

2. The Middle East: regional disorder

KEY TERMS

Arab Spring: Popular, antigovernment uprisings in North Africa and the Middle East starting in 2010.

Ba'athism: the principles and policies of the Baath political party of Iraq and Syria characterized especially by promotion of pan-Arab socialism.

Green Movement: also known as the Persian Awakening or Persian Spring by the western media, was a political movement that arose after the 2009 Iranian presidential election, in which protesters demanded the removal of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad from office.

Hezbollah: an extremist Shiite Muslim group with close links to Iran, especially active in Lebanon.

Houthis: an Islamic religious-political-armed movement that emerged in northern Yemen in the 1990s.

Islamic State (ISIS): an organization, made up of Sunni militants from Iraq and Syria, that has declared the creation of a caliphate and imposed strict Islamic rule through brutal tactics.

Oslo Accords: negotiations between Israel and Palestine in 1993, involving Norway and the United States, that were designed to end the decades-old fight between both sides but were derailed in the years that followed.

Pan-Arabism: the principle or advocacy of political alliance or union of all the Arab states.

secularism: a principle that adheres to the strict separation of the state from religious institutions and that people of different religions and beliefs are equal before the law.

The following lessons were written by Leah Graham McFarlane, M.Ed in English and social studies. She is a teacher in Arlington County Public Schools, VA.

LESSON ONE

Student Objectives

Upon completion, students will be able to:

- Evaluate U.S. priorities in the Middle East
- Propose use of U.S. foreign policy instruments

Materials

- *Great Decisions* article: “Middle East: Regional Disorder”
- Classroom set of Handout #2-B: U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East
- Access to current news sources on the Middle East

Time

Two 45-minute class periods

Lesson Development

1. Warm-up: Ask students to list reasons for U.S. involvement in the Middle East. Then invite individuals to write a set of values, both domestic and global, that guide their thinking. Encourage them to connect with the conflicts they summarized in Lesson 1, which focused on historical events that shaped current conflicts and the needs for internal reforms.
2. Then assign students to read the article with attention to pages 36–37. Tell them they will aim to align country-specific needs with the U.S. policy concerns. They should be ready to justify their priorities with U.S. values and suggest policy instruments that do not begin with military involvement.
3. Closing and assessment: Students will present their policy priorities in small groups and possibly revise their lists based on new points. Discussions can be run in person and/or online discussion board posts. Individual participation and/or written submissions can be used for evaluation.

Additional Suggestions

- Product options: Invite students to draft policy proposals for the U.S. Department of State website or create a social media message that communicates their proposal to a wider audience.
- As an extension, encourage students to make thematic connections to other articles in *Great Decisions 2019*.

LESSON TWO

Student Objectives

Upon completion, students will be able to:

- Describe the major conflicts in the Middle East
- Summarize needs for internal reforms

Materials

- *Great Decisions* article: “Middle East: Regional Disorder”
- Classroom set of Handout #2-A: Middle East Region Needs for Reform”

Time

One to two 45-minute class periods

Lesson Development

1. Warm-up: Before assigning the article, begin with small group discussions to assess background knowledge on current conflicts in the region and their origins. Provide a map for each group of 4–5 students and ask them make annotations to show existing knowledge and pose questions as they arise.
2. Establish that unrest can be traced to post-World War I when European-style borders were drawn and have continued to build tensions in the region. Tell students that before proposing further international aid, students will assess existing conflicts and prioritize needs for internal reform.
3. Assign students to read the article with a focus on internal problems that result in a failed state in each country. Depending on the number of students in the class, configure small groups or individuals to focus research on one country and take notes on Handout #2-A for one of the following: Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Iraq, and Iran.
4. Closing/Assessment: Lead a whole-class discussion that invites representatives of each country to present their community, security, and economic needs.
5. Wrap-up: Students should return to their original small groups to compare new understanding with the facts and questions shown by their initial map annotations.

Additional Suggestions:

- Consider breaking students into strategic groups to divide research responsibilities between them.
- To build background knowledge, direct students to relevant websites including United Nations (<http://www.un.org/en/sections/where-we-work/middle-east/>), NATO (<https://www.nato.int/>), BBC (https://www.bbc.com/news/world/middle_east)
- As an extension, assign students to find humanitarian stories that focus on affected individuals in their communities.

Handout #2-A

Middle East Needs for Reform

Read “Middle East: Regional Disorder” and focus on one country to determine needs for internal reforms. Rely on the *Great Decisions* article and outside sources.

Country:	
Power Competition in the Region	
State actors:	
Non-state actors:	
Country Background	
Historical factors:	
Cultural factors:	
Security factors:	
Economic factors:	
Political factors:	
Summary of Needs for Internal Reforms	

Handout #2-B

U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East

NAME: _____

Establish a set of three priorities for the current or future administration to consider in the region. Then describe the preferred policy instruments, including military, economic, diplomatic, and information capabilities.

Iran Nuclear Deal	Solutions in Syria	Wars in Yemen and Libya
Relations with Palestinians	Human Rights	Relations with Saudi Arabia

Policy Priority	Justification	Policy Instruments