

Rachel Otty
Cambridge Rindge and Latin School
Cambridge, MA
Grades 10-12

Lessons on the Impacts of World War I Era Borders by Decree on the Middle East

Lesson One - One 80 minute class period

Massachusetts Standards

Topic 4. The Great Wars, 1914–1945 [WHII.T4]

Analyze the political, social, economic, and cultural developments following World War I.

- c. the collapse of the Russian, Ottoman, and Austrian Empires
- e. the establishment of European mandates in the Middle East and the creation of modern state boundaries in the region
- g. the proceedings of the Paris Peace Conference and the Treaty of Versailles

[Slide Presentation to Accompany Lesson](#)

Essential Questions

- Why was WWI a critical turning point in the development of the modern Middle East?
- Were the states that developed by decree after WWI legitimate? What are the legacies of their creation?

Agenda

1. Quick Write: What does it mean if something is legitimate? What do you think gives borders legitimacy?
2. Quick Write Share: (Record student responses on the board.)
3. Mini Lecture: Legacies of WWI/State Building by Decree.
 - a. Four major legacies of WWI.
 - b. Explain what state building in the aftermath of the war looked like -- by decree and by conquest. We will focus on the former today and tomorrow; we will pick up with the other after that.
4. Document Analysis: Were the states that developed by decree after WWI legitimate?
 - a. As a whole class, explain to students that we will explore how the modern Middle East came to be as a result of deals and accords made during the World War I era. Remind them to keep in mind their responses to the Quick Write question as they assess whether borders that were drawn in the aftermath of World War I by European powers were legitimate.
 - b. Have students work in groups of two-three to analyze the [following documents](#):
 - i. Hussein-McMahon Correspondence, 1915
 1. Letter from Hussein to McMahon, July 1915
 2. Letter from McMahon to Hussein, October 1915
 - ii. Sykes-Picot Accord, 1916

Rachel Otty
Cambridge Rindge and Latin School
Cambridge, MA
Grades 10-12

- iii. Balfour Declaration, 1917
- iv. Syrian Congress, 1919
 - 1. While students examine the documents, have them fill out a [Document Analysis chart](#) that asks students to Source, Contextualize, Close Read, and Corroborate while they read.
 - 2. Pause after each document to show the document visualized with maps.
- 5. HW - [Gelvin's Chapter 11 "State Building by Decree"](#) w/ response options.

Rachel Otty
Cambridge Rindge and Latin School
Cambridge, MA
Grades 10-12

Lesson Two - Two 80 minute class periods

Massachusetts Standards

Topic 4. The Great Wars, 1914–1945 [WHII.T4]

Analyze the political, social, economic, and cultural developments following World War I.

- c. the collapse of the Russian, Ottoman, and Austrian Empires
- e. the establishment of European mandates in the Middle East and the creation of modern state boundaries in the region
- g. the proceedings of the Paris Peace Conference and the Treaty of Versailles

[Slide Presentation to Accompany Lesson](#)

Essential Questions

- How and why are borders you and others have drawn different from borders we see today in the region?
- Are borders drawn historically by decree legitimate?
- Is self-determination always a good principle to invoke and follow? Why and why not?

Activities:

1. Quick Write. Qs from HW?
2. Quick Write share.
3. [Review Simulation Activity](#)
 - a. Students will prepare in groups by reading documents, assignment roles, writing up opening speech, drawing map
4. Simulation! Get set up/arrange the room.
 - a. Round 1: Each group presents speech and presents proposed map
 - b. Round 2: Negotiations - Each group will choose a lead diplomat and that person will spend 3-4 min at each other group presenting their proposals and engaging in shuttle diplomacy.
 - c. Round 3: Announce any new alliances - Diplomats will return to groups where they will confer with group and then speak out about new alliances/proposals
 - d. Round 4: Compare maps and see if there can be some mutual agreement - all class diplomacy
 - e. Share out what ended up happening
5. Debrief: What insights did you gain as a result of this activity? Does it make you rethink your critique of S-P and other state building enterprises by decree? Does it solidify the position you held previously?
6. HW - [Stop Blaming Colonial Borders for the Middle East's Problems](#)

Rachel Otty
Cambridge Rindge and Latin School
Cambridge, MA
Grades 10-12

Lesson Three - One 80 minute class

Massachusetts Standards

Topic 4. The Great Wars, 1914–1945 [WHII.T4]

Analyze the political, social, economic, and cultural developments following World War I.

- c. the collapse of the Russian, Ottoman, and Austrian Empires
- e. the establishment of European mandates in the Middle East and the creation of modern state boundaries in the region
- g. the proceedings of the Paris Peace Conference and the Treaty of Versailles

[Slide Presentation to Accompany Lesson](#)

Essential Question

- Were the states that developed by decree after WWI legitimate? What other factors must be considered if we are to imagine a different Middle East?

Agenda

1. [Introduce writing assessment.](#)
2. Students will start brainstorming/writing argumentative 4-5 paragraph response.