

Lesson 8 - Umm Kulthum and Contemporary Arab Businesswomen



Essential Questions:

- What are your perceptions of the Arab world and how accurate are they?
- What makes one person, especially an artist, famous or successful?
- How can a figure from a different time and place be relevant to our lives today?

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Make connections between Umm Kulthum's success and contemporary Arab women who have demonstrated success in the arts, culture, or design business.
- Challenge stereotypes of contemporary women in the Arab world

Standards Alignment:

- Common Core Reading Standards for Literacy in History/Social Studies
 - RH 1. Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources.
 - RH 4. Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.
 - RH 5. Describe how a text presents information
 - RH 8. Distinguish among fact, opinion, and reasoned judgment in a text.
- National Standards for Foreign Language Education
 - Standard 4.2: Students demonstrate understanding of the concept of culture through comparisons of the cultures studied and their own.

Materials:

- Map of the Arab World (for each student)
- Arab Businesswomen Information Sheets

Procedure (suggested time):

Opening/Hook/Activate Prior Knowledge/Do Now (5)

- Have students respond to the following prompt:
 - “Name at least three successful women. Brainstorm attributes that have allowed them to become successful.”
- When most students have finished writing, discuss, and write student answers on the board. Announce to students that today we will be learning about other successful Arab businesswomen besides Umm Kulthum. We will be splitting into small groups, and sharing what we learn with the class.

Teacher Modeling (10)

- Explain to students that they will be working in different cooperative groups to learn about Arab businesswomen : a jigsaw or home group, made up of students who have read about different businesswomen in the Arab world.
- Then, with a piece of text appropriate for your group of students, read and think-aloud as if you are working in an expert group, focusing on thought processes such as:
 - How can I put these ideas into my own words?
 - What connections do I see between this material and things we’ve already learned about Umm Kulthum?
 - How will I tell the members of my jigsaw or home group about this material?
- To prepare students for returning to their jigsaw or home group, demonstrate thinking they can use to monitor their performances in their groups:
 - Is what I’m saying helping the others learn the material?
 - Are people understanding what I’m saying and making connections between their reading and mine?

Classroom Activity – Jigsaw Learning (20)

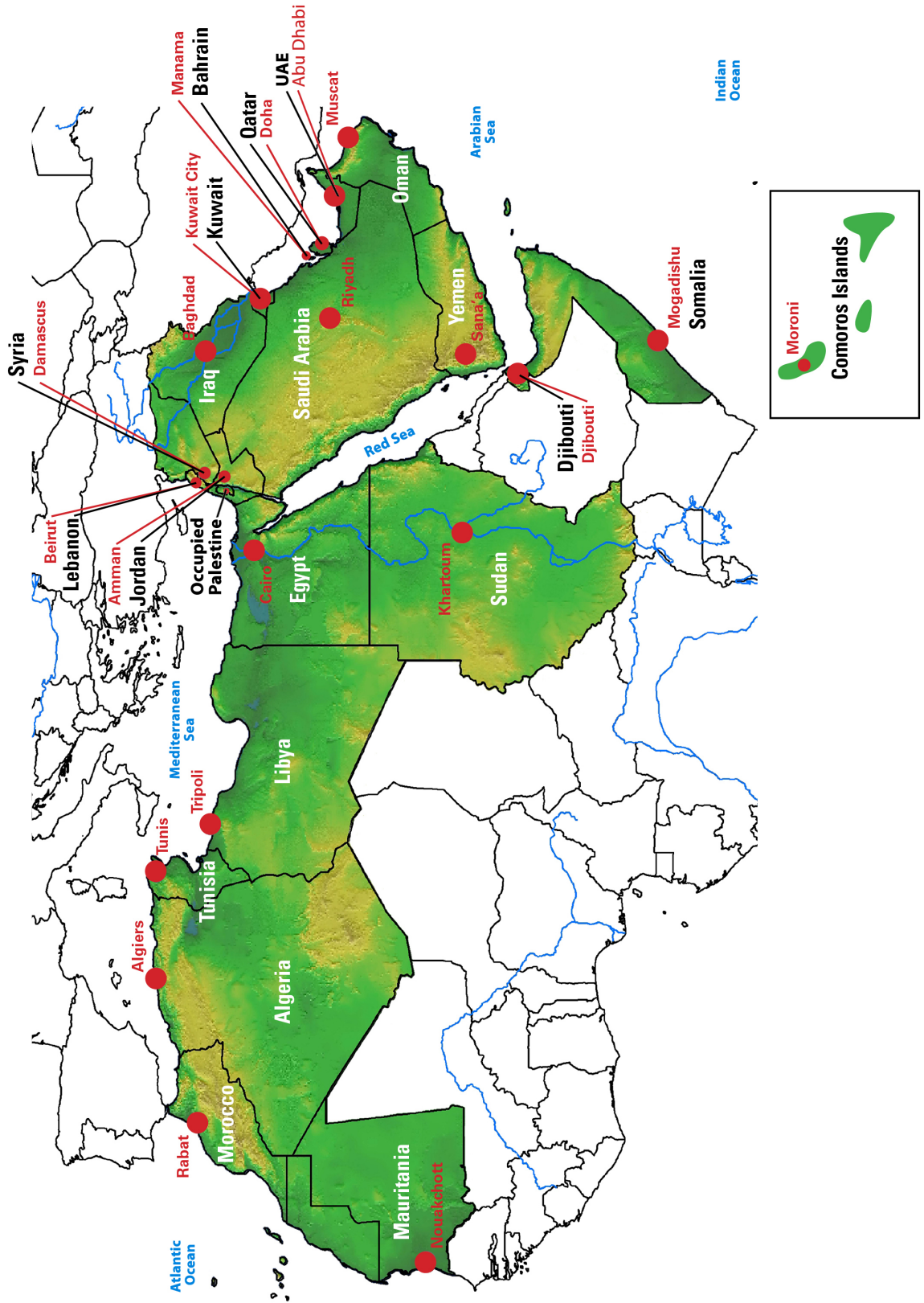
- Assign each student to learn about one Arab businesswoman, making sure students have direct access only to their own segment.
- Give students time to read over their information sheet at least twice and become familiar with it. There is no need for them to memorize it.
- Form temporary "expert groups" by having students who learned about the same businesswomen come together. Give students in these expert groups time to discuss the main points of their segment and to rehearse the presentations they will make to their jigsaw group.
- Bring the students back into their jigsaw groups.

- Ask each student to present her or his segment to the group. Encourage others in the group to ask questions for clarification.

Discussion & Conclusion (10)

- Bring the class back together. Briefly ask a few students to describe what they learned from the group.
- Have students write out attributes of the businesswomen that they were assigned.
- Lead the students in a discussion of what Umm Kulthum and the businesswomen they studied shared (about their life, their attributes, their drives, their talents).
- What types of business did these Arab women excel at?
- What qualities and attributes allowed them to continue to rise in their careers?

22 Countries of the Arab World



Zaha Hadid – Architect – Iraq & United Kingdom

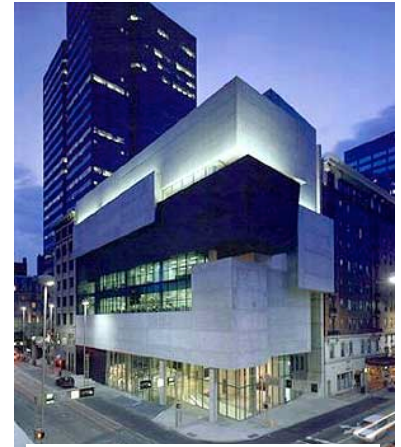


Zaha Hadid is famous for consistently pushing the boundaries of modern architecture and urban design. In 2004 the Iraqi-born architect was the first woman to receive architecture's most prestigious award, the Pritzker Architecture Prize, and has won many prizes since, including the Stirling prize for two consecutive years.

She established Zaha Hadid Architects in London in 1980. One of her breakout moments came in 2003 with the completion of the Rosenthal Center for Contemporary Art in Cincinnati, Ohio. The New York Times described it as “the most important American building to be completed since the end of the cold war.”

Hadid's work was the subject of a retrospective exhibition at New York's Guggenheim Museum in 2006. In keeping with Hadid's interdisciplinary approach to architecture, the exhibition featured a wide range of mediums: paintings, sketches, architectural drawings, urban plans, models, relief models, animations, furniture, and design objects

In February 2012, Hadid signed an agreement to design the new Central Bank of Iraq headquarters, her first project in her native country. The design process will focus on developing a national symbol for the new spirit of Iraq on the shores of the Tigris River in Baghdad. On this occasion Hadid said, “I am deeply touched that I have been asked to design the new headquarters for the Central Bank of Iraq. I was born in Iraq and I still feel very close to it. I feel very privileged to be working in Iraq on a design of such national importance.”



Rosenthal Center for Contemporary Art

(1) “Zaha Hadid.” (2007) Design Museum, London, UK.

<http://designmuseum.org/design/zaha-hadid>

(3) Herbert Muschamp, (2003) “Zaha Hadid's Urban Mothership.” *New York Times*. <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/06/08/arts/art-architecture-zaha-hadid-s-urban-mothership.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm>

(3) “Zaha Hadid.” (2006) Guggenheim Museum, Past Exhibitions.

<http://pastexhibitions.guggenheim.org/hadid/overview.html>

(4) Karissa Rosenfield, “Zaha Hadid Architects and Central Bank of Iraq sign agreement for new Headquarters,” (2012) *Arch Daily*

<http://www.archdaily.com/205126/zaha-hadid-architects-and-central-bank-of-iraq-sign-agreement-for-new-headquarters/>

Nadine Labaki – Actress and Director – Lebanon



The 38-year-old actress and director is a rising star of the international film scene. She broaches sensitive subjects like religion in her films with a delicacy and humor that have made them wildly popular in her home country of Lebanon and beyond.

Her 2007 breakout debut, *Caramel*, became an international sensation. A romantic comedy set in Beirut, the film centers on the daily life of five women who gather regularly at a beauty salon to discuss love and life. The movie landed Labaki on Variety’s annual list of 10 Directors to Watch. Her second feature film *Where Do We Go Now?*, released in 2012, won prizes around the world, including the People’s Choice Award at the Toronto Film Festival.

While *Caramel* was set in post-civil war Beirut and purposefully made no allusions to the country’s turbulent political atmosphere, the threat of war is the driving force of *Where Do We Go Now?* It is the story of Muslim and Christian women living in a remote village in Lebanon who attempt through creative and humorous means to prevent the outbreak of religious fighting among their men. The film was inspired by disturbing events in Lebanon. “On May 7th, 2008, fighting broke out between two opposing parties,” Labaki told a reporter for *The New Yorker*. “Beirut turned into a war zone in a matter of hours. We were stuck at home, the roads were blocked. I was watching TV and saw people with masks, weapons, and grenades. I thought, *Is that really possible? Could we be here yet again? And go into civil war one more time?...* I thought if my son was now eighteen years old and he was tempted to join the fight and take the burden of protecting his family...what would I do as a mother to stop him?” Her response to these questions was making this film, which offers a criticism of religious conflict and celebration of female activism.

(1) (2012) Nadine Labaki. *Arabian Business*. <http://www.arabianbusiness.com/100-most-powerful-arab-women-2012-448295.html?view=profile&itemid=448187>

(2) Asfour, N. (2012) “Where Do We Go Now? Asks Nadine Labaki.” *New Yorker* <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/culture/2012/03/where-do-we-go-now-asks-nadine-labaki.html>

Randa Ayoubi – Media - Jordan

Randa Ayoubi founded the animation studio Rubicon Group Holding fifteen years ago. It is now the largest animation studio in the region. Ayoubi transformed the firm, which she founded as a small project in 1994, into a global powerhouse with five international branches and more than 300 employees.

The company is headquartered in Amman, Jordan, and produces hits such as *Ben & Izzy*, a children’s cartoon series promoting cross-cultural understanding between the Middle East and the West. Last year the firm entered into a partnership to broadcast the show on Cartoon Network Animated in the United States.



When asked about the show’s goals and methods for promoting awareness and dialogue between cultures, Ayoubi said, “I have always believed that technology has the potential to revolutionize the education. This is what prompted me to start Rubicon.” She also serves on the Royal Commission for Education Reform in Jordan and is on the board of trustees of the Children’s Museum in Amman – the first children’s museum in the Middle East.

But RGH is more than just a company that produces animation. Led by Ayoubi, RGH has a culture of global corporate social responsibility and has ambitions to help



A screen from “Ben and Izzy”

transform Jordan into a high tech nation as well as aspirations to break down cultural barriers worldwide by exporting animated shows and movies produced in the Middle East. As Ayoubi explains, “I want to be a company that is mentioned in books when they talk about the Arab renaissance.”

(1) (2012) Align Your Work With Your Purpose. *The Way Women Work*
<http://thewaywomenwork.com/2012/02/jordan-randa-ayoubi/>

(2) (2012) Interview with Randa Ayoubi, CEO, RGH Entertainment. *Bloolooop: Networking the Attractions Business*. <http://www.bloolooop.com/Article/Theme-Parks-Interview-with-Randa-Ayoubi-CEO-RGH-Entertainment/307>

Nada Debs – Furniture Designer – Lebanon

Nada Deb is a modern furniture designer whose work is inspired by the many places she has lived. She was born to a Lebanese family and moved to Japan when she was very young. She studied interior architecture at the Rhode Island School of Design and then moved to the United Kingdom to start her own business.

She first started making furniture in London after she was married. Instead of buying furniture for her new house, she made it. Soon her friends were commissioning items from her for their own houses. She started to form her own style and began experimenting with materials like Plexiglass.



Her style is a fusion of different design styles. She likes to incorporate the ornate, geometrical decoration of the Middle East with the simple, pure shapes that are popular in Japanese design. She was able to see the similarities in the designs to fuse the two styles to create a unique style. In addition to using experimental materials, Nada uses traditional materials in her designs too, like wood and metal.

Ms. Debs now lives in her home country of Lebanon. She created her own company called East and East in 2000, which is based in Beirut. The company concentrates of designing, manufacturing and selling her furniture and home accessory lines. She has retail stores throughout Beirut and her furniture can be purchased in cities like New York, Dubai, Geneva, Cairo and Amman.

Shelving designed by Nada Debs

(1) (2010). Nada Debs. *Dia Says*. <http://www.dia-boutique.com/magazine/blog/29-nada-debs/>

(2) Biography. [nadadebs.com](http://www.nadadebs.com). <http://www.nadadebs.com>

Dr. Amina Al Rustamani – Media & Communications – United Arab Emirates



Dr. Amina Al Rustamani joined TECOM in 2001, a company that works in sectors as diverse as media, education, science, and manufacturing. She began at the company as a project engineer and quickly moved up the ranks, taking control of Dubai Media City as the executive director of investments.

Dubai Media City is a “free zone” in which companies can start doing business in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), with a tax-free guarantee for fifty years. This and other “free zones” are ways to attract new companies to Dubai, to turn the city into a regional and global hub for business and the media. Today, Dubai Media City is host to such channels as CNN, BBC, and the Al Arabiya news channel.

In an effort to educate people about the UAE, Dr. Al Rustamani played an instrumental role in establishing the Dubai International Film Festival and writes articles about wireless technologies around the world.

With the current economic recession, many large companies, including TECOM, have had to rethink their business plans. Dr. Al Rustamani was creative in looking for new business and improving existing strategies. As a result, the company is growing. Within the last year, TECOM added 654 new companies to their business parks in Dubai.

Dr. Al Rustamani said, “ Is the recession over? I think so, for Dubai I think it is. This is the year for growth, but we are still going through the restructuring and the plan that has been put in place after the crisis. But the worst is over... it’s time to be positive again.”

Dr. Al Rustamani received her Bachelor’s degree in 1993, Master’s degree in 1996 and Doctorate degree in 2001, all in Electrical Engineering, from The George Washington University in Washington DC.

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- (1) Bhojrul, A. (2012) Dr. Amina Al Rustamani interview: Zone of success. *Arabian Business*. <http://www.arabianbusiness.com/dr-amina-al-rustamani-interview-zone-of-success-446713.html>
 - (2) (2012) CEO TECOM Business Parks. *Tecom.ae*. www.tecom.ae/ceo-tecom-business-parks/

Sabah – Singer - Lebanon



Sabah Bdadoun is an Arab singer and actress whose career has begun in the mid-1940s. Her music and movies continue to be popular throughout the Arab world.

Sabah was born as Janet Fighali in Beirut, Lebanon, although other records state that her birthplace was the village of Wadi Shahroor. She began singing in the 1940s, and then started to act in Egyptian movies while continuing to sing.

Sabah has released over 50 albums and has acted in 86 movies, as well as almost 20 stage plays. She is among the most prolific Arabic language singers, and knows how to sing nearly 3,500 songs.

She was still an important performer in her late 70s, and continued to perform both in concert and on television, including such programs as Lebanon's Star Academy, the Arabic equivalent of the American Idol. She sang her new single on a stage lined with mannequins displaying costumes from several of her early films and musical plays.

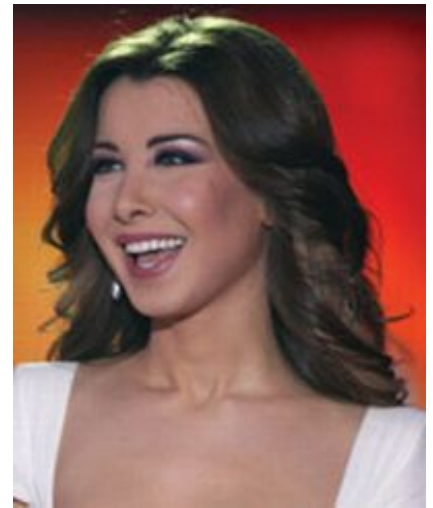
The singer is known to fans by the diminutive "Sabbouha" and is also called "Al Shahroura," or the singing bird.

In 2005, she released a new Dance single titled Lesh Ana Haywana (What's in the world?). Her 2006 release, Yana ya khara, a duet with Lebanese singer Rola, is a remake of a 1960s hit. She is now in her mid-80's, and although she no longer performs, she continues to be the icon of the old and young generation.

(1) IanAR (2007). Sabah Biography. *last.fm*. <http://www.last.fm/music/Sabah/+wiki>

Nancy Ajram – Singer – Lebanon

Nancy Nabil Ajram is a multi-platinum Lebanese singer. She has sold over 30 million records and released nine albums to date. She has acted in numerous films and music videos and commercials. She has participated in the most significant Arabic music festivals and won multiple awards, most importantly the 2008 World Music Award as best-selling Middle Eastern artist.



Ajram was born in 1983 in district of East Beirut, Lebanon. In 1995 when she was twelve years old, Ajram appeared on the show *Noujoum Al-Moustakbal*, ("Stars of the Future"), a Lebanese television musical competition similar to American Idol. On the show she won a gold medal in the *Tarab* category after singing a song by Umm Kulthum.

After this early success, Ajram began studying music with renowned Lebanese musicians. Although she was only 15 years old when she released her first album, Lebanon accepted her as a pop star. Her fourth album, *Ah w Noss* ("Yes, and a half"), was released on April 12, 2004, and was also an important marking point in Nancy's career. The album was very popular and solidified Nancy's position as an A-level star in the Arab music industry.

In 2005, Nancy Ajram became Coca-Cola's only star and official celebrity sponsor and spokesperson for the Middle East and North Africa. Her first Coke commercial was for her hit "Oul Tany Kida" (Say It Again) which was filmed with the international Italian director Luca Tomassini.

Lebanese filmmaker Nadine Labaki created a drama that portrayed Nancy in a mature role, which was very different from the youthful image of her songs and music videos. The film received a lot of positive reviews and Nancy's acting ability was greatly praised. Movie offers doubled for Nancy after this.

In addition to her singing and acting, in 2009 UNICEF chose Ajram to be the first female regional ambassador for the Middle East and North Africa.

(1) (2012). Nancy Ajram. *Lyrics Freak*.

www.lyricsfreak.com/n/nancy+ajram/biography.html

(2) (2009). UNICEF appoints singer Nancy Ajram as Regional Ambassador for the Middle East and North Africa. *UNICEF*.

http://www.unicef.org/media/media_51486.html