



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
COLLEGE OF SOCIAL & BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES

# Center for Middle Eastern Studies

**A Comparative Study of Two Political Cultures:  
Utilizing Constitutional Documents as Mirrors and Windows  
of Moroccan and American National Identities  
by John Baldrige**

## Overview

Students will be able to interpret Moroccan and American political cultures by comparing and contrasting the constitutions of Morocco and the United States. This lesson is intended to be utilized in a high school U.S. Government course, but it can be easily modified for use in a variety of Social Studies courses, including World Geography and American History.

Prior to this lesson, students will have learned about the historical, political, and philosophical origins of the United States and the debates between Federalists and Anti-Federalists regarding the adoption of the Constitution. Students will then compare and contrast the U.S. Constitution with the Constitution of Morocco in order to interpret the political cultures of each country with a focus on national identity.

The rationale for this lesson and approach is that students will not only learn about the culture of another country, but they will also learn about their own country's culture through the processes of comparison, contrast, analysis, and reflection.

## Procedures

1. Explain to students that each country's constitution is a reflection of that society's political culture--its national identity and shared values.
2. As a warm-up activity, ask students to brainstorm what values they attribute to American and Moroccan political cultures, utilizing a simple chart on the board. Allow 10 minutes.
3. Provide a compare/contrast chart (hard copy) with the following components of political culture:
  - a. State Religion
  - b. Minority Status and Rights
    - i. Religious minorities and freedom
    - ii. Ethnic minorities and racial equality
    - iii. Women's rights and gender equality
  - c. Official/national Language(s)
  - d. Civil Liberties
  - e. Other Core Values
4. Provide essential excerpts from the primary documents in handouts: the Preamble, Title I, and Title II of the Constitution of Morocco, and the Preamble and Amendments of the U.S. Constitution.

5. In small groups, students analyze similarities and differences between the constitutions using the chart provided. Allow 30-40 minutes.
6. Come back together as a whole class to discuss similarities and differences between the documents. Focus on key similarities and differences between the two societies' national identities and values. Allow 15-20 minutes.
  
7. Engage students in the following questions of reflection, to which they will respond in writing:
  - a. Describe one aspect of Morocco's political culture missing in the United States that you think we should adopt as a country and society. How would we implement it? Do you think it would be an easy or challenging transition?
  - b. Describe one aspect of political culture in the United States missing in Morocco. Do you think it could be implemented in Morocco? How?
  - c. Based on your reading of the documents, which country seems to prioritize diversity, multiculturalism, and equality? Explain your reasoning with evidence.
  - d. Students will finish assignment as homework.

### Resources

Constitution of Morocco: Preamble, Title I, and Title II:

[https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Morocco\\_2011.pdf](https://www.constituteproject.org/constitution/Morocco_2011.pdf)

Constitution of the United States of America: Preamble and Amendments 1-27:

[https://billofrightsinsstitute.org/founding-documents/constitution/?utm\\_source=GOOGLE&utm\\_medium=SEARCH&utm\\_campaign=EVERGREEN&utm\\_term=CONSTITUTION&utm\\_content=TEXT1&gclid=EAlaIqobChMI7o7ui4Kw5AIVyrzACh18kwQHEAAYASA AEqI99vD\\_BwE](https://billofrightsinsstitute.org/founding-documents/constitution/?utm_source=GOOGLE&utm_medium=SEARCH&utm_campaign=EVERGREEN&utm_term=CONSTITUTION&utm_content=TEXT1&gclid=EAlaIqobChMI7o7ui4Kw5AIVyrzACh18kwQHEAAYASA AEqI99vD_BwE)

Constitutional History of Morocco: <http://constitutionnet.org/country/morocco>

The New Moroccan Constitution: Real Change or More of the Same:

<https://carnegieendowment.org/2011/06/20/new-moroccan-constitution-real-change-or-more-of-same-pub-44731>

### Comparison and Contrast of the US and Moroccan Constitutions

	<b>Characteristics of US Constitution</b> (Differences)	<b>Similarities between the US and Moroccan Constitutions</b>	<b>Characteristics of Moroccan Constitution</b> (Differences)
<b>State Religion:</b> Does the country have an official religion? If not, what does the constitution say about government involvement with religion?			
<b>Minorities:</b> What is the status of minorities? What are their rights? Are they considered equal to the dominant group in society? Are there protections from discrimination?  <b>Religious Minorities</b> <b>Religious Freedom</b> <b>Ethnic Minorities</b> <b>Racial Equality</b> <b>Women's Rights</b> <b>Gender Equality</b>			
<b>Official Language(s):</b> Does the constitution designate an official language? Does the constitution recognize a national language? What does the constitution say about language?			
<b>Civil Liberties:</b> What fundamental rights does the constitution recognize? What rights are considered so important and fundamental that they are outlined and protected in the constitution?			

<b>Other Core Values:</b> What other values can you identify in the constitution?			
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**Reflection Questions**

1. Describe one aspect of Morocco's political culture missing in the United States that you think we should adopt as a country and society. How would we implement it? Do you think it would be an easy or challenging transition?
  
2. Describe one aspect of political culture in the United States missing in Morocco. Do you think it could be implemented in Morocco? How?
  
3. Based on your reading of the documents, which country seems to prioritize diversity, multiculturalism, and equality? Explain your reasoning with evidence.