



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

## Center for Middle Eastern Studies

**Title of Lesson:** Windows and Mirrors, A Refugee's Story

**Teacher:** Jennifer Metzler

**Grade Level:** 4<sup>th</sup>

**Content Area:** Language Arts, Social Studies

**Content standard(s) addressed by this lesson:**

RL.4.1	Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
RL.4.2	Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.
RL.4.3	Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (i.e., a character's thoughts, words or actions).

### Strand 4: Geography (Arizona State Standard)

#### Concept 1: The World in Spatial Terms

**PO 1.** Use different types of maps to solve problems (i.e., road maps –distance, resource maps-products, historical maps boundaries, thematic map- climates).

**PO 2.** Interpret political and physical maps using the following map elements:

- title
- compass rose (cardinal and intermediate directions)
- symbols
- legend
- scale
- grid (latitude and longitude)

**Inquiry question(s): (overarching)** In what way can stories be a window into other cultures? In what ways can stories be a reflection of your own identity?

(specifically)-

What can you learn about Roj's identity from his story?

By learning about Roj, what have you learned about your own identity?

What questions do you have about refugees or Syria?

#### Concepts and skills:

SWBAT make connections between their identity and the story, A Refugee's Story From Syria.

#### Evidence outcomes: (Every student should be able to...)

Complete a visual arts assignment that asks students to reflect on what components of culture can they identify in learning about Roj, and what parts of Roj's story reflect their own culture or identity.

## Background:

Books can serve as windows into other cultures and mirrors that reflect our own. Through this investigation students will have opportunities to use story to “see” into other cultures and using story to understand more about their own culture and identity.

An implicit objective is for students to question critically what they see and hear and to feel comfortable staying in the question mode and not always having a black or white answer.

It should also be understood that before this lesson students have worked extensively on components of their own identity that begin with methods of learning of the past, methods of learning about their past(oral stories, interviews), components of culture, definitions of culture that are “the top of the iceberg,” definitions of culture that are “the bottom of the iceberg,” working to understand the depth of culture through a variety of global literature.

A challenge with global literature is to draw the reader into experiences beyond their life experiences while at the same time being able to see something of themselves in the text.

If they can’t see themselves, then the end effect can be more of an “us” and “them” experience.

I also try to use literature in which students can develop an emotional connection as well as gaining new information.

I want these interactions with text to challenge and maybe change their thinking.

### Do this beforehand:

-make contact with local Syrian refugee group for guest speaker possibilities, Syrian baked goods, potential skype contact in Syria

-Work with the book The Best Eid Ever by Asama Mobin-Uddin

-Work with the book Market by Ted Lewin

The book A Refugee’s Journey from Syria has a format that allows it to be read in many ways;

- front to back, cover to cover
- only the captions
- only “Roj’s Story”
- only “Syria’s Story in Numbers” captions
- only the non-italicized text (nonfiction, no personal narrative text)

### Activities:

(Before this point, students would have spent considerable time explore the concepts around identity and exploring their own culture.)

**“Windows and Mirrors,”** A visual arts integration assignment that would lend itself well as a precursor to this lesson is to take what they have learned of their own identity and create a collage of visuals that may have been collected throughout the initial investigation that explored identity.

The final product is a 2 panel project. Using a file folder for the 2 panels could work.

The collage would be on the left side. This collage would have a window “frame” placed on top, I suggest a 4 panel frame are words that describe the kinds of windows we look through in order to see identity (family, language, place of origin, clothing, food, story, etc.)

The panel on the right would be a mirror, maybe using mylar, reflective foil, or even kitchen foil to represent the mirror.

An option would be to make this an interactive display.

Students would be expressing their identity through the window frame and inviting those studying their work to identify what they as a viewer see reflected in the collage that maybe describes the viewer’s identity.

If the mirrored surface was laminated, viewers could be encouraged to write with permanent markers, what they see reflected (or dry erase if you and the students decide you want to be able to erase the input, or small post it notes could be made available for viewers to write comments on and attach them to the “mirrors.”

Another powerful possibility is for students (the artists) to share their work with someone from another culture and to have a conversation about how the artist described their identity and how the viewer saw reflections of their own identity in the art.

\*Homework before beginning this series: bring in an artifact from your home that represents something important to you. It can be food, clothing, religious, art, toy, etc.) If we have already looked at folk art, items could be described as decorative, ceremonial or functional.

### **Day 1:** Exercise with artifacts

(Ahead of time: Have a student or small group copy these three questions on each of 5 pieces of butcher paper, leaving space between each question for students to record responses.

What do you see?

What is it used for?

If you don’t recognize the item, what do you think it is or is used for?

Prepare artifacts and display in groups around the room. Each location should have sheet with the 3 questions. Leave markers at each location. )

Begin this lesson with an invitation for students to share the artifact they brought from home. If only a small group brought an item, invite them to show it and tell the class

What it is

What it is used for

Why it is important to them

If everyone or almost everyone brought something in, split the class in half and have half form an inside circle and the other half form an outside circle. The inside circle faces out and the outside circle faces in. Following your direction, ask the inside circle to start and go through the sharing and explanation of their artifact (give them 1 minute; adjust as needed). The outside circle then gets a turn. Ask the inside (or outside) circle to move one place to their right and repeat. You will need to gauge on the needs of your students how long they can do this for.

When finished, ask students to deposit their artifacts at a designated place so all items can be seen together.

Divide class into 5 groups and assign one group of students to each group of artifacts. They will have time to talk together about the artifacts and answer the questions on the chart paper. After 3-5 minutes (adjust as needed), groups rotate. They can continue to add answers to the chart.

When all 5 groups are done, go over the charts as a whole class. You could ask for student volunteers to hold up the chart paper and go over the answers. Clarify if needed.

### **Day 2:**

(Have a “windows and mirrors” template ready for the class to complete.)

Readers see something of themselves in books. Books can reflect back portions of a readers’ cultural identities and experiences. Because the text I want to use with my class is heavy and potentially will portray more negative than positive, I want to begin with a story that takes place in our own country but draws from the reader, positive in time of crisis.

Read to the class Smoky Nights by Eve Bunting, a retelling of the LA riots from a child’s perspective.

Recreate the visual arts project as a class as this book is discussed. Share with the students the rubric for assessment and be prepared to reword or redo any components that are unclear to students. (see below) As a class decide what components of culture are seen in this story. Those words should be written on the window “frame.” Students could then illustrate “views” into the story to be assembled into the collage. On this day, or on a following day, students can write “mirror” reflections on post it notes as they reflect on what in the story reflects their culture or identity.

### **Day 3:**

(Preparation: have a world map posted and visible, have a “windows and mirrors” template ready for each student)

Read A Refugee’s Journey from Syria by Helen Mason, only the pages that tell Roj’s Story. (p. 8-9, 12-13, 16-17, 20-21, and 24-25)

Discuss the story as it is read whole class. Allow time for students to ask and answer questions.

Students create their own “Windows and Mirrors” visual piece to identify components of culture (words on frame), visuals that represent what they saw of Roj’s culture, and what part of their culture or identity can be reflected from Roj’s story?

**Approximate time:** Three to Five days (45 minutes to an hour each day). Can be expanded with extensions. Some ideas listed below.

**Materials needed:**

A Refugee's Journey from Syria by Helen Mason

Smoky Night by Even Bunting

2 file folders per student plus a few extras

Mylar, reflective material, or aluminum foil

**Accommodations and modifications:** Students may need help organizing words that describe components of culture. Ideally we would have some anchor charts in the room from the beginning of the year that they could refer to. Students may work with partners but each should do their own "Windows and Mirrors" final project.

**Evaluation or assessment of success:**

Students will be asked to answer the 3 reflection questions and attach it to the last page of their "Widows and Mirrors" assignment. Students should be given opportunity to assess their own work using the rubric below (created by teacher and students). Teachers will use the same rubric for assessment, maybe marking teacher's score in crayon.

	1	2	3	4
Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.	(0 or 1)	(2)	Students are able to visually identify 3-5 examples of culture in Roj's story.	(6+)
Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text; summarize the text.	(0 or 1)	(2)	Students are able to identify 3-5 components of culture in Roj's story.	(6+)
Describe in depth a character, setting, or event in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text.	(0 or 1)	(2)	In student's "reflection" he or she is able to describe 3-5 components of their culture or identity in Roj's story.	(6+)
<b>Reflection Question 1:</b> On which type of map can you best understand the location of Syria? (map in book, 2D world map, or globe) Give at least 2 reasons why you prefer this kind of map.	(1)	(1)	Students are able to answer the question completely and give 2 reasons why they prefer this kind of map.	(3+)
<b>Reflection Question 2:</b> In what way can stories be a window into other cultures?	Students are able to address this prompt with one main idea.	Students are able to address this prompt with one main idea, but do not have three supporting details.	Students are able to address this prompt with one main idea and three supporting details.	(4+)
<b>Reflection Question 3:</b> In	Students are	Students	Students are able to	(4+)

what ways can stories be a reflection of your own identity?	able to address this prompt with one main idea.	are able to address this prompt with one main idea, but do not have three supporting details.	address this prompt with one main idea and three supporting details.	
---	---	---	--	--

### Resources used to create the lesson

Artifact collection

Group 1: cowboy hat, Cuma, conical hat, baseball cap

Group 2: rosary, necklace with crucifix, Turkish orthodox eye of god, star of David

Group 3: dates, saliditos, peanut butter and jelly sandwich, \_\_\_\_\_;

Group 4: sugar, cinnamon, sumac, lucas

Group 5: spoon, chopsticks, tortilla, chapatti, naan, pita

### Extension Ideas

Assign the 2 page sections that are not “Roj’s story” to partners to read and present to the class (jigsaw).

4 Corners vocabulary exercise using bold face type words.

Investigate the UN Rights of the Child and highlight the captions in this book with that title.

Focus on the captions “Syria’s Story in Numbers.” Students individually or in pairs could be assigned a caption and asked to create a word problem(make sure you have covered numbers up to the millions, decimals to the tenths place, standard measurements of pound and cup and/or metric measurements of grams, kilograms, and millimeters).

Focus on pages 28 and 29, “You Can Help!” and as a class choose one of the suggestions or come up with your own response (social justice).

Investigate the websites listed on page 31.

Investigate other books in this “Leaving My Homeland” series.

### Other Resources to Investigate

Muslim Child, Understanding Islam through Stories and Poems by Rukhsana Khan

Ramadan by Suhaib Hamid Ghazi

Sugar Comes From Arabic

Ibby.org (International Board on Books for Young People)

[Usbby.org](http://Usbby.org) (United States Board on Books for Young People)

[Teachingtolerance.org](http://Teachingtolerance.org)

[Wowlit.org](http://Wowlit.org) (website for one of the largest collections of multicultural and global literature for youth and adolescents with global literature paired literature aligned to common core)

[www.meoc.us](http://www.meoc.us) (Middle Eastern Outreach Council)

[QFI.org](http://QFI.org) (Qatar Foundation International)