

Guide For Teachers

Contemporary World

BLOOD IS BLOOD

Where do *you* stand?

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2010



Overview

This unit will help students recognize that the problems and issues that characterize the contemporary world are interconnected and multidimensional.

General Objective / Purpose

The following unit, based on the book / DVD *Blood is Blood*, is for Secondary students of Contemporary World and their teachers. By learning about the conflict in the Middle East (applicable to tribal wars that have wreaked havoc elsewhere around the globe: Ireland, the former Yugoslavia, Russia, Darfur, and Zimbabwe, for example) this unit encourages students to (1) grasp the complexity of the world today and be open to the diversity of the societies that make it up; (2) develop their critical judgment by studying a problem of the contemporary world – in this case, the Middle East; and (3) participate as responsible citizens in social debate.

It is incumbent upon teachers undertaking this unit to refer to their curriculum guides and to target objectives appropriate for the students they teach. Teachers should feel free to adapt the lessons and resources to suit the needs and abilities of their students. Using the unit in its entirety may necessitate multiple viewings of the video.

Each activity begins with a lead-in for teachers (concepts, relevant vocabulary for students) followed by a step-by-step lesson plan. Note that the extension activity, included at the end of some lessons, is optional.

Target Audience/Grade Level(s)

- Secondary Cycle Two students of the Contemporary World program (Quebec)
- Senior Secondary students of World History/Geography

Specific Objectives

Upon completion of this unit, students will have:

- interpreted a contemporary world problem and taken a position on it
- examined their own preconceptions as well as the influence of the media on their vision of the world and on societies
- become aware of their role in society and of their responsibilities as citizens

Required Materials

- Class set of *Blood is Blood* (optional but recommended)
- DVD / *Blood is Blood*

ACTIVITY 1

Conflict: An Introduction

One class period

1. Lead-in:

Humans fight over a variety of things: money, religion, politics, sports. Conflict is a quintessential aspect of human interaction. On the world stage, however, conflict is often complicated. It has many tentacles. Some of the major sources of conflict include territory, ideology, dynastic legitimacy, religion, language, ethnicity, self-determination, resources, markets, dominance, equality, revenge, or any combination of these.

To understand what is going on in any of the hotbeds of conflict around the world, one must be knowledgeable about the issues surrounding the conflict. Conflict resolution is not possible without understanding the underlying cause(s) of the conflict. What commodities are the opposing parties arguing for? What values are at stake?

Conflict may be broken down into these types:

- a) Episodic conflict: isolated incident related to a specific issue
- b) Issue-based conflict: persistent incompatibility over a contested issue
- c) Identity-based conflict: unequivocal disaccord in which the moves of the other side are interpreted on the basis of hostile motives
- d) Power conflict - disagreement is more about the subordination (or extinction) of the 'other' rather than demarcation from the 'other'

It is important to note that the absence of violence does not necessarily imply an absence of conflict. Conflict-ing interests may be pursued without violence or coercion. However, the existence of non-violent conflict must be not only be recognized by the parties involved, it should be acknowledged, wherever possible, by the global community. The characteristics of a violent conflict, on the other hand, include the use of force, physical damage and human casualties.

2. Lesson:

a) Introduce/review the 4 types of conflict with the class.

b) Take students to the library or to the computer lab, and ask them to find a newspaper article focusing on a particular international conflict and paste it into their notebook (or journal). Have them describe the conflict (to the best of their ability), identifying the principal players as well as the causes and consequences of it. What is each “side” asking for? Are the demands of each reasonable or unreasonable? Explain. What do they think about the way in which the conflict was resolved, if it was resolved?

ACTIVITY 2

Spotlight on the Middle East

One to three class periods

Lead-in/Lesson:

- Begin by asking students to reveal their prior knowledge about the conflict in the Middle East. Have they ever come across news reports about it? (print media, radio, TV). What do they know about the conflict?
- Spend one class period in the computer lab researching “conflict in the Middle East” using an Internet search engine such as Google. Let students work in pairs.
- Once students have completed their research, assign them the task of converting this information into a visual representation:
 - a) Have each student-pair prepare one large collage in words and images representing the hotbed of conflict. They may use Bristol board, magazine and newspaper clippings, and images from the Internet for their project. The collage should showcase/illustrate the central conflict and demonstrate their understanding of it.

OR

- b) Have each student in the pair prepare his/her own collage in words and images representing one “side” in the conflict. They may use Bristol board, magazine and newspaper clippings, and images from the Internet for their project. The two collages should illustrate the conflicting points of view and demonstrate the students’ understanding of it.
- Set aside one or two class periods for the presentations, depending on the level of the students and how detailed the teachers wish them to be. Students should explain the conflict in their own words with reference to their collage.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Repeat the same activity using a different hotbed of conflict. Have students consult the BBC website below to help them:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/this_world/one_day_of_war/default.stm

ACTIVITY 3

Viewing the Video & Follow-up Discussion

One class period

1. Lead-in:

The two Montreal poets who have created *Blood is Blood* have a unique relationship. They are friends and creative collaborators, but they also sit on opposite sides of the fence where religion is concerned: Endre is Jewish and a child of Holocaust survivors; Carolyn, a Lebanese Christian with family still living there. When another war erupted in Lebanon in the summer of 2006 and tensions in the Middle East escalated, the deep-seated cultural baggage from their respective families began to resurface.

For more details and to help prepare the class for the viewing of the DVD, consult the document called “History of Our Artistic Collaboration” on the website.

2. Lesson:

- Introduce students to the principal voices in the DVD they are about to view. Teachers may choose to read the introduction as a class (in the book) or have students prepare ahead of time by consulting the website the night before class.
- Distribute and read aloud the questions on the handout called “Viewing Notes.” (Appendix A).
- Tell students that they will be viewing *Blood is Blood* twice, the first time for the impact; the second, taking time to fill in their note sheet.
- Afterwards, lead the class in a discussion. Students may refer to their notes, ask questions, and or share their general observations with the class.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Ask students to consider what type of conflict is being presented in Blood is Blood (use the definitions provided in Activity 1):

- Where in the text/DVD is this demonstrated?
- Is there resolution? Why or why not?
- Based on what you have learned so far, do you think that the Middle East conflict can be resolved?
- If so, how? If not, why not?

ACTIVITY 4

Spotlight on the 2006 Lebanon War: Expanding Your Understanding

One class period

1. Lead-in/Lesson:

- (Spend the first 10-15 minutes in the computer lab consulting the Blood is Blood website; alternately, teachers can have students read the required document for homework the night before)
- Instruct students to consult the short article called “The 2006 Lebanon War” in the folder called GENESIS at www.bloodisblood.com
- Return to class
- Distribute and review Appendix B with your students.
- View the DVD
- Instruct students to respond to the questions. This may be done individually while viewing the film or in pairs afterwards. Having a class set of books for consultation will simplify this activity. Students may also consult their “Viewing Notes” (see Activity 3).
- Correct as a class or collect and evaluate.

ACTIVITY 5A

Distinguishing Between Fact and Opinion

1. Lead-in:

Issues of the contemporary world are made public through a variety of media, which may present opposing viewpoints or biased information. Readers/viewers are therefore called upon to exercise critical judgment regarding their sources. They must not only gather information, but also process it and learn to distinguish between fact and opinion before taking a position on an issue.

2. Lesson:

- a) Discuss/review bias in the media with the class. (Distribute Appendix C)
- b) Instruct students to look for news stories about Day 1 (July 12, 2006) of the Israel- Lebanon War. Tell them to find at least three different stories from three different newspapers. Cut them out and paste them into their journal.
- c) Have students read each article carefully, highlighting any words, phrases or paragraphs that appear biased in any way. Compare and contrast the different versions. Which version seems to be the most objective? Why? Instruct students to note their opinions in writing.

EXTENSION ACTIVITY

Follow up the previous activity with a class discussion in which students share their observations.

ACTIVITY 5B

Bank of Exercises

Teachers are free to use the following suggestions as short exercises or expand them into major research activities. They may also adapt them for use with other hotbeds of conflict around the world. Students may work individually or in groups.

1. The land variously called Israel and Palestine at different times in history is a small (10,000 square miles at present) area at the eastern end of the Mediterranean Sea. During its long history, its area, population and ownership have varied a great deal. The borders of present-day Israel were shaped by three factors: the British mandate on Palestine; the outcome of the Israeli War of Independence of 1948-1949 (the first of the Arab-Israeli wars of the 20th Century); and the consequence of the Six Day War of 1967 (the third Arab-Israeli war). Create a series of maps tracking the border changes of this territory at different times in history. What did the region look like before 1917? after 1948? after 1967?
2. Visit the Blood is Blood website for a detailed timeline of the conflict in the Middle East. Using this as a model, create your own timeline of recent Israeli- Palestinian history from 1917 to the present day.
3. The West Bank is a landlocked territory and is the eastern part of the Palestinian territories; on the west bank of the Jordan River in the Middle East. To the west, north, and south, the West Bank shares borders with the state of Israel. To the east, across the Jordan River, lies the country of Jordan. The West Bank also contains a significant coastline along the western bank of the Dead Sea. The West Bank was taken control of by Israel, during the Six-Day War in June 1967. With the exception of East Jerusalem and the former Israeli - Jordanian “no man’s land”, the West Bank was not annexed by Israel. Most of the residents are Arabs, although a large number of Israeli settlements have been built in the region since 1967. As of July 2010, the ethnic breakdown in the West Bank was as follows: P a l e s t i n i a n A r a b a n d o t h e r 83%, J e w i s h 17%. As of July 2010, the religious breakdown in the West Bank was as follows: M u s l i m 75% (predom inantly Sunni), J e w i s h 17%, C h r i s t i a n a n d o t h e r 8% (source: CIA government library website).

Research life in the West Bank. Compare and contrast what is it like to live there if you are (a) Israeli (b) Arab. Present in essay form or as a PowerPoint presentation. (For an “inside” look at the situation, go to YouTube and type in phrases such as “Life in the West Bank.”)
4. Choose a significant date in the history of the Middle East conflict and write a detailed essay exploring the issues at the heart of the matter. Alternately, create a PowerPoint presentation and present your findings orally to the class. Individually or in pairs.

5. Take a position on the Middle East conflict and demonstrate your engagement by:
- creating and hosting a blog (<https://www.blogger.com/start>)
 - creating a weekly student discussion group (or joining a pre-existing one) to discuss ongoing developments in the region (i.e. news items, recent events, etc.)
 - attending a meeting of an established dialogue group such as the Montreal Dialogue Group <http://www.dialoguegroup.org/> and reporting what happened at that meeting (orally or in writing)
 - participating in a class debate: Is Peace possible in the Middle East?
 - Participating in a class debate: Is it right for other parties (e.g. countries with “special” interests) to intervene or should the Arabs and Israelis be left to sort out their own conflicts?

APPENDICES

Student Worksheets and Handouts

Appendix A: Viewing Notes

Appendix B: Spotlight on the 2006 Lebanon War / Expanding your Understanding

Appendix C: Introduction to Media Bias

Appendix D: Additional Resources on the Arab / Israeli Conflict

APPENDIX A

Viewing Notes

Name: _____

Answer as many questions as you can while viewing the video. Make a note of anything you do not understand on the back of this sheet.

1. What is the title? _____

2. Where does the first scene take place? _____

3. Identify the opening four sounds: _____

4. What part of world is illustrated on the first map? _____

5. List the five place names that appear on the first map: _____

6. What are the two performers doing during the “I was here first” segment? _____

7. What appears above the performers during the “My God can beat up your God” segment?

8. What images do you see during the “I killed you / No, I killed you” segment?

9. What two objects are on the table during the “We are Chosen / We are the desert dwellers” segment?

10. Where are the two performers during the “Bullets / Hail / This brutal reign / In crosshairs we meet” segment?

11. What happens to their faces during the “Your people / Your people” segment?

12. What words appear on the screen when the cracked clay faces are facing each other?

13. What two objects appear during the “You flaunted your star / You flaunted your moon” segment?

14. What country’s map appears during the “Here it is easy” segment? _____

15. List the ten plagues: _____

16. Where are the performers during the “We are / we are not” segment?

17. Where are they during the “You are the mystic lyre / you are the mystic lute” segment?

18. Where does the “One is enough” segment take place? _____

19. How are the performers positioned during the “On our separate balconies” segment?

20. Where does the final scene take place?

Spotlight on the 2006 Lebanon War

Expanding your Understanding

Answer the following questions in your journal / notebook. You may consult your Viewing Notes.

1. In what ways can you interpret the title Blood is Blood?
2. Why do you think Blood is Blood begins in a park? What mood is created by the park images? How is it created? (consider image/ sound /music)
3. Why do you think the poets created the first segment as a conflict between children?
4. Who is Yaweh? Who is Allah?
5. Why do you think the poets made it a poem for two voices?
6. Why do you think the text is read sometimes in solo, sometimes in harmony, and sometimes in cacophony?
7. In the “Your People” section, list the accusations hurled at each other. What are they based on? (e.g. history, religion, politics, personal prejudice, myth)
8. What is suggested in the “Perhaps if we were naked” segment?
9. What do the scimitar and the Star of David represent?
10. In what ways is the “God Damn” segment a prayer and a curse?
11. During what Jewish holiday do the Ten Plagues appear?
12. What is a wartime emergency measure?
13. What effect is created in the segment that combines the Ten Plagues of Passover and the wartime emergency provisions? Why do you think the poets did this?
14. How does the tone of the piece change with the “We germinate...” segment?
15. What does the final image signify?

Introduction to Media Bias

Despite the journalistic ideal of “objectivity,” every news story is influenced by the attitudes and background of its interviewers, writers, photographers and editors. Here are a few of the most common types of media bias.

Bias through selection and omission

Choosing to use or not to use a specific news item is a form of bias exercised by an editor. Moreover, within any given story, some details may be ignored, while others are included. These choices may lead readers or viewers to form a specific opinion about the event in question. Bias through omission is difficult to detect. The best way to do so is to compare news reports from a wide variety of sources.

Bias through placement

Newspaper readers tend to judge first page stories as being more significant than those buried in the back pages. Therefore the placement of an item affects what a reader or viewer thinks about its importance. Similarly, television and radio newscasts run the most important stories first and leave the less “significant” ones for the end.

Bias in the headlines

Headlines are the most-read part of a newspaper. In fact, many people read only the headlines. Of them, most will scan nearly all the headlines in a newspaper. While a headline summarizes the key point of the story, it may also, through subtlety, deliver hidden biases and prejudices: It can convey excitement where little exists; it can suggest approval or condemnation.

Bias by photos, captions and camera angles

A newspaper or magazine can choose photos to influence public opinion about anything (e.g. a candidate for election). Some photographs may flatter; others may cast a negative light on someone by choosing a shot that is unflattering. The same is true for television. (Case in point: The estimated 80 million viewers who watched the 1960 Kennedy-Nixon debate on television believed that Kennedy won the debate, while radio listeners thought Nixon had. On TV, Kennedy came across looking tanned, relaxed and confident while his opponent, whose mother apparently called after the debate to ask if he was sick, appeared pale and underweight). Captions that newspapers run below photos are also potential sources of bias.

Bias through use of names and titles

News media often use labels and titles to describe people, places, and events. The same person may be identified by one news source as an “ex-con” but by another as someone who “served time twenty years ago for a minor offense.” Same individual, different slant.

Bias through statistics and crowd counts

Numbers are sometimes inflated to make a disaster seem more spectacular and, by extension, more newsworthy.

Bias by source control

It is always essential to know who has provided the news item. Is the information supplied by a reporter, an eyewitness, police or fire officials, executives, or elected or appointed government officials? Each of these people may have a particular bias that is introduced into the story. Companies and public relations directors supply news outlets with “puff pieces” through news releases, photos or videos. Often news outlets depend on pseudo-events (demonstrations, sit-ins, ribbon cuttings, speeches and ceremonies) that take place mainly to gain news coverage.

Bias through word choice and tone

The use of positive or negative words or words with a particular connotation can strongly influence the reader or viewer. Consider the difference in nuance between the terms “terrorist” and “freedom fighter.”

- adapted from the Media Awareness Network

Additional Resources on the Arab-Israeli Conflict

Films

Lemon Tree (Israel, 2008) / Based on actual events, the story of a Palestinian widow who must defend her lemon tree field when a new Israeli Defense Minister moves next to her and threatens to have her lemon grove torn down.

The Band's Visit (Israel, 2007). A band comprised of members of the Egyptian police force head to Israel to play at the inaugural ceremony of an Arab arts center, only to find themselves lost in the wrong town.

Amreeka (France, 2009). Muna, a single mother in Ramallah, has applied for a visa to the US. When it comes, her son Fadi, an excellent student, convinces her they should go. After an incident at customs begins their exile badly, they join Muna's sister and family in Illinois.

Slingshot (Palestine/U.S.A, 2008) Hip Hop braids together the stories of young Palestinians living in Gaza, the West Bank and inside Israel as they discover Hip Hop and employ it as a tool to surmount divisions imposed by occupation and poverty. From internal checkpoints and Separation Walls to gender norms and generational differences, this is the story of young people crossing the borders that separate them.

Adam's Wall (Canada, 2007). Adam, a Jewish teenager and Yasmine, a young Lebanese girl, fall in love. Their relationship is overshadowed by the ongoing feud between their families, but also by the raging conflict in the Middle East. From the heart of Mile End, Montreal's multicultural neighborhood, comes this modern-day story of two lovers fighting against the walls that separate them.

Knowledge is the Beginning (Germany, 2005). The story of the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, where young Arabs and Jews perform and live side by side. It is a film about what music can do; the way it can transcend cultural barriers, bring people together, defeat prejudice and overcome religious and political differences. It also demonstrates the problems that crop up occasionally and how music can help people from different points of view find common ground. For Daniel Barenboim, founder of the ensemble, the orchestra is a symbol for what could be achieved in the Middle East. Barenboim has been an outspoken critic of the Israeli settlements and of Israel's government since Rabin. He is also a supporter of Palestinian rights.

Budrus (2010) is a feature documentary film about a Palestinian community organizer, Ayed Morrar, who unites local Fatah and Hamas members along with Israeli supporters in an unarmed movement to save his village of Budrus from destruction by Israel's Separation Barrier. Success eludes them until his 15-year-old daughter launches a women's contingent that quickly moves to the front lines. Struggling side by side, father and daughter unleash an inspiring, yet little-known, movement in the Occupied Palestinian Territories that is still gaining ground today. *Budrus* shines a light on people who choose nonviolence to confront a threat. The movie is directed by award-winning filmmaker Julia Bacha and produced by Bacha, Palestinian journalist Rula Salameh, and filmmaker and human rights advocate Ronit Avni. While this film is about one Palestinian village, it tells a much bigger story about what is possible in the Middle East.

Worth Reading

Articles by Robert Fisk (available online)

Robert Fisk, born July 12, 1946 is an English writer and journalist from Maidstone, Kent. Middle East correspondent for *The Independent*, he has been based mainly in Beirut for more than 30 years. Fisk has been described by *The New York Times* as “probably the most famous foreign correspondent in Britain.” He has written at length on how much of contemporary conflict has its origin in lines drawn on maps: “I have spent my entire career — in Belfast and Sarajevo, in Beirut and Baghdad — watching the people within those borders burn.” Fisk has been living in Beirut since 1976, and was present in Beirut throughout the Lebanese civil war. He was one of the first journalists to visit the scene of the Sabra and Shatila massacre in Lebanon, as well as the Syrian Hama Massacre. His book on the Lebanese conflict, *Pity the Nation*, was first published in 1990. Fisk also reported on the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Kosovo war, the Algerian civil war, and the Iran-Iraq War.

Books

DeNiro's Game, Rawi Hage (House of Anansi, 2006). The novel traces the different paths that Bassam and George, lifelong friends living in wartorn Beirut, follow as they face the difficult choice of whether to stay in Beirut and get involved in organized crime, or leave Lebanon and build a new life in another country.

Other Avenues to Explore

Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East (CJPME): a non-profit and secular organization bringing together men and women of all backgrounds who strive to see justice and peace take root again in the Middle East. It seeks to empower decision-makers to view all sides with fairness and to promote equitable and sustainable development of the region.

www.cjpme.org info@cjpme.org

Montreal Dialogue Group: a social justice organization based in Montreal, Quebec (Canada) to provide inter-religious dialogues. The Group takes dialogue into the public sphere through sponsorship of programs that celebrate diverse cultures in Montreal. The Montreal Dialogue Group was founded in January 2003 by Nada Sefian, a Palestinian Muslim born in Lebanon and Ronit Yorosky, a Canadian-Israeli Jew. <http://www.dialoguegroup.org>

Arab Festival of the Arts

<http://www.festivalarabe.com>

Toronto Jewish Film Festival

<http://www.tjff.com/>

Montreal Jewish Film Festival

<http://www.mjff.com/>

YouTube Links

There are a number of YouTube clips and documentaries focusing on the issue of settlements and evictions in the contested regions. Simply go to YouTube and type in key words and phrases. Here are two examples:

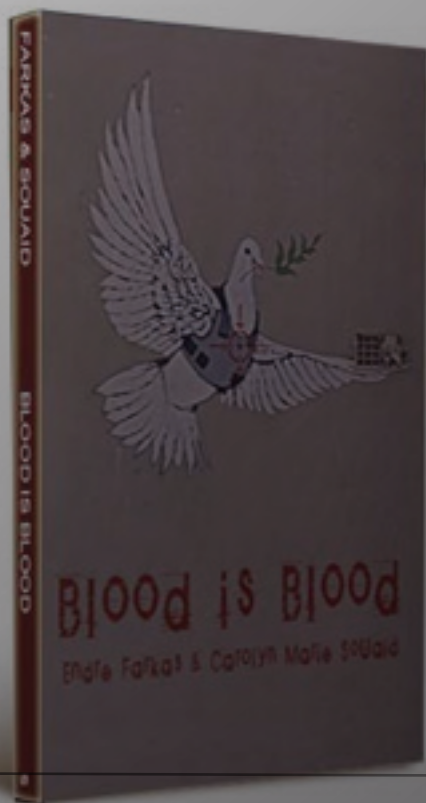
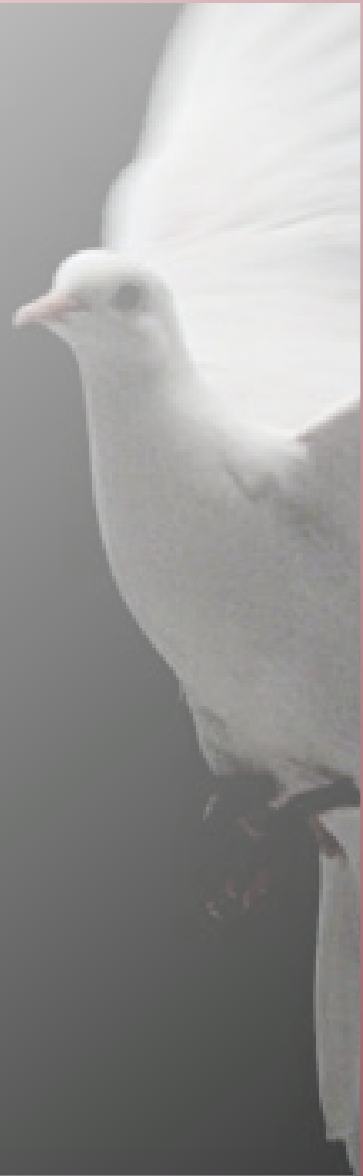
Unsettling Settlers (Israel/Palestine)

Documentary, 24 minutes

Showcases the complexities of the issue. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zhQlgmCwZLw>

Israel evicts Palestinian families-

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kdFVHlcxDGM&NR=1>



DVD
Video / Included

