



Teacher/Viewing Guide

Arab American Stories – Episode 107

Linda Sarsour

Director, Arab American Association of New York

Grade Level: 9-12

Episode Overview:

Linda Sarsour is a community activist of Palestinian descent. She was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY in a traditional Muslim household. In this story, Ms. Sarsour talks about her traditional upbringing, including her arranged marriage at age 17, within the context of modern American society. Now a divorced mother of three, her personal experience caused her to become dedicated to helping her fellow Arab-Americans navigate the sometimes complicated American social and political terrain. She currently runs a social services organization, the Arab American Association of New York, in Bay Ridge, Brooklyn. Sarsour is focused on serving the community close to her heart as she provides job training, English classes, links to government services, family counseling, and emotional support, as well as outreach to the larger non-Arab community. One of her favorite projects is working with local teens on a newspaper that allows them to communicate on issues important to them in their own voice. She is also a national activist who works to get the stories of Arab Americans heard by local and state officials, and in Congress, in order to gain acceptance into the mainstream American society. Ms. Sarsour sees the importance of her mission on a national scale, has testified before Congress, been invited to the White House and hopes someday to represent her own state in the US Congress.

Previewing Questions:

1. What is the role of a community outreach center?
2. Why is there a need for an Arab American outreach service and who benefits (both Arab and non-Arab) from these services? What kinds of services might immigrants and their children need?
3. What has been the historical role of young people in generating societal change?

Vocabulary:

1. **Activist:** An especially active, vigorous advocate of a cause, especially a political cause.
2. **Ethnicity:** The fact or state of belonging to a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition.
3. **Community Organizing:** A process where people who live in proximity to each other come together into a group to act on their shared interests.
4. **Facilitator:** One that helps to bring about an outcome (in learning, productivity, communication, or something else) by providing indirect or unobtrusive assistance, guidance, or supervision.
5. **Initiative:** An introductory act or step; leading action or enterprise.
6. **Outreach:** The extending of services or assistance beyond current or usual limits as well as the extent of such services or assistance.

Lesson Overview/Review:

After viewing the segment on Linda Sarsour, students should be prepared to brainstorm what they think the main problems are that Arab Americans (and other immigrants) face when dealing with mainstream American society. This can be done as a group activity, having students or the teacher record ideas on a board, or in their own journals.



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Journal Option: Have students take a moment to consider what they would like to improve about their community and what type of outreach services might help to facilitate the needed change.

Post Viewing Class Discussion: Conduct a short discussion to synthesize the information they gained from viewing the video segment. Some possible topics:

1. What did you learn about Arab culture from watching the video?
2. Why does Linda Sarsour say she does not want an arranged marriage for her children? What would arranging marriages mean for her and her children?
3. What issues does the Arab American community face that causes them to need outreach services?
4. Ms. Sarsour is a great example of a modern Arab American woman....what does that mean?
5. What types of community outreach centers are in your town/city and who do they help?

Activity: Divide class into groups of no more than four students. Each group will agree on one problem faced by people in their community or students in their school. Each group will then prepare a plan of action which addresses the following questions:

1. Who will this outreach serve?
2. What is the need?
3. What role does each person in the group play?
4. How will your group communicate your message?
5. What services will you offer? What will your group do?

Groups may do this all in class or use the internet to research how community service groups are organized and how they function. Groups should record their plan on large poster paper. Once groups have completed the task, they will share their plans with the rest of the class. Classmates will be encouraged to ask questions and advise if they think that the plan is something that would be successful. If they don't think the plan would work, have classmates brainstorm changes to the plan necessary to make the outreach a success.

Teachers – extend this activity beyond the classroom by having students actually put their plans into action!

Assessment Ideas: Students will be graded on:

1. Participation in class discussion and activity discussion.
2. Participation in group work.
3. Final group project and presentation.

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

1. Arab American Museum: <http://arabamericanmuseum.org/>
2. ACCESS, Arab American human services organization: <http://www.accesscommunity.org>
3. Arab American Antidiscrimination Committee: <http://adc.org/>
4. Arab American Association of New York: <http://www.arabamericanny.org/>

Interdisciplinary Options: Health Education; Psychology; Sociology; Family and Consumer Science

In this episode students will see how a community outreach program functions and what types of social services it offers.

Common Core Alignment:

- RI.6: Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how an author uses rhetoric to advance that point of view or purpose.



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- 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: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
- SL2: Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.
- SL4: Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.