



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

Center for Middle Eastern Studies

Writing Assignments on Nowruz (Persian New Year)

Compare and contrast the Persian New Year with the Western holidays of Easter and Passover celebrated during the same time of year. (Consider the overall themes of spring holidays.)

Describe how Nowruz is celebrated in one of the following countries: Iran, Kurdish areas of Iraq, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, or the United States (among Diaspora communities).

Analyze the process of cultural diffusion of the spread of Nowruz traditions. What historical factors/events led to the spread of the holiday (and Persianate culture) throughout Central Asia?

Research the Zoroastrian religion: its history and beliefs. How have these beliefs shaped Nowruz traditions celebrated today by people practicing a different religion (Islam)?

Research the history of astronomy.

Research the development of world calendars, including those used in the West, the traditional Hebrew calendar, the Arab calendar, and the Iranian one. Consider how the calendars developed, ways in which the dating system has shaped people's perceptions, and adaptation to the different calendars of nearby peoples.