



STARBUCKS®
GLOBAL ACADEMY

Resource Toolkit for
To Be Welcoming Curriculum

WELCOMING DIALOGUE ON ARAB/ MIDDLE EASTERN BIAS



OVERVIEW

Public spaces and third places are more welcoming to all when we celebrate our shared humanity. By understanding each other, we deepen connections. To encourage more meaningful conversations on this topic, leaders at Starbucks partnered with experts at Arizona State University to create To Be Welcoming, a 15-course curriculum designed to address bias through understanding the human experience.

Below are 4 core resources from the “Welcoming Dialogue on Arab/Middle Eastern Bias” course. This learning experience presents key terms related to Arab/Middle Eastern identities and biases, a discussion on the similarities and differences between Arabs, Middle Easterners, and Muslims, facts about ethnicities and religions in the Middle East, and a guide to encourage dialogue on Arab/Middle Eastern bias. Learn more about the program and register for courses at [ToBeWelcoming.com](https://www.tobewelcoming.com).



RESOURCE 1

Key Terms and Concepts

RESOURCE 2

The Difference Between Middle Eastern, Arab and Muslim

RESOURCE 3

Ethnicity and Religion in the Middle East

RESOURCE 4

Dialogue Challenge

We will begin by defining key terms and concepts related to Arab/Middle Eastern bias. These terms have been defined specifically to fit the context of this course, and will be used to enhance your understanding of the course topic.



ARAB

A member of a Semitic people, originally from the Arabian peninsula and neighboring territories, inhabiting much of the Middle East and North Africa; someone whose mother tongue is Arabic. Not all Arabs are Muslims.



MIDDLE EAST

The Arab countries from Egypt to the Persian Gulf, but also Turkey, Israel, and Iran. Some political scientists extend the region westward across North Africa and eastward through Afghanistan and Pakistan.



ALLAH

The Arabic word for God. Used by both Muslims and Arab Christians.



ISLAM

A monotheistic faith teaching that Allah is the one God and Muhammad is his Prophet. Teaches, like Judaism and Christianity, that the only true God made a covenant with Abraham. In Arabic, Islam means "peace" and Allah means "God."



MUSLIM

A member of the religion of Islam.



QUR'AN

The holy book of Islam.



HIJAB

A head covering that some Muslim women choose to wear in public. Some Arab Christian women wear a similar headscarf, and its meaning has become controversial in academic and everyday life.



NIQAB

A covering for the face in addition to the hair. Only a minority of women choose to wear niqab in public. Though some very conservative Muslims require it, historically most scholars agree the practice was part of various Arab cultures before Islam.



MOSQUE

A house of worship for Muslims, much like a Christian church or a Jewish synagogue. Although Friday prayers are the major event in a mosque, Muslims who can afford the time will attend any of the five daily prayers there as well.



ISLAMOPHOBIA

Dislike of or prejudice against Islam or Muslims, especially as a political force.

Summary: Bias of any kind generally stems from ignorance about situations different from the norm, which can lead to prejudice against others. These key terms will help you understand and demystify the "unknown," as well as give a glimpse of the trauma that certain groups of people still endure due to bias.

One of the most common misconceptions Arabs and Middle Easterners deal with is the constant assumption that they are Muslim. Pause and reflect on whether that holds true, though. Is it always the case that ethnic identity ties to religious identity? Orientalism— a system of thinking that situates the “East” as inherently distinct from the “West”— often sets up this part of the world as one monolithic, exotic “Other,” while in reality there are many cultural, religious, and ethnic differences within it. The Middle East and the religion of Islam are not monoliths, meaning that it is inaccurate to portray all Middle Easterners the same way. However, there is some legitimate basis for confusion between these terms. The following resource explores how these terms differ and overlap, with the goal of appreciating the diversity of identities.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MIDDLE EASTERN, ARAB AND MUSLIM

The Middle East is a **geographic region** lying at the intersection of Africa and Asia.

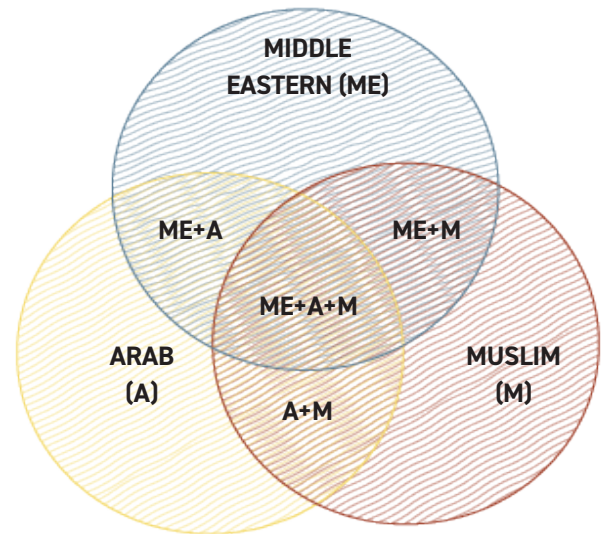
Ex. An Israeli who speaks Hebrew and identifies as Jewish would be Middle Eastern, but not Muslim or Arab.

Arab identity is based on a shared **language**. Arabs are people who speak Arabic as a native language and identify as Arabs.

Ex. A third-generation Lebanese Brazilian who speaks Arabic, identifies as an Arab South American, and practices Maronite Catholicism is Arab but not Middle Eastern or Muslim.

Muslims practice the **religion** of Islam.

Ex. Indonesia, a nation of islands in the South Pacific, is the largest Muslim-Majority nation (over 200 million). An Indonesian who speaks Javanese and practices Islam would be Muslim, but not Arab or Middle Eastern.



Can a person be Middle Eastern and Arab?

Yes, in Egypt there is a large concentration of Coptic Christians. An Arabic-speaking Egyptian Copt would be Arab and Middle Eastern, but not Muslim. The same applies to Christian Copts in Sudan, Lebanon, and elsewhere throughout the Middle East.

Can a person be Muslim and also classified as a Middle Easterner?

Yes, in Iran, the second most populous country in the Middle East, Shia Islam is the official state religion. But Persian, not Arabic, is the official language. An Iranian who speaks Persian and practices Islam would be Muslim and Middle Eastern, but not Arab.

Is it possible for a person to be both Muslim and Arab and not be a Middle Easterner?

Yes, it is possible, if the person or their ancestors emigrated from the Middle East. An Algerian-American Muslim family living in Detroit are still Muslim Arabs, but in terms of nationality, are American and not Middle Eastern.

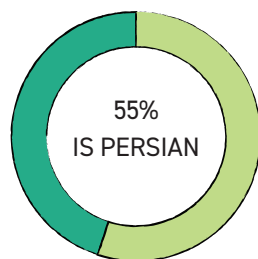
Can a person be all three—Middle Eastern, Arab and Muslim?

Yes, Saudi Arabia is one of the largest countries in the Middle Eastern and Arab world. Islam is the state religion. A Saudi who speaks Arabic and practices Islam is Middle Eastern, Arab and Muslim.

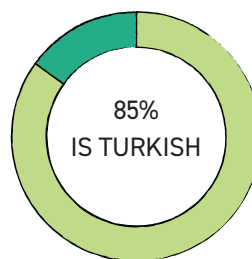
A variety of ethnic groups, including Arabs, Turks, Persians, Kurds, and Afghans, call the Middle East home. Most major world religions originated and are still practiced there, including Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism, and the Baha'i faith. Its political institutions include traditional political parties. Middle Eastern people reflect a diversity of traditional cultural beliefs and practices, family and child-rearing traditions, languages and communication styles, and educational experiences. This gives them a similar variety of intersectional identities and experiences, as seen in the following infographic.

ETHNICITY AND RELIGION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

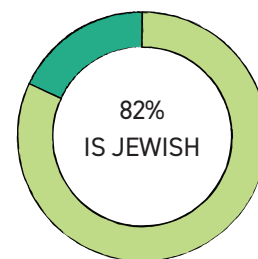
Arabs constitute about 60% of the total population in the Middle East and are the major ethnic group in most of these countries. Countries where Arabs are not the majority include Iran, Turkey and Israel.



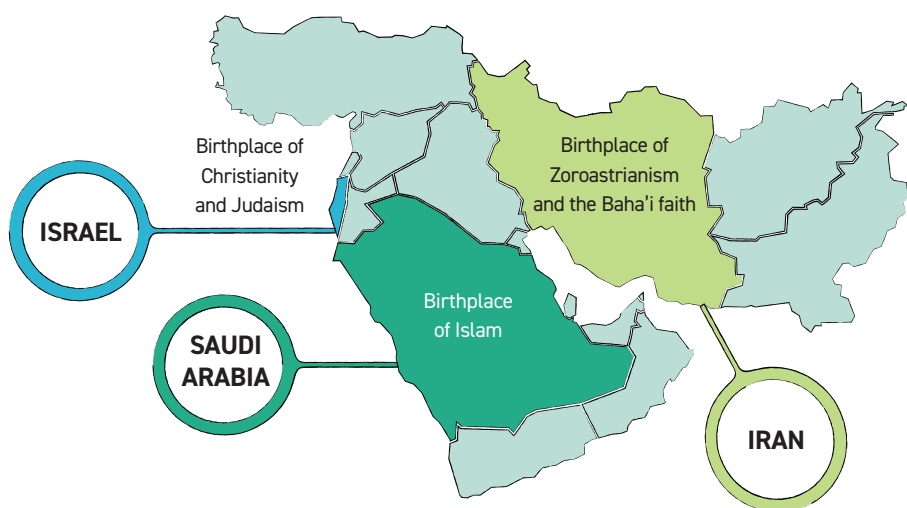
IRAN



TURKEY

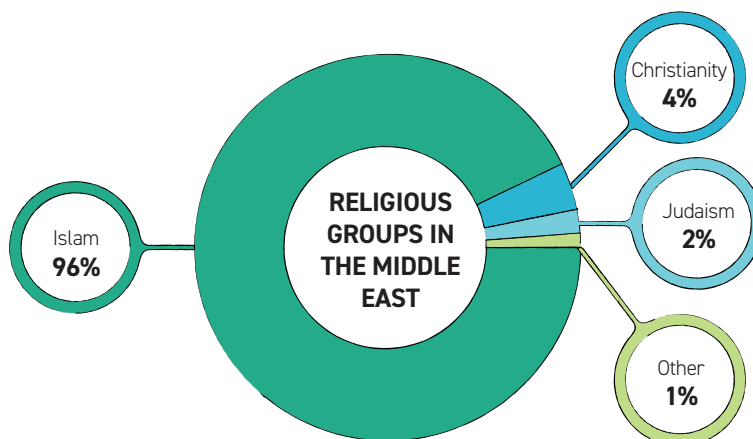


ISRAEL



Most major world religions originated and are still practiced in the Middle East, including Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism, and the Baha'i faith.

Islam is the largest religion in the Middle East, Israel has the largest Jewish population and Lebanon has the largest Christian population at 40%.



Talking about Arab/Middle Eastern bias requires a complex and creative communication skill set. This series introduced you to the role civility, empathy, and dialogue play in navigating critical conversations around bias. As you practice these skills, your awareness will increase and you will get better at engaging in critical conversations on sensitive topics.

It can be difficult to start a dialogue on these issues. Use the following list of questions to guide your conversation on Arab/Middle Eastern bias.

DIALOGUE CHALLENGE

I'm learning about the role civility, empathy, and dialogue play in critical conversations around Arab/Middle Eastern bias in the To Be Welcoming Series featured on Starbucks Global Academy. One of the activities is a dialogue challenge where I am encouraged to engage in dialogue with a close family member or friend on their perceptions related to Arabs/Middle Easterners. Do you mind if we discuss your perspective? Thank you.



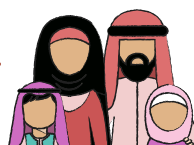
Who is the most famous or influential Arab or Middle Eastern person you know about? What about someone in your personal social circle? How did you meet?

What does being Arab or Middle Eastern mean to you? What are some of the most common images or depictions of Arabs and Middle Easterners that you've seen?



Do you think your perceptions about Arab or Middle Eastern people match with other people's views in society? What about the perceptions of people in your family or your community?

What do you think are the most common biases Arab or Middle Eastern people face in society?



How would you define the term Arab or Middle Eastern? Do you think there's a difference between these two terms?

What perceptions or beliefs do you hold about this group? What has influenced or shaped your perceptions about this group?

How have you seen Arab or Middle Eastern people portrayed in the media?



Do you think Arab or Middle Eastern people have the same opportunities as people from other groups in the US?

What similarities do you believe you share with people who are Arab or Middle Eastern?

COURSE AUTHORS



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