

The United States and the Middle East

Today, the U.S. need for oil, relationship with Israel, involvement in Iraq, and fears about terrorism have made the Middle East an increasingly critical area of U.S. involvement. *Shifting Sands: Balancing U.S. Interests in the Middle East* analyzes the mix of interests and values that have drawn the United States into the Middle East. This unit asks students to consider the principles behind America's presence in the Middle East. It provides students the opportunity to understand and evaluate U.S. policy both from the U.S. and Middle Eastern perspectives.



Student readings examine the history of Middle East politics with an emphasis on the involvement of the United States, and the current opportunities and challenges facing the United States in its relationship to the Middle East. Readings cover Israel-Palestine, the Iranian Revolution, the role of oil in geopolitics, and the increasing appeal of political Islam. The unit provides students with a comprehensive yet compact introduction to this critically important area of the world.

In addition to student readings, the materials contain role plays, lesson plans, and resources for constructing cooperative learning and simulations. The lessons are described in greater detail on the reverse. These materials challenge students to:

- read, understand, and interpret maps
- evaluate and work with primary sources
- understand causation in historical events
- explore Middle Eastern views of the United States
- analyze and evaluate multiple perspectives on an issue
- explore relationships between history and current issues
- communicate in written and oral presentations
- collaborate with peers

Choices curricula offer teachers a flexible resource for covering course material while actively engaging students and developing skills in critical thinking, deliberative discourse, persuasive writing, and informed civic participation. Teachers may choose to use all or only sections of readings and lesson plans to suit their classrooms.

Ordering Information

Teacher sets (consisting of a student text and a teacher resource book) are available for \$20 each. Permission is granted to duplicate and distribute the student text and handouts for classroom use with appropriate credit given. Duplicates may not be resold. Classroom sets (15 or more student texts) may be ordered at \$9.75 per copy. A teacher resource book is included free with each classroom set. Teacher sets can also be downloaded for \$16 each.

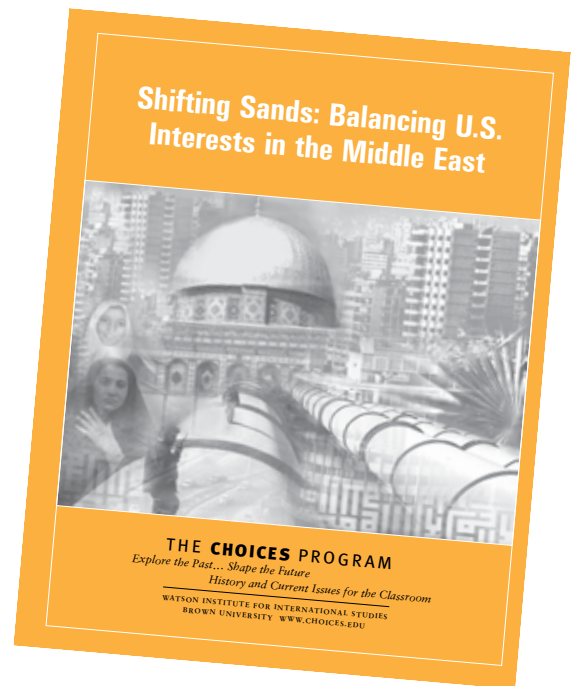
Print and download copies may be ordered at www.choices.edu/middleeast or by calling (401) 863-3155.

Shifting Sands: Balancing U.S. Interests in the Middle East

What factors should shape U.S. policy in the Middle East?

Shifting Sands: Balancing U.S. Interests in the Middle East explores how the oil resources of the Persian Gulf, our attachment to Israel, the rise of political Islam, and fears of terrorism have made the Middle East so important to the United States.

Using primary sources, readings, maps, and simulations, students examine the history of U.S. involvement in the Middle East from the early twentieth century to the present. Students consider the principles and assumptions behind the U.S. role in the Middle East in a role play simulation in which they act as advocates for four policy alternatives.



LESSON IN DETAIL

Views From the Middle East

In order for students to understand the Middle East from an international perspective, this lesson provides short background material on several prominent Middle Eastern leaders. In small groups, students then role play a summit in which the students—acting as the leaders—share their goals and concerns. An optional supplement to the lesson employs Google Earth software to provide additional information, particularly helpful for visual learners.

“For sixty years, my country, the United States, pursued stability at the expense of democracy in the Middle East, and we achieved neither.”

— U.S. Sec. of State Condoleezza Rice

Resources include excerpts of literature from Iran, Israel, Palestine, and Turkey, political cartoons, selected quotations from leaders and policy makers, graphic organizers to use with the readings, a large number of historical maps, and primary sources relevant to the partition of Palestine in 1947.

Lessons

The Iranian Revolution

Students form hypotheses about the causes of the Iranian revolution by exploring significant events in Iranian history.

Political Geography of the Middle East

Using historical maps which show border changes, students understand the geography of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The Partition of Palestine

Students tackle the difficult task of partitioning Palestine in 1947 using contemporaneous data.

Views From the Middle East

Middle Eastern Literature

Through a reading of four excerpts from short stories, students assess the interplay among literature, politics, and culture in the Middle East.

Role Playing the Four Options

Students work cooperatively to develop and present four distinct policy options for the United States. A fourth group plays the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which questions and evaluates the option groups.

Weighing Recommendations for U.S. Policy

Following deliberation with classmates, students articulate their own policy option and test it against hypothetical crises.