



Teacher/Viewing Guide

Arab American Stories – Episode 104

Hassan Faraj

Butcher, Artistic Inspiration

Grade Level 9-12

Episode Overview:

In this episode students are given an opportunity to hear from Hassan Faraj, a butcher from the Albany Park neighborhood of Chicago who owns a Lebanese meat market, where he worked side by side with his father. Hassan's importance to his community is underscored by the performance of David Gauna, a local high school student who plays Hassan in a local theater production with the Albany Park Theater Project, a theater company whose works are inspired by the stories of their local community. Hassan shares how he feels about having his life turned into art, and what his story can teach other people.

In addition, students are introduced to the idea of how food is related to culture as well as how ordinary people make up the rich fabric of a diverse American community. Students also learn about the choices Hassan Faraj made to carry on his father's tradition, while providing the opportunity for his own children and siblings to pursue college and their own dreams.

Previewing Questions:

1. What is an ethnic tradition? Do traditions come along with expectations?
2. How has neighborhood diversity created a unique "American Culture"?
3. How is the food we eat and the way we prepare our food related to our culture and/or ethnic background?
4. What is "American food"?

Vocabulary:

1. Diversity: the condition of having or being composed of differing elements, variety; especially: the inclusion of different types of people (as people of different races or cultures.)
2. Ensemble: A group of musicians, singers, dancers, or actors who perform together.
3. Community Theater: Performance made in relation to particular communities—its usage includes theatre made by, with, and for a community.

Lesson Overview/Review:

After viewing the segment on Hassan Faraj, students should be prepared to discuss the idea of carrying on family traditions through a family business, as well as the role that food plays in culture and community. Students should think about the unique way in which the United States incorporates food from around the world into the American diet, and how various ethnic foods are available to them in their cities and towns.

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

1. In the segment, Hassan—both in the market and as portrayed on stage—discusses the unique ways that various cultures ask for their meat to be prepared. Can you think of types of foods or ways that food is prepared that are unique to an ethnic group or region?
2. How is America unique in its food selection? The market that is featured in the segment is a Lebanese meat market. Does it only serve Lebanese people? Do you think it would be a successful market in the US if it only prepared meat one way?

Teacher/Viewing Guide

3. Why would a community theater group create an entire play based on different aspects of food in their community? Why is it important to tell the stories of your community?
4. In the past many people referred to the United States as a “melting pot,” where many diverse cultures came to the US and interacted, assimilated and blended together. Some people now say that the US is more of a “salad bar.” What do you think these concepts mean? What is the difference? Which do you believe is accurate? Does where you live in the US make a difference?

Journal option: Have students take a moment to write a journal entry based on the following writing prompt: Getting to know your local community in America is important because...

Activity: Hassan speaks about the various ways that his customers request their meat based on their culture. In the US our food and diet has always been influenced by the many different people that immigrate to our country. Just imagine how boring our diet would be if new people had not come to the US over the last one hundred years.

Your job is to research the ways in which the “American Diet” has changed in just the last 50 years. Take a look online at a grocery store website and see how many different cultures are represented in the foods you find there. Your job is to develop one recipe using at least three different cultures. In your recipe you will need to identify the food item and its country of origin and write one short paragraph about how this food has been adopted and/or integrated into the American diet. Be certain to include a picture of each food you use.

Students can use PowerPoint or another visual display to present their culinary creation to the class. You may also allow students to actually make their creation and share a video demonstration of the preparation. You can give students examples about the widespread use of tortillas, pita bread, salsa, hummus, gyros, filo dough, black beans, pasta, various Asian foods, etc.

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

1. <http://aptpchicago.org/>
2. <http://www.aaiusa.org/pages/demographics/>
3. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albany_Park,_Chicago

Interdisciplinary Options Career Education, Art/Theater, Culinary Arts

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.
- W6 Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology’s capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.
- SL2 Interpret information presented in diverse media and formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.
- SL5 Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, images, music, sound) and visual displays in presentations to clarify information.