



Islamic Speakers Bureau Tips for Teachers #1

Could Your Personal Views on Current Events Relating to the War on Terrorism and Impending War on Iraq Affect Your Academic Responsibility to be Objective & Neutral in Education?

- 1) If your knowledge of Middle Eastern culture or the Islamic faith is based mostly on what you've seen or heard on television or through other media sources, then please consider seeking more accurate information from objective or primary sources. We recommend the following websites & books:

Readings on Islam:

- <http://islamicity.com/education/>
- *Understanding Islam & the Muslims: The Muslim Family & World Peace* by TJ Winter & John Williams (Amazon.com)
- *The Vision of Islam: Visions of Reality, Understanding Religions* by Sachiko Murata & William Chittick (Amazon.com)

Overview of Middle Eastern Societies:

- <http://www.nitle.org/arabworld/index.php>

State Dept. of Education Approved Teachers Guide on Islam:

- *Teaching About Islam and Muslims in the Public School Classroom*, by the Council on Islamic Education (CIE). To order, go to: <http://www.cie.org/store/teachingaboutislamandmuslims.asp>

Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting (FAIR) view of US media coverage relating to Iraq:

- <http://www.fair.org/international/iraq.html>

News directly from the Arab World:

- <http://www.arab.net/>

Books on portrayals of Arabs and Muslims in our popular culture:

- *The TV Arab*, by Jack Shaheen (available on Amazon.com)
- *Reel Bad Arabs*, by Jack Shaheen (available on Amazon.com)

- 2) If you generally view Arabs and Muslims or their beliefs and practices in a negative way, then please consider either inviting a guest speaker into the classroom or taking part in open staff discussions with a knowledgeable resource person who could answer your questions or address your concerns.
- 3) If you feel afraid of students and/or parents who are of Middle Eastern or Muslim background, acknowledge your fears by communicating those feelings to an administrator or school counselor who can provide you with the necessary help & support.
- 4) Irrespective of your views towards the war on Iraq or other US policies relating to the war on terrorism, teachers should allow for questions and differences of opinion in the classroom, which must be grounded in **civil discourse and mutual respect**. Teachers should never encourage a particular viewpoint but rather provide the intellectual environment & learning process for students to come to their own conclusions about current events. Inviting speakers to the classroom might be a way to address specific perspectives.