

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



LESSON TWO: Commander of the Faithful

Presentation Content, Post-Presentation Questions and Activities

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Introduction

This lesson begins with the impending threat of a French invasion in 1830 after their conquest of Algiers, specifically against the coastal city of Oran. When the *Bey*, or ruler of Oran, pleads with Abd el-Kader's father to pledge protection against both the invaders and his own people, the young Abd el-Kader speaks up against the idea, worried that they will not be able to keep the pledge. He convinces his father and the other elders of his position, and the Bey is forced to flee. A couple of years later, the French now threaten the inland region; the local tribes are alarmed and decide to resist. They call upon Abd el-Kader's father to lead the fight; he agrees but immediately abdicates in favor of his son. Abd el-Kader reluctantly agrees and takes on the title "Commander of the Faithful." He spends the next fifteen years of his life fighting against the French, a war which he eventually gives up hope of winning. But along the way, his conduct and the understanding he shows even towards his enemies demonstrate his true mettle and character.

Content Focus and Themes

History of North Africa, History of France, Colonialism, Liberation Struggle, Intercultural Relationships

Guiding Questions

- What incident led to the French invasion of Algeria?
- What were the goals of French colonialism in Algeria?
- What motivated Abd el-Kader to fight against France?
- How did Abd el-Kader's faith influence his conduct in war?
- What facets of his character did he show as a military leader?
- How did Abd el-Kader's faith influence him to surrender?

Learning Objectives

After this lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify some of the reasons for the French invasion and occupation of Algeria.
- Describe Abd el-Kader's objectives in the war against French occupation.
- Describe Abd el-Kader's character in executing the war.
- Explain the reasons for Abd el-Kader's eventual surrender.

North African/Arabic terms used in this lesson:

Aman: pledge of protection

Emir: commander

Jihad: a struggle, including fighting against an aggressor

Smala: camp

Sultan: title used by rulers

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.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.3 Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

Response questions

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

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.

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.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.1 Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, connecting insights gained from specific details to an understanding of the text as a whole.

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.

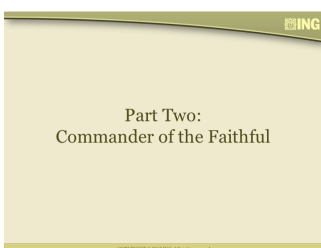
CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.3 Evaluate various explanations for actions or events and determine which explanation best accords with textual evidence, acknowledging where the text leaves matters uncertain.

Lesson Two Presentation Content: Commander of the Faithful _____

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.

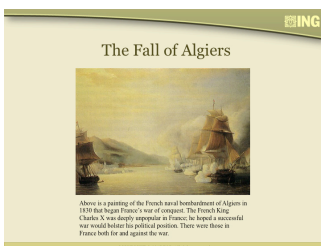
“Man is made of silk and iron. If he gets accustomed to luxury, soft living and good food, silk will dominate and soon he will be good for nothing. But if a man shows self-restraint and resists the little pleasures of life, the iron will dominate and he will be fit to carry out the hardest tasks.”

~ Muhi-al-Din’s words to his son.



Slide #15: Part Two: Commander of the Faithful

- The young Abd el-Kader is soon to see all that is familiar change as forces greater than him transform his life in ways he never imagined, altering his world for good.
- Fortunately, he had been well prepared by his upbringing for what lay ahead of him.



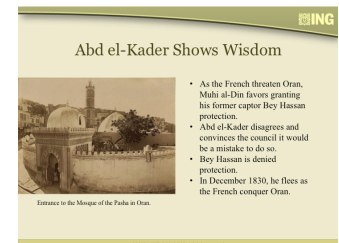
Slide #16: The Fall of Algiers

- It is the fall of 1830, some four years after Abd el-Kader and his father returned from their pilgrimage to Mecca. The whole land is now in turmoil. Fulfilling Mehmet Ali’s warning, the French have invaded and occupied the city of Algiers.
- The invasion can be traced back to what became known as the “flyswatter incident.” During a conversation about repaying a debt to Algerian financiers at a reception in 1827, the French consul insulted the *dey* (governor) of Algiers; the *dey* responded by slapping the consul’s face with a fly swatter. This insult to a diplomat provided a convenient pretext first for a French blockade of Algiers and then eventually for an invasion (John W. Kiser, *Commander of the Faithful: The Life and Times of Emir Abd el-Kader*, 34-35).


- The place and date of the invasion had been mentioned in the French press a few months prior to the actual event. Few people both then and now believed that the consul's insult was other than a deliberate provocation to provide a pretext for war.
- King Charles X, who was trying to roll back the democratic gains of the French Revolution, was deeply unpopular. He hoped that a successful war would not only bolster his political position before crucial elections in 1830 but also win France new ports on the Mediterranean that would compensate for the colonies it had lost in the Americas.
- There were those in France on both sides of this issue; some saw it as an opportunity to teach a lesson to the Turks and Arabs, while others argued against such an adventure. Neither side however expressed doubts or failed to support the French military, as this would have been deemed unpatriotic (Kiser, 36).

Slide #17: Abd el-Kader Shows Wisdom

- The French now threaten Oran, the city of Bey Hassan. After attempting to negotiate with them he is suspected of plotting to turn his city over to these new invaders. Now in danger not only from the French but also from his own people, he begged Muhi al-Din and his tribe for an *aman*, a solemn pledge of protection.
- At a meeting to discuss the matter, Abd el-Kader sits just outside the circle of men. Though the son of the tribal leader, he is a young man and must defer to his elders. Nonetheless, he is deeply disturbed by the course the discussion is taking (Kiser, 44-45).
- Muhi al-Din speaks in favor of granting Bey Hassan's request. He admits that he is well aware of the wrong that the governor has done, not only to him and his son, but to many others in the province. Bey Hassan is hated for squeezing taxes from the people and for other abuses.
- Nonetheless, Muhi al-Din insists on following Islamic injunctions to extend forgiveness rather than to seek revenge and to give hospitality to those who ask for it. The other members of the council agree with him. They are about to take a step that will make the hated Turkish governor a member of their tribe, guaranteed its protection.
- Abd el-Kader can keep silent no longer. "What will happen if we cannot protect him?" he asks. "His presence among us could even provoke a popular outbreak of violence. Who will extinguish those flames and at what cost? This will only bring dishonor on those who have promised his protection and show themselves incapable of doing so" (Kiser, 45).
- Additionally he points out that granting him protection will be seen as giving a tacit pardon to the Bey for all the wrong he has done to many in the province and as a result make enemies of all the surrounding tribes.
- After some thought, Muhi al-Din declares himself convinced by his son's arguments. The rest of the council follows suit. Bey Hassan is denied the pledge of protection and, in December 1830, flees as the French conquer Oran.



Commander of the Faithful




Abd el-Kader in his usual attire of a simple white tunic, holding his prayer beads.

- In 1832 as the French show signs of moving inland, the tribes gather to unite against the French.
- Muhi al-Din accepts their call to lead the fight and then abdicates in favor of his son, Abd el-Kader.
- Abd el-Kader accepts the position and becomes known as Emir, "Commander of the Faithful."

Slide #18: Commander of the Faithful

- Abd el-Kader, still in his early twenties, has won recognition for himself as a tribal leader.
- And not a moment too soon. The chaos spreads. At first, it seems that the French will be content to replace the Turks as rulers on the coast—a matter of no great significance to the inland tribes. But then the French show signs of wanting to move inland.
- In November, 1832, the tribes, now sensing real danger, call on Muhi al-Din to lead a *jihād*—a sacred struggle—against the invaders. (See Lesson One for the definition of *jihād*).
- At the gathering of tribes called together to decide on a united *jihād* against the French, Muhi al-Din accepts their call to become their leader in the fight—and then abdicates in favor of his son.
- The move was met with loud acclaim; apart from the wisdom he had shown in the Bey Hassan affair, Abd el-Kader had already acquitted himself well in several battles against the French near Oran.
- The young man, perhaps with some reluctance, accepts, but refuses the title of *sultan* they wished to call him by and asks to be referred to only as *emir* or commander.
- As he accepts his new office, he proclaims: "I will recognize no other law than the Koran." Even his military life was imbued with the spirit of religious obedience (Kiser, 50-51).
- Abd el-Kader issues a proclamation and an invitation to the other tribes to pledge their allegiance and join his struggle against the French. He signs the proclamation "Commander of the Faithful."
- His father warns him that leadership requires strength and demands total obedience from those who pledge allegiance to him, including often harsh punishments for those who disobey him.

War with France



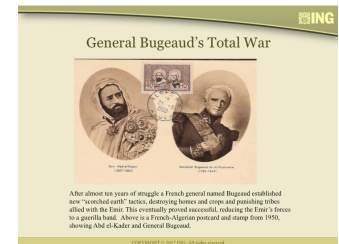
Abd el-Kader spent the next 15 years fighting the French. Although France at that time possessed one of the most powerful military forces in the world, Abd el-Kader was able to fight them to a standstill several times. He sought to unify the tribes, inspiring them to support the struggle, causing some tribes to desert him and allowing the French to hit him again.

Slide #19: War with France

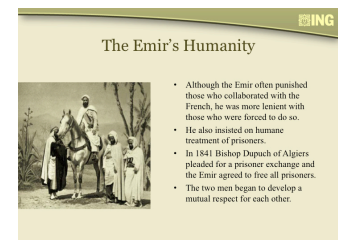
- Abd el-Kader spent the next fifteen years of his life in a back-and-forth battle with the French. France at that time possessed what was probably the most powerful military force in the world; yet Abd el-Kader was able, using what were essentially guerrilla tactics, to fight the invaders to a standstill several times.
- Twice he signed treaties with them that, had they remained in force, would have guaranteed independence to most of his land at least—and both times they were broken.
- From the beginning, Abd el-Kader sought to unify the tribes into something like a modern state. He imposed uniform taxes to support the struggle—and, ironically, his very success on the battlefield worked against him.
- When he fought the French to a standstill, the tribes began to resent his taxes, which were still necessary to build up the land as he had seen Mehmet Ali doing in Egypt. So tribes would desert him, and the disunity would embolden the French to undertake new aggressions. The fight went back and forth in this way for some time.

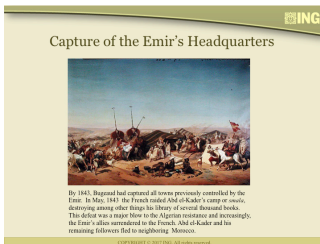
Slide #20: General Bugeaud's Total War

- After almost ten years of struggle, a French general named Bugeaud introduced a new and more ruthless policy based on his belief that “A restrained occupation is a fantasy and a dangerous one” (Kiser, 140-144).
- In light of this new policy he issued three decrees including a requirement that all Arabs in French controlled areas wore a medallion imprinted with the words “Submitted Arab.”
- He advocated new military tactics, including a war of constant pursuit, during which they were to become lighter and move faster, living off the land.
- But most significantly, he resorted to ruthless “scorched-earth” tactics, the same policy pursued by the North in America’s Civil War thirty years later. The French military deliberately destroyed the Algerians’ homes, crops, and food stores, and brutally punished tribes that would not relinquish their allegiance to the Emir, slaughtering men and taking women and children prisoner.
- Town after town fell to the French, and the Emir’s forces were reduced to a wandering guerrilla band.
- Abd el-Kader, however, refused to return brutality for brutality. In the midst of the lesser *jihad*, he never forgot the greater *jihad*.

**Slide #21: The Emir's Humanity**

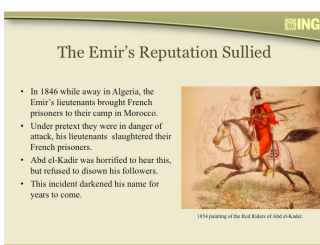
- Although he often severely punished those who voluntarily aided the French, he was more lenient with those individuals and tribes who pleaded that they collaborated with the invader only because they were forced to.
- Above all, he insisted on humane treatment of all the French prisoners he captured. Prisoners received the same rations as his soldiers, and he strictly forbade any humiliation or mistreatment and severely punished anything of the sort when it occurred.
- In 1841, when the Catholic bishop of Algiers, Dupuch, pleaded for an exchange that would release a French prisoner whose wife had sought the bishop’s intercession, Abd el-Kader replied that it was too little to release just one prisoner; why not arrange an exchange that would free virtually all the prisoners? (Kiser, 144-154).
- Dupuch succeeded in arranging this, and those whom the Emir had held prisoner aroused great admiration for him when they reported how humanely he had treated them.
- As the war went on, Abd el-Kader sought further prisoner exchanges, but General Bugeaud adamantly refused—precisely because of the dignity and kindness with which the Emir treated prisoners. Bugeaud wanted his soldiers to believe that horrible torture and death lay in wait for them should they be captured.
- But Bishop Dupuch and Abd el-Kader developed a strong mutual respect, corresponding frequently—although they did not meet in person until years later. Abd el-Kader had a profound respect for the Bishop’s good works, deep spirituality and reputation of compassion, while the Bishop had a corresponding admiration for the Emir’s commitment to his Muslim faith.





Slide #22: Capture of the Emir's Headquarters

- By 1843, General Bugeaud had captured all the towns previously controlled by Abd el-Kader and he no longer had a fixed line of defense or defined territory. He subsequently began to conduct his struggle from a mobile headquarters, or *smala*, with some 40,000 followers and their livestock. This mobile city had schools, police, courts, as well as the precious library Abd el-Kader had collected over many years (Kiser, 166-167).
- In May, 1843, the French captured Abd el-Kader's camp while he was away on a raiding expedition. More than 3,000 of Abd el-Kader's followers were captured as well as tens of thousands of sheep and other livestock and his treasury of millions of francs.
- Upon hearing the news, the Emir, who was with his troops, withdrew to pray and reflect, returning an hour later to reassure his anxious men, saying, "Praise be to God! All those things which I prized so much only impeded my movements and distracted me." (Kiser, 167).
- His family members managed to escape, unlike the hundreds who lost their lives in the surprise attack, but his prized library of several thousand books was burned and destroyed. As a man of knowledge, the Emir was dumbfounded that a supposedly civilized people would engage in such an act of destruction.
- The loss of his headquarters was a major blow to the Emir and his resistance against the French invasion. Six months later, he suffered another blow; the commander he had left in charge died fighting after his own family members had been killed by the French.
- General Bugeaud bragged, "Today after the splendid victory of November 11, when the remnants of the emir's infantry were annihilated, and his first and most distinguished caliph killed, I will boldly declare that all serious fighting is over" (Kiser, 171).
- Bugeaud's brutality on the battlefield had finally taken its toll. One by one, the tribes and tribal leaders, even those who had been close allies of the Emir, surrendered to the French.
- The Emir and his remaining followers fled to neighboring Morocco. At first the Sultan of Morocco left them alone—although he did not support them, as Abd el-Kader initially hoped; but finally, prodded by the French, he sent troops after them.



Slide #23: The Emir's Reputation Sullied

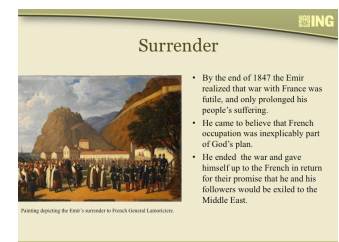
- In 1846, a horrible incident darkened the Emir's reputation (Kiser, pp.180-185).
- While Abd el-Kader was away in Algeria, two of his lieutenants, his brother-in-law Mustafa ben Thami and his old childhood friend Bou Hamidi, brought a group of French prisoners into Morocco. In accord with Abd el-Kader's instructions, the prisoners received the same meager rations as the troops. Eventually Abd el-Kader's forces found themselves in increasingly desperate straits, barely able to find enough food for themselves, let alone for their prisoners.

- Ben Thami wanted to kill the prisoners, both to save the expense of feeding them and to give the tribes wavering in their support of the resistance an example of the welcome they could expect from the French should they defect. Bou Hamidi argued vigorously against this, saying it would go against everything the Emir believed. But it was Ben Thami who was in command, and Bou Hamidi could do no more than try to convince him by argument.
- On April 23, Abd el-Kader sent a message to the camp warning of attacks by the French and the Moroccans (who were taking the side of the French) and urging Ben Thami to do everything he could to save the prisoners' lives; only if they were in imminent danger of falling into enemy hands should the prisoners be killed.
- Although the enemy troops were still some distance away, Ben Thami took advantage of this message to have the French prisoners slaughtered. When he received the news, Abd el-Kader was horrified; but he could not publically blame his own lieutenant at a time when support for his resistance was so shaky.
- The Emir's detractors and advocates of conquest and colonization in France naturally used this incident to portray their chief opponent as a bloodthirsty monster, and further discredit him and his moral authority. This incident would have repercussions for years to come.
- When later questioned by a Frenchman about his failure to punish those responsible for the massacre, he responded, "I could not do so. My chiefs were in revolt and no longer obeyed me. My soldiers, embittered by defeat, had only a handful of barley to live on. Do not question me further. I do not wish to accuse another." Understanding the honorableness of shielding his brother-in-law, he shook his hand (Kiser, 259).

Slide #24: Surrender

- By the end of 1847, it became clear to Abd el-Kader that he could no longer defend those tribes still loyal to him. Increasingly tribes were defecting to the French, his own brother had gone over to the Sultan of Morocco, and his horses had grown emaciated. He came to the conclusion that continuing the war against the French was futile and would only cause more needless suffering (Kiser, 189).
- The facts on the ground no longer supported the belief that he was doing God's will. Abd el-Kader came to believe that God, for inscrutable reasons, had decided that the land should be ruled by Christians, and now he had to submit to that reality—the very meaning of the word "Muslim" (one who submits to God). Despite the opposition of his lieutenants who wanted to keep fighting, he decided to surrender.
- He preferred to surrender to the French General Lamoricière, who was respected by the Arabs as a man of his word, rather than to the Moroccan Sultan whom he distrusted and who, although a fellow Muslim, had abandoned and betrayed his cause.
- He sent word to Lamoricière and the Duke d'Aumale, the French King's son, that he would surrender and promise never to return to Algeria or intervene in its affairs if he was given a pledge that he and his followers would be transported to the Middle East.
- Lamoricière and the Duke both gave their solemn written word that this condition would be fulfilled, subject to ratification in Paris; soon the Emir and his followers appeared in the French camp and laid down their swords.
- The lesser *jihad* was over; the greater *jihad* awaited.

See page 14 for important dates following Abd el-Kader's exile.



Post-Presentation Questions

Comprehension Questions

Questions about the text associated with each slide specified.

The Fall of Algiers

1. What incident was a pretext for the French invasion?
2. What were some of the reasons that the French might have wanted to occupy Algeria?

Abd el-Kader Shows Wisdom

3. Why was Bey Hassan in danger and from whom?
4. Why did Muhi al-Din favor granting Bey Hassan an *aman*?
5. What arguments does Abd el-Kader give for refusing the Bey's request?

Commander of the Faithful

6. Why was Abd el-Kader so easily accepted by the tribes as a leader against the French?
7. Why did he prefer the name "emir" or commander to the title "sultan" or ruler?

War with France

8. How did the Algerians' military capability compare with that of the French?
9. How many times did Abd el-Kader make treaties with France that were broken?
10. Why did the Algerian tribes often desert Abd el-Kader?

General Bugeaud's Total War

11. Why did General Bugeaud launch a more ruthless type of warfare?
12. What were some of the new tactics he used against the Algerians?

The Emir's Humanity

13. How did Abd el-Kader treat his prisoners of war?
14. Why did General Bugeaud refuse further prisoner exchanges?

Capture of the Emir's Headquarters

15. In what year did the French capture Abd el-Kader's *smala* or camp?
16. How did that lead to his eventual surrender?

The Emir's Reputation Sullied

17. Why were French prisoners slaughtered by Abd el-Kader's men in 1846?
18. How does this event contradict his long-standing treatment of prisoners?

Surrender

19. Why did Abd el-Kader finally surrender to the French?
20. What did the French promise Abd el-Kader in return for his surrender?

Vocabulary Questions

English Terms

- Define the following terms used in this lesson:
 - Invasion
 - Occupation
 - Conquest
 - Abdicate
 - Guerrilla warfare
 - Independence
 - “Scorched-earth” tactics
- Reflect on the use of the terms above as they relate to this particular historical context versus that of other conflicts, including the French resistance during World War II. How is the usage similar? How is it different? Do the words always convey the same meanings? Why or why not? Are these terms still relevant today? Give some concrete examples.

Arabic Terms

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

- Why do you think Abd el-Kader preferred to be called *emir* or commander rather than *sultan*?
- What does the text in Slide 24 mean by the phrase, “The lesser *jihad* was over; the greater *jihad* awaited?”

Analysis Questions

- Referring to the text for slide 17, respond to the following questions:
 - What do you think of Abd el-Kader’s advice not to grant an *aman* (protection) to Bey Hassan?
 - What was his reason for wanting to refuse protection?
 - How did he try to balance conflicting obligations?
 - What character traits did Abd el-Kader’s speaking up in the council demonstrate?
- Towards the last years of the war a number of events occurred that ultimately lead to Abd el-Kader’s voluntary surrender. Referring to the text for slides 19-24, respond to the following questions:
 - What were the series of events that ultimately led to Abd el-Kader’s surrender? Draw a timeline to illustrate the events including the date and place where they took place.
 - What single event do you think was most impactful in leading to his ultimate surrender?
 - How did Abd el-Kader’s faith in God play a role in his decision to surrender? Could another person have reached a different decision based on the same faith?
- What do the events of this lesson tell us about Abd el-Kader’s treatment of prisoners? How does this compare with what eventually occurred when he left his camp? How has this attitude evolved over time until the ratification of the 1949 Third Geneva Convention? What are some of the provisions of Geneva III that the Emir upheld? Failed to uphold? See [Geneva III](#).

Discussion Questions

1. What do you think lead the French to occupy Algiers and later expand the occupation to the whole land? What are some of the underlying goals of colonialism? How was the United States itself shaped by colonialism? How would you respond if your land was occupied?
2. Does colonialism still exist today and if so, where? Are there liberation struggles still today? Give concrete examples. How are they similar to the Algerian struggle against the French? How are they different?
3. What made Abd el-Kader eventually respect some of the very people he was fighting against? Is that a common occurrence between enemies? How does his response make him unique?

Response Questions

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

1. Before invading Algeria on the pretext of an insult to the French by the Turkish ruler Dey Hussein, those supporting the invasion made the case for it. Among them was the French Minister of War who argued, "There are many ports along Algeria's coasts whose possessions would be of great utility to France and give us control of the Mediterranean In the interior there are immense, fertile plains. Algeria is a veritable El Dorado that would compensate for the loss of our colonies in America" (Kiser, 35).

A counterargument was made in the influential *Le Journal des Debats*, "Let reason try to tell us what we are doing in Africa. Is it to seek glory? What glory is there in attacking Arabs in poorly fortified towns that cannons can easily demolish? Can one speak of glory when 35,000 French soldiers face a garrison of 5,000 demoralized Janissaries?" (Kiser, 36).

- a. What were the underlying arguments for those supporting war against Algeria?
 - b. What were arguments of those opposed?
 - c. Kiser states in *Commander of the Faithful*, "The republican left feared the adventure's real purpose was to get the nation drunk on smoke and gunpowder before the new parliamentary elections took place in July 1830." What does he mean by the phrase "drunk on smoke and gunpowder"?
 - d. How is this 19th century conflict similar to recent wars that also took place in Muslim lands? How are the conflicts different?
 - e. How did religion play a role then and now? Have things changed and if so, how?
2. The text for Slide 19 states that, "France at that time possessed what was probably the most powerful military force in the world; and yet Abd el-Kader was able, using what were essentially guerrilla tactics, to fight the invaders to a standstill several times." Refer to the various events in this lesson to respond to the following questions.
 - a. How and why do you think that, despite the great military imbalance, Abd el-Kader was able to engage the French as long as he did?
 - b. What factors were in his favor?
 - c. What were some of the factors or strategies that eventually worked against him?
 - d. What made him eventually decide to surrender despite the fact that his lieutenants wanted to keep fighting?
 - f. Do you think he made the right decision? Why or why not?

Test Questions

(Answers on page 14)

- In 1830 the French threaten to attack the town of
 - Oran
 - Mascara
 - Algiers
 - Algeria
- The Bey of Oran asks for an *aman*, which means a pledge of allegiance. True or false?
- While Abd el-Kader's father favors granting him an *aman*, Abd el-Kader is afraid that
 - They will not be able to protect him
 - It will appear that his previous wrongs are forgiven
 - Other tribes might turn against them
 - All of the above
- The Arabic term *jihad* means _____.
- The Arabic term *emir* means _____.
- General Bugeaud was a French general who
 - Resorted to ruthless "scorched-earth" tactics in his war with Abd el-Kader
 - Believed in treating the enemy fairly
 - Spoke excellent Arabic
 - None of the above
- Bishop Dupuch and Abd el-Kader became acquainted after
 - Meeting in Algiers
 - An interfaith gathering
 - Prisoner releases
 - None of the above
- French military personnel began to respect Abd el-Kader for his
 - Character
 - Humane treatment of prisoners
 - Military prowess
 - All of the above
- Towards the end of the war with France, what incident was a major blow to Abd el-Kader's resistance?
 - The bombardment of Algiers
 - The fall of Oran
 - The capture of Abd el-Kader's camp or *smala*, and 3,000 of his followers
 - All of the above
- A terrible incident in 1846 when Abd el-Kader was away from his camp darkened his reputation with the French. What was the incident? _____
- Why did the Arabs respect General Lamoricière?
- What eventually led Abd el-Kader to surrender in 1847? _____

Activities

All activities can be completed individually or in small groups.

1. Research and report on the major European powers and the areas that they colonized during the 19th and 20th centuries. Identify the different parts of the world that the French, English, Spanish and other European powers controlled. Present in a map or chart.
2. Create a timeline of the important events covered in this lesson and include major world events occurring at the same time.
3. Imagine a meeting between Abd el-Kader and other world leaders. What topics do you think they might discuss? Choose some of the French leaders mentioned in this lesson and create an imaginary dialogue between them and Abd el-Kader.
4. According to a prophetic saying or *hadith*, the greatest *jihad* is the daily striving to be a better person and to refine one's character. Reflect on why that is considered a greater *jihad* than engaging in battle. Consider some ways that you conduct this type of effort in your daily life and some of the challenge you face. Write a short essay or poem or create a poster or other art work that reflects your ideas.
5. Research the concept of *jihad* and compare it to the idea of a "just war." How are they similar? How are they different? List the similarities and differences. Include some examples of both that are viewed both positively and negatively? Discuss the question, "Are war and killing ever justified, and if so, when?"

Answers to test questions:

1) a; 2) false; 3) d; 4) struggle; 5) commander; 6) a; 7) c; 8) d; 9) c; 10) his men kill French prisoners in his absence; 11) he was respected by the Arabs as a man of his word; 12) he believed that continuing the war was futile and only prolonged the suffering of his people.

Important Dates in Algeria after Abd el-Kader's Exile (1847)

- 1848 France incorporates its colony into its domestic administration forming three new departments (sort of like counties). Arabs were considered French "nationals," but had to change their religion to have full citizenship rights; ie were second class citizens. Jews were granted full French citizenship
- 1943 Gen Mark Clark's invasion of Italy was launched from Algeria using Algerian troops under French command.
- 1954 Last Arab uprising against French occupation begins.
- 1957 Senator John Kennedy is the first US politician to call the rebels "freedom fighters"
- 1962 Algeria wins independence from France; later Abd El-Kader's remains are moved from Damascus to Algiers to legitimize the new government.
- 1979 Algerian diplomats help negotiate release of US diplomats held in Iran
- 1988 Algerian one party system of governance experiences the first Arab Spring uprising—leading to ten years of turmoil and violent Islamist insurgency.

Supplemental Film Content

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

Topics and Related Films

[*Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet*](#) (2011), directed by Omar al-Qattan, Unity Productions Foundation/ PBS. Clip run time: 81:40 - 89:15.

Jihad

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, as well as in educational, community, and interfaith forums. While the film follows a traditional documentary narrative about the life of the Prophet Muhammad, spliced throughout this narrative are many different stories about American Muslims and the role that he plays in their lives. These include scholars, politicians, nurses, businessmen, and a New York City Muslim fire fighter. This clip focuses on the term *jihad* (meaning to strive or struggle), one of the most misunderstood words relating to Islam and Muslims. In this clip from *Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet*, the term *jihad* is defined in much broader terms as the struggle with one's own self against lower desires as a means of spiritual purification. After explaining the meaning of the word *jihad*, the clip focuses on Kevin James, an American Muslim fireman who rushed to the World Trade Center to help on September 11th, 2001. This clip is a very emotional piece in which Kevin James narrates what happened on that day as he and others tried to find ways to help the victims of the attacks. He also reflects on the tolerance and universality that he believes Islam stands for, in contrast to the intolerance and hatred expressed by those responsible for the 9/11 attacks.

Questions about the film:

1. How does the definition of *jihad* in this film compare to the way it is generally defined in the media?
2. According to this film, is there anything in Islamic law that justifies the killing of innocent civilians?
3. What are Kevin James' reflections on his experiences on 9/11 and what does he think about those who were responsible? What does he say hurt him the most about the 9/11 attacks?

Further Resources:

[The Islam Project](#) has developed a detailed curriculum for this film.

This clip from *Inside Islam: What a Billion Muslims Really Think* focuses on data collected about global Muslim responses and beliefs surrounding the issue of terrorism, and their understanding of the word *jihad*. The clip describes the mainstream Muslim understanding of the term *jihad*, as well as the views of the majority of Muslims towards terrorism.

[*Inside Islam: What a Billion Muslims Really Think*](#) (2009), Unity Productions Foundation. Clip run time: 43:12 - 45:39.

Questions about the film:

1. One of the questions asked of the Muslim respondents was, "What does the word *jihad* mean to you?" What were some of the answers that were given?
2. What are some positive ways that Muslims understand the word *jihad*?
3. Were you surprised by the data discussed in the film? Why?
4. The clip states that that the majority of people being killed by terrorists are Muslims themselves. Was that fact surprising to you?

Additional Teacher Resources

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.

Bouyerdene, Ahmed, translated by Gustavo Polit. *Emir Abd el-Kader: Hero and Saint of Islam*. Bloomington, Indiana: World Wisdom Inc., 2012.

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: "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.

truejihad.com: As this website about Abd el-Kader states, "History, according to the truism, is written by the victors. Yet, it was the French victors who paid homage to the moral, intellectual, and spiritual qualities that made Abd el-Kader a widely recognized 'great man' of the mid 19th century. Emir Abd el-Kader inspired respect from Missouri to Moscow. His story is about many things, but ultimately it is about struggle: struggle against French invaders, struggle with Arabs who rejected his leadership, struggle with depression and despair in French prisons, struggle to live as a good Muslim. Today, he would be dismissed by many in the West as a 'fundamentalist'-- a label signifying to the secularist a retrograde, narrow-minded extremist. He was indeed a fundamentalist in this sense: to be rightly guided meant only one thing for him—to do God's will according to the teaching of the Koran and the traditions of the Prophet. He was also a man of great intellectual curiosity, marked by Greek thought, who squared his faith with a deep humanity and a progressive belief in the value of knowledge to improve lives. For him there was no contradiction between faith and reason, or between a rigid orthodoxy and acknowledging the diversity of God's ways. Nor was there a contradiction between being a puritanical, Law-abiding Muslim and a compassionate humanitarian who respected the accomplishments of European culture."

[20,000 Dialogues](http://20000dialogues.org): "20,000 Dialogues is a nationwide initiative that uses discussions about films to promote pluralism, dialogue, and civic engagement. It seeks to build greater understanding of Muslims through films and conversation. 20,000 Dialogues uses Unity Productions Foundation's (UPF) award winning films and provides the materials people need to participate in dialogues that further the American ideals of inclusiveness and positive civic action."