



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

Center for Middle Eastern Studies

Assignment Description (For Teachers)

Title: Murder in Muscat

Author: Lisa Adeli, University of Arizona Center for Middle Eastern Studies.

Purpose/Connection to the Curriculum: This simulation is designed to engage high school students in active learning about the geography, culture, language, religion, history, and politics of Oman (Arabian peninsula) and its close ties to Zanzibar (East Africa). Students will get an in-depth look into life in a Muslim, Arab country while working together to use the information to solve a murder mystery.

Overview: Students are divided into teams of 5-7 people. (There are 5 roles each day, but extra students can be assigned to a group to compensate for absences. English language learners or special education students may be paired with other students as well.) Teams are competing to solve a murder mystery, but it will take all the team members working together – and attention to detail – to solve the mystery, catch the killer, AND build a case that will stand up in court. Each day for 5 days, class will begin with group members viewing a short powerpoint together. Then, each will read a short place card and related witness statement. (There are 5 sets of materials each day.) Students will then report back to the group, which will together analyze the information – and evaluate the suspects. At the end, the group should be able to identify the probably murderer, reconstruct how and why the crime occurred, and articulate why learning about culture, history, and geography gives one deeper insights into people's actions.

Grade Level: High School

Time: 6 class periods + one day of homework if you have 55-minute classes. 3 periods if you have block schedules. Students will cover info on a variety of themes and world cultures in the Indian Ocean trade zone.

Required materials: Ideally, each student needs a computer and access to a file with the materials loaded on it. However, the project can be done with paper – if you're willing to do all the photocopying.

Targeted Skills - Based on Arizona State Standards:

High Social Studies: World History Strand:

Concept 1: Research Skills for History

PO 7. Compare present events with past events:

- a. cause and effect
- b. change over time
- c. different points of view

Concept 5: Encounter and Exchange

PO1. Describe the religious, economic, social, and political interactions among civilizations that resulted from early exploration:

- c. impact of expansion and colonization on Africa, the Americas, and Asia
- e. role of trade
- g. impact and ramifications of slavery and the international slave trade
- h. contrasting motivations and methods for colonization.

High School Social Studies: Geography:

Concept 2: Places and Regions

PO 1. Identify the characteristics that define a region:

- a. physical processes such as climate, terrain, and resources
- b. human processes such as religion, political organization, economy, and demographics

PO 2. Describe the factors (e.g., demographics, political systems, economic systems, resources, culture) that contribute to the variations between developing and developed regions.

PO 3. Examine geographic issues (e.g., drought in Sahel, migration patterns, desertification of Aral Sea, spread of religions such as Islam, conflicts in Northern Ireland/Ireland, Jerusalem, Tibet) in places and world regions.

PO 4. Analyze the differing political, religious, economic, demographic, and historical ways of viewing places and regions.

PO 5. Examine how the geographic characteristics of a place affect the economics and culture (e.g., changing regional economy of the sunbelt, location with respect of natural hazards, location of Panama Canal, Air Force Bases in Arizona).

PO 6. Analyze how a region changes over time (e.g., U.S./Mexico border, Europe from World War I to the development of European Union, change from pre- to post-colonialism in Africa, Hong Kong)

Concept 4: Human Systems

PO 8. Explain how ideas, customs, and innovations (e.g., religion, language, political philosophy, technological advances, higher education, economic principles) are spread through cultural diffusion.

Suggested Procedures:

Before starting the project in class:

1. You will need a computer or laptop for each student (though you may use one central computer and photocopied pages instead).
2. Photocopy the Students' Direction sheet (1 copy per person), the Suspect Evaluation sheet (1 copy per group per day), the groups (see below) – 2 copies, and the Roles/Responsibilities sheet (1 copy per group + 1 extra for you).
3. Divide students into groups (6-7 people per group so that you will have at least 5 per group in class each day). If some students are frequently absent, be sure that they are in groups where most kids have good attendance. ELLs or students with special needs can be assigned the highest number so that they will usually end up working with someone else.
 - Print out each group with the group name on top (Group 1) and then the students numbered from 1-7.
 - Make a folder for each group with a copy of the group member sheet (above) stapled onto the cover of the folder.
 - Put a copy of the roles/responsibilities sheet in each folder.
4. Establish a place where the folders are kept. Students must keep all their work in the folder so that there's no complaint when someone is absent that he/she has all the work!
5. Find a way to get information to the class each day. (Maybe upload the day's folder onto a class website the morning before class or put it onto the students' computers directly.) Important: EXCEPT FOR THE "DAY #1 FOLDER, which you can upload in advance – since it will be homework, upload each of the other days' work the night before class – or early morning the day of class. You don't want to give the students access to everything at once since you don't want them to look ahead. (Parceling the information out each day will ensure that all group members HAVE TO contribute since there should be no time for students to do other people's work in addition to their own! And it will keep the groups competing with each other to solve the mystery.) You should, however, leave the material on the computer afterwards in case the students need to refer back to it.

Advance Preparation for the Project:

1. Tell students that they will be solving a murder mystery, so if they really want to help their team solve the mystery, they need to be in class on time and prepared to work.
2. Assign the students to groups. (I put the group lists out, have them find their own names, and note down the group number – and their role within the group. It takes only a few minutes of class time.) Keep the sheets for future reference.
3. Upload the first file (Homework – introduction to Oman).

Homework before the project begins:

Each student needs to:

- (a) go through the powerpoint in the "Homework: Overview of Oman" folder
- (b) read and take notes on the 1-page selection with their role number. (Person #1 reads 2b-1 – history; person #2 reads 2b-2 – religion, etc. Tell students who have roles 6 and 7

to read 2b-1 and 2b-2 respectively. (It's OK to have 2 people read the same thing, NOT OK if no one has read one of the sections.)

Day 1 – (Note: It's best to do this and the overview of Oman on a Friday. Then, you can finish the entire lesson and the writing assignment the next week.) Procedures:

1. Have the students get into their groups and have the group Organizer take attendance.
2. Intro to the assignment.
 - a. Read the Students' Direction Sheet (as a whole class or group).
 - b. Go over the role sheet and be sure everyone understands his/her role.
 - c. Tell them that this is a competition. They are not to be going to another group to talk or share information.
 - d. Explain your rules and procedures. Be sure they know that they will have to make very efficient use of their time each day if they want to get everything finished without having homework.
 - e. Answer questions.
3. Have the groups go over what they read for homework. (The discussion leader – Role 3 – leads it; the Recorder – Role 4 – takes notes; and the Enforcer – Role 2 – makes sure everyone gets a chance to share their ideas, keeping track of time.) At the end, have the Closer – Role 5 collect all the materials and store them in the designated place.

Day 2 – Muscat, Oman – Folder 3/Day 2

***Before class: Post Folder 3 online – or put it on the computers.**

1. Have them do the group powerpoint for Day 2. 10 minutes.
2. Have each person read his/her place sheet and witness statement. 10-15 minutes.
3. Have each person present the findings.
4. As a group decide if they have any suspects and go over the questions on the suspect sheet.

Day 3 – interior of Oman – Folder 4/Day 3

Follow same procedure as Day 2 with the new materials.

Day 4 – Zanzibar – Folder 5/Day 4

Follow same procedure as Day 2 with the new materials.

Day 5 – Salalah, Oman – Folder 6/Day 5

Follow same procedure as Day 2 with the new materials. (Make sure to discuss who the killer is.)

Day 6: Conclusions and Debriefing

1. Have the group decide who to arrest and then fill out the debriefing sheet. Be sure that the group includes as much information as possible in order to help the prosecution make their case.
2. Creative writing/reflection. Tell students:
 - a. Individually, choose one of the following cities: Muscat, Nizwa, Salalah.

- b. You have a friend planning to visit Oman for the first time, and he/she wants your advice. Write a letter (1-2 pages) giving advice on visiting that city and its surrounding areas. You may write about where to go, what to see, and how to dress/behave in a culturally appropriate way.
3. General class discussion (after collecting all the student work):
- A. Have the groups compare results.
 - B. Discuss what they learned about Oman.
 - C. Discuss how an investigator needs to understand history and culture to investigate and solve the crime.
 - D. Discuss why *all* people need to understand the history and culture of other peoples.

Grading:

- a group grade
- individual grades (based on the individual notes in the folder)
- creative writing/reflection