



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

# Center for Middle Eastern Studies

## Assignment Description (For Teachers)

**Title:** The Shark Tank: Middle East Competition

**Author:** Lisa Adeli, University of Arizona Center for Middle Eastern Studies, PhD in History.

**Purpose/Connection to the Curriculum:** This lesson can be used in a high school English class or a Social Studies (current events or Middle East Studies) class. In addition to covering a variety of English and Social Studies skills, the lesson is designed to show students how global knowledge, research skills, and facility in reading, writing, and presentation can lead to success in the business world. The lesson is also designed to show students how creativity is based on research and expressed in a logical, organized way.

### Overview:

This lesson is a “workplace” simulation that requires students to build their research, writing, and presentation skills, while learning more about the Middle East. Students are expected to gather information and then apply it in a creative way.

Students play the role of interns at a company developing fast food concepts in a global market. Each “intern” (or “intern team” of 2 students) is assigned a Middle Eastern country and directed to research and create a proposal for establishing a Western-style fast food or coffee, snack, or dessert place in their assigned country. Each individual or team has three tasks:

- write a 2-3 page, easy-to-research (but hard to plagiarize!) research paper with a bibliography in MLA format
- develop a persuasive, creative, and well-thought-out proposal
- present the proposal as a formal presentation with visuals before the Shark Tank

The lesson, therefore, demonstrates the interrelationship of Social Studies content (global studies, geography, history) and English skills (reading, writing, research, presentation). It challenges students to think creatively and to write and present persuasively. It also helps students develop skills needed to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century global market.

**Grade Level:** High School/College.

**Time:** approximately 1-2 weeks, depending on how much work is done in class and how long the presentations take (depending on how many students and whether they work individually or in pairs)

## **Targeted Skills:**

### **--English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies – Based on Common Core Standards:**

- Reading: Standards for Informational Text
- Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies
- Writing: standards for argumentative writing, production and distribution of writing, and research
- Listening and Speaking: standards for presentation of knowledge and ideas

### **--Social Studies – Based on Arizona State Standards:**

#### **High School Social Studies: Geography Strand:**

- Concept 2: Places and Regions. PO 1 – Identify the characteristics that define a region – with specific reference to human processes such as religion and political organization. PO 5. Examine how the geographic characteristics of a place affect the economics and culture.

## **Suggested Procedures**

### **Advance Preparation:**

- Be sure the students have been introduced to general principles of research and formal documentation.
- For the introduction to the project (first day), have on hand a computer and projection equipment to show the powerpoint.
- Make copies of the packet “Project Guidelines for Students,” one packet for each student.
- Decide whether the students will work individually on the whole project, in pairs on the whole project, or individually on the research paper but in pairs for the proposal and presentation. (One of the latter two methods is best for large classes since it reduces the amount of class time required to hear presentations.)  
Important note: If you decide to have students work in pairs for all or part of the project, be sure that you assign the same country to each team member. Write the name(s) of the student (and his/her partner, if necessary) on the first page of the student packet.
- Write an assigned country on the appropriate line on the first page of the student packet.

- There is a list of countries included. For a small class or a class working in pairs, use the countries above the line. For a larger class working individually, you can also use countries below the line.
- Be sure that YOU choose the country for the student(s). If a student is from one of the countries on the list or has an attachment to one of the countries, it is best to assign them a different one!
- Make a list for yourself of who is working with whom and doing which country. Then, if they forget (or pretend to forget), you can remind them!

### **In Class and Homework**

#### **In Class Overview of the Project:**

1. Go through the powerpoint introduction, stopping frequently for discussion and student input.
2. Hand out the student assignment packet (with their names and assigned country written on it). Review together the overview and the specific instructions for the paper.
3. Tell them that they will have X amount of time in the library or the computer lab. Review expectations.

**Research and Writing the Paper:** Give them 1-2 days to research the paper.

**Proposal:** If working in pairs, allow at least one day in class for partners to collaborate and make decisions on how to do the presentation. Allow a few days (either in class or for homework) for students to prepare their presentations.

#### **Presentations:**

- Tell students they have to be prompt and efficient in beginning their presentations or they could lose points.
- Appoint someone to time the presentations to make sure they are between 3 and 5 minutes. You may have warning cards for students about to exceed the limit, or you may choose to have them be responsible for their own timekeeping.
- Decide who will judge: You should have a panel of 3-4 judges. You should be one of the judges, but it's up to you who the other 2-3 are. Classmates? Volunteer parents/community members? Students from another class (if you invite another class to observe the presentations)? Tell student judges that they are expected to be fair and honest. Their input will be anonymous – only the *presenters'* names are on the paper, not the judges' names.

**Wrap-up:** Have students reflect, out loud or in writing: What knowledge and skills do people need to compete in the 21<sup>st</sup> century global marketplace?

#### **Extending the Lesson:**

Make a copy (unmarked, before you grade it) of student research papers and proposals. Have each student read someone else's paper and proposal in order to evaluate the works' strengths and weaknesses.

**Assessing Student Learning:** Teachers differ widely in how they assign points or what emphasis they give to different assignments. Whatever the method, however, use the student checklists and judging sheets as a kind of rubric.