Prior to the outbreak of the Second World War, the only countries of the Middle East that had achieved full independence were Iran, Oman, North Yemen, Afghanistan, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. The remaining states of the region labored under varying forms of foreign domination, some as British and French mandates, others as protectorates or a possession of Great Britain, and a few that while nominally independent still endured the overbearing supervision of the British government. The countries still under the influence of an outside power would not cast off the vestiges of imperial power until the middle and later decades of the 20th century (see table next page).

Foundational to understanding the end of the imperial era in the Middle East is Egypt’s protracted struggle for complete independence following World War I, a national goal that would not be achieved until the mid-1950s.
when at the height of the Cold War the region and the West faced a formidable Arab leader in the person of Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt. He and a group of Egyptian military officers removed their king, established a republic, nationalized the Suez Canal, and thwarted a foreign invasion intent on overthrowing their new government and reclaiming control of the canal. For nearly twenty years following the Egyptian Revolution, Arab politics were dominated by the nationalist policies of Nasser.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Official Name of Country</th>
<th>Colonial Power</th>
<th>Date of Independence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Republic of Iran</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>A.D. 1501 (unification of modern Persian state under Safavid Dynasty)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sultanate of Oman</td>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>Mid-1600s (expulsion of Portuguese)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Islamic Republic of Afghanistan</td>
<td>U.K.</td>
<td>August 19, 1919 (end of U.K. control over foreign affairs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arab Republic of Egypt</td>
<td>U.K.</td>
<td>February 28, 1922 (independence with reservations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Turkey</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>October 29, 1923 (founding of the republic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingdom of Saudi Arabia</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>September 23, 1932 (founding of the kingdom)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Iraq</td>
<td>U.K.*</td>
<td>October 3, 1932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanese Republic</td>
<td>France**</td>
<td>November 22, 1943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syrian Arab Republic</td>
<td>France**</td>
<td>April 17, 1946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan</td>
<td>U.K.*</td>
<td>May 25, 1946</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Israel</td>
<td>U.K.*</td>
<td>May 14, 1948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Cyprus</td>
<td>U.K.</td>
<td>August 16, 1960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Kuwait</td>
<td>U.K.</td>
<td>June 19, 1961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kingdom of Bahrain</td>
<td>U.K.</td>
<td>August 15, 1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State of Qatar</td>
<td>U.K.</td>
<td>September 3, 1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
<td>U.K.</td>
<td>December 2, 1971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Yemen</td>
<td>***</td>
<td>May 22, 1990 (founding of united republic)***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*British-administered League of Nations mandate

**French-administered League of Nations mandate

***On May 22, 1990, the Republic of Yemen was established with the merger of the Yemen Arab Republic (North Yemen) and the People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen (South Yemen). Previously, North Yemen became independent from the Ottoman Empire in November 1918 and became a republic with the overthrow of the Imamate in 1962; South Yemen became independent from the U.K. on November 30, 1967.
and other Arab leaders. These nationalists made several attempts to form a united Arab nation, but none of their efforts would produce a permanent union. Nevertheless, they strove to remove all foreign influence from the Middle East, modernize their countries, and in some instances dominate the internal affairs of their Arab neighbors. The revolutionary ideology and politics of Nasser and the era's other Arab leaders were not without controversy, particularly for the United States, which was troubled by the Arab world’s growing rapprochement with the Soviet Union.

In the two decades following the 1948-1949 Arab-Israel War, a Palestinian national identity and liberation movement emerged in opposition to the Israeli occupation. Palestinians also won the political, economic, and military backing of other Arab countries, but the latter’s words and deeds, including war with Israel in 1956 and 1967, failed to achieve a Palestinian state. This failure of Arab diplomacy, money, and arms would radicalize the Palestinian movement and earn it international acclaim and support. Although colonial empires shrank rapidly following World War II, the interests of today’s global powers--the United States, European Union, Russia, and China--in the social, economic, and political affairs of the nations of the Middle East are poignant reminders of the intrusion and control of the imperial powers in the late-19th and early-20th centuries.

Egypt’s Struggle for Independence, 1919-1956

Egypt, which became the political and cultural center of the Arab world over the course of the 20th century, is an informative case study of decolonization. The ancient country was prized by the Ottoman Empire and European powers as an invaluable symbol of imperial power. Control over it facilitated outside influence over the Arab world, and its unique location provided a strategic bridge to the Middle East, Africa, India, and East Asia. Owing to centuries of living under foreign rule, Egyptians were extremely suspicious of outsiders. It is worth noting that no native Egyptian ruled Egypt from the time of Alexander the Great, who seized Egypt in 332 B.C., until the Egyptian Revolution of 1952.
Throughout World War I and the final years of the sputtering Ottoman Empire, the British were obsessed with the security of Egypt. They were particularly concerned about the fate of the Suez Canal, a strategic shipping lane between the Mediterranean and Red Seas and an important gateway to the Indian Ocean. They worried over the close relationship between the Ottomans and Germany and, in December 1914, a few months after the empire joined the Central Powers, declared a protectorate over Egypt and established direct rule. The British also installed Husayn Kamil as the new titular Egyptian ruler and gave him the title of sultan, making him equal to the sultan in Istanbul. This act effectively severed Egypt’s long and increasingly tenuous ties to the Ottoman Empire.

The world war and British occupation produced grave hardships for Egypt. The British requisitioned supplies, imposed a military draft, and curtailed civil liberties. Egyptian hostility to foreign rule became deep and visible, and nationalist fervor boiled over. Much of the anger was orchestrated by Saad Zaghloul, who sought to take Egypt’s case for independence to the Paris Peace Conference. The British refused, but Zaghloul’s Wafd (Delegation) Party successfully drummed up mass popular support for Egyptian independence. In 1922, Britain granted limited independence to Egypt in the hope of sapping the Wafd
The Era of Independence

Party’s political strength. The British retained the right to safeguard access to Egypt (particularly the canal), defend Egypt from attack, protect minorities and foreign interests, and govern Sudan. They also elevated Egypt’s new ruler, Sultan Fuad, to king, but independence under British occupation with its emphasis on defending imperial interests remained extremely unpopular with Egyptian nationalists and the general population.

Zaghloul, who served as prime minister until 1924, failed to revise the terms of independence due to Britain’s stubborn hold on the canal and Sudan, but by 1936 a change in the relationship between Britain and Egypt appeared likely. That year, Fuad’s son Faruq inherited the throne, and, faced with the threat posed by Fascist Italy’s occupation of Ethiopia, the two sides signed the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of Alliance, which recognized Egyptian independence and permitted Egypt’s membership in the League of Nations. Sudan was placed under joint Anglo-Egyptian administration, and foreign capitulations were cancelled. Nevertheless, the treaty granted Britain a number of important concessions, including the right to defend strategic communications, use bases in wartime, and keep a limited number of British troops in the Canal Zone. Most significantly, the 1936 treaty brought fifteen years of relative peace between Egypt and Britain.

During World War II, the British stationed a huge military force in Egypt, and the country’s common fabric suffered due to social dislocations, high inflation, and food shortages. By 1942, anti-British sentiments ran high, and Faruq enraged the British by appointing a pro-Axis prime minister. In February, with German General Erwin Rommel’s Afrika Korps advancing on Alexandria, the British surrounded the royal palace with troops and forced Faruq to appoint a Wafdist government that would uphold the 1936 treaty. Faruq’s credibility was undermined as a result of the “Fourth of February Incident.” In October, General Bernard Montgomery’s Eighth Army defeated Rommel at El Alamein, ending the Axis threat to Egypt.

When World War II ended, Egypt’s age-old problems of disease, poverty, and illiteracy again came into sharp focus. Unable to deal effectively with these difficulties but wanting to distance itself from Britain, Egypt entered the arena of pan-Arab politics, which became overheated with the
establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 and the subsequent Arab-Israeli war of 1948-1949. Israel withstood the onslaught of her Arab neighbors, won more territory than that allocated under the 1947 U.N. partition plan, and gained borders that would remain unchanged until 1967. The Israeli victory also caused a radical shift in the demographics of the Arab world as displaced Palestinians were forced to settle in surrounding Arab states. Conversely, Egypt’s leaders had used the war to divert the attention of ordinary Egyptians from their problems and to increase Egyptian hegemony in the Arab world, but this effort backfired, as several Egyptian army officers blamed the king for their country’s humiliating defeat, and the public viewed him as immoral, corrupt, detached, and incompetent. The continuing British occupation, the defeat in Palestine, and an array of domestic problems ultimately contributed to the fall of the Egyptian monarchy and paved the way for a new wave of Arab nationalism. In July 1952, the Free Officers Movement, led by Lieutenant Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser, seized control of the government. The officers sought to end imperialism, promote social justice and human dignity, and achieve economic progress for all Egyptians.

Nasser, who became president in 1956, opened negotiations with the British and won their agreement to withdraw all troops from the Canal Zone, which they would complete by June 1956. In 1955, an Israeli raid on the Egyptian-controlled Gaza Strip convinced Nasser that he needed a larger
and more modern arsenal, but he refused to purchase arms from the United States or Britain because of restrictions on their use. That year, at a conference in Bandung, Indonesia, Nasser and other leaders heralded the start of the **Non-Aligned Movement**, which opposed imperialism and sought to steer a middle course between the Soviet and Western blocs. Nasser thus hoped to obtain arms from the Communist bloc and economic aid from the West. The United States attempted to influence him by offering technical and economic assistance, including a huge loan to build the new High Dam at Aswan, but Nasser continued to play both sides of the Cold War. A tipping point in U.S.-Egypt relations came when Egypt recognized the People’s Republic of China. In July 1956, the U.S. government canceled the loan for the dam project; thereupon, Nasser retaliated by nationalizing the Suez Canal, which was principally owned by Britain and France, both of whom immediately plotted to get it back.

In October 1956, Britain and France, in secret league with Israel, attacked Egypt in a deliberate effort to take over the canal and drive Nasser from power. The Israelis invaded and occupied the Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula, ostensibly to halt guerrilla attacks on Israel. The British and French then occupied the Canal Zone, allegedly to separate Israeli and Egyptian troops. Upset at the aggression, the United States and Soviet Union pressured the invading forces to evacuate Egyptian territory. The Suez Affair was a military defeat for Nasser, but he retained his grip on power, preserved Egyptian sovereignty over the canal, and emerged as the foremost political figure in the Arab world. Israel relinquished Gaza and Sinai but did not achieve peace with its Egyptian neighbor. The United States alienated its British and French allies and the Israelis but earned no Arab gratitude. Anti-colonial passions still ran strong. The crisis over Suez signaled the end of British and French imperial ambitions in the Middle East.

**Arab Nationalism, Inter-Arab Politics, and the Cold War**

In the two decades following the 1948-1949 Arab-Israeli War, Arab leaders tried several times to form a unified political body that would advance the needs of a collective Arab nation over the interests of imperial powers. While no lasting unified pan-Arab state succeeded, the attempts at unity fixed attention on inter-Arab cooperation, contributed to the development of political identities for individual Arab states, and influenced relations among Arab countries and between Arab and non-Arab nations. Middle East historians often refer to the years 1957-1967 as the “Quiet Decade,” since there was no war between Israel and its Arab neighbors. However, as we shall see in this
chapter, a number of significant developments occurred between the end of the Suez Affair and the outbreak of the Six-Day War, a ten-year period dominated by the nationalist politics and revolutionary ideology of Egypt's Nasser and influenced by Ba'athism, a rival Arab political ideology that would take hold of Syria and Iraq. The major events, which include the formation and dissolution of the United Arab Republic, Iraqi Revolution, Lebanese Civil War and U.S. intervention, Yemen Civil War, Jordan River waters dispute, and establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), belie the period's nickname. Indeed, this remarkable decade was anything but "quiet."

Nasser and other nationalists believed that only a unified Arab nation could thwart the power of the West. Furthermore, they regarded Israel as a Western state embedded in the heart of the Arab world. They rejected Communism due to its atheist ideology and call for class warfare, but since Russia had not controlled any part of the Arab world Arabs harbored no hostility toward the Soviet Union. The Soviets latched onto this opportunity to undermine the West's influence in the region.

Nasser sought to reverse the humiliation that the colonial powers had heaped upon the Arab world. His defiance of the West and conviction that the Arabs were destined for greatness shaped his political ideology, which became known as Nasserism. It contained three main elements: Pan-Arabism, which advocated political unification that would increase the wealth and power of the Arab nation; Positive Neutralism, through which Egypt and other nonaligned states would enjoy peaceful coexistence with the Soviet and Western blocs; and Arab Socialism, which called for non-foreign ownership of industries, economic opportunities for all classes, redistribution of land and wealth, and central economic planning.

The U.S. government still hoped to improve relations with the Arab world in the wake of the Suez Affair and in 1957 announced a policy of economic aid and military assistance to any nation in the Middle East threatened by Communist aggression. Nasser was not won over by the American pledge, known as the Eisenhower Doctrine, and soon tilted toward the Soviet camp. He refused to join a Middle East alliance aimed at containing Communist expansion and signed an agreement with the Soviets to build the Aswan High Dam.

**Ba'athism, the United Arab Republic (UAR), and Iraq**

Another influential Arab nationalist movement emerged in Syria in the 1940s. The Ba'ath (Renaissance) Party, which was founded by Michel Aflaq, a Christian, and Salah al-Din al-Bitar, a Sunni Muslim, espoused Arab nationalism and unity, secularism, socialism, and revolutionary activism. It also called for land reform, nationalization of industries, and resistance to Israel and all remnants of imperialism.
After the Arab-Israeli war of 1948-1949, Syria suffered from political instability and social and sectarian divisions, which created an opening for the Ba’ath Party to win popular support and seize power by 1957. The following year, Egypt and Syria merged to form the United Arab Republic (UAR), with Nasser as its president. The union increased Nasser's power and prestige in the Arab world, but his heavy-handed governance intruded into Syria's commercial economy and political structure. In 1961, a military coup took place in Damascus, and the UAR dissolved over Syria's disapproval of Nasser's policies. Nasser then pursued a new strategy to achieve Arab unity. By focusing on economic growth and social equality at home, he believed that other Arab states would join with Egypt to achieve the goals of Arab Socialism. Not all Arabs, especially conservative monarchs, such as the Saudi and Jordanian kings, subscribed to his ideologies. The political rift within the Arab world would be played out in a civil war that broke out in the southwest corner of the Arabian Peninsula, following the overthrow of the ruler of North Yemen, Imam Muhammad al-Badr, by a rebellious cabal of army officers in 1962. Over the next five years, Nasser deployed approximately 70,000 Egyptian troops to North Yemen in support of the rebels, who had declared the country a republic. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia and Jordan backed the royalist supporters of the imam. By 1970, the republicans would prevail in this little-known conflict.

In the years following World War II, another Arab power emerged: the Kingdom of Iraq. The country suffered little during the 1948-1949 war with Israel, and its large oil revenues were invested in major development projects. Nevertheless, it was plagued by a number of socio-political problems. Governments changed with great frequency, minority problems festered, and the peasantry was deeply impoverished. In 1955, Iraq joined Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, and Britain in an anti-Communist alliance known as the Baghdad Pact. This development not only challenged Nasser's leadership in the Arab world, but many Iraqis viewed it as a capitulation to the West, which cost Iraq's monarchy considerable popular support.

In 1958, General Abd al-Karim Qasim led a bloody military coup that deposed and murdered the young king, Faysal II, and other prominent members of the Iraqi government. Qasim was not a Ba’athi, but he advocated land reform and Arab unity. He proclaimed Iraq a republic, established ties with the Soviet Union, and terminated Iraq's membership in the Baghdad Pact. To Cold War-era U.S.
officials, it appeared that strident Arab nationalists and Communists had taken over the country, but Qasim maintained a careful balance between the two competing factions. He also kept Iraq out of the UAR, because he was unwilling to share Iraq's oil wealth and power with Nasser. In 1963, he was removed in a Ba'athist coup; that same year, Ba’athists took control of the government in Syria. With Arab nationalists in power in Egypt, Syria, and Iraq, efforts were renewed to establish an enlarged UAR, but the attempt failed. After a half decade of political turmoil, the Ba’athist party in Iraq took a firm grip on power in 1968 and would remain the country’s absolute authority until Saddam Hussein was ousted by the U.S.-led invasion in 2003.

Emergence of a Palestinian Identity and Turmoil in Lebanon

For the Israelis, the 1948-1949 war and the events leading up to it had been a struggle for independence waged against the British, Palestinians, and neighboring Arab states. For the Arabs, the war was a humiliating defeat that severely discredited their regimes. For the Palestinians, it was called an-Nakbah (the Disaster). The war uprooted more than a half-million Palestinians, who sought refuge in the Gaza Strip, West Bank of the Jordan River, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. In the years to come, many refugees would become ardent nationalists who bitterly opposed Israel, its supporters, and Arab governments that sought peace with Israel.

During the war, Transjordan held on to most of the West Bank and the Old City of Jerusalem. Both were annexed, and the name of the country was changed to Jordan. The new territory added a million Palestinians to the existing population of a half-million, threatening the stability of the kingdom. King Abdullah pursued secret negotiations with Israel, but this risky initiative led to his assassination at the hand of a young Palestinian in 1951. His schizophrenic son Talal assumed the throne but was forced out a year later in favor of his teenage son Husayn. Under Husayn’s leadership, Jordan developed as a stable and politically moderate Arab state and cultivated friendly relations with the West.

In post-mandate Lebanon, the government took the form of a constitutional oligarchy, which was led by a small number of influential families that represented the country’s religiously diverse population, monopolized its wealth and
power, and upheld its political stability. As in Jordan, the influx of Palestinian refugees threatened to upset this unique and fragile political arrangement. Since 1948, the majority of Lebanon’s population has been Muslim, with a sizable Christian minority (see more on these demographics in chapter 3 of this resource).

The National Front, an Arab nationalist movement led by urban politicians and rural landlords, challenged the pro-West government. The Front was supported by Egypt, Syria, and the Palestinian population of Lebanon. The march to civil war was irretrievable following the assassination of a pro-Nasser newspaper editor in 1958, which the Front blamed on the government, and by the intention of President Camille Chamoun, a Maronite Christian, to amend the constitution and run for a second term.

The escalating crisis in Lebanon coincided with the brutal coup in Iraq. Fearing a similar fate, Chamoun requested assistance from the United States under the Eisenhower Doctrine. One day later, U.S. Marines landed unopposed in Beirut. Their brief deployment helped the government restore order. Chamoun abandoned thoughts of running for reelection, and the crisis passed.

The final crisis of the so-called “Quiet Decade” concerned Israel, her Arab neighbors, and the Jordan River. In the late 1950s, Israel planned to build a national water distribution system, tapping the waters of the Jordan. The surrounding Arab countries objected to the plan and threatened to dam the river’s tributaries. Israel threatened air strikes, and in 1964 Nasser convened an Arab summit meeting in Cairo to discuss the crisis. Although the Arab kings and presidents could not agree on a course of action regarding the water dispute, they used the occasion to establish the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which would serve as an umbrella for Palestinian political and social organizations and paramilitary groups. The PLO’s charter proclaimed the Palestinians’ right of self-determination and the goal of establishing a “secular democratic state” in place of Israel. The PLO’s most effective fighting force was al-Fatah, a guerrilla movement founded and led by Yasir Arafat, who would become the leader of the organization in 1969. The establishment of the PLO and the stunning Arab defeat in the 1967 Arab-Israel War were critical events in the development of a Palestinian national identity and the establishment of an internationally recognized liberation movement. In the wake of the disastrous Six-Day War, the Palestinians would no longer rely on the promises of other Arab states. Henceforth, they would shoulder the principal responsibility for winning their freedom and attaining their independent state.

Conclusion

On the eve of the First World War, a student looking at a map of the world hung in his or her classroom would notice roughly three-quarters of the earth’s landmass covered in about ten colors, each representing the territory controlled by a colonial power. During the war, two of those powers,
Great Britain and France, reached an agreement acknowledging each other’s imperial interests in the Middle East and, through this policy of Allied cooperation, hoped to preserve their dominance over the region well after the peace settlement. Egypt’s long and difficult road to full independence illustrates the extremes to which Great Britain would go—including the orchestration of the multinational attack that became known as the Suez Affair—to maintain its power and influence over that coveted and strategically important land.

Although no war erupted between Israel and its Arab neighbors during the ten-year period between the Suez Affair of 1956 and Six-Day War of 1967, several momentous events and developments—some violent—took place throughout the Arab world. During the purported “Quiet Decade,” the political attention of Arab leaders was focused on inter-Arab relations. From the early-1950s and through the 1960s, Arab politics were dominated by Egypt’s charismatic leader, Gamal Abdel Nasser. He cast off his country's imperial masters and attained a modicum of Arab unity, but he betrayed his ideology of neutrality by tilting toward the Soviet bloc during the Cold War and would lead the Arabs into the disastrous Six-Day War, a conflict that would redraw the map of the Middle East and intensify a seemingly irreconcilable conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors.
Aswan’s High Dam

Completed in 1971, after more than a decade of construction overseen by Gamal Abdel Nasser, the Aswan High Dam is a grand infrastructure project that indelibly changed life around the resource-rich and life-giving Nile River. Nearly fifty years after its opening, its effects continue to be important and investigated by researchers. On the one hand, the High Dam allowed Egypt to control the often volatile seasonal flooding of the Nile, harnessing a great power source and expanding farmable land by at least 30%. On the other hand, the dam displaced tens of thousands of people, submerged historical sites, and disrupted the natural fertilization process that the river for millennia had provided for its flood plains. The synthetic fertilizers that replace these nutrients change the nature of the soil. Lake Nasser, the enormous reservoir that the dam creates, has become an essential and major source of water for Egypt’s large population. These competing and polarizing views of the dam as either a wonder of modern engineering or an environmental stressor is ripe for exploration in the classroom and continued independent research. There is no dispute, however, that the Dam was, in Nasser’s view, one of his crowning achievements as president of Egypt, and its presence plays a major role in Egyptian life today.

Film Resources

Archival Footage: Nile Dam: Nasser Launches Aswan Dam
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P53PCuXg45c

Archival Footage: Khruschev and Nasser at Aswan Dam Ceremony (1964)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cPmYH2fPZZw

Modern Marvels: The Aswan High Dam (45 minutes)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=303bua504kU
Back to Basics:  
**Dam Essentials**

**Directions to Teacher:** Ask students to carry out some basic research on the functionality and features of dams around the world, including the Aswan Dam but not limited to Egypt or the Middle East. Review student responses, checking for understanding.

**Directions to Students:** Starting with basic internet research and/or library tools, identify and peruse three different resources (at least one must be a text from a local or school library) that provide introductory, but thorough, background on dams, their purposes, and varieties of construction. Using these texts, write short paragraph answers to the following questions for reporting back (in groups or full class discussion).

1. **What is the basic purpose of a dam; i.e., how does a dam work?**
2. **The Aswan High Dam is an embankment dam. What is an embankment dam? What are three other types of dams? Detail why engineers might choose to build one sort of dam over another among the examples you chose.**
3. **What are some of the benefits that people receive from dams? What are some of the common trade-offs? Do you think the trade-offs are worth the benefits?**
4. **What kind of training is needed to be able to design a dam? What about physically building one? Based on your research, how many people and how much time do you think it usually takes to build a dam? How much do you think it costs to build one? What sort of maintenance is required to keep a dam working long-term?**
5. **Do some local research: Is there a dam in your local area? What type of dam is it, and what is its purpose in/service to its local environment?**
**Digging Deeper**

**Research and Position Essay**
Either using the example of the Aswan High Dam in Egypt, or by identifying another big dam project you uncovered through the above research (or carry out a comparative analysis if you like), do you think your chosen dam project was a “success?” In your essay, provide historical detail on the dam project you have chosen. Detail its pros and cons in your view, and support your positions with evidence. In addition to the dam’s direct outputs, make sure to discuss its environmental and social effects.

**For Further Exploration**

**Historic Preservation**

In the left photograph, visitors to Abu Simbel are dwarfed by the colossi of Pharaoh Ramses II, who sit high and dry along the shore of Lake Nasser. A great international effort, mobilized and led by UNESCO, saved the great monument; it was dismantled piece by piece, its components were moved to higher ground, and it was reassembled with painstaking precision. The rescued colossi have gazed upon the waters of the huge man-made lake (right), not for millennia, but since the completion of the High Dam in 1971. Photos courtesy of the author.

Abu Simbel, among other major ancient Egyptian sites, was on track to be submerged by the rising waters created by the Aswan Dam until conservationists and archaeologists intervened to excavate and in some cases move the artifacts out of the path of the flood. Chronicle the efforts of these archaeologists, who worked to preserve the historical site. What tactics did they use, and what solutions did they find to preserve the precious materials? Were their efforts effective? What was lost?

**Moving Abu Simbel Video MSN Encarta**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iFznAEcv1Lw
**Teaching Tool**  
**Ba’athism and Nasserism**

This teaching tool will permit students to become familiar with two similar—but controversial and competing—Arab secular nationalist ideologies of the mid-20th century: Ba’athism, founded in the 1940s by Syrian Arabs Michel Aflaq, a Christian, and Salah al-Din al-Bitar, a Sunni Muslim, and Nasserism, championed by Gamal Abdel Nasser, the leader of the 1952 Egyptian Revolution and Egypt’s president from 1956 to 1970. Both ideologies sought to end imperialism completely, which also meant abolishing Israel, and to promote economic opportunity, social justice, and Arab unity. While they achieved few lasting successes, Ba’athism and Nasserism produced harsh dictatorships that historians have often compared to the European fascists of the 1930s. In the early 1970s, President Anwar al-Sadat, Nasser’s successor, ended Nasserism in Egypt, while Ba’athism in Iraq was eliminated by the U.S.-led invasion in 2003. In Syria, the Alawite-Ba’athist regime has been fighting for its survival in a brutal civil war since 2011.

**Discussion Questions/Essay Topic**

**Directions to Teacher:** Have the students read the excerpts on Ba’athism by Michel Aflaq and on Arab Socialism (Nasserism) by Gamal Abdel Nasser in *The Middle East and Islamic World Reader*, revised edition, edited by Gettleman and Schaar, pp. 132-35, 289-91, and then answer the following seven questions in one or more complete sentences. Please note that a number of the questions have multiple parts that must be addressed. Review student responses, checking for understanding.

**Student Instructions:** Compose a well-thought-out short essay that addresses the following questions informing your reader about the topic we have been studying. Be sure to include specific references to the text(s) that are correctly cited, use proper grammar, and include introductory and concluding statements and transitions where appropriate.

1. According to Michel Aflaq, in what way is Communist socialism limited and why is it difficult to achieve or be successful?
2. In what way is Ba'ath socialism flexible, why can it be easily achieved, and how will it be achieved?

3. What are the characteristics of the “single Arab unified state” that Aflaq envisions?

4. What is Aflaq’s definition of “nationalism”?

5. According to Nasser, what are the four “broad objectives of change” that the elected Assembly “must attain”?

6. What are the “three major objectives which [Egypt has] unlimited capacity to achieve”? In your opinion, how realistic is Nasser’s ideology?
Teaching Tool
The Life and Career of Dr. Ralph Bunche

Dr. Ralph Bunche (1904-1971), an African-American diplomat, served as the U.N.'s chief mediator in Palestine during the 1948-1949 Arab-Israeli War. He successfully negotiated a series of armistice agreements between Israel and four of its Arab neighbors: Egypt, Transjordan, Syria, and Lebanon. The armistice lines stood unaltered as international borders until 1967. His achievement remains one of the few noteworthy diplomatic accomplishments in the tragic history of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Research and Writing
Directions to Teacher: Have the students use Internet sources (see below for suggested websites) to research the life and career of Ralph Bunche and answer the following questions. After the students have answered the questions, conduct a whole class review, checking for understanding. (This activity can be done in school or as a home assignment.)

Student Instructions: Using Internet sources, answer the following questions related to the life and career of Ralph Bunche. Be sure to address all parts of a question and ensure your answers are in one or more complete sentences or short paragraph, in the case of the last question.

1. Summarize the personal background of Ralph Bunche, concentrating on his educational and employment history.
2. Who was Count Folke Bernadotte and what was Bunche’s relationship to him?
3. How did Bunche become the chief U.N. mediator in Palestine?
4. Describe the process by which Bunche carried out negotiations between the Arabs and Israelis at Rhodes.
5. How successful was Bunche at Rhodes? More specifically, what did he achieve through his negotiations? What did he not achieve?
6. What great honor did Bunche receive for his efforts in achieving armistice agreements between Israel and the Arab States?
7. List and briefly describe three of Bunche’s other diplomatic achievements.
8. In your opinion, what were some of Bunche’s personal qualities that made him an effective negotiator?
9. Closing Question: In a short, well-organized paragraph, evaluate Ralph Bunche’s career as public servant and negotiator. Use evidence to support your opinion. (Ensure that specific references to outside sources are correctly cited.)

The Era of Independence
An undaunted advocate for peace and justice, Dr. Bunche participates in the historic march for voting rights from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, on March 25, 1965. In the front row, from left to right, are: Rosa Parks; the Rev. Ralph Abernathy; Mrs. Juanita Abernathy; Bunche; Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.; and Mrs. Coretta Scott King. Doctors Bunche and King are both recipients of the Nobel Peace Prize.

Photo Courtesy of Howard Greenburg Gallery.

Sample web sites for Ralph Bunche:

**Character Sketches: Ralph Bunche**

**The Nobel Peace Prize 1950: Ralph Bunche**
Ralph Bunche was a Nobel Peace Prize–winning academic and U.N. diplomat known for his peacekeeping efforts in the Middle East, Africa and the Mediterranean.  
http://www.biography.com/people/ralph-bunche-9231128

**Ralph Bunche: An American Odyssey**  
http://www.pbs.org/ralphbunche/education/teach_biog.html

Ralph Bunche, United Nations mediator in Palestine during the 1948 conflict between the Arabs and Jews  

**On This Day: Dr. Bunche of U.N., Nobel Winner, Dies**  

**UCLA marks anniversary of Ralph J. Bunche receiving Nobel Peace Prize**  
http://newsroom.ucla.edu/stories/dec-10-60th-anniversary-of-first-188563

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**MEPC (Middle East Policy Council) Resources**

**“The Arab Street: Effects of the Six-Day War”** by Albert B. Wolf  
http://mepc.org/journal/middle-east-policy-archives/arab-street-effects-six-day-war
Sources and for Further Reading

General References:


Readings on the Independence Era:


Common Core/Standards

Common Core/Standards/College, Career, and Civic Life (C3)

Anchor Standards Reading

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.1
Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4
Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.10
Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

Anchor Standards Writing

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1
Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.4
Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.5
Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7
Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.8
Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.9
Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.10
Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of tasks, purposes, and audiences.

Anchor Standards Speaking and Listening

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1
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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.4
Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.6
Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.

Social Studies ELA Standards by Subject/Grade (9-10)

Reading: Informational Text » Grade 9-10

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.1
Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.4
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.10
By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literacy nonfiction in the grades 9-10 text complexity
band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range. By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend literary nonfiction at the high end of the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

History/Social Studies » Grade 9-10

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.1
Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4
Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.10
By the end of grade 10, read and comprehend history/social studies texts in the grades 9-10 text complexity band independently and proficiently.

ELA Writing » Grade 9-10

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.1
Write arguments focused on discipline-specific content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.2
Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.4
Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.5
Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.8
Gather relevant information from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format for citation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.9
Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.9-10.10
Write routinely over extended time frames (time for reflection and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
Science & Technical Subject>> Grades 9-10

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.9-10.1
Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis of science and technical texts, attending to the precise details of explanations or descriptions.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RST.9-10.2
Determine the central ideas or conclusions of a text; trace the text’s explanation or depiction of a complex process, phenomenon, or concept; provide an accurate summary of the text.

**NCSS Themes**

2. Time, Continuity and Change
Through the study of the past and its legacy, learners examine the institutions, values, and beliefs of people in the past, acquire skills in historical inquiry and interpretation, and gain an understanding of how important historical events and developments have shaped the modern world. This theme appears in courses in history, as well as in other social studies courses for which knowledge of the past is important.

3. People, Places, and Environments
The study of people, places, and environments enables us to understand the relationship between human populations and the physical world. Students learn where people and places are located and why they are there. They examine the influence of physical systems, such as climate, weather and seasons, and natural resources, such as land and water, on human populations. They study the causes, patterns and effects of human settlement and migration, learn of the roles of different kinds of population centers in a society, and investigate the impact of human activities on the environment. This enables them to acquire a useful basis of knowledge for informed decision-making on issues arising from human-environmental relationships.

5. Individuals, Groups and Institutions
Institutions such as families and civic, educational, governmental, and religious organizations, exert a major influence on people’s lives. This theme allows students to understand how institutions are formed, maintained, and changed, and to examine their influence. In schools, this theme typically appears in units and courses dealing with sociology, anthropology, psychology, political science, and history.

6. Power, Authority, and Governance
Understanding the historical development of structures of power, authority, and governance and their evolving functions in contemporary U.S. society and other parts of the world is essential for developing civic competence. In exploring this theme, students confront questions such as: What is power? What forms does it take? Who holds it? How is it gained, used, and justified? What is legitimate authority? How are governments created, structured, maintained, and changed? How can individual rights be protected within the context of majority rule? In schools, this theme typically appears in units and courses dealing with government, politics, political science, history, law, and other social sciences.

8. Science, Technology, and Society
Science, and its practical application, technology, have had a major influence on social and cultural change, and on the ways people interact with the world. This theme appears in units or courses dealing with history, geography, economics, and civics and government. Young children learn how science and technologies influence beliefs, knowledge, and their daily lives.
NCSS C3 Framework


Analyze historical, contemporary, and emerging means of changing societies, promoting the common good, and protecting rights.

D2.Geo.5.9-12.

Evaluate how political and economic decisions throughout time have influenced cultural and environmental characteristics of various places and regions.

D2.Geo.6.9-12.

Evaluate the impact of human settlement activities on the environmental and cultural characteristics of specific places and regions.

D2.Geo.10.9-12.

Evaluate how changes in the environmental and cultural characteristics of a place or region influence spatial patterns of trade and land use.

D2.His.1.9-12.

Evaluate how historical events and developments were shaped by unique circumstances of time and place as well as broader historical contexts.

D2.His.3.9-12.

Use questions generated about individuals and groups to assess how the significance of their actions changes over time and is shaped by the historical context.

D2.His.4.9-12.

Analyze complex and interacting factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras.

D2.His.5.9-12.

Analyze how historical contexts shaped and continue to shape people’s perspectives.


Analyze multiple and complex causes and effects of events in the past.

D4.3.9-12.

Present adaptations of arguments and explanations that feature evocative ideas and perspectives on issues and topics to reach a range of audiences and venues outside the classroom using print and oral technologies (e.g., posters, essays, letters, debates, speeches, reports, and maps) and digital technologies (e.g., Internet, social media, and digital documentary).