



Carolina Center for the
Study of the Middle East
and Muslim Civilizations

Duke
UNIVERSITY

MIDDLE EAST STUDIES
Center

CAROLINA
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Writing an Objective Summary on the Experience of Lebanese Immigrants in America

Overview

This lesson is designed for English IV students (grades 11-12) and focuses on writing an objective summary. It spans a total of two days and features resources from the Khayrallah Center for Lebanese Diaspora Studies at North Carolina State University. Students will learn about the experience of Lebanese immigrants in the United States by watching a documentary, *Cedars in the Pines*, and reading an essay written by an immigrant in 1927. After writing an Objective Summary on the text, students will reflect on the complexity of human identities.

Essential/Compelling Question(s)

- How are human identities shaped or reshaped by physical space?

Grade(s)

11-12

Subject(s)

English IV

ELA Common Core Standards:

- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.2:** Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.11-12.1:** Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
- **CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1.D:** Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.

Materials:

- Menti
- Video- [Cedars In the Pines](#)
- Article: [“Syrians” and Race in the 1920s](#) by Dr. Akram Khater
- Text- Syria for Syrians
- Elmo or other document camera
- Video on [“How to Write an Objective Summary”](#)
- Data sets, articles, and research from the [Khayrallah Center for Lebanese Diaspora Studies Projects website](#)

Duration

The lesson covers two days of 60 minute sessions however teachers may modify the time according to their own schedules. Teachers are also welcomed to carry on the subject using other resources suggested at the end of the lesson.

Procedure

Day 1: Introduction: Menti.com- Who Are You?

1. Using [Mentimeter](#), have students reflect on their own identities. Menti is a software that allows students to respond to questions with their smartphones and show the results live. Ask students to use three words to describe who they are: at school, home, & on social media.
2. Lead a class discussion about the various identities that shape students' lives. Do they feel different in different places? Around different people? What does it mean to be from a certain place? How would they feel if they moved to a new place away from home?

Documentary: Cedars in the Pines

3. Students will watch a video on Lebanese immigration to North Carolina; [Cedars in the Pines](#). This documentary is 55 minutes long and narrates the lives of Lebanese immigrants who have journeyed from Lebanon to North Carolina and labored here to build new homes, raise families and enrich the state with their culture and hard work.
4. After finishing the documentary, the teacher will engage students in a whole group discussion using the Socratic Seminar model of discussion. The discussion will be centered around the immigrant experience in America, giving students an opportunity to share their own thoughts on the subject. Questions to discuss can include:
 - a. Discuss the importance of maintaining cultural heritage and community within the Lebanese diaspora over time.
 - b. What compels Lebanese immigrants to maintain or seek a connection with a homeland, and how have they done so?

Day 2: Primary Source Document: Syria for the Syrians

5. On day 2, students will read (two times) and annotate an essay titled "Syria for the Syrians" written in 1927 by Dr. Michael Shadid, living and practicing medicine in Oklahoma. The essay argues that "Syrians" will never be accepted in America because of racial prejudice. The teacher may want to provide additional context with information from this article, ["Syrians" and Race in the 1920s](#), by Dr. Akram Khater. The teacher should first model annotating the document to extract central ideas; project the text and use the Elmo device to demonstrate this process using Think-Aloud. Respond to student questions about the text or annotation skills.
6. Teacher will review summary writing with the class. Show this 5-minute video on ["How to Write an Objective Summary"](#).
7. Individually, students will read the text "Syria for the Syrians". Students will be instructed to engage the author by making notes on points of interest or points of confusion as they read (but they should not fully annotate yet). After reading, students will have a peer discussion- students will share their thoughts with an elbow partner for 5 minutes.
8. Students will read the text a second time, and under the supervision of the teacher, begin to annotate the text for reasons the author gives on why Syrians should return to Syria.
9. As the **culminating** assessment, students will write an Objective Summary of all the reasons for which Mr. Shadid says Syrians should return to their country. Summaries should not exceed two paragraphs;

Summaries should be paraphrased while retaining the author's original ideas. Students will first write a draft, which will be edited by a peer and then by the teacher.

- a. Students may do additional research using the [Khayrallah Center's Projects website](#) with data sets, research projects, and interesting articles about the Lebanese diaspora in the United States.

10. **Homework after Day 2:** Using the information from the entire lesson- video, discussions, & readings- students should answer the essential question in 3-4 sentences: "How are human identities shaped or reshaped by physical space?"

Extended Learning

Students may conduct research on Lebanese Poets and writers: Students could select one of the poets/writers from the list and write a two page research paper on him/her- [11 famous Lebanese Poets & Writers You Should Know](#). In the paper, students should address how this poet's Lebanese identity and location (are they in Lebanon or in the diaspora) has shaped his/her writings.

FEBRUARY, 1927

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Syria For The Syrians

An account of the personal experiences of a Syrian physician who analyzes a condition and prescribes a remedy.

By DR. M. SHADID
of Elk City, Oklahoma.

I am a physician and surgeon, Was graduated 20 years ago and have been in the active practice of medicine and surgery ever since. Am married and have six children. I came to this country in 1898 when a mere lad of sixteen years. As a physician and surgeon, I have achieved a fair degree of success and happen to be forty-five years of age. Ever since my arrival in this country I have mingled with native Americans exclusively and can fairly say that I know America and the American mind.

Pardon the foregoing personal references, which I merely state as a preliminary to give weight to my conclusion which is succinctly stated in the caption of this communication, "Syria for the Syrians". By this I imply that of all countries Syria is the country of choice for Syrians to live in.

This conclusion has been borne upon me after a residence in the United States of America of 28 years. The reasons for this conclusion are cultural, social and economic.

The economic factor takes first rank with the average Syrian and for the very good reason that he left his native abode for economic reasons. The question therefore resolves itself into whether or not the Syrian in Syria can do as well economically as he can in the United States. I am of course speaking for the average Syrian and believe it holds true for the vast majority of the Syrians. The majority of the Syrian people in the United States will be better off economically in their native country. The needs of Syria are agricultural and Syrian agricultural possibilities have not been touched. Successful agriculture depends on available cheap land and cheap labor, and Syria has both of them.

Farming in Syria is still where it was in the middle ages. The land is plowed with a crooked stick, called a plow, drawn by a pair of oxen. The crops are harvested with the hand scythe and threshed with the same old primitive fashion. In spite of

all these primitive methods the people are still able to subsist. The land is fertile and productive and what can one not do with modern methods of farming? I am not a farmer and do not pretend to know very much about the needs of farming. But I live twenty miles from a prosperous Syrian colony where all are engaged in farming. These Syrians raise cotton, corn, wheat, poultry, and they all tell me that there is no reason in the world why they cannot go back home and engage successfully in agricultural pursuits. They seem to be awaiting the pacification of the country before returning home for that purpose.

Cotton in Syria should be a very profitable crop, indeed more so than in this country owing to the climatic conditions and to the availability of cheap land and cheap labor. And cotton is a world staple with a ready market. Egypt prospers with cotton raising, why not Syria? Corn and wheat may be produced in great abundance in Syria and I verily believe that the only way to stop emigration of our people to foreign lands lays in the educating of our people to the very great possibilities of farming. Personally I would be happy to join any group of profit-seeking and public-spirited Syrians who would band together and combine their fortunes in an effort to introduce modern methods of farming with a view to the salvation of Syria from economic ruin.

But farming, though the chief opportunity, is not the only one in Syria for the Syrians. Once agriculture is put on its feet, the country will become ready for other commercial and industrial enterprises. In this country all depend on agriculture; when farmers succeed all others succeed in proportion. When farmers fail, others fail also. The same will apply to Syrian agriculture. A Syria of prosperous farmers will mean a Syria of prosperous merchants, doctors and other technical workers. Once farming is established the needs of the country will call for telephones, railroads, manufactures of every description, mining and so forth.

From a social standpoint Syrians are subject to being ostracised not alone by native Americans but by all those peoples belonging to the Nordic branch of the White race. While native Americans are the worst offenders in this respect, it cannot be said that other Nordics are free from this offense. Indeed it may be said that among native born Americans there is more prejudice against foreigners in general and Syrians in particular than in any other country of the wide world, it seems.

Nor is this prejudice and social ostracism limited to any

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social stratum in American society. It permeates the mass of Americans without regard to class or station in life. The bulk of Americans is made up of the so-called middle class and this class is more emphatic in its prejudices than any other. Witness the organization of the Ku Klux Klan. It grew like a mushroom almost over night and its venom was spent more upon "foreigners" than Catholics, Negroes or Jews.

I live on Broadway, the main residential street in this provincial town of five thousand souls — all Americans — and across the street of me live two doctors, two "brother" physicians, both Klansmen. They recognize me professionally but ostracise me socially. Next door to me to the east lives an American whose father was an immigrant to this country, a Swede, who, too, is a Klansman. Next door to the west of me lives a banker, also a member of the "Invisible Empire". Needless to say these "one hundred-per-cent Americans" will have no social intercourse with men of foreign birth.

Just how an educated American, as all these men are supposed to be, can be descendants of the fathers of the American Revolution and still owe fealty to an "Invisible Empire" passes all comprehension.

I would not mind if this social ostracism affected me, and in no way affected my family, my wife and six children. Personally I do not care for society very much, my time being taken up with my daily professional duties and occasional readings and literary ramblings. But I do object to having my children feel that they are being discriminated against, they being native born, on my account. I object very strongly to my children being looked down upon or considered inferior by snobbish American children.

I have been a member of the Masonic fraternity for 24 years or thereabout, and when a year ago, after residing in this town for three years, I decided to become a member of the local lodge by sending in my demit from my home lodge, a member of the K. K. K. and an officer of the local Masonic lodge saw fit to black-ball me. I happen to know his reasons for it. I am a foreigner and therefore an anti-klansman and he thinks and believes it to be to the best interest of the Masonic fraternity to keep such out of the lodge.

A Syrian merchant who lived in Greer County, Oklahoma, for 15 years moved from one town to another in the same county and engaged in business. Soon after renting a store, he received

a communication on the official stationery of the hooded order warning him to keep away from the town at the risk of economic boycott and his own life. Another Syrian merchant's dry goods store was burned down soon after he received a threat by mail ordering him to move away from the town.

In this communication I am not finding fault with Americans. I am not saying that Americans are a bad people. I believe in the American people. I believe the American people are good people. I believe there is more good in the hearts of the American people than evil. I believe they compare favorably in general with other peoples. But, nevertheless, the subject of my thesis is that Syria is the proper place, the best country in the world, for the Syrian people.

I would rather live on equality with any people than to live on a basis of inequality anywhere in the wide world. I want to live in a country where I can look any man in the face as a sovereign citizen; where I would not need to be ashamed of my nativity, my ancestry, my racial traditions, etc. Where else in the world can a Syrian so live, except in Syria?

THE HUNTER'S PITY

Ibn Moussa Sheibany, one of the Arab sages, once gave the following parable on the true sense of pity:

A bird hunter went out once to spread his net on a windy day. The birds, both from being harassed by the winds and through the attraction of the grain, flocked to the net in large numbers. The hunter made a great haul and in order to hasten his work resorted to the simple method of breaking the birds' wings and throwing them alive in his bag, stopping at times to wipe the tears flowing from his eyes through the action of the wind and the dust.

Noticing this, one bird, who was glad for having his life spared, turned to one of his companions and said:

"How kind-hearted and compassionate this hunter is; see you not his flowing tears?"

To which the companion replied:

"Look you not upon the tears of his eyes, but rather upon the work of his hands!"

Readers' Forum

SYRIANS HAVE

FAITH IN AMERICA

Editor Syrian World.

In the case of Dr. M. Shadid the diagnosis is "Elkcidityis", that depressing affliction which overcomes so many folks, including Americans. For further information consult Sinclair Lewis' "Main Street".

Somehow, we can't forgive Dr. Shadid for his surrender and advice. We credit to him a greater degree of wisdom and culture than usually is possessed by the average man. His professional ability combined with his inherent culture should make him impregnable in the situations described in his letter. He claims twenty eight years spent exclusively with Amtricans, and those should have meant a more than fair chance to attain that place in their society which apparently he craves. That he isn't the master of the situation may be due to the limited social advancement possible in a small town, half of which may be composed of cousins to the twenty-fifth degree, and feels sufficient in itself.

Despite all one's efforts to find for one's self a niche in the American community, which is American in every aspect, there is always that door through which one may not enter. The password is fourth generation Americanism. There are many who constantly feel obliged to express the opinion that to be truly American one must be able to claim a great grandfather born in the country. To a certain class this is the most vital qualification because it cannot claim any other distinction; whereas, the glory rightfully reverts to the pioneers who paved the way.

We remember that during our childhood, when we sang "America", we tried so hard to justify the fervor which we sang into the phrase "land where my fathers died". And, we also remember that we finally solved the problem satisfactorily to us. The child in us concluded that George Washington, the father of our country, must be our father because this is our country. We loved every word and phrase of "America", and no one can ever persuade us that our childish conclusion was wrong, and that we did not have as much right to sing the anthem as anyone else here.

For the foreigner who comes to these shores, imbued with the desire to be truly patriotic, there is the seemingly inevitable danger of losing his identity. Impulsively we reach out for the new things, and tend to lose sight of our own goodness. That transcendent process is naturally more difficult for Syrians. Unlike the Nordics and other Europeans, our people were not early settlers, and have yet to make their impression on the community.

There is nothing for us to conceal; on the contrary, we have much to reveal to our American brethren. Syria once led the world both in cultural and commercial pursuits, and we cannot be entirely devoid of the progressive qualities which made the name of Lebanon world-famed. We must always remember that the need for acquiring new ideals does not necessarily mean discarding the old. By dealing exclusively with Americans and excluding Syrian companionship, we will surely find ourselves betwixt and between, not a part of either group. We should be

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We

proud of being our own true selves, and we know from experience that our American friends admire us for what we are. It is difficult enough for an American housewife to convince her husband that her pies are as good as those his mother made! Why should we try to convince the husband when his own compatriot fails? Why bake pies if we can excel in kibbe? "Know thyself" is as true today as when the Greek philosopher uttered it. Before trying to be like someone else, we must know our limitations, as well as our possibilities.

It is surprising that Dr. Shadid is not grateful for having his children ignored by snobbish people. Why should anyone object to "being looked down upon or considered inferior" by snobbish Americans? To be considered inferior by an intelligent American... that is a question worthy of consideration. From Dr. Shadid's letter, we infer that he studied medicine in this country and was awarded his degree here; therefore, he certainly ought not to complain about being considered inferior.

As for the Ku Klux Klan, whose growth Dr. Shadid likens to a mushroom's, whereas it has existed for nearly one hundred years, we shall disregard its activities while we have a group of true Americans who have manifested their friendship for us by giving unstintingly to our Syrian schools and colleges. In a town the size of Elk City we suppose entertainment must be provided to break the ennui. The Klan provides it. In our opinion the Klan personifies that type of humans whose righteousness is perverted so as to magnify the faults of others and diminish its own.

We may be partly to blame for

not not having the proper entree into the American community. Dr. Shadid partly solved the reason why Syrians have been somewhat isolated, when he mentions the "Syrian colony... awaiting pacification before returning". Until we assume our share of all the community's responsibilities, we have no right to expect consideration and friendship. Who lives for himself must live by himself. As long as we have among us a group that assumes a "fly by night" attitude, we will be unable to take our position in any American community. The effect of a colony cannot be undone by one person, even though he be a professional man.

The ideas of rehabilitating Syria are splendid, and worthy of praise. From information gleaned for the past ten years, we are under the impression that there is a great number of unemployed in Syria. This number would, undoubtedly, be sufficient for undertaking the projects described by the doctor. Our presence in Syria is not as necessary as our financial assistance and the leadership of those who are qualified to be leaders.

The world as a whole does not consider a man's religion, his nationality, nor political belief with the stress that it did in former days. And the truth of this statement is unfortunately apparent only in times of disasters. Then, do nations arise to the need of their suffering brethren, just as America did at the time of the Japanese earthquake. Whether our neighbor thinks in terms as magnanimous as does the world at large is immaterial to us, for he has a right to his opinion, even though it may be bigoted. Hasty conclusions are detrimental to our welfare. Last summer we

read daily of the difficulties experienced between the American tourists and Frenchmen. Where the fault lay does not interest us as much as the fact that war was not declared. The sailing lists of Americans bound for France are as long as money will provide.

America has been too benevolent for us to permit one or one hundred bigoted so-called Americans to cause us to lose faith with our adopted country. A hegira of all Syrians to Syria may hardly be termed a remedy, and should not be considered even lightly. Dr. Shadid is a pioneer in Elk City. All the more honor to him when he reaches his goal.

E. K. S.

ANOTHER VOICE FROM THE MIDDLEWEST

Editor Syrian World.

I read Dr. Shadid's article in your February issue with great interest, also your editorial comment on same.

I live in a small town of about 2500, all Americans, with the exception of three Syrian families.

This section, unfortunately, was at one time the hot-bed of the so-called Ku Klux Klan. However, we have not been molested in any manner, and we believe we are respected as much as any of the so-called 100 per cent. Americans.

It is ridiculous to think or state that the Southwest is so infested with this propaganda that a foreigner cannot live here. There are hundreds, and safe to say, thousands, of foreign-born Syrians living in this country who are enjoying the sunshine and liberty and friendship in equal degree as the American citizen.

I have lived in the Southwest for

27 years, mingled with the Southwestern inhabitants of the United States, and I want to say that there is no better locality for a man who attends to his own business and obeys the laws of the country, to live in.

I note Dr. Shadid's article wherein he advocates emigrating back to the land of his birth, where his children may enjoy the same privileges as other children, and he will be respected among men.

I desire to say that my experience is that any Syrian conducting himself properly will be respected anywhere he goes.

My children attend the public schools of this country. They are on a par with any American-born children. They receive the same attention and courtesy as is shown any American pupil, and their scholastic and social standing is equal to that of any so called 100 per cent. American child.

If more of Dr. Shadid's type of men would emigrate back to Syria, carrying with them the ideas and civilization of America, it would be of great advantage to our mother-country, and every Syrian citizen of the North American continent would be glad to see him go back there and sow the seeds of liberty and advanced civilization which we have experienced in the United States.

The greatest trouble with the Syrians of the old country is lack of unity. If they would only unite in a common cause, they could do great things. If religious hatred and prejudices which now exist among the four factions of the mother-country could be blotted out, it would be a great godsend to the nation.

A. N. Adwon.

Wilson, Okla.