

Synopsis: The Arab-American Odyssey

Using the metaphor of the mosaic, the Arab-American Odyssey module tells a story about inter-cultural understanding through the experiences of two boys, Ihsan and Johnny. Ihsan is of Iraqi descent, and he finds his adjustment to a new school to be somewhat difficult, as he gets teased and singled out in ways that make him uncomfortable. Ihsan is befriended by a boy named Johnny, and the two become friends as Johnny enjoys the opportunity to learn about Ihsan's heritage and culture. The story culminates as Johnny faces a conflict, though, in which he must decide what friendship truly means to him. Both boys learn that deep values of family, love, and support are part of all the diverse people and cultures that make up the United States of America.

Characters:

Ihsan classmate, later elementary school

Johnny classmate, later elementary school

Ihsan's mother

Johnny's mother

Kevin class bully

Ms. Eisenhart teacher

Ihsan's Grandma

Major Themes:

Friendship & Courage: As a white boy in a majority-white setting, Johnny becomes friends with the newcomer, Ihsan, but finds himself forced to stand up to his old friends on behalf of his new one. Will he take the risk and, if he does, how will he do it?

Arab Culture: Students will read the story of an Iraqi family and their immigration to the United States, while also getting a sense of the richness of their cultural heritage.

Fitting In: The story dramatizes the tensions that can arise between the desire to fit in at school, or in social situations, and the importance of maintaining a strong sense of who we are and what we believe in. Johnny and Ihsan both must think deeply about who they are, and what they believe in, and they both face tests regarding how to maintain their sense of themselves while trying to get along with others.

GLECs

Related 4th Grade GLCE Requirements

R.CM.04.01 Connect personal knowledge, experiences, and understanding of the world to themes and perspectives in text through oral and written responses. *(Most of the thought questions at the bottom of each page directly address the above requirement. The questions are very simple yet relevant to the fourth grade age group, and are centered around both personal expression and*

interesting group discussions).

R.NT.04.01-04 – Narrative Text. [Analyzing the meaning, themes, human experience, and textual effects in quality literature.]
(This is a narrative selection with characters that have motivations and clearly demonstrates the first person point of view).

W.PR.04.01 Set a purpose, consider audience, and replicate authors' styles and patterns when writing a narrative or informational piece.

C5.O.1 Explain responsibilities of citizenship (e.g., initiating changes in laws or policy, holding public office, respecting the law, being informed and attentive to public issues, paying taxes, registering to vote and voting knowledgeably, serving as a juror).

Persuasive Communication: Communicate a reasoned position on a public issue.

R.CS.04.01 develop, discuss, and apply individual and shared standards using student/class created rubrics and begin to assess the quality, accuracy, and relevance of their own writing and the writing of others.

R.AT.04.01 be enthusiastic about reading and do substantial reading and writing on their own.

R.NT.04.01-04 – Narrative Text. [Analyzing the meaning, themes, human experience, and textual effects in quality literature.]
(This is a narrative selection with characters that have motivations and clearly demonstrates the first person point of view).

W.PR.04.01 Set a purpose, consider audience, and replicate authors' styles and patterns when writing a narrative or informational piece.

W.PS.04.01 exhibit personal style and voice to enhance the written message...

W.GR.04.01 in the context of writing, correctly use simple and compound sentences; direct and indirect objects; prepositional phrases; adjectives; common and proper nouns as subjects and objects; pronouns as subject and objects; pronouns as antecedents; regular and irregular verbs; hyphens between syllables; apostrophes in contractions; and commas in salutations to set off words; phrases and dialogues; quotation marks or italics to identify titles or names.

L.RP.04.04 combine skills to reveal strengthening literacy (e.g., viewing then analyzing in writing, listening then giving an opinion orally).

Related 5TH Grade Requirements

R.NT.05.03 analyze how characters' traits and setting define plot, climax, the role of dialogue, and how problems are resolved.

R.CM.05.01 connect personal knowledge, experiences, and understanding of the world to themes and perspectives in text through oral and written responses.

R.CM.05.03 analyze global themes, universal truths, and principles within and across text to create a deeper understanding by drawing conclusions, making inferences, and synthesizing.

R.CS.05.01 develop, discuss, and apply individual and shared standards using student/class created rubrics to assess the quality and accuracy of their own writing and the writing of others; identify attainment of intended purpose to interpret authors' viewpoints and determine effect on classroom or school-wide audiences.

W.PS.05.01 exhibit personal style and voice to enhance the written message in both narrative (e.g., personification, humor, element of surprise) and informational writing (e.g., emotional appeal, strong opinion, credible support).

W.SP.05.01 in the context of writing, correctly spell frequently encountered words (e.g., roots, inflections, prefixes, suffixes, multi-syllabic); for less frequently encountered words, use structural cues (e.g., letter/sound, rime, morphemic) and environmental sources (e.g., word walls, word lists, dictionaries, spell checkers).

L.RP.05.04 combine skills to reveal strengthening literacy (e.g., viewing then analyzing in writing, listening then paraphrasing in writing).

L.RP.05.05 respond to and go beyond the information given by a speaker, making inferences and drawing appropriate conclusions.