janice.** *A Peddler's Dream.* Illustrated by Tom Shefelman, (32 pp.). Houghton

Mifflin Company, 1992. ISBN: 9780395609040. Picture book.

Soloman was determined to travel to American and make a new life for himself and his future bride. Leaving his family and future bride behind he travels on a ship for four weeks. When he reaches America, he takes the advice of a shop keeper who explains that being a peddler is a good way to start to save for the future business he dreams of. After many months and having faced hardships along the way, he is taken in by a farming family, and given a job. Eventually he secures work in a store exactly like the one he dreams of owning one day. Follow Solomon as he works to fulfil his dream. Children will get a glimpse of life at the turn of the century, when so many immigrants came to America to start a new life. The illustrations lend themselves to the struggles and joys of Solomon's pursuit of his dream.

### Mauritania

**Cunnane, Kelly.** *Deep in the Sahara.* Illustrated by Hoda Hadadi, (40 pp.). Schwartz & Wade

Books, 2013. ISBN: 9780375870347. Picture book.

Lalla wants to be just like her mother, sister, cousin and grandmother. Each woman wears a beautiful, colorful malafa (moo-LAH-fuh) over her clothing. Lalla tells each one her desire to wear a malafa so she can be beautiful like them, they in turn explain that the malafa is about

more than being beautiful. Finally, she is given one of her own. A wonderful, beautifully illustrated story that offers a narrative different from the sometimes, controversial narrative in the western world about the cloaking of the body in the Middle East and Arab world.

**Awards:** Kirkus Reviews Best Book of the Year, 2014.

### Morocco

**Alalou, Elizabeth & Ali Alalou.** *The Butter Man*. Illustrated by Julie Klear Essakalli, (32 pp.).

Charlesbridge, 2008. ISBN: 9781580891271. Picture book.

Nora's father (baba) makes couscous in a special pot he brought all the way from Morocco. It takes a long time for the couscous to cook. On these Saturdays Nora stays in the kitchen to watch her baba, but on one Saturday, she was especially hungry and kept asking for something to eat. Baba told her she had to wait and with her comment about "starving", he continues to cook. At the same time, he tells her the story about the butter man. It's a story from his childhood, when their crops failed because no rain came. His father had to sell their cow and leave their village in the Atlas Mountains to find work. Soon most of the food they had left was gone, even the butter. Baba's mother gave him a small piece of bread. He wanted butter, but all the butter was gone. She told baba to go to the edge of the road and wait for the butter man to come. While he waited, he was too hungry and ate the bread. He did this for many days, waiting for the butter man. Then one day, with the smallest piece of bread in his hand and while he waited and fretted about whether the butter man would ever come, down the road came his father, bringing food for the family. Eventually the rains came, they grew crops and bought another cow.

There is an author's note and glossary

The folk-art illustrations are bright and are indicative of life in the Berber village of Morocco.

**Awards:** Charlotte Zolotow Award Nominee for Highly Commended Title: 2008; Middle East Outreach Council Award: 2009; NCSS Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People: 2009; Children's Africana Book Awards Honor Book for Young Children: 2009.

**Baker, Jeannie *Mirror*.** Illustrated Jeannie Baker, (40 pp.). Candlewick Press, 2010.

ISBN: 9780763648480. Picture book - Wordless.

There are two families in this book. One family lives in Australia and the other in Morocco. The two stories on opposite sides of the book compare daily life for the families. The western side of the book opens from left to right, the Moroccan side from right to left. Each page mirrors some aspect of their daily lives. Though the homes people live in, the places where they live and their activities may be different, this book reinforces the idea that people, no matter where they live, also have much in common. The illustrations are unique, colorful and appear to be almost three dimensional.

**Awards:** *Horn Book* Fanfare Best Books of 2010, Picture Books; *Kirkus Reviews* 2010 Best Children's Books; IRA Notable Books for a Global Society, 2011; Children's Book Committee, Bank Street College of Education, Best Children's Books of the Year, 2011.

**Czernecki, Stefan. *Zorah's Magic Carpet*.** Illustrated by Stefan Czernecki, (32 pp.). Hyperion

Books for Children, 1995. ISBN: 9780786800810. Picture book.

Zorah dreamed of traveling. She wanted to see the world. One day her husband brings home a lost sheep. Holiday time is coming soon and Zorah's husband want to use the sheep for the holiday meal. The sheep tells Zorah that if she lets him go, she can shear its wool and make a

magic carpet with its wool, that will take her anywhere she wants to go. She follows the sheep's instructions and her trips are the substance of this story. Wonderful explanations are provided for some of the things she witnessed while traveling. The illustrations are right in keeping with the tradition of bright, colorful carpets in Morocco.

**Ichikawa, Satome. *My Father's Shop*.** Illustrated by Satome Ichikawa, (32 pp.). Kane/Miller Book Publishers. 2006. ISBN: 9781929132997. Picture book.

A humorous story of a Moroccan boy, Mustafa, whose father owns a rug shop. Mustafa's father wants him to learn a few words in different languages to greet customers. But Mustafa is more interested in the carpet his father gave him, the one with the hole in the middle. Off he runs, through the market to show his friend his carpet when a rooster follows him and along the way crows loudly. Mustafa's friend wants to know if the rooster is his and insists Mustafa make the rooster sing. As Mustafa tries, tourists in the market offer their interpretation of how a rooster sounds in their country. The delightful illustrations depict the colorful markets that can be seen all over Morocco.

**Awards:** USBBY Outstanding International Booklist, 2007; ASA Children's Africana Honor Book for Young Children, 2007; Best Children's Books of the Year, Bank Street College, 2007.

**Lewin, Ted. *The Storytellers*.** Illustrated by Ted Lewin, (40 pp.). Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, 1998. ISBN: 9780688151799. Picture book.

The author takes the reader on an incredible journey through the ancient walled city of Fez, following Abdul and his grandfather to work. The descriptions of every aspect of the city are enhanced by the illustrations which lend a sense of mystery and wonder to the city. At last Abdul

and his grandfather reach their spot by the old gate of the medina. Grandfather performs his ritual of sending the white bird to the sky to bring back a story. Once Grandfather begins, the crowds grow larger and inch closer, better to hear.

This story is based on the author's experiences following the storyteller, while in Morocco.

There is an author's note and a glossary.

**Awards:** Notable Children's Trade Book in the Field of Social Studies designation, NCSS/CBC, 1999; New York times Best Illustrated Book of the Year; School Library Journal Best Book of the Year; A Smithsonian Magazine Notable Book, 1999.

**London, Jonathan.** *Ali Child of the Desert*. Illustrated by Ted Lewin, (32 pp.). Lothrop, Lee & Shepherd Books, 1997. ISBN: 9780688125608. Picture book.

Ali and his father are traveling in the Sahara, with their herd of camel, to the Moroccan town of Rissani. Ali was finally old enough to make the trip. A fierce sandstorm separates them. When the storm blows over Ali is alone, he mounts his camel and heads west in the direction of the town. Along the way he meets a Berber goatherd and his son. They invite Ali to spend the night with them at an oasis. In the morning, although the goatherd invited Ali to go with them to their village, he chooses to stay at the oasis. The goatherd teaches Ali how to use their musket, so he can use it as a signal and leaves Ali some dates. Ali keeps the fire burning and every now and then fires the musket, hoping his father will find him and he does. This coming of age story is a wonderful window into a desert culture that has all but disappeared. The illustrations make the story come alive. The story is based on the experiences of the author while he was in Morocco. There is a Glossary at the end of the story.

**Awards:** Parent's Choice Gold Award, 1997.



**Rumford, James.** *Traveling Man: The Journey of Ibn Battuta, 1325 - 1354.* Illustrated by

James Rumford, (40 pp.). Houghton Mifflin Company, 2001. ISBN: 9780618083664.

Picture book - Non-fiction.

The author weaves a wonderful story of the life of Ibn Battuta. The mesmerizing artwork lures the reader along, as the serpentine ribbon of text leads from place to place. It is impossible in a children's book to include the entirety of Battuta's travels, but there is enough in this biography to astonish even a seasoned traveler. The calligraphy and decoration of each illustration is evocative of the art of illumination. Ibn Battuta traveled for almost 30 years and 75,000 miles. Included are maps, a glossary and historical notes.

**Awards:** ALA Notable Children's Books, 2002; MEOC Book Award, 2001.

### Palestine

**Bahous, Sally.** *Sitti and the Cats: A Tale of Friendship.* Illustrated by Nancy Malick, (24 pp.).

Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 1997. ISBN: 9781570981715. Picture book - Folk Tale.

Sitti encounters talking cats, she stops to help them and they in turn give her a bag of onion peels and a bag of garlic peels instructing her to put them under her bed. Her good deed brings her good fortune. This is a time-honored tale, about friendship and about doing good and receiving an unexpected reward. It offers a wonderful glimpse into Palestinian values and beliefs.

Sprinkled throughout the book are notes offering explanations about Palestine, Arabic words and food. The author provides an explanation of the purpose of Palestinian folk tales. An introduction and a glossary. Sitti is a gentle soul and the softly rendered illustrations match her gentle character.

**Nye, Naomi Shihad.** *Sitti's Secrets*. Illustrated by Nancy Carpenter, (32 pp.). Aladdin

Paperbacks, 1997. (Originally published by Simon & Shuster Books, hardcover edition, 1994). ISBN: 9780689817069. Picture book.

Based in part on the author's life when, as a child, she visited her grandmother in Palestine. A young girl describes her visit with her Siti (grandmother) who lives on the other side of the world. Their loving relationship, even without the benefit of a common spoken language, draws the reader into their shared experiences and the heartbreak of parting. The illustrations enhance the sense of intimacy and heartfelt emotion of this story.

**Awards:** Jane Addams Children's Book Award for Picture Book, 1994.

**Williams, Emma.** *The Story of Hurry*. Illustrated by Ibrahim Quraishi and Edited by Jean Stein,

(36 pp.). Seven Stories Press, 2014. ISBN: 9781609805890. Picture book.

This story, based on an actual event in Gaza, is told from the donkey's point of view. This is an anti-war story, but the author keeps the story focused on the donkey, which lends a small bit of humor to it. Hurry, the donkey wanted to do something to make the children happy, in the midst of war, so he allows Moody, the zoo keeper, to paint him so he looks like a zebra. A zebra which the zoo did not have. The illustrations are a mix of photographs, watercolors, and marker. There is a six-page historical note section for adult readers.

**Awards:** Middle East Outreach Council Book Awards: Honorable Mention, 2015.

### Saudi Arabia

**Alexander, Sue.** *Nadia the Willful*. Illustrated by Lloyd Bloom, (44 pp.). Dragonfly Books,

1983. ISBN: 9780394852652. Picture book.

This is a story of overcoming grief after the loss of a loved one. Nadia loved her brother Hamed. He was the only member of the Sheik Tarik's family that could calm Nadia when she was in a temper. One day, Hamed left their Bedouin camp to look for new grazing land for their sheep. He never returned. All attempts to find Hamed were to no avail. Sheik Tarik was inconsolable and forbade anyone from mentioning his son's name. Nadia was upset and angry. She remembered all the wonderful things about Hamed and her times with him. She could stand the silence no more and approach her father. Explaining what was in her heart, convincing him it was better to share thoughts, feelings and memories than to never speak of him. The illustrations are black, gray and white and lend a somberness to the story, but without being maudlin. I could find no research to indicate the author was ever in the Desert, but her depictions are accurate and well done.

**Awards:** Notable Children's Trade Book in the Field of Social Studies; NCTE Teachers' Choice; A *Booklist* Children's Reviewers' Choice. No dates available for these awards.

**MacDonald, Margaret Read and Nadia Jameel Talbah.** *How Many Donkeys? An*

*Arabic Counting Tale (Retold).* Illustrated by Carol Liddiment, (32 pp.). Albert

Whitman & Company, 2009. ISBN: 9780807534250.

This is the Saudi Arabian version of a traditional folk tale told in many Middle Eastern and Arab countries. Jouha is a silly man who never seems to be able to keep track of just how many donkeys he has. The illustrations are colorful and amusing, helping the reader to "see" Jouha's ongoing dilemma of miscounting his donkeys.

### Sudan

**Park, Linda Sue.** *A Long Walk to Water*, (120 pp). Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010.

ISBN: 9780547577319. Novel based on true events, two stories in one.

Salva's story: 1985

He was one of the lost boys of Sudan. Eleven years old, separated from his family during a seemingly endless war. Alone, he sets out on foot to find his family, or anyone from his village. Along the way he meets other boys, all looking for their families, a safe place to sleep, food. He walked 1,800 miles, for a year and a half, across the Sudan, to Ethiopia and finally into Kenya to a refugee camp. Follow his footsteps and hold your breath.

Nya's story: 2008

For seven months of the year Nya spent her days walking to and from the pond to get water and bring it to her family's village. When the pond dried up, the family camped near a lake three day's walk from their village. When the lake dried up, Nya dug in the earth until water slowly seeped to the surface enough for her to get some water. The water was not clean, people often became sick from drinking it. One-day strange men came to her village, they spoke to Nya's father and uncle, they looked at a place between two trees in the village, and finally they left. she did not understand what was happening. Eventually, the men returned with a large machine and drilled for three days until water shot up into the air. Water, finally.

Read the stories to discover the connection between Salva and Nya. There is an author's note at the end of the book.

**Awards:** Top 10 Books for Youth, Historical Fiction: 2011; IRA Notable Books for a Global Society, 2011; *Booklist* Lasting Connections of 2010, Social Studies; Jane Addams Children’s Book Award, 2012; Black-Eyed Susan Award Nominee, 2012; Flicker Tale Children’s Book Award, 2012; Great Lakes Book Award Nominee, 2012; Kentucky Blue Grass Award Nominee, 2012; Maine Student Book Award Nominee, 2012; Golden Sower Award Nominee, 2013; South Carolina Association of School Librarians Award Nominee, 2013; Young Hoosier Book Award Nominee, 2013.

**Williams, Karen Lynn and Khadra Mohammed. *My Name is Sangoel*.** Illustrated by

Catherine Stock, (32 pp.). Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2009. ISBN: 9780802853073. Picture book – Realistic Fiction.

A beautifully told story of a Sudanese boy who comes to America with his mother and sister, leaving behind all the other members of his family. War in South Sudan has forced him and his family from their village into a refugee camp and ultimately to resettle in America. The rest of the family must stay behind. He will most likely never see them again. Americans find it difficult to pronounce his name. Sangoel declines suggestions that he change his name and finds an inventive way to help Americans pronounce his name. His name is not only his identity, but that of his entire ancestral line.

There is an author’s note.

**Williams, Mary. *Brothers in Hope: The Story of the Lost Boys of Sudan*.** Illustrated by R.

Gregory Christie, (39 pp.). Lee & Low Books, 2005. ISBN: 9781584302322. Picture book- Historical fiction.

Garang is just eight years old when his village and the surrounding area is attacked while he is out tending the cattle. Many of his cattle are killed, the other run off in fear. He hides in the shadows of trees. Returning to his village, everyone is gone and the houses on fire. He began to wander down the road and met other boys, soon there were more people than he had ever seen. The boys took care of each other as best they could. Slowly, holding hands so no one would get lost, they walked to Ethiopia to a refugee camp where they met Tom who helped run the camp. But war came to Ethiopia, the boys were chased back into Sudan, again began to walk, on to Kenya, 1000 miles, for more than a year. They met Tom again, he took the youngest and sickest boys in his truck to the camp. At last they all met again in Kenya. But Tom had to leave again. Garang and the boys who survived, worked together to stay alive and it was 13 years before he saw Tom again. He came with news that the United States would find homes for the boys.

There is an author's note and an afterward with information about the boys.

**Awards:** Coretta Scott King Illustrator Award Honor, 2006; IRA Notable Children's Book Award, 2006; Best Children's Books of the Year: Outstanding Merit, 2006; Notable Books for a Global Society, 2006; Books Reflecting Diversity, 2006; Children's Book Award Notable, 2006; Bank Street College Best Children's Books of the Year Outstanding Merit, 2006; Children's Picks List, Book Sense, 2006; Family Fun Magazine, Best Children's Books, 2006.

### Syria

**Rahimi, Alhan. *Yara: My Friend from Syria*.** Illustrated by Anahit Aleksanyan, (35 pp.).

Alhan Rahimi, Publisher, 2016. ISBN: 9781520109305. Picture book.

This little story about Yara from Syria, who moves to Canada because of war, is really meant to provide an example of how we would like children and adults to respond when an immigrant

child, who does not speak the language of the host country, enters the classroom. The illustrations are in bright and the bold colors are in keeping with the upbeat tone of the story. The illustrations depicting Yara's life in Syria before the war show a modern family in a modern setting that could be anywhere in a western country. Before the war, that was Syria.

**Ruurs, Margriet. *Stepping Stones: A Refugee Family's Journey*.** Illustrated by Nizar Ali Badr,

Translated by Falah Raheem, (25 pp.). Orca Book Publishers, 2016.

ISBN: 9781459814905. Picture book - Arabic/English.

This is a story told all too often, a refugee story, a story of a family fleeing from war, a family finding a home in a new land. This time the place is Syria. The illustrations are what make this story so extraordinary. The stone artwork of Mr. Badr is astonishing in its ability to bring to life the emotions of Rama, her father, grandfather, mother and brother as they leave their home and walk to freedom.

There is a Forward and information about the author, the illustrator and a list of organizations that help refugees.

**Awards:** Kirkus Reviews Best Books of 2016 US; Christie Harris Illustrated Children's Literature Prize, CA 2017; Bank Street College of Education Best Children's Books of the Year, US, 2017; CL/R SIG International Reading Association Notable Books for a Global Society, US, 2017; CCBC Best Books Starred Selection, CA, 2017; Bolen Books Children's Book Prize, CA, 2017.

### Tunisia

**Gioanni, Alain. *Arafat: A Child of Tunisia*.** Photos by Alain Gioanni, Boutin, Francois Goalec,

Muriel Nicolotti, Michel Gauvry and Pascal Deloche, (23 pp.). Blackbirch Press, 2001.

ISBN: 9781410302892. Picture book – Non-fiction.

This lovely book provides a mini tour of both traditional and modern life in a seaside town in Tunisia. Photographs of Arafat's family, neighborhood, the family store, where he sometimes helps out, and his school. Photographs of the southern part of Tunisia offer a glimpse of life in the Sahara among the Bedouins.

There is a world map with Tunisia highlighted as well as a list of facts about Tunisia.

### Turkey

**Curtis, Chara M. *No One Walks on My Father's Moon*.** Illustrated by Rebecca Hyland,

(24 pp.). Voyage Publishing, 1996. ISBN: 9780964945418. Picture book.

This is a story about a boy who lives in two worlds. The one he shares with his hard working, old world thinking father, in a small village and the one he shares with other students and his teacher. In school he learns that America has sent a space ship to the moon and men have walked on the moon. Astonished, he relates this information to his father. His father is unbelieving and angry. This presents a problem for the boy, as his father thinks he is lying. The teacher explains that everyone has a different idea about the moon. With that idea in his mind, he proceeds to try to understand his father's point of view.

The author created this story based on a conversation with a friend from Turkey. Rebecca Hyland based her illustrations on drawings she made while she was in Turkey.

**Awards:** Washington State Governor's Writers Award, 1997.

**Gilani-Williams, Fawzia. *Nabeel's New Pants: An Eid Tale*.** Illustrated by Proiti Roy, (24 pp.).



Marshall Cavendish Children, 2010. ISBN: 9780761456292. Picture book.

This is an amusing story about Nabeel, the shoemaker and his family, all hurrying to prepare for Eid. House cleaning, food preparation and buying new clothes are a big part of the preparations. Nabeel, among other purchases, buys himself a pair of pants, but they are too long. First his wife decides to surprise him and shorten the pants. Not realizing that has already been done, his mother shortens them again. Both wife and mother are eager for Nabeel to try on his pants. Can you imagine his surprise when he does? The illustrations are bright and cheery, matching the spirit of this holiday tale.

**Awards:** Vermont Red Clover Award Nominee, 2012; CCBC Choices, 2011; Bank Street CBC Best Book of the Year, 2011; Five to Nine, 2011.

**Masood, Hiba. *Drummer Girl*.** Illustrated by Hoda Hadadi, (36 pp.). Daybreak Press, 2015.

ISBN: 9780990625971. Picture book - Realistic fiction.

Based on a true story, this colorfully illustrated book brings to life an old Ramadan tradition practiced in only a few small villages in the Middle East and Arab world. Before alarm clocks, during Ramadan (the annual month of fasting), before the sun rose, a drummer (musaharati) would walk through the village and wake everyone, so they might eat before daybreak.

Traditionally the drummer was a male member of the village. The setting of this story is Turkey, but the true story, upon which this one is based, took place in Cairo. The original story is about an Egyptian woman who became the musaharati to earn extra money to support her family, after her husband died. There is a glossary, an author's note, biographical information about the author and the illustrator and information about the publisher.

**Awards:** Literary Classics International Book Award Seal of Approval, 2017.

**Robinson, Anthony.** *Meltem's Journey: A Refugee Diary.* Illustrated by June Allan, (28 pp.).

Frances Lincoln, 2010. ISBN: 9781847800312. Picture book - Non-fiction.

Meltem and her family had a pistachio farm in a Kurdish area of Turkey. They lived peacefully until political tensions with the Turkish government forced her father to flee to Germany.

Meltem and her mother followed, with the help of German social services, then in the dead of night, hiding in a lorry, they arrived in England. They were settled in Bradford England, but they lived in terror from threats. Their house was set on fire, they were hounded by immigration officials. For their father it was run, hide, run. For Meltem and her mother it was fear, fear, fear, then prison. Meltem was so traumatized, while officials were trying to deport her and her mother that she was in and out of the hospital. Their ordeal lasted for 10 years before they were finally given leave to stay in England. The illustrations are subdued, matching the subdued tone of the story, interspersed with photographs.

There is a map, a fact section and historical notes about the Kurds in Turkey.

### United Arab Emirates

**Al Redha, Ahmad AbdulGhani.** *The Sifrah Glider.* Illustrated by Joanne Mendelski, (19 pp.).

Jerboa Books, 2008. ISBN: 978998859956. Picture book.

This little fantasy story stars an amusing character who bursts into the children's classroom larger than life. He is the special guest of the day and is there to tell them about the clothes he is wearing. At the end, he tells the kids he is special as he glides off into the horizon using his sifrah (the large white triangle cloth worn on the head, under the black rope, the agaal). The illustrations are bright, colorful and have a comic book quality to them, right in keeping with the mood of the story.

**Faruqi, Reem. *Lialah's Lunchbox: A Ramadan Story*.** Illustrated by Lea Lyon, (32 pp.).

Tilbury House Publishers, 2015. ISBN: 9780884484318. Picture book.

Lialah is from Abu Dhabi, but now resides in America. Ramadan has begun, and she is excited to be fasting for the first time but worried her classmates and teacher will not understand why she is not eating lunch. She hides in the library. The librarian is happy to see Lialah, so Lialah explains about fasting and Ramadan. The librarian convinces Lialah to explain things to her teacher. She writes a note and a poem. Her teacher responds with a note inviting Lialah to read her poem about Ramadan to the class.

**Awards:** ALA Notable Children's Books, 2016.

**Johnson, Julia. *Humpy Grumpy Saves the Day!*** Illustrated by Emily Styles, (31 pp.). Stacey

International, 2007. ISBN: 9781905299430. \*Picture book.

This is a lively story, written in easy rhyme about Humpy Grumpy Camel. He is the star of several stories written by this author. Although this is a delightful tale, it does have one realistic aspect, flashfloods. However, children will not realize these storms have really occurred and can be delighted with the poetry and light airy illustrations.

**Johnson, Julia. *The Pearl Diver*.** Illustrated by Patricia Al Fakhri, (56 pp.). Stacey International,

2003. ISBN: 9781909339767. \*Picture book - Historical fiction.

Saeed, age six, is at last invited to join the crew and his father, Abdullah, to learn pearl diving. He had been practicing swimming and holding his breath under water. Saeed would follow in the footsteps of his ancestors and learn the ways of the sea to become as good as his father. Stormy

sears and angry sharks add to the adventure, but the authors skillfully chronicle the life of the pearl divers of the Arabian Gulf. The beautiful illustrations mirror the fluid movement of the sea.

\*Dubai

### Art

**Robert, Na'ima BD.** *Journey Through Islamic Art.* Illustrated by Diana Mayo, (32 pp.).

Mantra Lingua, 2005. ISBN: 9781844444392. Picture book - English/Kurdish.

A young girl takes an imaginary journey through the Islamic world stopping to see the most notable icons of Islamic art. The illustrations bring to life the art and the short explanations are perfect for the young reader.

**Awards:** UK National Literacy Association WOW! Award 2005 for Best Children's Titles.

### History

**Ceceri, Kathy.** *The Silk Road: Explore the World's Most Famous Trade Route.* Illustrated

By Kathy Ceceri, (122 pp.). Nomad Press, 2011. ISBN: 9781934670620. Expository text.

The Silk Road was not just one road, but a series of interconnecting routes between China and Europe. Although the Silk Road is often most closely associated with China because that is where the silk route began, Muslims were heavily involved in the trade route. This book includes projects and is an excellent resource for learning about the contributions of Muslims to the world, spreading art, culture, religion and so much more along the Silk Road.

**Dennis, Yvonne Wakim & Maha Addasi.** *A Kid's Guide to Arab American History: More*

*Than 50 Activities.* Illustrated by Gail Rattray, (204 pp). Chicago Review Press, 2013.

ISBN: 9781613740170. Expository text.

In this book, the contributions of Egyptian, Iraqi, Jordanian, Lebanese, Palestinian, Syrian and Yemeni Americans are described through the many craft instruction. Learning about Arab Americans is the missing link in some multicultural curriculum.

There is a resource section and an index at the back of this book.

**Jungman, Ann. *The Most Magnificent Mosque*.** Illustrated by Shelley Fowles, (24 pp.).

Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 2004. ISBN: 9781845070120. Picture book - Realistic fiction.

In the days of the Moorish Empire, people of the book, Muslims, Christians and Jews lived in harmony. This is the story of the great mosque of Cordoba, told through the lives of three friends, a Christian, a Jew and a Muslim. A relevant story for today.

**Major, John S. & Betty J. Belanus. *Caravan to America: Living Arts of the Silk Road*.**

Illustrations: Photo Credits listed on page 129, (130 pp.). Cricket Books/A Marcato Book, 2002. ISBN: 9780812626773. Expository text.

This colorful text positions the people from the Middle East and Arab world in the context of the history of contributions of immigrants to the United States. The book is an extension of the Silk Road Project established by Yo-Yo Ma inspired by his travels. A wonderful resource for young researchers, this book connects history, geography, immigration and the arts.

**1001 Inventions and Awesome Facts from Muslim Civilization**, (96 pp.).

National Geographic Kids, 2012. ISBN: 9781426312588. Expository text.

The National Geographic organization worked with the Foundation for Science, Technology and Civilization to put together the information in this book. It was created for children from about age eight. The format is very much like the Guinness Book of World Records, with short bits of information in colorful boxes spread across the pages.

**Ruelle, Karen Gray & Deborah Durland DeSaix.** *The Grand Mosque of Paris: A Story of*

*How Muslims Rescued Jews During the Holocaust.* Illustrated by Karen Gray Ruelle & Deborah Durland DeSaix, (40 pp.). Holiday House, 2009. ISBN: 9780823423040. Picture Book - Non-fiction.

This is a not so well know story of the humanitarian effort by the Muslims in Paris to help Jews from being captured by the Nazis. The Mosque is a large complex and the rector was able to hide Jews for short periods of time and help them move on with falsified papers identifying the holder as a Muslim. It is estimated that more than 1,700 Jews passed through the mosque, many of them children.

There is an Afterword, a glossary, references, bibliography and an index.

**Awards:** ALA Notable Children's Book Award, 2010; NCTE Orbis Pictus Recommended Book, 2010; MEOC Honorable Mention, 2009; Booklist Top 10 Religion Books for Youth, 2010; Choices, 2010; Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young People, 2010; Smithsonian Magazine's Notable Books for Children, 2009.

### Immigrants

**Bunting, Eve.** *One Green Apple.* Illustrated by Ted Lewin, (32 pp.). Clarion Books, 2006.

ISBN: 9780618434770. Picture book.

Farah hasn't learned to speak English and she's on a field trip with the students from her new school. It is only her second day at this school. The students will ride together on a hay wagon to the orchard to pick apples. She finds this unusual, boys and girls sitting together. Everything is strange. This story revolves around Farah's inability to speak English and how she feels about being in that predicament. Eventually a classmate, Anna, helps Farah to say the word Apple. The ice is broken.

**Awards:** The Arab American National Museum Book Award – 2006.

### **Islam**

**Abdullah, Noorah Kathryn.** *What do we say... (A Guide to Islamic Manners)*. Illustrated by

Noorah Kathryn Abdullah, (20 pp.). The Islamic Foundation, United Kingdom, 2008.

ISBN: 9780860373506. Picture book - Non-fiction.

This is a book used by Muslims parents to help teach their children Islamic manners. The words and phrases in this little book can be heard all over the Arabic speaking world. Any reader will immediately recognize that, although the words are in Arabic, translated into English, they are the equivalent of the language American parents will teach their children. When someone sneezes you often hear people say in English, "God bless you." In Arabic the phrase is Al-Ham-du-lil-lah. The illustrations are cheerful and whimsical.

There is a glossary on the last page.

**Ali, Thuraya.** *Searching for the Eid Moon: Adventures of Mystical Desert Island Part 1*.

Illustrated by Thuraya Ali, (52 pp.). Al Marouf Publishing House, 2013.

ISBN: 9781483401539. Picture book.

This colorful story is a combination of the Magic School Bus and an adventure story. There is magic, adventure and information carefully woven together. The colorful characters exhibit the excitement of waiting for the end of Ramadan. They are on a quest to find the Eid Moon that signifies the end of Ramadan, the Muslim month of fasting. Eid Al-Fitr is the celebration at the end of Ramadan. Usually there is food, especially sweets and the exchange of gifts. The characters and activities are a nice blend of Middle Eastern, Arab and Western clothing and games.

**Demi. *Muhammad*.** Illustrated by Demi, (48 pp.). Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2003.

ISBN: 9780689852640. Picture book - Biography.

Demi has created an elegant, beautifully illustrated book on the life of Muhammad. The reader will not only learn of the life of Muhammad from boy to adult but will also see illustrations created in the style of Persian miniatures. Included in the story are a few passages from the Qur'an, a map and a bibliography.

**Awards:** Middle East Outreach Council Book Award, 2004.

**Douglas, Susan L. *Ramadan*.** Illustrated by Jeni Reeves, (48 pp.). Carolrhoda Books, Inc.

2004. ISBN: 9781575055848. Non-fiction.

This book not only explains what Ramadan is but includes information about how it is celebrated by Muslims living in different countries. The author describes the daily routines during Ramadan, the food that is eaten before and after daylight hours and the celebration of the end of



Ramadan.

A recipe and a glossary are included.

**Ghazi, Suhaib Hamid. *Ramadan*.** Illustrated by Omar Rayyan, (30 pp.). Holiday House, 1996.

ISBN: 9780823412754. Realistic fiction.

The author skillfully explains what Ramadan is and how a family experiences the month of fasting all Muslims practice, especially focusing on how a child might experience fasting. This is a gently told story offering facts and insight into what Ramadan means to Muslims and how it fits into their lives. The illustrations compliment the text with subdued colors and Islamic artistic embellishments. There is a glossary at the end of the book.

**Hoyt-Goldsmith, Diane. *Celebrating Ramadan*.** Photographs by Lawrence Migdale, (32 pp.).

A Holiday House Book, 2001. ISBN: 9780823415816. Picture book - Non-fiction.

Ibraheem lives near Princeton, New Jersey and is in the fourth grade. The combination of text and photographs offer the reader a window into the life of a devout American Muslim family. Photos of Ibraheem demonstrating the five steps of Muslim prayer, the family praying at home and in the mosque, celebrating Eid al-Fitr are just a few of the photographs that enable, even a child who cannot read the text, to learn about Ramadan.

There is a glossary and an index at the back of this book.

**Husain, Sharukh. *What Do We Know About Islam?*** Illustrated by Celia Hart, (45 pp.). Peter

Bedrick Books, 1996. ISBN: 9780872263888. Picture book - Non-fiction.

Written in short chapters with accompanying illustrations, this book covers the most important aspects of Islam. The chapter headings are all questions and the answers are short paragraphs

with photographs and illustrations. What is different about this book is the inclusion of information about calligraphy and why it is so important to Muslims. The first commandment to Muhammad was to read. There are four major styles of calligraphy in Islam: Kufic Script, one of the oldest and originating in Iraq, found on stone carved buildings like those in the Alhambra; Naskh Script, found on computer keyboards and used for writing; Thuluth Script, most frequently used in Koranic texts; Nasta'liq Script used mostly as a Persian-Arabic script; Diwani/Diwali al Jali Script developed during the reign of the Ottoman Turks. There is an index, a glossary, maps and a timeline of important Islamic events.

**Islam, Hina. *An Eid for Everyone*.** Illustrated by Roseanna Lester, (12 pp.). Author House, 2009. ISBN: 9781438948454. Picture book - Non-fiction.

Muslims all over the world celebrate Eid. This little book, with festive illustrations, explains Eid while at the same time showing characters in the holiday dress of their respective countries. There is a helpful author's note included.

**Khan, Aisha Karen. *What You Will See Inside a Mosque*.** Photographs by Aaron Pepis, (31 pp.). Skylight Paths Publishing, 2008. ISBN: 9781594732577. Picture book - Non-fiction.

This excellent book takes the reader on a walk through a mosque. This is a fine introduction to what a Muslim house of worship looks like. The book also includes photos of Muslims at various stages of daily prayer rituals with complete explanations. There is also some basic historical information about Islamic traditions, celebrations and food.

**Khan, Hena. *Crescent Moons and Pointed Minarets: A Muslim Book of Shapes*.** Illustrated by

Mehrdokht Amini, (30 pp.). Chronicle Books LLC, 2018. ISBN: 9781452155418. Picture book.

A beautifully illustrated book with rhyming text takes the reader on a tour of places each representing some aspect of Islam: Triangle – a mimbar; arch – the mihrab; cube – the Ka’aba and so on. The book is informative and entertaining.

There is a glossary and an author’s note

**Khan, Hena. *Golden Domes and Silver Lanterns: A Muslim Book of Colors*.** Illustrated by

Mehrdokht Amini, (25 pp.). Chronicle Books LLC, 2012. ISBN: 9780811879057.

Picture book.

The author has cleverly used colors to explain various aspect in Islam. Each illustration concentrates on one area, red - prayer, blue - the hijab, gold - the mosque, and so on. A beautiful book that is easy for readers in the lower elementary grades. The narrator is a child, telling her story of the many colors of Islam. The illustrations are bright, bold and eye-catching.

There is a glossary at the back of the book. The fly leaves of this book are beautifully decorated with a Zellige design. This is a design created from various cut plaster shapes in many colors found in Morocco.

**Awards:** ALA Notable Children’s Books Award, 2013; MEOC Book Award Honorable Mention, 2013.

**Khan, Hena. *It’s Ramadan, Curious George*.** Illustrated by Mary O’Keefe Young, (16 pp.).

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2016. ISBN: 9780544652262

Picture book - Realistic fiction.

Curious George is at it again. This time celebrating Ramadan with his friend Kareem. This book does not identify any particular culture. Instead, the characters are from many ethnicities participating in Ramadan. This is for lower elementary children and offers an uncomplicated explanation of Ramadan.

**Robert, Na'ima B. *Mabrook! A World of Muslim Weddings.*** Illustrated by Shirin Adl, (32 pp.)

Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 2016. ISBN:9781847805881. Non-fiction picture Book.

A colorful book explaining a variety of Muslim wedding practices. I like this one because it is brief enough for children to grasp and colorful enough to capture their interest. There are many cultures in the Middle East and Arab world and this book shares some of those differences with a look at wedding practices. There is a glossary and a brief note by the author about Muslim weddings.

**Robert, Na'ima B. *Ramadan Moon.*** Illustrated by Shirin Adl, (24 pp.). Frances Lincoln

Children's Books, 2009. ISBN: 9781845079222. Picture book - Realistic fiction.

This poetically written celebration of Ramadan is a delightful introduction for children. The illustrations depict elements of various Muslim cultures around the world. The tone of the story is as joyful as any story of a family's anticipation of a holiday.

**Zucker, Jonny. *Festival Time! Sweet Dates to Eat: A Ramadan and Eid Story.*** Illustrated by

Jan Barger, (17 pp.). Rafiq Abdulla, Consultant. Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 2004. ISBN: 9781845072940. Picture book - Realistic fiction.

The story of Ramadan and Eid is very simply told and children reading this book should have little trouble understanding this holiday. The illustrations are colorful and uncluttered matching the easily read text.

### Language

**Haskins, Jim.** *Count Your Way Through the Arab World.* Illustrated by Dana Gustafson, (22 pp.). Carolrhoda Books, Inc., 1991. ISBN: 9780876143049. Picture book - Non-fiction.

Each page in this book offers not only a number in Arabic, but some fact related to an Arab custom or country. The language is easy, all words in Arabic are accompanied by a phonetic spelling to help with pronunciation. There is also a pronunciation guide for just the number words at the back of the book. The illustrations are colorful and depict visuals of facts in text.

### Prejudice

**Mobin-Uddin, Asma.** *My Name is Bilal.* Illustrated by Barbara Kiwak, (24 pp.). Boyd Mills Press, 2005. ISBN: 9781590781753. Picture book.

Bilal and his Ayesha are in a new school. They are Muslim and on the first day are encountering trouble. A bully, Scott, grabs Ayesha's hijab, then runs away. Bilal wants to fit in, he tells his classmates his name is Bill. However, his teacher, a Muslim, helps Bilal by loaning him a book about a friend and helper of the Prophet also named Bilal. He reads about the courage of the friend of the Prophet. When he returns to school, his sister is again being verbally abused by Scott. Bilal confronts him and tells him to leave his sister alone. After school, noticing Scott standing alone watching a game of basketball, Bilal invited Scott to join in the game. Tensions

are eased, Bilal adjusts and finds new friends. The illustrator has managed to capture the subtle expressions of each character as the story unfolds, which lends itself to the quiet confidence Bilal gains through his faith.

**Awards:** Paterson Prize for Books for Young People, Grades 4-6, 2006; Best Children's Books of the Year Bank Street College of Education, 2006.

### Refugees

**Garland, Sarah.** *Azzi In Between*. Illustrated by Sarah Garland, (36 pp.). Frances Lincoln

Children's Books, 2012. ISBN: 9781847802613. Picture book.

Azzi's father is a doctor and for a while things go on as usual. But war has come to Azzi's country. Each day life becomes a little more dangerous, until the day arrives when Azzi and her family must flee. Her grandmother stays behind to watch the house. In the dead of night, they begin their escape, over mountains, in an overcrowded boat, finally reaching land. Everything is confusing, the language, the food...everything. Finally, the family is settled in one room. Now Azzi goes to school however, she cannot understand anyone, but a kind lady comes to help Azzi. This story captures the difficulties of refugee resettlement, especially for a child. It was inspired by a young refugee who asked the author why there were no books about children like her. The author met and worked with many refugee children who were the inspiration for her book.

**Awards:** Little Rebels Children's Book Award, 2013.

**Laird, Elizabeth.** *Oranges in No Man's Land*. Illustrations by Gary Blythe, (99 pp.).

Haymarket Books, 2008. ISBN:9781931859561. Realistic fiction.

This story is based on the experiences of the author while living in Beirut, Lebanon. Ayesha lived in a farming community in southern Lebanon until it was invaded while her father was away. Her home was destroyed, and her mother killed as the family was trying to escape the bombs. Ayesha, her grandmother and two brothers wandered for days looking for a place to live. A family living in a bombed-out building, invited them to stay there. Ayesha's grandmother is ill. Ayesha realizes she must find a way to replace her grandmother's medicine or her grandmother will die. To do so she must make her way to a dangerous section of the city. I have read reviews of this book. Some unfavorable citing lack of depth. I can only rely on my own experiences of living under siege, not knowing what any minute will bring. I did not dare to think too deeply into my own feelings about the situation I was in, for fear of falling apart. I tended to the day to day necessities and emergencies, putting one foot in front of the other. A part of me was numb, the part that would have given in to panic. I thought the author portrayed that state of mind in Ayesha and conveyed the difficulties, but not the horror of war. I think children in upper elementary could learn from this story.

### Science

**Beshore, George.** *Science in Early Islamic Cultures*. Illustrations by Drew-Brook-Cormack

Associates, (64 pp.). Franklin Watts, 1998. ISBN: 9780531159170. Expository text.

This book beautifully connects the ancient civilizations through scientific theories and discoveries. Muslims, using information from ancient civilizations, explored mathematics, science, medicine, astronomy, medicine and the universe. This is an excellent introduction to the accomplishments of Islamic cultures.

There is a glossary, an index and a page with a few resources.

**War**

**Foreman, Michael.** *A Child's Garden: A Story of Hope.* Illustrated by Michael Foreman,

(32 pp.). Walker Books, 2010. ISBN: 9781406325881. Picture book.

A touching story about a boy in a village destroyed by war. In the rubble he finds a tiny green plant struggling to survive. He carefully nurtures it, but it doesn't survive the winter. However, in spring, tiny shoots appear where his plant originally grew. This is a wonderful story to share with children about hope in the face of the devastation left in the aftermath of war. With so many refugees in the world at this moment in time, the topic needs to be discussed.



## Teacher Resource Bibliography

### Children

**Abdelrazaq, Leila. *Baddawi*.** Illustrated by Leila Abdelrazaq, (125 pp.). Just World Publishing, LLC, 2015. ISBN: 9781935982401. Graphic biography.

The author's biography of her father's life in stark black and white is arresting. The reader will either be intrigued and choose to read on or be repelled. Outside the community of people interested in the story of the Palestinians from the Palestinian perspective, these stories are not part of the American Middle East narrative. Leila's family was forced to escape to a refugee camp from their home in Palestine in 1948. Leila's father was born there and until old enough to attend college, lived his entire life as a refugee in Lebanon.

There is a glossary and a small selection of Ahmed and his family.

**Al-Ali, Naji. *A Child in Palestine: The Cartoons of Naji al-Ali, With an introduction by Joe Sacco*,** (118 pp.). Verso Books, 2009. ISBN: 9781844673650. Graphic biography.

The story of the life of Palestinian Naji al-Ali as a refugee and his ever-evolving views of the struggle of the Palestinian people in this selection of his cartoons. It is also a reflection of his own struggles to maintain a hope of a return to Palestine. The most famous symbol of his cartoons is the barefoot child Hanthala, his back always to the reader. Al-Ali documented what he witnessed. He chose not to represent any political party with his work. His lampooning of Yassar Arafat resulted in warnings by the PLO. This book contains only a small fraction of what he produced. His work is held in high esteem by Arabs but, in particular, by Palestinians, wherever they are in the world.

**Ellis, Deborah.** *Thee Wishes: Palestinian and Israeli Children Speak.* Photographs by Deborah

Ellis, (112 pp.). Groundwood Books, 2004. ISBN: 9780888996459. Non-fiction.

Deborah Ellis has written a powerful book about how the decisions of governments effect children. She lists the names of the 429 children under the age of 18, who were killed between 2000 and 2003 in the Palestinian/Israeli conflict. Her interviews with the Palestinian and Israeli, children, all between the ages of eight and 18, are sometimes painful to read, but necessary to understand.

There is a map, an Afterword, a bibliography, a list of organizations attempting to help in this conflict, and a short paragraph about the author.

**Imani, Vahid.** *Haji and the Mystery of the Dig.* Illustrated by Karri Simmon, (184 pp.).

Stormtop Publishing, 2014, ISBN: 9780991110315. Realistic fiction.

Naji is a curious child and cannot help but investigate the activity in the courtyard of her house. Men are digging a hole, she doesn't know why but has strange feelings about it. Information about Persian culture is folded into the story as Naji persists in her quest to discover the reason why the men are digging the hole, but also her strange feelings about what might be living deep down in that hole. When the workers disappear, the tension is unbearable. A delightful story and a way to introduce readers to this ancient culture.

There is a glossary, suggestions for writing, ideas for research about the Middle East and discussion questions.

**Awards:** Literary Classics International Book Awards: 2015 Best in Category: Best First Chapter Book; 2015 Gold medal winner for pre-teen/tween;

2015 Best in Category: Cultural Issues Preteen.

**Marston, Elsa.** *Figs and Fate: Stories About Growing Up in the Arab World Today.* George

Braziller, Inc., 2005, (135 pp.). ISBN: 9780807615546. Realistic fiction.

Elsa Marston studied in Beirut, Lebanon, where she met and married her Lebanese husband. She lived and traveled Arab countries and devoted her life to writing stories set in the Arab world.

One of her goals was to help young Americans understand they have much in common with young Arabs. These stories depict an aspect of the lives of Arab children that is rarely included in the media.

I had the pleasure of corresponding with Elsa, she passed away in February 16, 2017.

**Pennington, Sarah.** *Novel Unit for a Long Walk to Water by Linda Sue Park*

**Wilkes, Sybella.** *Refugees' Stories in Words, Paintings and Music: Out of Iraq.* Picture credits listed on copyright page, (70 pp.). Evans Brothers Limited, 2010.

ISBN: 9780237539306. Picture book - Non-fiction.

Refugee status: No country, no city, no town, no village, no home and sometimes, no family. The plight of Iraqi refugees is presented here in the aftermath of the invasion of Iraq and in the face of what many believe was a horrific mistake. The author worked with the actual refugees as a member of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. Her goal is to help people hear the voices of those refugees. These are their stories.

There are maps, a glossary, an index, a list of resources and suggestions for how teachers might use this book in school.

## Contemporary Issues

### Middle Easterners, Arabs and Muslims in America

**Alsultany, Evelyn.** *Arabs and Muslims in the Media: Race and Representation After 9/11.*

New York University Press, 2012, (225 pp.). ISBN: 9780814707326. Non-fiction.

This exploration into the media representations of Arabs and Muslims is an important contribution toward understanding how and why public perceptions are created based on political events, public sentiment and the role of the media and the government. The author provides well referenced historical and contemporary information about the stereotyping of Arabs and Muslims.

**Bayoumi, Moustafa.** *How Does It Feel To Be A Problem? Being Young and Arab in America.*

Penguin Books, 2008, (301 pp.). ISBN: 9780143115410. Non-fiction.

Bayoumi deftly shares the experiences of seven young Arab-Muslims after 9/11 and how America's human rights were no longer applied to all people. These stories provide the other side of the story of the aftermath of 9/11. While the focus was understandably primarily on the victims of the downing of the twin towers, other victims were being created. These are compelling stories with the potential to help people see another side of the event. There is an Afterward, extensive notes and a conversation with Moustafa Bayoumi section.

**Cristillo, Louis, Nisrin Elamin, Ann Hawley and Amina Tawasil (Eds.).** *This is Where I*

*Need to Be: Oral Histories of Muslim Youth in NYC.* Student Press Initiative /CPET,

Teachers College, 2008, (105 pp.). ISBN: 9781932948448. Oral history.

This book represents a unique project developed at Teachers College. The oral historians are all teenagers trained at Columbia to collect oral histories. They were then sent out into the city to interview ordinary Muslim teens about their thoughts and experiences living in NYC after 9/11. These stories provide a wide variety of experiences from a group whose voices are not usually heard. The students are proud to be Muslims and even though some of them have experienced prejudicial incidents, they believe the incidents are due to ignorance. The maturity of their responses is encouraging.

**Dumas, Firoozeh. *Funny In Farsi: A Memoir of Growing Up Iranian in America.***

Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2003, (227 pp.). ISBN: 9780812968378. Memoir.

Ms. Dumas skillfully takes us on her journey in America as an Iranian, before, during and after the Iranian Revolution. She has managed to share some of her most difficult experiences with humor, while at the same time focusing sharply on what it is like to be an outsider. Even while I was laughing loudly as I read her stories, I was also cringing on the inside, not only with sympathy for her, but for the ignorance of the Americans she encountered. Her resilience is astounding. She manages to cover her life from age seven to adulthood so well the reader hardly realizes what might have been left out. Readers will gain insight into how political events can change a life here in America. Overnight her father, an engineer, loses his job and his pension, during the hostage crisis and had to sell all their belongings. The family was constantly humiliated by situations like vendors selling T-shirts with the slogan “Iranians Go Home”. There is a Reader’s Guide and a Reading Group Questions and Topics for Discussion section. Her website, [www.firoozedumas.com](http://www.firoozedumas.com), has photographs of some of her friends as well as teacher materials.

**Dumas, Firoozeh.** *It Ain't So Awful, Falafel.* Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016, (378 pp.).

ISBN: 9781328740960. Semi-autobiographical novel.

Ms. Dumas relates her life experiences as an Iranian child growing up in California, trying desperately to fit in. Her name is Firoozeh, and since no one seems to be able to pronounce it, she tells her teachers to just call her Cindy and introduces herself to others as Cindy. And so her efforts to accommodate, understand, fit in and make a place for herself provides wonderful insight into the life of an immigrant child. Along the way the reader will learn a considerable amount about Iranian history and culture that would never be found in a textbook.

There is an author's note that includes information for learning more about Ms. Dumas and Iran.

**Ewing, Katherine Pratt, (Ed.)** *Being and Belonging: Muslims in the United States Since*

*9/11.* Russell Sage Foundation, 2008, (215 pp.). ISBN: 9780871540447. Non-fiction.

The collection of authors for this book have undertaken a much-needed look at aspects of Muslims in America that are not all in the public eye. The invisible struggle for identity, the many different ethnicities of Muslims and the reshaping Muslim practices and institution. These are complex issues but ones that need to be examined by educators. Teaching about Arabs, Middle Easterners and Muslims requires understanding the context in which events take place.

**Kincheloe, Joe L. & Shirley R. Steinberg (Eds.).** *The Miseducation of the West: How Schools*

*and the Media Distort Our Understanding of the Islamic World.* Praeger, 2004,

(209 pp.). ISBN: 9780275981600. Non-fiction.

The authors have taken on an important task in attempting to shed light on the causes of distortions and misunderstandings of the Islamic world. While every chapter is important, I call

attention to Chapter 5: Consequences of Perceived Ethnic Identities, that deals with misperceptions of ethnic identities. The author asks the question, “How is it that an Iranian, a Pakistani, an Indian, a Sikh, an Afghani, or any other dark-skinned person from this cast region have all become Arabs, or more accurately, Arabs with possible links to terrorism? The author goes on to state that this chapter is written for teachers and student teachers and that his concern is for elementary-school-aged children.

**Pearson, Robert P. & Leon E. Clark. *Through Middle Eastern Eyes (4<sup>th</sup> ed.): Post 9/11***

*Edition.* Illustrations and photographs sourced individually, (413 pp.). A Cite Book, 2002. ISBN: 9780938960485. Non-fiction.

This resource is a collection of chapters covering two broad areas: Part one: Tradition and Change and Part two: Past Glories and Future Hopes. With these two sections the authors cover broad swaths of history, tradition, culture and life of the cultures of the Middle East and Arab world most connected to the conflicts of today between the West and the people of these two areas. The chapters are short, and concise therefore readers will come away with an overview of the topic they choose.

### **History of Arab Stereotypes**

**Tchen, John Kuo Wei & Amita Manghnani (Eds.) *A Is For Arab: Archiving Stereotypes in***

*U.S. Popular Culture.* Illustrations credits are listed with each illustration, (71 pp.).

Asian /Pacific /American Institute, 2012. ISBN: 9780615699691. Expository text.

This small book contains excerpts from a much larger work, *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People*, by Jack Shaheen. The representations of Arabs and Muslims in American

popular culture going back to the days of the silent film is critiqued and provides context for these representations in American culture. Jack Shaheen was the quintessential expert on Arab and Muslim stereotypes. His extensive work is archived in the library at New York University. I met Jack in 2012 and briefly corresponded with him about my efforts to find ways to introduce a counter narrative about Arabs, Muslims and Middle Easterners to teachers and students. He graciously offered his assistance after my dissertation was completed, but sadly Jack passed away in July of 2017.

### **Illustrating and Writing**

**Ellabbad, Mohieddin.** *The Illustrator's Notebook*. Illustrated by Moheiddin Ellabbad, (30 pp.).

Groundwood Books, 2006. ISBN: 9780888997005. Expository text.

The author is a renowned Egyptian writer and illustrator. This English version retains the Arabic format of opening the book from left to right. All the illustrations are the same as in the Arabic version with explanations in English in the margins. Arabic calligraphy is part of the pictorial tradition and Ellabbad takes the reader through an impressive gallery of this artistic tradition. Since calligraphy is such an important artform in the Middle East and Arab world, exploring this tradition opens another door of understanding between East and West.

**Awards:** Middle East Outreach Council Award – 2006; Children's Africana Book Awards Best Book for Older Readers: 2007.

**Whitesides, Barbara.** *Sugar Comes from Arabic: A Beginner's Guide to Arabic Letters and*

*Words*. Book designed by Geoffrey Piel, (133 pp.). Interlink Books, 2009.

ISBN: 9781566567572. Expository text.



If only I had had this book when I was studying Arabic in Morocco! Written Arabic has an artistic quality to it even when the written words are mundane. Reading Arabic is confusing not only because the words are written and read from right to left, but the letters themselves do not resemble the letters in the English language. This text demystifies Arabic by presenting explanations in small easily understood increments with illustrations.

### **Islamic/Muslim Contributions to the World\***

**Al-Hassani, Salim, T. S. (Ed.) *1001 Inventions: The Enduring Legacy of Muslim Civilization***

(3<sup>rd</sup> ed.), (350 pp.). Illustration credits p. 342. Published by National Geographic as a companion to the National Geographic Museum exhibition 1001 Inventions in Washington, D.C., 2012. (for more information about the exhibit: <http://www.1001inventions.com/dc>). ISBN: 9781426209345. Expository text.

The book is well organized by topic with beautiful illustrations. Each section is delineated with a border of traditional Islamic design.

There is an extensive reference section, an index and glossary.

**Al-Hassani, Salim, T. S., Chief Editor; Elizabeth Woodcock & Rabah Saoud. *1001***

***Inventions: Muslim Heritage in Our World (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)***, (376 pp.). Illustration credits p. 374-375. The Foundation for Science, Technology and Civilization, 2006.

ISBN: 9780955242618. Expository text.

The focus is the Muslim Middle Ages, with seven chapters: Home; School; Market; Hospital; Town; World; Universe. The illustrations are photographs and drawings. This book was the centerpiece for two events in England, 1001 Inventions Exhibition at the house of Parliament in

2008 and a conference at Hoare Memorial Hall, Church House, Westminster, London.

There is an extensive reference section, a timeline of events, suggestions for further reading, a glossary, and an index.

**Barnard, Bryn.** *The Genius of Islam: How Muslims Made the Modern World.* Illustrated by

Bryn Barnard, (38 pp.). Alfred A. Knopf, 2011. ISBN: 9780375840722. Expository text.

This book is not a definitive collection of all the contributions of Muslims, but it is a good introduction. The author includes a time line of events, maps and colorful illustrations. The book is not too cumbersome and is an excellent starting point for further exploration of the contributions of Muslims and the impact of those contributions on today's society.

**Awards:** Middle East Outreach Council – 2011.

**Hussain, Saima S.** *The Arab World Thought of It: Inventions, Innovations and Amazing*

*Facts.* Photographs from multiple sources listed on page 44, (48 pp.). Annick Pres (U.S.)

Ltd. 2013. ISBN: 9781554514762. Expository text.

A look at the contributions of the Arab world from a different perspective. Chapters are short and include colorful photographs, touching on the topics of education, architecture, medicine, to name a few. The author also includes the contributions of women. This is an excellent introduction to the Arab world.

There are maps, a timeline, reference list, bibliography and an index.

**\*Although the books in this section cover many of the same topics, each book contains information the others do not.**

### Muslim Women

**Abdel-Fattah, Randa.** *Does My Head Look Big In This?* (360 pp.). Scholastic Inc., 2005.

ISBN: 9780439922333. Novel.

The idea of wearing the hijab (Muslim woman's head covering) has been a controversial subject on and off over the years. This novel opens the door to understanding what wearing the hijab can mean to a Muslim girl (or woman). In places where the choice is left to women as opposed to places where it is mandatory, the decision is more than a fashion statement. It is also more than a religious choice. In western cultures, deciding to wear the hijab is also a social choice. There are consequences to taking this step. Abdel-Fattah's novel follows a young Australian-Palestinian girl as she takes a metaphorical breath and decides.

**Awards:** Australian Book Industry Award; Australian Book of the Year Award for Older Children, 2006; American Library Association Popular Paperbacks for Young Adults, 2007; Bank Street College of Education Best Children's Book of the Year, 2008; Booklist Top 10 First Novels for Youth, 2007; Australian Family Therapists Books Useful for Therapists, 2005; The Capitol Choices Committee Capitol Choice, 2008; American Booksellers Association Children's Book Sense Picks, 2007; Kirkus Best Young Adult Books, 2007; Children's Book Council, 2006; West Australian Young Readers' Book Award, 2006; White Ravens Award Nominee, 2006; Winner Australia International, 2006.

**Fernea, Elizabeth Warnock.** *In Search of Islamic Feminism: One Woman's Global Journey.*

Photograph credits listed with individual photos, (430 pp.). Anchor Books, 1998. ISBN: 9780385488587. Non-fiction.

This book expands what it means to be a feminist. Women in the Middle East and the Arab world define being a feminist from within the context of their societies. One thing they all have in common is the idea of change. What kind of change is determined by context. In Palestine and Israel, a women's movement for peace, in Iraq education for women, in Kuwait a divorced women's support group, in Turkey, the establishment of a Women's Library. The history of the feminist movement in Turkey is saved in a collection of stories, letters and literary tracts for all women to access. Egypt is considered the birthplace of the first Arab women's movement, when Huda Sharawi shed her face veil. This is an eye-opening book that challenges the definition of feminism.

**Maydell, Natalie & Sep Riahi.** *Extraordinary Women from the Muslim World.* Paintings by

Heba Amin, (117 pp.). Global Content Ventures, 2007. ISBN: 9780979990106.

Picture book - Non-fiction.

Although this book is considered a picture book for grade five and up, I believe it should be read by teachers. Famous women from the Muslim world are generally invisible in the west. The women in this volume challenge the conventional thinking about Islam and women as being timid and housebound. Reading this book, as well as Ms. Fernea's book, raises new questions. Is one contributing factor to the unrest in the Middle East and Arab world a subconscious fear of the potential strength and power of Muslim women? Aspects of that question are addressed in the next book in this bibliography.

**Awards:** Skipping Stones Magazine's Honor Award, 2009; Middle East Outreach Council Award, 2008; National Best Book Award, 2008; Moonbeam "Peacemaker Award, 2008.

**Sabbagh, Suha, (Ed.).** *Arab Women: Between Defiance and Restraint,* (267 pp.). Olive

Branch Press, 1996. ISBN: 9781566561877. Non-fiction.

A series of essays, this book is divided into nine parts that examine women's roles in politics, as leaders, their work, their education, status in society and in the family and so much more. Every contributor has a connection to the Arab world. Stereotypes in the western media of Arab women are shattered with revelations of who Arab women are, strong, resilient and independent, more often than not. A book full of revelations and questions.

**Satrapi, Marjane. *Embroideries*.** Illustrated by Marjane Satrapi, (144 pp.). Pantheon Books, 2005. ISBN: 9780375714672. Graphic memoir.

Ms. Satrapi eavesdrops on the conversations of her grandmother, relatives and friends at an afternoon informal gathering over coffee and tea. Every stereotype of Muslim women as meek, obedient, and uneducated is shattered by the revelations in the conversations of these women. Their strong opinions of men, marriage and virginity are related with humor, through Ms. Satrapi's drawings, and snappy dialogue.

**Satrapi, Marjane. *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*.** Illustrated by Marjane Satrapi, (153 pp.). Pantheon, 2003. ISBN: 9780375714573. Graphic memoir (First published In France).

The author not only shares her story of growing up during the Iranian revolution, but imparts the confusion, contradictions and chaos of those years. The black and white drawings add to the sense of underlying doom and drama as events unfold. The scale and position of characters in some of the scenes are aligned with the relationship of the characters to each other and events (example: page 153). This powerful story reveals the reality of the revolution. I lived in Iran

from 1976 to 1979. There were signs of a coming revolution with news of bombings and crackdowns on Iranians. All the while we, Americans, received written reassurances from the American employers, these were just occasional disruptions and things were under control. However, the constant uncertainty was anxiety producing. The news we received each day was conflicting. In our village one day there were pro Shah demonstrations and the next day we were warned not to leave our homes as anti Shah demonstrators with weapons and tanks moved across the local landscape. Other days our neighborhood was surrounded by armed guards. I was never sure if they were there to keep us in or the revolutionaries out. I can attest to the validity of many of the author's experiences.

**Awards:** American Library Association ALEX Award Winner, 2004; Booklist Editor's Choice for Young Adults Winner; New York Public Library Books for the Teen Age Winner; New York Times Notable Book; Time Magazine "Best Comix of the Year"; San Francisco Chronicle Best Seller; Los Angeles Times Best Seller; School Library Journal Adult Book for Young Adult Award; Angouleme Coup de Coeur Award in France in 2001.

**Satrapi, Marjane. *Persepolis 2: The Story of a Return*.** Illustrated by Marjane Satrapi,

(187 pp.) Pantheon, 2004. ISBN: 9780375714665. Graphic memoir (First published in France).

The sequel to *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*, is every bit as compelling as the first book. Marjane's life takes a drastic turn as she leaves Iran for Europe. Her culture shock combined with the hostility she encountered because she was Iranian, drove her to extremes in trying to "fit in" with the new people in her life. While she was struggling to adjust to the changes in herself as a young adult, the world around her was changing swiftly. She seemed always to be trying to

adjust to those changing circumstances while grappling with her Iranian values, alternately feeling brave and defiant or a traitor to her own culture. Her return to Iran was as much of a culture shock as the shock of living in Europe, but she was with her family for support. Her ultimate decision to leave Iran for good was painful, but she was no longer a child, she made peace with herself and moved forward.

**Awards:** Time Magazine Best Non-fiction Book, 2004; Angouleme Prize for Scenario in France in 2002.

**Wilson, G. Willow. *Ms. Marvel Volume 1: No Normal*.** Illustrated by Adrian Alphona, (122 pp.). Marvel Worldwide, Inc. 2015. ISBN: 9780785190219. Comic book.

One of the newest superheroes of the Marvel world of comics is a reincarnation of the Ms. Marvel character as a teenage Muslim girl. Because the author is herself a Muslim, she has successfully created a Muslim character without having to worry about not getting it right. I chose to include this comic for two reasons. One because the author is a Muslim woman and does not fit any of the stereotypes attributed to Muslim women. She is not meek, subservient and uneducated nor is she exotic. She is a talented author with a husband and children. And two because the character in this comic is an American Muslim teenage girl struggling with the usual teenage transformation from child to adult issues and she is also dealing with understanding her powers as a superheroine. The author and her character are examples of an anti-stereotypical Muslim woman.

**Awards:** Hugo Award for Best Graphic Story, 2015; Harvey Award Nominee for Best New Series, Best Writer (for G, Willow Wilson), 2015; Will Eisner Comic Industry Awards Nominee for Best New Series, Best Writer (for G. Willow Wilson); Best Penciller/Inker (for Adrian

Alphona), Best Lettering (for Joe Caramagna); Best Cover Artist (for Jamie Mc Kelvie & Matthew Wilson), 2015; Award Nominee for Graphic Novels & Comics, 2014.

### Miscellaneous

**Reynolds, Jan. *Sahara, Vanishing Cultures*.** Photographs by Jan Reynolds, (30 pp.). Lee &

Low Books Inc, 2007. ISBN: 9781600601316. Non-fiction.

This is a wonderful book documenting the lives of the Tuareg. A culture of astonishingly resilient and resourceful people that is vanishing. She traveled with the Tuareg, photographing them as they moved through their daily lives, resulting in an account from the perspective of the boy Manda. Just as there are animals that are near extinction, there are also cultures whose traditions and way of life are disappearing. When these cultures disappear, their accomplishments, abilities and contributions to the world, also disappear.

Lesson plans for this book are available on the Lee & Low website.

**Encyclopedia for Children. *Animals of the Sahara: Wildlife of the Desert*.** (36 pp.)

Speedy Publishing LLC, 2015. ISBN: 9781683056430. Non-fiction.

I chose to include this book because my sense is that people think of the Sahara as just sand dunes with nomads here and there. This lovely little book provides some information about some of the creatures who inhabit this very hot place along with the nomads, and the villages built around some oases.



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## Appendix A

Changing Our Story of the Middle East

October 29, 2016 Diversity, Literature, Teaching I am Malala, Islam and Christianity, Middle East, Lu Ann McNabb

*This post is written by member Brandy French.*



When I asked my students to describe the images they associated with the Middle East, the responses were predictable: Muslim extremists, deserts, guns, bombs, poverty, terrorism, oppressed women, and hatred of America. This troubling view has been engendered by news broadcasts covering terrorist attacks and further reinforced by political rhetoric seeking to pinpoint a single, coherent “enemy.” But this is only one story of the Middle East, the one largely told by the West—and to counter it, my students and I started this school year reading a book by a teenaged Pakistani girl called *I Am Malala*.

Malala Yousafzai was just 15 years old when the Taliban retaliated against her advocacy for girls’ education by shooting her in the head. She survived the brutal attack, and her book, *I Am Malala*, recounts her childhood growing up in northern Pakistan under the increasingly oppressive rule of the Taliban. Within the first few pages, Malala challenged our story of the Middle East. She watched television, listened to music, spoke English, struggled with homework, and bickered with her younger brothers. Her home was nestled in a lush valley at the foot of the Himalayas with flowing waterfalls and snowcapped mountains. She helped her dad post on Twitter and Skyped with her friends after school. My students found themselves face to



face with a peer to whom they could easily relate—not a foreign “other” suffering incomprehensibly in a faraway desert.

As we read, Malala systematically challenged every aspect of our one story of the Middle East. Pakistan, a predominantly Muslim country, elected a female prime minister in 1988. The Taliban originated not as a terrorist group, but as a way to safeguard Islamic culture against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. In fact, the Taliban provided relief efforts in the wake of the 2005 Kashmir earthquake and earned the gratitude and support of many of the disaster’s 3.5 million victims. Malala explained that many Muslim women chose to cover their heads out of modesty rather than strict religious adherence and that a woman in a *hijab* did not automatically signify a woman oppressed. She argued the radicalized interpretations of the Quran and the Hadith held by extremist groups were against the true spirit of Islam and contended that terrorists were defiling the peaceful faith followed by millions of Muslims around the world. With each page we read, our view of the stereotypical Middle Eastern person fractured from a single, hostile enemy into dozens of smaller, varied snapshots.

Our school is a private Catholic high school, and many of my students began reading *I Am Malala* with a fixed view of Islam as fundamentally opposed to Christianity. However, we were able to compare the five pillars of Islam with the five precepts of the Catholic Church and discovered that while our doctrines are different, the spirits of our faiths can be quite similar. True Islam is peaceful, hospitable, generous, and kind—the same as true Christianity.

Our discovery of the diversity of the Middle East allowed us to use our differences not to distance ourselves from its inhabitants, but to connect to each other across ethnic, national, cultural, and religious boundaries. By introducing nuance into our perceptions of others, we

embraced the richness of the human experience and broadened our understanding of the world as global citizens.

*Brandy French teaches 9th- and 10th-grade English at Bishop John J. Snyder High School in Jacksonville, Florida. She has been teaching for five years and is a new member of NCTE in 2016.*

## Appendix B

### Websites Searched

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4. Arab American Book Awards – [www.arabamericanmuseum.org/bookaward](http://www.arabamericanmuseum.org/bookaward)
5. Arab World and Islamic Resources – [www.awaironline.org](http://www.awaironline.org)
6. Book Links – [www.booklistonline.com/booklinks](http://www.booklistonline.com/booklinks)
7. Bridging Cultures – Muslim Journeys Bookshelf Collection – [www.bridgingcultures.neh.gov/muslimjourneys](http://www.bridgingcultures.neh.gov/muslimjourneys)
8. Children’s Book Council – [www.cbcbooks.org](http://www.cbcbooks.org)
9. Chadwick School Books for Expanding Global Understanding – <https://sites.google.com/a/chadwickschool.org/books>
10. Color of Us – [www.colorofus.com/20-childrens-book-set-in-the-middle-east-northern-africa/](http://www.colorofus.com/20-childrens-book-set-in-the-middle-east-northern-africa/)
11. Cooperative Children’s Book Center – <https://ccbc.education.wisc.edu/links/links.asp?idLinksCategory=4>
12. Globe Trottin’ Kids – [www.globetrottinkids.com](http://www.globetrottinkids.com)
13. Good Reads – [www.goodreads.com/list/show/3721.best](http://www.goodreads.com/list/show/3721.best)
14. I’m your neighbor – [www.i’myourneighbor.org/category/setting/region-middle-eastern](http://www.i’myourneighbor.org/category/setting/region-middle-eastern)
15. International literacy Association – [www.literacyworldwide.org/reading-lists](http://www.literacyworldwide.org/reading-lists)
16. International Board on Books for Young People – [www.ibby.org](http://www.ibby.org)

17. Lee & Low Books – <http://blog.leeandlow.com/2014/05/15/book-list-picture-books-about-muslim-or-middle-eastern-characters/>
18. Middle East Books and More – [www.middleeastbooks.com](http://www.middleeastbooks.com)
19. Middle East Outreach Council – [www.meoc.us](http://www.meoc.us)
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21. Mumzworld – [www.mumzworld.com/en/books-dvds/arabic-books](http://www.mumzworld.com/en/books-dvds/arabic-books)
22. National Education Association – [www.nea.org/grants/50-multicultural-books.html](http://www.nea.org/grants/50-multicultural-books.html)
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26. Rukhsana Khan – [www.rukhanakhan.com/muslimbooklist/picturebooks.html](http://www.rukhanakhan.com/muslimbooklist/picturebooks.html)
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29. Teach Mid East – [www.teachmideast.org](http://www.teachmideast.org)
30. The Logonauts – [www.thelogonauts.com](http://www.thelogonauts.com)
31. United States Board on Books for Young People – [www.usbby.org](http://www.usbby.org)
32. World of Words – [www.wowlit.org](http://www.wowlit.org)

**Appendix C**  
**Rubric-Book Review**

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>YOUR SCORE</b>
<b>Elements</b>		Book review contains all required elements and they are accurate (title, author, genre, summary, favorite part, and overall recommendation).	Book review contains all required elements but they are not all accurate or developed.	Book review contains most required elements and parts included may not be accurate or developed.	Book review is missing several parts and the parts are inaccurate and not developed.
<b>Sentence Structure (Sentence Fluency)</b>		All sentences are well constructed with varied structure on the written book review. They flow well for the reader.	Most sentences are well constructed with varied structure. They have pretty good flow for the reader.	Most sentences are well constructed but have a similar structure. Sentence flow is not what it could be.	Sentences lack structure and appear incomplete or rambling. Sentences do not flow well.
<b>Grammar Mechanics, etc.</b> <b>CUPS =</b> <b>Capitalization</b> <b>Usage</b> <b>Punctuation</b> <b>Spelling</b>		Very few errors in CUPS (1-3) on the written book review.	Several errors (4-5) but they do not interfere with reading or understanding the writing.	More errors (6-7) and some interfere with the reading.	Filled with errors (above 7)

<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Book-Review-Rubric-Editable-FREE-375939>