

Lesson Plan: Modern Oman

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Grade Level: 9-12th grade

Subject: Social Studies

Focus Question: Is Oman currently experiencing a golden age under the rule of Sultan Qaboos?

Lesson Objective/Teaching Point: There are several golden ages throughout world history. Students will be able to identify a golden age by:

- identifying and analyzing evidence from primary and secondary sources
- engaging in writing that provides evidence, from a variety of sources, to support a claim

Resources/Materials

- Student handout, *DO NOW*
- Student handout, *DOCUMENT PACKET*
- Student handout, *EXIT TICKET*
- White board and dry erase markers

Introduce the Lesson/Motivate Students

- When students enter the classroom they will get a copy of the *DO NOW* student handout.
- Students will be instructed to analyze the map provided and answer the questions that follow.
- Facilitate a whole class share out of students' responses. Capture students' ideas on the white board as they are shared out.

NOTE TO TEACHER: It is assumed that students have studied golden ages in the past and have an understanding of what a golden age is. If necessary, spend time reviewing the characteristics a golden age with students:

- The most flourishing and outstanding period, especially in the history of an art or nation
- Any period of great peace, prosperity and happiness

Model/Teach

- Pass out the handout, *DOCUMENT PACKET*, to students.
- Explain to students that during the class period they will be reading primary and secondary source documents about present-day Oman to determine if the Sultanate is currently experiencing a golden age.
- As a whole class, model how to complete the task using the first document, *Oman's Transformation*. Before reading the document to students, remind them that they are looking for evidence to prove that Oman is or is not going through a golden age. Read the document and the questions that follow it aloud to the whole class (or have a student read it).
- Have students turn to their neighbor and give them 60-seconds to discuss their ideas about the document and how they would answer the questions. After a minute, invite students to share out possible answers to the questions to the whole class. Write these responses on the board as students share out.

Group/Independent Work

- Students will then work in small groups or pairs to read and analyze the documents in the handout, *Student Documents*.

NOTE TO TEACHER: If time permits, students can complete this activity independently. If time is an issue, students may work in small groups where each student will read one document and share their evidence with their group.

- Circulate around the room while students work to informally assess students on their document analysis and group discussion, and to answer students' questions.

Assessment

- When students have finished analyzing the documents, they will use the information to complete the activity at the end of the packet to answer the prompt, "Is Oman currently experiencing a golden age under the rule of Sultan Qaboos?"
- This will allow the teacher to assess students' abilities to:
 - state a claim based on relevant evidence.
 - relate relevant information to their claim.
 - justify their reasoning using relevant facts and details from the documents.

Wrap Up

- When there are five minutes left in the class period, pass out the *EXIT TICKET* to students and give them time to complete the question on the bottom.
- If there is time before the bell rings, have students share out their responses. Otherwise, collect the *Exit Ticket* as students leave the classroom.

Extension Activity

- Using the activity at the end of the *Document Packet* as an outline, have students complete a five-paragraph essay that answers the activity prompt.

DO NOW

Directions: Analyze the map below and answer the questions that follow.



1. Based on your knowledge of history and current events, describe what you think it would be like to live in Oman.

2. Do you think it is likely that Oman is currently going through a golden age? Explain your reasoning.

DOCUMENT PACKET

Directions: Read and analyze each of the documents provided and answer the questions that follow. Remember that you are looking for information that will help you to answer the following question:

Is Oman currently experiencing a golden age under the rule of Sultan Qaboos?

Document 1: The Sultanate of Oman

Historically, the Sultanate has been a seafaring nation and overlooks three seas -- the Arab Gulf, the Gulf of Oman, and the Arabian Sea. Omani ships sailed to ports in India, Pakistan, China, and Africa, trading commercial goods, crafts, and cultural traditions. Today, Oman is a modern monarchy led by Sultan Qaboos bin Said. Full suffrage is granted to all citizens over the age of 21, who elect one of two governing councils. Women play an active role in every facet of Omani life. Adult literacy exceeds 75% and Arabic is the official language, although many languages are spoken. Islam is the main religion and source of legislation for the Basic Statute of the State.

Source: "About: The Sultanate of Oman." *SQCC*. Sultan Qaboos Cultural Center, n.d. Web. 11 Sept. 2016.
<<https://www.sqcc.org/About/The-Sultanate-of-Oman.aspx>>.

Does this document support or refute the claim that the Oman is currently experiencing a golden age?

What textual evidence justifies your analysis?

Document 2: Oman's Transformation

In a region torn by war and civil strife, it is sometimes difficult to look at those political and economic actors who have created dramatic change in a positive way for their citizens in the Middle East... Oman has been an island of stability in the region.

Not only has Oman achieved massive economic growth, it has also exponentially increased the standard of living for its citizens. At the helm of this remarkable economic prosperity has been Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al-Said. Over forty years Sultan Qaboos has overseen a program of both modernization and economic liberalization that has transformed Oman from a former agriculturally and isolated sultanate to a strong economic and diplomatic actor in the Gulf and the Middle East Region.

Under the rule of Sultan Qaboos' father, Oman had maintained its feudalistic characteristics despite the rapid change occurring in the Middle East at the turn of the century. Infant mortality rates and illiteracy skyrocketed, and general unrest manifested itself in a Marxist rebellion in Dhofar in the country's south.

However, in July 1970, Sultan Qaboos ousted his father Said bin Taimur, and once he took power, he promised Omani citizens that he would transform their 'life into a prosperous one with a bright future.' Now forty-six years have passed, and Oman's feudalist history is nowhere to be seen.

From 1970 onwards, Sultan Qaboos set about a massive infrastructure project to bring Oman into the 20th Century by establishing a network of schools, hospitals roads, public transport and universities. Sultan Qaboos also created a highly functioning national health care system and sanitary facilities for food handling, waste disposal and water purification.

Source: MacGillivray, Iain. "Sultan Qaboos and the Omani Economy." *GRI: Know Your World*. Global Risk Insights LLP, 17 Feb. 2016. Web. 11 Sept. 2016. <<http://globalriskinsights.com/2016/02/power-broker-series-sultan-qaboos-and-the-omani-economy/>>.

Does this document support or refute the claim that the Oman is currently experiencing a golden age?

What textual evidence justifies your analysis?

Document 3: 40 Years of Sultan Qaboos

When Sultan Qaboos bin Said al-Said seized power from his father, Said bin Taimur, in July 1970, he promised Omanis that he would “transform your life into a prosperous one with a bright future.”

At the time, few Omani children went to school, almost no-one had access to healthcare and seven out of every 10 people lived in the countryside. Marxist rebels had been waging an insurgency campaign in the south for five years and diplomatic relations with the outside world were practically non-existent. Life expectancy was just 48 years.

Today, the country could hardly be more different from what was then called the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman. Life expectancy for the average Omani is now almost 76 years. There are scores of hospitals and hundreds of schools across the country. Literacy rates are above the regional average and 72 per cent of people now live in towns and cities, connected to the world by a string of airports and seaports.

“What we have done over the past 40 years is amazing,” says Kalat al-Bulooshi, chief executive officer of the Oman Investment Corporation. “It has been a tremendous achievement. In the past, Omanis used to work abroad. After 1970, they came back and started working in Oman. If you compare what Oman has done over 40 years versus other countries that were much more advanced, we went up and developed faster and we are now ahead of some of them.”

Omani society then and now		
	1970	2008
Life expectancy at birth (years)	49.4	75.9
Fertility rate (births per woman)	7.20	3.05
Hospitals	2	58
Schools	3	1,283
Students	900	623,389
Telephone subscribers	557	3,493,527
Sources: World Bank; National Economy Ministry		

Source: Dudley, Dominic. "Reflecting on 40 Years of Sultan Qaboos' Rule." *MEED: Middle East Business Intelligence*. EMAP Publishing Limited Company, 23 July 2010. Web. 11 Sept. 2016. <<https://www.meed.com/sectors/government/reflecting-on-40-years-of-sultan-qaboos-rule/3008038.article>>.

Does this document support or refute the claim that the Oman is currently experiencing a golden age?

What textual evidence justifies your analysis?

Document 4: Women in Oman

In a regional comparison, women in Oman are indeed in a good position. According to official data, they have a third of the positions in the public sector and occupy twelve percent of government leadership positions. There are four female ministers and two female ambassadors; a few women also sit in the steering committee of the chamber of commerce as well as in the State Council, whose members are appointed by decree. For the advisory council (Majlis ash-Shura) they have active and passive voting rights, although at present there are only two women among the eighty-three delegates. This relation might improve itself soon, as new elections are being held this year.

Due to their better education women are in demand in modern professions in the service sector. Men, on the other hand, profit from government program of Omanization that is supposed to gradually reduce the number of foreign workers in the labor force. Taxi drivers and fishermen, for instance, must be Omanis – neither of which are favored women's professions. Nevertheless, men and women compete for positions. The quota at Sultan Qaboos University attests to this.

The public university is considered to be the springboard for careers in administration. A portion of female graduates, some with brilliant exams, withdraw and devote themselves solely to the role of housewife and mother. The Omani society is very family-oriented. That Sultan Qaboos bin Said, the omnipresent regent, granted women the right to gainful employment, has removed many provisos, but the family still has the last word.

...

What a triumph of girls' education! In 1970, when Sultan Qaboos came to power, Oman had only two schools, not one of them for girls. Today on the Jebel Akhdar Plateau, formerly an isolated mountainous region, one can visit a girls' school, where a sixth-grade class sits in front of phalanx of computers – and in response to the question of who wants to study at the university, every hand shoots up.

Source: Wiedemann, Charlotte. "Women in Oman: 'We Are Better!'" *Qantara.de*. Trans. Nancy Joyce. German Foreign Office, 2007. Web. 11 Sept. 2016. <<https://en.qantara.de/node/782>>.

Does this document support or refute the claim that the Oman is currently experiencing a golden age?

What textual evidence justifies your analysis?

Document 5: Oman Explores Solar-Powered Oil Recovery

Oman's knack for pioneering enhanced oil recovery (EOR) is already well known, but the Miraah solar thermal project offers solutions to a myriad of challenges facing the region's energy producers.

The \$600 million Miraah project in southern Oman will deliver the largest peak energy output – 1,021 megawatts – of any solar plant in the world by harnessing the sun's energy to produce steam that can be injected into an oil reservoir. Heating the oil makes extraction of viscous crude, also known as heavy oil, considerably easier and cheaper. Miraah, which will span three-square kilometres upon completion, will use concentrated sunlight to generate 6,000 tonnes of solar steam per day...

...

Slashing emissions and preserving water are both incorporated into the Miraah project, which could provide a local test case for Saudi Arabia and Kuwait... Miraah's automated washing system can recapture 90 percent of used water, which illustrates how solar EOR projects can help ease the rising pressure on the region's water-food-energy nexus and costly desalination projects. Oman alone obtains 85 percent of its fresh water from the sea. Miraah will also reduce CO2 emissions by over 300,000 tonnes a year...

Oman's technological innovations were borne of a need to cushion its budget against turbulent oil prices and dwindling reserves. Oman has pledged to produce 10 percent of its total electricity requirement from renewable energy sources by 2020. Comparatively, Abu Dhabi is targeting 7 percent, with Kuwait and Bahrain aiming for 5 percent within the same period.

Source: Meineke, Michelle. "Oman Explores Solar-Powered Oil Recovery." *MIT Technology Review*. N.p., 21 Mar. 2016. Web. 11 Sept. 2016. <<http://technologyreview.me/en/energy/oman-explores-solar-powered-oil-recovery/>>.

Does this document support or refute the claim that the Oman is currently experiencing a golden age?

What textual evidence justifies your analysis?

Document 6: Excerpts from the Omani Constitution of 1996

Article 10 - The Political Principles

- Preserving the independence and sovereignty of the State and safeguarding its entity, security, stability and defending it against all aggression.

Article 12 - The Social Principles

- Justice, equality, and equal opportunities between Omanis are pillars of the Society guaranteed by the State.
- The State guarantees aid for the Citizen and his family in cases of emergency, sickness, disability, and old age according to the social security scheme. The State shall work for the solidarity of the Society in bearing the burdens resulting from national disasters and catastrophes.
- The State is responsible for public health and the means of prevention and treatment of diseases and epidemics. The State endeavors to provide healthcare for every Citizen and encourages the establishment of private hospitals, polyclinics and medical institutions to be under its supervision and in accordance with regulations determined by the Law. The State also works for the conservation of the environment, its protection, and the prevention of pollution.

Article 13 - The Cultural Principles

- Education is a cornerstone for the progress of the Society which the State fosters and endeavors to disseminate and make accessible to all.
- Education aims to raise and develop the general cultural standard, promote scientific thought, kindle the spirit of research, respond to the requirements of economic and social plans, and build a generation that is physically and morally strong, which takes pride in its Nation, Country, and heritage and preserves its achievements.
- The State shall provide public education, work to combat illiteracy, and encourage the establishment of private schools and institutes under its supervision in accordance with the provisions of the Law.

Source: *Oman's Constitution of 1996 with Amendments through 2011*. Austin: Comparative Constitutions Project, 18 Apr. 2016. PDF.

Does this document support or refute the claim that the Oman is currently experiencing a golden age?

What textual evidence justifies your analysis?

Directions: Consider the readings you have completed today, as well as what you have learned about golden ages throughout your study of world history. Incorporate at least two sources that corroborate and support your claim in response to the prompt:

Is Oman currently experiencing a golden age under the rule of Sultan Qaboos?

Argument: *(answer the prompt)*

Claim: *(Support your argument with a specific statement)*

Evidence 1: *(Introduce and include a quote that helps support your claim.)*

Reason 1: *(Explain how your evidence supports your claim.)*

Evidence 2: Choose a second reading that corroborates Evidence 1. (*Introduce and include a second quote that helps support your claim.*)

Reason 2: (*Explain how your evidence supports your claim.*)

Counterclaim/Counter Argument: (What is one potential counterclaim/counter argument that could be used to dispute your argument? How can you refute/defeat it?)

EXIT TICKET

At the beginning of class you looked at the map below and answered two questions:

1. Based on your knowledge of history and current events, describe what you think it would be like to live in Oman.
2. Do you think it is likely that Oman is currently going through a golden age? Explain your reasoning.



Has your perception of Oman changed as a result of the documents you analyzed in today's lesson? Explain your answer in the space below.
