

“World War I and the Middle East” Weekend Workshop

Oct 24-25, 2015

**Lesson Plan: The Ottoman Empire in World War I:
 A Study in Maps**

LESSON TITLE:	THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN WORLD WAR I
AUTHOR:	Joan Brodsky Schur
GRADE LEVEL:	10 th Grade NYS AP World History
OVERVIEW OF LESSON:	<p>This lesson includes four activities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Making inferences from maps about the rise and fall of the Ottoman Empire 2. Examining arguments as to whether or not the Ottomans should have remained neutral in World War I 3. Making a Strategic Plan to save the Empire 4. Assessing the effectiveness of the Ottomans in waging war. <p>Throughout the lesson, suggestions are made for advanced classes to assess the complexities of decision making facing the Ottoman Empire because of diverse communities <i>within</i> the empire who might not remain loyal to it Many of these minorities had been encouraged by various European powers to agitate for national homelands.</p>
SUBJECT AREA:	History, Geography
COUNTRY/REGIONAL FOCUS:	The Ottoman Empire in World War I: A Study in Maps
TIME REQUIRED:	Plan for one class period for each of the four activities. Some tasks should be completed as homework. Activity 1 is optional.
MATERIALS REQUIRED:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 30 small index cards ○ 10 red thin markers, 10 green 10 black, 10 pencils. ○ Map A. The Ottoman Empire at its Height ○ Map B. The Ottoman Empire at the Outbreak of World War I 1914 ○ Map C. Ottoman Empire Rail System including the Arabian Peninsula ○ Map D. European alliances during World War I. ○ Maps E – H postwar settlements. ○ Chart 1. Timeline of the Shrinking Ottoman Empire ○ Chart 2: At War with the Entente Powers ○ Handout 1: Questions for Maps A and B ○ Handout 2: Making an Argument: Ottoman Neutrality or a Finding an Ally? ○ Handout 3: Making a Strategic Plan for the Ottoman Empire

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BACKGROUND:

The consequences of the tragic losses on the Western Front in World War I (1914-1918) have long overshadowed how we teach about the Great War. Arguably the war only became a world war with the entry of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans entered the war under the direction of the CUP (Committee of Union and Progress). The CUP came to power in parliamentary elections following the Young Turk Revolution of 1908. In that year the Young Turks re-imposed a constitution that had been overthrown in 1878 by Sultan Abdul Hamid II. In 1909 he was deposed and Mehmed V became sultan, the titular head of state.

For centuries the Ottoman Empire had existed, for the most part, as a relatively tolerant multi-ethnic and religiously diverse empire. European nations nonetheless agitated to “protect” non-Muslim Ottoman minorities. Russians championed the Eastern Orthodox Slavs in the Balkans as well as Armenians in the Caucasus, while the French “protected” Maronite Christians in the Levant and Jews in North Africa. With the fervor of nationalist movements throughout Europe inspiring similar movements by ethnic minorities within the Empire, among them the Arabs (both Muslim and Christian), the CUP countered at first by extending greater equality to all minorities. With the advent of war, the CUP became increasingly dictatorial, especially when confronted by disloyal citizens.

At the outset of World War I in Europe, Ottoman soldiers and citizenry were war-weary from fighting and losing battles in Libya (to Italy 1911-12), and most significantly, from their losses in the Balkan Wars (1912-1913). Retaining what was left of the Empire was paramount. Regaining what was lost in the Balkans and in the Caucasus was important to some members of the CUP, especially to Enver Paşa, Secretary of War. Along with Enver, Secretary of the Interior Talaat Paşa, and Secretary of the Navy Cemal Paşa (sometimes spelled Djemal) were the governing powers of the CUP and thus of the empire.

The Ottoman Empire could have remained neutral in World War I. Alternatively she could have sought the protection of a stronger ally. Yet the Entente powers of France, Britain and Russia were hesitant to protect what they perceived to be a weak empire. At the same time they coveted the Ottoman territory they could win in victory. In early August of 1914 the Ottomans, under the ruling party of the Young Turks, made the fateful decision to enter into a secret treaty of alliance with Germany.

What was at stake was not only Istanbul and Anatolia, but the Arab lands which today form the core of what we call the *Middle East*. The Arab Ottoman provinces had been ruled by Turks for roughly four hundred years. A century after World War I we still live in the shadow of what happened in the aftermath of Ottoman demise.

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This lesson asks students to view World War I through the eyes of the ruling Ottoman State, which most of its citizens (regardless of their religion or ethnicity) supported. Using a series of maps and timelines, students construct a Strategic Plan to save the Empire. Thus, it puts the battles in the Middle East at center stage.

CURRICULUM CONNECTION:

In World History this lesson can be introduced as students learn about the outbreak of World War I. Because so many of the problems in today’s Middle East were created after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, consider spending less time on the Western Front and more time on the Ottoman Fronts: in the Caucasus, the Dardanelles, Eastern Anatolia, Mesopotamia, Egypt (and the Suez Canal), the Arabian Peninsula (Mecca and Medina), and in Greater Syria (which included Palestine). This lesson sets the stage for those theaters of war and does so from the Ottoman point of view.

This lesson would make an excellent introduction to a course on the Modern Middle East.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- Why did the Ottoman Empire enter World War I?
- What were the challenges facing the Ottoman Empire in waging war?
- How effective was the Ottoman government in planning and executing the war?

LEARNING GOALS:

- To read maps and make inferences based on maps.
- To compare the expanse of the Ottoman Empire at its height to that of its last 100 years.
- To understand that there are multiple ways of reading and interpreting history, depending on the point of view within the story.
- To learn about the battlefronts of the Ottoman Empire from the perspective of those Ottomans leading the war effort,
- To assess some of the consequences of the fall of the Ottoman Empire.

STANDARDS:

Common Core State Standards:

- CCR Anchor Standards for Speaking and Listening: Comprehension and Collaboration: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. CCR pg. 48, 6-12.
- C3 Framework: College, Career & Civic Life for Social Studies State Standards (NCSS)

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Geography D2.Geo.8.9-12. Evaluate the impact of economic activities and political decisions on spatial patterns within and among urban, suburban, and rural regions. (43)

- National Standards for History Standard 5. Historical Issues-Analysis and Decision-Making
- National Standards for History in the Schools Standard 5B. Analyze the interests, values, and points of view of those involved in the dilemma or problem situation.
- National Standards for World History Standard 2.B. Describe the major turning points of the World War I and principal theaters of conflict in the Middle East (...) (200)

PRE-ASSESSMENT:

Distribute three index cards to groups of three students. On the first card ask each group to write down the things that pop into their minds when they think of World War I. (Probable answers might be: trench warfare, battles of the Marne or Somme, Woodrow Wilson, the machine gun.) Next ask them to write down some of the countries or empires that fought in the war. (Their first answers are likely to be the United States, Germany, France, Britain, or Russia.)

On their second index card ask students to write down some of the most strife-worn cities or locations of the Middle East and especially the Arab Middle East. (Probable answers might be Baghdad, Mosul, Damascus, Jerusalem, Gaza, Aleppo, and so forth.)

On their third index card ask students to write down what they know about the connection between the war-torn Middle East and World War I?

Ask groups to share their answers with the class (and/or collect their index cards) to assess what students already do and do not know about the Ottoman Empire and World War I.

PROCEDURE:

1. Making inferences from maps.

This activity is a whole-class activity. Project Map A. and distribute Handout 1: Questions for Maps A and B. (See the questions and answers in Appendix 1.)

While students look at Map A. help them to understand the color-coded key. This is a map that explains *chronology* as well as *space*. It shows when territory was added to the Ottoman Empire, and ends when it reached its fullest extent. Pose the questions in the handout and work through the answers as a whole class. (Students can fill in answers on their copies of Handout 1.

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Now project Map B. side by side with Map A* or distribute printouts of Map B. Students will work in pairs to answer questions that compare Map A. to Map B. When students have completed this work, share answers as a class. Finally, pose the following questions:

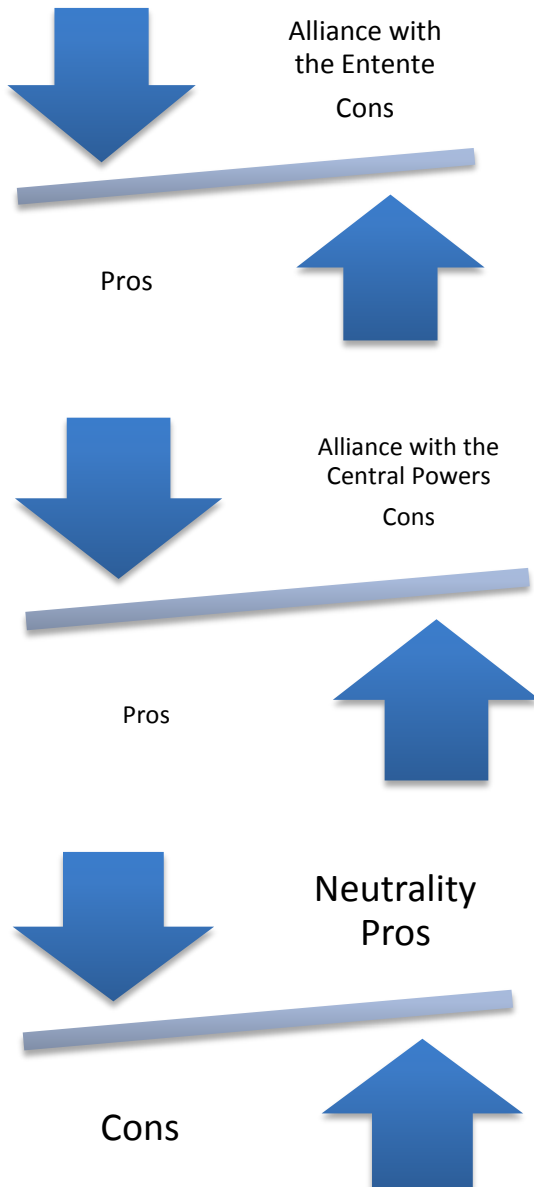
- Did the Ottoman Empire begin as an empire in Europe, Asia, or both? Explain.
- Were Arab lands at the heart of the Ottoman Empire, or an extension of it? Explain? (The Arab Middle East includes the bright green area that includes Cairo and Jerusalem, and the darker green area that includes Baghdad.)
- To your knowledge, what other empires approximated the geographical expanse and longevity of the Ottoman Empire?
- For advanced classes: How did the Ottomans cope with emerging ethnic nationalisms in a time of war? Review the varied population of Ottoman lands at the start of the twentieth century by Googling “Demographics of the Ottoman Empire” and analyzing the charts of 1906 when approximately 75% of the population was Muslim, including Turks, Arabs and Kurds. The Empire also included Christian Arabs, Greeks, Armenians, and Jews. How have the Ottomans tried to hold their loyalty? Review the Tanzimat reforms of the 19th century and promises of the Young Turks in 1908 to create equal citizenship for all males in the Empire. Will all citizens support the Ottomans? Why or why not?

*You can do this by creating a PowerPoint slide that includes both.

2. Making an Argument: Ottoman neutrality versus finding the right ally?

Distribute Chart I: Timeline of the Shrinking Ottoman Empire and Outbreak of World War I (1830-1914) and Handout 2: Making an Argument. Place students in groups of 3 to review Chart 1. Students should argue amongst themselves about the pros and cons of the three alternatives: an alliance with the Entente, alliance with the Central Powers, neutrality. Devote some class time to hearing arguments made for each of the three scenarios and summarize it on the following graphic organizers. Students can complete the writing assignment on Handout 2. as homework.

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3. Making a Strategic Plan for the Survival of the Ottoman Empire

Explain that pro-war members of the governing party of Young Turks, known as CUP (Committee for Union and Progress) sought an alliance with each of the Entente powers. None was interested in what it took to be such a weak ally. Rather, each had designs for carving up the Ottoman Empire. Germany, on the other hand, was interested in making such an alliance. It hoped that Ottoman participation in the Great War would provoke internal rebellions and uprisings among all Muslims, including those living under British colonial rule in India, French

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colonial rule in North Africa, and Russian rule in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Germany and the Ottomans made a secret treaty in early August that committed the Germans to defending the Ottoman Empire, while the Ottomans pledged to attack Germany’s enemies, Russia and Britain. By Nov 2, 1914 the Ottomans were at war. In Turkish, “Seferberlik” means “conscription,” a term that was widely used during World War I to mean “war.”

Read out loud the following description of *seferberlik* from Irfan Orga’s autobiography *Portrait of a Turkish Family* (Eland Publishing).

That evening [in Istanbul] Orhan Bey [our neighbor] came to bid us farewell. He was off the next morning to a place he did not know. We drank his health and wished him well, Mehmet [my brother] and I holding our glasses high with the others. And down the street the drums beat for someone else. For in those days going away to the war, any war, was a brave and noble thing to do and as the young men left a district so the band would play outside each of their houses, the Turkish flag being handed to the newest recruit. And all the youth with their wild, wild hearts leaped and danced and shouted, the better to drown the noise of the women’s weeping. When they were leaving their homes the band played a song of unbelievable sadness and everyone started to sing (...) [the words] *Oh wounded ones I am coming to take your place and my heart is crying because I am leaving my beloved ones. The mountains and the stones cry with me*” (71-72)

Assign students to make a Strategic Plan to save the Ottoman Empire as men like Orhan Bey, the narrator’s uncle as well as his father march off to a war they hope to win.

Place students in small groups of three to five people.

Distribute to each group one printed copy of:

- Map B. The Ottoman Empire at the Outbreak of World War I, 1914. Each group of students will make their Strategic Plan on this map.
- Map C. Ottoman Empire Rail System including the Arabian Peninsula
- Map D. European alliances during World War I.
- Chart 2: At War with the Entente Powers
- Handout 3. Making a Strategic Plan for the Ottoman Empire

Distribute to each group 1 red, 1 green and 1 black thin marker (Sharpies are best) and 1 pencil.

- Assign one Group Leader in each group to read aloud the directions.
- The Group Leader can divide up some of the research tasks on Part 1. Researching the Geography of the Ottoman Empire.

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- Make the assignment such that Part I can be completed as homework. Give students one class period to complete their plans in their Group.
- Post all Strategic Plans at the end.

Optional: Ask each group to present their Strategic Plan to the whole class. Direct the class to vote for the best Strategic Plan. (No group can vote for their own plan)

4. Reaching Conclusions

Return to the Essential Questions:

- Why did the Ottoman Empire enter World War I?
- What were the challenges facing the Ottoman Empire in waging war?
- How effective was the Ottoman government in planning and executing the war?

Assign class members to read the following overview of Ottoman campaigns: *Ottoman Empire at War*, at New Zealand History, <http://www.nzhistory.net.nz/war/ottoman-empire/at-war>

Differentiated Instruction: For advanced classes:

Assign to members of each group a different section of Dr. Altay Atlı's detailed history of the following Ottoman fronts: Caucasus (Battle of Sarıkamış), Gallipoli, Arabian Peninsula (Arab Revolt), Mesopotamia (Battle of Kut), Palestine (Suez and Gaza). Each group should evaluate what they learned in respect to the Essential Questions, and report back to the whole group

Turkey in the First World War: The Campaigns, Dr. Altay Atlı of Boğaziçi University in Istanbul, <http://www.turkeyswar.com/campaigns/index.html>

Pose the following questions:

- In what regards did the Ottomans show strength and tenacity? Were they underestimated by their enemies? Did they endure longer than expected?
- What were the most fatal mistakes made by the Ottomans in World War I? Would you have made the same mistakes? If these mistakes had not been made, could the Ottomans have survived?

5. Now What?

At the end of World War I the residents of the Arab provinces are no longer subjects of the Ottoman Empire.

- Ask students to think “now what?” What should be the fate of the lands and diverse peoples of the former Ottoman Empire? Who should decide? How was the Middle East divided after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, by whom and for whose benefit?
- With the class look at the Maps E through H. Pose the following questions:

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- Was the Sykes-Picot Agreement adopted? (Compare maps E and G)
- What would have happened to Anatolia had Turkey not fought and won the Turkish War of Independence 1919-1923? (Compare maps F and H)

Proceed to implement one of the suggested follow-up lessons in Resources.

ASSESSMENT:

	Exceeds Expectations	Meets Expectations	Meets Some Expectations	Falls Below Expectations
Class participation				
Small group Strategic Plan Participation				
Short Essay: Making an Argument				

RESOURCES:

Atli, Altay. “Turkey in the First World War.” <http://www.turkeyswar.com>

Erickson, Edward J. *Ordered to Die: A History of the Ottoman Army in the First World War Contributions in Military Studies, No. 201*. Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 2001.

Erickson, Edward J. “Gallipoli: War’s Global Concourse (1915),” in *Places of Encounter: Time, Place and Connectivity in World History Since 1500*. Eds. Aran Mackinnon and Elaine Mackinnon. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2012. 161-177.

Fewster, Kevin, Vecihi Başarın and Hatice Hürmüze Başarın. *Gallipoli: The Turkish Story*. NSW Australia: Allen & Unwin, 2003 (1985).

Fromkin, David. *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East*. New York: Henry Holt, 1989.

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McMeekin, Sean. *The Berlin-Baghdad Express: The Ottoman Empire and Germany’s Bid for World Power*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2010.

Orga, Irfan. *Portrait of a Turkish Family*. London: Eland, 1988 (1950). A depiction of Orga’s family members and their fate during World War

Rogan, Eugene. *The Fall of the Ottomans: The Great War in the Middle East*. New York, Basic Books, 2015.

Suggested Lesson Plans on Post-War Settlements:

- The Making of the Modern Middle East: World War I and its Aftermath.
- Ataturk and the Rise of Modern Turkey

Portland State : Middle East Teaching Tools

http://www.middleeastpdx.org/resources/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/Rick-Burnett_1.docx

Appendix 1

Questions for Maps A and B

Questions Map A.	Answer Key
What does Map A. show?	Map A. shows the growth of the Ottoman Empire from 1359 to 1683, and tracks which parts of the Empire were added on when
Guess approximately how much of the Mediterranean basin was encircled by the Ottoman Empire at its height?	Perhaps 3/4 to 4/5 of the Mediterranean Basin is in Ottoman hands by 1683. Only Spain, Italy and France, Morocco and some of the Adriatic coast are not under Ottoman rule.
The Ottoman Empire occupied parts of how many continents? What are they?	Europe, Asia and Africa. Europe and Asia are divided by the Turkish Straits linking the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. The Ottomans controlled territory west of the Turkish Strait, in Europe. They controlled Anatolia east of the Turkish Strait in Asia, Southwest Asia (the Middle East) and land in Africa along its northern coast.
On what bodies of water did the Ottoman Empire lie? Name them. In what ways did Ottoman control of waterways empower the Empire?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Mediterranean Sea (including the Aegean, Sea of Marmara, and the Adriatic). The Mediterranean connects to the Atlantic Ocean.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Red Sea (on both eastern and western coasts) which links to the Indian Ocean. • The Black Sea (linked to the Mediterranean through the Turkish Straits). • The Persian Gulf on its northern and eastern sides (linking to the Indian Ocean) • The Caspian Sea (approx. half of its eastern coast. <p>Trade from the Far East to Europe took place not just across land routes (the Silk Road) but also across numerous major waterways.</p>
<p>Look at Acquisitions up until 1451. Approximately what proportion of the Empire was in Asia? In Europe?</p>	<p>At this point the Ottoman Empire is divided between Europe and Asia, with only slightly more territory in Asia.</p>
<p>In what years were portions of what we call the <i>Middle East</i> and North Africa acquired by the Ottomans?</p>	<p>The Middle East and North Africa were acquired after 1451 and up until 1683.</p>
<p>Where in Europe did the Ottomans expand after 1451?</p>	<p>The Ottomans kept expanding into Hungary and up until the “Gates of Vienna.”</p>
<p>Making Inferences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the Ottoman Empire <u>begin</u> as an empire in Europe, Asia, or both? Explain. • Was the Middle East at the heart of the Ottoman Empire, or an extension of it? Explain? (The Middle East includes the bright green area that includes Cairo and Jerusalem, and the darker green area that includes Baghdad.) • To your knowledge, what other empires approximated the geographical expanse and longevity of the Ottoman Empire? 	<p>Most students think of the Ottoman Empire as from its inception part of the Middle East. It is important for them to understand that as early as 1451 the Empire lay equally in Europe and Asia. Until 1520 Muslims did not predominate; the Empire historically included large Christian populations as well as significant Jewish ones.</p>

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Questions Map B.	Answer Key
What does Map B. show?	Map B. shows the extent of the Ottoman Empire in 1914 when World War I broke out.
Compare Map B. to Map A. Look at the seas and waterways. Which shorelines have been lost to the Ottomans?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Ottomans no longer encircle the Black Sea, but control only its southern shores. • The Ottomans have lost most of the Mediterranean. They retain only its eastern corner (including the Aegean and Sea of Marmara). • The Ottoman Empire no longer reaches the Caspian Sea. • The Empire controls only the eastern side of the Red Sea and not all of it.
List six major cities on Map B. in the Ottoman Empire. (Note that Istanbul was called Constantinople by Europeans.) Include at least two cities of religious significance.	Cities include Istanbul, Ankara, Van, Ezerum, Smyrna (now Izmir), Damascus, Baghdad. For centuries the Ottomans controlled Jerusalem, important to all three Abrahamic faiths, and the holy cities of Islam, Mecca and Medina.
List four foreign powers that have taken over Ottoman lands by 1914.	Russia, Persia, Italy, United Kingdom (Britain), Bulgaria. Not on the map but important to point out is that France colonized Algeria (1830) and Tunisia (1881).