Recommended Books for High School
* = a Middle East Outreach Council (MEOC) book award winner

**Fiction and Poetry**

Ten Things I Hate about Me by Randa Abdel-Fattah
An Australian teenager of Lebanese descent struggles to reconcile her conflicting identities.
**Combine this with the film "Muslims: An In-Depth Look at What It Means To Be a Muslim in the 21st Century."**

The Language of Baklava by Diana Abu-Jaber
This coming of age story explores the cultural tensions faced by a young Jordanian-American girl and her family. Food plays a central role.

The 99 by Naif Al-Mutawa
This comic book features a team of superheroes based on Islamic culture and religion.

Zahra’s Paradise by Amir and Khalil
Zahra’s Paradise is a graphic novel set in Iran after the elections of 2009. It brings together fiction and real people and events and has been compared with Persepolis.

The Bridge on the Drina by Ivo Andric
This internationally-acclaimed Bosnian novel describes (as a series of short stories set in different time periods) a small town in Bosnia during the years of Ottoman rule. A teacher can easily use one or two stories, rather than the whole novel.

Forgotten Fire by Adam Bagdasarian
Although the book is a work of fiction, it is based on the true experiences of the author’s great-uncle, who was an Armenian teenager during the genocide of 1915.

The Little Black Fish by Samad Behrangi
This Iranian short story is made to be read aloud. It has many different levels of meaning - about breaking out of one’s narrow environment and learning about the wider world. Even more interesting is the fact that the author, a school teacher might have been murdered in 1968 at the age of 29 by the shah’s secret police because of the way he encouraged his elementary school students to think freely and look at the social problems of their country. This small book also is written half in Persian, so kids can see what the language looks like and how the cover of a Middle Eastern book is the back of an American one (since they write from right to left).
* Rebels by Accident by Patricia Dunn
  Two teenage girls (Egyptian-American) find adventure on the eve of Egypt’s Arab Spring revolution.

* Fear of Beauty by Susan Froetschel
  A story of contemporary rural Afghanistan, the book alternates between the voice of an Afghani village woman trying to understand the mysterious death of her son and that of an American soldier trying to reestablish peace and economic prosperity in the area. It is a compelling, often suspenseful story.

* When the Moon is Low by Nadia Hashimi
  An Afghani family is torn apart by the civil war and must flee the country to survive.

The Kite Runner by Khaled Hosseini
  This well-known novel not only explores the impact of the Taliban regime on Afghan society, but also treats the way that the Afghan expatriate community tries to adapt to life in America.

A Thousand Splendid Suns by Khaled Hosseini
  This book concerns family life in Afghanistan. Born a generation apart, Mariam and Laila are brought together by war, loss and fate. As they endure the ever escalating dangers around them, they come to form a bond.

The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf by Mohja Kahf
  This novel tells about a Muslim girl growing up and entering adulthood in Indiana, “exploring the fault lines between ‘Muslim’ and ‘American.’”

* Wanting Mor by Rukhsana Khan
  An Afghani girl with a cleft palette struggles to make a life in post-Taliban Afghanistan.

* The Apprentice's Masterpiece: A Story of Medieval Spain by Melanie Little
  A young adult novel set in 14th-century Spain tells the story of a family with a secret at a time when the Inquisition brings intolerance and torture. Written in elegant free verse, this is a dramatic story set in a troubling time.

* Figs and Fate by Elsa Marston
  This is a wonderful collection of short stories about teens growing up in the Arab world.

Santa Claus in Baghdad and Other Stories about Teens in the Arab World by Elsa Marston
  This is a wonderful collection of short stories. (The title story, “Santa Claus in Baghdad,” can be compared with “The Gift of the Magi.” Be sure to see the film – below – made from the former story.)

Ismailia Eclipse by Khaled Mattawa
  This is a collection of poems by a Libyan-American writer.
**Dawn and Dusk** by Alice Mead
A 13-year-old Kurdish boy and his family struggle to survive during the time of the Iran-Iraq War (and the Iraqi poison gas attack on some Kurdish villages).

**Exit Wounds** by Rutu Modan
In this graphic novel, a young Israeli man searches for his father, who may or may not have been killed in a suicide bombing attack.

**The Mismatched Braid** by Weam Namou
Amel flees Baghdad after the Gulf War. He illegally immigrates into Athens, where he meets his first adversities and sees Dunia, his American cousin who comes to Greece for a semester. His struggles to win her love and his attempts to make it to America lead Amel to true adulthood.

**The Feminine Art** by Weam Namou
Set in the U.S. and Iraq in the early 1990s, the book deals with issues of love, arranged marriages, and the search for happiness.

**The Flag of Childhood: Poems from the Middle East; *Nineteen Varieties of Gazelle; The Space between Our Footsteps** (high school) by Naomi Shihab Nye
These three books of poetry are by Middle Eastern poets.

**My Name is Red** by Orhan Pamuk
A famous Turkish author wrote this non-traditional mystery set in the 15th century Ottoman Empire.

**My Name is Aram** by William Saroyan
A coming-of-age story set in an Armenian immigrant community in the early twentieth century.

**Damascus Nights** by Rafik Schami
One of the city’s greatest storytellers is struck dumb, and his friends must tell him stories from myth, history and contemporary Syria to reawaken his tongue.

**A Hand Full of Stars** by Rafik Schami
A Syrian teenager, long before the current troubles, learns that: “If you tell the truth in Syria, you must pay with your life.”

**Habibi** by Craig Thompson
Set in a fictional Islamic fairytale landscape, this graphic novel tells a story that extends across ancient Middle Eastern geographies, religions, mythologies, and migrations—containing both Arab and Christian histories—to tell about Dodola, a runaway child bride, and Zam, the orphan she rescues in the slave market where they first meet.

**Like Water on Stone** by Dana Walrath
This is a novel of the Armenian genocide.
* **Alif the Unseen** by G. Willow Wilson  
_Teenagers who like science fiction will love this novel that takes place in an unnamed police state in the Middle East._

*Cairo* by G. Willow Wilson and M.K. Perker  
_This graphic novel is a modern fable set on the streets of the Egypt. A stolen hookah and a genie change the lives of five strangers forever._

* **A Bottle in the Gaza Sea** by Valérie Zenatti  
_Inspired by a true story, A Bottle in the Gaza Sea is the story of Tal Levine, an Israeli teenager who longs to strike up a correspondence with “someone on the other side.” She convinces her brother, who is serving in the Israel Defense Forces along the Gaza border, to throw a bottle containing a message into the Gaza Sea in the hopes that someone will pick it up and respond. In this way, she meets “Gazaman,” a Palestinian._

**Personal Accounts**

*I Want to Get Married: One Wannabe Bride's Misadventures with Handsome Houdinis, Technicolor Grooms, Morality Police, and Other Mr. Not Quite Rights* by Ghada Abdel Aal  
_This is a young Egyptian woman’s humorous blog about her adventures in “dating.”_

* **A Game for Swallows: To Die, To Leave, To Return** by Zeina Abirached  
_This graphic novel tells the story of a family trying to survive in Lebanon during the civil war._

**Return to Childhood: The Memoir of a Modern Moroccan Woman** by Leila Abouzeid  
_This is the memoir of a woman growing up during the time of Morocco’s struggle for independence._

* **The Girl Who Fell to Earth: A Memoir** by Sophia Al-Maria  
_A girl grows up caught between two worlds, one of her American mother and the other of her Bedouin father from Qatar. In addition to addressing coming-of-age issues of belonging, the book provides insight into the rapidly changing society in the Persian/Arabian Gulf._

**Thura's Diary** by Thura Al-Windawi  
_A girl describes her life in Iraq during the 2003 U.S. military action._

* **Tasting the Sky** by Itbisam Barakat  
_This is a beautifully written book about her childhood as a Palestinian refugee. Young people can relate to her vivid tale of youth, family relationships, and overcoming adversity._

**If You Could Be My Friend** ed. by Litsa Boudalika  
_Two teenagers, Mervet Akram Sha ‘ban and Galit Fink, one Palestinian and one Israeli teenager, corresponded with each other for three years when “introduced” by a Belgian film director, producing a documentary in Israel._
* **Jerusalem: Chronicles from the Holy City** by Guy Delisle  
  *This graphic novel focuses on life in Israel from many different perspectives.*

**Funny in Farsi** by Firoozeh Dumas  
*This comedic memoir tells anecdotes from the author’s life growing up as an Iranian immigrant in the U.S. Also see her follow-up memoir, Laughing without an Accent.*

* **It Ain’t So Awful, Falafel**  
  *This humorous book explores the author's childhood as an Iranian-American growing up in the 1970s.*

* **The Illustrator's Notebook** by Mohieddin Ellabbad  
  *The book is an award-winning autobiography (with photographs and drawings) of an Egyptian illustrator focusing on his art and how art is connected with his personal experience and the broader context of Egypt’s history.*

**Children of War: Voices of Iraqi Refugees** by Deborah Ellis  
*This book provides an opportunity for students to read interviews with Iraqi refugee children and see how the war has affected their lives.*

**Three Wishes: Palestinian and Israeli Children Speak** by Debora Ellis  
*This book is a collection of accounts of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict by children ages 8-18.*

**Waltz with Bashir: A Lebanon War Story** by Ari Folman and David Polonski  
*This graphic novel is based on the award-winning movie, a true story that reconstructs an Israeli soldier's experience during a war in Lebanon. (Note: There is one drawing of a nude woman.)*

* **How to Understand Israel in 60 Days or Less** by Sarah Glidden  
  *This graphic "novel" is a true account of the Jewish author's "birthright" tour of Israel and her attempt to understand the complex history of the nation.*

**Encounters with the Middle East: True Stories of People and Culture That Help You Understand the Region** by Nesreen Khashan and Jim Bowman  
*The book contains different (and readable) stories about Westerners' encounters with the Middle East.*

**The Photographer** by Didier Lefevre and Emmanuel Guibert  
*Part photojournalism and part graphic memoir, The Photographer tells the story of a 1986 Doctors Without Borders mission which traveled into northern Afghanistan by horse and donkey train at the height of the Soviet occupation.*

* **Children Growing Up with War** by Jenny Matthews  
  *A war reporter shares her insights into children's sufferings in times of war and her own struggle to report them.*
Baghdad Journal: An Artist in Occupied Iraq by Steve Mumford
In this graphic “novel,” the artist documents the everyday scenes of Iraq in watercolors and drawings painting a human side of the war. Mumford draws and paints daily activities of American platoons and Baghdad residents.

* A Fort of Nine Towers: An Afghan Family Story by Qais Akbar Omar
Described from a young person’s point of view, A Fort of Nine Towers gives a vivid, intimate, and detailed picture of life in another culture and the violence besetting the society of Afghanistan in the 1980s and 90s. The memoir is a complex cultural tapestry of a range of Afghan tribes and dialects described through a family’s travels made during nine years of fleeing to safety during the war.

We Just Want to Live Here by Amal Rifa’l and Odelia Ainbinder (with Sylke Tempel)
A Palestinian and an Israeli teenager, who met in an exchange program overseas, write to each other about their lives and the tragic conflict in their country.

Palestine by Joe Sacco

* Dare to Disappoint: Growing Up in Turkey by Ozge Samanci
This engaging graphic novel tells of a young woman’s coming of age in Turkey.

Persepolis and Perselopis II by Marjane Satrapi
The two-volume memoir in graphic novel style describes the author’s childhood during the Iranian Revolution, her schooling abroad during the Iran-Iraq War, and eventual return to her homeland. Note: She describes a sexual encounter in book 2. **See the acclaimed animated film version (in the Multi-Media section below).

Every Man in this Village Is a Liar by Megan K. Stack
A reporter describes her experiences covering Middle Eastern wars from 2001.

When I Was a Soldier by Valerie Zenatti
This memoir describes a teenage Israeli girl’s required two years of service in the military.

Bye, Bye Babylon: Beirut 1975-1979 by Lamia Ziade
This illustrated story tells about the author's experiences as a child during the Lebanese Civil War.

Non-Fiction/Reference

* Al-Kindi: The Father of Arab Philosophy by Tony Abboud
This book is part of a 6-volume series "Great Muslim Philosophers and Scientists of the Middle Ages."
Suleyman and the Ottoman Empire by John Addison
A brief overview of the subject along with a series of short, primary source documents.

Picturing Iran: Art, Society and Revolution Ed. by Shiva Balaghi and Lynn Gumpert
A book showing modern Iranian visual culture of the 1960s and 1970s (just before and during the revolution). Some of the posters shown in the book would be useful in helping students to understand the reasons behind the revolution.

Saddam Hussein: A Biography by Shiva Balaghi
The recent biography (December 2005) describes the life of the former Iraqi leader.

* The Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Arabia by Mary Beardwood
This detailed encyclopedia entry focuses on the geography, cultures, and, especially, the flora and fauna of the Arabian Peninsula. With many photographs, charts, maps, figures, asides, this exhaustive and beautifully illustrated text will answer every question you never knew that you had about Arabia on subjects from pearling to fossils, migratory birds to the many uses of the date palm. The sheer breadth of information will eliminate the narrow geographic and social stereotypes so many students have about the Middle East.

Everyday Life in the Muslim Middle East edited by Donna Lee Bowen and Evelyn A. Early
The book contains stories, poems, and essays of ordinary people in various Middle Eastern countries.

* Al-Khwarizmi: The Inventor of Algebra by Corona Brezina
This book is part of a 6-volume series "Great Muslim Philosophers and Scientists of the Middle Ages."

The Essential Koran, translated and edited by Thomas Cleary
This is an introductory selection of readings from the Muslim holy book.

* Encyclopedia of Muslim-American History, ed. by Edward E. Curtis IV
This illustrated two-volume encyclopedia includes some 300 articles covering historical and contemporary issues, events, people, court cases, themes, and activism relating to Muslim-American history. The reference also includes 50 original documents, a master chronology and an extensive bibliography.

Democracy in the Middle East, edited by John C. Davenport.
From The World in Focus series, the book offers a variety of views on the prospects for democracy in the Middle East and the U.S. role in promoting democratic developments.

Muhammad and the Arab Empire by John Duckworth
A brief overview of the subject along with a series of short, primary source documents.
* **Iran: Opposing Viewpoints**, ed. by Laura K. Egendorf  
  The collection of articles offers many different perspectives on modern Iran. The book addresses such issues as whether Iran is a threat to global security, how the U.S. should respond to Iran, and the status of human rights. (Students see different sides of the same issue.)

* **A History of the Muslim World to 1405: The Making of a Civilization** by Vernon O. Egger  
  This book is written in a clear style, presents sophisticated themes, avoids clichés common in introductory works, and is accessible to the high school audience.

**Islam** by Jamal J. Elias  
This is an overview of the Muslim religion, essential in understanding modern developments in the Middle East.

**The Everything Middle East Book** by Jacob M. Fellure  
This is an easy-to-read overview of Middle Eastern nations, histories, and conflicts.

**The Middle East and the Islamic World Reader**, edited by Marvin E. Gettleman and Stuart Schaar  
This collection of documents spans Islam and Middle Eastern history. (Over half the book is on 20th century conflicts and issues.)

**The Waiting Room** (online at Cartoon Movement) by Sarah Glidden  
http://www.cartoonmovement.com/comic/10  
Written in a documentary style, Sarah Glidden’s 20-page cartoon account tells of Syria’s displaced Iraqis, the largest urban refugee population ever.

* **Opposing Viewpoints: Egypt** edited by Margaret Haerens  
  One of the "Opposing Viewpoints" series, this book is a collection of writings on Egypt during and after the Arab Spring.

* **Women in the Middle East: Tradition and Change** by Ramsay M. Harik and Elsa Marston  
  This comprehensive look at Middle Eastern women and their struggle to incorporate both tradition and change in their daily lives is a major contribution to resources on this topic of wide interest. Of particular note, the revised edition includes two chapters that cover the experience of women in Afghanistan and women’s health issues region-wide.

* **Celebrate Ramadan and Eid Al-Fitr with Praying, Fasting, and Charity** (National Geographic, “Holidays Around the World” series) by Deborah Heiligman  
  Although it is at a low reading level, this book is even interesting to adults due to its great pictures and clear explanations. (It is National Geographic book, so the photography is amazing!)

**Mecca** by Shahrkh Husain  
From the Holy Cities series, this is a basic introduction to the city of Mecca.
* The Arab World Thought of It: Inventions, Innovations, and Amazing Facts by Saima Hussain
This high-interest, beautifully illustrated book helps students learn about and visualize the important contributions of the Arab world to science, math, culture, and everyday life.

* The Iranian Revolution by Brendan January
This well-written book, part of the Pivotal Moments That Changed the World series, focuses on the Iranian revolution of 1979.

* Avicenna (Ibn Sinna): Muslim Physician and Philosopher of the 11th Century by Aishe Khan
This book is part of a 6-volume series "Great Muslim Philosophers and Scientists of the Middle Ages."

* Iraq by Dale Lightfoot

Islam: Faith, Culture, and History by Paul Lunde
The book is an overview of Islamic religion, history, and culture.

* Mosque by Daud Macaulay
The book describes the construction of a 16th century Ottoman mosque.

Inside Story: A 16th Century Mosque by Fiona MacDonald and Mark Bergin
Detailed illustrations and clear explanations make this a terrific resource book with information about the building, religious background, and history surrounding the construction of a mosque.

* Teen Life in the Middle East, edited by Ali Akbar Mahdi
This compilation offers insights into the interests, family and social lives, religious practices, and culture of teens in twelve profiled countries.

* The Compassionate Warrior: Abd el-Kader of Algeria by Elsa Marston
This is a well-written account of a 19th century Algerian freedom fighter, Abd el-Kader, who won respect in the West for his humanitarian values and compassionate policies during the struggle against French colonialism. In fact, Abd el-Kader is commended by Abraham Lincoln, has a town in Iowa named after him, and is the subject of a yearly essay competition for U.S. high school students.

* Extraordinary Women from the Muslim World by Natalie Maydell and Sep Riahi
This book, introduces readers to 13 Muslim women in history who have lived extraordinary lives and influenced their communities in a positive way, often overcoming extreme hardship and inaccurate stereotypes that have been placed on the role of women in Islam. In addition to showing the impact these women have had throughout the years.
The Arab Americans by Alixa Naff
*This book describes the experiences and contributions of Arab-Americans.*

The Ottomans: Empire of Faith by Dr. David Nicolle
*A comprehensive history of the Ottoman Empire with maps and illustrations.*

Jerusalem by Saviour Pirotta
*From the Holy Cities series, this is a basic introduction to the city of Jerusalem.*

The African and Middle Eastern World, 600-1500 by Randall L. Pouwels
*A history of medieval Africa and the Middle East with beautiful photographs and maps.*

* Al-Biruni: Master Astronomer and Muslim Scholar of the 11th Century by Bill Scheppler
*This book is part of a 6-volume series "Great Muslim Philosophers and Scientists of the Middle Ages."

* Historical Atlas of Islam by Malise Ruthven and Azim Nanji
*This beautifully illustrated history of Islam provides a broad overview of the economic, social, political, and cultural history of the Islamic world from the birth of the Prophet Muhammad to the present. Brief essays address pivotal moments and movements and eras, and color maps and photographs effectively complement the text throughout.*

Footnotes in Gaza by Joe Sacco
*This is a journalistic graphic “novel” of an Israeli massacre in the Palestinian town of Rafah during the Suez War and life in Gaza today.*

* Al-Biruni: Master Astronomer and Muslim Scholar of the 11th Century by Bill Scheppler
*This book is part of a 6-volume series "Great Muslim Philosophers and Scientists of the Middle Ages."

Approaching the Qur'an by Michael Sells
*A copy of the Muslim holy book, it also comes with commentaries as well as an Audio CD of Qur'an readings.*

* Averroes (Ibn Rushd): Muslim Scholar, Philosopher, and Physician of the 12th Century by Liz Sonneborn
*This book is part of a 6-volume series "Great Muslim Philosophers and Scientists of the Middle Ages."

Early Islam by Desmond Stewart
*Part of the "Great Ages of Man" series, this book has vivid pictures and maps to illustrate the history of Islam during medieval times.*

* The Middle East Today by Dona J. Stewart
*This book gives political, geographical, and cultural perspectives of the Middle East today.*
* **Islamic Design: A Genius for Geometry** by Daud Sutton  
*Focusing on Islamic geometric patterns, simple and complex, man-made and in nature, this book offers unique insight into Islamic culture.*

* **Children of the Stone: The Power of Music in a Hard Land** by Sandy Tolan  
*This is the biography of a young Palestinian man, Ramzi Aburedwan, who was the subject of an iconic photograph of a child throwing a stone at an Israeli tank. The book chronicles his journey as he discovers classical music, becomes a musician, and founds children's music schools throughout Palestinian lands.*

**Pride of Baghdad** by Brian K. Vaughan and Niko Henrichon  
*This graphic “novel” is based on the true story of a group of lions that escaped from the Baghdad zoo during the American bombing in 2003. It asks questions about liberty: whether it can be given or must be earned, whether it is better to die free or live in captivity.*

**The Arab-Israeli Conflict** by Richard Worth  
*An Open for Debate book which shows the main issues for both Palestinians and Israelis.*

* **A Brief History of Saudi Arabia** by James Wynbrandt  
*In recent years, Saudi Arabic has experienced changes that have both altered the internal structure of the country and affected its foreign relations. This book manages to steer an even course through a subject that is often treated with skepticism or defensiveness.*

**Medieval Cuisine of the Islamic World** by Lilia Zaouali  
*This book gives a culinary history of the Islamic world and provides recipes.*