



Teacher/Viewing Guide

Arab American Stories – Episode 101

Diane Rehm

Radio Personality, Pioneer

Grade Level 9-12

Episode Overview:

Diane Rehm is a national public radio talk show host. Her program, The Diane Rehm Show, is distributed nationally and internationally by National Public Radio. It is produced at WAMU, which is licensed to American University in Washington, D.C. Diane grew up in the close-knit Syrian Christian community in Washington, D.C. and in this episode she talks about her father, Wadie Aed, who immigrated to the United States in 1909, and her mother Eugenie Zouekie who came later when she married her father.

The episode takes a look at the accomplishments of Diane Rehm in her broadcasting career, which she began in 1973 as a volunteer for WAMU's, "The Home Show". Diane did not go to college, but she read and educated herself with the encouragement of her husband. Her hard work paid off when she took over as the host of WAMU's morning talk show Kaleidoscope in 1979. It was renamed The Diane Rehm Show in 1984.

In this episode Diane speaks about her changing role and ambitions in society as she moved from being a stay-at-home mother into building a career in radio, and how different her life today is from both her parents' lives and the life they would have imagined for her. She also speaks about her parents' immigration to the United States, and in particular about the loneliness and challenges her mother faced leaving her beloved family, especially her own mother, behind.

Students are challenged to think about the role of women in the workplace and the tension between career and family, in American and immigrant households. Students should consider the changes that have occurred in this area in just the last several decades, and the role of women today in the workforce. Students should also consider the emotional challenges of immigration, and the difficulty of leaving one's family and culture behind for an uncertain future.

Previewing Questions:

1. What is the role of immigration in the United States?
2. How has the role of women in the workforce changed over time? How do women balance work and family?
3. What are the unique aspects of the Arab American immigration experience? What are the commonalities of the immigration experience?

Vocabulary:

1. Airmail: A system of transporting mail by aircraft, typically overseas
2. Syrian American: Citizens of the United States of Syrian ancestry or nationality. This ethnic group includes Americans of Syrian ancestry, Syrian first generation immigrants, or descendants of Syrians who emigrated to the United States
3. Nationally syndicated: In broadcasting, national syndication is the right to broadcast radio shows and television shows by multiple radio stations and television stations across the United States
4. Old Country: Term often used to describe the native country of a person who has gone to live abroad.



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5. Precedence: considered more important than someone or something else; priority in rank.

Lesson Overview/Review:

After viewing the segment on Diane Rehm students should be prepared to discuss the role of women in the workforce and how the immigration experience can be different for women.

Post-viewing Class discussion: After viewing the segment, consider the following questions:

1. Diane Rehm speaks about how she and her sister were very much part of the American community but her mother was more isolated in the Syrian American community. What are some reasons why a new immigrant to the United States might feel isolated and disconnected?
2. How has the world become more connected? Diane Rehm speaks about her mother never seeing her family again and only corresponding through letters. How might that be different for someone immigrating to the United States today?
3. What are the sacrifices that someone makes when they immigrate to the United States? What do they gain? What might they lose?
4. Diane Rehm states that most women in her generation “stayed at home and were happy at home” but that she wanted more. In what ways were the early 1970’s a time of change for women in America?
5. Diane states that she is not certain if her parents would be proud or embarrassed of her career. Why might her parents not be proud of her achievements?

Journal option: Have students take a moment to reflect on the experience described by Diane Rehm of adapting to a new country and way of life.

Activity: Diane Rehm speaks about the beautiful letters that her mother would receive from her grandmother, who still lived in their native land. Imagine that you are a recent immigrant to the United States in the early 1930’s. Write a letter to your homeland (whatever country you choose or the homeland of your ancestors) and describe your new daily life in America. Be certain to point out the differences and new experiences you find in the United States.

Explore online: Use the following resources to allow your students to further explore the topic and the Arab American community.

1. <http://thedianerehmshow.org/>
2. <http://www.aaiusa.org/>
3. http://aim.arabwomenorg.com/en/About_Us.aspx

Interdisciplinary Options Career Education

In this episode students learn about how an internship can lead to a career.

Common Core Alignment

- RI7 Analyze various accounts of a subject told in different mediums (e.g., a person’s life story in both print and multimedia), determining which details are emphasized in each account.
- W3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
- SL1 Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.