

Middle Eastern and North African Heritage Month (MENA): Resources for Teachers and Staff

April is Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) Heritage Month. It is a time to celebrate the rich history and diverse cultures of this vast region, stretching from Morocco in the West to Afghanistan in the East, from Iran in the North to Sudan in the South.

Springhurst Library Media Specialist Lauren Rodriguez, Middle/High School Library Media Specialist Ellen Elsen, and K-8 Literacy Coordinator Michelle Yang-Kaczmarek have teamed up with Dobbs Ferry Public Library Children's Librarian Gina Elbert to create this resource list to help your classes explore and celebrate MENA Heritage throughout the month.

Booklist

Below is a list of published books. You can access items marked with a blue dot (●) through the Dobbs Ferry school libraries and items marked with a yellow dot (●) through the Dobbs Ferry Public Library. Please contact your librarians to put them on hold and/or learn more information about the formats in which these titles are available.

Picture Books and Easy Readers

- *Sabbath Lion: A Jewish Folktale from Algeria* by Howard Schwartz ●
- *Sadiq* series by Siman Nuurali ●●
- *The Cat Man of Aleppo* by Irene Latham ●●
- *Crescent Moons and Pointed Minarets: A Muslim Book of Shapes* by Hena Khan ●
- *My Beautiful Birds* by Susanne Del Rizzo ●
- *Lailah's Lunchbox* by Reem Faruqi ●
- *Ten Ways to Hear Snow* by Cathy Camper ●
- *Lost and Found Cat: The True Story of Kunkush's Incredible Journey* by Doug Kuntz ●
- *The Three Lucys* by Hayan Charara ●
- *Nour's Secret Library* by Wafa Tarnowska ●
- *Counting Up the Olive Tree: A Palestine Number Book* by Golbarg Barshi
- *Salma the Syrian Chef* by Danny Ramadan ●
- *The Ghoul* by Taghreed Najjar ●
- *Masai and I* by Virginia Kroll ●●
- *Sitti's Secrets* by Naomi Shihab Nye ●●
- *Amira's Picture Day* by Reem Faruqi ●●
- *Deep in the Sahara* by Kelly Cunnane ●●
- *Ramadan Moon* by Na'ima B. Robert ●●

Elementary Non-fiction

- *Hands Around the Library: Protecting Egypt's Treasured Books* by Susan L. Roth ●
- *The Librarian of Basra: A True Story from Iraq* by Jeanette Winter ●●
- *A Kid's Guide to Arab American History* by Yvonne Wakim Dennis and Maha Addasi ●
- *Ibn Al-Haytham: The Man Who Discovered How We See* by Libby Romero ●
- *Amazing Women of the Middle East: 25 Stories from Ancient Times to Present Day* by Wafa Tarnowska ●
- *Middle Eastern Food (I Can Cook series)* by Wendy Blaxland ●●
- *The Egyptian News* by Scott Steedman ●●
- *Who was King Tut?* by Roberta Edwards ●●
- *Zarafa: The Giraffe Who Walked to the King* by Judith St. George ●●
- *The Legend of the Persian Carpet* by Tomie DePaola ●●
- *My Grandma and Me* by Mina Javaherbin ●●
- *Ramadan* by Suhaib Hamid Ghazi ●●
- *Ramadan and Id-ul-Fitr* by Nancy Dickmann ●●

Middle Grade Fiction

- *Other Words for Home* by Jasmine Warga ●●
- *Once Upon an Eid* by S.K. Ali and Aisha Saeed ●●
- *All-American Muslim Girl* by Nadine Jolie Courtney ●●
- *Escape from Aleppo* by NH Senzai ●●
- *The Magical Reality of Nadia* by Basim Youssef ●●
- *The Shadow of Ghadames* by Joëlle Stolz ●
- *The Red Pencil* by Andrea Davis Pinkney ●●
- *A Long Walk to Water* by Linda Sue Park ●●
- *Oranges in No Man's Land* by Elizabeth Laird
- *The Turtle of Oman* by Naomi Shihab Nye ●
- *Farah Rocks* series by Susan Muadi Darraj ●
- *The Secret Grove* by Barbara Cohen
- *A Pocketful of Stars* by Aisha Bushby
- *Refugee* by Alan Gratz ●●
- *Playing Atari with Saddam Hussein: Based on a True Story* by Jennifer Roy ●●
- *Zenobia (graphic novel)* by Morten Dürr and Lars Horneman ●●
- *The Unwanted: Stories of the Syrian Refugees (graphic novel)* by Don Brown ●●
- *The Breadwinner* by Deborah Ellis ●●

Middle Grade Non-fiction

- *1001 Inventions and Awesome Facts From Muslim Civilization* by National Geographic Society ●
- *Islamophobia: Deal With It In the Name of Peace* by Safia Saleh ●
- *The Lemon Tree* by Sandy Tolan ●●
- *Tasting the Sky: A Palestinian Childhood* by Ibtisam Barakat ●●

YA Fiction

- *A Very Large Expanse of Sea* by Taherah Mafi ●●

- *Internment* by Samira Ahmed ●●
- *Love, Hate, and Other Filters* by Samira Ahmed ●●
- *Darius the Great Is Not Okay* by Adib Khorram ●●
- *Darius the Great Deserves Better* by Adib Khorram ●●
- *Perfectly Parvin* by Olivia Abtahi ●●
- *An Emotion of Great Delight* by Tahereh Mafi ●●
- *Does My Head Look Big In This?* by Randa Abdel-Fattah ●
- *Escape from Syria (graphic novel)* by Samya Kullab, Jackie Roche & Mike Freiheit ●●
- *Everything Sad Is Untrue* by Daniel Nayeri ●●

YA Non-fiction

- *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi ●●
- *Americanized: Rebel Without a Green Card* by Sara Saedi ●●

Websites

Coulours of Us: All About Multi-Cultural Children's Books

<https://coloursofus.com/20-childrens-books-set-in-the-middle-east-northern-africa/>

Your one-stop source for multicultural children's books (listed by subjects, ethnicity and age groups), toys and clothes. Because representation matters!

National Council for the Social Studies

<https://www.socialstudies.org/social-studies-and-young-learner/30/3/picture-books-bring-arab-voice-s-and-middle-east-and-north>

An annotated list of children's books that are high quality, unbiased, and non-stereotypical portrayals of Arabs. It is also a collection that brings the native voices of the MENA region to elementary readers.

Notes from an Islamic School Librarian

<https://islamicschoollibrarian.com/>

Reviewing Children & YA Islamic Fiction, Books by Muslim Authors, & Books Featuring Muslim Characters.