

EDUCATION PACK **LEARNING ABOUT THE ARAB WORLD**

Arabic language and Arab culture
www.britishcouncil.org/schoolsonline



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INTRODUCTION

The Arab world is a fascinating, diverse region stretching from south-west Asia to north-west Africa. It has an immensely rich culture and history but it is often misperceived, giving rise to inaccuracies and stereotypes.

Tackling prejudice and combatting confusion is central to the work of the Council for Arab-British Understanding (Caabu). This resource from the British Council and Caabu is designed to help teachers explore the Arab world with students aged 11 -16, providing accurate information and challenging misconceptions, raising critical questions and informing debate.

It contains two sections: The Arab World and The Impact of Stereotypes and Islamophobia. Each part has background information for teachers, a slideshow with detailed notes, questions for students to think and talk about and classroom activities.

There are also links to show where core and transferable skills can be developed, ideas for things do with a partner school if you have one, and further suggestions for reading and follow up talks for those who would like to find out more.

Note: It is important for teachers to be aware that some of the issues explored in this resource may be sensitive for some students and their families, especially those from Arab heritage backgrounds, when exploring words and images associated with stereotypes; so care needs to be taken when planning to teach this content. Make sure that you have explored both the notes and slides so that you are aware of all the content before teaching takes place and adapt the resources to meet the needs of your pupils.

Before you begin, it is a good idea to encourage your students to establish a set of discussion guidelines to ensure that discussions are constructive and respectful. These should start with the sentence stem we will... and be agreed by all. For example:

We will:

- respect each other's ideas
- be prepared to change our minds
- try and come to a shared agreement
- clarify, challenge, summarise, and build on each other's ideas
- invite someone to contribute by asking a question

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE ARAB WORLD

Curriculum links: English, Geography, History, Personal, Social and Health Education, Religious Education, Citizenship

Core and transferable skills: Communication and collaboration, citizenship, digital literacy, personal development, critical thinking and problem solving

Learning objectives: To help students find out about the history, geography, culture and language of the Arab world in the past and present

Resources: You will need: access to the internet, slide projector, large pieces of paper and pens, copies of activity sheets, art materials

The Arab world has a very rich culture and history. Did you know for example that during the Middle Ages there was a golden age of inventions and discoveries that shape aspects of how we live today? These include the invention of windmills, early cameras, toothbrushes and coffee. However, although the Arab world shares some aspects of history and heritage, it is very diverse in terms of culture, religion, and even language and does not consist of a single story. Arabs in different countries may dress differently and have different cultural traditions.

To begin an exploration of the Arab world with your students, download the accompanying slides to share with them. There are notes for each slide and a brief thumbnail showing the content in the appendices at the back of the booklet. <https://www.britishcouncil.org/school-resources/find/classroom/learning-about-arab-world>

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To establish your students' prior knowledge before you begin, display the following four statements from slide 2:

- I know a great deal about the Arab world
- I know a fair amount about the Arab world
- I have limited knowledge about the Arab world
- I don't know anything about the Arab world

Ask your students to share with a partner which statement is most relevant to them. Encourage those who know a great deal or fair amount about the Arab world to share a few facts with the rest of the class, before engaging with the rest of the slides. For example you may have pupils who can tell you that they have visited an Arab country, that the pyramids and Sphinx are found in Egypt, or have someone who can tell you how to greet somebody in Arabic using the phrase:

as-salaamu 'alaykum! (peace be upon you) and the response w'alaykum as-salaam! (and peace be upon you)



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THINGS TO THINK ABOUT AND DISCUSS...



Do all Arab people follow the same religion?

The 22 countries of the Arab world are very diverse. They include people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds who speak different languages and follow different religions. If you visit an Arab country you may see a number of geographical features, spot buildings from world religions and meet people who dress in a variety of ways, eat different food and follow cultural traditions.

Can you find out the names of 3 Arab countries and an interesting fact about each to share with someone else?

ACTIVITY1: SLIDE 12

There are many English words that we use today, which originally came from Arabic, especially during the Middle Ages when trade flourished, and Arab scholars were world leaders in science and technology. These include: algebra, average, calendar, candy, coffee, cotton, magazine, mattress, saffron, sherbet, sofa, sugar, syrup, tambourine, traffic and zero. Many English words such as computer, mobile (phone), and sandwich have also entered the Arabic language.



Share the English words that originated from Arabic with your pupils on slide 12. Ask them to group them into different categories such as food and drink, Maths and Science and exploration. Encourage them to talk about why languages 'borrow' words from one another and how some of these may have entered the English language.

Show your pupils the examples of words that English has 'borrowed' from other languages on the appendix. Ask them to work in pairs to discuss which language and country they think each word originates from and then match each word to its country of origin on the map.

Can they give reasons for their decisions? Gather the whole class together to discuss whether similar choices were made. Reveal the correct answers and discuss whether they were surprised about any of the individual words and how many have been borrowed from other languages and countries.

ACTIVITY2: SLIDE 12

Calligraphy is a very distinctive and important feature of Arab culture and can be seen in art forms and historical periods across the Arab world.

Explain to your pupils that the word calligraphy means ‘beautiful writing’, and requires a lot of skill and practice to master in any language. Arabic calligraphy is a highly valued art form in the Arab world and can be found not only in books, but also on many different materials including decoration on pottery, rugs and furniture.

Some Arabic calligraphers form words into geometric shapes or the shape of plants and animals. You can find some wonderful examples on the Internet. Resources for this can be found in the Find Out More section.

Invite your students to research Arabic calligraphy in different art forms and have a go themselves at reproducing Arabic letters in an expressive way in an art form of their choice. They might use paint or ink or collage materials. Encourage them to photograph an example they are proud of.



ACTIVITY3: SLIDE 12

If you have time, ask your students to work in pairs to find answers to the missing words and questions on slide 13. Alternatively this could be set as a task for home learning.

Partner School Activities:

If you are working with a partner school:

- You could exchange thoughts and ideas from your discussions.
- Share examples of their own calligraphic art and beautiful images of calligraphy from their research on the Arab world.
- Compile your own quiz questions or missing word sheet for the pupils at your partner school.



SLIDE 15

Find Out More

If you want to find out more, the following links provide additional information and resources :

<https://www.britishcouncil.org/arabic-language-and-culture-education-pack>

Many beautiful examples of Islamic art can be found at:

<https://patterninislamicart.com/> and

<http://www.vam.ac.uk/page/i/islamic-art-and-design/>

Links to contemporary Calligraphy artists can be found at:

<https://elseed-art.com/>

<http://www.everitte.org/>

Elias Matar is a Palestinian play specialist, drama therapist, workshop facilitator, performer, storyteller and founder of the El Bayet Centre for Performing Arts & Drama Therapy.

El-Bayet Centre

The El Bayet Centre for Performing Arts and Drama Therapy will offer a range of activities, conducted in both English and Arabic. 'links:

<https://www.facebook.com/elbayetcentre/>

<https://www.instagram.com/elbayetcentre/>



APPENDIX 1

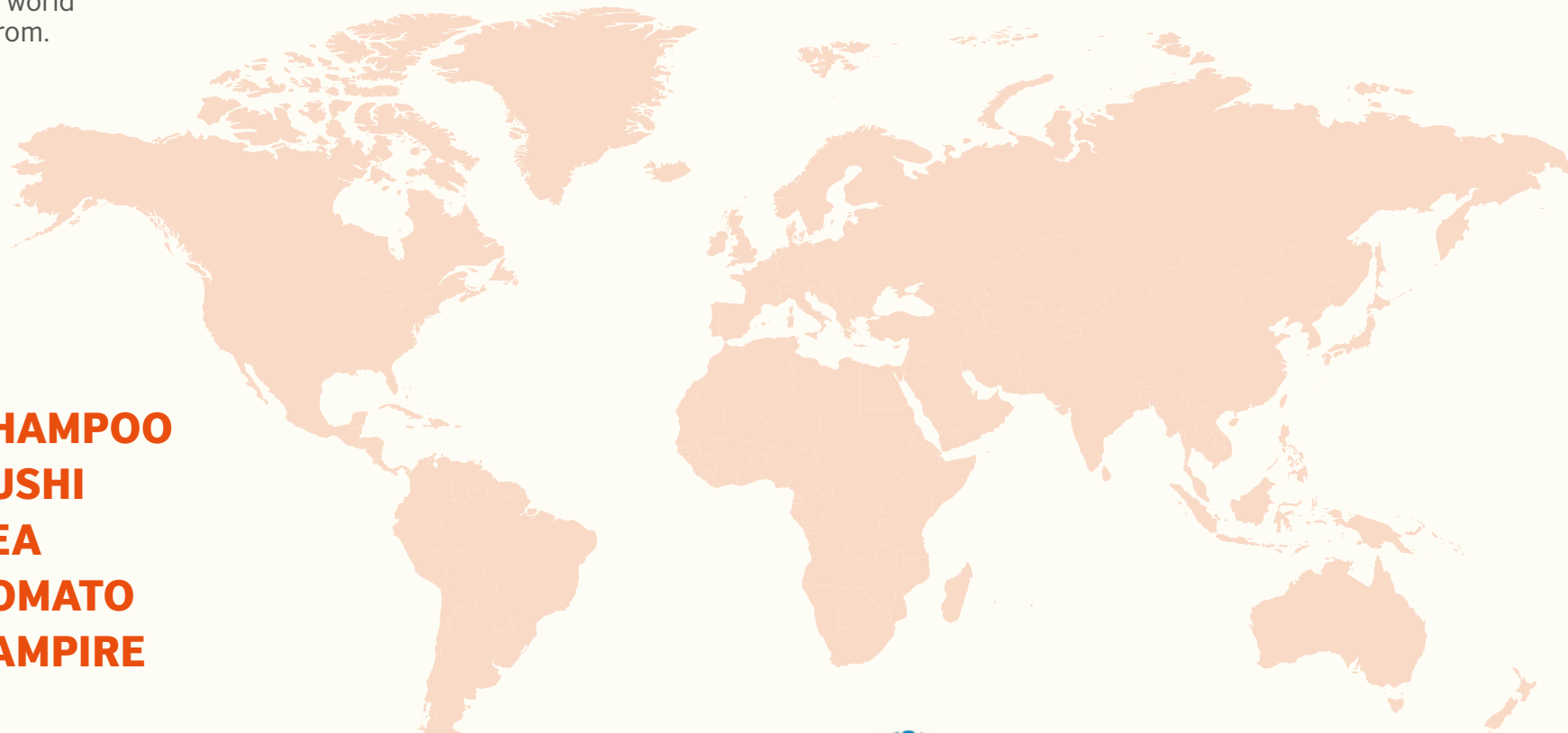
English words and their origins

These English words have originated from different countries and languages. Draw a line to the part of the world where you think they came from.



BARBECUE
CANDY
DOLLAR
LLAMA
MAGAZINE
ROBOT

SHAMPOO
SUSHI
TEA
TOMATO
VAMPIRE



Answer sheet for teachers

(From the British Council English Effect resources)

Barbecue (The Caribbean) – Barbecue came into English from Spanish in the 1600s. In its early English use the word had a wider meaning such as ‘rack on which food is cooked over an open fire’ and hence a meal or gathering at which this occurs.

Candy (Arab World) – Candy came into English from French in the late Middle Ages, but it came into French from Arabic. The basic expression is sugar candy, ultimately from Arabic sukkar qandî ‘candied sugar’.

Dollar (Germany) – The word dollar originated from the German Taler. The word occurs in English from the mid-1500s referring to various different silver coins. Also used in British colonies in North America during the War of Independence, the dollar was adopted as the US currency in 1785.

Llama (The Andes, South America) – The name of the llama, the characteristic pack animal of the Andes, comes originally from Quechua, a language of the Andes. Llama first entered English in 1600 and came into English via Spanish, reflecting Spanish colonialism in South America.

Magazine (Arab World) – The idea behind the magazine that you read was originally that it was a ‘storehouse’ for articles. The word entered English from French in the 1500s, but originates in Arabic, in which mak_zin means ‘storehouse’.

Robot (Czech Republic) – The word robot comes from Czech, and first appeared in 1920 in Karel Čapek’s play Rossum’s Universal Robots. In this play it is the name of a type of mass-produced worker made from artificially synthesised material. It comes from the Czech word robota meaning ‘forced labour, drudgery’.

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Shampoo (India) – Shampoo entered English in the mid-1700s as a result of increasing British involvement in South Asia. Its probable origin is Hindi câṁ. po, meaning ‘press’. The original meaning in English was ‘to massage’. Over time the meaning became ‘to wash or scrub (the head or hair)’.

Sushi (Japan) – The word sushi has been found in English from at least the late 1890s. For most of its first 100 years in English, sushi is found chiefly in references to Japan or to Japanese restaurants outside Japan.

Tea (China) – Tea is first found in English in the mid-1600s, shortly before the first aristocratic craze for tea drinking. Originating in Chinese, tea probably came into English via Dutch, and may have come into Dutch via Malay, reflecting the trading routes by which tea first came to Britain.

Tomato (Mexico) – Tomato came into English in the 1600s, from Spanish. However, Spanish had itself borrowed the word in the 1530s, soon after the Spanish conquest of the Aztec empire. The word originates from Nahuatl (the language of the Aztecs), in which the word is tomatl, and may come from tomaw ‘to grow’.

Vampire (Hungary) – The origins of vampire lie in Eastern Europe, a region where Dracula, the most famous of all vampires, is said to have come from. The word is found in English in the early 1700s, and comes from Hungarian vampir, via French vampire.



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APPENDIX 2

Can you find out the information about the Arab world to fill in the gaps and answer these questions?

1. There are more than 15 million in the Arabic states (more than people in London)
2. Saudi Arabia is the world's largest country without a
3. The Burj Khalifa in Dubai is the worlds tallest
4. Al-Qarawiyyin in Morocco is the oldest in the world, founded by a woman
5. In the 16th century, women in Turkey could if they weren't provided with enough coffee.
6. How many Arab footballers can you name who play in the Premier League?
7. Can you find out some facts about a famous actor, musician, sportsperson, architect or scientist from the Arab world?

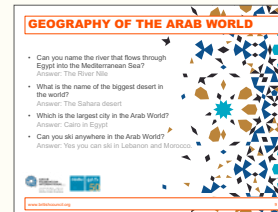
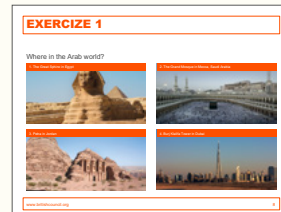
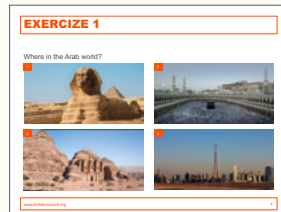
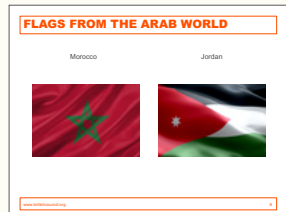
APPENDIX 2

Answers

1. There are more than 15 million **camels** in the Arabic states (more than people in London)
2. Saudi Arabia is the world's largest country without a **river**
3. The Burj Khalifa in Dubai is the worlds tallest **building standing at 828m**
4. Al-Qarawiyyin in Morocco is the oldest **University** in the world, founded by a woman
5. In the 16th century, women in Turkey could **divorce their husbands** if they weren't provided with enough coffee.



APPENDIX 3





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