

**Middle Grade Social Studies**  
**The Many Cultures of our Society**

**Anticipatory Set:** Explore with the students the number of different cultures represented in their community. Talk about how the life of immigrant families is shaped by their country of origin, and that they bring different experiences, ideas, likes and dislikes into their lives than people that have come from other countries. Remind the students that with the exception of the First Nations, America is a land of immigrants, and that all residents carry some overtones from their countries of origin, even if it has been many generations since their family immigrated.

**Objective:** The students will develop an understanding of family life in Iran in the early 1940s. They will explore family structure, traditions around food, prayer, and parenting.

**Purpose:** The purpose is to increase tolerance in multi-cultural communities, and to expand the students' awareness of how other people live and think, and the beliefs that guide them. They will understand that some traditions are a continuous thread since ancient times.

**Instruction:** The students will be divided into small groups, "book clubs. Over the course of two weeks, they will read the book *Naji and the Mystery of the Dig*, by Vahid Imani. As they read they will explore different aspects of the text, to reinforce comprehension and to expand their thinking. At the end of each chapter, each group will add to an on-going list of foods, vocabulary (with definitions), traditions, and aspects of family life that are new to them. These lists will be shared at the end of each class period, and discussed by the teacher. The students may borrow ideas from other groups and add these to their own list. The lists will guide the students in their final projects.

**Guided Practice:**

1. By the end of chapter 2, individually, in pairs, or in groups, depending upon the teacher's discretion, the students will have completed the following projects:
  - a. (p. 17) Complete a detailed, labelled, illustration of the family's courtyard. In the labelling, include any new vocabulary words as appropriate: hoze, chador, looloos, yal-lah, samovar, sangak, lavash, salahm. Include the following:  
The buildings surrounding the courtyard, including windows which open up into it;  
Foliage  
Utility pool  
And either 1) summer beds or 2) the outhouse hole; students' choice.
  - b. (p. 19) Illustrations and labelling of clothing, including Naji's pajamas, and the chador worn by the older women. Have the students research online the traditional clothing of men and boys, and provide labelled illustrations for these.
  - c. Research the Samovar. Determine what it is, find a photograph, define its usage, and give a brief timeline of its history.
  - d. (p. 21) list the foods found in the text so far. Research unknown foods, and provide definitions for: sangak bread, feta cheese, and lavash. Have the students bring these foods to school to share with one another, and experiment with making and consuming two-colored tea.
2. By the end of chapter 6, the students will have completed the following projects:
  - a. (p. 52-55) Individually, in pairs, or groups, at the teachers discretion, complete a detailed illustration of the street outside the home. Gather all the possible details of all the street scene and include as many as possible. Be sure to remember the: bicyclist, ice cream

vendor, the ice cream sandwiches, the salt vendor, the mattress fluffer. Try to remember the foliage, and whether or not the street was busy or empty, and be sure to draw it that way. Label the drawing, and include new vocabulary words as appropriate: nahmoos, faloodeh, namakie, noon-e-khoshck, lahaf-dooz.

3. By the end of chapter 8, the students will have completed the following:
  - a. In writing, describe Naji's Three Phase Plan. Explain what she does in each phase: Observation, Contact, and Phase 3. Why does she do these things? What important conclusion does she come to? Why did grownups keep warning her of monsters (loloos) everywhere? Did your parents ever say something similar to you? Why or why not?

**Final project:**

Working in pairs, the students will complete the following shoe-box project. Each student will bring in one shoebox or similarly sized box. These will be placed one on top of the other, giving it two layers. In the top layer, the students will depict, three dimensionally, the courtyard life of Naji's family. Included in the depiction will be each family member, the three hole diggers and the mattress fluffer, where they ate and how they ate, and the hole. For extra credit, they may include a minaret in the background, depict the Azan floating through the air. In the bottom layer, they will depict underground bazaar. The important aspects of both levels be labelled, using as many vocabulary words as possible. The students may use a variety of materials, including construction paper, modelling clay, paint, glue, markers, fabric, sticks, etc. Parent helpers will be useful in the execution of this project.

**Closure:**

When all are complete, each pair will present their project to the class, followed by a celebration with traditional Iranian foods, with the help of parent volunteers.

**Assessment:**

<b>Final Project Rubric</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
I have 6 family members present in correct clothing.		
I have 4 workers present in correct clothing.		
I have depicted the courtyard with plants, utility pool, eating area, door to the street, tea set and samovar.		
I have depicted the outhouse hole.		
I have depicted the underground bazaar.		
My work is neat and clear, and everything is labelled, using as many vocabulary words as I could.		
I included a minaret in the background, and depicted the Azan.		
I worked cooperatively with my partner.		
We resolved disagreements independently.		