

Middle Eastern Amazing Race Lesson Plan

Overview:

In this lesson plan, students will have a race across the Middle East to learn about geography and history. By following their team's itinerary across the Middle East, students will acquire historical information about the Middle Eastern past, as well as learn the geography of the region. The goal is to deepen student knowledge of the Middle East's prolific past and to map that past onto present-day Middle Eastern geography.

Objectives:

Students will:

1. Use research skills to navigate the history and geography of the Middle East.
2. Plot on a map the itinerary of their Amazing Race.
3. List the types of "crossings" that must be dealt with while on the journey.

Activity:

1. Ask students if they have ever watched the television show "The Amazing Race." Explain that contestants on the television show are given a series of clues which they must follow to end up at a designated destination. Divide students into teams that will compete to navigate their own Amazing Race across the Middle East. Provide each team with an itinerary and a map of the Middle East (See Amazing Race Itineraries, Worksheet, and Map) Challenge teams to be the first to complete their itinerary and Traveler's Guide Worksheet.
2. Provide students with access to research materials (encyclopedia or internet) so that they can use the historical clues given to them on their itinerary sheet to locate geographical positions on the map of the Middle East. Students will need to research historical sites in the Middle East in order to locate their present-day positions on the map of the Middle East.
3. Tell students to plot their itinerary locations on the blank map. Each itinerary provides a starting point and a final destination. Students should organize the remaining locations in the most logical sequence to move from the starting location to the ending location. They should determine the closest stops and/or make logical arguments based upon landmasses like deserts, seas, or mountains that may make travel difficult. The goal is to make students aware of the complexities of travel.

4. In order to stress the concept of borders and diversity, have students fill out the Traveler's Guide Worksheet. Crossing borders is not necessarily an easy feat, as any viewer of "The Amazing Race" knows. There are numerous barriers that must be dealt with. To complete their Middle Eastern travel itinerary and win the race, students must also provide travelers with the knowledge necessary to complete the race. Thus, they must list the types of "crossings" that must be dealt with from one point on their itinerary to the next, including historical information, country border crossings, language crossings, currency crossings, and natural land formation crossings. PSAMES Country Information Sheets, along with a physical map of the Middle East, will allow students to complete this aspect of their journey.