

Unit Guide

Can Islam and Democracy Coexist?

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This unit features lessons about a political ideology that students think they know quite well, *democracy*, and a religion that students tend to poorly understand, *Islam*. The intent of this unit is to expand students' current knowledge of *democracy* and encourage them to not only learn about the basic elements of *Islam* but also the role that this major religion plays in the development of democracies around the world, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa. Undeniably, discussing ideology and politics together can create friction in the classroom. Adding religion in the mix makes such discussions still more difficult. However, it is imperative that teachers explain the relationship between ideologies, politics, and religion in order to help them make sense of government and politics in diverse countries. At the conclusion of the unit, students should no longer view *democracy* and *Islam* as being two separate entities; rather recognize that they jointly function together in many parts of the world. *Islam* and *democracy* are most definitely compatible. Although this unit was designed for advanced high school students, it can easily be modified for lower level high school or middle school students.