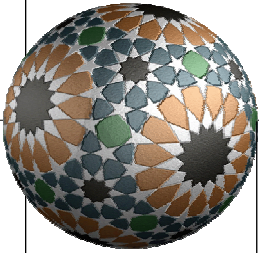


Arab & Muslim women: beyond the stereotypes



Learning outcomes

- ◇ Students will understand the value of looking beyond stereotypes and generalisations
- ◇ Students will consider how stereotypes about Arab and Muslim women can be very misleading
- ◇ Students will see that the lives of Arab and Muslim women are diverse
- ◇ Students will appreciate that people's attitudes and decisions cannot simply be 'read off' from their ethnic/religious identities – they will understand that Islam is only one aspect of Muslims' lives
- ◇ Students will use the internet for research

Lesson in brief

Students will research the life stories of prominent Arab women considering the factors that affected their lives and accomplishments.

National curriculum

Citizenship – KS 4 – Unit 03 – Challenging racism and discrimination

Materials: Access to the internet

It is easy to look at the Arab and Muslim women and to sympathise with their plight. In doing so, we often forget that women still face challenges here and we flatten the multiplicity of experiences and life stories of Arab and Muslim women. Arab societies, like our own, are incredibly diverse – and Arab and Muslim are not simply victims of oppression. In all societies, there are women who try to challenge the expectations placed upon them.

Lesson Plan

Starter

- ◆ As a class brainstorm what images the students have of Arab and Muslim women

Main activity

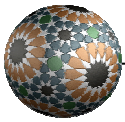
- ◆ Students will then research the life-story of a prominent Arab woman considering as they do so
 - i) what factors they think affected the woman's life (such as family background, economic standing, educational opportunities, historical context etc)
 - ii) if the woman fulfilled the expectations of her society or challenged and went beyond them
 - iii) how their own notions are confirmed or questioned by the life of the woman in question
- ◆ Depending on the research abilities of the students, you can choose whether or not to give them the suggested internet resources guide
- ◆ N.B. All of the women are Arab, though not all are Muslim

Plenary

- ◆ Come together at the end for students to present their findings

Homework/following-up

- ◆ Write a short piece about how the lives of the women they looked at do or don't correspond with the prevalent stereotypical images
- ◆ Write a piece imagining you are one of these woman about how you feel about the negative stereotypes of Arab and Muslim women



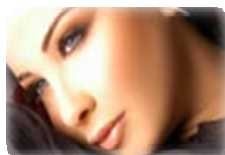
Suggested women to research

i) what factors do you think affected the woman's life (such as family background, economic standing, educational opportunities, historical context etc)

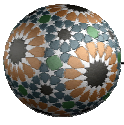
ii) did the woman fulfil the expectations of her society or challenge and go beyond them?

iii) how are your own ideas about Arab and Muslim women confirmed or questioned by the life-story of the woman you have researched?

- ◆ Khadija – wife of the prophet, first Muslim woman – from present day Saudi Arabia – 565-623
- ◆ Fatima – daughter of the prophet – from present day Saudi Arabia – c.606-32
- ◆ Rabia al-Adwawiyya – considered one of the first of the Sufis, a Sufi saint – Iraqi – c.712-801
- ◆ Walladah bint Mustakfi – poet, free spirited daughter of caliph – from Cordoba, Spain – c.1001-1080
- ◆ Um Kalthoum –one of most famous Arab singers – Egyptian – 1908-1975
- ◆ Nawal al-Saadawi – leading feminist writer, sociologist, doctor – Egyptian – 1931-
- ◆ Fairouz – one of most famous Arab singers – Lebanese – 1935-
- ◆ Fatima Mernissi – Muslim feminist professor, author and researcher – Moroccan – 1940-
- ◆ Hanan Ashwari – scholar and political activist – Palestinian – 1946-
- ◆ Ahdaf Soueif – novelist who writes in English and Arabic – Egyptian – 1950-
- ◆ Zuha Hadid – world renowned architect – Iraqi – 1950-



- ◆ Queen Noor – widow of King of Jordan – Jordanian – 1951-
- ◆ Muna Hathoum – artist who works in sculpture, conceptual and situational art – Palestinian—1952-
- ◆ Reem Kelani – musician and singer – Palestinian – 1963-
- ◆ Suheir Hammad – spoken word poet based in the US – Palestinian — 1973-
- ◆ Haifa Wehbe – model and pop star – Lebanese – 1976-
- ◆ Nancy Ajram – pop star – Lebanese – 1983-



Suggested Internet resources

Khadija – wife of the prophet Mohammad, first Muslim woman – from present day Saudi Arabia – 565-623

<http://www.al-islam.org/biographies/khadija.htm>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Khadijah_bint_Khuwaylid
<http://www.islamfortoday.com/khadijah.htm>

Fatima – daughter of the prophet – from present day Saudi Arabia – c.606-32

http://www.usc.edu/dept/MSA/history/biographies/sahaabah/bio.FATIMAH_BINT_MUHAMMAD.html
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fatima_Zahra

Rabia al-Adwawiyya – considered one of the first of the Sufis, a Sufi saint – Iraqi – c.712-801

<http://sufimaster.org/teachings/adawiyya.htm>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rabia_Basri
<http://www.mythinglinks.org/NearEast~3monotheisms~Islam~Rabia.html>
<http://www.poetry-chaikhana.com/A/AlAdawiyyaRa/> - poems
<http://www.khamush.com/sufism/rabia.htm>



Walladah bint Mustakfi – poet and free spirited daughter of caliph – from Cordoba, Spain – c.1001-1080

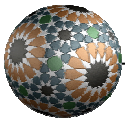
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walladah>
<http://www.andalucia.com/history/people/ibn-wallada.htm>

Um Kalthoum –one of most famous singers in Arab world – Egyptian– 1908-1975

<http://www.aljadid.com/music/0101umkulthu.html>
<http://almashriq.hiof.no/egypt/700/780/umKoulthoum/biography.html>
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umm_Kulthum_\(singer\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umm_Kulthum_(singer))
<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2000/467/umm6.htm>
<http://www.shira.net/lisah.htm> - lyrics and audio clip of song 'Do you still remember?'

Nawal al-Saadawi – leading feminist writer, sociologist, doctor – Egyptian – 1931-

<http://www.nawalsaadawi.net/bio.htm#saadawi>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nawal_el-Saadawi
<http://www.kirjasto.sci.fi/sadawi.htm>
<http://books.guardian.co.uk/departments/politicsphilosophyandsociety/story/0,,333041,00.html>
<http://www.africacentre.org.uk/habari2.htm> (second half is about Nawal al Saadawi)



Fairouz – one of most famous singers in Arab world – Lebanese – 1935-

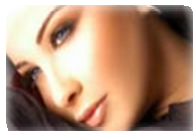
<http://www.fairouz.com/fairouz/tribute/fb.html>
http://leb.net/~aljadid/music/fairouza_voice_star_mystery.html
<http://www.fairuzonline.com/alegend.htm>
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fairuz>
lyrics in English http://www.orientaldancer.net/arabic-song-lyrics/lyrics_of_Fairuz.html
<http://www.shira.net/nihna-wil.htm> - lyrics and audio clip of song 'We and the moon are neighbours'

Fatima Mernissi – Muslim feminist professor, author and researcher – Moroccan – 1940-

<http://islamlib.com/en/page.php?page=article&id=461>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fatema_Mernissi
<http://www.bdancer.com/med-guide/culture/mernissi.html> - excerpt from Memoir

Hanan Ashwari – scholar and political activist – Palestinian – 1946-

<http://www.palestinehistory.com/biography/palestine/palbio22.htm>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanan_Ashrawi
<http://www.fembio.org/english/biography.php/woman/biography/hanan-ashrawi>
<http://www.worldtrek.org/odyssey/mideast/ashrawi/ashrawibio.html>
<http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/Elberg/Ashrawi/ashrawi-con0.html>



Ahdaf Soueif – novelist who writes in English and Arabic – Egyptian – 1950-

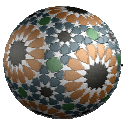
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ahdaf_Soueif
<http://www.cairotimes.com/content/culture/suef.html>
<http://www.africacentre.org.uk/habari2.htm> (first half is about Ahdaf Soueif)
<http://books.guardian.co.uk/graphic/0,,2020158,00.html>
<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2001/559/profile.htm>

Zuha Hadid – world renowned architect – Iraqi – 1950-

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zaha_Hadid
<http://nymag.com/arts/architecture/profiles/17237/>
<http://arts.guardian.co.uk/features/story/0,,1890945,00.html>
<http://www.designboom.com/eng/interview/hadid.html>
<http://www.slate.com/id/2144044/?nav=tap3>

Queen Noor – widow of King of Jordan – Jordanian – 1951-

http://www.noor.gov.jo/personal_profile.htm
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queen_Noor_of_Jordan
<http://www.cnn.com/2005/US/08/22/cnn25.queen.noor/index.html>



Muna Hathoum – artist who works in sculpture, conceptual and situational art – Palestinian – 1952-

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mona_Hatoum

http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio3/johntusainterview/hatoum_transcript.shtml

<http://webexhibits.org/colorart/hatoum.html>

http://www.moma.org/exhibitions/2003/mona_hatoum_interv.html

Reem Kelani – musician and singer – Palestinian – 1963-

<http://www.reemkelani.com/theartist/Biography/>

<http://www.reemkelani.com/theartist/thesingermagazine/>

<http://theyap.org/showcase/people/reemkelani/>

<http://www.reemkelani.com/springgazelle/samples/> - audios

Suheir Hammad – Spoken word poet – Palestinian – 1973-

http://www.birzeit.edu/news/news-d?news_id=33201

<http://leb.net/~aljadid/interviews/DropsofSuheirHammad.html> - interview

<http://www.hbo.com/defpoetry/interviews/season5/episode09.html> - interview

<http://suheirhammad.com>



Haifa Wehbe – model and pop star – Lebanese – 1976-

<http://www.anahaifa.com/>

<http://haifa-wehbe.topwomen.org/Biography.htm>

<http://www.haifawehbeh.com/index2.html>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haifa_Wehbe

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6666725.stm> - Arab youth revel in pop revolution

Nancy Ajram – pop star – Lebanese – 1983-

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nancy_Ajram

<http://www.nancyajram-online.com/profile.htm>

<http://www.nancy-ajram.ws/nancy-ajram-lyric/nancy-ajram-lyric.htm> - lyrics

<http://www.shira.net/lyrics/ahwanoss.htm> - lyrics and audio of 'Ah and a half'

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/6666725.stm> - Arab youth revel in pop revolution