

## **U.S. Intervention in Iran and Iraq**

### **Carole Hawke - 11th grade government teacher at Robichaud High School**

This lesson was designed for a day following the United States' killing of Qasem Sulieman and Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis. Students came to my 11<sup>th</sup> grade government class with a lot of questions about what was happening in the world, so I let them know that we would be learning some background the following day.

There are 21 students in the class, so I designed a jigsaw research activity. Each student would work with a group to research one of the five topics, and then split up into different groups in which each student would be the 'expert' on his/her topic to share with the others. This will help the English Learner students practice the language domain of speaking, which is the most difficult for a teacher to incorporate into lessons. It will also require students to take their own research seriously because they will be the sole member of their mixed group to be the expert.

The class is an honors class. Of the 21 students, there are five who have arrived in the US within the last 5 years—three from Syria, one from Lebanon, and one from Nigeria. The class as a whole is generally more curious about current events than classes I have taught prior to this year.

I often select groups for students in order to have them work with a variety of peers and with mixed-ability peers, but on this day I wrote the research topics on the board with 4 spaces and allowed them to pick something that they were interested in, in order to respect student choice. The students then got into groups and used iPads to research the questions on their topic.

Students worked well on their research as I circulated and read what they had written, cleared up misunderstandings, asked guiding questions, etc. I took their papers home that evening to make additional comments.

The following class period, we had a follow-up lesson. I had created four groups so that students would each be the 'expert' for their group and share the information. However, there were more absences than usual (4), and students requested that we do the lesson in one large circle rather than four groups of 5 students each, so we adjusted chairs and shared together. In retrospect, this worked well because I was able to ask guiding questions and clarify concepts that the students had not understood from their research (such as group 3's understanding of the US involvement in the 1953 coup to overthrow Mosaddegh). It did suffer some in terms of 'academic conversation' in which students summarize and share with one another verbally, but I believe that more content was delivered and students were able to ask questions and have answers.

I also shared this material with the two other members of the social studies department at my school in case they wanted to have a resource to teach this current event.

(lesson materials):

*In the latest in America's long involvement with Iran and Iraq, a US drone strike in Baghdad targeted and killed Iranian General Qasem Soleimani on January 3<sup>rd</sup>, also killing Iraqi General Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis. The action has resulted in threats and denunciations from all parties.*

What do we need to know about Iran and about Iraq?

What is America's involvement with Iraq?

What is America's involvement with Iran?

Who was Qasem Solieman? Who was Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis?

What have the different sides threatened and done so far?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Group One: What do we need to know about Iran and Iraq?**

Do the people in Iran and Iraq speak the same language? Explain.

Do the people in Iran and Iraq have the same religion? Be careful in your explanation.

Who was Saddam Hussein?

What was his religion?

What happened in Iran in 1979?

What were relations like between Iran and Iraq in the 1980s and 1990s?

What have relations been between Iran and Iraq since 2004?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Group Two: What is America's involvement with Iraq?**

Who was the leader of Iraq from 1979 until 2003? Describe him and his rule.

In 1990, Iraq invaded the country of \_\_\_\_\_ due to a dispute over \_\_\_\_\_. A coalition of nations, led by the US, attacked back. This was known as the \_\_\_\_\_.

In 2001, \_\_\_\_\_ was president. He wanted the US to invade Iraq because he said there were \_\_\_\_\_ in Iraq which endangered Americans. (Was he correct about this? \_\_\_\_\_ ) The US invaded Iraq on \_\_\_\_\_. With the absence of Saddam Hussein's strong government, groups of Iraqis began to fight each other, particularly the three major groups: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_.

What year did the US begin withdrawing troops? \_\_\_\_\_

What year did the US formally withdraw combat troops? \_\_\_\_\_

In 2014, the US increased its presence to help Iraq battle \_\_\_\_\_, which was taking over territory.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Group Three: What is America's Involvement with Iran?**

Who was Mohammad Mosaddegh? What happened to him?

What happened in Iran in 1979?

What was the Iranian Hostage Crisis?

What is/was the Iran Nuclear Deal?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Group Four: Who were Qasem Soleimani and Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis?**

Who was Qasem Soleimani? (What was his job? What were a few of his accomplishments?)

What did the US dislike about him? (What was the reason the US assassinated him?)

How did he die?

Who was Abu Mahdi Al-Muhandis?

(What common enemy did these men fight that the US also fought?)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Group Five: Actions and Threats**

American military response: \_\_\_\_\_

American threat (via Trump's twitter account on Sunday: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Iraqi lawmakers voted to \_\_\_\_\_. (However, most of the lawmakers involved in the vote were \_\_\_\_\_, not \_\_\_\_\_ nor \_\_\_\_\_.)

Iran announced that it will \_\_\_\_\_.

The replacement for Soleimani said that \_\_\_\_\_.

Describe the funeral for Qasem Soleimani.