

## **Title: UNRAVELING INTOLERANCE**

### **Overview:**

The purpose of this lesson is to encourage students to examine the issue of tolerance in our culture. The students will view the film *Turbans*, which focuses on a Sikh family's immigration to Oregon in the early 1900s. They will relate the issues in the film to problems facing Sikh, Arab and Muslim populations living in the United States in the post-September 11 environment.

**Grade Levels:** 4-8

**Subject Areas:** Language Arts, Social Studies

**California State Standards** <http://www.cde.ca.gov/board/>

### **Language Arts Reading Comprehension**

#### **Grade 4**

2.2 Use appropriate strategies when reading for different purposes (e.g., full comprehension, location of information, personal enjoyment).

2.5 Compare and contrast information on the same topic after reading several passages or articles.

#### **Grade 5**

2.3 Discern main ideas and concepts presented in texts, identifying and assessing evidence that supports those ideas.

2.4 Draw inferences, conclusions, or generalizations about text and support them with textual evidence and prior knowledge.

#### **Grade 6**

2.3 Connect and clarify main ideas by identifying their relationships to other sources and related topics.

#### **Grade 7**

3.3 Analyze characterization as delineated through a character's thoughts, words, speech patterns, and actions; the narrator's description; and the thoughts, words, and actions of other characters.

#### **Grade 8**

2.7 Evaluate the unity, coherence, logic, internal consistency, and structural patterns of text.

### **Language Arts Writing**

#### **Grade 4**

2.3 Write information reports:

- a. Frame a central question about an issue or situation.
- b. Include facts and details for focus.

## **Grade 5**

1.2 Create multiple-paragraph expository compositions:

- a. Establish a topic, important ideas, or events in sequence or chronological order.
- b. Provide details and transitional expressions that link one paragraph to another in a clear line of thought.
- c. Offer a concluding paragraph that summarizes important ideas and details.

## **Grade 6**

1.2 Create multiple-paragraph expository compositions:

- a. Engage the interest of the reader and state a clear purpose.
- b. Develop the topic with supporting details and precise verbs, nouns, and adjectives to paint a visual image in the mind of the reader.

## **Grade 7**

1.1 Create an organizational structure that balances all aspects of the composition and uses effective transitions between sentences to unify important ideas.

1.2 Support all statements and claims with anecdotes, descriptions, facts and statistics, and specific examples.

## **Grade 8**

1.1 Create compositions that establish a controlling impression, have a coherent thesis, and end with a clear and well-supported conclusion.

1.3 Support theses or conclusions with analogies, paraphrases, quotations, opinions from authorities, comparisons, and similar devices.

## **National Standards**

<http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/search.asp>

## **Historical Understanding**

### **Grades: 3-5**

Standard 1

Understands and knows how to analyze chronological relationships and patterns.

4. Knows how to identify patterns of change and continuity in the history of the community, state, and nation, and in the lives of people of various cultures from times long ago until today.

### **Grades: 6-8**

Standard 14

Understands issues concerning the disparities between ideals and reality in American political and social life.

5. Knows how various individual actions, social actions, and political actions can help to reduce discrepancies between reality and the ideals of American constitutional democracy.

## Learning Objectives:

Students will

- empathize with the problems faced in the classroom by Arab, Muslim, Sikh, Middle Eastern and South Asian students.
- synthesize information from a variety of sources.
- conduct an interview to learn about biases.
- interpret facts and express meaning through writing activities.

## Assessment:

To assess students' mastery of the learning objectives, you may rate them on the quality of their writing, their presentations and their participation in group discussions.

You may also have students complete the following Student Self-Evaluation:

What did I learn from this lesson?

What do I still want to learn about this topic?

What part of my work on this lesson gives me a sense of achievement?

What would I do differently next time?

In what ways was I able to work effectively with others?

What did I like most about this lesson?

You may also wish to conduct individual conferences to discuss the students' self-evaluations and their own observations of student participation in the lesson activities.

## Time:

Two to three 50-minute class periods and one homework assignment

## Materials and Teacher Preparation:

Videotape of **Turbans**, directed by Erika Surat Andersen

Internet access

Drawing and writing (journal) supplies

Bookmark the following Web sites:

<http://www.sikhmuseum.org/bs.htm>

<http://www.sikheducation.com/>

[http://search1.npr.org/opt/collections/torched/watc/data\\_watc/seg\\_136651.htm](http://search1.npr.org/opt/collections/torched/watc/data_watc/seg_136651.htm)

[http://www.npr.org/news/specials/response/home\\_front/features/2001/oct/muslim/o11022.muslim.html](http://www.npr.org/news/specials/response/home_front/features/2001/oct/muslim/o11022.muslim.html)

<http://www.adc.org/education/aboutarabs.htm>

<http://www.adc.org/education/islam.htm>

[Islam.com](http://www.adc.org/education/islam.htm)

<http://www.freep.com/jobspage/arabs/>

[http://www.tolerance.org/hidden\\_bias/o2.html](http://www.tolerance.org/hidden_bias/o2.html)

[http://www.tolerance.org/news/article\\_hate.jsp?id=277](http://www.tolerance.org/news/article_hate.jsp?id=277)

<http://www.unesco.org/tolerance/teneng.htm#idea1>

<http://www.apa.org/pi/oema/racism/q17.html>

[http://www.tolerance.org/101\\_tools/index.html](http://www.tolerance.org/101_tools/index.html)

[http://www.tolerance.org/10\\_ways/index.html](http://www.tolerance.org/10_ways/index.html)

[http://www.tolerance.org/one\\_world/index.jsp](http://www.tolerance.org/one_world/index.jsp)

## PRE-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

### Activity One

**The purpose of this activity is to prepare students for viewing the film by providing a brief introduction to Sikh culture.**

1. Before beginning this activity, visit the Sikh Education.com Web site at <http://www.sikheducation.com/>. Make copies of the four "Handouts for Students" in the "For Teachers" section:
  - Facts About Sikhs
  - Understanding a Sikh Turban
  - Basic Background About Sikhism
  - Your Sikh Neighbors
2. Read the opening paragraph of the Sikh Education.com homepage, which discusses how some Sikh children have been afraid to go to school and interact with their classmates after the events of September 11.
3. Divide the class into groups of three and provide each group with a copy of the handouts.
4. Ask each group to collect four facts from each of the handouts.
5. After the groups have finished, provide time for them to share and discuss their facts with the rest of the class. At the end of the activity, collect the handouts to use later in the lesson.

### Activity Two

**The purpose of this activity is to encourage students to reflect on times in their own lives when people were judged by outside attributes rather than their personality, character or other inner qualities**

1. Do a "Think-Pair-Share" activity, in which students pair up, discuss questions and then participate in a large-group discussion. Pairs begin by discussing the following questions:
  - What is diversity? (List examples of diversity in nature, music, your family, your local community and the world.)
  - What would it be like if everyone looked and acted the same? Could that lead to conflicts?
  - Why do you think some people don't value diversity?
  - What is prejudice? (List examples of how prejudice causes some people to stereotype others.)
  - What are some examples of prejudice resulting in unfair treatment of people?
  - Why do you think some people are prejudiced?
  - What is tolerance? (List examples of ways people practice tolerance or respect toward others.)
  - What do people gain or lose from respecting or not respecting other people's diversity?
  - What do you think the United States and the world in general gain or lose from not respecting diversity?
2. Have the pairs share their insights with the entire class.
3. Discuss how prejudice and intolerance have affected various groups of people since September 11.

## FOCUS FOR VIEWING

Tell the students to divide a piece of paper into four equal sections and write one of the following headings in each section. As students watch the film **Turbans** they will record information from the film under the appropriate headings.

- Examples of differences among the Singh family members
- Examples of differences among the classroom students
- Examples of people building walls in their relationship with the Singh family
- Examples of people building bridges in their relationship with the Singh family

## POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

### Activity One

**In this activity, students will listen to an essay written by an 18-year-old Arab-American girl. Students will consider the comments made in her class following the events of September 11 and compare them to the Singh family's experience.**

1. Listen on the NPR Web site as Rana Sino, an 18-year-old Arab American, reads excerpts from her essay about becoming a target of hostility and suspicion after September 11:

[http://search1.npr.org/opt/collections/torched/watc/data\\_watc/seg\\_136651.htm](http://search1.npr.org/opt/collections/torched/watc/data_watc/seg_136651.htm).

Note: You may also access this transcript by going to [www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org) and typing "Bronx Essay" in the search box.

2. Remind students that **Turbans** and Rana Sino's essay are both based on real-life experiences. Engage students in a discussion about the similarities and differences in the two accounts. The following questions may be helpful in initiating the discussion:

- What were some of the common themes in both accounts?
- In what ways have things changed from the Singh children's school experience in the early 1900s to Rana's current-day experience? In what ways have they stayed the same?
- How did the Singh children react to the way they were treated by their classmates?
- How did Rana react to the classroom conversation of her peers?
- How did the teachers respond to the classroom situation in each of the settings?
- How might the Singhs' teacher have made their transition to a new school and country easier?
- If you were Rana Sino's teacher, how might you have handled class discussions after September 11?

3. Divide students into groups of six or seven.

4. Tell students in each group to choose one of these roles to play:

- Rana Sino
- Teacher
- Student who talked about shooting Arabs
- The other class members

5. Ask the groups to role-play a continuation of the scene that Rana describes in her essay. Begin where Rana says, "Why don't you just shoot me now?" in response to her classmate's comment about joining the armed services to shoot Arabs.

6. Tell students to role-play ways of opening up meaningful dialogue among Rana's classmates in this situation.
7. After each group finishes its role-playing session, discuss that group's performance.
8. Homework assignment: Ask students to imagine that they were in Rana's class on the day she wrote about. Tell them to reflect on the day's events in the form of journal entries. Each student will write four entries, one from each of the following perspectives:
  - Rana Sino
  - Teacher
  - Student who wanted to join the armed services
  - Random student from the class
9. Collect the journals and ask for volunteers to share their entries with the class.

## Activity Two

**In this activity, students will listen to an NPR broadcast on Muslims in America, take a hidden-bias test and conduct an interview.**

1. Listen to or read the three-part NPR Special Report "Muslims in America," at [http://www.npr.org/news/specials/response/home\\_front/features/2001/oct/muslim/011022.muslim.html](http://www.npr.org/news/specials/response/home_front/features/2001/oct/muslim/011022.muslim.html), and discuss.

2. Discuss the following quotation from the **Detroit Free Press** Web site:

Like all people, Arab Americans are too often described in simplistic terms. Although the Arab culture is one of the oldest on Earth, it is, in many parts of the United States, misunderstood. There are no easy, one-size-fits-all answers. Culture, language and religion are distinct qualities that act in different ways to connect Arabs, and to distinguish them from one another.

The differences that seem to separate Arab Americans from non-Arabs can be much smaller than the variations that at times differentiate them from one another. It takes time to learn the issues and to understand them, but it is essential and rewarding for us to do that. Misunderstanding ultimately hurts each one of us.

3. Tell students that they are going to work in small groups to develop interview questions that will serve as a guide in beginning to explore the cultures of Arabs, Muslims and Sikhs and in opening discussions on the importance of valuing the diversity that is the foundation of our country.
4. Pass out the handouts from the Sikh education Web site. Send students to the following Web sites to collect further information:

<http://www.adc.org/education/aboutarabs.htm>

Facts about Arabs from the American Arab Anti Discrimination Committee's Web site

<http://www.adc.org/education/islam.htm>

Facts about Islam from the American Arab Anti Discrimination Committee's Web site

[Islam.com](http://Islam.com)

Los Angeles-based Web site with comprehensive information and links to Muslim culture worldwide

<http://www.freep.com/jobspage/arabs/>

The Detroit Free Press Web site's "100 Questions and Answers About Arab Americans"

5. Before students begin writing the interview questions, send them to the Tolerance.org Web site at [http://www.tolerance.org/hidden\\_bias/o2.html](http://www.tolerance.org/hidden_bias/o2.html) to evaluate their hidden biases. Tell students to click on the "Racial Bias: Arab Muslims" button.

6. After the students have completed the test, discuss the results, using such questions as the following:

- Did the results show that you have some hidden bias toward Arab Muslims?
- Were you surprised by the results? Explain.
- What do you think might be some of the reasons behind your test results?

7. Now that students have completed their research and assessed their own hidden biases, ask the groups to write interview questions. Below are some suggested directions students can use as a starting point:

- What happens when people are judged by the way they look?
- How did some people's biases affect how they treated Arabs, Muslims, Sikhs and anyone who looks Middle Eastern or South Asian after September 11?
- What can people do to help create an environment that encourages respect for all persons?
- What do we know about the history of Arabs, Muslims and Sikhs?
- What are some things that can happen when people practice intolerance over a long period of time?
- What are some of the stereotypes, biases or misperceptions people might have about Arabs, Muslims and Sikhs?

8. Ask each student to interview at least two people and record their responses, either on tape or by hand.

9. Tell students to respond to the following in writing:

- Which answer surprised you the most? Explain.
- Choose the answer that you found the most interesting and describe your reaction to it.
- Discuss an answer that made you think about your own views. If none of the interviewees' responses made you think about your own views, explain why this was the case.
- What did you learn from the interview?
- What do you think the interviewee might have learned from the interview?

## Extension Activities

### Activity One

1. Visit the "Hate in the News" section of the **Tolerance.org** Web site at [http://www.tolerance.org/news/article\\_hate.jsp?id=277](http://www.tolerance.org/news/article_hate.jsp?id=277).

Select a few examples of the hate mail received by the American Arab Anti Discrimination Committee since September 11, 2001.

2. Read the hate-mail messages to your students and ask them to respond to one of the messages in the form of a letter to the editor.

### Activity Two

Work as a class to create a school or community initiative for tolerance. The following sites provide many ideas on the topic.

<http://www.unesco.org/tolerance/teneng.htm#idea1>

"Ten Ideas for Observing the International Day for Tolerance"

<http://www.apa.org/pi/oema/racism/q17.html>

"Ten Things You Can Do to Fight Prejudice and Racism"

[http://www.tolerance.org/101\\_tools/index.html](http://www.tolerance.org/101_tools/index.html)

"101 Tools for Tolerance"

[http://www.tolerance.org/10\\_ways/index.html](http://www.tolerance.org/10_ways/index.html)

"10 Ways to Fight Hate"

### Activity Three

Visit the "One World Mural" section of the **Tolerance.org** Web site at

[http://www.tolerance.org/one\\_world/index.jsp](http://www.tolerance.org/one_world/index.jsp) to help create the largest online mural dedicated to unity and justice.