

"ONE OF THE BEST FILMS OF THE YEAR. SOMETHING CLOSE TO A MIRACLE."

-Oliver Lyttelton, THE PLAYLIST

"FUNNY AND TOUCHING. DISCOVER WHAT CAN MAKE US HAPPY, BOTH AS MOVIEGOERS AND CITIZENS OF THE WORLD. 'WADJDA' DOES THE TRICK."

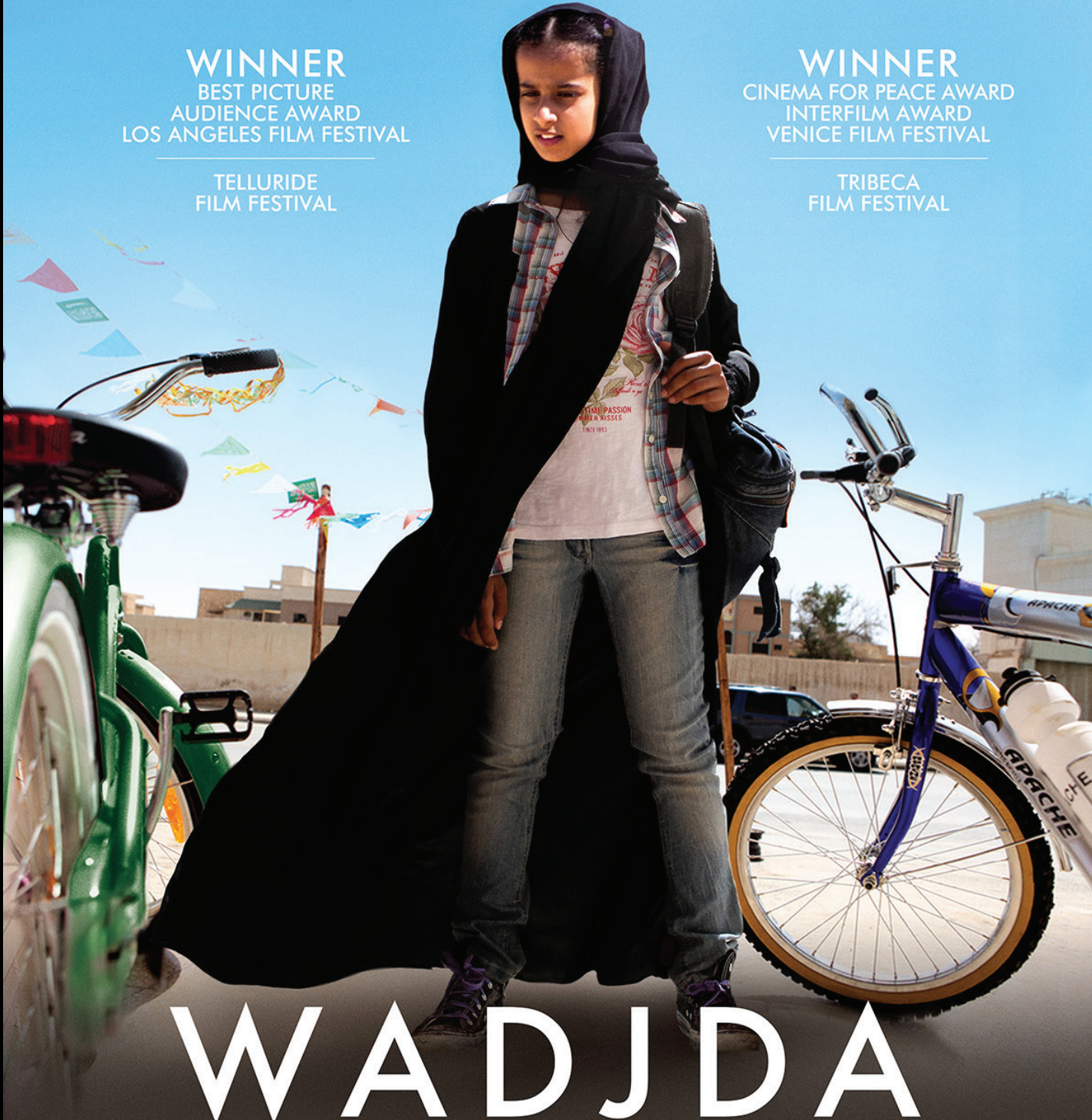
-Joe Morgenstern, WALL STREET JOURNAL

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WADJDA

A SONY PICTURES CLASSICS RELEASE. RAZOR FILM IN CO-PRODUCTION WITH HIGH LOOK GROUP AND ROTAMA STUDIOS IN COOPERATION WITH NORDDEUTSCHER RUNDFUNK AND BAYERISCHER RUNDFUNK WITH THE SUPPORT OF FILMFÖRDERUNGSANSTALT MITTELDEUTSCHE MEDIENFÖRDERUNG MEDIENBOARD BERLIN-BRANDENBURG INVESTITIONSBANK DES LANDES BRANDENBURG SUNDANCE INSTITUTE FEATURE FILM PROGRAM DORIS DUKE FOUNDATION FOR ISLAMIC ART PRODUCED IN COOPERATION WITH DUBAI ENTERTAINMENT AND MEDIA ORGANIZATION AND ENJAAZ A DUBAI FILM MARKET INITIATIVE DEVELOPED WITH THE SUPPORT OF RAWI SCREENWRITERS LAB ABU DHABI FILM COMMISSION HUBERT BALS FUND PRESENT "WADJDA" REEM ABDULLAH ABDULLRAHMAN AL GOHANI AHD INTRODUCING WAAD MOHAMMED EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS OLE NICOLAISEN PRODUCED BY THOMAS MOLT EDITOR PETER POHL EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS OLIVER ZIEM-SCHWERDT EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS MARC MEUSINGER EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS SEBASTIAN SCHMIDT EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS OLAF MEHL EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS MAX RICHTER EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS ANDREAS WODRASCHKE DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY LUTZ REITEMEIER EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS HALA SARHAN EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS CHRISTIAN GRANDERATH EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS BETTINA RICKLEFS EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS RENA RONSON EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS LOUISE NEMSCHOFF EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS AMR ALKAHTANI EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS ROMAN PAUL GERHARD MEIXNER EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS HAIFAA AL MANSOUR

PG
FOR THEMATIC ELEMENTS, BRIEF MILD LANGUAGE AND SMOKING
Some Material May Be Inappropriate for Children Under 13

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Wadjda

Curriculum Guide

Journeys in Film

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JOURNEYS IN FILM: WADJDA

Educating for Global Understanding

www.journeysinfilm.org

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	<i>Click the Chapter heading to be taken to that page</i>
About <i>Journeys in Film</i>	6
A Letter from Liam Neeson	8
A Letter from Haifaa Al Mansour	9
Introducing <i>Wadjda</i>	10
To the Teacher	11
<hr/>	
LESSONS	
LESSON 1: WADJDA'S STORY: UNDERSTANDING WADJDA'S WORLD (English Language Arts)	13
LESSON 2: THE COUNTRY OF SAUDI ARABIA (Geography, World History)	25
LESSON 3: SAUDI ARABIA CONFRONTS MODERNITY (Social Studies)	41
LESSON 4: THE WOMEN OF SAUDI ARABIA (Social Studies, Film Literacy)	57
LESSON 5: AN INTRODUCTION TO THE QURAN (World History, World Literature))	67
LESSON 6: INTRODUCING WADJDA FILMMAKER HAIFAA AL MANSOUR (Film Literacy, English Language Arts)	75

About *Journeys in Film*

Founded in 2003, *Journeys in Film* operates on the belief that teaching with film has the power to help our next generation gain a richer understanding of the diverse and complex world in which we live. Our goal is to help students recognize cultural biases and racism (including their own), cultivate human empathy and compassion, develop a deeper knowledge of universal issues and current challenges, and encourage civic engagement as competent world citizens.

Award-winning feature films and documentaries act as springboards for lesson plans in subjects ranging from math, science, language arts, and social studies to other topics that have become critical for students to learn about: human rights, environmental sustainability, poverty, hunger, global health, diversity, gender, and immigration. Prominent educators on our team consult with filmmakers and cultural specialists in the development of curriculum guides, each one dedicated to an in-depth exploration of the culture and issues depicted in a specific film. The guides complement teachers' existing lesson plans and meet mandated curricular requirements, providing teachers with an innovative way to fulfill their school districts' standards-based goals.

We prepare teachers to use film effectively in the classroom through customized professional development workshops and online webinars.

Journeys in Film is an organization with proven results. Individual teachers worldwide and entire school districts in the U.S. have employed our interdisciplinary film-based curricula.

- Millions of students have learned about our multicultural world through Journeys in Film's middle school series, based on films from Iran, South Africa, South Korea, the Maori of New Zealand, Tibet, India, China and Saudi Arabia.
- Students are becoming inspired by the courageous contemporary and historical figures portrayed in films such as *Hidden Figures*, *The Post*, and *He Named Me Malala*.
- Films like *Schindler's List*, *Defiant Requiem*, and *Big Sonia* not only teach about the Holocaust, but also demonstrate how one person can make a difference in the lives of others.
- Teachers are using our outstanding documentary series to teach about historical events, American prison systems, the critical role of photojournalists, and positive psychology.

Journeys in Film guides help teachers integrate these films into their classrooms, examining complex issues, encouraging students to be active rather than passive viewers, and maximizing the power of film to enhance critical thinking skills and to meet the Common Core Standards.

Why teach with film?

Today's students are the most visually literate generation in history. According to the Social Science Research Network, 65% of people are primarily visual learners. Today's students are more affected by media than ever before. They seldom need to be coaxed into watching films; after all, everyone loves a good movie. Through their own desire to be entertained, students become captivated learners.

Films have long been overlooked as an educational tool. We teach our students literature that originates from many places around the world, but we tend to forget that what often spurs the imagination is both visual and auditory. Film, which in minutes can be screened and beamed to every country in the world, is this extraordinary educational tool that goes right into the heart of different cultures. One of its strengths lies in its ability to present information rapidly and convey atmosphere, making that world come to life. It allows viewers to "feel" and thereby develop empathy skills, thus potentially increasing the likelihood of students connecting personally to the content, which in turn helps with understanding and analyzing concepts.

In teaching with films, we encourage our students to be critical consumers of what they see and teach them to consider the perspective of the filmmaker and challenge generalizations. Analyzing film and media is an empowering skill and one that is increasingly important for young people. To this end, it is imperative to integrate the film into a larger lesson, using it as a launching pad for historical and cultural exploration, as well as an examination of narrative perspective, character development, and media literacy.

In one 7th grade student's words, "I like Journeys in Film because it just doesn't teach you like a book. It's better when you can actually see it happening. Films give a first-hand view of places and stories."

A Letter from Liam Neeson



Working in films such as *Michael Collins* and *Schindler's List*, I've seen the power of film not only to entertain, but also to change the way audiences see themselves and the world. When I first met Joanne Ashe, herself the daughter of Holocaust survivors,

she explained to me her vision for a new educational program called *Journeys in Film: Educating for Global Understanding*. I grasped immediately how such a program could transform the use of film in the classroom from a passive viewing activity to an active, integral part of learning.

I have served as the national spokesperson for *Journeys in Film* since its inception because I absolutely believe in the effectiveness of film as an educational tool that can teach our young people to value and respect cultural diversity and to see themselves as individuals who can make a difference. *Journeys in Film* uses interdisciplinary, standards-aligned lesson plans that can support and enrich classroom programs in English, social studies, math, science, and the arts. Using films as a teaching tool is invaluable, and *Journeys in Film* has succeeded in creating outstanding film-based curricula integrated into core academic subjects.

By using carefully selected documentary and international films that depict life in other countries and cultures around the globe, combined with interdisciplinary curricula to transform entertainment media into educational media, we can use the classroom to bring the world to every student. Our film program dispels myths and misconceptions, enabling students to overcome biases; it connects the future leaders of the world with one another. As we provide teachers with lessons aligned to Common Core Standards, we are also laying a foundation for understanding, acceptance, trust, and peace.

Please share my vision of a more harmonious world where cross-cultural understanding and the ability to converse about complex issues are keys to a healthy present and a peaceful future. Whether you are a student, an educator, a filmmaker, or a financial supporter, I encourage you to participate in the *Journeys in Film* program.

Please join this vital journey for our kids' future. They are counting on us. *Journeys in Film* gets them ready for the world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature of Liam Neeson in black ink, written in a cursive style.

A Letter from Haifaa Al Mansour



I truly hope you enjoyed watching my film *Wadjda*. It is not only the first feature film I directed, but was also the first film ever shot in my home country of Saudi Arabia. It is also the first film directed by a Saudi woman. So it is the first of many things, but

certainly not the last, as Saudi Arabia has now lifted the ban on both the production and exhibition of films within the Kingdom. I know we will now see many more films coming from my country and am so excited about all of the amazing stories there that are waiting to be told.

Wadjda is a very personal story for me but it is not autobiographical. I was never as tough or rebellious as Wadjda when I was a kid! But I learned to go after the things I want in life just like her. The story was influenced a lot by all the girls that I knew growing up, that were so full of life and creativity but never found an outlet for all of their potential. I know they could have done so much more if they had just taken a chance and pushed the boundaries of their lives a little. So I wanted to make a film that celebrates the very difficult choice of stepping outside of ascribed social limitations to pursue a dream. It is never easy, but just like my dream of making films in a country where cinema was forbidden, I wanted to show how important it is to try. I believe we all have to work hard to create the change we want to see in the world.

My goal with *Wadjda*, and with every film I direct, was to make an entertaining film that people enjoy. If a film is not entertaining, the message will never get through. I also wanted to make a film that could be special to Saudis, and make the medium itself seem more accessible, while still

presenting a window to our world to international audiences. As the script developed, I constantly tried to look at it from the outside, to the universal themes that it spoke to. I didn't want to give foreign audiences the false impression that it would be an easy or acceptable thing for a girl to ride a bike around Riyadh, so it was hard not to want to put in a bleaker end to her journey. But I think the positive aspects of the film help audiences relate to the story more.

I knew that Western audiences had ideas and concepts about women in Saudi but didn't know much about the day-to-day life of women in the Kingdom. It is hard to be a woman in Saudi Arabia and I wanted the world to know how strong the women are in my country. They are tough and sassy and the new generation has a whole new outlook and window to the world. They are empowered and motivated to improve their status within the society in ways my generation could never have imagined. They are survivors.

So I hope this film gave you a little insight into the place that I am from. Most of all, I hope it encourages you to tell your own story, to think about what is special and unique about your journey, and how you can share your perspective with the world. We need to hear about every person that takes a risk, no matter how small, and pushes for something they believe in. Those are the stories that will move the world forward.

I am so honored to be included in your studies and sincerely look forward to someday hearing all of your stories.

Respectfully,
Haifaa Al Mansour

Introducing *Wadjda*

A young girl who desperately wants a bicycle of her own and tries to earn the money to buy it. A wife and mother who worries about losing her husband to another woman. These two story lines intertwine in the film *Wadjda* against the backdrop of conservative society in contemporary Saudi Arabia and the cultural pressures that this society exerts on women.

Ten-year-old Wadjda's friend Abdullah has a bicycle and to Wadjda his bike represents the speed and freedom that only boys seem to have in this gender-conscious society. Having found the bike of her dreams in a local shop, Wadjda makes and sells bracelets and runs errands to earn enough money to buy it, which sometimes gets her in trouble with her school principal. When she hears about prize money for the winner of a contest that tests knowledge about the Quran and the ability to recite the sacred text, she decides that, in spite of her previously lackluster effort in learning the verses, she is going to win this prize.

Meanwhile, her mother is coping with a long commute with a cranky and overbearing driver, the restricted job opportunities she faces as a Saudi woman, and her loneliness. Her husband wants a son and she is unable to give her one; his family is pressuring him to take a second wife. She is also trying to bring up Wadjda as an almost-single mother, and Wadjda is a handful.

Students will identify with Wadjda's longing for what seems to be an unattainable goal and with the difficulty that she has fitting into her strict and conservative girls' school; her worn sneakers, visible often in the film from the opening credits on, symbolize her independence and desire to go her own way in a world that wants to force her to hide her individuality and ambition. It will be more difficult for Western students to understand the totality of restrictions facing women in this society, restrictions that are challenged most effectively by this film. This curriculum guide will help students to enter this world and understand its nuances.

This award-winning film is the work of writer and director Haifaa Al Mansour, who learned about film from her father's videos, since movie theaters were not allowed in Saudi Arabia from 1974 to 2018. She is the first female Saudi director and the first director to make a feature-length movie filmed entirely in that country.

DIRECTOR: Haifaa Al Mansour

WRITTEN BY: Haifaa Al Mansour

PRODUCER: Gerhard Meixner

CO-PRODUCER: Amr Alkahtani

EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS:

Christine Granderath, Louise Nemschoff, Bettina Ricklefs,
Rena Ronson, Hala Sarhan

MUSIC: Max Richter

CINEMATOGRAPHY: Lutz Reitmeier

Artwork from *Wadjda* appears courtesy of Sony Pictures Classics Inc.

To the Teacher

One of the great challenges of bringing the world home to the students in your class is the difficulty of finding authentic materials that are age-appropriate, inherently interesting to young people, and available in a language that is accessible to them. And at a time when understanding the power and role of Saudi Arabia is critical to understanding the Middle East, the world economy, and the complexities of diplomacy, any authentic contribution to understanding Saudi society is important. Film is a vehicle for supporting that understanding. A film like *Wadjda* can teach your students not only about the differences between Saudi Arabia and their own country, but also about the underlying similarities of shared experiences. This curriculum guide is written to help your students process the unfamiliar aspects of culture that *Wadjda* portrays.

This curriculum guide, like other Journeys in Film resources, is based on a few fundamental beliefs:

- That a well-made, relevant film is an excellent way to convey information and teach students important critical thinking skills.
- That an interdisciplinary approach will reach students who have different learning modalities and interests.
- That talented teachers interacting with real students on a daily basis are best positioned to write good lesson plans.

There are six lessons in this guide. Although it is possible to use all of these lessons, most teachers will select just one or several to use with their classes. You might wish to consider a team approach built around *Wadjda* for a memorable experience for your students.

Lesson 1 introduces students to the film and supports their viewing with a reader-response journal activity that links what they are seeing in the film to their own experiences. A role-playing activity using some of the characters from the film helps deepen their understanding of the characters' motivations and personalities. An extension activity deals with the symbolism of the film.

Lesson 2 uses mapping and research activities to help students grasp some basic knowledge of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It also provides an opportunity for students to learn about Islam, the religion that is second in the world in the number of adherents, yet is little understood by the average American.

Lesson 3 continues to explore the Saudi kingdom by looking at how it is confronting the tension between a very traditional society and the demands of the modern world. Students read and analyze a variety of news articles about Saudi Arabia today and prepare scripts for their own podcasts.

Lesson 4 asks students to reflect on the gender expectations they experience in their own daily lives. Then after reading an article about women in Saudi Arabia today, they analyze scenes from *Wadjda* to explore the restrictions on Saudi women. They look at how cinematic techniques portray both women who resist the restrictions and women who reinforce them.

Lesson 5 introduces students to the Quran, the most sacred text of Islam. First, they watch clips from the film that have been selected to show the Quran class learning to recite verses from the *suras*, or chapters, of the book. They read a FAQs handout that provides additional information about the book and then they explore the Smithsonian’s website based on an exhibit of historically important and artistically superb examples of the Quran.

The final lesson asks students to consider the role of the director in filmmaking and then provides an interview with Haifaa Al Mansour so that they can learn about her goals and challenges in making *Wadjda*. They also reflect on a challenge they had to deal with and some of the ways that people have chosen to counter limitations society tries to impose. Finally, they practice writing in a correct business letter format to send their ideas about the film to the director.

For more information about this and other free Journeys in Film curriculum and discussion guides, please see the Journeys in Film website at www.journeysinfilm.org.

Wadjda's Story: Understanding Wadjda's World

Enduring Understandings

- Wadjda's life in Saudi Arabia has numerous restrictions because she is a girl.
- Wadjda's school reinforces unequal expectations for boys and girls as well as different rules and regulations.
- The bicycle that Wadjda wants has symbolic meaning beyond just being enjoyable to ride.
- A viewer response journal allows the viewer to understand a film better and experience it more fully.
- Role-playing helps students to fully reflect upon not just the plot and imagery of *Wadjda*, but also a meaningful interpretation of what it means to live in Wadjda's world.

Essential Questions

- What is it like for Wadjda to grow up in Saudi Arabia?
- How does Wadjda's parents' complicated marriage affect her outlook?
- Why is Wadjda's principal so strict with her (and the other girls in school)?
- Why does Wadjda want a bicycle so badly?

Notes to the Teacher

Wadjda is a ten-year-old girl who lives with her mother in Saudi Arabia. Her father is only partly present in her life and is planning a second marriage so that he can have a son. Wadjda is desperate to have a bicycle like her friend Abdullah, and she does whatever work she can to earn the money for it. But in Saudi Arabia, girls simply do not ride bikes.

After a brief introduction to the film, students will view it in class or, preferably, in the auditorium on a larger screen. You should prepare your students for subtitles and reassure them that they will soon forget that they are even reading them as they get involved in the story.

After viewing the film, students work with viewer response journal handouts (**HANDOUTS 1–4**) to understand each facet of Wadjda's life, including her family, her school, and her friendship with Abdullah, and to connect these facets of her life with their own experiences. Since the purpose of these handouts is to allow for a student's personal connection with the character, the answers will all vary. Emphasis should be placed on individual interpretation and the explanations for those interpretations with the class in inclusive class discussions. Prepare for this part of the lesson by printing copies of each handout. If your students have access to computers, you may prefer to share them electronically instead.

An extension activity on the symbolism of the film is optional, but a discussion of the importance symbolic value of the bicycle would be a good way to conclude this lesson.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS ADDRESSED BY THIS LESSON

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.1

Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.5

Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Duration of Lesson

At least three 50–60-minute lessons, plus one optional writing lesson.

Assessments

Completion of viewer response journal handouts
Participation in class discussions
Participation in role playing activities

Materials needed

Classroom map that includes Saudi Arabia.
DVD or streaming capability for Wadjda
Copies of **HANDOUTS 1–5**
Writing utensils and/or computer access for those with computer accommodations

Procedure

Part 1: Introduction

1. Tell students that they are about to see a film about a ten-year-old girl named Wadjda who lives in Saudi Arabia. Point out Saudi Arabia on a classroom map and ask students what they know about the country. Tell them that they are going to see a film made by a Saudi director who wanted to show what life was really like there.
2. Explain to students that after the film you will ask them to reflect upon Wadjda, her family, her school, and her friendship with Abdullah. Tell them that, as they watch the film, you want them to think about how Wadjda’s life is different from their own, but also how it is similar.
3. Explain that they will need to read subtitles for the film but reassure them that they will adapt to this very quickly. Then show the film.

Part 2: Reviewing and interpreting the film

1. Distribute **HANDOUT 1: GETTING TO KNOW WADJDA: A VIEWER RESPONSE JOURNAL**. Read the directions aloud to the class as the students read them silently to themselves. Ask students if there are any questions and clarify as needed. Ask students to work independently to complete the chart; don’t assign the reflection question at the end yet.
2. When students have had time to complete the chart, ask them to share their answers, reviewing one idea from the film at a time and giving students time to discuss any insights their own experiences have provided. (Answers will vary.)

3. Now prompt students to answer the reflection question at the end of the worksheet. Allow a few minutes, and then ask students to share their answers. (Answers will vary.)
4. Arrange students in pairs. Distribute **HANDOUT 2: WADJDA'S FAMILY: A CHARACTER DIAGRAM**. Read the directions aloud to the class as the students read them silently to themselves. Remind students that an adjective is a word or phrase naming an attribute of a noun or noun phrase. Ask students if there are any questions and clarify as needed. Allow time for students to discuss what they have learned about the family and fill in the diagram; then give students an opportunity to share their answers with the whole class.

Suggested answers (allow for variation):

1. Possible answers for Wadjda's father include descriptive words/phrases like *absent/not around, polygamist/marries another woman, kind, plays video games, does not have a son, and allowed to show his face in public*. Possible answers for her mother include *loving, strict, uncertain, reserved, unable to drive, required to cover head and face in public, submissive, and kind*.
2. Possible answers include descriptive words/phrases like *kind, enjoys video games, must cover her head*.
3. Possible answers include descriptive words/phrases like *quiet, observant, entrepreneur, stealthy, smart, moderately respectful, determined, efficient, good negotiator, and loyal*.
4. Students may choose *determined* because Wadjda works very hard to win the recitation competition and the prize money (even though she does not receive the money after sharing her intentions with Ms. Hussa and the school.)

5. Join pairs together to form groups of four. Pass out **HANDOUT 3: WADJDA'S SCHOOL: A LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL**. Read the directions aloud as the students read them silently to themselves. Allow about ten minutes for discussion within the small groups, and then have each student write the letter individually.
6. Ask students to share the basic themes of their letters from Ms. Hussa with the class as a whole. Encourage discussion of various viewpoints. (Answers will vary. Students might focus on Ms. Hussa's own experiences as a woman in Saudi Arabian society, in addition to her own admission that Wadjda reminds her of herself when she was Wadjda's age. Others will portray her as a mean and authoritarian personality.)
7. Pass out **HANDOUT 4: WADJDA'S FRIENDSHIP WITH ABDULLAH: A DIARY ENTRY**. Read the directions aloud as the students read them silently to themselves. Assign the diary entry for homework.
8. The next day, give students a chance to share the ideas they expressed in their diary entries. (Answers will vary. Some students might think Wadjda only befriended or helped people because she wants a bicycle, or because she and her mother are on their own due to Wadjda's father's second marriage. Some students may state that Wadjda wishes she had the freedom that the boys have, which is why she befriends Abdullah and desires to get a bicycle of her own. Unless society changes, it will be very difficult to continue the friendship once they are adolescents or adults, unless they marry as Abdullah suggests.)

Lesson 1 (ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS)



Extension Activity

If you haven't already defined the term *symbol* for the class, do so now. (A symbol is an object or action that represents an idea.) Lead a discussion on the bicycle as a symbol in the film. You may wish to read the article on the symbolism of the bike at <http://www.theessential.com.au/features/object-dart/riding-uphill-the-shifting-symbolism-of-wadjdas-bicycle>. Other symbols to consider in your discussion are Wadjda's sneakers, the veils that adult women wear, the use of training wheels for Wadjda's bike-riding lessons, the names on her family tree, and Wadjda's choice to remain at the hopscotch game when the other students go inside. Have students write a summary of their ideas on the symbolism in this film.

Handout 1 ▶ P. 1

Getting to Know Wadjda: A Viewer Response Journal

Directions:

Complete the chart below, drawing on the film and your own personal experiences to answer each question.

Film content	Your Reaction/Connection
Wadjda gets in trouble at school.	
Wadjda wants a bicycle.	
Wadjda is an entrepreneur who sells things and runs errands to earn money.	
Wadjda has an unlikely friendship with a boy, Abdullah.	

Handout 1 ▶ P. 2

Getting to Know Wadjda: A Viewer Response Journal

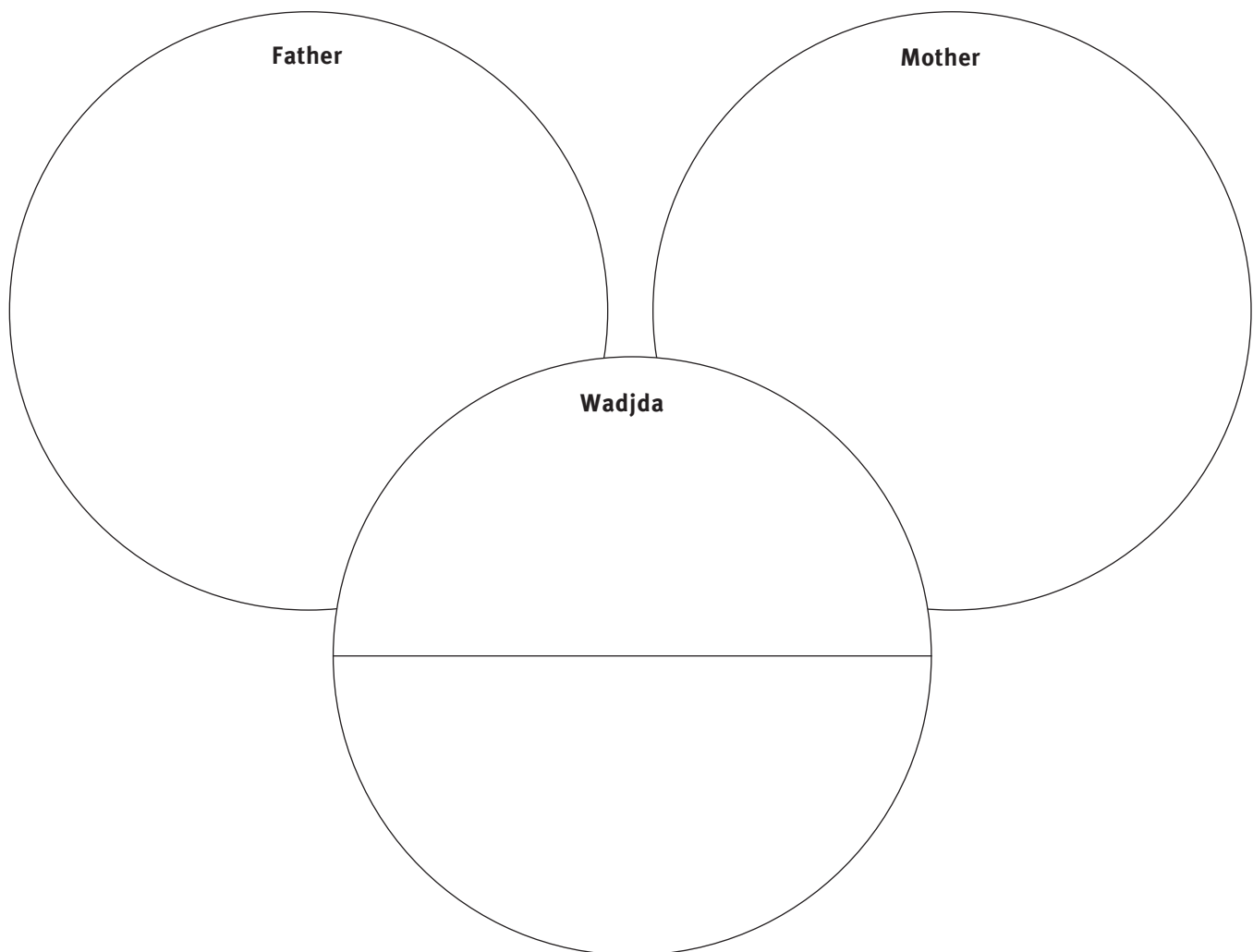
<p>Wadjda saves money to get something she wants.</p>	
<p>Wadjda goes outside of her comfort zone to compete in the Quran recitation competition.</p>	
<p>Wadjda is disappointed when she is not given the prize money that she won.</p>	
<p>Final reflection: How are you similar and different from Wadjda? Explain.</p>	

Handout 2 ▶ P. 1

Wadjda's Family: A Character Diagram

Directions:

1. Reflect on Wadjda's family by writing down a minimum of five adjectives or descriptive phrases to describe her father and her mother in the appropriate circles below.
2. Decide whether Wadjda possesses any of the characteristics of her parents and write those adjectives/descriptive phrases in the top portion of Wadjda's circle.



Handout 2 ▶ P. 2

Wadjda's Family: A Character Diagram

3. Does Wadjda possess any traits that her parents do not? Write them down in the bottom portion of her circle.
4. Do you relate to any aspects of Wadjda's relationship with her parents/caregivers?



Handout 3

Wadjda's School: A Letter from the Principal

Directions:

Put yourself in the position of Ms. Husa and compose a letter to Wadjda explaining your reasons for the way you act. Think about Ms. Husa's experiences as a woman in Saudi Arabian society. Think back to the film: What does Ms. Husa think of Wadjda? What does she think of her other students?

Dear Wadjda,

Sincerely,

Ms. Husa

Handout 4

Wadjda's Friendship with Abdullah: A Diary Entry

Wadjda is a good friend of a boy who lives nearby, Abdullah. Although he sometimes teases her, he also helps her, particularly with learning to ride a bike. Compose a diary entry in Wadjda's voice reflecting upon her friendship with Abdullah. What about this friendship makes her happy? Why does she continue to spend time with him if it is not considered appropriate to do so in Saudi Arabian society? What will happen with her friendship with Abdullah in the future?

Date _____

Dear Diary,

The Country of Saudi Arabia

Enduring Understandings

- The geography of Saudi Arabia has informed its history as well as its impact on the rest of the world.
- The Islamic faith is deeply infused in the history and culture of Saudi Arabia.
- Islam has greatly impacted the world and is the second most popular religion in the world.

Essential Questions

- What is the history of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia?
- What are the most important elements of Islam?
- How have faith and government impacted life in the Middle East?

Notes to the Teacher:

Saudi Arabia's history and culture are so intrinsically woven into *Wadjda* it is hard to imagine this story taking place anywhere else. It is important for students to understand the setting of the film because it will inevitably help them to better understand the story. Saudi Arabia occupies most of the Arabian Peninsula; the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba are on its west coast and the Persian Gulf is on the east. The kingdom is central to the Middle East region as it is the homeland of the Arab peoples, as well as the birthplace of Islam.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was unified in 1932 under King Abdul-Aziz ibn Abdul-Rahman al Faisal al Saud. He was a descendant of Wahhabi leaders who believed in the need for the region to return to its roots of Islam following several years of Ottoman rule. King Ibn Saud seized Riyadh in 1901 and established himself as the leader of the Arab nationalist movement. By 1906 he had established Wahhabi dominance in Nejd and conquered Hejaz in 1925. The Hejaz and Nejd regions were merged to form the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932. The result was an absolute monarchy with the Saud dynasty in charge, ruling by *sharia* law, a set of guiding principles in Islam developed after the death of Mohammed. A year later the region of Asir was added to the kingdom.

King Ibn Saud's alignment with Wahhabi and Islamic principles was a major contributor to his success. Islam is central to the culture in Saudi Arabia. Muhammad founded Islam there, and it is the location of the two holy pilgrimage cities of Mecca and Medina. The Islamic calendar begins in 622 CE, the year of the *hegira*, Muhammad's flight from Mecca. During the next centuries, Islam spread eastward from the Arabian Peninsula through northern India as far as Indonesia, and westward to Spain and north Africa. Today, Islam is practiced all over the world by many ethnic groups.

In Saudi Arabia, the majority of citizens practice Sunni Islam, the branch of Islam followed by 85% of Muslims worldwide. In addition to the Quran (alternately spelled Qur'an or Koran), they follow the Hadith, a literature about Islamic law and behavior based on traditions about Mohammed's life and sayings; the "well-trodden path" laid down by the Hadith is called the *sunna*.

In this lesson, to be taught after students have seen the film *Wadjda*, they begin by examining the geographic makeup of Saudi Arabia by completing a map assignment to familiarize themselves with the region. Have students complete **HANDOUT 1: MAPPING THE MIDDLE EAST** as a homework assignment before the lesson. The handout contains a set of directions for labeling and a blank outline map. If you wish to make the activity more complex, you can add the main deserts (An Nafud Desert and Ar Rub' Al Khali Desert) and the Tihamat Mountains, divided into the Asir (southern) and Hijaz (northern) ranges. A map of the Middle East with all the locations listed on the handout can be found at https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_Middle_East.png.

You may wish to make a slide of this map to project while discussing the homework. A physical map of the mountains and deserts of Saudi Arabia may be found at <http://www.freeworldmaps.net/asia/saudi-arabia/map.html>.

In Part 2, students then take a closer look at the kingdom's history and culture using an online encyclopedia source. This section of the lesson begins with a discussion of skimming and scanning, two useful tools for academic reading. There are many helpful discussions of this online; one particularly useful one is a pdf on reading skills produced by James Madison University at <https://www.jmu.edu/valleyscholars/files/studyreadingskills.pdf>; skimming and scanning are discussed on pp. 2 and 3. Be sure to familiarize yourself with this information from this document or a similar website before beginning the second part of this lesson. After reviewing this information, students will first skim an online encyclopedia article about Saudi Arabia to find out what general information it contains; they will then scan the article to find particular information about Saudi Arabia during a team-based quiz game.

Before this part of the lesson, make a copy of the answer sheet to **HANDOUT 2** and cut the questions apart, placing the questions in a bag or hat to draw from. Save the last question on the handout, the one about how these facts inform parts of *Wadjda*'s story, for the end of the activity. Decide how many teams you would like to divide your class into and make an index card with a number on it to identify each team. Try to divide the teams so that the stronger students are teamed with weaker ones. Prepare a small prize for the team that finds the most answers fastest. If you decide that you wish to give your students a copy of the blank **HANDOUT 2** at the end for them to take notes on for homework or instead of playing the game, run enough copies for your students.

Islam is a crucial aspect of life in Saudi Arabia. As the birthplace of Mohammed and the location of the annual pilgrimage called the *hajj*, Saudi Arabia is central to the Muslim world. Part 3 is an introduction to Islam. Students will do independent research about the religion, taking notes on **HANDOUT 3**. As with any complex topic, you should review with students how to determine if a website is objective. Some excellent resources for guidance in determining the objectivity of internet sites for research are:

<https://ccconline.libguides.com/c.php?g=242130&p=1609638>

<https://sccollege.edu/Library/Pages/EvaluatingInformationontheInternet.aspx>

<https://guides.library.illinoisstate.edu/evaluating/craap>

You should familiarize yourself with this information before this part of the lesson to help guide your students. Alternatively, you could ask your school librarian to do a session with your students on evaluating websites if they are unclear on how to do so.

Be attentive to any Muslim students in your classroom to be sure they are comfortable during class discussions. They may even provide you with additional information or contacts for a guest speaker who would come to class to answer questions.

[Note: For fuller lesson plans on this topic and for useful background information, download the curriculum for *Morgan Freeman's The Story of God* at <https://journeysinfilm.org/product/the-story-of-god/>. Lesson 5, beginning on page. 83, covers the beginnings of Islam, the life of the Prophet, the Five Pillars and Six Principles of Islam, Islamic art and science, and the spread of empire.]

Journeys in Film also has these additional materials available regarding Islam and/or the experiences of Muslim girls and women: <https://journeysinfilm.org/product/the-neighborhood-storyteller> and <https://journeysinfilm.org/articles/teach-about-islam-with-film/>.

Finally, students will create travel materials detailing important information about Saudi Arabia. It would be helpful if you provide examples for them of travel ads; a local travel agency might be able to give you some sample brochures or posters for other countries besides Saudi Arabia. There are multiple travel videos and podcasts available on YouTube as well. Collect materials that might be useful to them as they make their travel ads on Saudi Arabia and arrange for them to use a color printer to print up images if needed.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS ADDRESSED BY THIS LESSON

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.1.D

Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.2.B

Develop the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience's knowledge of the topic.

Duration of lesson

3 or 4 class periods

Assessments

Completion of **HANDOUTS 1-3**

Completion of informative travel materials

Materials needed

HANDOUT 1: MAPPING THE MIDDLE EAST

HANDOUT 2: A SURVEY OF SAUDI ARABIA

HANDOUT 3: AN INTRODUCTION TO ISLAM

Colored pens or pencils

Markers

Construction paper and chart paper or poster board

Old magazines

Scissors, glue, and tape

Access to laptops, tablets, chrome books, or other electronic devices to complete handouts and conduct research

Access to the following online sources:

“Britannica Online Encyclopedia-Saudi Arabia” at <https://www.britannica.com/place/Saudi-Arabia>

“Blank Map Outline-Middle East” at https://er.jsc.nasa.gov/seh/Mission_Geography/Map_Index.pdf

Procedure

Part 1: Mapping Saudi Arabia and the Middle East

1. The day before the lesson, distribute copies of **HANDOUT 1: MAPPING THE MIDDLE EAST**. Ask students to complete the handout in preparation for the lesson. Point out to students that they will need colored pens or pencils and access to a world atlas online or in print.
2. On the day of the lesson, ask students to take out their completed maps and display a map of Saudi Arabia on your projector or smart board. (See Notes to the Teacher for suggested maps.) Ask students to share what information they already know about the region and what information they learned about Saudi Arabia from the film. Ask students to hypothesize about what geographical/physical features of the region helped to shape the culture of Saudi Arabia.

Part 2: A cultural and geographical survey of Saudi Arabia

1. Ask students how they approach a new social studies reading when you assign it to them. After hearing their responses, write two words on the board, “skimming” and “scanning.” Explain to students that these are techniques that can help them process a reading quickly to find out what it is about and if it contains information they need.
2. Define *skimming* for them as reading quickly to gain a general idea of the content of the selection; write this definition on the board. Display <https://www.britannica.com/place/Saudi-Arabia> on the projection screen. Using information from the James Madison document mentioned in Notes to the Teacher, work with students to begin skimming the document together, reading the introduction together, then using subheads, words in bold type, diagrams, and other keys to meaning. After a few pages, have students log on to the website on their own devices and continue to skim quickly until they reach the end.
3. Now define *scanning* as reading quickly to find specific information; write this definition on the board as well and be sure that students understand the difference between the two terms. Then explain to students that they are going to practice by competing in a race to find information about Saudi Arabia by scanning.
4. Divide the class into a convenient number of small teams of two or three, and give each team a number to display clearly. Write the numbers in a column on the board. Explain that you are going to call out a question and award a point to the team that can find a satisfactory answer first. Then draw a question from a hat or bag and read it aloud twice. Give students time to scan the Britannica document for the correct answer and put a hatch mark next to the first team to call out the answer. Ask the team to give you the page number of the website so that other students can locate it and confirm that the answer is correct. Clarify any questions that students have about that topic.
5. Continue in this way until you have answered all the questions. (This may take more than one class period.) Give a small reward to the team that comes in first.

6. If desired, give students a copy of the blank **HANDOUT 2** to jot down what they remember from the game. Let them work together to share information they remember and complete the handout for homework, adding any information to their handouts that they missed previously.
7. At the beginning of the next class meeting, ask the final question from **HANDOUT 2**: “How do these facts inform parts of Wadjda’s story?” As students review their handouts, discuss what aspects of Saudi culture and geography have had an impact on Wadjda’s life. Be sure to include a discussion of religion to lead into the next part of the lesson.

Part 3: Examining Islam

1. Have students find a research partner. Distribute **HANDOUT 3: A SURVEY OF ISLAM** and instruct students to complete the handout with their new partner, using their research skills to find suitable websites. Remind students of what makes an online source credible and what red flags to look for, especially given the sensitive nature of this topic.
2. Give student pairs adequate time to research the answers to the questions on the handout. If necessary, allow them to continue independently for homework.
3. Use the time at the end of the class period to review student responses to the handout, using the answer sheet on **TEACHER RESOURCE 2**. Then facilitate a conversation about the last question asked the class before: How did religion influence Wadjda’s life and that of her mother? How did it affect the lives of the other women depicted in the film? What more do students now know from their research about how their faith shaped the lives of Wadjda and her mother?

Part 4: Creating informative material for travel to Saudi Arabia

1. Begin the class by reminding students of all that they have learned about the geography and culture of Saudi Arabia. Tell them that they are now going to use this knowledge to create a piece of informative material that could help someone planning to travel to Saudi Arabia. If you have samples of travel advertisements or posters, show them now.
2. Ask them to think about what product they wish to create: a travel brochure, a poster ad, a video commercial, or an audio podcast. Once students know what they want to do, they should team up with students who would like to do the same thing. Students can work in groups of three, pairs, or individually.
3. Provide students with adequate time and materials to create their ads. Give them a deadline by which you expect them to turn in their work.
4. When they have finished, give them an opportunity to present their work to their classmates.

Handout 1 ▶ P. 1 Mapping the Middle East

Directions:

Using colored pencils or colored pens, follow the instructions to label each of the important countries, cities, and bodies of water in the region on the map. You may use an atlas or an online resource to complete your map with accuracy.

1. With a light blue pencil or pen, color the bodies of water.

2. With a dark blue pencil or pen, label the following:

Black Sea

Persian Gulf

Arabian Sea

Mediterranean Sea

Caspian Sea

Gulf of Aden

Red Sea

3. With a black pencil or pen, label the following locations:

Bahrain

Israel

Oman

Syria

Egypt

Jordan

Palestine

Turkey

Iran

Kuwait

Qatar

United Arab Emirates

Iraq

Lebanon

Saudi Arabia

Yemen

4. With a red pencil or pen, label the following cities in Saudi Arabia:

Riyadh

Mecca

Medina

Handout 1 ▶ P.2 **Mapping the Middle East**

Name _____ Date _____



Handout 2 ▶ P.1 **A Survey of Saudi Arabia**

Name _____ **Date** _____

What is the capital of Saudi Arabia?	What are the three climatic zones in the kingdom?
What wild animals inhabit Saudi Arabia?	What domesticated animals inhabit Saudi Arabia?
Which ethnic groups live in the kingdom?	What is the official language of the kingdom?
What are the religious demographics of the kingdom?	Is religious freedom recognized under the law?
What are the four traditional regions of Saudi Arabia?	How have Bedouin culture and immigration from other countries affected the kingdom's demographics?

Handout 2 ▶ P.2 **A Survey of Saudi Arabia**

Describe the economy, including the series of five-year plans.	Describe the agricultural life of the kingdom.
How has petroleum impacted Saudi Arabia?	What is Saudi Arabia's constitutional framework?
How do the local governments operate?	What is the Sharia?
To what extent are citizens allowed to participate in the political process?	Describe education in Saudi Arabia.
Describe daily life and social customs.	How do these facts inform parts of Wadjda's story?

Teacher Resource 1 **A Survey of Saudi Arabia (Answer Key)**
P . 1

Note: Exact percentages referenced here in the answer key may vary depending on the year in which students are completing the assignment

<p>What is the capital of Saudi Arabia? <i>Riyadh</i></p>	<p>What are the 3 climatic zones in the kingdom? <i>(1) desert almost everywhere, (2) steppe along the western highlands, (3) a small area of humid and mild temperature conditions with long summers</i></p>
<p>What wild animals inhabit Saudi Arabia? <i>Wolves, hyenas, foxes, honey badgers, mongooses, porcupines, baboons, hedgehogs, hares, sand rats, jerboas</i></p>	<p>What domesticated animals inhabit Saudi Arabia? <i>Camels, fat-tailed sheep, long-eared goats, salukis, donkeys, chickens</i></p>
<p>Which ethnic groups live in the kingdom? <i>Saudi Arabian-74%</i> <i>Indian-5%</i> <i>Bangladeshi-3.5%</i> <i>Pakistani-3.5%</i></p>	<p>What is the official language of the kingdom? <i>Arabic</i></p>
<p>What are the religious demographics of the kingdom? <i>Sunni Muslim-84%</i> <i>Shi'a Muslim-10%</i> <i>Roman Catholic-3%</i></p>	<p>Is religious freedom recognized under the law? <i>Public worship and display by non-Muslim faiths is prohibited</i></p>
<p>What are the 4 traditional regions of Saudi Arabia? <i>Hejaz, Asir, Najd, Al-Hasa</i></p>	<p>How have Bedouin culture and immigration from other countries affected the kingdom's demographics? <i>Government has settled the majority of Bedouin and there has been an influx of foreign workers since the 50s</i></p>

Teacher Resource 1 **A Survey of Saudi Arabia (Answer Key)**
P . 2

<p>Describe the economy, including the series of five-year plans. <i>Fueled by enormous revenues from oil exports, long-range economic development has been directed through a series of five-year plans beginning in 1970</i></p>	<p>Describe the agricultural life of the kingdom. <i>Less than 2% of the total land area is used for crops because of a poor water supply and poor soil</i></p>
<p>How has petroleum impacted Saudi Arabia? <i>In terms of oil reserves, Saudi Arabia ranks first internationally, with about one-fifth of the world's known reserves</i></p>	<p>What is Saudi Arabia's constitutional framework? <i>Monarchy ruled by the Al Saud, a family whose status was established by its close ties with and support for the Wahhabi religious establishment; basic law of government; Council of Ministries; Consultative Council</i></p>
<p>How do the local governments operate? <i>The kingdom is divided into 13 administrative regions</i></p>	<p>What is the Sharia? <i>The basis of justice and religious law</i></p>
<p>To what extent are citizens allowed to participate in the political process? <i>Participation is limited to a relatively small portion of the population; no elections for national bodies; political parties are outlawed</i></p>	<p>Describe education in Saudi Arabia. <i>Education is free at all levels and is given high priority by the government; segregated by gender</i></p>
<p>Describe daily life and social customs. <i>Cultural setting is Arab and Muslim; Sharia is woven into daily life</i></p>	<p>How do these facts inform parts of Wadжда's story? <i>Student responses will vary</i></p>

Handout 3 ▶ P.1

A Survey of Islam

Name _____ Date _____

Directions:

Use objective online and print sources to answer the questions below. Take accurate notes on your findings.

What are the origins of Islam? How did the religion begin? Where?

What are the fundamental beliefs and principles of Islam?

What are the 5 Pillars of Islam?

A Survey of Islam

What is the sacred text of Islam?

What are the basic practices of Islam? How do Muslims worship?

How did Islam spread beyond Saudi Arabia?

What similarities and differences do you notice amongst the three major monotheistic religions that originated in the Middle East (Judaism, Christianity, Islam)?

How did religion influence Wajda's life? How did it impact the lives of other women depicted in the film?

Teacher Resource 12

A Survey of Islam

P . 1

Note: Exact percentages referenced here in the answer key may vary depending on the year in which students are completing the assignment

What are the origins of Islam? How did the religion begin? Where?

According to Muslim belief, in 610 CE the Prophet Muhammad began receiving revelations from Allah (to be recorded in Arabic in the Quran). He preached in Mecca and was expelled from that city, but returned from Medina with an army to conquer and convert the people of Mecca.

Islam considers Abraham to be the founder of monotheism and recognizes Moses, Jesus, and others as prophets;

Muhammad, born in Mecca, is considered the last prophet.

The two main sects of Islam are Sunni and Shi'a.

What are the fundamental beliefs and principles of Islam? What are the 5 Pillars of Islam? What is the sacred text of Islam?

5 Pillars of Islam:

- Shahadah: profession of faith
- Salat: prayer 5 times daily
- Zakat: giving alms (charity)
- Sawm: fasting during the month of Ramadan
- Hajj: pilgrimage to Mecca

Sacred text: Quran (Qur'an)

Religious law: Sharia

What are the basic practices of Islam? How do Muslims worship?

5 Pillars of Islam

Place of worship: mosque

How has Islam spread beyond Saudi Arabia? Where is the religion found today?

It spread through travel, trade, war, and missionaries.

Muslim population as of 2010:

- 986.4 million in Asia and the Pacific*
- 317.1 million in the Middle East and North Africa)*
- 248.4 million in Sub-Saharan Africa)*
- 43.5 million in Europe*
- 3.5 million in the Americas*

Source: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/01/31/worlds-muslim-population-more-widespread-than-you-might-think/>

What similarities and differences do you notice among the three major monotheistic religions that originated in the Middle East (Judaism, Christianity, Islam)?

Similarities: monotheistic (belief in one God); both value charity and good works; Jerusalem as a holy site

Differences: sacred texts, holidays and observances, places of worship

How did religion influence Wajda's life? How did it impact the lives of other women depicted in the film?

Student responses will vary.

Saudi Arabia Confronts Modernity

Enduring Understandings

- The Saudi Arabian government and economy are slowly moving into modern times.
- There is much change going on in Saudi Arabia's conservative culture.
- Saudi Arabia has complicated relations with its neighbors.

Essential Questions

- Why is Saudi Arabia going through so much social and economic change?
- How are the changes affecting the citizens of Saudi Arabia?
- How will the changes affect the future of Saudi Arabia?

Notes to the Teacher

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was formed in 1932 after a chaotic period of internal and external upheaval beginning with the defeat of the Ottoman Empire after World War I and the reconfiguration of the Middle East. Initially, an agricultural country dependent on religious pilgrimages to holy Muslim shrines, Saudi Arabia was forever changed with the discovery of oil in 1938. The advent of World War II, brought a massive demand for gasoline and other petroleum products and the Saudi economy thrived under the management of U.S.-controlled Aramco (Arabian American Oil Company.) By 1976, Saudi Arabia had become the largest oil producer in the world.

The wealth generated by the oil brought Saudi Arabia into the modern world. Saudi Arabia gained international recognition and a major place in the world economy. Nearly all Saudi Arabians benefited with free health care, education, and other social services. The country began to take on Western influences, with automobiles, televisions, modern homes, and a look to a more open society. But Saudi Arabia was also strongly influenced by the forces of tribal tradition, religion, and a monarchical government. As Saudi Arabia passed out of the second half of the 20th century and into the 21st, these entities often clashed against the pressures of the modernity that was enveloping the kingdom.

The conservative religious doctrine known as Wahhabism, began to demand the government reject Western influences in exchange for its support among the people. The Saudi Arabian government cracked down on dissent and discouraged modern influences while at the same time accepting Western money and modernizing its institutions and businesses. The result is a constant tug-of-war between

the traditional and modern influences. This conflict is depicted in the film *Wadjda* as 10-year-old Wadjda navigates the pressures of being female in Saudi Arabia. In her quest for a bicycle, something that is not forbidden but strongly discouraged in Saudi Arabia, Wadjda is caught between the severe limitations placed on women by custom, Islam and family honor, and her strong personal desire to declare her own individuality.

Some additional online resources on Saudi Arabia that you may find helpful for background information or additional research:

- Saudi Government (official site) links to parts of Saudi Government https://www.saudi.gov.sa/wps/portal/snp/main!/ut/p/zo/04_Sj9CPykssyoxPLMnMzovMAfljo8zifQxNHT2c3Q18_E38zAoczc1DDNwtgowNjM31g1Pz9AuyHRUBfGZcew!!/
- Encyclopedia Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Saudi-Arabia/Government-and-society>
- BBC News Saudi Profile <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14702705>

You can also share this link with students: <https://guides.library.yale.edu/c.php?g=595576&p=4120422> and encourage them to use one of the websites listed here to research Saudi Arabia.

This lesson includes activities in which students examine the government and economy of Saudi Arabia and how these elements are evolving in a modern world. In a way, Saudi Arabia is experiencing some of the same struggles that Wadjda experiences in the film. The lesson begins by asking students to think about what they know and would want to know about modern Saudi Arabia in terms of its government, economy and culture, and to begin a K-W-L chart. If you have used Lesson 2, this is a good opportunity to review what students have learned in that lesson.

Students will then do a brief news analysis on current events involving the Saudi government, its economy, relations with its neighbors and the Royal family's exercise of power. These themes will be repeated throughout the lesson. To keep the activity relevant, current, and accurate, locate and select articles from reputable news sources that report on the following topics:

- The Saudi government and relations with its citizens including civil rights
- The Saudi Arabian economy
- Saudi relations with its neighbors (Israel, Iran, other Middle Eastern States)
- An important current event that is taking place now or has recently taken place in Saudi Arabia
- News on the Royal family, its exercise of power, social or political reforms, etc.

You can provide students with a list of links to these articles or print them out. You can also have students select their own articles with the guidance that the article be a news article and not an opinion piece; that it be from a reputable news source; that it be current (within the past two years); and that it be approximately 1000-2000 words long.

In the third activity, students will review what they have learned so far, do additional research, and write scripts for podcasts. When the scripts are ready, they will film their webcasts and record their podcasts and present them to the class. Before this section of the lesson, familiarize yourself with podcast technology and be sure you have the technology resources available.

Here are some resources that may be helpful:

- How Stuff Works “How Podcasting Works” page:
<http://computer.howstuffworks.com/internet/basics/podcasting.htm>
- Podcasting Tools Web site: <http://www.podcasting-tools.com/>
- Mashable.com Podcasting Tools Web site: <http://mashable.com/2007/07/04/podcasting-toolbox/>

There is a rubric for the or podcast on **HANDOUT 4**. Note that there is a row at the bottom of the rubric for you to add one or more additional criteria of your own. You may wish to give this rubric to students to evaluate themselves as part of their preparation, or you may use it for a final assessment, or both.

In conclusion of the lesson, students will review and record what they’ve learned in the lesson using their KWL charts.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS ADDRESSED BY THIS LESSON

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.1

Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.3

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

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7

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

Duration of lesson

Two class periods, plus time to research, design, and produce presentations

Assessment

News analysis activity

Rubric for group podcast scripts and production

Materials Needed

Copies of **HANDOUTS 1–4**

Computer access for research

Procedure

Part 1: Assessing current knowledge

1. Divide students into small groups of 3-4. Remind them that the character of Wadjda lives in Saudi Arabia. From what they saw in the film (if you show the film before this lesson), or what they know on their own, what thoughts do they have on the relationship between the Saudi government and its citizens? What type of government do they think Saudi Arabia has? What freedoms exist there? To what degree do its citizens participate in Saudi government?
2. Distribute one copy of **HANDOUT 1: WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT SAUDI ARABIA?** to each student. Ask students to list things they know about Saudi Arabia’s government, its citizens, culture and the economy in the “K” section of the KWL chart (K=Things I Know; W=Things I Want to Know; L=Things I Have Learned). Then have them list things they want to know about Saudi Arabia in these areas in the “W” column. Leave the “L” column blank for now.)
3. When the student groups have completed their charts, ask one student from each group to report two things from each column to the class. You might want to create a KWL chart for the whole class to record student responses. Collect the handouts to be revisited later in the lesson.

Part 2: News analysis activity on Saudi Arabia

1. Tell students that they will now examine recent news stories about Saudi Arabia.

2. Distribute **HANDOUT 2: SAUDI ARABIA IN THE NEWS** and copies of the articles or links to their location on the Internet. Review the handout with students and provide time for them to complete analyzing one news article. You may also choose to assign this as homework.
3. When students have completed the news analyses, have them briefly present their findings to the full class as a formal two-minute presentation, in informal roundtable discussions, or as a Think-Pair-Share activity.

Part 3: Podcast activity on Saudi Arabia

1. Tell students in this next activity, they will be developing a webcast (digital video broadcast across the Internet) or podcast (digital audio file made for download on the Internet) on one of the topics they looked at in their news story analysis or a podcasts. The production will first be written and then with additional time and the technology needed, produced for publication.
2. Divide the class into at least five groups. Write the following topics on the front board. Have each group select, or assign them a topic for their webcast/podcast.
 - The Saudi government and relations with its citizens, including civil rights
 - Saudi Arabian economy
 - Saudi Arabia's relations with its neighbors (Israel, Iran, other Middle Eastern States)
 - An important current event taking place now or recently taken place in Saudi Arabia
 - News on the royal family, its exercise of power, social or political reforms, etc.
3. Distribute **HANDOUT 3: PODCAST ON SAUDI ARABIA** to all students and review the steps, the resource materials, and the storyboard handout. Explain to students that the storyboard is a way to map out your podcast. Tell them to write down individual subtopics in the rectangles on the storyboard. Then, if they wish to re-arrange them or add topics, have them cut the storyboard up and move the individual rectangles around until they are satisfied with the organization, and then tape everything together. Students doing a webcast can also use this method to decide when to insert slides.
4. Share with students **HANDOUT 4**, the rubric on the podcasts. Discuss to be sure students will know how they can evaluate themselves and how they are to be evaluated by the teacher.
5. Allow students time to create their podcasts.
6. Once the podcasts are complete, allow time for each group to present them to the other groups in the class. (The teacher may elect to have the class critique each podcast for accuracy and effectiveness.) If possible, the teacher may also wish to have the podcasts stored online, for download or streaming by others, including the public.

Part 4: Conclusion

1. Redistribute the KWL charts on **HANDOUT 1** from the beginning of the unit. Ask students to reflect on what they've learned about the government, economy, Saudi Arabia's relations with its neighbors, important events taking place, and the Saudi Royal family's exercise of power. Have them write their responses in the "L" column of the KWL chart.
2. Ask students to summarize what they have learned.

Handout 1

What Do You Know about Saudi Arabia?

Group Members _____

K Things I Know	W Things I Want to Know	L Things I've Learned

Handout 2 ▶ P.1

Saudi Arabia in the News: News Article Analysis Worksheet

Name _____ **Date** _____

Newspaper/Electronic Source: _____

Name of article: _____ Date: _____

1. What did you already know about that topic before you began reading?

2. Comprehensiveness of Information (Use an additional piece of paper if needed.)

Any good reporter covers six basic questions in a news article. Use these questions to summarize the content of the article:

a. Who is the central figure or group in this article? Who else is important?

b. What happened? What are significant details about this event?

Handout 2 ▶ P.2

Saudi Arabia in the News: News Article Analysis Worksheet

c. When did it happen? Is it still happening? Is it likely to happen again?

d. Where did it happen? What other places are affected?

e. Why did it happen?

f. How did it happen? What factors contributed to this event”

3. Of all the 5 “W’s” and “H” items you identified above, put a star next to the one you think is the most important.
Tell why below:

Handout 2 ▶ P.3

Saudi Arabia in the News: News Article Analysis Worksheet

4. Analyze the magnitude of the event in the article.

a. Is it international, national, or local?

b. What is its impact? How many people were affected by it?

5. Reliability of Sources

Identify the author. _____

a. What qualifications or special knowledge, if any, does the author have?

b. What is the name of the publication? _____

Handout 2 ▶ P.4

Saudi Arabia in the News: News Article Analysis Worksheet

c. Who are the sources in the article itself? Who did the author interview? (Examples: lawyer, doctor, neighbor, police officer, forensics expert)

d. How do you know whether these sources are reliable?

6. Personal Reaction. What do you think of this article? (Include whether you think it is credible, accurate, and informative. Explain why or why not. What questions are left unanswered?)

Webcast/Podcast on Saudi Arabia

Group member names: _____

Topic title: _____

Directions:

In this activity you and your group will research your topic on Saudi Arabia and then produce a web or podcast. Instructions and resources follow.

A. Research Phase

1. Gain an understanding of your topic by examining and discussing with your group the information that might be covered in the topic. Refer to the class KWL chart for questions or ideas that might relate to your topic. Think about information students would like or need to know related to your topic. Brainstorm with the group what questions are relevant to your topic. Record the questions and keep them in mind as you research your topic.

2. As you research, put your topic through the 5 Ws and H process you conducted in the news analysis activity. Use the guide below. Keep in mind, the questions below are purposefully vague to apply to any of the five topics. After you have completed your research, use the Webcast/Podcast Storyboard below to organize your information.

- Who?
 - Who is involved?
 - Who is affected?
 - Who will benefit?
 - Who will be harmed or disadvantaged?
- What?
 - What is your topic when reduced to simple terms?
 - What does your topic involve? (What are the different parts to it?)
 - What is it similar to or different from?
 - What might be affected or changed by your topic or the people or places involved?
- When?
 - When did this take place?
 - Was this the best time for it to take place? Should it have been sooner or later?
 - How does the time when this takes place affect the topic or key parts, people or places involved in the topic?
- Where?
 - Where did this take place?
 - Where should it have taken place if not where it did?
 - Does it matter that it took place where it did? Was anything affected by where it took place?

Handout 3 ▶ P.2

Webcast/Podcast on Saudi Arabia

- Why?
 - Why is this topic important? Why does it matter?
 - Why do things like this happen? What are some of the causes and effects within the topic?
- How?
 - How does this topic work or function? How does it do what it does?
 - How did it come about?
 - How those are involved affected?

Resources

Here are some suggested resources related to your assigned topic for you to get started. You can also do your own research to develop your production. Just be sure you are using reliable sources.

Basic Information on Saudi Arabia’s government and economy

Encyclopedia Britannica

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Saudi-Arabia/Government-and-society>

Global Edge

<https://globaledge.msu.edu/countries/saudi-arabia/government>

Human Rights Watch

<https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2018/country-chapters/saudi-arabia>

BBC News Saudi Profile

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14702705>

Video

Saudi Government and Religion

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KC6gzsv6cU8>

Saudi Arabia’s political crisis and purge

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bl3gdolwNKA>

Saudi Arabia Royal Family explained

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j1gedfN2mtY>

Saudi Arabia line of succession

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YrnTY8n7cqA>

Saudi Arabia’s Political Crisis, Explained

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bl3gdolwNKA>

How dangerous is Saudi Arabia?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yV6aNYTBz1w>

New Saudi Arabian prince ushering in wave of cultural change

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KDfaFk6jPC4>

Saudi women begin driving

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/saudi-arabia-women-driving-government-arrests-those-demanding-total-equality/>

Inside Saudi Arabia’s Changing Kingdom

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NG8n4hbDvFQ>

How Powerful is Saudi Arabia?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=POBKbnRApE>

Saudi Arabia and Qatar’s Complicated Relationship

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qj7RXa9bXPM>

Saudi Arabia and Iran’s Fight to Control the Middle East

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rhSEApTWAHM>

The Future of Women’s Rights in Saudi Arabia

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xD343PmU5Ds>

How Bad are Saudi Arabia’s Human Rights Violations?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hfvnju1S5yg>

Why are Saudi Arabia and the U.S. Allies?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NT5AqiaVtA8>

Is Saudi Arabia Giving up on Oil?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x4bfQ-eySGQ>

Handout 4

Saudi Arabia Confronts Modernity

Webcast/Podcast Rubric					
Category	Excellent (10-8)	Good (7-5)	Fair (4-3)	Poor (2-0)	Group Score
Research	All sections of the research phase were reflected in the podcast/webcast	Most of the research phase completed; reasonable mastery	Approximately ½ of the research phase completed; some mastery of material	Less than ½ of the research phase completed; little or no mastery of material	
Organization	Podcast/webcast runs smoothly; high level of organization	Good organization shown. Podcast/webcast generally runs smoothly	Podcast/webcast shows average level of organization and generally runs smoothly	Little organizational skill shown. Podcast/webcast does not run smoothly	
Aesthetics	Podcast/webcast is appealing and attention grabbing	Podcast/webcast is relatively engaging	Podcast/webcast engaging on an average level	Podcast/webcast neither appealing nor engaging	
Originality	Significant evidence of original thought and invention	Some originality shown; still includes large amount of other's ideas	Little originality shown; work is a rehash of other's ideas	No evidence of originality or uniqueness shown.	
Other Criteria					
Overall group score					

The Women of Saudi Arabia

Enduring Understandings

- Women and girls in Saudi Arabia live with legal, cultural, and social limitations on their behavior, but some find ways to challenge and resist these limitations.
- Individual women and girls in Saudi Arabia react to legal, cultural, and social demands on their behavior in diverse ways: some reinforce the rules, others resist them.
- Women and girls in Saudi Arabia change their perspectives and behaviors over time and depending on context.

Essential Questions

- In what ways does everyday life in Saudi Arabia impose restrictions on the lives of women and girls? Where do these restrictions come from?
- The film *Wadjda* depicts the lives of women and girls in various locations. How do the settings of home, school, and street (coming and going between home and school or work) present different challenges and interactions for the characters in the film?
- How did the director of *Wadjda* use cinematic techniques, such as sound, costume, and symbolism, to represent female characters' individual responses to their situations?
- What gendered limitations and expectations do you face in your own life? Where do they come from and how do you and others react to them?

Notes to the Teacher

The modern Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was founded in 1932, with the Holy Quran serving as its constitution. The country's official policies and informal restrictions on women and girls, however, are not simply interpretations of Islamic doctrine, but rather rooted in tradition and culture. Rules restricting women's ability to travel without a male guardian, own property, or drive were enshrined in law, while others regarding the specifics of dress codes and public decorum tend to be enforced socially. As the sources and enforcement of restrictive expectations on Saudi women and girls are varied, so are their responses from acceptance to resistance, as in the case of activists who worked for the right to drive. The film *Wadjda*, the first Saudi film directed by a woman, depicts a range of reactions to a variety of gendered expectations.

Filmmaker Haifaa Al Mansour uses literary techniques, like characterization and setting, as well as cinematic techniques, like sound, costume, and symbolism, to highlight many restrictions on women and girls, as well as resistance and reinforcement of those restrictions by female characters. In film the use of such storytelling tools often reinforces the story. For example, the red dress that *Wadjda*'s mother considers buying helps to characterize the way the mother responds to the possibility of her husband taking a second wife (allowed by Saudi law); the costume symbolizes her only option, to emphasize her own sexuality and femininity, in resisting that possibility. Analyzing the ways in which such techniques come together in *Wadjda* helps reinforce the understanding of how women and girls navigate challenges in the Kingdom.

In this lesson, students will first reflect on the kinds of gendered expectations they face in their own lives. Next, they read “The Changing Face of Saudi Women,” a 2016 *National Geographic* article on women in Saudi Arabia. This article includes background on the sources of legal and social restrictions placed on Saudi women, as well as a range of reactions to them. Using this text as background, students will work in groups to analyze scenes in *Wadjda* to make sense of the different restrictions on women and girls and the various responses women have to these restrictions. The class will then consider how cinematic techniques enhance the viewer’s understanding of the main ideas behind the film. Finally, students write an essay or prepare a graphic to analyze gender expectations and responses in *Wadjda* or another film of their choice.

Here are some resources you might find helpful:

The Saudi Embassy’s webpage about Saudi Arabia

<https://www.saudiembassy.net/history>

A recent report on human rights in Saudi Arabia from Amnesty International

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/saudi-arabia/report-saudi-arabia/>

Current events and reports on conditions in Saudi Arabia from Human Rights Watch

<https://www.hrw.org/middle-east/n-africa/saudi-arabia>

An episode of *To the Contrary* about gender equality in Islam

<https://www.pbs.org/video/-contrary-gender-equality-islam1/>

COMMON CORE STANDARDS ADDRESSED BY THIS LESSON

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.3

Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.5

Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

Duration of lesson

5–6 class periods, including screening the film *Wadjda*

Assessments

Class discussions

Completion of handouts

Concluding essay or graphic

Materials needed

Video of *Wadjda* and projector

Paper and pens for students

“The Changing Face of Saudi Women” at <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2016/02/saudi-arabia-women/>

Copies of **HANDOUTS 1** and **2**

Procedure

Part 1: Rules for women in Saudi Arabia

1. Ask students if they have ever wanted to do something important to them only to have an adult tell them “girls don’t do that” or “boys don’t do that.” Discuss some of the students’ experiences and share one or two of your own experiences if you wish.
2. Tell students they will be viewing a film set in Saudi Arabia featuring a young girl who really wants to own and ride a bicycle. However, to do so would violate the customs of her society. Mention that the film also shows customs that govern the roles of the adult women in her life. Explain that they should expect to see a lifestyle different from their own, particularly around expectations for women and girls. Ask them as they watch, to jot down a list of restrictions faced by female characters. Then show the film.
3. After the screening, ask students to share their responses to the film and answer any questions they may have. Then ask them to tell you the restrictions on women and girls that they noted as they watched. (Possible responses: *Wadjda*’s mother cannot drive to work on her own; women wear black *abayas* over their clothing; girls should not play with boys; girls may not stay outside where men can see them; *Wadjda*’s mother hesitates to work in a hospital where she would be in contact with men.)
4. Explain to students that the restrictions they noted come from various places: from religion, from the law, or from social customs. The rules might be enforced legally or socially. Then give students access on their

computers or devices to the article “The Changing Face of Saudi Women” at <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2016/02/saudi-arabia-women/>. As they read, have students complete **HANDOUT 1**, noting restrictions faced by women and girls in Saudi Arabia and identifying whether the restrictions are legally or socially enforced.

Suggested responses:

1. Students should list five of the following: having to cover the body and face with the abaya and niqab when out in public; restrictions on the color of the abaya in many places; needing to live with a male guardian; needing a male guardian to approve getting a passport or taking legal action; inability to sit with an unrelated male in a public place, such as a restaurant; separation of the sexes in department stores.
2. Conservative religious movements spread throughout the Middle East. The Saud family enforced conservative beliefs and customs as a way to avoid being overthrown.
3. Some women resent and even resist these restrictions; others help to enforce them by verbally attacking a woman who resists them.
4. Answers will vary.

Part 2: Film techniques

1. Tell students you are going to show them some clips from the film they have just seen. Give students copies of **HANDOUT 2: SCENE ANALYSIS**. Then divide the class into groups, assigning each group one of the following scenes.

- Group 1: The opening scene (00:41-02:47)
- Group 2: Wadjda and her mother with their driver (4:32-6:07)
- Group 3: Wadjda races Abdullah on foot (07:38-09:21)
- Group 4: The girls in the school yard (15:00-16:58)
- Group 5: Wadjda is interrogated by the principal (26:41-28:35)
- Group 6: Wadjda’s mother’s friend discusses hospital jobs (45:28-47:00)
- Group 7: Wadjda and her mother on the roof (1:01:07-1:02:35)
- Group 8: At the hospital (1:09:16-1:10:35)

Tell them they are to choose two characters and two behavioral restrictions from the scene. Students should first note where this restriction comes from (using the *National Geographic* article as a support), and how each character reacts to it. (For example, at school, girls must wear black shoes. This restriction is social; the article notes that wearing black shoes is not a legal rule, but rather an informal one, in place because of the school. Wadjda resists this rule by wearing sneakers; the principal reinforces it.) Point out the questions on the first page of the handout.

2. Run through the clips; this should take about 15 minutes. As you start each clip, alert the appropriate student group of their responsibility for analyzing the scene and taking notes on the first page of the handout.
3. Ask each group to share out their findings. Support students in making sense of where restrictions come from, specifically to note that what are often considered to be religious restrictions are often simply tradition or else very specific interpretations.

4. Explain to students that filmmakers use different techniques to highlight their messages. These include using music/sound (for example, to set tone and mood); costume (to conform to or contrast with settings and to illuminate character); and symbols (to represent deeper meanings). These are similar to how literary devices like imagery and onomatopoeia are used in literature; these techniques deepen the message through their appeal to different senses.
5. Rewatch several of the scenes listed above, this time asking students to note the use of music/sound, costume, and symbols, and to explain if and how each of these elements contributes to the main idea of the scene. Discuss each scene immediately after viewing.
6. Conclude by reminding students that gender restrictions and expectations exist in all cultures. These manifest themselves in many ways, including differences in how men and women dress, in speech, and in the degree of acceptance of LGBTQ individuals and communities. Remind them of some of the gender differences that they cited at the beginning of the lesson.
7. Assign students to do one or more of these final assessments, individually or in pairs:
 - a. Write an essay in which you discuss the ways gender expectations are resisted or reinforced in your own culture. What are the consequences for those choices? How do those consequences differ from those faced by characters in *Wadjda*? Do you think that these restrictions on Saudi women and girls will eventually be lifted? Why, or why not?
 - b. In writing or comic-strip format (where students sketch the scene and include notes on symbols, sound and music, and costuming choices), have students answer the following: If you were making a short film about the lives of people in your community, what are two ways you might represent the way individuals react to (resist or reinforce) expectations around gender?
 - c. Describe two ways in which gender is represented in a film or TV show you are familiar with. How do cinematic techniques clue viewers in to gender expression, expectations, and resistance or reinforcement to expectations around gender?

Extension activities:

Follow this method of analysis with another film featuring the responses individuals have to legal, social, and cultural limitations on their behavior. (Suggestions: *Hidden Figures*; *The Color Purple*; *Suffragette*; *Pride and Prejudice*; *Belle*; *Malcolm X*)

Handout 1 ▶ P. 1

The Women of Saudi Arabia: Guided Reading Questions

Directions:

Read the article “The Changing Face of Saudi Women” at <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/magazine/2016/02/saudi-arabia-women/>. Then answer the following questions.

1. What are five ways in which the lives of women of Saudi Arabia are restricted?

a.

b.

c.

d.

e.

Handout 1 ▶ P.2

The Women of Saudi Arabia: Guided Reading Questions

2. Why were restrictions on women tightened in the 1980s?

3. According to the article, how do women feel about these restrictions?

4. The first driver's licenses issued to Saudi women were granted in 2018, after this article was written, although they must still have written permission from their male guardian to drive. Do you think this decision will lead to other changes, or not?

Scene Analysis

Scene for analysis _____

1. Give a brief summary of what happens to the characters in this scene.

2. What restriction(s) on girls and women do you see in this scene?

3. Do you think these restrictions come from religion, law, or tradition?

Scene Analysis

4. How are the restrictions enforced?

5. How do the characters respond to the restrictions?

An Introduction to the Quran

Enduring Understandings

- The Quran is a sacred text for Muslims (followers of Islam).
- Muslims believe that the words of the Quran were revealed by God through the Prophet Muhammad. Therefore, the Quran should be treated with great respect.
- Reciting the Quran requires study so that the words will be pronounced correctly and with full meaning.
- The Quran contains teachings about the nature of God, God’s relationship to humans, and the proper way for humans to behave.
- Some copies of the Quran are remarkable artworks.

Essential Questions

- What is the Quran?
- What are the origins of the Quran?
- How is the Quran to be handled?
- How does one recite the Quran?
- What is in the Quran?

Notes to the Teacher

The film *Wadjda* has several scenes involving the sacred text of Islam, the Quran. This lesson will help students understand the significance of this text.

First, a note about terminology. The name of the text is variously spelled Qur’an, Quran, or the earlier version, Koran. Because Arabic uses a different letter system from other languages, Arabic words are transliterated into those other languages, often spelled as the listener hears them. (Another example is the alternate spellings of Muslim or Moslem.) This guide will spell the name of the text as the Quran; the subtitles for the film use the spelling “Koran,” perhaps because the phonetic spelling seems simpler for the English-speaking reader to pronounce.

At the start of this lesson, students will view about 20 minutes of clips, with brief pauses between them, and develop a set of questions they have about what they have seen. Here are some unfamiliar vocabulary words used in the clips that you may want to clarify for them:

Sura or *surah* – a chapter of the Quran. There are 114 chapters, and each one contains a number of verses, from 3 to 286.

Tajwid or *tajweed*– the rules that explain how the words of the Quran should be pronounced

Tarteel – the clear pronunciation of each letter of the verse

After viewing the clips, students will discuss what they learned about the Quran from the clips and list any questions they still have. Then they will read **HANDOUT 1: FAQs ABOUT THE QURAN** to learn more information about the Quran and answer their remaining questions.

After reading the handout and discussing the new information, students will study images of prized Qurans with elegant calligraphy and intricate illustrations, using the website <https://www.freersackler.si.edu/exhibition/the-art-of-the-quran-treasures-from-the-museum-of-turkish-and-islamic-arts/>. You may wish to project the images from the website onto a screen or whiteboard and discuss them together, or you may prefer to have your students explore the website on their own. There are additional teacher resources for further study available on the website at <https://www.freersackler.si.edu/exhibition/the-art-of-the-quran-educator-resources/>. You might also consider team-teaching this section of the lesson with an art teacher who could share additional information and insights.

A concluding writing activity focuses on an incident in 1994 when the internationally-known designer Karl Lagerfeld made three dresses for Chanel that featured embroidered verses from the Quran. There was an uproar among Muslim leaders, and Lagerfeld apologized and burned the offending clothing. For additional information, see the *New York Times* article at <https://www.nytimes.com/1994/01/21/style/chronicle-933805.html> or the *Guardian* article at <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/chanel-apologises-to-muslims-for-satanic-breasts-dress-1409011.html>. Pictures of the dresses are still available online and it is clear why Muslims, who are supposed to dress modestly, would be outraged. It is probably not advisable to share these images with your class, however.

A more complete lesson plan on Islam in general may be found in Journeys in Film's guide to *Morgan Freeman's The Story of God* at <https://journeysinfilm.org/product/the-story-of-god/>.

Journeys in Film also has these additional materials available regarding Islam and/or the experiences of Muslim girls and women: <https://journeysinfilm.org/product/the-neighborhood-storyteller> and <https://journeysinfilm.org/articles/teach-about-islam-with-film/>.

COMMON CORE STANDARDS ADDRESSED BY THIS LESSON

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.2

Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.2

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.9

Compare and contrast treatments of the same topic in several primary and secondary sources.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.2

Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Duration of the Lesson

2–3 class periods

Assessments

Class discussion

Two paragraphs about Chanel controversy

Materials needed

Video of *Wadjda* and projector

Copies of **HANDOUT 1: FAQs ABOUT THE QURAN**

One copy of a news article about the Chanel dress controversy

A copy of the Quran (optional)

Procedure

1. Tell students that today's lesson will focus on six clips from the film *Wadjda* that deal with the classes Wadjda is taking to learn to recite the Quran and the competition. Write the word on the board and then, using Notes from the Teacher, explain the alternate spelling used in the subtitles. Ask them to keep a list in their notebooks of all the questions they have as they view six clips from the film. Then play the following clips, pausing for a minute or two after each clip to give students time to write their questions down:

0:00:41 – 0:02:28 (The girls' class is reciting and Wadjda is sent from class for not knowing the verses.)

0:35:13 – 0:37:43 (Ms. Hussa, the principal, explains the rules for the Quran competition. There is enough money for Wadjda to buy her bicycle if she wins. Contestants must learn the first five *suras*. The competition has two parts: "The first involves vocabulary and God's revelation of the verses." The second is the recitation, where pronunciation must be perfect. Wadjda then tells Ms. Hussa that she wants to change and asks to join the religious club. She buys a computer program to help her learn about the Quran.)

0:48:42 – 0:51:06 (The girls wash their hands and feet before their Quran practice. The Quran teacher explains some rules for handling the books, and then calls on Wadjda to read. She has difficulty, but a classmate can read it easily.)

0:54:46 – 0:57:02 (Wadjda is winning over her Quran teacher by her efforts.)

1:05:22 – 1:07:31 (Wadjda has greatly improved. She can recite verses from memory, although her teacher says she still must work on her *tarteel* and *tajwid*. Her recently-married classmate Salma demonstrates the proper way to read the Quran.)

1:15:15 – 1:23:00 (The competition is under way. Gradually, all but three girls are eliminated. Wadjda survives the questions and recites really well; after a break, Ms. Hussa announces that Wadjda has won first prize.)

2. After the clips are finished, ask students to explain what they have learned about the Quran. Then have them share the questions they generated while watching the clips and discuss to see if students can answer each other's questions.
3. Distribute **HANDOUT 1: FAQs ABOUT THE QURAN**. Ask students to read it quietly and annotate it with their questions and comments.
4. Lead a discussion about the questions and comments students had on the reading. Here are a few additional questions to facilitate the discussion:
 - What surprised you when you read this handout?
 - Why do you think a smart girl like Wadjda had difficulty reading the Quran at first?
 - Are there any vocabulary words in this handout that were unfamiliar to you? How can we figure out their meaning?
 - What do the rules about handling and reading the Quran suggest about Muslim attitudes toward it? Do other religious groups have similar recommendations for handling their sacred texts?

Lesson 5 (WORLD HISTORY, WORLD LITERATURE)



5. If you have a copy of the Quran to share with the class, show it at this time. Then remind the class about the end of Section 3 on the handout that discusses artists who copied the Quran. Show students images of the Quran from the Smithsonian exhibit at <https://www.freersackler.si.edu/exhibition/the-art-of-the-quran-treasures-from-the-museum-of-turkish-and-islamic-arts/>. Discuss the calligraphy and design of these artworks as you explore the site with your students, or have them explore the website on their own.
6. Tell students about the controversy over the Chanel dresses with Quranic verses, using the information from Notes to the Teacher and reading aloud one of the newspaper articles cited. For homework, have students write one paragraph about why Muslims were outraged by the dresses, based on what they have learned in this lesson, and a second paragraph about whether Chanel made the right decision in burning the dresses. The next class session, hold a discussion about their answers.

Some FAQs about the Quran

1. Where and how did the Quran originate?

Like the sacred books of Judaism and Christianity, the Quran originated in the region we call the Middle East, in the country now called Saudi Arabia. According to Muslim tradition, in the beginning of the seventh century CE, the Angel Gabriel revealed the teachings of the Quran to Muhammad, a merchant from the city of Mecca. The revelations were made in a cave outside Mecca, and later in the city of Medina, where Muhammad fled when he was persecuted by the leaders of Mecca.

Although Muhammad received the revelation, he was not the one who wrote it down, since tradition holds he was illiterate and most scholars agree. Instead, shortly after his death, his revelations were collected and written down under the Caliphs who ruled the Muslim community.

2. What language is the Quran written in?

It was written in Arabic, the language spoken in Muhammad's city of Mecca. A translation of the Quran into another language is not considered to be a true Quran. Thus, although Muslims live in countries around the world, they consider it important to be able to read Arabic.

The Arabic alphabet is very different from the English alphabet. The alphabet has 28 letters, and most of the letters have four different forms, depending on where they come in a word. The language is written and read from right to left, and books begin at the place an English speaker would consider the back of the book. Vowels are usually not included in written Arabic.

3. What is in the Quran?

Muslims consider the Quran to be the direct word of Allah (God) speaking to humans. The book has 114 chapters *or suras*, with the longest chapter being 286 verses and the shortest 3.

The following main teachings of Islam are among those found in the Quran:

- Most important is the belief that God is one, eternal, omniscient (all-knowing), and all-powerful. This belief in monotheism was in stark contrast to the polytheism (belief in many gods) that was practiced in Mecca before Muhammad.
- There will be a Day of Judgment at the end of the world.
- God communicated with humankind, using angels to deliver the messages to prophets. Among the prophets were the Biblical figures Adam, Noah, Moses, David, and Jesus; Muhammad is the last and greatest of the prophets.
- Believers should behave in ethical ways and have certain responsibilities. For example, they should practice charity toward those in need. They should pray regularly, prostrating themselves in prayer. They should fast from dawn to dusk during the holy month of Ramadan. They should not gamble or lend money at high interest rates.

What you will not find in the Quran are pictures of Muhammad or other figures. Muslim tradition discourages the depiction of people in a religious context. Instead, artists who copied the Quran tried to make it visually beautiful by using elegant calligraphy, geometric designs, and images based on plants.

Some FAQs about the Quran

4. How should the Quran be handled?

The Quran is treated by Muslims with the greatest respect. A person who is going to handle a Quran should perform ablutions to be sure he or she is clean. Some scholars believe that a menstruating woman should not handle a Quran. The Quran should never be placed on the floor, but should be placed on a rack or pillow.

5. How does one read the Quran?

Having ritually cleansed themselves, readers should sit respectfully and place the Quran on a pillow or rack. The Quran should be read with attention to *tajweed*, that is, with correct pronunciation of all words, including using the appropriate vowel sounds. For those for whom Arabic is not a first language, this may be challenging. In addition to pronunciation, a slow pace (*tarteel*) is important, so that the meaning of the words can be clearly understood. There are brief prayers to be recited at the beginning and end of the reading.

6. Is the Quran sung?

It is not quite singing, certainly not in the sense that Christians sing hymns during religious services. Rather, the reader is trying to make the voice sound beautiful as a way of honoring the text.

7. When should the Quran be recited?

Millions of Muslims recite verses from the Quran every day, and many recite the Quran in full at least twice a year. Ramadan, the month of fasting, is also known as the month of the Quran, and it is generally recommended that Muslims recite it more frequently during this month.

Introducing *Wadjda* Filmmaker Haifaa Al Mansour

Enduring Understandings

- In Saudi Arabia, the freedom to pursue personal goals is limited by cultural social standards.
- In many ways, women in Saudi Arabia are pushing boundaries to challenge their cultural social standards and achieve personal goals that are normally inaccessible to them.
- Haifaa Al Mansour is a Saudi woman who was limited by the cultural and social prohibitions against women working in a mixed-gender environment.
- Haifaa Al Mansour pushed the boundary and accomplished her goal, despite limitations. Her film shares the story of a girl in Saudi Arabia doing so as well.
- Art imitates life, often the life of the artist herself.

Essential Questions

- How can people resist limits placed on them (whether cultural rules, physical limitations, limited access to resources, etc.) when they are trying to accomplish a personal goal?
- What are some cultural limitations placed on women in Saudi Arabia that may limit their accomplishment of a personal goal?
- How did Haifaa push the boundaries in Saudi Arabia to make her film?
- How are some women in Saudi Arabia choosing to push the limitations placed on them to achieve their own personal goals?

Notes to the Teacher

In Saudi Arabia, due to cultural rules, women are confined to a limited set of goals they are allowed to pursue. Gender mixing is not allowed and women are expected to remain hidden from public sight when outside the home, by covering themselves completely with an *abaya*. An *abaya* is a large, usually black, cloak wrapped to cover the whole body.

If a Saudi woman wants to go somewhere, she must be chaperoned or supervised by a male from the family. Women have not been allowed to drive or ride bikes, or do anything that calls attention to them in public. These cultural rules are attributed to their religious beliefs, and to break the rules is shameful in the eyes of God, according to many communities in Saudi Arabia. Nevertheless, some women are pushing back against these limitations.

There have also been restrictions on films in Saudi Arabia. Beginning in the 1980s, when the kingdom adopted more conservative Islamic practices, movie theaters were banned. The most recent development has been the lifting of the ban in April, 2018, by Crown Prince Mohamed bin Salman, the same leader who now allows women to obtain driver's licenses. See <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/12/11/world/middleeast/saudi-arabia-movie-theaters.html> for additional details about the opening of theaters in Saudi Arabia.

The class should have viewed the film *Wadjda* before you teach this lesson; watch the film together again, if necessary and if time permits. Part 1 of the lesson reviews the film and the cultural rules for women that it demonstrates; you may wish to use Lesson 4 before this lesson to help students understand these cultural rules for women's dress and behavior.

After reviewing these cultural norms, students discuss the role and responsibilities of a director in taking a project from script to screen. Directors interpret the script; they may commission a script for a project they want to do or even write it themselves. They choose the cast, select the location(s) for filming, and hire a technical crew for operating cameras, handling lighting and sound effects, providing props and costumes, etc. They work with the actors during rehearsals and while the film is being shot. They work with editors, who take all the film from multiple shots and weave it into a seamless whole that will keep the audience's attention. Directors also have to keep track of budgets for all of these various aspects of the film's production. For a more thorough understanding of the role of the director, see <http://www.filmreference.com/encyclopedia/Criticism-Ideology/Direction-RESPONSIBILITIES.html>.

After a preliminary discussion, students listen to an NPR interview with Haifaa Al Mansour, the director of *Wadjda*, using **HANDOUT 1** to take notes. The interview can be found at <https://www.npr.org/2013/09/22/224437165/wadjda-director-haifaa-al-mansour-it-is-time-to-open-up>. After the interview, students will share their answers on the handout.

Next, the lesson takes up the driving ban for Saudi women that was lifted in 2017. Through printed copies, their devices, or projecting onto a whiteboard, give students access to the Guardian article at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/26/saudi-arabia-woman-driving-car-ban>. The article describes women in Saudi Arabia driving out of defiance in order to change the rule prohibiting them from driving. This will lead into a discussion of civil disobedience and other methods of protesting a social or even legal restriction that protesters find unfair.

This part of the lesson concludes with students writing in their journals about a time when a goal they had was blocked by cultural rules or social expectations.

Part 2 begins with giving students who wish to share their journal stories an opportunity to do so. Some students may have written about very personal stories they do not wish to share with peers; be respectful of this by only calling on volunteers who wish to share.

Then the lesson moves to writing a business letter to Haifaa Al Mansour in proper format. This section of the lesson may be skipped by film literacy classes or clubs, but will prove helpful to writing classes. Students who use only texting, email, or Instagram may not ever have written a business letter, but this is a skill they should have as adults. Using **HANDOUT 2**, students will learn about (or review) the parts of the business letter and then will brainstorm some possible topics they would like to write about. After drafting the letter, they will have the opportunity to participate in peer editing and then they should revise their draft to hand in for a grade. There is a fake address in the Procedure section to use for the inside address.

For additional information about Haifaa Al Mansour, see the following resources:

A Vanity Fair article that includes a biography of Haifaa Al Mansour

<https://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2018/05/meet-haifaa-al-mansour-the-saudi-woman-challenging-riyadh>

International Move Database page on Haifaa Al Mansour, including a list of her films

<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm2223783/>

An essay by Haifaa Al Mansour on why she loves movies

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/30/opinion/saudi-arabia-movies-women.html>

COMMON CORE STANDARDS ADDRESSED BY THIS LESSON

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2

Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.2

Write informative/explanatory texts, including the narration of historical events, scientific procedures/experiments, or technical processes.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.9

Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Duration of the Lesson

At least 2–4 one-hour class periods, depending upon the time available for student research and/or extension activities.

Assessments

Class discussion

Journal entries

Letter to filmmaker Haifaa Al Mansour

Materials needed

Projector

Laptop

White board

Dry erase markers

Student journals

Computer access to websites provided in procedures.

Copies of **HANDOUT 1: FORMAL BUSINESS LETTER TEMPLATE**

Procedure

Part 1

1. Ask students to recall the film orally, and discuss the plot: a girl who has been blocked by cultural rules pushes boundaries to achieve her goal of owning and riding a bike in public.
2. Discuss the cultural rules for girls and women in Saudi Arabia, using Notes to the Teacher. Write them on the board. If students have completed Lesson 4, review the additional material they have learned about these rules.
3. Prep them to hear an interview with Haifaa Al Mansour, the woman who directed *Wadjda* in Saudi Arabia despite the rules, by posing the following pre-listening questions and discussing:
 - Given these limitations, how do you think Haifaa was able to make the film?
 - Why do you think she did it?
 - Do you think the film’s story is reflective of real life?”
4. Distribute **HANDOUT 1**. Tell students that they are going to listen to an interview with the director of *Wadjda*. Ask students exactly what the role of a director is in making a film; fill in this discussion using the information in Notes to the Teacher.
5. Distribute **HANDOUT 1: AN INTERVIEW WITH HAIFAA AL MANSOUR** and review the questions with students. Then play the NPR interview of Haifaa Al Mansour about the making of the film at <https://www.npr.org/2013/09/22/224437165/wadjda-director-haifaa-al-mansour-it-is-time-to-open-up>. The interview takes about 7 1/2

minutes; you may wish to stop it occasionally to allow students to take notes on their handouts.

6. After listening to the interview, discuss the limitations Haifaa Al Mansour faced, how she circumvented the rules in Saudi Arabia to shoot the film, and why she made the film.
7. Remind students of Wadjda’s mother’s need to rely on a cranky driver to get her to work on time. Explain that not being allowed to drive legally has been another cultural obstacle for women. Discuss ways that people in general can push boundaries on social rules they disapprove of: protest marches, sit-ins like those at lunch counters during the 1960s, Rosa Parks’ refusal to move from her seat. Mention Haifaa Al Mansour’s way of “protesting” by making the film.
8. Give students access to the article from *The Guardian* at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/oct/26/saudi-arabia-woman-driving-car-ban>. Let the students know that because of these protesting women, similar to Rosa Parks’ protest, the Saudi Arabian Government eventually changed the law and made it legal for women to drive. Do they see any similarities to the actions of Wadjda and her mother?
9. Then discuss how people can overcome the limitations placed upon them by outside influences, particularly gender expectations; if possible, share a personal story of your own. Elicit student volunteers to discuss a personal story or two, of overcoming an external obstacle to accomplish something outside the norm.
10. For homework, have students write in their journals about a time when they had a goal that was blocked by cultural rules or social expectations, and how they dealt with those obstacles.

Part 2: Writing a business letter

1. Ask for volunteers to share some of the experiences that students wrote about for homework, and discuss how effective their responses to social expectations were. Do not force all students to share, since some experiences may be very personal.
2. Announce that today they will write a letter to Haifaa Al Mansour. Talk about the differences between electronic forms of communication (email, text, Instagram) and a business letter.
3. Distribute **HANDOUT 2: WRITING A BUSINESS LETTER** and review the information on the first page. Make sure students know how to use the template on the second page of the handout.
4. Review how to write an address and a date if necessary.
5. As you work through the handout with students, you can provide the following fake address for them to use for the purpose of filling out the inside address:

Ms. Haifaa Al Mansour
Sony Picture Classics
123 Studio Dr.
Los Angeles, CA 12345

6. Brainstorm with the class some of the content that students might include in the body of a letter to the director; write suggestions on the board as they are mentioned. (Possible answers: reasons why students liked or disliked the film; questions about the film, Saudi Arabia, the future of the status of Saudi women, or future film projects; stories about times that students also had to take a stand against social expectations, if they are comfortable sharing) Point out that you are going to do peer editing, so they should not include anything they are uncomfortable sharing.
7. Then have students begin writing a first draft. Have individual writing conferences with students while they are drafting their letters.
8. Continue with your usual procedure for peer editing and revising.

Extension Activities

1. Show students a video that went viral, showing women in Saudi Arabia skateboarding, bowling, dancing, and playing basketball in public. These activities violate their cultural practice of preventing girls from doing “boy things,” being seen in public, and drawing attention drawn to themselves. The video is completely in Arabic and for some reason incorporates a photo of President Trump several times. Discuss the video, asking students to theorize about its message and comparing it to the film *Wadjda*. The video may be found at <https://youtu.be/1rUn2j1hLOo>. After the discussion, share the following article with them on the video and the reaction to it: <https://www.elle.com/uk/life-and-culture/culture/news/a33229/saudi-arabia-music-video-women/>
2. For students who would like to learn more about the life of girls and women in Saudi Arabia, suggest the novel *A Girl Like That* by Tanaz Bhathena. See the book summary and reviews provided at <https://www.amazon.com/Girl-Like-That-Tanaz-Bhathena/dp/0374305447>. Publishers Weekly recommends this for ages 14 and up at <https://www.publishersweekly.com/978-0-374-30544-4>.

Handout 1 ▶ P.1

An Interview with Haifaa Al Mansour

1. What difficulties did Haifaa Al Mansour encounter in making this film? How did she overcome them?

2. What were her goals in making this film?

3. Iran has a thriving and internationally respected film industry. Why do you think there has been no equivalent film industry development in Saudi Arabia?

An Interview with Haifaa Al Mansour

4. In this interview, Haifaa Al Mansour says, “It is a hard, tough time now in the Middle East, and it is up to people to change things — if they really change at *heart*. Not only by changing regimes and political stuff, but also by believing in women. By believing in others and becoming more tolerant, more respectful for other cultures.... It is time to open up the culture.” In your opinion, how successful has this film been in opening up Saudi culture?

A Template for a Business Letter

The basic information that is needed in a business letter is as follows:

1. A block of text that contains your return address. (Do not put your name in this block, however.) Follow your address on the next line with the date of the letter, with the name of the month fully written out, not abbreviated.
2. Skip a line and then add another block of text, this one with the contact information for the person that you wish to write to. Be sure to include any information necessary so that the letter will reach the recipient; it should be identical to what you will put on the envelope. This may include the name of the recipient if you know it; the department that it should go to; the name of the company; and the address of the company.
3. Skip a line and then write what is known as the salutation. This should be “Dear _____:” if you know the person’s name. Use “Dear Sir or Madam:” if you do not know it. Note the colon, not a comma, after the name.
4. Skip another line and now write the body of your letter. It should be single-spaced, in paragraph form. The language of the letter should be more formal than a casual email, but not stilted; use what is called “standard English.” If more than one paragraph is needed, skip a line between paragraphs.
5. Skip a line and write a closing. This is usually just “Sincerely yours,” or “Sincerely,” whether you feel sincerely or not. “Thank you,” is not a closing; if you wish to thank the recipient, make that part of the body of the letter.
6. Skip four lines, and then type in your name. You are leaving space to sign your name after you print the letter out. If you have a title, you can type it in just below your name, without skipping a line.

A template for the letter is on the next page. If you wish to use it, just highlight each section and replace it with the appropriate information. Your letter may continue on to a second page if the body text is long.

When you have finished writing, do the following:

- Check your letter to be sure spelling and grammar are correct.
- Check to be sure you have used an appropriate business font, like Times New Roman.
- Center your letter on the page from top to bottom.
- Print your letter.
- Sign your letter.

Handout 2 ▶ P.2

A Template for a Business Letter

Your street address

Your city, state, and zip code

Today's date

Recipient Name

Recipient's title

Name of company

Street address of company

City, state, and zip code of company

Dear (Insert name of recipient or "Dear Sir or Madam" if unknown):

Body of letter

Sincerely,

Your Name

Your title, if appropriate



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