

UNIT PLAN BRAINSTORM



Celebrating Iran (Social Studies, History)

Embark on a research project centered on Persian and Iranian art! First, have a conversation with your class about the history of Iran. With your students, identify Iran on a map and take time to learn about their food, language and culture. Then, conduct some research about places in your community where your class can see Persian art. For those that live in New York City, this may be the Iranian Film Festival at IFC Center or the large collection of Iranian Art at NYU's Grey Art Museum. Task your students with going to one of these places (or go together on a class field trip) and picking one piece of art that resonates with them. Afterwards, have each student present on the piece of art they experienced and ask them to draw connections between the artwork and Persian culture. Throughout the year, keep track of any events in your city or community celebrating Iranian culture and heritage so your class can support them!

To support this unit, use the Context to Consider page in the Learn and Engage section.

All in the Family (Theater, English Language Arts, Social Studies)

Every family has a story to tell. Prompt your students to create a theatrical retelling inspired by a famous family, like the Jacksons from American pop culture, the Medicis from Italian history or the Soong family from Chinese politics. To begin, ask your students to research a famous historical family and draw out their family tree on a piece of paper. Students may also choose to draw a tree based on their biological or chosen family. Next, task them with choosing a relationship on their tree between two people that they want to explore more. Ask them to consider how these two people might interact with questions like: *How did they meet? What did they think of each other?* and *How did they spend time together?* Based on learned historical context, and using their imagination to build on that information, invite each student to write a scene between their two familial characters. This may be an explosive family drama, a romantic tragedy or a comedic adventure. Introduce theatrical elements like stage directions, character voices and monologue as tools for the class to utilize in their writing. To culminate, put on a mini play festival where each student stages a reading of their work and brings their own history to life.

To support this unit, use the My Anthem of Awesomeness Creativity Page in the Discover and Create section.

Turn Off the Dark (Theater, English Language Arts, Visual Arts)

Hit the lights because it's time to create an adaptation of a story by playing with shadows! To get started, choose a story that you and your class would like to adapt. This could be a book, a fable or short story, or a well-known legend. Put your students in small groups. Task one group with creating the shadow puppets for all the characters in the story. They can do this by creating cutouts with paper, using their hands or body, experimenting with found objects in the classroom or a combination of all the above! Other breakout groups can create the music for the show, design projections or backdrops, write the script or create the voices for all the puppets. When each team is done, invite groups to come together and combine every element to create a show. Finish the unit by presenting your unique shadow show to another class or taking a video of it to post online.

To support this unit, use the Shadow Lab Activity in the Discover and Create section.