

## ***Arab World Video Collection***

### **Introduction to the Arab World**

Amideast Productions, 1988

Color, 42 minutes

This video is divided into three segments that serve to introduce the viewer to the history, politics, culture, religion, and contemporary issues of the Arab world. Part I: An Overview (15 min) introduces some common themes seen throughout the region. First the differences between the Arab World, Middle East, and Islamic World are explained. Then the video covers the Arab World by regions: North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and the Fertile Crescent. For each region a brief history is given as well as reasons why the countries are significant in the Arab World. The end of this segment briefly discusses the Arab/Israeli conflict. This segment alone serves as a good introduction to the culture of the Arab World.

Part II: Islam (14 min) begins by discussing the origins and the spread of Islam, including the importance of both Mecca and Medina. Next discussed is how Islam is practiced today and how it has changed society, with attention to health issues and women's rights. The video then covers the different sects of Islam and their relationship to one another. If viewed alone, this segment would sufficiently introduce the viewer to the religion and culture of Islam.

Part III: Arab Society Today (13 min) looks at several Arab cultures and how they function today. The combination of old ways with the newer ways of today's generation is emphasized in this segment. The video also discusses how the Arab World has responded to industrialization and how agricultural and medical technologies have made everyday life easier. Next is a discussion of colonization and how Europe influenced the countries of the region, and finally how they gained their independence. Along with this came political struggle and experimentation in the Arab countries. This segment is best for those viewers who want to learn something about the modern history and practices of the Arab World.

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### **Tales From Arab Detroit**

ACCESS and Olive Branch Productions (1995)

41 minutes, color

This video tells the story of a traditional Egyptian poet/storyteller visiting the Arab community in Detroit. He was brought from Egypt by the area's community center. The effects of this visit are looked at through the eyes of several families and individual Arab-Americans. The video emphasizes the problems that result when the new generation of Arabs living in the U.S. differ from their parents culturally. Both parents and children share their thoughts on Arab culture and what it means to them to be an Arab. The film maker interviews several Arab-Americans and explains the lives of many different types of Arabs living in Detroit, including a rapper, member of a basketball team, dancers, and

many more. The video also shows clips of the storyteller reciting his 100-hour long epic, which is presented in a series of shows. This video does a good job of informing the viewer of some of the conflicts facing Arabs living in American society.

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### **Young Voices From the Arab World—The Lives and Times of 5 Teenagers**

Amideast Productions (1998)

30 minutes, color

This video is an introduction to the historical and geographical background of the Arab world, which targets students in elementary or middle school. The video is divided into 5 different segments, each of which follows the life of a different teenager living in the Arab world. Each of these segments is 3-4 minutes long, with bits of historical and cultural information given in between each segment. The first segment of the video follows a young man named Mohammed, who is living in Jordan, as he briefly explains different Islamic traditions such as fasting during Ramadan and making the pilgrimage and how they affect his own life. He also shows the viewer how some aspects of his everyday life are similar to those of Western children, such as little league games. After the first segment of the video is a brief discussion by the narrator of the similarities and differences among Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. The second segment follows a Lebanese girl named Tamara to her summer camp and also back home to Beirut. Tamara explains how the civil war in Lebanon has affected her family, and also how her family is being affected by the changes in new generations. After this segment is a brief discussion of the role of farming and agriculture in the Arab world. Segment three is set in Cairo, Egypt, with a boy named Hazzem. Hazzem explains what he does as an everyday routine and how he helps out with his family's chores. After this segment in Egypt the video quickly discusses the background of the Arabic language. Next is a segment set in Kuwait with a boy named Saaud. He explains how old ways are giving way to the newer practices of his generation, and how this is affecting the role of the extended family in the Arab world. After the fourth segment is a brief discussion of the changing role of women in the Arab world. And finally the last segment of the video is set in Morocco with a girl named Hadisha. She continues the discussion of gender inequality and disparity between generations in her country. Although the children interviewed are of the middle or upper classes, the video attempts to show the lives of the lower classes also. This video is a very elementary introduction to the Arab world, and will serve well for a younger audience.

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