



TURKEY'S HEADSCARF BATTLE

LEARNING GOAL:

What is the ongoing controversy in Turkey about allowing women to wear the Muslim headscarf in public universities? How can we discuss the issue and connect this to our own lives?

What is the relationship between religion and government, and what influence has each had over the other in modern societies?

GRADES: 9-12 **SUBJECTS:** Social Studies & Government

TIME REQUIRED: 5 class periods [1 hour each] with extension; 2 class periods without

MATERIALS: GLOWE Curriculum DVD, TV/DVD Player, copies of handout, fact sheet, timeline, signs for activity written on cardstock or index cards

Overview: This 5 minute clip from Link TV's Global Pulse series, and accompanying lesson, introduces students to an ongoing controversy in Turkey over whether to allow women to wear the Muslim headscarf in universities. Though most of its residents are Muslim, since the 1920s the Turkish government has been secular, keeping Islamic practices out of politics. However, an Islamist political party recently won elections in Turkey, and this current battle over the headscarf is perhaps the first of many battles to come over whether the country will remain secular or will institute more Islamist government policies.

Prerequisite Knowledge: NONE

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SEE, THINK, WONDER: TURKEY'S HEADSCARF BATTLE

LEARNING PROCESS | SESSION ONE

1. THINK, WRITE NOW PROMPT [5 minutes] *Students 'free write' on the following*

Instruct students to free-write in response to the following question:

"Should students be able to wear whatever they want to public school and in public places?"

2. MEDIA EXPERIENCE [5 minutes] *Show the [Turkey's Headscarf Battle](#) clip.*

Show the 5 minute film clip and ask students to take notes on what they find interesting.

3. SEE, THINK, WONDER DISCUSSION [15 minutes] *Facilitate classroom discussion.*

Have students respond to the following questions as soon as they finish watching the video clip.

- Who did you see supporting the ban on the headscarf in universities? Who did you see opposing the ban on the headscarf in universities?
- Why do you think the secular Supreme Court of Turkey wants to ban wearing the headscarf in universities?
- What do you wonder about the rules in other countries and whether wearing the headscarf or other religious attire is allowed?

4. TURKEY IN CONTEXT ACTIVITY [35 minutes] Classroom dyads to explore Turkey.

Provide some more background information and context about Turkey for students – pass out the fact sheet and timeline to students.

In order to read and learn the information, split students into pairs. Have one student read the fact sheet overview, and the other student read the timeline; then they can teach each other what they have learned from their readings.

TAKE A STAND: TURKEY'S HEADSCARF BATTLE

LEARNING PROCESS | SESSION TWO

1. TO BAN OR NOT TO BAN? [30 minutes] Classroom group inquiry about media clip.

Pass out the handout. Now that students have learned more about Turkey and its government and history, show them the clip again. Instruct students to pay particular attention to the people and voices represented in the clips and those left out.

After watching the clip, have the students split into groups of 3 for ten minutes and discuss and answer the questions on the handout. Each group should share answers with the class.

2. TAKING A STAND [20 minutes] Classroom experiential activity.

Now the whole class will participate in a Take a Stand activity, and be able to share their own opinion on this issue, and more general issues related to the headscarf debate. Before the activity, place 4 cards in different areas or corners of the classroom with the following labels: **Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree**. Leave at least five feet of space between where each card is placed.

Tell students that you will read a series of statements to them. After each statement, the students should move around the classroom and stand next to the card that *most closely* reflects their opinion about that statement. *They cannot, therefore, be undecided; they must choose the closest representation of their views.*

Once all the students have chosen their response, allow 1-2 minutes to discuss their reasons for that opinion, and choose a representative from each group who can share their opinion with the class.

Take A Stand Statements

- Female students in Turkey should be able to wear the headscarf in universities if they want.
- Wearing a Muslim headscarf is the same principle as wearing a cross or Star of David around your neck.
- Freedom of religion means that people should be able to wear any religious garments or attire they want.
- In order to be a democracy, a country must support freedom of religion in every form.

3. CLASSROOM REFLECTION [10 minutes] Classroom reflective discussion.

Debrief the activity with students, and discuss the following questions.

- What have you learned about this controversy in Turkey?
- What have you learned about how Turkey's democracy is different from the United States?
- What should be the role of the media in covering such controversial issues? Does the media have a responsibility to show the perspectives of people who will be affected by the issue?

EXTENSION

CREATE A DEBATE: TURKEY'S HEADSCARF BATTLE

LEARNING PROCESS | SESSIONS THREE THROUGH FIVE

CREATE YOUR OWN DEBATE [Time will vary]

Other countries are also grappling with whether to allow Muslim girls to wear a headscarf to public school. The extension activity asks students to explore one of these countries and formally debate whether they should be allowed to wear the headscarf.

1. DEBATE BACKGROUND

In 2004, France banned religious symbols in public schools – including large crosses, skullcaps, Sikh turbans, and Muslim headscarves. Have students read the following article to learn more about the ban: http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/2004-02-03-head-scarves_x.htm.

This article from 2007 serves as a brief follow-up to the article about the 2004 ban, discussing the opening of Muslim private schools in France, largely as a result of the ban on religious symbols: <http://www.iht.com/articles/ap/2007/03/05/europe/EU-GEN-France-Muslim-School.php>.

2. DEBATE SET UP

Split students up and have them formally debate the issue. No matter what their own personal opinion is, have half the students advocate to keep the ban on religious symbols in French schools, and have the other half of the class argue to get rid of the ban.

Give the students one day to formulate some arguments for or against the ban, using the articles provided and any additional research they find on their own.

3. DEBATE PLANNING

On the second day, have each of the groups meet together to plan out their arguments. Students should choose the facts and arguments they want to present, and each student should plan to speak at least once during the debate. Have students choose the strongest debaters to be the students who will rebut the arguments from the opposing team.

4. DEBATE PRESENTATIONS

On the third day, have the students debate the issue. Instruct students that the debate will be structured.

Only one student will speak at a time, and a student from the “pro” side (the ban should stay in place) will alternate with a student from the “con” side.

When it is your turn to speak, you can either offer a rebuttal to what a previous person has said, or you can present another fact to support your side.

5. ACTION STEP

Find out what your school’s policy is regarding the wearing of headscarves or other religious attire or symbols at school. Poll your classmates in the school to find out whether they agree or disagree with the school policy. If a majority of students disagree with the school policy, set up a meeting with the school administrators to share the results of the poll, and advocate for specific changes to be made to the school policy.

GLOBAL PULSE CURRICULUM UNIT: "TURKEY'S HEADSCARF BATTLE" STANDARDS COVERED: NATIONAL McREL AND CALIFORNIA CONTENT

NATIONAL STANDARDS FROM McREL

The National Standards were taken from McREL (Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning). For full list of McREL standards, go to: <http://www.mcrel.org/compendium/browse.asp>.

World History Standard 40: Understands the search for peace and stability throughout the world in the 1920s and 1930s

8. Understands post-World War I shifts in geographic and political borders in Europe and the Middle East (e.g., how the postwar borders in Southern Europe and the Middle East were created, including influence of local opinion, prewar "spheres of influence," long-and short-term interests; how Ataturk worked to modernize Turkey, how Turkish society and international society responded)

Topics: Rise of Nation-States, Transformations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, 1920's-1930's

Civics Standard 4: Understands the concept of a constitution, the various purposes that constitutions serve, and the conditions that contribute to the establishment and maintenance of constitutional government

2. Understands how constitutions set forth the structure of government, give the government power, and establish the relationship between the people and their government

3. Understands how constitutions may limit government's power in order to protect individual rights and promote the common good

6. Understands how constitutions may be used to preserve core values and principles of a political system or society (e.g., prohibition of religious tests for public office, protection of private property by the United States Constitution)

Topics: Purpose and Use of Constitutions

CALIFORNIA CONTENT STANDARDS

World History, Culture, and Geography: The Modern World Standard 10.10 Students analyze instances of nation-building in the contemporary world in at least two of the following regions or countries: the Middle East, Africa, Mexico and other parts of Latin America, and China.

1. Understand the challenges in the regions, including their geopolitical, cultural, military, and economic significance and the international relationships in which they are involved.
2. Describe the recent history of the regions, including political divisions and systems, key leaders, religious issues, natural features, resources, and population patterns.
3. Discuss the important trends in the regions today and whether they appear to serve the cause of individual freedom and democracy.

Principles of American Democracy

Standard 12.2: Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the scope and limits of rights and obligations as democratic citizens, the relationships among them, and how they are secured.

1. Discuss the meaning and importance of each of the rights guaranteed under the Bill of Rights and how each is secured (e.g., freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly, petition, privacy).

Standard 12.9: Students analyze the origins, characteristics, and development of different political systems across time, with emphasis on the quest for political democracy, its advances, and its obstacles.

8. Identify the successes of relatively new democracies in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the ideas, leaders, and general societal conditions that have launched and sustained, or failed to sustain, them.

Standard 12.10: Students formulate questions about and defend their analyses of tensions within our constitutional democracy and the importance of maintaining a balance between the following concepts: majority rule and individual rights; liberty and equality; state and national authority in a federal system; civil disobedience and the rule of law; freedom of the press and the right to a fair trial; the relationship of religion and government.

HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES ANALYSIS SKILLS

Grades 9-12: *Chronological and Spatial Thinking*

2. Students analyze how change happens at different rates at different times; understand that some aspects can change while others remain the same; and understand that change is complicated and affects not only technology and politics but also values and beliefs.
4. Students relate current events to the physical and human characteristics of places and regions.

Grades 9-12: *Historical Interpretation*

1. Students show the connections, causal and otherwise, between particular historical events and larger social, economic, and political trends and developments.
4. Students understand the meaning, implication, and impact of historical events and recognize that events could have taken other directions.

TURKEY'S HEADSCARF BATTLE CLASSROOM HANDOUT

Instructions: Use the information from the video clips and the information you learned about Turkey from the handouts to answer the questions below.

1. Why do you think the secular government of Turkey originally banned wearing the headscarf in universities?
2. Why do you think the leaders in the AK party want to reverse the ban?
3. If the ban were to be reversed, predict what you think the impact would be on the people of Turkey.
4. Turkey is trying to join the European Union. In order to join the European Union, Turkey must agree to uphold certain principles, including democratic principles. From what you have learned about Turkey and this controversy, do you think the headscarf ban could pose a problem to Turkey joining the European Union? Why or why not?
5. Whose perspectives about this controversy are represented in the media clips? What perspectives are not represented in the media clips? Should they be included? Why or why not?

TURKEY'S HEADSCARF BATTLE FACT SHEET

Turkey is a country of many contrasts: urban and rural, secular and Islamic, European and Asian, with mountains and coastal beaches. Below are some major statistics about contemporary Turkey, a glossary of terms appearing in the LinkTV video clip, and a timeline of major events in the recent history of Turkey.



Source: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tu.html>

Population:

71,892,807 (July 2008 est.)

Area:

Over 780,000 sq km (slightly larger than Texas)

Ethnic Groups:

80% Turkish, 20% Kurdish

Religions:

99.8% Muslim, 0.2% other (mostly Christian and Jewish)

Official Language: Turkish

- Most of Turkey's land lies in Asia, but a portion of Istanbul, the largest city, lies partly in Asia, while the rest lies in Europe, as does the sliver of land in the northwest of the country.
- The majority of the Kurdish population of Turkey lives in the mountainous regions in the southeastern portions of the country.
- The capital city of Turkey is Ankara, and its largest city is Istanbul, which was called Constantinople during the Ottoman Empire.

TURKEY'S HEADSCARF BATTLE GLOSSARY

Secular – not pertaining to or connected to religion. When used in connection to government, the term secular means that religion is separate from the official functions of the government.

Democracy – government by the people; a form of government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised directly by them or by their elected agents under a free electoral system.

Islamize – to bring into a state of harmony or conformity with the principles and teachings of Islam; give an Islamic character or identity to.

(All definitions taken from Random House online dictionary, 2006.)

TURKEY'S HEADSCARF BATTLE TIMELINE

Below is a basic timeline of major dates in Turkey's recent history.

1299-1922	Ottoman Empire – One of history's great empires, stretching around the Middle East and the Mediterranean Sea, at one point reaching across northern Africa and up through Eastern Europe to Austria. The modern country of Turkey was a central component of the Empire, and the current capital of Istanbul served as the capital and leading city of the Ottoman Empire.
1800s-early 1900s	Long, slow decline of the Ottoman Empire. Regions of the Empire began pulling away and forming independent countries, Greece among them.
1915	Armenian genocide – estimated loss of about one million Armenians due to massacres and forced deportation; still a matter of much political disagreement with Turkey disputing the number of dead and the events being termed genocide.
WWI	The Ottoman Empire sides with Germany in WWI, and after the end of the war, the victorious Allies start to carve up the remains of the Ottoman Empire.
1923	Turkey becomes an independent country, and Mustafa Kemal Ataturk becomes the first president. (Ataturk is an honorary title, meaning "father of the Turks".) Ataturk believed that Turkey needed to modernize in order to be successful as a country in a rapidly changing world, and so he introduced a series of reforms to make Turkey secular and more Western. These reforms included unifying the education system, reforming the Turkish language, a ban on wearing the fez, and political reforms including a new constitution and the right to vote for women.
1923-1950	Though Turkey made many political and social reforms during this time, the government remains under single party control, with only two leaders in this nearly 30 year span.
1928	Turkey becomes secular – the clause stating that Islam is the state religion is taken out of the Constitution. This also later includes the banning of headscarves in public universities and for government workers.
1938	President Ataturk dies, but remains a national hero to this day.
WWII	Turkey attempts to remain neutral during WWII, and does not take part in combat. Joins the United Nations in 1945.
1950	First open elections held, and beginning of multi-party democracy. Over the decades, numerous political parties form and grow.
1960, 1970	Democratic leaders struggled, and Turkey faced military coups in 1960 and 1970, returning to civilian control soon after each coup.
1974	Turkish troops invade Cyprus and spar with Greek forces for control of the island. Results in a standoff, and a line of control splitting the island in half.
1980	Another military coup – the government returns to civilian control 2 years later.
1980s	Kurds in southeastern Turkey wanting a separate state begin guerilla insurgency.
2002	Islamist-based Justice and Development Party (AK Party) wins landslide elections victory, and promises to maintain secular principles of Constitution.
2005	Talks begin regarding accession of Turkey to the EU.

Sources:

BBC News – Timeline of Turkey: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/1023189.stm>

CIA World Factbook - <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/tu.html>

Columbia Encyclopedia: <http://www.bartleby.com/65/tu/Turkey.html>