

Program Information	<i>My American Experience</i>		TEACHER NAME Nathan Floom	PROGRAM NAME MVCTC Aspire- College and Career Readiness ESOL Class		
	<i>Online or In-person</i>		NRS EFL(s) 4	TIME FRAME 1 class: 1-2 hours		
Instruction	<u>ESOL Standards</u>					
	Receptive		Productive		Interactive	
	1. Construct meaning from oral presentations and literary and informational text through level-appropriate listening, reading, and viewing.	4.1.3	3. Speak and write about level-appropriate complex literary and informational texts and topics.	4.3.2	2. Participate in level-appropriate oral and written exchanges of information, ideas, and analyses, in various social and academic contexts, responding to peer, audience, or reader comments and questions.	4.2.1
	6. Analyze and critique the arguments of others orally and in writing.		4. Construct level-appropriate oral and written claims and support them with reasoning and evidence.		5. Conduct research and evaluate and communicate findings to answer questions or solve problems.	
	7. Adapt language choices to purpose, task, and audience when speaking and writing.		7. Adapt language choices to purpose, task, and audience when speaking and writing.			
	8. Determine the meaning of words and phrases in oral presentations and literary and informational text.		9. Create clear and coherent level-appropriate speech and text.			
			10. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English to communicate in level-appropriate speech and writing.			
	<u>CAREER COMPONENTS</u>			<u>DIGITAL LITERACY</u>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual Education, Career, and Life Plans • Ongoing Assessment and Learning • Career Advising • Instruction and Job Training Services 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic Computer Skills • Internet and Communications • Productivity Software • Information Literacy 			

<p>LEARNER OUTCOME(S)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> S's will able to interpret and evaluate an article on immigrating to the U.S. using reading, writing, speaking, and critical thinking skills. 	<p>ASSESSMENT TOOLS/METHODS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing sample and evaluate student writing Comprehension question worksheet.
<p>LEARNER PRIOR KNOWLEDGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students should be prepared to carry on a discussion about the themes and preconceptions concerning American culture and custom. The article for this lesson is written by an immigrant, but is of a higher level for ESOL Students. Only recommended for advanced reading level 4+ A writing worksheet is provided with this lesson: it's recommended that students feel comfortable writing in basic complete sentences and have basic knowledge of paragraph structure. This lesson may be a good thing to do early in the term to help bond the class participants through a shared immigration experience. In this lesson the class will discuss the following concepts: the American "dream", how and why students immigrate to the U.S., preconceptions and realities of American culture, expectations and reality of America, etc. 	
<p>INSTRUCTIONAL ACTIVITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin class with carrying out an open discussion. Explain to S's that they will be reading an article written by someone who is similar to them who moved to the United States from Egypt. Questions for Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why did you come to the U.S.? What did you think about the U.S. before you came here? What were your expectations for living in America? Has it matched your current reality? What is one thing you were wrong about when it comes to the U.S.? What was it like for you to adjust to life in America? Introduce the article "What I Learned When I Move to America" by following standard pre-reading practice. Ask S's to interpret the title. Have them evaluate Essraa, the author and where she is from. Examine the title headings. Pass out/share and review the writing worksheet. Vocabulary: Students could write down any words that they don't know or understand while in groups and these words can be used to create a vocabulary list to review during this lesson. 	<p>RESOURCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "What I Learned When I Moved to America" by Essraa Nawar, from the Huffington Post: https://www.huffpost.com/entry/what-i-learned-when-i-mov_b_6412064 Writing Worksheet (In groups or individual): https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hsVRZYO6bOoPJhIghEMwyh6EXpJUcBBKbv3oNmpcxsl/edit?usp=sharing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break the students up into groups of 3-4, or whatever works best for your class. Instruct the S's to each take a turn reading the article in their groups. They are also responsible for writing their responses in the writing worksheet. • Once the groups have finished reading and have had time to write responses, take some time to debrief the article and have the S's share their thoughts from the worksheet. • Collect the worksheet and review responses. Take some of the best responses and post them on social media (with permission from students of course). 	
	<p>DIFFERENTIATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working together in small groups • Teacher-created assignment outside of textbook. • Technology: use laptops if in person, in online format students would already be using computers/phones 	
<p>Reflec tion</p>	<p>TEACHER REFLECTION/LESSON EVALUATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is a great lesson to do early on in a class with a group of new students. ESOL classes are composed of students from all around the world. This is a great opportunity to have them share a bit of their journey with others while practicing some great reading and writing skills. • Be aware that this reading is not one designed specifically for the classroom, so you may want to take some time to prepare some vocabulary review around it or follow a different method reading it depending on the students you have. • Encourage your students to really take some time to write and share their own story. Use this activity to create some social media content for your program! 	
	<p>ADDITIONAL INFORMATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are other articles and experiences like Essraa's out there. If you find them let me know: nfloom@mvctc.com 	

What I Learned When I Moved to America

01/04/2015 06:39 pm ET **Updated** Mar 06, 2015

By Essraa Nawar

I grew up in the Middle East living between Egypt and the Gulf region until I was 21. I did not see many differences between these countries in the overall lifestyle, religion and the language yet I experienced the uniqueness of each country's culture. While moving from any country (or even a place) to another is hard, it is not very challenging if moving within the Arab World. What I call real challenges include lifestyle adjustment, culture differences, and a whole different level of acceptance when someone with my background (Muslim Arab women) moves to America. You are not just learning and adjusting to one culture, but to hundreds of cultures to become a real global citizen. You are fighting external stereotypes about yourself and internal ones that are already embedded in your mind about America and the American people. Yet, it is your call on how to make your experience of living in the States positive or negative, rewarding or not, enriching or cumbersome depending on the way you define it and decide to make use of it.

The most important thing that needs to be kept in mind and to have the right balance is to embed yourself in the society you are living in, and to be a productive citizen without losing your identity and values.

It has been almost nine years since I moved to America and I thought it might be helpful for many people who live in the Middle East if I put together a list of things that I personally learned from the American people. On the other hand, it might be helpful for the American people to hear a Middle Eastern experience and perspective that contradicts what is usually seen in the mainstream media.

Of course, everyone's experience is different and unique, but I will try my best to touch on the major things that I know most of us struggle with or even have a totally different perspective on before we move here. Whether you are moving, visiting or just discussing politics, I think you will find these handy.

1. The Reality of the American Dream

Being an American citizen, resident or even working on your paperwork to move legally to this country, the reality is that nobody hands you anything as soon as you get out of the airplane. Yes, you can get a great house, a wonderful car and much more of all things that are branded as the "American Dream" but you have to earn it. Working really hard is one of the core values of American society, as well as sustaining a good work ethic that will help you maintain the lifestyle you are dreaming of. Whether you are an entrepreneur with business ideas, a college professor, a waiter or a barber, everyone can make a decent living that can support the desired reasonable lifestyle, but you have to earn it yourself. You can get where you want to be as long as you work hard, develop yourself, stay out of trouble and have a dream. The bottom line (and unlike what many might think) is that no one will hand you anything as nothing in this world is free.

2. This country is HUGE

The United States comprises (almost) half of the North American continent. Thus, you have to understand that the regular/mainstream Americans (neither the politicians nor the highly educated who are interested in worldwide problems) have enough to worry, think and talk about aside from what is happening in the Middle East and worldwide alike. For most of them, if you live in California and know what is happening in New York means that you are well-versed. In addition, a well-traveled person here is measured by how many states he or she has visited (there are 50 of those) — not even countries. Sometimes this is considered a disadvantage as Americans seem to be a little isolated from the rest of the world, but when I compare them to Australians and Canadians for example, I think that they are doing pretty well — but they still have enough to worry about in their day-to-day life and activities.

Most Americans want to enjoy cool places and the beauty they see around them. I am not talking about Disney, Universal Studios, Hollywood or other places (although those are cool too). I am talking about the beautiful nature everywhere in this country including snow caps, rivers, mountains, deserts, forests and oceans. Wherever you live or go visit, you will find a beautiful scene to look at, enjoy and admire.

You might think that the daily issues the Arab world is facing are really taking center stage of the American life; the truth is that some Americans are not even aware where Syria is located! Think about your day-to-day people living in your own country (especially the poorer ones), are they even interested to hear what is happening beyond their own neighborhoods?

3. Government and politics versus the regular people

The American people are (generally) very nice, welcoming and friendly people, but they can also make a comment that you might not like (aren't all humans that way?). Whether you are waiting in line for a train, in a doctor's office or in a grocery shop, you will find people randomly talking to you, commenting on something you are wearing, complimenting on how cute your kids are or even asking you where you come from. Thus, it is best to take out of your brain what you see on TV and hear in the news and treat the people for who they are. This of course applies both ways as the American people also need to take politics out of the equation and treat people for who they are. We all need to invest and enrich in our relationships with each other as humans.

4. Movies versus the reality

When I moved to the U.S., for some reason I thought that all I would see were people with tattoos on Harley Davidson motorcycles! This (of course) did not happen. While there are many great people who ride motorcycles (which is very cool by the way!), there are others who get involved in drugs, crimes and all sorts of things that we see in the movies. There are also millions of highly educated people, religious leaders, artists, singers and people with families and children that want to maintain a good life. You are free to choose your community but it will be your call and your choices that will define your experience and will add tremendously to who you are.

You will also find people who are highly tolerant and accepting, and others who are brainwashed by the media and do not have as much of a level of acceptance and tolerance. Although it is unfair at times, one should always be ready and prepared to have a conversation that might change a perspective or a misconception of one person forever.

5. East and West Coast versus the Midwest

The East and West coasts of the United States are very different than the states in the middle of the country. Immigrants tend to prefer the coasts for some reason. Thus, if you ever plan to move, you might want to consider one of the coasts as it will be very easy for you to find your favorite ethnic food, your mosque, temple or church or even get involved with your community. I personally have been involved with the Italian American Community, the Egyptian American Community, the Sikh Indian American community and many others communities. There is even an area in California that is commonly known as Little Arabia because of the many Arab businesses and restaurants opened in this area. Chinatown and Little Saigon serving other ethnic groups are also quite close. While all of these communities have the American values embedded in them, they are striving to maintain their heritage, culture and identities in which I do not see anything wrong with that. In fact, I think it is really amazing how culturally diverse this country is, and people still get along. (most of the time!)

6. The real meaning of freedom

While you are free to wear, pray, worship, eat, look and behave the way you want, you are always expected to follow rules and obey the law. The application of the law is one of the things that I deeply respect about this country and in most cases (there are exceptions of course) it is applied on everybody whether you are a CEO of a major company or a small worker in a factory. Freedom does not mean to cut roads, burn cars, not stopping for a lawful order, but it means that you can take the mayor to court if he did something wrong to you and win your case.

7. Being American does *not* mean that you are a White person with blond hair and blue eyes

For some reason, the media has tricked us into believing that all Americans are white, thus when I came here I was kind of shocked to see people from different ethnicities and backgrounds that are Americans too. They all hold the same values of family, hard work and good citizenship. You will see even Chinese Americans serving at the Transportation Security Administration at airports, Sikh Americans serving in the Army while wearing their turbans and highly accomplished Egyptian Americans serving in the U.S. government. This is important for all of us to understand especially with America's Demographic Transformation in the next few decades.

Before I moved to America, I do not recall that I ever used the words diversity and/or race in my life. In the Muslim countries (specifically) and the Middle East in general, you are never defined by the color of your skin and it is considered rude and actually a kind of a "sin" in some cultures/religions to do that. In any official paperwork, we are never asked about our race or skin color. Of course, the history and the demographics of these countries are very different compared to the United States but there we are all basically the same and we are ultimately defined by our education and social/family status not at all with the color of our skin nor where are we originally from (Turkish decent for example..). When I went back for vacation a year ago and I used the word black (which I rarely use anyway) casually in one of my conversations, people were shocked.

Being American does not depend on how you look or where you originally came from but what you give to this country. The concept of diversity and race is a shared value in the American system.

8. Middle Eastern people are lucky

Contradicting what thousands might think, Middle Eastern people are lucky (at least in some ways). Because of the fact that labor is very cheap, each family — even the middle class — has a maid or two, someone to drive their car (or cars), run their errands and buy their groceries. Everything can be delivered to your house 24/7, from a sandwich you are craving in the middle of the night to an urgent medicine that you need for your sick child. People are looking for and finding creative ways to make money, thus they are providing cheap services that make lives easier. You do not necessarily think about it until you move out and realize how hard it is to depend on yourself for (literally) everything, and how expensive it is to even hire someone to clean your house or apartment on a regular basis (even if you are a middle class, upper middle class or rich person).

Even if you think about the Arabic versus the English languages, you will find that anyone who grew up in any of the Arab countries took basic education of the English language. Thus, you will find that the majority of people coming from the Middle East have a basic understanding of the English language and can communicate with few simple words. On the other hand, it is very rare to find someone who grew up exclusively in America with basic understanding of the Arabic Language.

I think that Middle Easterners are very lucky in that regard, but it almost seems as if no one really pays attention to these advantages.

My American Experience Writing Worksheet

Description: Each of us here in class has come from a different country. Some have come here by choice: for travel, for work, or for opportunity. Others have had no choice. In this assignment you and your group will share your experience of moving to the U.S.

Reading: Read [“What I Learned When I Moved to America” by Essraa Nawar](#). Answer the following questions in your group.

1. How does Essraa describe the “American Dream”? What does the “American Dream mean to you?
2. What did you think about the United States before you came here? After having lived here for a little while, does America live up to what your expectations were?
3. What has been your favorite place to visit in the United States? What did you do there? Describe it.