



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

Center for Middle Eastern Studies

Lesson: "Coffee in the Arab World"

Deb Holland, D'Evelyn Jr/Sr High School, Denver

Lesson goal:

- **Content:**
 - Students will examine the role coffee has played in the social and political development of the Islamic world, specifically in the Ottoman Empire.
- **Skills:**
 - Students will read a secondary document on the brief history of coffee.
 - Students will use their background knowledge [of coffee and previous instruction on the Arab world] to develop responses to the ban of coffee.
 - In post-activity share-out, students will evaluate how coffee, or other luxury goods (sugar, spices, salt, tea), can impact a state's politics, economy, and society.

Directions:

- Have students read the background information about coffee, its origins, and spread in the Islamic World.
- Use the "Imperial Decree" handout to set the scene for students. Explain they were living in the Ottoman Empire when the decree was passed by Sultan Murad IV in 1633.
- Students will receive various roles of citizens living in the Ottoman Empire when this order took place. Of the twenty roles portrayed (see handout), students will be assigned (or can choose, based on teacher preference) an assigned number of roles based on teacher prerogative.
- Students should then write a "twitter" feed of no more than 140 characters to respond to the imperial decree. Students need to consider the role and perspective of the citizen.
 - This may take between 10-20 minutes based on how many roles/character portrayals students are assigned.
 - Emphasize that students will share their twitter feeds.
 - If teachers have access to personal electronic devices, doing this with padlet is an excellent way for students to respond to other students' "twitter" feeds immediately.
 - If teacher's have a twitter account with the class, this activity could be done live on a twitter account.

- Following the twitter activity, allow students time to discuss their perspectives in small groups.
 - Ask students what citizen would be most opposed to the Imperial Decree; which citizen might support such a decree.
 - Ask students why such a ban would be significant on a multiple of levels: political, economic, social, and personal.

Follow-up/Take home assignment:

- Students can write a constructed response to the following prompt:
“How would the production, sale, and consumption of goods like coffee impact the economic, political, and social development of a country?”

Materials:

- Handouts: “Background of Coffee in the Arab World,” “Imperial Decree,” and “Ottoman Citizens.”

Works Cited:

- Allen, Stewart Lee. *The Devil’s Cup*. New York: Soho Press, 1999.
- Hattox, Ralph S. *Coffee and Coffeehouses*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985.
- Malik, Abdul-Rehman. “*The Muhammadan Bean: The Secret History of Islam and Coffee.*” BBC Podcast: May 1, 2017. Bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07tq8cd
- Pendergrast, Mark. *Uncommon Grounds*. New York: Basic Books, 2010.
- Standage, Tom. *A History of the World in Six Glasses*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2005.

