

The Legacy of 9/11

Essential Question

How do political events impact the lived experiences of people?

Enduring Understanding

Political events have a lasting impact on international and national policies, communities, and the daily lives of individuals in America.

Learning Outcomes

Students will know:

- Anti-Muslim racism has social, economic, and emotional consequences for many Muslims.
- The Muslim experience is diverse and varies depending on race, ethnicity, and background.
- Racialization and stereotyping of the Muslim identity has caused non-Muslim groups (like Sikhs, Arab Christians, etc.) to experience anti-Muslim racism as well

Students will be able to:

- Analyze first-person narratives of Muslims of different backgrounds.
- Infer character traits and feelings by shifting points of view

Standards:

- **CCSS RL 3.3:** Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.
- **CCSS RL 3.6:** Distinguish their own point of view from that of the narrator or those of the characters.
- **SS.IS.7.3-5.** Identify a range of local problems and some ways in which people are trying to address these problems.
- **SS.H.2.3.** Describe how significant people, events, and developments have shaped their own community and region.

Vocabulary:

- Hijab
- Stereotype
- Discrimination
- Anti- Muslim Racism

Time:

50-60 Minutes

Materials:

- The Proudest Blue by Ibtihaj Muhammad (book, or [video](#) of read-aloud)
- POV [Worksheet](#)

Procedure:

1. **Hook:** Opener (5 min): Have you ever been made fun of for something that you loved?
2. **Mini-Lesson:** (15 min)
 - a. How are people affected by events in the news?
 1. Remind students of what they know about segregation in America, the backlash against Asian-Americans after the COVID-19 pandemic began, and invite them to share other stereotypes and discrimination they have noticed in their world.
 - b. A brief history of 9/11 [slide deck](#)
3. **Read-Aloud:** [The Proudest Blue](#), by Ibtihaj Muhammad (15 min)
 - a. Teachers read aloud the book to students using guiding questions to connect the plot to the experiences of Muslims in America post-9/11.
 - b. As you read, pause for students to stop and share their thoughts:
 1. Why do you think Faiza whispers the answer to her classmate?
 2. Why does the boy laugh/ yell at Asiya? How do you think that made Asiya feel?
 3. What can we learn from the way the characters respond to conflict?
 4. What does the color blue mean to Faiza?
4. **Point of View Activity** (15 min)
 - a. Remind students that although the story is told from Faiza's point of view, Asiya goes through big events throughout the story- how do you think Asiya feels throughout the story? Have students name the emotions they think Asiya feels throughout key points of the story.
 - b. Have students reflect on why bullying is harmful and how they can stand up against it.
5. **Closing** (5 min):
 - a. Exit Ticket: *How can we stop anti-Muslim racism in our world?*

Talking Points

- Even though racism against Muslims did not start with 9/11, the event served as a catalyst for an increase in discrimination against Muslims and people that ‘look Muslim.’
 - This [graph](#) shows the increase in hate crimes after 9/11
- Muslims are one of the most diverse religious groups in America. Muslims can be of any race, ethnicity, and culture. There is no singular way to ‘look Muslim,’ but because the Muslim identity has become racialized, people assume that all Muslims wear hijab, are brown-skinned, have a beard or wear certain types of clothing. People assume someone is Muslim based on how they look, not necessarily by their actual beliefs (which is what actually makes someone a Muslim).
 - This is why other groups, like Arab Christians or Sikhs are often thought to ‘look Muslim.’
- Even though Islam is a religion, not a race, the term Anti-Muslim racism is preferred over Islamophobia. Islamophobia implies an individual fear or hatred of Muslims or Islam, while racism takes into account how there are systemic issues that unjustly target Muslims and those that ‘look Muslim.’
- So, when addressing questions of whether the attackers are Muslim, or terrorists, it's important to recognize that Muslims are not a monolith. The actions of a small fraction of people do not represent the views and beliefs of an entire religion. The use of the word terrorist has been coded by the media and popular culture to associate the word with black and brown people. For more information, see ReThink Media's [guidance](#) on the use of the word terrorist.

Alternate Strategies & Resources

- Character Traits Activity:
 - Have students create a [Venn diagram](#) to compare and contrast the character traits of Asiya and Faiza, or themselves to one of the characters. What similarities and differences do they notice?
- Extension Activity:
 - Encourage students to reflect on the emotions that Asiya and Faiza felt when people made fun of Asiya's hijab. Have students write a [letter](#) to any of the characters (even the boy). What would they tell the characters if they could?