



## Arab American National Museum

### Recognizing Stereotypes, Developing Media Literacy

#### Description:

- This lesson is a broad introduction to thinking about stereotypes and learning to critically engage with popular television and media. It prepares students to discuss stereotypes about Arab Americans during their museum visit. Part two of the lesson is conducted at the Arab American National Museum with their tour guides or independently with their instructor. Part three is a follow-up exercise to be conducted after their museum visit and in conclusion to the unit. You might adapt this exercise by dropping the drawing portion, and emphasizing the slideshow portion.
- Corresponds to GLCEs: K1.3, K1.5, K1.6, P1.1, P1.2, P1.3
- Corresponds to Common Core: RL3, RL7, RL9, RI7, RI9, W3, W8

#### Lesson Objectives:

- Students will start to recognize recurring images and ideas in popular culture
- Students will learn how values are attached to recurring images and ideas
- Students will begin to discuss the affect of images on individuals and communities

#### Materials:

- Crayons, Colored Pencils, or Equivalent
- Drawing Paper
- Slideshow of Cartoon Villains and Heroes

#### Procedures:

- Distribute drawing materials to students.
- Ask students to imagine their favorite television, movie, or storybook heroes and villains. When they have a clear image, ask them to draw two side-by-side pictures. One picture of their hero and one picture of their villain. Ask them NOT to label their images.
- When students complete drawings, allow the students pass their image to another student for review. Allow them to pass at least 5-6 times in order to get a composite sense of what heroes look like and what villains look like.
- Discuss the drawings with the following questions. Keep lists of traits and associations on the board as they are generated.
  - Who is the villain and who is the hero in each sketch? How do you know?
  - What are the similarities and differences in the sketches of the villains?
  - What are the similarities and differences in the sketches of the heroes?
  - What kinds of values and ideas do you associate with villains? What about heroes?
- Display slideshow, showing villains and heroes from sources with which children may or may not be familiar. Repeat above question set. Add to your list of traits and associations as they emerge.

- Explain that through repetition and use, ideas and values become attached to images. Sometime those attachments are negative and sometimes they are positive. In either case, we automatically begin to expect bad behavior with some kinds of images, and good behavior with other kinds of images. Focus on their capacity to recount ideas based on images alone. For example: seeing a McDonald's logo may prompt one to sing: "I'm loving it!" The same kind of object-content association happens in stereotyping, except in these cases, we attach value to the object and its contents.
- Discuss:
  - Why might this pairing of images to values be harmful or limiting?
  - Are there examples when the image or trait doesn't match the association or value we've generated here together?
  - What happens when a negative message attaches to one image repeatedly?
  - What happens when an image that is usually paired with negative behavior is actually positive and vice versa?
- Explain: just like we learn how to recognize villains and heroes from our cartoons, other cultural sources like the media, television, etc teaches us to expect certain kinds of behavior from certain individuals and/or communities.
- Foreshadow: In the future, we will be visiting the Arab American National Museum, and we will talk about the different messages we receive about Arabs and Arab Americans in our culture. You may emphasize that the last image on the slideshow, about Aladdin and Jafar, begins to hint at the representations of Arabs and Arab Americans.

# Heroes and Villains

a Selection of Heroes and Villains  
from Contemporary Popular Culture

































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### Recognizing Stereotypes, Developing Media Literacy

#### Description:

- This lesson uses exhibits at the Arab American National Museum to discuss stereotypes and their effects on individuals and groups. A precursor to this lesson where students are introduced to stereotypes is available on our website. A follow-up exercise to be conducted after their museum visit is also available.
- Corresponds to GLCEs: K1.3, K1.5, K1.6, P1.1, P1.2, P1.3
- Corresponds to Common Core: RL3, RL7, RL9, RI7, RI9, W3, W8

#### Objectives:

- Students will infer and discuss images and values associated with Arab Americans
- Students will discuss the differences between stereotyped Arab Americans and everyday Arab Americans
- Students will reflect on the importance of media literacy

#### Materials

- Media/Stereotypes Gallery at AANM, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor

#### Procedure

- Tour guides or instructors can incorporate this lesson at any point during their movement through the museum.
- In the gallery, ask the students to study the wall with popular media images of Arabs and note repeating images. Are the images diverse or repetitive?
- Ask:
  - What first comes to mind when you see these images? Are they warm and inviting or cold and scary?
  - What messages do you receive about Arab Americans based on these images?
  - How can these images be harmful for Arabs and Arab Americans?
  - Why do we see these images repeatedly? If they respond that the image could be accurate, either remind them what they have seen on their tour so far or use this as an opportunity to introduce the rest of the museum.
- Ask the students to compare and contrast what they learned in the Museum about Arabs and Arab Americans to what they learned from the images in the Media Gallery. What is similar and what is different?
- Conclude by reasserting the difference between lived Arab American life and the stereotypes thereof. Ask students to remember to look past the story that media images tell and be conscious of media themes and motifs.



## Arab American National Museum

### Recognizing Stereotypes, Developing Media Literacy

#### Description:

- This is a follow-up lesson for students who visited the Arab American National Museum to discuss stereotypes. The previous two parts of the three-part lesson are available on our website.
- Corresponds to GLCEs: K1.3, K1.5, K1.6, P1.1, P1.2, P1.3
- Corresponds to Common Core: RL3, RL7, RL9, RI7, RI9, W3, W8

#### Objectives:

- Students will reflect on their Museum visit and their previous discussion of heroes and villains

#### Materials

- Arab Villains Slideshow

#### Procedure

- Check in with students after their museum visit. Ask them what stood out during their trip, and what ideas or images they remembered the most.
- Present the Arab Villains slideshow as a way to cement the relationship between Part One and Part Two of the lesson. Namely, that Arab and Arab Americans have often been villainized in American popular culture. Remind them of the consequences of negative portrayals that you discussed in part one of the lesson.
- Ask students to brainstorm stories and characters that resist typical representations of Arab Americans. If time allows, provide paper and drawing utensils for students to literally re-draw their heroes. When they finish their drawings, ask them to share the story of their hero with the class.

# Where Arabs and Villains Collide

a (Brief) Slideshow of Arab Villains in  
Popular American Culture



Guard from *Aladdin*



Angry Merchant, *Aladdin*



Villain in Mickey Mouse Cartoon





Hassan and Bugs Bunny



Ali Baba from a Bugs Bunny reel