



educating for cultural literacy  
and mutual respect

# Emir Abd el-Kader: A Muslim Hero for Our Time



## **LESSON ONE:** **Abd el-Kader's Formative Years**

Presentation Content, Post-Presentation Questions and Activities

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## Introduction

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This lesson introduces Abd el-Kader’s homeland, background, and upbringing, including formative moments in his life that paved the way for his later actions. The lesson also provides the historical and cultural context to make his life and work understandable, including some basic concepts and foundations of Islam, the religion that Abd el-Kader professed and that had enormous influence both on his role as a religious leader and on many of the life decisions he made. Additionally, it highlights some of the critical moments in his youth that would presage his role as both a religious and national leader.

### Content Focus and Themes

Social Studies, American Studies, Geography and History of North Africa, Basics of Islam, Religious Studies

### Guiding Questions

- What were the political situations in Algeria and France in the early 19th century? How were the two intertwined?
- What inspired an American lawyer to name a town after Abd el-Kader?
- In what way was Bedouin culture similar to that of pre-revolutionary France?
- What were the central values which helped shape Abd el-Kader’s character during the formative years of his life?
- How did Abd el-Kader’s upbringing and his zeal for knowledge prepare him to be a leader in promoting tolerance and understanding among people of different religions and cultures?
- How does the quality of Abd el-Kader’s education compare to your own education?

- What are some of the basic beliefs, practices, and values of Islam?
- What would inspire a lawyer from Utica, New York to name a town after the Emir?

## Learning Objectives

At the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify where Algeria is and by whom and how it was governed in the early 19th century.
- Describe some of the important beliefs, values, and practices of Islam.
- Name at least two events in Abd el-Kader's early life that helped him acquire an open, inclusive, and flexible mind and prepared him to work for understanding among different religions and cultures.

## North African/Arabic terms used in this lesson:

*Adab*: manners, etiquette, right attitude

*Bedouin*: Arabic-speaking nomadic peoples of the deserts of North Africa or the Middle East

*Bey*: governor of province under Ottoman-Turkish rule

*Dey*: governor of the Regency

*Hadith*: sayings or actions of the Prophet Muhammad

*Hajj*: Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca

*Jihad*: struggle which may be internal, ie. to control one's negative actions, or to seek knowledge; or external, ie. for justice, truth, or to repel aggression

*Marabout*: religious leader in North or West Africa

*Sharif*: person who claims to be from the family of the Prophet Muhammad

*Sufi*: person who practices the inner, or spiritual dimension of Islam

*Zawiya*: a religious school or monastery for spiritual seekers (*Sufis*)

## Common Core State Standards

This lesson helps students meet the following Common Core Standards in the sections specified.

### Vocabulary Questions

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history / social science.

### Analysis Questions

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.3 Analyze in detail a series of events described in a text; determine whether earlier events caused later ones or simply preceded them.

### Response questions

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source.

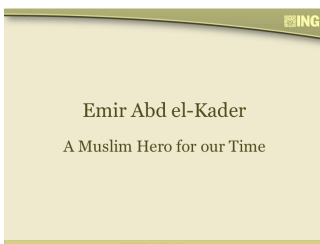
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2 Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

## Lesson One Presentation Content: Abd el-Kader's Formative Years\_\_\_\_\_

The following presentation notes are designed to explain the subject matter on each respective slide when delivering the digital presentation that accompanies this curriculum. When relevant to the topic discussed with each slide, we provide references to corresponding pages in *Commander of the Faithful: The Life and Times of Emir Abd el-Kader* by John W. Kiser.

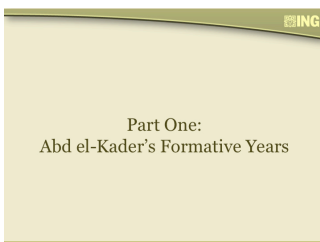
*“Do not ask about a man’s genealogy, but about his character and his deeds... If the water is pure, so is the source.”*

~ Emir Abd el-Kader



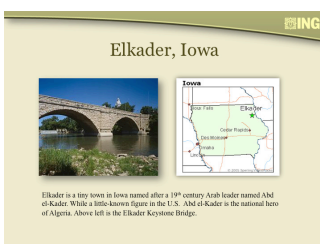
### Slide #1: Emir Abd el-Kader: A Muslim Hero for our Time

- This is the story of Emir Abd el-Kader (1808-1883), a man whose life story encapsulates many lessons and themes that are still relevant today, which is why he truly represents a Muslim hero for our time.
- While it was a time and place far removed from 21st century America, his legacy continues to touch us here in the United States, where his character and story counters stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims that have persisted since the first confrontations between Christians and Muslims in medieval times.



### Slide #2: Part One: Abd el-Kader's Formative Years

- Abd el-Kader was born into the changing world of the early 19th century in the area of North Africa that is today known as Algeria.
- The backdrop of his story is the simultaneous declining power and rule of the Ottoman-Turkish Empire, which at the time governed much of North Africa and the Middle East, and the rising colonial ambitions of European powers, specifically France. Of particular interest to European powers was the deteriorating health of the five hundred year old Ottoman Empire which had become known the “Sick Man of Europe.”
- Against this backdrop, Abd el-Kader (born a year before Abraham Lincoln) emerged as a moral giant who represents not only a true Muslim hero, but a world hero whose character and guiding principles are still relevant today.



### Slide #3: Abd el-Kader's Footprint in Iowa

- In the middle of Iowa in Clayton County is a tiny town called Elkader. The population was a mere 1,273 at the [2010 census](#), and there is little that is remarkable about the place, but its name.
- Most people—neither Americans nor Arabs—are aware that there is a town in the United States named after an Algerian leader of that name, the only town in America to be named after an Arab.
- What inspired the founders of the town to name it for the young Algerian who was leading a resistance against French colonization in the first part of the 19th century? Who was this man who inspired praise from European monarchs?

- The following quote by Elkader High School’s class of 1915 conveys the reasons this name was chosen and a glimpse of the man their town was named for: “Such is the history of the man for whom our town is named. A scholar, a philosopher, a lover of liberty; a champion of his religion, a born leader of men, a great soldier, a capable administrator, a persuasive orator, a chivalrous opponent; the selection was well made, and with those pioneers of seventy years ago, we do honor the Sheik” (John W. Kiser, *Commander of the Faithful: The Life and Times of Emir Abd el-Kader*, xiii).
- Abd el-Kader was his nation’s foremost freedom fighter, the George Washington of Algeria, battling the French conquest and colonization of his land.
- But more than that, after his defeat, he became a pioneer in the effort to bring people of diverse religions and cultures together in mutual respect and harmony—an effort that is more needed today than ever.

#### Slide #4: Algeria Yesterday and Today

- Abd el-Kader’s story begins in a land that is today known as Algeria, located in North Africa. In Abd el-Kader’s time this entire region was part of the Ottoman, or Turkish Empire; it was called the Regency of Algiers, after the largest city in the area.
- The Regency was composed of several provinces, each governed by an official called a *Bey*. In reality, however, Turkish control was very loose.
- The Regency was a place not unknown to the United States; in fact it was one of the first countries to recognize American independence.
- Like its neighbors in North Africa it also had an early history of engagement with the United States, mainly through conflict with the Barbary pirates which led to the 1795 Treaty of Amity and Peace between the two nations.
- This conflict had nearly ended around the time our narrative begins as the French embark on their colonial ambitions in the region, while still wrestling with the results of its own cataclysmic revolution that had sent tremors throughout Europe and the world (Kiser, xiv-v).
- Abd el-Kader’s life story was inextricably intertwined with French and British colonialism in the 19th century. Even today, little can be understood about North Africa and the Middle East, as well as much of the developing world without an understanding of the role and impact of European colonialism.

**Algeria Yesterday & Today**

- Algeria today is located in the northwestern region of Africa.
- At the time of our story it was known as the Regency of Algiers, part of the Ottoman Empire.
- It was composed of several provinces, each governed by an official called a *Bey*.
- Soon this part of the world would be changed forever with the advent of European colonialism.

#### Slide #5: Abd el-Kader’s World

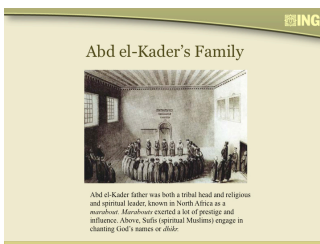
- Abd el-Kader’s people were Bedouins who comprised the majority of the rural population. Their land was controlled by a variety of tribes and their chiefs who were often in conflict with one another. Like many Arabs at the time, the people of Abd el-Kader’s homeland lacked a sense of national cohesion or consciousness and thought of themselves more in terms of tribe and family.
- Bedouin life was tough and demanding. It called for mastery of skills such as hunting and horsemanship and prized the martial valor needed to fight off hostile tribes. Raids back and forth to take cattle and other goods were

**Abd el-Kader’s World**

- Ottoman rule was loose with real control in the hands of tribal leaders.
- Since tribes were often in conflict, Bedouin life was demanding, requiring mastery of skills such as hunting and horsemanship.
- Tribal leaders and many tribe members were literate and even well educated, carrying their books with them.

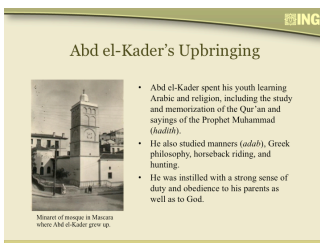
considered part of the normal way of things—in fact, they were occasions for men to prove their manhood.

- Bedouins however were, far from being “primitive” and uneducated. Many people in the tribes, and especially the leaders, were literate and indeed well educated, and even when they wandered about with their livestock they carried entire libraries with them. Tribal leaders in particular were chosen for such qualities as generosity, patience and wisdom.
- Furthermore, Bedouin society was strongly hierarchical; aristocracy and aristocratic birth were greatly prized just as breeding was valued in one of their most prized possessions, horses. The French called the Bedouin Arabs “Lords of the Tent,” and those Frenchmen who were dedicated to the hierarchy and aristocracy of pre-revolutionary France actually felt a strong kinship with Bedouin aristocrats (Kiser, 8-9).



### Slide #6: Abd el-Kader's Family

- Muhi al-Din, Abd el-Kader's father, was among those desert aristocrats. He was a religious leader in the Qadiriyya Sufi order of Islam and a *sharif*, which means a person who claims to belong to the family of Muhammad. His name Muhi al-Din means “Reviver of the Faith,” a fitting name for a respected tribal chief and religious and spiritual leader.
- He was beloved throughout the region as a scholar, sage, and peacemaker; his wife, Abd el-Kader's mother, was likewise highly educated. Both came from an esteemed family of *marabouts*, an Arabic term for religious leaders common in West and North Africa. *Marabouts* exercised general leadership in many of these tribes (Kiser, 9-10).
- Their third son was born near the town of Mascara in 1808 and was named Abd el-Kader—“Servant of the All-Powerful”—one of the 99 names of God in Arabic. Abd el-Kader was born and spent his early years in a *zawiya*, a religious school or monastery for Sufis which also served as a hostel for travelers and the poor (Kiser, 14).
- Growing up in a family of *marabouts*, he was taught that religion and knowledge were inseparable—as they traditionally were for Christians, including the early Americans who founded what became the great universities of Harvard, Yale, and Princeton as schools for training clergy.
- His particular religious experience was impacted by Sufism, a more spiritual or mystical understanding and practice of Islam (Kiser, 14-15).



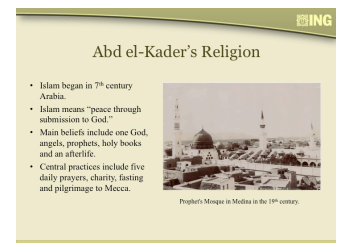
### Slide #7: Abd el-Kader's Upbringing

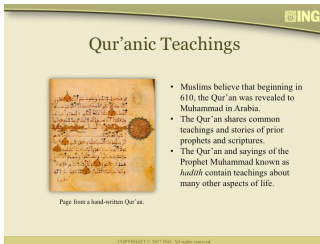
- Alongside religion, the importance of education and learning, as well as tribal affiliation, hierarchy, and obedience to leadership were values taught to Abd el-Kader at a young age.
- Abd el-Kader's education took place in two stages; until the age of eight, Abd el-Kader was taught by his mother Zohra, who focused on religion and moral grounding.

- Religious education meant not only learning how to read and memorize the Muslim holy book, the Qur'an, and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad known as *hadith*, but also *adab*, or good manners. He also learned the difference between ritual purification versus inner purification, in addition to other aspects of his faith.
- At the age of eight the responsibility for his education was passed to his father and he joined the company of men. In addition to continuing his religious studies, he also learned practical life skills such as hunting and horsemanship, spending his mornings studying and his afternoons learning to ride and hunt.
- His father believed in the importance of both a firm religious foundation as well as the practical skills of life required for the leader of a tribe. He also taught him about worldliness and the diversity of creation, including religious diversity.
- But Abd el-Kader's education was not limited to religious texts; he also read the works of Greek philosophers such as Aristotle and Plato and of great Muslim thinkers such as Averroes, Avicenna, Ghazali, and Ibn Khaldun (Kiser, 15-18).
- Importantly, he was instilled with a strong sense of duty and obedience to his parents as well as to God; it was his foundation in religious law as a youth that would provide his moral compass in both war and peace. His education and upbringing brought to life a famous *hadith* or saying of the Prophet Muhammad: "The ink of a scholar is worth more than the blood of a martyr."

### Slide #8: Abd el-Kader's Religion

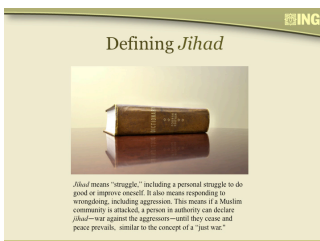
- In order to understand Abd el-Kader, we need to know something about his religion, Islam, which played an important role in his story and was always the center of his life. The following is a very brief introduction.
- The origins of Islam go back to 7th century Arabia (to the east of the country now known as Algeria) and a man named Muhammad, whom Muslims believe to be the last in the line of prophets mentioned above.
- The meaning of the word Islam is "peace through submission to God." The basic message of Islam is that there is only one God, the word for whom in Arabic is Allah.
- Muslims believe that God sent a succession of prophets, beginning with Adam and including Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus, and others, all of whom are believed to have taught the same basic message and all of whom are viewed with the same level of reverence as authentic recipients of divine revelation. Other major beliefs include the belief in angels, holy scriptures, and an afterlife.
- Islam prescribes many of the same actions as other religions. The Five Pillars are an obligation for practicing Muslims in their daily lives and include: the Profession of Faith, namely that there is only one God and Muhammad is His Messenger; prayer, charity, fasting and making a pilgrimage to Mecca (in today's Saudi Arabia) once in their lifetime if they are financially and physically able.
- Central to a Muslim's daily life is the five daily prayers. Muslims pray not only with words, but with their bodies, bowing and prostrating themselves before the majesty of God. The Qur'an also teaches the importance of prayer as a vehicle, not only to ask God for one's needs, but also to thank him and praise him for his benevolence and mercy.





### Slide #9: Qur'anic Teachings

- Muslims believe that in the year 610 Muhammad began to receive revelations from God which affirmed many of the teachings of these prior prophets, including the belief in one God. The revelations were written down and collected into a book called the Qur'an, or "recitation." Muslims believe that the Qur'an is the very word of God.
- The Qur'an states that God alone should be worshipped, that God is just, but above all merciful and compassionate, and that God wants people to behave righteously and promises a reward for righteous behavior and punishment for bad deeds. The Qur'an also states that there is no compulsion in religion.
- The Qur'an describes itself as God's final and definitive revelation. But it also confirms previous revelations, particularly those made to Abraham, David, Moses, and Jesus. So Muslims see themselves as closely related to people of other religions, especially to Jews and Christians. This will turn out to be an important key to understanding some of Abd el-Kader's later actions.
- The moral values the Qur'an teaches are also the same as those taught by other religions. They can be summed up in a famous saying of Muhammad, which can be viewed as the Golden Rule of Islam: "No one of you is a believer until you wish for your brother or sister what you wish for yourself."
- The Qur'an and prophetic sayings, in Arabic known as *hadith*, contain teachings about many other aspects of life that are followed by religious Muslims; however, similar to adherents of other religions, Algerians, like Muslims in general, did not always live up to the religious teachings they professed to follow.



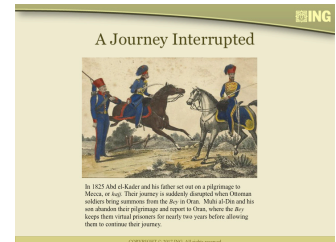
### Slide #10: Defining Jihad

- Here we must pause to take a look at that word *jihad* as it will come up repeatedly in the life of Abd el-Kader in the fullness of all its meanings.
- The word is often translated "holy war," but this is misleading. In Arabic, it simply means "struggle"—of any sort, physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual.
- The higher form of *jihad* is the struggle to make oneself a better person, in short, to improve one's character. As we will see, this is the sort of *jihad* that Abd el-Kader engaged in throughout his life.
- His struggle to become educated, not only in his religion but also in oratory, horsemanship, and the other skills needed by a man of his culture, was his first *jihad*; as a devout Muslim, he continued the daily *jihad* of prayer and the other practices of his faith to improve his character and God-consciousness.
- If a Muslim community is attacked, the Qur'an allows a Muslim leader to declare and conduct a *jihad*—that is, a war—against their attackers until the defenders win or until the aggressor sues for peace. This sort of *jihad* resembles the concept of "just war" in Christianity—but in Muslim tradition it is considered the lower form of *jihad*.
- In the midst of his assiduous practice of the "greater *jihad*," Abd el-Kader was destined to find himself engulfed in the "lesser *jihad*" in a fight against foreign invaders.

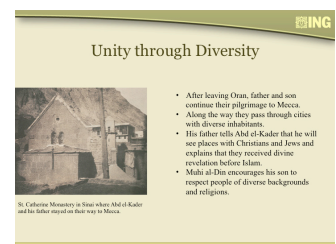


**Slide #11: A Journey Interrupted**

- Now back to the story. The year is 1825. Muhi al-Din and his son Abd el-Kader, who is now in his late teens, join pilgrims from Morocco passing through Mascara on their way to Mecca to perform the pilgrimage or *hajj*. By the 6th day the group had grown to include thousands of pilgrims.
- Over the objections of the women in the family Muhi al-Din had chosen Abd el-Kader rather than his older siblings to accompany him; he believed that a special destiny awaited his third son and was eager to continue his education by exposing him to the diversity and complexity of the world.
- But the goal of performing *hajj* was put on hold as their travel plans are abruptly disrupted. The Ottoman *Bey* of the province had suddenly summoned Muhi al-Din to his headquarters in Oran out of fear that they were fomenting an uprising.
- While treated with great deference and hosted in a comfortable house, they are held virtual prisoners for nearly two years before they are finally allowed to leave. A minor incident in an obscure place, one might think—but in reality this incident and its aftermath foreshadowed the story that was yet to unfold (Kiser, 24-26).

**Slide #12: Unity through Diversity**

- After leaving Oran, father and son continued their pilgrimage to Mecca, once again attracting followers but taking a circuitous route to avoid rousing the Bey's suspicions.
- The journey opened the teenager's eyes to a world he had not known before, as they passed through cities with a great diversity of inhabitants, including Tunis, Alexandria, and Cairo.
- "'You are going to see places where there are many Christians and Jews,' his father explained. 'Don't forget that they received God's revelation before we did. Abraham was a Muslim.' 'How could he be a Muslim before Islam?' asked Abd el-Kader. 'Because he submitted to the will of God. A Muslim is one who submits to the will of God.' 'Are Jews and Christians Muslims?' he asked. 'Yes, when they seek sincerely to do God's will . . . . 'Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven . . . .' is part of a prayer the prophet Jesus gave to the Christians'" (Kiser, 27).
- Thus Muhi al-Din encouraged his son to respect people of diverse backgrounds. And in Alexandria, Egypt, and in other cities, Abd el-Kader got to know people of many different cultures and religions.<sup>1</sup>




<sup>1</sup> The Qur'an explains human diversity and challenges notions of racial or ethnic superiority by emphasizing the common origin and humanity of all people. The Qur'an further states that the only measure of superiority among people and groups is in righteousness, as described in this oft-quoted verse: "O humankind, We created you from a male and a female, and We made you races and tribes for you to get to know each other. The most noble of you in the sight of God are those of you who are most conscientious. And God is omniscient, fully aware." (Qur'an 49:13, from the translation by Dr. Thomas Cleary, *The Qur'an: A New Translation*). This concept of human equality is echoed in a famous prophetic tradition that states, "There is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab, or of a non-Arab over an Arab, or of white over black or of black over white, except in God-consciousness." The Qur'an also emphasizes that diversity in religion is part of God's plan and that the goal of all religious traditions is to do good: "For each of them We have established a law, and a revealed way. And if God wished, God would have made you a single nation; but the intent is to test you in what God has given you. So let your goals be everything good. Your destiny, everyone, is to God, Who will tell you about that wherein you differed" (Qur'an 5:48, Cleary's translation).

**ING**

### An Auspicious Meeting

- In Cairo they met with the Ottoman governor, Mehmet Ali, later known as the founder of modern Egypt.
- The governor was encouraging Western technology and world trade in Egypt, which profoundly impacted young Abd el-Kader.
- Mehmet Ali warned them of European ambitions in North Africa and their potential involvement in a future conflict.



Mehmet Ali, 19<sup>th</sup> century ruler of Egypt.


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### Slide #13: An Auspicious Meeting

- Stopping in Cairo, Abd el-Kader had another encounter that presaged his future career. Muhi al-Din arranged for the two of them to meet with the Ottoman governor, Mehmet Ali. He had been ruling Egypt for the past twenty years as a semi-autonomous state, and is viewed by Egyptians today as the founder of modern Egypt.
- Mehmet Ali was encouraging the use of Western technology and opening his country to world trade. That made a profound impression on the young pilgrim.
- Equally important, as events later proved, was Mehmet Ali's warning to his father that European powers, especially England and France, were eager to divide up the Middle East and North Africa among themselves. He warned Muhi al-Din that he was right in the middle of this turmoil to come. Little did Abd el-Kader know that he was to play a major role in the resulting conflict (Kiser, 29).

**ING**

### An Enriching Journey



From Cairo they travel to Mecca where they perform *hajj*. Abd el-Kader is astonished by the diversity of the pilgrims. From there they travel to Syria where he studies with a Sufi leader before visiting Baghdad and the tomb of their Sufi patron and namesake, Abd el-Kader Jilani. Indeed an enriching journey.

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### Slide #14: An Enriching Journey

- After leaving Cairo they stayed for a time at a Christian monastery where Abd el-Kader was impressed by the faith and devotion of the monks.
- From there they traveled to Mecca to perform the *hajj*. Walking around the cube known as the Kabah which the Qur'an describes as being built by Abraham and his son Ishmael, he was astonished by the diversity of the pilgrims who represent every skin color and background, yet come together as one in their rituals and worship.
- After completing the *hajj*, they proceeded north to Syria, where Abd el-Kader studied with a Sufi sheikh or spiritual leader and encountered the same resentment against Ottoman rule he had witnessed in his homeland.
- Finally, they head to Baghdad and the tomb of their Sufi patron and namesake, Muhi al-Din Abd el-Kader al-Jilani; Jilani was a renowned spiritual master who taught the importance of praying for the well-being of all people and emphasized a love and respect for Jesus, whom Muslims venerate as a special prophet. (Kiser, 14 and 32).
- It was in Baghdad that his father asked him to begin leading discussions with scholars and their hosts; word spread quickly of his wisdom and intellect far beyond his years.
- When asked about his genealogy, he responded as his father had taught him, "Don't ask about a man's origins, but about his actions and character; if the water from the river is good, so is its source" (Kiser, 32).
- All this proved to be excellent training for the turn his life was soon to take.

## Post-Presentation Questions

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### Comprehension Questions

Questions about the text associated with each slide specified.

#### Emir Abd el-Kader: A Muslim Hero for our Time

1. When was he born? When did he die?

#### Abd el-Kader's Formative Years

2. What historical reality in Europe served as a backdrop for this story?
3. What empire was known as "The Sick Man of Europe" and why?

#### Abd el-Kader's Footprint in Iowa

4. What town in Iowa is named after Abd el-Kader?
5. What are some of the qualities which lead the town's founder to name it after him?

#### Algeria Yesterday and Today

6. Where was the Regency of Algeria located?
7. What area did a *Bey* govern?

#### Abd el-Kader's World

8. What is the name for Abd el-Kader's people?
9. What were some of the characteristics of Abd el-Kader's people?

#### Abd el-Kader's Family

10. What is meant by the term *marabout*?
11. Near what town was Abd el-Kader born? What English word does that sound like and why do you think that is the case?

#### Abd el-Kader's Upbringing

12. What are some of the subjects that he studied in his youth?
13. Why was horsemanship an important skill for him to learn?

#### Abd el-Kader's Religion

14. What is the central message of Islam?
15. What are some other Islamic beliefs and practices?
16. How many times are Muslims instructed to pray each day?

#### Qur'anic Teachings

17. What are some Qur'anic teachings?
18. What commonalities does Islam have with Judaism and Christianity?

#### Defining Jihad

19. What is the meaning of the term *jihad* that is given in this lesson? How is that different from what many people believe about *jihad*?
20. What is the difference between the "greater *jihad*" and the "lesser *jihad*"?

### A Journey Interrupted

21. In what year do Abd el-Kader and his father set out for Mecca?
22. Why had his father chosen Abd el-Kader to accompany him?
23. Who suddenly summoned Muhi al-Din to Oran and why?

### Unity through Diversity

24. What did Abd el-Kader's father teach him about other faiths?

### An Auspicious Meeting

25. Who was Mehmet Ali and why is he considered important for Egypt's history?
26. What warning did Mehmet Ali give to Abd el-Kader's father?

### An Enriching Journey

27. What different type of diversity did he encounter in Mecca?
28. What are some of the things that Abd el-Kader learned on the trip that might have influenced him in his later life?

## Vocabulary Questions

### English Terms

1. Define the following terms used in this lesson:
  - a. Resistance
  - b. Colonization
  - c. Freedom fighter
  - d. Sovereign
  - e. Circuitous
2. Reflecting on the use of the terms "resistance" and "freedom fighter," how does one determine whether a particular movement can be called a "resistance" rather than a "rebellion" or less positive terms? What is the difference between a "freedom fighter" and a "rebel?" Who decides? What comes to mind with each of these different terms?

### Arabic Terms

Referring to the Arabic terms defined at the beginning of the lesson, respond to the following questions.

1. Abd el-Kader was taught *adab* or manners as part of his education. Does this seem unusual as a subject of study? Can you think of other cultures that might have encouraged such a subject at a young age?
2. What other Arabic terms relating to his family background could explain why a young boy might be taught *adab*, or why Abd el-Kader's family was considered a noble one?
3. How does the concept of *jihad* as discussed in this lesson differ from your perceptions about it? Why do you think that daily *jihad* is considered a greater *jihad* than engaging in battle? Are there similar concepts in other faiths or philosophies? Where do the negative concepts about *jihad* come from?

## Discussion Questions

1. Had you heard of Elkader, Iowa before? Why or why not?
2. Were you surprised to learn that education and knowledge was so important in the upbringing of Abd el-Kader? How does this fit into the way that people often think of tribal societies?
3. What do you think about Muhyi al-Din's decision to obey the summons of Bey Hassan? What do you think of his attitude toward obedience?

## Analysis Questions

1. What events or experiences in Abd el-Kader's early life, as depicted in this lesson, might have lead him to become an advocate for tolerance and mutual respect among religions and cultures?
2. Referring to the verses from the Qur'an cited under the text for Slide 12, what does the Qur'an say about human diversity? Religious diversity? What does the prophetic tradition cited say about racial and ethnic diversity? Are these citations surprising to you? Why or why not?
3. How did Mehmet Ali's warning to Muhi al-Din presage Abd el-Kader's later life?

## Response Questions

Pair up in groups of two to discuss and respond to the questions below.

1. Reflect and respond to the questions below about the conversation between Abd el-Kader and his father:
 

"You are going to see places where there are many Christians and Jews," his father explained. "Don't forget that they received God's revelation before we did. Abraham was a Muslim." "How could he be a Muslim before Islam?" asked Abd el-Kader. "Because he submitted to the will of God. A Muslim is one who submits to the will of God." "Are Jews and Christians Muslims?" he asked. "Yes, when they seek sincerely to do God's will . . . 'Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven . . . ' is part of a prayer the prophet Jesus gave to the Christians."

  - a. What did Abd el-Kader's father mean when he says that Abraham was a Muslim?
  - b. How does this definition differ from your understanding of who a Muslim is?
  - c. What does this conversation indicate about how some Muslims regard other religions?
2. Reflect and respond to the questions below about verse 48 in Chapter 5 of the Qur'an.
 

"O humankind, We created you from a male and a female, and We made you races and tribes for you to get to know each other. The most noble of you in the sight of God are those of you who are most conscientious. And God is omniscient, fully aware."

  - a. What is the central message of the above verse?
  - b. How does this verse view racial and other human differences?
  - c. What does this verse describe as the only differentiating factor between humans?

**Test Questions**

(Answers on page 15)

1. Elkader is a town in:
  - a. North Dakota
  - b. Minnesota
  - c. Iowa
  - d. Idaho
  
2. Algeria in the 19th century was part of the:
  - a. Roman Empire
  - b. Ottoman Empire
  - c. Moghul Empire
  - d. Persian Empire
  
3. Members of Algerian tribes at the time were always illiterate. True or false?
  
4. The term *Bey* meant an official who governed a:
  - a. City
  - b. Province
  - c. Country
  - d. None of the above
  
5. The term *marabout* meaning religious leader is common in:
  - a. North Africa
  - b. West Africa
  - c. South Africa
  - d. North and West Africa
  
6. The young Abd el-Kader studied the following subjects:
  - a. *Adab* or manners
  - b. Qur'an
  - c. Horsemanship
  - d. All of the above
  
7. The basic message of the Qur'an is \_\_\_\_\_.
  
8. *Hajj* is one of the \_\_\_\_\_.
  
9. Alexandria is a city in \_\_\_\_\_.
  
10. Mehmet Ali is regarded as the:
  - a. Founder of modern Egypt
  - b. Mayor of Cairo
  - c. President of Egypt
  - d. Governor of Algeria

## Activities

All activities can be completed individually or in small groups.

1. Research the history and geography of Elkader, Iowa. Create a brochure or collage that describes the town's history and geography including photographs.
2. Research what was happening in the world at the time that this story takes place (1825). Create a visual representation of your findings using a timeline, a diagram representing different parts of the globe, or the front page of a newspaper with headlines and articles about major world events. Include illustrations.
3. Research and explain the five pillars of Islam. If working in a group, assign one pillar to one or two people. Include the requirement of each pillar and how it is performed as well as illustrations or photographs. Present your research orally, in a brochure format or on a poster.

## Answers to test questions:

1) c; 2) b; 3) false; 4) b; 5) d; 6) d; 7) monotheism; 8) Five Pillars of Islam; 9) Egypt; 10) a.

## Supplemental Film Content

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In this section of the curriculum we provide recommendations or links to films that relate to the topics or themes discussed in this lesson. These films vary from full length documentaries, to short form documentaries or clips taken from full length documentaries. Each of the film names or links is accompanied by a brief description of the film. Select films also include discussion questions.

### Topics and Related Films

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#### Islam

*Inside Islam* (2002) by the History Channel provides a very good introduction to the history of Islam, demographics of Muslims globally, and differences between Muslim populations throughout the world. This clip shows the global practice of Islam, and also discusses the many shared practices and beliefs that Islam shares with Judaism and Christianity.

[\*Inside Islam\*](#) (2002),  
The History Channel.

#### Islamic History

Covering more than a thousand years of history over three separate films, *Islam Empire of Faith* is one of the best documentaries about the long history of Islamic civilization and its influences on the world.

*Islam Empire of Faith*

**Further Resources:** [PBS original website for films](#) and [PBS curriculum for films](#)

## Muhammad

Since its release in 2002, the film *Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet* has been shown numerous times on Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) stations across the United States, and in educational, community, and interfaith forums. We recommend showing it in its entirety to your classes if time permits.

The film narrates the story of the man whom Muslims revere as the last prophet while touching on various contemporary issues affecting American Muslims through interviews and a look into their lives and experiences. The film sheds light on many of the topics touched upon in this lesson, including the revelation of the Qur'an and different Islamic teachings. For a synopsis of the film, visit the [PBS website for the film](#).

*Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet* (2011), directed by Omar al-Qattan, Unity Productions Foundation/PBS.

## Qur'an

This film from the History Channel looks at the history of the Qur'an, how it was revealed, and how it has been interpreted through the centuries. As the description of this film states, "The Koran is one of the most important works ever written. For almost one billion people worldwide, it is the Holy Scripture, the word of God and his prophet. For others, it is a historical artifact that has left an indelible imprint on the world. *Decoding the Past: Secrets of the Koran* probes the heart of the work that many outside Islam find mysterious. This feature-length program examines the history of the verses and their implications for modern times, as well as the striking similarities and differences between the Koran and the Bible."

*Decoding the Past: Secrets of the Qur'an* (2006), The History Channel. Clip run time 1:40 - 7:55. This film is available at most local libraries.

### Questions about the film:

1. Do Muslims view the Qur'an as a story? If not how do they view it?
2. How is the Qur'an organized? Is it in chronological order?

## Pilgrimage to Mecca (Hajj)

The pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*) is one of the largest annual gatherings of people anywhere in the world. This film from National Geographic gives an inside view of the preparations for *hajj* by the Saudi Arabian government as well as that of three different pilgrims: one from the United States, one from Malaysia, and one from South Africa. As the website for this film states, "While followers of Islam are scattered around the globe, they share a single spiritual center—Mecca, Saudi Arabia. Muslim faithful throughout the world face Mecca during their five daily prayer sessions, and each year two million Muslims visit the holy city during the *hajj*, a sacred pilgrimage that represents the religious experience of a lifetime. All adult Muslims who are physically and financially capable are expected to make a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their lifetime. The *hajj* is an enormous melting pot that gathers believers from over 70 countries and reveals the many faces of modern Islam."

*Inside Mecca* (2003), National Geographic Films.

### Questions about the film:

1. Has Mecca always been considered sacred territory? What acts are not allowed in Mecca?
2. What are some of the challenges of making the *hajj* even today?

**Further Resources:** [Mecca: Behind Geographic TV's Rare Look Inside, PBS](#)



## Additional Teacher Resources

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### Books

Ali-Karamali, Sumbul. *The Muslim Next Door: The Qur'an, the Media, and That Veil Thing*. Ashland: White Cloud Press, 2008.

Armstrong, Karen. *Islam: A Short History*. New York: Random House, 2002.

Cleary, Thomas. *The Qur'an: A New Translation*. Starlatch Press, 2004.

Esposito, John. *What Everyone Needs to Know about Islam*. New York: Oxford Press, 2002.

Kiser, John W. *Commander of the Faithful: The Life and Times of Emir Abd el-Kader*. New York: Monkfish, 2008.

Marston, Elsa. *The Compassionate Warrior: Abd El-Kader of Algeria*. Bloomington, Indiana: Wisdom Tales, 2013.

### Websites

[abdelkaderproject.org](http://abdelkaderproject.org): "Starting in Iowa, the project is growing a worldwide movement to revive the legacy of Emir Abd el-Kader. Our goal is to restore the historical memory of a remarkable human being whose importance today is greater than ever. He was also an Arab warrior-scholar-statesman respected and admired from the Missouri Territory to Moscow to Mecca. When he died in 1883, the *New York Times* wrote, he 'deserved to be counted among the few great men of the century.'" The Abd el-Kader project also features an annual essay contest featuring six scholarships for winning essays from students in high school and college.

[Elkader Sister Cities International Program](#): "It all began with a name . . . Elkader's founders had no way of knowing that selecting the name for their city had set the stage for a great international experience for the residents of Elkader. Elkader, a Northeast Iowa community of some 1500 inhabitants, was founded in 1846 by Timothy Davis, John Thompson and Chester Sage. Davis was an admirer of the courageous and world-famous Algerian, Emir Abd Elkader, who in 1830 began a fight against French colonialism in his country that would last for more than 130 years. Davis, challenged with the task of choosing a name for the new Iowa community, Americanized 'Abd Elkader' and proposed the name 'Elkader'".

[Geography Map Lesson](#): this interactive lesson provides the names of countries in the Middle East and Africa as well as an empty map of the region. Students learn while testing their ability to match the names with the countries.

[Patheos - Muslim Faith Portal](#): "Founded in 2008, Patheos.com is the premier online destination to engage in the global dialogue about religion and spirituality and to explore and experience the world's beliefs. Patheos is the website of choice for the millions of people looking for credible and balanced information about religion. Patheos brings together faith communities, academics, and the broader public into a single environment, and is the place where many people turn on a regular basis for insight, inspiration, and stimulating discussion. Patheos is unlike any other religious and spiritual site on the Web today."

[Unity Productions Foundation](#): "The mission of Unity Productions Foundation (UPF) is to create peace through the media. A nonprofit organization founded in 1999, UPF produces documentary films for both television broadcast, online viewing, and theatrical release, and implements long-term educational campaigns aimed at increasing understanding between people of different faiths and cultures, especially between Muslims and other faiths. We are convinced of the power of media to empower citizens with greater understanding and to nourish pluralism in America."