

The Year That Shook the World: The 1979 Iranian Revolution

LESSON TITLE:	THE YEAR THAT SHOOK THE WORLD: THE 1979 IRANIAN REVOLUTION
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GRADE LEVEL:	10th Grade
OVERVIEW OF LESSON:	This lesson introduces students to the Iranian Revolution. Students will identify the causes of the revolution and decide which cause was most responsible for the revolution. Additionally, it begins exposing students to Iranian and U.S. perceptions of the revolution.
SUBJECT AREA:	Global History & Geography
COUNTRY/REGIONAL FOCUS:	Iran and the Middle East
TIME REQUIRED:	One 90-minute double period class (Or, two 47-minute single period classes).
MATERIALS REQUIRED: *SEE ATTACHED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SMART Board (Or, Promethean Board) - “Once Upon a Time...” Important Questions activity sheets (34 copies) - <i>ARGO</i> film opening sequence played from 1:34 to 4:15. - “Read All About It!” student prompt (34 copies). - “Read All About It!” journalist notepads for Field Site Gallery Walk (34 copies). - Gallery Walk Field Sites 1-4 documents on the causes of the Iranian Revolution (Two differentiated sets. One for each side of the classroom) - Excerpts from U.S. history textbook on the Iranian Revolution for Field Site 5 (34 copies).

BACKGROUND:

When I was designing this unit, I thought back on when I first learned about Iran. Shockingly, I was first introduced to Iran in the DC Comics Batman series, *A Death in the Family*, in 1988 where the Joker meets with Ayatollah Khomeini and arranges to sell nuclear weapons to Arab terrorists in Lebanon so they could destroy Tel Aviv. Likewise, some students today cannot hear about Iran without it attached to the word “nuclear,” “Islamic,” or “terrorism.”

The Iranian Revolution narrative is typically presented to the public and students as a revolution led by Islamic radicals to overthrow the evil Shah. It is the story of two villains making life difficult

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for the hero of our story—the United States—to stop the evil Soviets from taking over the world. Yet despite research debunking this “Western” narrative, it still persists in media and school history textbooks. This lesson aims to establish the Western narrative so we can revisit and evaluate its accuracy throughout our unit. At the same time, this discovery-based lesson begins introducing material that challenges and questions the dominant story.

CURRICULUM CONNECTION:

Overall, the goals of our “Decolonization and the Cold War, 1945-2000” Unit is to re-examine the Iranian Revolution, and confront our perceptions of the Middle East. Our unit begins with a lesson on Iran’s geography and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s TED Talk “The Danger of a Single Story.” After all, the Middle East has often been confined to a single story. The lesson plan presented here is the second lesson, which introduces students to the “single story” of Iran while also hinting that there is another story to uncover.

The remainder of our Iranian case study is dedicated to uncovering the *several* stories of the Iranian Revolution by weighing Iranian voices against the narrative. Each lesson builds up to graphic novel excerpts from Marjane Satrapi’s *Persepolis*, and Daniel Burwen’s and Mike de Seve’s *Operation Ajax*. Both act as the crucial sources for challenging the Western narrative of the Middle East. Was the Iranian Revolution an “Islamic” revolution? Can the story of the Iranian Hostage Crisis simply be explained as a group of evil Islamic radicals committing cruel acts towards the United States? Or, is there a deeper and more complicated explanation than that? Are all Iranians obsessed with religion and want to export their worldview through terrorist acts? These are some of the many questions to explore.

In the end, students will decide if telling historical stories in terms of “villains” and “heroes,” “good guys” and “bad guys” is helpful to our understanding of the cultures and history. Students are repeatedly bombarded with a single story by media and politicians today often leading to biased and narrow views of Muslims, and a lack of understanding of the ethnic and religious diversity of the Middle East. I want students to be empowered so that they will beware the single story and realize life and history are a lot more complicated.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- ❖ Is progress worth the human and environmental costs?
- ❖ Do belief systems unite or divide people?
- ❖ Are conflicts between people inevitable?

LEARNING GOALS:

Content Learning Target:

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Explain how the abuses of the U.S.-backed Shah contributed to an “Islamic” revolution in Iran.

Depth of Knowledge (DoK) Skills Learning Targets:

- Level 1 → I can define “Fundamentalism.”
- Level 2 → I can investigate the causes of the Iranian Revolution using primary and secondary sources.
- Level 3 → I can weigh (assess) the main cause of the Iranian Revolution.
- Level 4 → I can connect the causes of the Iranian Revolution with the Cold War.

STANDARDS:

■ Common Core State Standards:

- RH9-10.1: I can cite evidence using primary and secondary sources.
- RH9-10.2: I can identify the main idea of primary and secondary sources.
- RH9-10.4: I can define the meaning of words as they are used in a text.
- RH9-10.6: I can compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same topic.
- WHST9-10.1a: I can write claims.
- WHST9-10.1b: I can support my claims with evidence.

■ NCSS Standards:

- Theme 1: Culture.
- Theme 2: Time, Continuity, and Change.
- Theme 3: People, Places, and Environments.
- Theme 6: Power, Authority, and Governance.
- Theme 9: Global Connections.

■ NYS Social Studies Framework and Standards:

- 10.6 UNRESOLVED GLOBAL CONFLICT (1945-1991: THE COLD WAR):** The second half of the 20th Century was shaped by the struggle between superpowers-the United States and Soviet Union.
- 10.6a: The Cold War was characterized by competition for power between the United States and Soviet Union.
- 10.7 DECOLONIZATION AND NATIONALISM (1900-2000):** Nationalists and decolonization movements used a variety of methods including nonviolence and armed struggle. Tensions and conflicts often continued after independence.
- 10.7d: Nationalism in the Middle East was often influenced by factors such as religious beliefs and secularism.
- NYS Standard 2: World History.

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- NYS Standard 3: Geography.
- NYS Standard 4: Economics.
- NYS Standard 5: Civics, Citizenship, and Government.

PRE-ASSESSMENT:

Do Now (Motivation): Have you ever re-read a diary entry; Facebook posts; or, looked at old pictures? Why do people do this sometimes? Explain. **(Modify the Do Now by adding images, especially for ESL students.) (2 minutes)**



Possible Answers: Trying to remember the past; remembering happier times; finding answers; remembering how we got to where we are; or, attempting to find a way to go back.

Share: Turn and Talk your answers to your shoulder partner.

Possible Follow-up Questions: Do the memories and stories stay the same over time? What affects our memories? What affects how we tell stories of our past? Does a story give voice to all people involved?

Turn and Talk: Look at the images on the board! What do you think the term "Fundamentalism" means? Define it and share with your shoulder partner. **(1-2 minutes)**



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Additional discussion question: Look at the third image. Is Fundamentalism a term strictly for religions?

PROCEDURE:

*Set-up:

Prior to starting the lesson, save instructional time by placing all materials into the team folders to avoid having to pass handouts and directions out during the lesson.

Hang Field Sites (2 sets of documents) 1-4 on each side of the classroom. This allows teachers to split the class so the gallery walk can be completed in a short amount of time. Additionally, each set can be differentiated.

Transition: Introduce Lesson AIM and the first two Learning Targets (1-2 minutes)

Aim: Students can weigh the causes of the 1979 Iranian Revolution.

Learning Target 1: Students can define “Fundamentalism.” Assess students’ understanding Learning Target 1 by taking a “Fist-to-Five” class poll. **(This can be modified by having students close their eyes before taking the poll to make it safe and anonymous.)**

- Five Fingers = I understand it and feel I can teach to my peer.
- Four Fingers = I understand it but I need help explaining it.
- Three Fingers = I think I understand but I need help from a peer.
- Two Fingers = I am a little confused and I need help from my teacher.
- One Finger = I do not understand it.

Learning Target 2: Students can identify the causes of the 1979 Iranian Revolution.

Activity 1: Important Questions Collaborative Teamwork (25-30 minutes)

Organize students into mixed-ability teams of 3 (or 4) for the Important Questions activity. Each team chooses a folder handler who is responsible for passing out papers for each activity. For Important Questions, it is crucial that teams complete each part (Parts 1-7) one-by-one. Have the folder handlers distribute the Part 1 sheet (“When the devil leaves, the angel returns!”) and close the folder. Each teammate contributes something they notice in the image using a Round



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Robin format (each student says one thing clock-wise or counter-clockwise) for 4 minutes. As each student states something they notice, the team records what is said on their sheets.

Have the folder handlers take out the Step 2 sheet and repeat using the same format for 4 minutes.

Take out the sheet with Steps 3, 4, and 5. For Step 3, teams record what they saw in the images in the first two columns of the chart. In the third column, teams look for similarities between the images and record them. For Step 4, teams look at the similarities and write two claims based on the information in the boxes provided. Use Step 5 to assess the students. Put the images up on the SMART Board and have teams share out what they saw, the similarities, and their claims. Allow 10-15 minutes for Steps 3-5.

Next, teams turn the sheet over and complete Step 6 by writing statements they wonder about and turning them into questions. The point is to encourage further inquiry and find answers. Allow 4 minutes for this activity.

When teams complete Step 6, have the folder handlers take out the Step 7 reading (“The Graphics of Revolution and War”) to find their answers. Before reading silently, have teams select two teammates to annotate for causes of the Iranian Revolution with a “CA” and one student label all examples of “Fundamentalism” with an “F.” This helps with the share out after they read.

Assess: Share out (3-5 minutes)

Create a web diagram on the board and label it “Causes of the Iranian Revolution.” Place students answers in the diagram.

Questions: What were the causes of the Iranian Revolution? What examples of Fundamentalism were found in the reading? Why is this Revolution often called an “Islamic” Revolution?

Introduce Learning Target 3: Students can identify the long-term causes of the 1979 Iranian Revolution.

Transition: Video - *Argo* opening sequence (4-5 minutes)

Play the opening sequence to the film *Argo*
[\[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6RGegNFaQM\]](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6RGegNFaQM). Play the video from 1:34 to 4:15. This acts as a transition to Activity 2.

Activity 2: Read All About It! Gallery Walk (15-20 minutes)

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Folder handlers take out the “Read All About It!” prompt sheet. Read the prompt out loud as a class and review the self-checklist. Allow for questions students have about the activity. Next, team folder handlers distribute the journalism notepads to their teammates. Review the directions on the notepads so students understand what they must complete for the gallery walk.

Directions: First, write down the Field Site title. Complete Part 1 by writing down 3 things they see and making an inference using the sentence stem. Make sure students understand they have to use *at least* 1 adjective and 1 verb for each thing they see.

Divide the room in half. Assign 4 teams to the right side of the room and 4 teams to the left. Each team starts at a different Field Site. Give each team 3-5 minutes at each site. If teams are completing each site early, then shorten the time.

After teams complete all 4 Field Sites, have them return to their seats.

Assess: Share out (3-5 minutes)

Return to the “Causes of the Iranian Revolution” web diagram and share out the causes students have learned so far from Field Sites 1-4. Place their answers on the board.

Activity 2 continued... (5 minutes)

Have folder handlers take out Field Site 5 and give it to their teammates. Teams read Field Site 5, annotating causes with a “CA.” After they read, have them complete Part 2 in their journalism notepads. This allows them to evaluate their original causes based on the new information. Finally, teams complete Part 3 of their notepads, classifying the Topics for each Field Site.

Assess: Summary (3-5 minutes)

Discuss as a class the information in Field Site 5.

Possible Questions: According to Field Site 5, what was the main cause of the Iranian Revolution according to the United States? How does this cause compare to what you learned in Field Sites 1-4? How do the causes from the Field Sites compare to the claims you made in the Important Questions activity? Who are the good guys and bad guys in this story based on the information we have so far? What explains the differences in the story between Activities 1 and 2?

Answer the Aim: What was the main cause of the Iranian Revolution?

Summative Assessment: Regents quiz exit ticket (5 minutes)

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Students complete Regents quiz on the causes of the Iranian Revolution. Review quiz if time permits. If there was no time to give the quiz, give as a pre-assessment the next day.

ASSESSMENT: (See attachments for materials)

The first formative assessment is a “Fist-to-Five” classroom poll for Learning Target 1. If some students are still struggling with the term “Fundamentalism,” the instructor will help those students during the “Once Upon a Time” Important Questions team activity.

Additionally, students are formatively assessed using a color-coded Social Studies rubric based on a scale of 1-4 attached to their desks. The rubric assesses students’ abilities to explain the Learning Targets; collaboration during group activities; ability to explain the main idea using supporting evidence; and, their ability to remain on task. The color used depends on the activity during that particular moment of the lesson. All four categories are assessed by the end of the period using a skills tracker aligned to the rubric. Similarly, teams self-assess during activities as the instructor walks around the room and asks teams what they should receive based on the rubric at that moment. The instructor can provide on-the-spot feedback for helping students move to the next level of the rubric. A checklist was also included on the “Read All About It!” student prompt so students can check to make sure they completed all tasks on their journalism notepads for the gallery walk.

For summative assessments to check for understanding, the instructor collects “Once Upon a Time...” Important Questions activity sheets and “Read All About It!” journalism notepads. Finally, students will complete individually Regents multiple-choice quiz exit ticket on the causes of the Iranian Revolution. If there is no time for the quiz, then it can be given as a pre-assessment the following day.

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