

Middle East Synthesis Unit Responses

2015

“The Synthesis Unit provided me with more knowledge of the history, religion, and cultural background of the Middle East, enabling me to better understand the crises and tension that are present in the region today. With topics ranging from music, history, art, and society, I now have a much more comprehensive perspective on the Middle East.”

- 10th Grade

“Learning about a different culture and religion always makes me appreciate the world’s diversity. The unit made it clear how important it is to consider diverse ideas, think about them, and form arguments based on fact and not opinion.”

- 12th Grade

“I definitely learned more about cooperation and collaboration working with my Synthesis Unit group.”

- 8th Grade

“The Synthesis Unit really helped me understand the Kurds’ situation in the Middle East. I didn’t know how marginalized and persecuted the Kurds actually are prior to this unit. I really enjoyed being able to learn and understand more about that unique Middle Eastern culture.”

- 12th Grade

“One of the topics often comes up in the news is the Israel/Palestine conflict. Now that I have heard from some difference speakers about it, I understand the whole thing a lot more. I now understand what each side wants and what it stands for, and why the situation is so complex.

- 8th Grade

“It was interesting to learn about the Middle East, somewhere I am unfamiliar with, and contrast it with what I am familiar with.”

- 8th Grade

“Seeing different points of view from the speakers made me appreciate their views and diversity.”

- 9th Grade

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“The unit has helped me understand the ongoing conflicts, such as the conflict between the Turks and the Kurds... Not to mention the Egyptian government being overthrown in the Egyptian Revolution. “

- 9th Grade

“Being required to ask two questions during the unit helped me a lot. I’m usually shy and don’t like asking questions, so being required to do so made me think critically and do something outside of my comfort zone.”

9th Grade

“The way the media portrays the Middle East is that all are terrorists or support terrorism. Although I never believed this point of view, the Synthesis Unit helped me get a clearer picture of what is actually happening.”

- 9th Grade

“Now when I look at the news I can understand what’s happening.”

- 9th Grade

“Asking questions after speakers made it easy to communicate clearly, argue logically, and speak effectively.”

- 12th Grade

“With what is going on with ISIS I am able to understand that, although they claim that what they are doing is for religion, the majority of Muslims do not embrace violence as a part of their religion.”

- 11th Grade

“In American Society class we often discuss current events and I understand them more now since they often involve the Middle East and we learned about these places in the unit... I have learned about the conflicts there which helps me interpret what the news is saying.”

- 8th Grade

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“When the speakers were done with their presentations I got the chance to communicate with them and ask questions. This helped me speak effectively because when you’re asking a question you must think it through and listen to see if they already mentioned the answer.”

- 7th Grade

“With the explanation of the geography of the Middle East and the cultures I now understand where things are happening and the disputes of cultures in certain countries or regions. I also now know some of the history from these places so if something historical is mentioned I might know what is being spoken of. “

- 9th Grade

“I’m much more able to follow the news in the Middle East and I understand the actual information. I can easily tell the fiction from the truth now.”

- 11th Grade

“It helps knowing the background of a group, place, or conflict when listening to or watching the news. This helps me to avoid having stereotypes.”

- 9th Grade

“Before I had a very brief and vague understanding of what was going on in the Middle East but now I have a more in-depth understanding of why there are controversies between these groups. Salim really spoke well and helped me understand how Islam really works and how they make some of their life decisions. He also explained the irrational decisions being made in the Middle East today.”

- 12th Grade

“Those who live in the Middle East have a different belief system and it is always a good idea for us to do our best at understanding the many ways of their culture.”

- 11th Grade

“I was able to analyze information by interpreting each speaker’s presentation and making an effort to relate it to other concepts to get the big picture.”

- 12th Grade

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“I am able to realize where certain countries are and what problems/issues are taking place in certain areas of the Middle East.”

- 9th Grade

“I think that the Synthesis Unit really helped me understand what’s going on in the world and give me a big picture of world situations.”

- 12th Grade

“I think that the geography part made it a lot easier to just picture where everything is in relationship to each other, which is useful. Also, understanding the history of the different groups of people makes it easier to understand why certain things are happening in the Middle East today.”

- 10th Grade

“I learned that it is very important to analyze a situation before you create an opinion. For example, people make up many lies about the Muslim religion. It was nice that in the Synthesis Unit I, as well as everyone else, was able to learn truthful things about the Muslim religion.”

- 8th Grade