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## **The History of Head Covering and Polygamy Practice in Islam**

Guide for Curriculum Unit 11.02.03  
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In the school where I teach, the percentage of Muslim students is very small. Most students do not have background knowledge about Islam and Muslims, but from what they hear about this religion they picture Muslims as totally different in practice and customs from Christians and Jews. This unit is designed for high-school students in Arabic class but can also be used in other disciplines like social studies. The purpose of this unit is to teach the students that although we look different, we may have something in common and should respect each other no matter how different we may be. The focus is on the similarities among three monotheistic religions – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam – with emphasis on the use of head cover and the practice of polygamy.

I chose to address these topics in particular because they are the two stereotypes my students often use to identify Muslims. Through this unit, students will learn that head covering is used in a variety of cultures for religious and non-religious reasons. Students will also learn that in ancient times head covering was used by Jews, Christians, and Muslims as a sign of respect for their worshiping place – whether a synagogue, church or mosque – and that for Islam in particular, head covering is used to protect women from molesting eyes. On the other hand, students will learn that Islam did not initiate polygamy and that, in the past, it was practiced among followers of Judaism and Christianity, as well. Students will also learn about the reasons polygamy is allowed today in Islam, and the restrictions on its practice.

(Recommended for Arabic and Social Studies, grades 9-12)

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