



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

## Center for Middle Eastern Studies

### Cemetery Celebrations

A Comparison Study of how the Southwest traditions around “Day of the Dead” and cemeteries compare and contrast to cemetery traditions in Oman.

**Objective:** SWBAT learn about another culture’s traditions. SWBAT learn about practices another culture has in how it uses cemeteries and tombs. SWBAT compare and contrast their own cultural traditions to another culture’s traditions.

**Grade level:** Fourth

Content area: Language Arts, Social Studies

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**Background:** This cumulating project is a result of a trip to Oman and Zanzibar through the Fulbright Hays Project and The University of Arizona’s Center for Middle Eastern Studies and the Sultan Qaboos Center. This lesson plan is one small component of a larger unit, used in a 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

#### Standards:

4<sup>th</sup> Grade Social Studies, Strand 4: Geography

Concept 2: Places and Regions

PO 1. Describe how the Southwest has distinct physical and cultural characteristics.

(Science Strands are summarized below as they apply to Social Studies content in Grades K-8. These concepts are reinforced in Social Studies classes, but assessed through Science.)

Connect with:

Science Strand 3 Concept 1 Describe how natural events and human activities impact environments.

Concept 4: Human Systems

PO 2. Describe how Mexico and Arizona are connected by the movement of people, goods, and ideas.

PO 4. Describe the cultural characteristics (e.g., food, clothing, housing, sports, customs, beliefs) of Arizona’s diverse population.

PO 6. Describe elements of culture in areas studied (e.g., Mexico, Central and South America).

4<sup>th</sup> Grade Writing Common Core Standards

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2. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas and information clearly.
    - a. Introduce a topic clearly and group related information in paragraphs and sections; include formatting (e.g., headings), illustrations, and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension.
    - b. Develop the topic with facts, definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples related to the topic.
    - c. Link ideas within categories of information using words and phrases (e.g., *another, for example, also, because*).
    - d. Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to inform about or explain the topic.

Provide a concluding statement or section related to the information or explanation presented. **(4.W.2)**

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3. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience. (Grade-specific expectations for writing types are defined in standards 1–3 above.) **(4.W.4)**
- a. Produce clear and coherent functional writing (e.g., friendly and formal letters, recipes, experiments, notes/messages, labels, graphs/tables, procedures, invitations, envelopes) in which the development and organization are appropriate to task and purpose. **(AZ.4.W.4)**
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5. With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, and editing. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to and including grade 4.) **(4.W.5)**
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Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences. **(4.W.10)**

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**Time:** Three lessons, each 35-50 minutes depending on the needs of your students

**Materials and prep:** Access to internet, student notebooks, chart paper, world map, Day 1 Graphic Organizer (ideally printed on 12x18 inch construction paper, 8-10 thought balloons printed out and precut ahead of time for Day 1 activity, “Google Earth” installed on computer and able to project for students to view, Venn Diagram template for culminating assessment.

### **Day 1 “Cemetery Traditions”**

(5 minutes) **Anticipatory Set:** “When you think of a cemetery, what images come to mind?” On Day 1 Graphic Organizer, students write or illustrate impressions they have of cemeteries. (After 5 minutes) “What feelings come to mind when you think of cemeteries?” Students use “thought balloons” to add feeling words to their graphic organizer. (5 more minutes) With a partner share your graphic organizer (2 minutes).

(30 minutes) **Activity:** “Today we will be looking at cemeteries and ideas around cemeteries. At the top of your graphic organizer, please write this objective: “I can learn about another culture’s traditions. I can learn about practices another culture has in how it uses cemeteries and tombs.” You have already started to think of your own experience with cemeteries. Watch the following video about cemeteries in Tucson where we live and a video about Day of the Dead celebrations in Mexico.”

View videos:

(Cemeteries in Tucson) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N5xGO97ytNU>

(Day of the Dead in Mexico) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IExHomgKOg4>

“On your middle part of your graphic organizer, write down the impressions you have of cemeteries in Tucson, AZ and of the Day of the Dead celebrations in Mexico. Again, how can you represent these ideas with words and pictures?” (After 5 minutes) “What feelings come to mind when you think of cemeteries?” Students use “thought balloons” to add feeling words to their graphic organizer. (5 more minutes)

**Closure:** With a different partner share your graphic organizer (2 minutes).

**Assessment:** Collect and go over students’ work so far. Observe what kind of transitions students are making from the first time they were asked to reflect to the second time they are asked to reflect.

### **Day 2 “Cemeteries in Oman”**

**Anticipatory Set:** “On your white board, make a list of vocabulary words you think are important to know as we continue to talk about cemeteries.” (3 minutes) Go over list with class, creating a class list on chart paper. If students do not mention the word “tomb,” introduce it as it will be used in the activity.

**Activity:** “Today we will learn about another culture and their attitudes toward those that have died. Put on your seatbelts because we are flying across our world to the country of Oman.” (Google Earth “trip” from Tucson to Muscat, Oman)

View Powepoint “Tomb Traditions” as students take notes on the third “tombstone” of their graphic organizer. (attached)

**Assessment:** Students will peer edit three classmates graphic organizer: Check for clarity and thoroughness.

### **Day 3 “Cemetary Celebrations!”**

**Anticipatory Set:** During this study you have been asked to reflect on your ideas about cemeteries and to be open to learning about other traditions around cemeteries. You have taken notes on a graphic organizer. Look back to the first notes you took (on the first gravestone) and on your white board, answer this question: “How have my attitudes toward cemeteries changed or stayed the same?” (5 minutes)

**Activity:** Write a three paragraph essay with the title “Cemetery Celebrations.” In this essay use your graphic organizer to address the following ideas:

- What attitudes do I have about cemeteries based on my own experience?
- What have I learned about traditions around cemeteries in other cultures?
- How have my attitudes toward cemeteries changed or stayed the same?

Give students time in class to complete this assignment. At this point the lesson can be extended to take this assignment through the writing process, or to use it as an in class assignment as is. Provide scaffolding/support based on the needs of your students.

**Assessment:** Using a Venn diagram, students will compare and contrast traditions around cemeteries in the Southwest part of the United States and in the country of Oman.

(Graphic organizer template, Venn diagram template and Power point file attached. Thought balloon template below.)

Celebrating Cemeteries

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Name

Date

