**Recommended Books for High School**

\* = a Middle East Outreach Council (MEOC) book award winner

**Fiction and Poetry**

**Ten Things I Hate About Me** by Randa Abdel-Fattah  
*An Australian teenager of Lebanese descent struggles to reconcile her conflicting identities.  \*\*Combine this with the film "Muslims: An In-Depth Look at What It Means To Be a Muslim in the 21st Century."*

**\* Where the Streets Had a Name** by Randa Abdel-Fattah

*13-year-old Hayaat, believing that a handful of soil from her grandmother’s ancestral home in Jerusalem will save her grandmother’s life, travels with her friend Samy across Israeli checkpoints to reach the village. The story is one of humor, adventure, family love, and vivid characters (including a Jewish Israeli couple who assist the young people).*

**The Language of Baklava** by Diana Abu-Jaber  
*This coming of age story explores the cultural tensions faced by a young Jordanian-American girl and her family. Food plays a central role.*

**A Child in Palestine**by Naji al-Ali

*These satirical cartoons criticize the Israeli occupation, corruption of the regimes in the region, and the suffering of the Palestinian people.*

**The 99** by Naif Al-Mutawa

*This comic book**features a team of superheroes based on Islamic culture and religion.*

**Zahra’s Paradise** by Amir and Khalil

Zahra’s Paradise *is a graphic novel set in Iran after the elections of 2009. It brings together fiction and real people and events and has been compared with* Persepolis*.*

**The Bridge on the Drina** by Ivo Andric  
*This internationally-acclaimed Bosnian novel describes (as a series of short stories set in different time periods) a small town in Bosnia during the years of Ottoman rule.  A teacher can easily use one or two stories, rather than the whole novel.*

**Forgotten Fire** by Adam Bagdasarian  
*Although the book is a work of fiction, it is based on the true experiences of the author's great-uncle, who was an Armenian teenager during the genocide of 1915.*

**The Little Black Fish** by Samad Behrangi  
*This Iranian short story is made to be read aloud. It has many different levels of meaning - about breaking out of one’s narrow environment and learning about the wider world. Even more interesting is the fact that the author, a school teacher might have been murdered in 1968 at the age of 29 by the shah’s secret police because of the way he encouraged his elementary school students to think freely and look at the social problems of their country. This small book also is written half in Persian, so kids can see what the language looks like and how the cover of a Middle Eastern book is the back of an American one (since they write from right to left).*

**The Shepherd’s Granddaughter** by Anne Laurel Carter

*Palestinian teen Amani tends her extended family's sheep until Israeli settlers encroach on their land. The family’s resistance – with the help of sympathetic Israelis – forms the underpinning of this coming-of-age story.*

**Funny in Farsi** by Firoozeh Dumas  
*This comedic memoir tells anecdotes from the author’s life growing up as an Iranian immigrant in the U.S. Also see her follow-up memoir, Laughing without an Accent.*

**Parvana’s Journey** by Deborah Ellis  
*A sequel to The Breadwinner, this book follows 12-year-old Parvana. Separated from her family, she sets off looking for them in war-torn Afghanistan during the time of the Taliban.*

**The Kite Runner** by Khaled Hosseini  
*This well-known novel not only explores the impact of the Taliban regime on Afghan society, but also treats the way that the Afghan expatriate community tries to adapt to life in America.*

**Emails from Scheherazade** by Mohja Kahf  
*This is a book of poetry describing Arab immigrants to America and their experiences.*

**The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf** by Mohja Kahf  
*This novel tells about a Muslim girl growing up and entering adulthood in Indiana, “exploring the fault lines between ‘Muslim’ and ‘American.’”*

**\* Wanting Mor** by Rukhsana Khan  
*An Afghani girl with a cleft palette struggles to make a life in post-Taliban Afghanistan.*

**\* The Apprentice's Masterpiece: A Story of Medieval Spain** by Melanie Little  
*A young adult novel set in 14th-century Spain tells the story of a family with a secret at a time when the Inquisition brings intolerance and torture. Written in elegant free verse, this is a dramatic story set in a troubling time.*

**\* Figs and Fate** by Elsa Marston *This is a wonderful collection of short stories about teens growing up in the Arab world.*

**Santa Claus in Baghdad and Other Stories about Teens in the Arab World** by Elsa Marston *This is a wonderful collection of short stories.  (The title story, “Santa Claus in Baghdad," can be compared with “The Gift of the Magi."  Be sure to see the film – below – made from the former story.)*

**Ismailia Eclipse**  by Khaled Mattawa  
*This is a collection of poems by a Libyan-American writer.*

**Dawn and Dusk** by Alice Mead *A 13-year-old Kurdish boy and his family struggle to survive during the time of the Iran-Iraq War (and the Iraqi poison gas attack on some Kurdish villages).*

**Exit Wounds** by Rutu Modan  
*In this graphic novel, a young Israeli man searches for his father, who may or may not have been killed in a suicide bombing attack*

**The Feminine Art** by Weam Namou  
*Set in the U.S. and Iraq in the early 1990s, the book deals with issues of love, arranged marriages, and the search for happiness.*

**The Flag of Childhood: Poems from the Middle East; \* Nineteen Varieties of Gazelle; The Space between Our Footsteps** (high school) by Naomi Shihab Nye  
*These three books of poetry are by Middle Eastern poets.*

**My Name is Red** by Orhan Pamuk  
*A non-traditional mystery set in the 15th century Ottoman Empire. The author is a famous Turkish writer*.

**The Essential Rumi** byJalal al-Din Rumi

*This is a collection of the poetry by Rumi, the great 13th century Persian poet.*

**My Name is Aram** by William Saroyan  
*A coming-of-age story set in an Armenian immigrant community in the early twentieth century.*

**Damascus Nights** by Rafik Schami  
*One of the city’s greatest storytellers is struck dumb, and his friends must tell him stories from myth, history and contemporary Syria to reawaken his tongue.*

**A Hand Full of Stars** by Rafik Schami  
*A Syrian teenager, long before the current troubles, learns that: “If you tell the truth in Syria, you must pay with your life.”*

**Habibi** by Craig Thompson

*Set in a fictional Islamic fairytale landscape, this graphic novel tells a story that extends across ancient Middle Eastern geographies, religions, mythologies, and migrations—containing both Arab and Christian ­histories—to tell about Dodola, a runaway child bride, and Zam, the orphan she rescues in the slave market where they first meet.*

**Cairo** by G. Willow Wilson and M.K. Perker

*This graphic novel is a modern fable set on the streets of the Egypt. A stolen hookah and a genie change the lives of five strangers forever.*

**\* A Bottle in the Gaza Sea** by Valérie Zenatti  
*Inspired by a true story, A Bottle in the Gaza Sea is the story of Tal Levine, an Israeli teenager who longs to strike up a correspondence with "someone on the other side."  She convinces her brother, who is serving in the Israel Defense Forces along the Gaza border, to throw a bottle containing a message into the Gaza Sea in the hopes that someone will pick it up and respond. In this way, she meets "Gazaman," a Palestinian.*

**Personal Accounts**

**I Want to Get Married:****One Wannabe Bride's Misadventures with Handsome Houdinis, Technicolor Grooms, Morality Police, and Other Mr. Not Quite Rights** by Ghada Abdel Aal

*This is a young Egyptian woman’s humorous blog about her adventures in “dating.”*

**Return to Childhood: The Memoir of a Modern Moroccan Woman** by Leila Abouzeid  
*This is the memoir of a woman growing up during the time of Morocco's struggle for independence.*

**Thura's Diary** by Thura Al-Windawi  
*A girl describes her life in Iraq during the 2003 U.S. military action.*

**\* Tasting the Sky** by Itbisam Barakat  
 *This is a beautifully written book about her childhood as a Palestinian refugee. Young people can relate to her vivid tale of youth, family relationships, and overcoming adversity.*

**If You Could Be My Friend** ed. by Litsa Boudalika  
*Two teenagers, Mervet Akram Sha’ban and Galit Fink, one Palestinian and one Israeli teenager, corresponded with each other for three years when “introduced” by a Belgian film director, producing a documentary in Israel.*

**\* The Illustrator's Notebook** by Mohieddin Ellabbad  
*The book is an award-winning autobiography (with photographs and drawings) of an Egyptian illustrator focusing on his art and how art is connected with his personal experience and the broader context of Egypt’s history.*

**Children of War: Voices of Iraqi Refugees** by Deborah Ellis  
*This book provides an opportunity for students to read interviews with Iraqi refugee children and see how the war has affected their lives.*

**Three Wishes: Palestinian and Israeli Children Speak** by Debora Ellis  
*This book is a collection of accounts of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict by children ages 8-18.*

**Waltz with Bashir: A Lebanon War Story** by Ari Folman and David Polonski

*This graphic novel is based on the award-winning movie, a reconstruction of a soldier's experience during Israel's war in Lebanon.*

**\* How to Understand Israel in 60 Days or Less** by Sarah Glidden  
*This graphic "novel" is a true account of the Jewish author's "birthright" tour of Israel and her attempt to understand the complex history of the nation.*

**Encounters with the Middle East: True Stories of People and Culture That Help You Understand the Region** by Nesreen Khashan and Jim Bowman  
*The book contains different (and readable) stories about Westerners' encounters with the Middle East.*

**The Photographer** by Didier Lefevre and Emmanuel Guibert

*Part photojournalism and part graphic memoir, The Photographer tells the story of a 1986 Doctors Without Borders mission which traveled into northern Afghanistan by horse and donkey train at the height of the Soviet occupation.*

**Baghdad Journal: An Artist in Occupied Iraq** by Steve Mumford

*In this graphic “novel,” the artist documents the everyday scenes of Iraq in watercolors and drawings painting a human side of the war. Mumford draws and paints daily activities of American platoons and Baghdad residents.*

**Palestine** by Joe Sacco

*In this graphic “novel,” Joe Sacco writes about his 1991-92 experiences, emphasizing the history of Palestine, in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1991.*

**Persepolis and Perselopis II** by Marjane Satrapi  
*The two-volume memoir in graphic novel style describes the author’s childhood during the Iranian Revolution, her schooling abroad during the Iran-Iraq War, and eventual return to her homeland. Note: She describes a sexual encounter in book 2. \*\*See the acclaimed animated film version (in the Multi-Media section below).*

**Behind the Wall: Life, Love, and Struggle in Palestine** by Rich Wiles.

*This book is a collection of interviews and photos with Palestinians in the AWest bank’s refugee camps.*

**When I Was a Soldier** by Valerie Zenatti  
*This memoir describes a teenage Israeli girl’s required two years of service in the military.*

**Non-Fiction/Reference**

**\* Al-Kindi: The Father of Arab Philosophy** by Tony Abboud  
*This book is part of a 6-volume series "Great Muslim Philosophers and Scientists of the Middle Ages."*

**Suleyman and the Ottoman Empire** by John Addison  
*A brief overview of the subject along with a series of short, primary source documents.*

**Picturing Iran: Art, Society and Revolution** Ed. by Shiva Balaghi and Lynn Gumpert  
*A book showing modern Iranian visual culture of the 1960s and 1970s (just before and during the revolution). Some of the posters shown in the book would be useful in helping students to understand the reasons behind the revolution.*

**Saddam Hussein: A Biography** by Shiva Balaghi  
*The recent biography (December 2005) describes the life of the former Iraqi leader.*

**\* The Genius of Islam: How Muslims Made the Modern World** by Bryn Barnard.

*Although written at a middle school level, this beautifully illustrated book contains information – and illustrations of interest to high school students too. It is comprised of short articles on developments in the medieval Muslim world: from advances in medicine, math, and science to the transmission of ancient knowledge to the development of military bands.*

**\* The Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Arabia** by Mary Beardwood  
*This detailed encyclopedia entry focuses on the geography, cultures, and, especially, the flora and fauna of the Arabian Peninsula.  With many photographs, charts, maps, figures, asides, this exhaustive and beautifully illustrated text will answer every question you never knew that you had about Arabia on subjects from pearling to fossils, migratory birds to the many uses of the date palm. The sheer breadth of information will eliminate the narrow geographic and social stereotypes so many students have about the Middle East.*

**\* Al-Khwarizmi: The Inventor of Algebra** by Corona Brezina  
*This book is part of a 6-volume series "Great Muslim Philosophers and Scientists of the Middle Ages."*

**Equal Rights Is Our Minimum Demand: The Women’s Rights Movement in Iran, 2005** by Diana Childress.

*This well-written account of the women’s rights movement in Iran does not only cover developments in 2005 but provides an overview of women’s life throughout the history of modern Iran.*

**The Essential Koran,** translated and edited by Thomas Cleary  
*This is an introductory selection of readings from the Muslim holy book.*

**\* Encyclopedia of Muslim-American History,** ed. by Edward E. Curtis IV  
*This illustrated two-volume encyclopedia includes some 300 articles covering historical and contemporary issues, events, people, court cases, themes, and activism relating to Muslim-American history. The reference also includes 50 original documents, a master chronology and an extensive bibliography.*

**Democracy in the Middle East,** editedby John C. Davenport.  
*From The World in Focus series, the book offers a variety of views on the prospects for democracy in the Middle East and the U.S. role in promoting democratic developments.*

**Muhammad and the Arab Empire** by John Duckworth  
*A brief overview of the subject along with a series of short, primary source documents.*

**\* Iran: Opposing Viewpoints,** ed. by Laura K. Egendorf  
*The collection of articles offers many different perspectives on modern Iran. The book addresses such issues as whether Iran is a threat to global security, how the U.S. should respond to Iran, and the status of human rights. (The purpose is to show students different sides of the same issue.)*

**\* A History of the Muslim World to 1405: The Making of a Civilization** by Vernon O. Egger *This book is written in a clear style, presents sophisticated themes, avoids clichés common in introductory works, and is accessible to the high school audience.*

**Islam** by Jamal J. Elias  
*This is an overview of the Muslim religion, essential in understanding modern developments in the Middle East.*

**The Everything Middle East Book** by Jacob M. Fellure  
This is an easy-to-read overview of Middle Eastern nations, histories, and conflicts.

**The Middle East and the Islamic World Reader,** edited by Marvin E. Gettleman and Stuart Schaar  
*This collection of documents spans Islam and Middle Eastern history. (Over half the book is on 20th century conflicts and issues.)*

**The Waiting Room** (online at Cartoon Movement) by Sarah Glidden http://www.cartoonmovement.com/comic/10

Written in a documentary style, Sarah Glidden’s 20- page cartoon account tells of Syria’s displaced Iraqis, the largest urban refugee population ever.

**\* Women in the Middle East: Tradition and Change** by Ramsay M. Harik and Elsa Marston  
*This comprehensive look at Middle Eastern women and their struggle to incorporate both tradition and change in their daily lives is a major contribution to resources on this topic of wide interest. Of particular note, the revised edition includes two chapters that cover the experience of women in Afghanistan and women’s health issues region-wide*

**\* Celebrate Ramadan and Eid Al-Fitr with Praying Fasting, and Charity** (National Geographic, “Holidays Around the World” series) by Deborah Heiligman *Although it is at a low reading level, this book is even interesting to adults due to its great pictures and clear explanations. (It is National Geographic book, so the photography is amazing!)*

**Mecca** by Shahrukh Husain  
*From the Holy Cities series, this is a basic introduction to the city of Mecca.*

**Understanding Islam and the Muslims** by Islamic Affairs Department of the Embassy of Saudi Arabia  
*An introduction to Islam in a brief booklet with bright photographs.*

**The Book of Jewish Belief** by Louis Jacobs

*This well-organized, thorough book provides short descriptions of all aspects of Jewish beliefs.*

**The Book of Jewish Practice** by Louis Jacobs

*This book provides short, clear descriptions of Jewish customs, holidays, and practices.*

**\* The Iranian Revolution** by Brendan January  
*This well-written book, part of the Pivotal Moments That Changed the World series, focuses on the Iranian revolution of 1979.*

**\* Avicenna (Ibn Sinna): Muslim Physician and Philosopher of the 11th Century** by Aishe Khan  
*This book is part of a 6-volume series "Great Muslim Philosophers and Scientists of the Middle Ages."*

**Oil in the Middle East** by John King  
*This book contains beautiful photos and well-written narrative about modern diplomatic and political developments in the Middle East.*

**\* Iraq** by Dale Lightfoot  
*One of the Modern World Issues series. The book gives an overview of Iraq’s geography, history, government, and economy. Colorful pictures and maps make it student-friendly.*

**Islam: Faith, Culture, and History** by Paul Lunde  
The book is an overview of Islamic religion, history, and culture.

**\* Mosque** by Daud Macaulay  
*The book describes the construction of a 16th century Ottoman mosque.*

**Inside Story: A 16th Century Mosque** by Fiona MacDonald and Mark Bergin  
*Detailed illustrations and clear explanations make this a terrific resource book with information about the building, religious background, and history surrounding the construction of a mosque.*

**\* Teen Life in the Middle East,** edited by Ali Akbar Mahdi

*This compilation offers insights into the interests, family and social lives, religious practices, and culture of teens in twelve profiled countries.*

**\* Extraordinary Women from the Muslim World** by Natalie Maydell and Sep Riahi  
*This book, introduces readers to 13 Muslim women in history who have lived extraordinary lives and influenced their communities in a positive way, often overcoming extreme hardship and inaccurate stereotypes that have been placed on the role of women in Islam. In addition to showing the impact these women have had throughout the years, Extraordinary Women from the Muslim World seeks to make a difference in the lives of Islamic women today, inspiring them to fervently pursue their goals. All proceeds from the special edition hardback series will be donated to Islamic Relief to benefit the women and children of Sudan.*

**The Arab Americans** by Alixa Naff  
*This book describes the experiences and contributions of Arab-Americans.*

**The Ottomans: Empire of Faith** by Dr. David Nicolle  
*A comprehensive history of the Ottoman Empire with maps and illustrations.*

**Jerusalem** by Saviour Pirotta  
*From the Holy Cities series, this is a basic introduction to the city of Jerusalem.*

**The African and Middle Eastern World, 600-1500** by Randall L.Pouwels  
*A history of medieval Africa and the Middle East with beautiful photographs and maps.*

**\* Albucasis (Abu Al-Qasim Al-Zahrawi): Renouned Muslim Surgeon of the 10th Century** by Fred Ramen  
*This book is part of a 6-volume series "Great Muslim Philosophers and Scientists of the Middle Ages."*

**Essential Judaism: A Complete Guide to Beliefs, Customs, and Rituals** by George Robinson.

*This wonderfully detailed reference book makes it easy to look up anything that one needs to know about Judaism. It may be a bit challenging for beginning-level students but very useful for advanced ones – or for teachers.*

**\* Historical Atlas of Islam** by Malise Ruthven and Azim Nanji

*This beautifully illustrated history of Islam provides a broad overview of the economic, social, political, and cultural history of the Islamic world from the birth of the Prophet Muhammad to the present. Brief essays address pivotal moments and movements and eras, and color maps and photographs effectively complement the text throughout.*

**Footnotes in Gaza** by Joe Sacco

*This is a journalistic graphic “novel” of an Israeli massacre in the Palestinian town of Rafah during the Suez War and life in Gaza today.*

**\* Al-Biruni: Master Astronomer and Muslim Scholar of the 11th Century** by Bill Scheppler  
*This book is part of a 6-volume series "Great Muslim Philosophers and Scientists of the Middle Ages."*

**Approaching the Qur'an** by Michael Sells  
*A copy of the Muslim holy book, it also comes with commentaries as well as an Audio CD of Qur’an readings.*

**Foods of Iran** by Barbara Sheen  
*This book has lovely photographs and explanations about Iranian food.*

**\* Averroes (Ibn Rushd): Muslim Scholar, Philosopher, and Physician of the 12th Century** by Liz Sonneborn  
*This book is part of a 6-volume series "Great Muslim Philosophers and Scientists of the Middle Ages."*

**Every Man in this Village Is a Liar** by Megan K. Stack  
*A reporter describes her experiences covering Middle Eastern wars from 2001.*

**Early Islam** by Desmond Stewart  
*Part of the "Great Ages of Man" series, this book has vivid pictures and maps to illustrate the history of Islam during medieval times.*

**\* The Middle East Today  b**y Dona J. Stewart  
*This book gives political, geographical, and cultural perspectives of the Middle East today.*

**\* Islamic Design: A Genius for Geometry** by Daud Sutton  
*Focusing on Islamic geometric patterns, simple and complex, man-made and in nature, this book offers unique insight into Islamic culture.*

**Pride of Baghdad** by Brian K. Vaughan and Niko Henrichon  
*This graphic “novel” is based on the true story of a group of lions that escaped from the Baghdad zoo during the American bombing in 2003. It asks questions about liberty: whether it can be given or must be earned, whether it is better to die free or live in captivity.*

*a refugee camp, tells of two Afghani girls who share one pair of sandals.*

**\* A Brief History of Saudi Arabia** by James Wynbrandt

*In recent years, Saudi Arabic has experienced changes that have both altered the internal  
structure of the country and affected its foreign relations. This book manages to steer an even course through a subject that is often treated with skepticism or defensiveness.*

**Medieval Cuisine of the Islamic World** by Lilia Zaouali  
*This book gives a culinary history of the Islamic world and provides recipes.*

**Videos**

**Persepolis (from the memoirs of Marjane Satrapi)**

*This animated true story includes both the author’s graphic novels in the Persepolis series. It tells of the author’s youth in Iran just before and during the revolution, her struggle to adapt to life in Vienna when her parents send her to study abroad during the Iran-Iraq War, and her return to Iran as a young adult. (For reasons which become clear at the end of the story, it is in FRENCH with English subtitles).* 96 minutes.

**Promises**

*Promises* presents a powerful portrait of seven Palestinian and Israeli children who live in and around Jerusalem. As filmmaker B.Z. Goldberg, who was raised in Israel, notes, "They live no more than 20 minutes from each other, but they are each growing up in very separate worlds." *Promises* doesn't attempt to explain them, but lets the kids speak for themselves. The results are funny, sad, and ultimately quite profound.

**Santa Claus in Baghdad (the short story of Elsa Marston)**  
*This is a beautiful short fictional story that can be compared with “The Gift of the Magi.”  Iraqis living during the bleak time of international sanctions just before the overthrow of Saddam Hussein try to find gifts for people that they love. (Note: The story can be found in the collection of short stories by Elsa Marston in the Book section above.)* 35 minutes.